# American and British Post-Sparrow Pirate Fiction between Utopian Construct and Democ(k)racy

## Dissertation

vorgelegt von

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"I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Mans."[2]
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Michel Foucault

"Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child; it is there that he changes the tenor and the atmosphere of his life."[4]
Robert Louis Stevenson

## Introduction: Why Does Fiction Which Focuses on Criminals Offer Material for Day-Dreaming?

The most popular pirate franchise of the present-day era is the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series (2003 -). These films combine piratical tropes, such the abduction of the daughter of a governor, mutiny, and the search for treasure, with a strong foothold in the supernatural, such as sea monsters, zombies, ghosts, curses, magical objects, etc. Pirates are linked to elements of so-called sea-yarning or elements of maritime lore: a gigantic kraken that drags ships down to the deep; a ship that falls down at the end of the world (which renders its name to the eponymous film); man-eating sirens with mermaid tails; Davy Jones himself, who collects souls. This franchise thus refrains from the attempt to recreate a Caribbean past and moves the pirate motif to a world of maritime myth instead. I claim that the depicted pirates are part of this maritime myth.

*Pirates of the Caribbean* did not only move pirates to a mythical world, it also sparked a new interest in pirates. The moment the first *Pirates of the Caribbean* film hit the cinemas can be considered a starting point of a new epoch in pirate fiction. This is not to say that the following franchises and narratives are all influenced by the Disney film. In contrast to Susanne Zhanial, who argues that "one can discover similarities between Disney's series and those latter texts" (*Postmodern Pirates*, 283), I merely define the first *Pirates of the Caribbean* film as

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2   *Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, E 10.
3   "Les hétérotopies, des espaces autres," 51-52.
4   "A Gossip on Romance," 117.

starting point of an epoch that I call "Post-Sparrow." Zhanial argues that all present-day pirate fiction is strongly rooted in postmodernism "such as intertextuality, self-referentiality, irony, parody, hybridisation, an emphasis on spectacle and a reworking of stereotypical genre elements," (*Postmodern Pirates*, 280) thus following the role-model of the Disney franchise (*Postmodern Pirates*, 282). Yet argues in the same text that postmodernism is highly popular with contemporary audiences (*Postmodern Pirates*, 5). In this reading, the fact that most present-day pirate texts are postmodern does not automatically mark them as a "cultural legacy" (280) of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, but rather as products of the current demand of the market. She argues: "One of the main reasons why Western viewers enjoy the postmodern representation of Jack Sparrow and his stories so thoroughly might be the fact that they perfectly embody the ambiguity that has always characterised the motif." (286-87) Yet, this does not explain why audiences feel drawn to criminals who ambush and kill others and why the life-style of these criminals has such a strong escapist appeal. The pirate is a symbol and figurehead for the freedom of choice and self-development, despite the brutality that can be found in historical records. In this dissertation I show the particulars of this new wave of pirate fiction and analyse how the backdrop of maritime violence has been instrumentalised for fiction that must be called utopian, in the meaning that it mostly depicts an alternative, allegedly better life style. The pirate as found in present-day fiction is not a representation of historical maritime violence, but a conglomerate of contradictory constituent parts which embody the wish and need for rebellion and resistance in our time.

In this study, I argue that the pirate of present-day American and British pirate fiction is a fragmentary motif, constituted by illogical or contradictory elements, kept together by the objective of escapism and the respective genre expectations and genre conventions. I use the term "fiction" to describe everything that is fictional: novels, films, TV series, etc. Pirate fiction may be summed up with William Blake's famous quote: "I must Create a System or be

enslav'd by another Mans." (*Jerusalem*, E 10) Pirates create their own system, a democracy ruled by pirate articles, in order to escape the prevailing system of hegemonic monarchies. Murder and robbery are transformed into rebellion to embody present-day ideals of freedom, such as free choice of gender, absence of restraining socio-cultural norms, and, last but not least, a never-ending cruise through the sunny Caribbean. Pirates are free of restrictions of society because they have set up their own community with their own rules. The fact that they create their own rules is at the core of their appealing character. Pirates are created by a creation of their own system.

Blake put the above mentioned quote into the mouth of one of his own characters. In a very simplified explanation, the character in question is the embodiment of the imagination, Los.[5] The created system is thus linked to the imagination, pointing towards fictional worlds and fiction. In my context of pirate fiction, the suggestion that imagination and creating a system are linked illustrates the basic nature of the pirate as an idea; not only do pirates create their own system intrinsically in their world, but pirate fiction takes the function of creating a system using the imagination, thus testing the limits where our minds could go. However, this use of the the imagination does not bring out the best in those who apply it, but the worst. When consuming pirate fiction in an escapist manner, readers aspire to be criminals and murderers, but this aspect has apparently never lessened the popularity of pirate fiction. The crucial point is, as I will argue, the conscious creation of a contrary world to the existing. This creation of a contrary system is the driving element of pirate fiction. On the one hand, pirates create their system intrinsically as a plot-element, but, on the other hand, this idea of resistance can feed and nourish the need for anarchy and rebellion on side of the readers.

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5 For more on Blake's characters, see for example Bentley, Gerald E. (ed.) *William Blake, The Critical Hertitage*. Bloom, Harold. *The Visionary Companion: a Reading of English Romantic Poetry*. Damon, S Foster. *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*. Frye Nortrop. *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*.

Audiences thus accept all too willingly that sailors and passengers have to be sacrificed to the pirate. The pirate is, per definition, a robber and a murderer. Pirate fiction puts a criminal centre stage and makes breaking the law look attractive. Seen in this light, pirate fiction should not be as attractive. What makes pirate fiction in my eyes fascinating and worthy of research is the fact that the utopian element here is breaking the law.

Pirate fiction mostly turns the marauders into fascinating, often appealing characters. The history of the pirate motif has been mapped until the 20th century.[6] I intend to continue this line of research by focusing on the 21th century, starting with the release of the first film of the Disney series, *Pirates of the Caribbean: the Curse of the Black Pearl*, in 2003. Present-day culture has witnessed a revival of pirate fiction. Pirate movies were much en vogue, evolving as a cinematographic genre of its own in the 1940s and '50s, only to suddenly die out.[7] They did not make a comeback until 2003. The pirate motif thus regained public attention as well as popularity when the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series was launched. Earlier attempts, like the 1995 *Cutthroat Island* proved to be a failure. *Cutthroat Island* won the Guinness record for the largest box office loss.[8] *Pirates of the Caribbean: the Curse of the Black Pearl*, however, did not only prove to be a huge success, spawning four sequels, but also started a new interest in pirates. This led to the release of numerous other films, novels, TV series, (popular) scientific books (such as Colin Woodard's *A Republic of Pirates* (2007)) and computer games (such as *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (2013)).[9] This new wave of piratical fiction and me-

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6   Hans Turley has investigated the pirate motif in the 18th century. Grace Moore's compilation *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swinderls* discusses the pirate motif in English and American 19th century texts; Nina Gerassi-Navarro focuses on pirates in Spanish American texts of the 19th century. Alexandra Ganser's *Crisis and Legitimacy in Atlantic American Narratives of Piracy 1678-1865* covers American texts from the 16th to the 19th century.

7   Rüdiger Suchsland and Constanze Alvarez argue that this sudden decline of pirate films can be explained by a disinterest in anti-authoritarian behaviour next to a replacement by science fiction, space being a much better site to function as unknown and dangerous territory than the seas which are well-known and cartographed by now. They consider *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Black Pearl* a nostalgic memory (9). This thesis shows, however, that pirate fiction experienced a large survival following *Pirates of the Caribbean* I. The release of *Pirates of the Caribbean* I is the beginning of a new era of pirate fiction instead if a nostalgic remembrance.

8   *Guinness World Records*. <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/69937-largest-box-office-loss> [10/29/19]

9   For pirates in computer games, see: Pfister, Eugen. "'Don't Eat Me, I'm a Mighty Pirate' Das Piratenbild in

dia must be considered a new phenomenon, as it follows a long period of disinterest in pirates. This new "Post-Sparrow" form of the pirate motif has not been investigated yet in its entirety. Pirate research has either isolated the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films,[10] focused on their inter-relation with earlier pirate fiction and media[11] or reduced the recent narratives on their re-working of the postmodern character of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series.[12] The utopian function of fiction following the wake of *Pirates of the Caribbean* as a new reincarnation mir-roring the present-day zeitgeist has not been investigated so far.

This study focuses on the utopian nature of present-day American and British pirate fic-tion. Drawing on Foucaultian concepts, I show that the pirate motif as found in present-day pirate narratives is contradictory in itself, kept together by the objective of escapist fantasy. I focus on different forms of idealisation, idealisation of the pirate, idealisation of the piratical community, idealisation of piratical freedom of self-development, next to intertextual struc-tures to show that the pirate motif is dominated by elements creating instability, such as (de)construction, creation and break of structuralist binaries, and metafiction. I analyse differ-ent media and different formats, such as a film series, a TV series, a novel series, stand-alone novels, a non-fiction book, and a Jane Austen-variation. This broad range of different text sorts and media enables me to analyse various and multiple forms and representations of the pirate motif. In doing so, I can delve into the functionality of fiction, asking the following question: How can present-day fiction focused on criminals function as escapist utopia?

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Videospielen."

10 Cf. Steinhoff, Heike. *Queer Buccaneers: (De)Constructing Boundaries in the PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN Film Series* and "'Yo-ho, A Pirate's Life for Me' - Queer Personalities, Heteronormativity and Piracy in *Pirates of the Caribbean,*" Irmtraud Hnilica's "Vom *Out-Law* zum *In-Law*: Piraterie, Recht und Familie in *Pirates of the Caribbean.*"

11  Cf. von Holzen, Aleta-Amirée *"A Pirate's Life for Me!", Von* The Black Pirate *bis* Pirates of the Caribbean – *Abenteuerkonzepte im Piratenfilm*. (2007), Zhanial, Susanne. "'Take What You Can...': Disney's Jack Sparrow and His Indebtedness to the Pirate Genre" and *Postmodern Pirates, Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean, and Steinhoff, Heike. "Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and the Pirate as Mobile Signifier in *Captain Blood*, *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*" and "Piraten im Hollywoodkino: Genre, Gender und Sexualität in *Pirates of the Caribbean* I-IV."

12 Cf. Zhanial, Susanne. *Postmodern Pirates, Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean. 280-287.

**On Piracy – An Overview**

The concept of piracy has been used in many different contexts. Piracy refers to a historical phenomenon, illegal file-sharing,[13] and present-day maritime violence. It also serves as inspiration to name political parties or design an emblem; e.g. the symbol of the ecological activists Sea-Shepard shows strong semblance with the pirate flag. In literary representations of the pirate, another discourse emerges, namely that of the freedom-loving pirate who leads an easy life, who believes in equality and rebellion.

Lost in Time, the Futile Attempt to Recover Maritime History

Reports of history can be considered as unreliable sources, in the meaning that the respective author has changed facts to his advantage. Hayden White observes:

> Here the conflict between competing narratives has less to do with the facts of the matter in question than with the different story-meanings with which the facts can be endowed by emplotment. This raises the question of the relation of the various generic plot types that can be used to endow events with different kinds of meaning—tragic, epic, comic, romantic, pastoral, farcical, and the like—to the events themselves. Is this relationship between a given story told about a given set of events the same as that obtaining between a factual statement and its referent? Can it be said that sets of real events are intrinsically tragic, comic, or epic, such that the representation of those events as a tragic, comic, or epic story could be assessed as to its factual accuracy? Or does it all have to do with the perspective from which the events are viewed? (29)

White claims that historical events are narrated under a certain lens, hereby following narrative patterns coined by literature, thus events are interpreted as "tragic, epic, comic, romantic, pastoral, farcical, and the like." (29) I will show that in case of historical pirates, however, historiography is even more complicated as historical sources have sensationalised the pirate right from the moment someone took up a pen to write about pirates.

Although piracy can be traced across many different epochs and cultures, it is mostly associated with the Golden Age of Piracy, piratical activity in the Caribbean between 1650 –

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13 For research on this kind of piracy see for example: Arvanitakis, James and Frederiksson, Martin, eds. *Piracy: Leakages from Modernity.*

1721.[14] Golden Age piracy dominates the cultural memory as well as fictional representations of pirates. Most famous pirates, such as Blackbeard or Kidd, lived during this period.

Their biographies are collected in Captain Charles Johnson's semi-factual, semi-fictional *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*[15] (1724). Its authorship remains unclear. While some researchers see it as a work of Daniel Defoe using a nom de plume (Lutz, 29; Turley, 8), others argue that the author had nautical knowledge, a fact which rules Defoe out (Cordingly, XIII-XIV). It is even unknown whether the biographies are the work of one author in the first place or a collaborative collection. Especially the second part features many variant writing styles (Schillings, *Legitimate Violence*, 36). Not only the question of authorship remains unsolved; it is also difficult to separate fact from fiction. Whereas some of the biographies correspond to case files (Cordingly, X), the chapter on Captain James Mission who founds the piratical society Libertalia is fictional (Turley, 3-4, Cordingly, XI).

This means, as Hans Turley puts it: "We cannot, I believe, recover the 'real' pirate." (1) The tales of the famous Golden Age pirates are constantly retold and just as constantly adapted to respective spatio-temporal surroundings: "Blackbeard – like all the famous pirates – changes from generation to generation." (5) As a consequence, "[t]hese larger-than-life figures remain legendary precisely because there is no 'truth' that can be determined as changing interpretations of Blackbeard show. The legend and the reality are woven into a fabric impossible to unravel. However, the *way* this fabric is woven can be examined." (7, emphasis in original) In other words, the *General History* cannot reveal Golden Age piracy, but it can re-

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14 Pirate researchers do not agree upon the time-span. I have chosen the emergence of the buccaneers for a starting point and the British Piracy Act 1721 for an ending. The Act equalled any kind of interaction with pirates with piracy itself (cf. "Piracy Act" <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/db_1804/20030118-3692/pdf/db_1804.pdf>). Lacking trading connections, the number of pirates subsequently declined (von Holzen 293).

15 In the following referred to as *General History*.

veal how Golden Age piracy was constructed. The most important source on historical pirates is dominated by constructedness already.

Despite its dubious nature in the context of maritime history, this book has to be considered the main source for most information circulating on Golden Age piracy, seconded only by the slightly earlier *Histoire des aventuries flibustiers* (*History of the Buccaneers of America*), written by Alexandre-Olivier Exquemelin assumedly in French. It was published in Dutch first and appeared 1686 in its assumed French original. However, it is impossible to determine how much content was actually penned by Exquemelin. (cf. Oullet and Villiers) Both semi-factual histories have coined the conception of pirates for centuries and the impact of the *General History* on pirate fiction is immense – Robert Louis Stevenson asked for a copy while writing *Treasure Island* (1883). (Thomson, 221)

As it is close to impossible to keep fact and fiction apart and both concepts constantly merge in cultural perception, Turley suggests the concept of the "piratical subject" – a discursive approach centred on the combination of factual and fictional existence of the pirate:

> The "piratical subject" is my term for the merging of the legally defined pirate – *hostis humani generis* or homo economicus – and the culturally revered pirate, a hypermasculine [sic], transgressive, desiring subject. Through historical and fictional representations of the pirate, these two depictions merged into the antihero – the piratical subject – beloved by generations of readers. (Turley 7)

The "piratical subject" combines maritime history and constructed idealisation of this past phenomenon into one term.

Rendering matters more complicated to grasp what a pirate may be, there is no coherent and clear-cut definition of piracy. Sonja Schillings observes:

> This understanding of a pirate [as an enemy that must be destroyed <A/N>] is not based on *performance*, meaning that particular forms of *behavior* are recognized as piratical. Indeed definitions of piracy have always lacked a coherent understanding of the specific *acts* piracy consist of. Instead, piracy has usually been defined by *constellation* - not the act itself is central, but the legal, political and cultural *implications* of the act. ("Cultural Translation," emphasis in original, 296)

Pirates are not defined by their actions, but by their hostile positioning against state authorities and illegal infringement. The privateer is by his doing just as much a pirate, attacking and

plundering foreign ships, but his carrying a letter of marque legalises and institutionalises his actions. His actions are sanctioned by a legal authority, a king. Being a pirate or a privateer is only a question of carrying permission of a king.[16] The pirate is thus defined as a pirate by his lack of national bindings.

The lack of national bindings makes pirates the enemy of all mankind. Marcus Tullius Cicero declared in *De Officiis* (44 BC) that "pirata" has to be considered and treated as "communis hostis omnium," the mutual enemy of all. He points out that pirates have ceased to be a part of society and thus it is considered lawful to deceive a pirate to escape capture. (Cicero, liber tertius, 107) This concept helped to manifest the later legal concept *hostis humani generis*, the enemy of all. (Schillings, *Legitimate Violence*, 36)  *Hostis humani generis* refers to an enemy of humankind, a criminal so dangerous that he must be killed without preceding trial. (Schillings, "Cultural Translation," 296)

The only thing that can redeem the enemy of everyone is the fact that s/he has founded a society featuring justice and equality when it is missing in the established counterparts. Pirates were organised democratically, a direct contrast to colonial monarchies ruled by class difference and hegemony. New piratical crew members were forced to sign the pirate articles, a set of rules to govern general conduct as well as to regulate recompensation in case of permanent injury (an early form of insurance) and the share of pelf. (cf. Ganser, *Crisis*, 38) Pirates choose their captain by vote (cf. Ganser, *Crisis*, 38), a fact frequently incorporated in pirate fiction, such as  Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (cf. Thomson "'Dooty is Dooty': Pirates and Sea-Lawyers in *Treasure Island*"). The right to vote and freedom of choice in an age of hegemonic colonialism and strict marine hierarchy gave pirates their reputation as freedom-fighters and admired rebels. Contemporary research in maritime history,

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16 The same accounts for James Bond's licence to kill. For an analysis of how Bond inventor Ian Fleming makes use of the letter of marque as equivalent to the licence to kill in particular and the pirate motif in general throughout his novels, see Hagen, Katharina. "The Spectre of Bloody Morgan: Ian Fleming's Use of the Pirate Motif."

however, steps back from the radical viewpoint of an ideal, egalitarian and just pirate society (cf. Fox, Edward. *'Piratical Schemes and Contracts': Pirate Articles and Their Society 1660 – 1730*). Pirates were not as just and democratic as we were led to believe. Be that as it may, the ideals of equality and democracy were immortalised in the popular understanding of pirates and pirate fiction alike.

Glorification of pirates thus hinges on their function as a figurehead for equality and freedom, which, in turn, hinges mainly on the democratic aspect. Alex Thompson points out:

> The mythology of the pirate is based on a simple topological model. As exotic outsider, or as drunken hooligan, the pirate derives his status from being outside or beyond the law, a situation doubled in the case of the notorious female pirates. The revisionist model offered by Linebaugh and Rediker [in maritime history <A/N>] does not put this into question, but takes pirate democracy to be the figure of a virtuous and self-organising community […] This is to reverse our perspective on piracy: no longer simply illegal, illegitimate and outlawed, being outside the law becomes the very virtue of the pirate. […] The historians presume a topological model of legality based on a simple opposition […] their analysis of pirate democracy inverts conventional distribution of the value within the figure (an inversion whose affective path has already been mapped in the popular romance of the heroic swashbuckler) rather than threatening the overall schema. (221-222)

The popular myth of the pirate, meaning a loop-sided or even falsified perception of maritime history, is constructed by glorifying the formation of a democratic society among outlaws. This romanticised view on historical pirates re-values their relational situation to lawful society. The fact that pirates are outside of society, and more importantly, outside its laws, is now, seen in the light of a historical revision in a democratic context, to their advantage. Pirates construct a better society outside of society and the fact that their behaviour is illegal, amoral or indecent is turned into an appealing aspect. This path had already been foreshadowed by literature, which tends to romanticise (and thus idealise) the pirate.

Clint Jones suggests that piratical utopian thinking might even excuse piratical brutality: "non-violence is a recent utopian concept and violence, even the savagery of the most notorious pirates, ought not automatically disqualify golden age piracy from utopian consideration." (28) However, both Exquemelin's and Johnson's texts are marked by explicit depiction of cruelty and violence. Violence is not a side-effect of piracy, it is part of its very definition.

Whatever definition of piracy one may use, violence and aggression are always a part of it. Despite the fact that non-violence might be a present-day ideal, pirates have always been depicted as ruthless and brutal. The use of brutality is an undeniable part of the pirate myth. Downplaying or ignoring it means looking at only one half of the pirate myth. Jones continues:

> We could argue that golden age pirates were not only utopians, but successful utopians, and this is demonstrated by an analysis of both life aboard a pirate vessel, focusing on the socio-political standards for living at sea among pirates, specifically the infamous Pirates Code [sic], and a closer look at the myths surrounding Libertalia (also called Libertatia). These two examples encapsulate the anarcho-utopianism of golden age pirates at the level of individual vessel and pirate commune, and, thus, bookend all discussions on piratical utopianism. (30).

Jones restricts his analysis of piratical societies by refusing to take excessive cruelty, injustice among pirate crews, and their misery during long voyages on sea into account. He discusses their pirate articles and democratic organisation of pirate ships and communities as progressive, innovative developments. I want to suggest that the listed elements of injustice and misery weaken a utopian understanding. The popular understanding of pirate societies as well as their fictional representations are often far from perfect, or, in other words, utopian.

As already hinted at, piratical societies were faulty. Some of them were reigned by injustice and difference as much as normative society. Even pirate fiction sometimes falls short to the expectations of representing a better society. Alexandra Ganser observes:

> heterotopian, resistant textual economies have been always already undermined by indigenous exploitation, the triangular trans-Atlantic (and later trans-Pacific slave trade), and the epistemological project of categorizing and imposing scientific and legal order onto the New World. Because of its deep implication in the colonial economy, material and symbolic, this literature is limited in terms of its representation of resistance to the dominant order. Its resistant discursive potential, my readings hope to have made evident, was deeply affected by prevailing social/cultural values and dominant discourses about race, class, gender, and nation. (*Crisis*, 253-254)

Not only are piratical societies in American fiction of the 17th until 18th century texts reigned by injustice, they are constructed by exploitation of natives and slaves.

Another grave factor inhibiting a utopian, ideal society is the fact that a pirate society is set up of criminals and law-breakers. As I will show, pirates as depicted in the corpus at hand do not shed their skin and are thus prone to break their own rules as often as they break na-

tional law. An ideal society created by ruthless cutthroats and cunning tricksters can be a utopia in appearance only.

This projection of utopian ideals on a society set together by thieves and murderers proves that the cultural, popular understanding of pirates and, what is more, the pirate motif are fragmentary and these fragments even contradictory to each other (an ideal society versus the criminal activity of its inhabitants). The criminal nature of pirates stands at odds with utopia full and proper, an ideal society populated by ideal inhabitants, as I will explain in more detail later.

Pirates in Fiction: Motif History

When asked what a "pirate" may be, people would arguably seldom think of a utopia set together by robberers. Instead, it is the colourful, charming rogues which have conquered  the stage of world literature and hold a firm clutch on popular culture: James Hook, Long John Silver, Jack Sparrow. Despite the very early idealisation and fictionalisation of historical reports on pirates, the romanticising and their success as fictional characters started only after the threat of real pirates had vanished, in other words, long after the Golden Age of Piracy had ended.

The exception to the rule are three plays by William Shakespeare which precede the Golden Age of Piracy, namely the second quarto (Q2, 1604) and the first folio (F1, 1623) of *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (the pirates are not part of the first quarto (Q1, 1603)), *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1607), and *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* (1601)*,* which allow for positive interpretations of the respective pirates.[17] The debate of role and function of

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17 Some scholars, such as Claire Jowitt in her treatise *The Culture of Piracy 1580-1630*, also list *Measure for Measure* (F1, 1623) among the plays that feature a positive depiction of pirates. I exclude this text, as the piratical character only appears as a dead body in a Viennese prison. Although his body proves useful to save another's life, I argue that this episode does not help to shed a positive light on the pirate himself, as his only contribution is to die at the right time.

Shakespearean pirates is too complex as to be discussed here,[18] but the mere possibility to interpret them as positive characters, redeemers instead of villains, marks them as important forerunners of the much later popular swashbucklers. Shakespearian pirates still miss the aspect of romanticising, despite the braveness of the love-struck Antonio in *Twelfth Night* who risks capture by an enemy count to stay with his beloved, another man (III, IV, 25-8; III, IV, 38-42). This homoerotic pairing is also a very early depiction of the pirate as queer. (cf. Jowitt, Claire, "Politics of Seaborne Crime," 80-81) However, Antonio is less of a hero than a character serving comical relief, so the rise of pirate fiction as such would only begin much later.

The pirate motif as a heroic, impressive, and attractive hero character evolves in the 19th century. Grace Moore suggests that the increasing idealisation of pirates in literature is a direct consequence of their distinction, which means that pirates were subjected to romanticising and changed permanently during the English Romantic period:

> While piracy has been identified as the 'third oldest profession' (Stanley in Moore, 22) and pirates continue to plague the sea traders to this day, the 1800's saw a lull in pirate activity, particularly in the Atlantic Ocean. Perhaps as a direct consequence of the decline in pirate attacks close to home, the pirate underwent a metamorphosis in the nineteenth-century literary imagination in both British and American literature. Representations shifted from the dangerous, uncouth cutthroats like the notorious Blackbeard, to the brooding Romanticism of Byron's corsair and the swashbuckling charisma of figures such as Captain Hook and Long John Silver. (Moore, 1)

The 19th century witnesses a large change in the perception of pirates in fiction, as dangerous villains become brooding, intelligent heroes, a development of lasting impact on the following centuries. However, at this point the American literary tradition of pirates and the English literary tradition of pirates part ways.

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18 cf. for example Farley-Hills, David, "Hamlet's Account of the Pirates," Floyd-Wilson, Mary, "Hamlet, the Pirate's Son," Ide, Richard. "Shakespeare and the Pirates," Jowitt, Claire, "'Parrots and Pieces of Eight': Recent Trends in Pirate Studies" and "Scaffold Performances: the Politics of Pirate Executions" and "Shakespeare's Pirates: The Politics of Seaborne Crime" and *The Culture of Piracy 1580-1630,* William Witherle. "Hamlet's Sea-Voyage," Savage, Derek Stanley, *Hamlet and the Pirates, an Exercise in Literary Detection.* Sinfield, Alan, "Hamlet's Special Providence," Snider, Denton Jacques, "HAMLET," Stevens, Martin. "Hamlet and the Pirates: A Critical Reconsideration," Petsch, Robert, "Hamlet unter den Seeräubern," and Wentersdorf, Karl. "Hamlet's Encounter with the Pirates."

The United States observed the rise of the rogue narrative during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in other words, a glorification of criminals. Born of the Puritan execution sermon, it evolved to full developed narratives. Daniel Williams observes:

> Individualism, in short, was becoming more popular. Refusing to accept the limitations placed upon them by either a Calvinist God or an English King, Americans exhibited a far greater willingness to pursue their own interests. Individuals worried more about material progress in this world rather than spiritual progress in the next. By the end of the eighteenth century, particularly after the Revolution, freedom, including personal freedom, took on greater importance. Self-determination, self-reliance and self-initiative became socially celebrated ideals. Defiance of authority became pervasive, almost institutionalized. (13)

Resistance against church and British authority alike seemed inviting, in alliance with the development of a new nation and the spirit of independence. Yet, their role as representatives of American ideas such individualism and democracy must be seen as ambivalent, they were "secular examples of the excesses caused by radical and predatory individualism. They were indeed both epitome and parody of the free, self-reliant individual living in a democracy." (Williams, 17) Ganser argues that this rise of crime narratives as a new genre paved the way to 19<sup>th</sup> century pirate novels. The pirate does not only represent rebellion, what is more, the pirate is a part of English literature and culture and reinventing him in an American context adds another layer of resistance against (English) authority: "in the context of the early Republic the heroic English pirate is taken up and Americanized into a figure of liberty." (*Crisis*, 114) The most famous examples of this epoch are the novel *The Red Rover* (1827) by James Fenimore Cooper, who also authored the famous novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and Maturin Murray Ballou's *Fanny Campbell: The Female Pirate Captain. A Tale of the Revolution* (1845).

On the other side of the Atlantic, in England, the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought forth the probably most important and most popular fictional pirates of all times: James Hook and Long John Silver, whose popularity may nowadays only be topped by Sparrow. Mel Campbell observes:

> Just as Johnson facilitated Byron and Scott's complex portraits of the pirate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, so *The Corsair* [Lord Byron, 1814] and *The Pirate* [Sir Walter Scott, 1822] paved the way for both further consolidation and further parody of the aestheticized piratical subject. Gilbert and Sullivan's comical operetta *The Pirates of Penzance* was written in 1879; and J. M. Barrie's play

> *Peter Pan*, with its stage-ish villain Captain Hook, in 1904. But the text that most wholeheartedly takes on the Romantic project of aestheticizing the pirate is Robert Louis Stevenson's 1883 novel, *Treasure Island*. (22)

The two fictional pirates Hook and Silver evolve out of a literary tradition that increasingly reinterprets pirates as alternatively mysterious (e. g. *The Corsair*) or comical figures (e. g. *The Pirates of Penzance*). But, most of all, these two forerunners set the path for a continuing of the depiction of a romanticised pirate:

> [T]he genre of historical romance continued Scott's triumph of style over historical substance. Rafael Sabatini's early-twentieth-century piratical adventure novels became the basis for canonical pirate movies like *Captain Blood* or *The Black Swan*. By interweaving fact and fiction, and transforming villain into anti-hero, a common maritime criminal has become a figure of enduring popular fascination. (Campbell, 22)

By transforming murderers and robbers of maritime history into fascinating, romantic characters, pirate fiction has begun a life of its own which increasingly separates from history. What is more, the pirate motif is often instrumentalised to convey a certain message or to serve escapist purposes.

Eugen Pfister observes that pirate fiction functions as a short respite from daily routine for the audience. However, he stresses the connection to the rehabilitation of the piratical hero into society:

> Dieser erlösende Moment, die Wiedergutmachung und erneuete Eingliederung in die Gesellschaft, ist neben dem Reiz des Rebellischen im Grunde das zentrale Motiv des Piratengenres. Piratengeschichten gewährtem dem Publikum für kurze Zeit Urlaub von seinen kulturellen und sozialen Zwängen. Sie erfüllten – und erfüllen weiterhin – vielschichtige Sehnsüchte des Publikums: nach Abenteuer, nach Exotik, vor allem aber nach Freiheit. ( "Pop-Kultur," 37-38)

Pirate narratives allow to imaginatively join the pirates and rebel against authority. Jo Stanley observes something similar but binds it to going unpunished: "They [pirates] transgress for us, and when they are brought to justice, the hangman's rope is never slipped around their necks." (4) This does not apply to all pirates, e.g. the historical pirate Jack Rackham is hanged while Mary Read dies of fever while imprisoned. The fact that both pirates die as a consequence of their capture and conviction does not diminish their status as pirates. As pirate fiction and fictionalised accounts of pirates are not impacted by the fact whether the hero is redeemed and /

or rehabilitated, I argue that this moment of redemption or going unpunished is not an obligatory aspect for present-day pirate fiction.

The idealisation of pirate fiction to serve the objective of escapism is heavily reliant on a loop-sided perception of facts and history – which is in itself another discursive practice. The idea of pirates perpetuated in cultural memory is coined by various factors and most of them do not date back to any accurate record of maritime history. Stanley observes:

> The illusion of a tropical paradise with money growing on trees has its roots for British readers in a mixture of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, advertisements for Captain Morgan rum, Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Pirates of Penzance* – and a refusal to see the reality of a terrorizing trade. (4)

The public perception of pirates is actually a concoction of fiction and advertisement, which explains even more why a pirate life appears as utopian ideal: advertisement always presents the best option possible to make something desirable. In the example mentioned above, a marketing campaign to promote a brand of rum that even carries the name of a famous pirate, the product in question, rum, is presented as desirable by placing it firmly in the context of a pirate life. A pirate life becomes the means and backbone of a marketing strategy to make something desirable, which means that the pirate life has to be conceived as desirable in the first place.

Stanley further shows that the set up of pirate fiction is highly idealised and negative aspects are simply missing:

> In this magic land, simply to believe in fairies, as *Peter Pan* audiences are urged to do, can rescue people from any danger. […] Gender and race discrimination are absent, as is hardship. The jolly rogue who staggers to his next puncheon of rum cannot be a desperate social exile with severe alcohol addiction and a damaged liver. Long John Silver with his wooden leg, and every archetypical eye-patched ruffian, are only indulging in a fancy dress charade, not human beings with occupational injuries […] And pirates never grow old. (4-5)

Negative aspects of the pirate life, such as being an outcast or alcohol addict are seen in a positive light. Even bodily mutilation such as the loss of limbs or eyes are dismissed as part of the cliché, thus turning serious injury into a burlesque. What is more, it is exactly these elements which serve as defining elements of the pirate (expulsion of society, alcohol consumption, and

bodily mutilation). The injuries which have caused these severe losses are insignificant for the understanding of a pirate.

The same strategy of white-washing accounts for moral questions: "Their palm-fringed island is full of wooden casks splitting over with Spanish doubloons, pieces of eights and shining ducats. No one asks about the human cost of acquiring this plunder or discuss how it can be divided without abuse of power." (Stanley, 5) Pirates are supposed to indulge in riches and find buried treasures and fill their treasure troves. As pointed out above, the sailors and passengers those goods were stolen from are too readily sacrificed to maintain this utopian fiction.

Pirate fiction allows the audience to dream, to dream of a life free of obligations and re-strictions. Stanley observes further:

> The pirate in twentieth-century western thinking stands for someone exciting who profitably and con-fidently operates outside society. He is not a pillar, or even the obedient servant, of any community – he pillages communities rather than contributes to them, disregarding their laws and setting up his own. Fantasy piracy is committed on the high seas, out of sight of land and under the jurisdiction of no nation. Anything is possible because nothing requires permission: no one controls the pirate's morality. […] The pirate daringly appropriates the fabulous booty more law-abiding fools only dream of. (5)

What seems to be alluring are the disregard of social conduct, the freedom not to work, and the absence of control. The pirate life seems utopian because all restrictions of society are suddenly wiped out, leaving room for every thinkable unmoral behaviour, from sexual free-dom to debauchery, from laziness to break of social-cultural norms. Yet, this conception can only be seen as utopian when seen heavily loop-sided. Stanley continues:

> This legendary sort of piracy has a similar eroticised thrill as that of Westerns, but to find it exciting we have to make ourselves blind to the brutality and sexist and racist attitudes that accompanied it. We have to ignore the viciousness the pirates showed towards captives from other ships, to people ashore whose services they needed and each other. (6)

This idealised notion of piracy is only possible when consciously ignoring the fact what pir-acy basically is: theft, ambush, murder. The way I see it, piracy should not be perceived as piracy itself, but as a vehicle to represent a longing for freedom. The objective of escapism

can only function when one does indeed believe that "money grows on trees" in the exotic backdrop of "palmed-fringed islands." (Stanley, 5)

This depiction of ostensibly endless freedom is of huge appeal to audiences. Martin Fradley points out: "As the voluminous popular literature on pirate life suggests, the largely fantasized milieu of pirate vessels and the liminal world of life at sea resonates with displaced longing for liberation from the confines of the normative." (301) In this reading, the piratical societies become ideal societies which lack the restrains of normative societies. Jones observes:

> Golden Age pirates work well as proxies for consumers of popular cultures because they operate not only as *antagonists* to the modern state, but as *alternatives* to the modern state. The piratical lifestyle is one characterized by freedom and it is unsurprising that, as a result, a pirate's life would appeal to anyone feeling the burdens and constraints of modern society. This is especially important because the choice to become a pirate was radically different from becoming a charlatan or swindler; rather, opting into piracy was a declaration against all of human society, a clear sign that an individual had decided to abandon it and was consequently cast as a villain of all nations. (28)

Pirates can be used as carrier of utopian notions of freedom because the pirate operates outside of society. His position as *hostis humani generis* positions him outside of society itself, an appealing aspect to everyone who may dread the restrictions of socio-cultural norms prescribed by society; turning pirate allows them to fight society itself. Fictional portrayals thus tend to idealise piratical activity to emphasise the utopian aspect.

## Pirate Fiction as Utopian Fiction: The Insulated Perfect Society or Are Some Pirates More Equal than Others?

Utopia is one of the few literary genres to start out with one definite text of origin, namely Thomas More's eponymous *Utopia*, written in 1510. But when using the word "utopia," most speakers seldom refer to the literary genre. It is more likely that they refer to an ideal state of being, a Golden Age which is far away and out of reach. Sebastian Mitchell observes:

> The Ngram chart of the frequency of occurrence of 'utopia' in books shows a sharp increase in its use from the 1950s until the turn of this century with some trailing off thereafter. Anecdotal evidence suggests that 'utopia' remains in common parlance either as a wished- for state, or the suggestion of a superlative in a given institution, service or object, though sometimes the term's very familiarity means it is little more than a vaguely attractive label. Hence 'utopia' can be found on such fond things as a

seaside villa and a lovingly restored campervan, but it is also the name of a range of bathroom furniture, a gardendesign firm, a hairdressing salon, the title for a collection of electronic music, and a standard model of fluted wine glass (with the word 'Utopia' etched onto the foot). (Mitchell, 1)

"Utopia" refers to everything perfect and desirable which makes for the popularity of the term in marketing strategies. "Utopia" is often used to describe an ideal state of being, a Golden Age which is far away and out of reach. I think that in this case this is the Golden Age of Piracy. The utopian description does not refer to the period of maritime history, but a Golden Age that is just as insubstantial and paradisical like any other Golden Age ever evoked. The way I see it, many references to the Golden Age of Piracy, especially those in fictional representations, must be considered utopian.

What is more, it is striking that pirate imagery as well as the term "utopia" have been discovered and made useful for marketing strategies alike. This illustrates that both pirate imagery and the term "utopia" have an alluring function and aspect in popular culture and the fact that both have their share in advertisement implies a convergence of the first with the latter. In other words, pirate imagery and "utopia" are used to make products more desirable and attractive for the potential customer, which implies that both carry the same idealised connotations marketing managers draw upon. Advertisement can be considered the embodiment of utopian craving. Utopia is here the desirable objective the customer is made compelled to buy. Frederic Jameson observes:

Ernst Bloch's luminous recovery of The Utopian impulses at work in that most degraded of all mass cultural texts, advertising slogans – visions of eternal life, of the transfigured body, of preternatural sexual gratification – may serve as the model for an analysis of the dependence of the crudest form of manipulation on the oldest Utopian longings of mankind. (Bloch in Jameson, Bloch, Ernst. *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. Suhrkamp, 1959, pp. 395-409) (287)

I will show in the following paragraphs that in the case of pirate fiction these cravings are rebellion and freedom.

Pirate fiction is not only tied to the "utopia" as a concept, but also to its implementation in literature. More's eponymous *Utopia* features a narrator who explains that he has visited an island that has established, in his eyes, a perfect society. This new society stands in

stark contrast with the by far less societies he is familiar with. The fact that the ideal society is located on an island demonstrates that the perfect society is isolated from the other, spoiled and rotten societies that surround it. Moreover, it is a faraway country and (almost) out of reach. Christopher Ferns observes in his study *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature* that utopias are located

> almost invariably remote or well insulated from the actual world to which it proposes an alternative: More and Bacon are only two of the many writers who place their utopias on islands; Tomasso Campanella's City of the Sun [sic, no cursive in original] is rendered impregnable by its sevenfold walls; while more recent writers have set their fictions in the future, on other planets, or both. (2)

Another example was written one hundred years after More's text in 1619 by Johann Valentin Andreae, who is famous for his authorship of *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz Anno 1459* (*The Chemical Wedding*, 1616).[19] His utopian text *Reipublicae Christianopolitanae descriptio* is modeled after More's text, but takes a religious approach by presenting a perfect Christian society. Here, too, the perfect society is established on an island. Francis Bacon also places his ideal society on an island; his text *Nova Atlantis* (1627) revokes the city of Greek myth that sank into the sea. Jonathan Swift takes a parodistic approach in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by letting his main character explore more and more grotesque societies on islands, only to end up in an ideal, utopian society, in which horses and humans have swapped places, thus removing human thinking all together from a utopian concept by making horses the agents of his utopian vision.

The piratical examples discussed here are threefold utopias. The pirate society is always insular too, it is either placed on a ship or an island, but it is in any case separated from the surrounding societies. This isolation allows for an own set of socio-cultural norms, new laws, and a new form of government. Second, like many of the examples presented above,

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19 For Bruce Dickinson's concept album *The Chemical Wedding* (1998) inspired by the manifesto and the (art)work of William Blake, see Hagen, Katharina. "'If you want to learn the secrets, close your eyes': Bruce Dickinson's "Gates of Urizen" as a Contrary Version of *The [First] Book of Urizen*."

they are frequently depicted as contrary mirrors of the (British) society. Thirdly, they are meant to be ideal societies in which injustice and unhappiness do not exist.

These ideal societies depicted in canonical utopian novels and narratives are inhabited by ideal citizens which often appear uniform. In other words, they are flat characters. Ferns observes: "As in any fiction, utopian and otherwise, there are inherent problems in presenting characters who are merely ideals. Too often the reader's experience of utopian fiction is akin to that of reading a novel whose entire cast is composed of Dickensian heroines." (4) A utopian island populated by pirates should thus be populated by "bloodless and one-dimensional" (4) characters. Pirate fiction, however, constantly undermines this utopian notion and puts on open display the criminal nature of the inhabitants of this utopian island. The pirate motif is caught in between the flat characters common to utopian fiction and the depiction of (charming) criminals. I argue that this combination of two rather contradictory factors (ideal citizens versus criminals and flat characters versus the historical / popular / literary discourses of the ambiguous pirate) makes for a fragmentary motif. The pirate motif, as depicted in present-day fiction, is fragmentary in the meaning that it consists of elements that are contradictory to each other.

While pirate fiction has been interpreted in the context of utopia, historical pirate societies too have repeatedly been identified as utopias (cf. Bey / Wilson, Leeson, Rediker) or described as "utopian experiment," (Rediker, 15) but these approaches reinterpret maritime history in a philosophical approach, or, in the case of Peter Leeson, as a model to be implemented in nowadays companies. I, however, argue strictly from the position of a literary theorist and regard utopia as a literary genre. I investigate how pirate fiction complies with and breaks with the literary tradition of the genre of utopia as presenting an ideal non-existing society and thus do not delve any further into the accuracy of interpreting maritime history as utopian constructs. I am solely interested in how far the fictional representation of pirates takes on the

form of utopian narratives by idealising pirate life as a better version of social structures and a way of life that leads to greater happiness. This utopia always hinges, although unmentioned, on the idea of not having to earn one's living, to do as one pleases, and cruising the Caribbean in an endless holiday. In other words, the pirate life is a paradisical state in which social requirements (such as having a job) social norms (such as behaving in a way that is considered appropriate), and morals (such as the prohibition of theft) are simply not existing. Thus, in my approach, the utopian character of pirate fiction ties it firmly to the idea of escapism. I am interested in why criminals, individuals who hurt others, be it by stealing their goods or even physical injury, can be considered representatives of present-day utopian ideals.

I will show that modern-day fiction often distances itself from the supposed ideal piratical society and rather depicts rotten, unjust societies that are not much of an improvement in comparison to the normative, (hegemonic, and colonial) societies. Moreover, the concept of degenerated colonial society and utopian piratical society is binary and relies on the antagonistic oppositionality of colonial society and pirate society. I show that many examples of contemporary pirate narratives (de)construct this binary structure. The fact that maritime history may be regarded as utopian is thus not relevant any more for present-day fictional representations of pirates. I argue that the epoch of pirate fiction I am to discuss in this thesis even adds a large question mark to the utopian aspect ascribed to the popular understanding of pirates. I illustrate how present-day pirate fiction meanders in between utopia and dystopia at the same time. Piratical societies may appear equal in their outward appearances, but to borrow George Orwell's famous quote (in whose novels egalitarianism leads clearly to a dystopian vision as demonstrated in *1984* (1948) and *Animal Farm* (1945)), some pirates are more equal than others.

Heroes, Villains, and Pirate Charming

Considering the obvious clash between brutal murderers ransacking ships and heroic rebels building up a democracy, it may seem logical that the pirate motif is mostly divided into good pirates and evil pirates, implying that the heroic pirates can build a democracy whereas the black sheep raid ships. This is of course not true; fictional pirates must always be both, founders of democracies and robberers. Yet this distinction within the motif largely helps to keep up the ambiguity of pirates and makes the motif even more fragmentary. Pfister distinguishes between "heroische Freibeuter" and "ruchloser Pirat." (cf. "Piraten-Pop-Kultur, Wandel und Bedeutung eines kulturellen Piratenbildes") In fact, ambivalence is a strong factor defining the dualistic nature of the pirate motif – the pirate motif can encompass the role of the hero and villain alike, even in the same narrative. Susanne Zhanial observes that the embodiment of the pirate motif is mostly a mixture of both, meaning that both categories, hero and villain, constantly overlap:

> Despite the possibility of glorifying the outlaw, the pirate protagonists of fiction and film cannot be definitely inscribed in either of the two categories. The piratical hero is never completely freed of all the motif's darker traits, which surface briefly at particular moments of the story, and similarly, there are always attributes or deeds that allow the reader or viewer to (secretly) admire even the most villainous pirate cutthroats. Exactly this ambiguity […] is the source of our ongoing fascination with the motif. (*Postmodern*, 280)

She states that while pirate heroes always have a threatening side, pirate villains also always demand admiration or sympathy. However, as the following analyses will show, the constitution of the pirate motif is even more complex as it is often contradictory in itself. Next to contradictory constitutional elements, the pirate motif may be subject to change; it may be reliant on subjective interpretations or even the character constellation of the narrative. Ambiguity and changing interpretations are a central aspect of the pirate motif.

One of these ambiguities is the oscillation between dangerous and charming lover. Pirates are objects of idealisation in many aspects, be it a roguish adventurer or a love interest. (cf. e.g. Campbell 12-17, Lutz 23-40, Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 62) Pirates are also often represented

as objects of sexual desire, male and female pirates alike. Even a text as early as the *General History* is already subject to this development. The interpretation as to why the pirate is a highly sexualised object differs. On the one hand, Turley interprets the *General History* as a text which emphasises the pirate as hypermasculine, but also as a sodomite. He thus puts strong emphasis on a homosexual reading. (cf. *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash*) Carolyn Eastman, on the other hand, claims that the *General History* is a precursor of the *Playboy*, a book feeding male desires and sexual fantasies. Cross-dressing female pirates thus become exotic pin-up girls spiced with Otherness and a hint of danger. (cf. "Masculinity and Sexuality in Illustrated Print Portrayals") In pirate fiction, the pirate is often used as a fetish. In case of the male pirate, however, depictions are usually much more formulaic and less open to debate than in case of cross-dressing female pirates. In case of the male pirate, the most structural form of this fetishisation as an exotic but dangerous lover manifests in a the subgenre of pirate fiction that belongs to erotic fiction, driven by structural plot-lines, flat characters, and open depiction of sexual encounters: the Pirate Romance. Yet, a clash of interests between genre conventions and reader expectation leads to a decline of the Pirate Romance in present-day culture. The nature of the pirate as aggressive, dominant male is at odds with modern-day conceptions of feminism and reader's expectations. (cf. Harris, Racheal, "Really Romantic? Pirates in Romance Fiction") Present-day approaches, as I will show, often allow the female protagonist to model her pirate after her desires, removing the threatening and dangerous element all together. This demonstrates further that the pirate motif has disintegrated into more or less meaningless fragments, more apt for decoration than driving a plot-line in present-day fiction. The robber and murderer has suddenly become an ideal lover or an ideal performance aspired by the male lead. In these cases, the pirate is an eroticised performative act.

The motif-history of cross-dressing female pirates, however, is subject to much more variance and controversial viewpoints. The idea of (cross-dressing) women who become pir-

ates has mesmerised the masses. Ganser points out: "Ever since Captain Johnson had made popular the lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read in his *General History*, female seafaring and piracy were themes in print and on the stage as well as in oral culture." (Ganser, *Crisis*, 149) I argue that characters like Elizabeth Swann, Angelica Blackbeard (*Pirates of the Caribbean)*, and Nenna (*Crossbones*) prove that this topos is still very much en vogue today, although these present-day examples do not perform as men. Only two women are presented as cross-dressers: Bonny and Read. Bonny and Read may be regarded as the most famous historical female pirates. Their biographies were made popular in Captain Johnson's *General History*. This corpus includes a present-day re-telling of these biographies. Even the most famous historical pirates have been incorporated into present-day fiction, prolonging the fascination with female pirates. Yet, the popularity of cross-dressing women in fiction peaks at a specific epoch. Dugaw points out in a new preface she has written in 1996 for her study *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry 1650-1850* that depictions of cross-dressing female sailors, next to female soldiers, called female warriors, were highly popular from the 17th to the 19th century: "This transvestite heroine […] flourished from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age, her story appearing in plays, poems, life histories, and songs that were known to a wide range of people, especially people of the lower classes." (*Female Warrior*, xi) Despite this firm grip on literary productions, this development does not solely point towards feminism and liberation. The depiction of cross-dressing pirates oscillated between self-empowerment and fetishism of the exotic female. Julie Wheelwright interprets the phenomenon in a positive light. Although she observes that the transgressive behaviour of Bonny and Read is weakened as Captain Johnson places them into romance plots ("Tars," 183) and that cross-dressing only touched a minority and failed to claim equality of all women with all men (*Amazons*, 11), she argues that the representation of cross-dressing women nevertheless offered an alternative representation of gender roles and challenged gender prescriptions (*Amazons*, 13-14). Stanley, however,

interprets the representation of female pirates more negatively. While the representation of queer femininity, meaning cross-dressing and leaving behind what might be considered appropriate female behaviour, exchanging the kitchen herd for a ship and the casserole for a sword, still might have an inspiring effect on female readers, Stanley reduces the aspect of cross-dressing and living a male gender role to mere imitation. (45) Ganser points out on the example of Maturin Murray Ballou's *Fanny Campbell* that female empowerment in piracy may be temporary and thus reversible:

> Yet while the patriotic woman of the 19th century, as I am arguing in my reading of *Fanny Campbell*, enjoys recalling her adventurous, revolutionary past, she accepts that the times have changed and a new model of femininity is the order of the day. The former revolutionary heroine, a patriotic female pirate, is being domesticated in such popular tales in order to make palpable to its plethora of female readers a more passive image of womanhood and to girdle the emergent feminism of the 1840s (*Crisis*, 116)

While the heroine cherishes her memories of her past as a warrior, she readily accepts that she should embrace another form, a more socially acceptable form, of femininity.

The development of the pirate motif shows that it is subject to an increasing tendency to fragmentation and instrumentalisation. Caribbean history becomes less and less important and serves as a colourful backdrop at best. At the centre of the depiction of pirates are idea(l)s of the respective epoch which are changed accordingly. Artists only re-use those elements of the motif which serve their respective purpose, be it comedy as for Hook and the pirates of Penzance, explicit sexual depictions functioning as pornographic material or a pedagogical approach, showing that women make for better housewives than captains. As a consequence, the motif is shattered into many splitters which can be used as seen fit.

## State of the Art

Pirate research mostly follows three directives: mapping motif history, demonstrating instrumentalisation for specific purposes, and structuralist approaches. The history of the pirate motif has been mapped until the 20th century. The pirate motif has been subject to instrumental-

isation in varying ways, meaning that pirate fiction is often used as a carrier for certain ideas. The texts are often used to reflect on certain issues and the presentation of the pirate motif is changed accordingly. These ideas range from politic usage to gendered approaches. The pirate motif is also subject to an increasing fragmentation into what might be termed postmodern, inviting approaches dealing with binaries, intertextuality, instability, metafiction, and discursive approaches.

Many studies have traced the motif history over the course of the centuries. Antonio Sanna's essay collection *Pirates in History and Popular Culture* illuminates the subject matter from different angles, covering different epochs and media, as well as fictional portrayals and fictional narratives. Irmtraud Hnilica's and Marcel Lepper's essay collection *Populäre Piraten – Vermessung eines Feldes* covers a even wider span of topics, covering all forms of piracy, including copyright infringement and bio-piracy. Pfister traces the motif history in his article "'Don't Eat Me, I'm a Mighty Pirate' Das Piratenbild in Videospielen" until the present-day embodiment in computer games. In his study *Treasure Neverland: Imaginary and Real Pirates*, Neil Rennie traces how the biographies as presented in the *General History* have been retold, adapted, and most of all, changed. The issues of cross-dressing female pirates have been discussed by Julie Wheelwright in "Tars, tarts, and swashbucklers" and Jo Stanley in *Bold in Her Breeches*.

Turley has investigated the pirate motif in the $18^{th}$ century. As mentioned above, in his study *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash* he focuses on a gendered approach. In a close reading of the *General History*, he follows a two-end approach: He shows that the pirate is depicted as both hypermasculine brute and a sodomite at the same time. He demonstrates that even the text that is considered the most important source on piratical biographies already others the male pirate. The depiction of queer pirates makes them even more exotic. Eastman's "Masculinity and Sexuality in Illustrated Print Portrayals," however argues that the *General His-*

*tory* is meant to feed male desire. In her reading, the exotic element is not meant to other the pirate and make him more abject, but to entice a male bourgeois readership. Both approaches show, however, that the *General Fiction* can be read as a gendered text that was coloured in a certain way to entertain the reader. Pirate fiction is subjected to a certain functionality.

The nineteenth century is covered by several different approaches. Grace Moore's compilation *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swinderls* is a collection of essays covering the depiction of pirates in fiction of the respective period. These essays mostly focus on the milestones of pirate fiction that stem from the nineteenth century, texts that would leave a lasting impact on the pirate motif, namely Lord Byron's *The Corsair*, James Matthew Barrie's Peter Pan plays, and, most importantly, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

Nina Gerassi-Navarro focuses in *Pirate Novels: Fictions of Nation Building in Spanish America* on pirates in Spanish American texts of the 19th century. She shows how the pirate motif in historical novels negotiates questions of nation-building of Spanish America. Spanish-American writers tried to reconstruct their past in retrospective. Gerassi-Navarro shows how the ambivalence of the pirate motif was used to discuss issues of nationality: "from hero, to dangerous enemy, to a lost American roaming the seas for an identity, the pirate was constantly being resignified [sic] as Spanish Americans continued to imagine their past" (187). In an attempt to construct a unified past, the pirate becomes ground for discussion of nationhood and identity.

Ganser's study follows a similar vein. In *Crisis and Legitimacy in Atlantic American Narratives of Piracy* she shows how piratical narratives may provoke reflection on the future of American identity. In an attempt to (re)create an American past "the evocation of the American Revolution as well as her maritime strength in commerce and war was a standard tool, especially in the historical romance, to cement heroic narratives of freedom-fighting Americ-

ans and to activate, rejuvenate, and actualize a shared memory" (128), so"[i]n this context, it is perhaps no surprise that the pirate was nationalized and re-signified as a figure of popular identification, given his/her symbolic history of profiteering, self-stylization, and independence." (129) Still "the pirate as a figure of liberty is double-edged, evoking the foundational crisis of legality at the beginning of colonial emancipation as well as actual threats by (less romantic) pirates who were on the rise again after the War of 1812." (129) The pirate fiction serves as backdrop to re-enact the American Revolutionary War, instrumentalising the pirate into the freedom-fighter per se and a national idol. Steinhoff argues that the same applies to *Pirates of the Caribbean*. In *(De)Constructing Boundaries s*he observes that "*Pirates of the Caribbean*, although not set in the geographical space of what later became the United States, manages to convey a strong feeling of Americanness." (*Buccaneers* 109)

As one might imagine, pirate myth and lore adds largely to the mystification of the Caribbean in turn. Piracy is a fundamental element of Caribbean past and identity. In his *The Repeating Island*, Antonio Benítez-Rojo observes that this intertwining of piratical past and Caribbean identity has been adapted to literature, such as a depiction which features "the Caribbean Self, intending to mystify and at the same time transcend symbolically its natural-unnatural genesis, that is […] to speak of its Caribbean Otherness, an Otherness deriving from the violence of conquest, colonization, slavery, piracy." (210) In "'Whether Beast or Human': The Cultural Legacies of Dread, Locks, and Dystopia" Kevin Frank discusses how dreadlocks are perceived to be representative of the Caribbean culture and how this stereotype was deployed among others in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series. Erin Mackie shows the relation between piracy, maroons and Jamaican youth gang delinquency in "Welcome the Outlaw: Pirates, Maroons and Caribbean Counter Cultures." Ganser further elaborates on the role of pirate narratives in the justification of colonial politics in "The Coastal Figuration of the Caribbean Pirate."

Schillings investigates the pirate motif on an abstract level. In *Enemies of All Humankind, Fictions of Legitimate Violence* she shows how the narrative of *hostis humani generis,* a legal construction which defines criminals who are in enmity to all nations, can be translated to non-pirate contexts. She thus applies the concept on novels of American literature which do not feature pirates, such as Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* (1841) and Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940).

Pirate research focusing on present-day pirate fiction mostly focuses on the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series using structuralist approaches. Aleta-Amirée von Holzen has analysed the structuralist forms of piratical hero and piratical villain in the adventure novel and film. (cf. *Abenteuerkonzepte im Piratenfilm*. (2007)). Eugen Pfister defines in his article "Piraten – Pop – Kultur, Wandel und Bedeutung eines kulturellen Piratenbildes" two master narratives, that of the "heroischem Freibeueter" and the "ruchlosem Piraten." Steinhoff shows how the aspects of queerness, crossing boundaries and (de)construction inform the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series. (cf. *(De)Constructing Boundaries*). Zhanial traces the pirate motif back to the forerunners in British literature and shows how it was adapted for the Disney franchise which she defines as postmodern films. She thus explains how the pirate motif has changed when translated from British literature to postmodern cinema which is coined by disruption, self-referentiality, and instability. (cf. *Postmodern Pirates* and "'Take What You Can...': Disney's Jack Sparrow and His Indebtedness to the Pirate Genre"). Steinhoff has done a similar analysis under a gendered lens; she has compared the portrayal of the female protagonist Swann to the portrayal of female protagonists in other Hollywood blockbusters in her article "Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and the Pirate as Mobile Signifier in *Captain Blood*, *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*." In her articles "Piraten im Hollywoodkino: Genre, Gender und Sexualität in *Pirates of the Caribbean* I-IV" and "Queer Personalities, Heteronormativity and Piracy in *Pirates of the* Caribbean," she continues her analysis under a

gendered lens, enhancing the focus to male and queer gender roles. Fradley investigates in "Why Doesn't your Compass Work? *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Fantasy Blockbusters, and Contemporary Queer Theory" the portrayal of Sparrow in relation to queer theory, meaning that he sees Sparrow as "the very personification of queer theory." (310) Irmtraud Hnilica argues in "Vom *Out-Law* zum *In-Law*: Piraterie, Recht und Familie in *Pirates of the Caribbean*" that family bonds and piracy are depicted as interrelated in the film series. Zhanial offers a short overview on the impact of the postmodern character of *Pirates of the Carribbean* on subsequent pirate TV series and films in her last chapter of her study *Postmodern Pirates*. She also points out how they rework the pirate motif she has traced in British literature.

Pirate research is heavily influenced by Foucaultian thought. Ganser points out how the Foucaultian two-sided discourse, meaning the double-edged function of gallow's speeches which served to justify the punishment and to elevate the criminal to glorious rebellion at the same time, applies to the "execution sermon" (*Crisis*, 94) in New Puritan England. (*Crisis*, 94) But even more prominently is the concept of heterotopia. Fictional piratical societies have been repeatedly identified as Foucaultian heterotopias. Ganser applies Foucault's final conclusion that the ship epitomizes heterotopia to fictional representations of the pirate ship in her article "The Pirate Ship as a Black Atlantic Heterotopia: Michel Maxwell Philip's *Emmanuel Appadocca*" and in her study *Crisis and Legitimacy in Atlantic American Narratives of Piracy*. Steinhoff points out in *(De)Constructing Boundaries* that the piratical society, especially the city of Tortuga, as depicted in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, shows characteristics of a heterotopia. Eva Michely, in turn, demonstrates in "'Of Other Bodies': An Analysis of of Heterotopic Love and Kinship in *Crossbones* (2014)" that the piratical society located on the fictional island Santa Campana in the TV series *Crossbones* establishes alternative, heterotopic ways to structure a society, especially in the context of family bonds.

**Position of this Thesis within Pirate Research**

I will combine the last two mentioned developments of research focused on recent pirate fiction by reading the fiction following *Pirates of the Caribbean*, which must be considered the beginning of a new epoch of pirate fiction, with a strong focus on Foucaultian thought. I will continue the existing line of motif history by investigating the most recent development and epoch of pirate fiction. I continue the structuralist approaches by analysing the fragmentary and inconsistent nature of the pirate motif in present-day pirate fiction. By focusing on the utopian character, I continue research that has analysed instrumentalisation of pirate fiction in general and escapist purposes in particular. I thus cover all the three objectives of pirate research I have defined above.

I will exclude two theoretical approaches from my study. As I focus on how pirate fiction serves escapist purposes and is thus turned into an idealised utopia, which more resembles a better, alternative universe than a glorious past of the respective nation, I refrain from pursuing approaches that interpret pirate fiction as a strategy to reconstruct a national past. As I focus on the pirate motif only, I further refrain from using Turley's concept the "piratical subject," which combines the discourses of history and fiction. This thesis deals with fiction only.

I also narrow down the fictional presentations of pirates. I exclude the subgenre of Pirate Romance. Next to the aforementioned decline in present-day culture of the Pirate Romance, it is also ruled by a formulaic structure, making use of flat characters, which is more subjected to the genre of (pornographic) romantic literature than the pirate motif. The characters of the Pirate Romance thus cannot shed further light on my subject matter. I also focus exclusively on the idealised pirate. I do not say "good" pirate because some characters are indeed "good" and "bad," such as Edward Teach / Blackbeard / The Commodore in *Crossbones*. But, as I will explain later, I do not delve further into the depiction of pirate villains, such as Blackbeard in *Pirates of the Caribbean – On Stranger Tides* (2011).

**The "Post-Sparrow" Embodiment of the Pirate Motif**

The pirate motif is a vehicle and carrier of many ideals. Especially present-day pirate fiction which follows the wake of a rebirth of the pirate genre, puts strong emphasis on utopian and idealising elements of the pirate motif but questions and often destroys them in the same breath. I consider the first instalment of the Blockbuster series as starting point of a new wave of pirate fiction. I thus do not see the Disney film as parent to the subsequent narratives and instead of looking for parallels to an alleged master text, I investigate every text in its own right. *Pirates of the Caribbean* is not more prominent or more important than any other text in this corpus.

As mentioned above, I analyse different media and different formats, such as a film series, a TV series, a novel series, stand-alone novels, a non-fiction book, and a Jane Austen-variation. I am interested in the glorification of the pirate and the use of pirate fiction to still the needs of contemporary audiences. Subject to my analysis are solely those depictions of pirates which either manifest or destroy the notion of escapist utopia. I exclude children's literature because the different target audience asks for a depiction of rather cute, child-friendly pirates, which would whitewash the *tertium comparationis* to the other, adult-targeted texts. I analyse the NBC series *Crossbones* (2014) depicting an insular Golden Age pirate society reigned by Blackbeard; Robert Kurson's non-fiction account *Pirate Hunters* (2015) featuring two deep sea divers and their search for the wreck of a pirate ship; Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*-series; James Nelson's novelisation of the biographies of John Rackham, Anne Bonny, and Mary Read as found in the *General History* with the title *The Only Life that Matters* (2004), Mark Keating's British novel series *The Pirate Devlin* (2010 - ) centred on the eponymous main character; Daniel Handler's stand-alone novel *We Are Pirates* (2015) set in the modern day US and depicting a group of people of varying backgrounds who try to enact

pirates in the present-day era; and Kara Louise's self-explanatory *Pirates and Prejudice, a Pride and Prejudice Variation* (2013).

I mostly work with theories and concepts such as narratology and intertextuality that apply to written texts and filmic products alike, which allow me a comparative approach to works encompassing different media as well as different national cultures, namely British and American. The only difference in approach concerning mediality are the analytical methods, which are close reading and film analysis respectively, but the overarching research questions "How is the pirate motif constructed in present-day fiction?" and "How is it instrumentalised?" remain the same. I hypothesise that the pirate motif as found in the examples presented above is set together by fragmentary or illogical components which can be used as seen fit. They can be combined arbitrarily. My approach is thus neither strictly structural or poststructural, as I see the pirate motif as neither binary nor ambivalent, but as incomplete and lacking a definite shape. It is so fractured that its only defining element can be summed up with Blake's quote "I must create a system or be enslaved by another mans."

I use the following terminology: I use Foucault's definition for discourse as he coined it in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: "the term discourse can be defined as group of statements that belong to a single system of formation[.]" (107) The system of formation is here everything that is "piratical" in some way, maritime history, cultural understanding of piracy, pirate fiction or a combination of two of the mentioned aspects or even all three of them. I mostly focus on the discourse as found in pirate fiction. I define "fiction" as a narrative structure that is not a part of (maritime) history or the realm we live in and "history" as what is recorded in archives and documents as past events and what is accepted in the academic discipline of "history." I use "realism" in reference to everything that is not fictional or fiction that is not based in the supernatural, as opposed to the literary genre realism. I refer to "criminal" as a person who does not only break the law, but also harms others. Pirates are thieves and can

also me murderers and rapists. I use the term "motif" as it is used in the German academic tradition as defined in the *Reallexikon der Deutschen Literaturwissenschaft: Neubearbeitung des Reallexikons der deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (2010) "Kleinste selbständige Inhalts-Einheit oder tradierbares intertextuelles Element eines literarischen Werkes." (638) I use "performative" to describe a way of behaviour that is coined by culture and upbringing and not of natural descent, behaviour we copy and imitate as learned from others.

This study aims at showing how functional elements, such as escapism, can overrule artistic elements, such as the inner logic of a narrative. To answer my research questions questions, I will examine some of the constituent elements of the pirate motif, such as the legal term *hostis humani generis*, piratical "democ(k)racy" (a mock democracy as well as mockery of democracy, my invention) and piratical freedom. Isolating these elements and investigating their respective form in earlier pirate fiction exemplarily allows me to narrow the pirate motif down to the obligatory elements of the contemporary pirate motif. Many of these constituent elements comply with Foucaultian concepts, such as the two-sided discourse of the criminal, the antagonism and working together of power/resistance, or heterotopia. These theoretical concepts prove useful to analyse a motif as fragmentary and artificial as the pirate motif. Foucault's theories encompass, among others, two major topics, that of resistance against normative cultural prescriptions and the construction of a subject matter via discourse. Pirate fiction is such a discourse. A subject matter is constructed by the way we talk about it, by the way it is depicted and narrated. Pirate fiction translates to the construction of resistance against normative prescriptive society via literature, via a discursive medium.

I thus devote my first chapter, "Birth of the Pirate: A Foucaultian Theory on Pirate Fiction," to Foucaultian concepts and their application to analyse the pirate motif. In doing, so I set up a working definition for the pirate. As shown above, defining the pirate is difficult and the subject matter often changes depending on the definition used. In a first step, I will trace

the pirate motif and define it. In a second step, I give a very short overview on utopia as a literary genre and how it can shed further light on the instrumentalisation of the pirate motif as found in present-day fiction.

In the following chapters, I will analyse four different aspects, the idealisation of *hostis humani generis*, the illusionary character of the piratical society, the male pirate as gender ideal performed by both sexes, and the intertextual character of pirate narratives.

In the chapter "The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal, *Hostis Humani Generis*, and the Pirate-Hero," I analyse the aforementioned *Pirates of the Caribbean* series and the British novel series *The Pirate Devlin*. I show how the ambivalent character of a pirate is created. A pirate must be appealing to an audience but maintain enough aspects of cruelty and / or egoism to be recognised as a criminal at the same time. I demonstrate how these contrary elements are paired to create a character that finds acceptance as a plausible character, and, in the case of Sparrow, manages to win great popularity, both in the meaning of being known and being loved. I further investigate how the construction of this hero is linked to aspects of masculinities and, in the case of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, is reliant on paratextual elements and discourses such as Johnny Depp's double role as an actor and a rock musician.

"'Where there is Power, there is Resistance': Heterotopia, Equality, and 'Democ(k)racy'" focuses on the depiction of piratical societies. Analysing the NBC series *Crossbones*, Daniel Handler's *We Are Pirates*, and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, I shed further light on how the depiction of piratical communities negotiates the paradox of utopian ideals lived out by cut-throat criminals. I further discuss how the depiction of the British society, i.e. the British-Jamaican attempt at "Britishness," is paramount to constructing and colouring the fictional piratical society as well as in how far pirate fiction can serve as a manual to model a new and better mini-society.

I devote one chapter to the depiction of cross-dressing female pirates, "Cross-Dressing Female Pirates on the Examples of Anne Bonny and Mary Read: James Nelson's *The Only Life that Mattered.*" I show how a present-day reincarnation of Bonny and Read discusses issues of identity, performativity, and theatricality. I discuss this text in context of the literary tradition of the jolly sailor bold and the female warrior and show how the present-day text negotiates these concepts and breaks with this part of motif history. The shift from liberation to disillusionment and disorientation marks further the instability underlying contemporary pirate fiction. It also questions the chance for an alternative life style outside of socio-cultural gendered normativity and thus the concept of utopia.

In my last chapter, "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality," I focus on the constructedness of the pirate motif on the textual level. I analyse *Crossbones*, *The Pirate Devlin* series, Robert Kurson's non-fiction text *Pirate Hunters*, Kara Louise's *Pirates and Prejudice, a Pride and Prejudice Variation* and *We Are Pirates* in exemplary fashion to illustrate different forms and uses of intertextuality.[20] This chapter combines the preceding chapters and demonstrates how elements operating on the plot-level are constructed by intertextual means. I show that the pirate motif is heavily reliant on intertextuality, pirate fiction functioning both as hypotext and hypertext. I also analyse how this interplay with other texts is used to construct the pirate motif, or, in turn, how the pirate motif changes other texts. I further focus on metatextuality, showing how pirate fiction constructs itself by talking about pirate fiction.

I aim at providing an overview of what must be considered a new, independent, and the most recent epoch of pirate fiction, the fiction that was created after Disney's first instalment of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, which sparked a new interest in pirates. This is not to say that all fiction following the release of the blockbuster series is influenced by and dependent on the

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20 For analyses of postmodernism in the *Pirates of the Caribbean*-series see Steinhoff, Heike. *Queer Buccaneers: (De)Constructing Boundaries in the PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN Film Series* and Zhanial, Susanne. *Postmodern Pirates, Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean. Zhanial traces the film series to the forerunners of the pirate motif in British fiction, thus offering an extensive intertextual analysis of the film series.

Disney franchise. I rather say that the film must be seen as the starting point of a new epoch. The long pause and disinterest in pirate fiction preceding the release of *Pirates of the Caribbean* firmly separates the most recent narratives from their forerunners in motif history. *Pirates of the Caribbean* did not only spark a new interest in pirates, but also started a new literary epoch, the epoch that is "Post-Sparrow."

## 1.    Birth of the Pirate: A Foucaultian Theory on Pirate Fiction

Foucault devoted several of his studies to what he calls the "birth" of a subject matter: *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), and the lecture *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1978-79). I call my approach "The Birth of the Pirate," as I show that the pirate motif is a theoretical construct that is structured by reader expectations and genre conventions; the pirate is a theoretical construct, a chimera, born to fulfil needs of present-day society.

The pirate motif as found in present-day fiction consists of contradictory or fragmentary constitutional elements. In fact, the definitions and ideas linked to the word "pirate" are already contradictory in themselves, a mixture of (faulty) historical references, stereotypes coined by constant repetition in fiction, such as the almost obligatory presence of parrots and peg-legs, associations to political parties, and the often neglected reference to real life crime, namely present-day maritime violence and copyright infringement. In what I call the "pirate discourse," a criminal becomes a hero; history is falsified; the enemy of all carries an air of coolness; a criminal (of maritime history) is re-interpreted as rebel who presents an alternative lifestyle. I will trace this phenomenon full of contradictions with the help of Foucaultian concepts. I refer soley and exclusively to literary representations of pirates, I am not interested in the popular understanding of pirates and maritime history. Before analysing the primary texts I will present my theoretical framework which I have based on ideas by Foucault. I will show that the pirate discourse is contradictory in itself. Moreover, this framework provides me with a working definition of the pirate motif. After that I give a short overview on the literary genre of utopia and how it is applicable in this context to shed further light on the fragmentary character and functionality of the pirate motif as found in present-day

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21 Blake, William. *Jerusalem*, E 10

fiction.

## 1.1    The 'Criminal' and *Hostis Humani Generis*

In order to find a working definition of what a "pirate" may be, I will start with a much broader concept, the criminal. Foucault devoted one of his studies, *Discipline and Punish*,[22] to the construction of a 'criminal.' Foucault begins this analysis of the discursive construction of the 'criminal' in medieval times. It is centred around the topoi of torture and capital punishment. Foucault's working definition is grounded in an elaborate contemplation of the execution, which "belongs, even in minor cases, to the rituals by which power is manifested." (Foucault, *Discipline* 47) In this way, the focus lies less on a restoration of justice than on a restoration of power. This Foucaultian definition of 'criminal' thus depends on an antagonistic position towards the acting sovereign whose authority (and power) the 'criminal' has overstepped: "Besides its immediate victim, the crime attacks the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince." (47) Simply put: a 'criminal' is someone who has challenged the power of the sovereign – a clear-cut definition which excludes every aspect of injustice, the victim, etc.

Foucault points out that "the intervention of the sovereign is not, therefore, an arbitration between two adversaries, it is much more, even, than an action to enforce the right of the individual; it is a direct reply to the person who has offended him." (47-48) The sovereign has to defend his superior position and thus punish the 'criminal.' 'Criminal' and prince are caught in and defined solely by a relationship of power: "The public execution […] belongs to

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22 The original title translates to "Surveillance and Punishment" as the French original is called *Surveilleier et Punir*. In addition, I consider this book is a manifesto. At its ending, Foucault calls to French authorities to abolish prisons as he considers incarceration as inhuman. What's more, Foucault's treatise neglects the role of victims of crime and criminal assault on society, marking it all the more as a text aimed at reaching his goal, the abolition of prisons. In the preceding chapters, Foucault focuses on the construction of a 'criminal' throughout history and his respective relation to authorities. He also points out how methods of surveillance and punishment force individuals to adapt to rules given and constantly monitor their own behaviour, as he illustrates on the example of the panopticon, a circular prison which creates the illusion of permanent surveillance with a watchtower in its midst.

a whole series of great rituals in which power is eclipsed and restored" (48) since "its aim is not so much to re-establish a balance as to bring into play […] the dissymmetry between the subject who has dared to violate the law and the all-powerful sovereign who displays his strength." (49) This means that the only purpose of an execution is to prove the positioning of the prince as the one in power.

Foucault's concept of a 'criminal' as presented in his first chapter can be compared to the concept of *hostis humani generis*. *Hostis humani generis,*[23] which translates to the "enemy of mankind" goes back to Cicero's term *communis hostis omnium* (Schillings, *Legitimate Violence* 26) and refers to the ultimate antagonist whose destruction is not only rightful, but also obligatory (Schillings, "Cultural Translation" 296).[24] It does not apply to every criminal, but only to criminals who attack all nations at once, such as pirates. The pirate could be hanged at a yardarm – meaning that the call for immediate destruction deprives him of his right for a trial. This concept is similar to the medieval German 'vogelfrei' – leading to an actual exclusion of society itself. The 'pirate' loses his status as citizen. Cicero's definition of *pirata*, although he terms him *communis hostis omnium* (Schillings, *Legitimate Violence* 26) demonstrates that being the mutual enemy of all equals total exclusion from society:

> Ut, si praedonibus pactum pro capite pretium non attuleris, nulla fraus sit, [...] nam pirata non est ex perduellium numero definitus, sed communis hostis omnium; cum hoc nec fides debet nec ius iurandum esse commune. (Cicero, liber tertius 107)

> So liegt, wenn du ein mit Räubern abgemachtes Kopfgeld nicht beibringst, kein Betrug vor […] Denn ein Seeräuber ist nicht einbegriffen in die Zahl der Kriegsgegner, sondern der gemeinsame Feind aller. Mit ihm darf kein Treueverhältnis und kein Eid gemeinsam sein. (trans. by Hans Gunermann)

You do not have to pay a ransom you have promised to a pirate – a pirate is not a part of society and its rules and thus the rules of society, such as keeping a promise, do not apply to

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23 For a historical tracing of the term and its philosophical implications from the Roman Empire to the Middle-Ages, see Heller-Roazen, Daniel. *The Enemy of All. Piracy and the Law of Nations*. For an application of the concept on literature see Schillings, Sonja. *Enemies of All Humankind, Fictions of Legitimate Violence.*

24 For a philosophical approach on how governmental authorities label and exact power on human life, see Agamben, Gorgio, *Homo Sacer*. As Agamben bases his work on concentration camps of the Nazi regime, I will exclude his works from my study. I do not support a viewpoint that equals piracy with the genocide practised by the Nazi regime.

the pirate. The pirate is positioned outside of civilisation itself.[25] Every sovereign is in an antagonistic position towards him. Pirates are a threat to several civilisations and adversary to several sovereigns – they are in an even more hostile position than the 'criminal.' In sum, *hostis humani generis* is defined by two aspects, immediate execution and hostility to several sovereigns.

Foucault touches upon the concept of *hostis humani generis* twice, but applies it to all criminals. The following passage of Foucault bears strong semblence to the *hostis humani generis* concept, including an almost exact quote of Cicero's *communis hostis omnium*:

> In effect the offence opposes an individual to the entire social body; in order to punish him, society has the right to oppose him in its entirety. It is an unequal struggle: on one side are all the forces, all the power, all the rights. And this is how it should be since the defence [sic] of every individual is involved. Thus a formidable right to punish is established since the offender becomes the **common enemy**. (*Discipline*, 90, emphasis added)

Foucault draws here directly on the concept of *hostis humani generis*, but turns it on its head. The enemy of all becomes a victim, facing "all the forces, all the power, all the rights" in an "unequal struggle." (*Discipline*, 90) Now, the offender becomes the victim; the concept a twisted notion to enact power; defence a weak excuse. Later, he openly refers to the concept:

> The criminal designated as the **enemy of all**, whom it is in the interest of all to track down, falls outside the pact, disqualifies himself as a citizen and emerges, bearing within him as it were, a wild fragment of nature; he appears as a villain, a monster, a madman, perhaps, a sick and, before long 'abnormal' individual." (101, emphasis added)

The criminal does not only leave society, he also becomes a "monster" (Foucault, *Discipline*, 101) to be tracked down. Most of all, he is labelled as 'abnormal.' (Foucault, *Discipline*, 101) The criminal is not only placed outside of society, he is also marked as Other. The 'criminal' is excluded from society, he is deprived of his humanity and turned into a monster. In other words, he is victimised. Foucault changes the common understanding of *hostis humani generis* as an enemy into the depiction of a victim who is turned into a monster that has to be removed from society because it is 'abnormal.' This twist as provided by Foucault proves

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25 For a detailed analysis what "cum hoc nec fides debet nec ius iurandum esse commune" means in Roman society see Heller, Roazen, Daniel. *The Enemy of All. Piracy and the Law of Nations* p. 14-22.

useful for the analysis of pirate fiction, which follows exactly the same pattern. The pirate is defined by enmity to society, but he is usually not depicted as a threat to society, but a charming rogue who is exiled from society and thus constantly has to flee the hangman. Viewers are usually invited to regard this (threat of) capital punishment as unjustified. The depiction of criminality is thus presented in a distorted, or at least unusual way.

The 'criminal' is defined by his seclusion from society and opposition to the sovereign in power. He does not have any rights which require citizenship. He is constructed as something secluded from the rest of humanity, as a monster, as 'abnormal.' He is then turned into a monster that has to be removed from society by execution. In pirate fiction, however, the monster is usually the hangman next to the just as monstrous sovereign who enforces the normative law, and an enemy society that willingly accepts or even asks for the execution of a pirate. The presentation of pirates in fiction mostly complies with Foucault's concept of a 'criminal:' The 'criminal' is a construct meant to designate those as Other who do not comply with the required norm. The link of criminality to harming others is weakened in favour of rebellion against oppressive authorities.

## 1.2. The Two-Sided Discourse of the Pirate

According to Foucault, this white-washing of the 'criminal' can be partly explained with the antagonistic effects gallows speeches and early crime fiction could have on the audience. Foucault explains that gallows speeches are a description of the crime(s) in question a condemned man had to give before his execution: "The rite of the execution was so arranged that the condemned man would himself proclaim his guilt by […] the statements he was no doubt forced to make." (*Discipline*, 65). These gallows speeches can have two different effects, on the one hand they may justify the execution of a criminal, in the meaning that they may serve as confessions, on the other hand they allow for the recipient to identify with the

'criminal' and thus glorify the condemned. Foucault points out that gallows speeches were allowed, published, and developed into text genres to defame the convict and justify capital punishment at the same time. He argues that the intention behind these publications of gallows speeches was that torture and death of a 'criminal' need "posthumous 'proofs'" (*Discipline*, 66) in order to find acceptance among the civilians. Yet,

> the effect, like the use, of this literature was equivocal. The condemned man found himself transformed into a hero by sheer extent of his widely advertised crimes […]. Against the law, against the rich, the powerful, the magistrates, the constabulary or the watch, the tax collectors, he appeared to have waged a struggle with which one all too easily identified. (67)

Foucault asserts that readers identify with the criminal because he represents the fight against authority. The popularity of pirates hinges on the very same effect (cf. Ganser, *Crisis*, 94-95); pirate fiction orchestrates breaking the law as an act of rebellion against suppressive norms and authorities.

This may be all the more true in the case of present-day pirate fiction because we look at maritime violence mostly from a backwards perspective; a present-day reference to "pirates" more often than not excludes real life contemporary maritime violence as found in Somalia. "Piracy" is associated with peg legs, parrots, and a charming rogue. Maritime history is re-interpreted, turning criminals, indeed, just as observed by Foucault in case of the gallows speeches and their respective literary representations, into heroes one might identify with.

Foucault argues that the potential for identification with a criminal can be increased by the fact that a criminal may gain posthumous glory: "A convicted criminal could become after his death a sort of saint, his memory honoured and his grave respected. […] The criminal had been almost entirely transformed into a positive hero." (*Discipline*, 67) Dead criminals from the past lose their threatening character and are so more likely to be seen as shining heroes instead.

Semi-historical reports about pirates, such as the *General History*[26] can thus be seen as

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26 Captain Johnson, Charles. *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724). For further information see my introduction.

two-sided discourses. The *General History* was a tremendous success. (cf. Cordingly VII-VIII) This proves that readers were most likely not only appalled by the criminal deeds and felonies described in the book, but could also find something appealing, something to their liking in it. The half-fictional representations of historical pirates, as found in the *General History*, often oscillate between the depiction of a gruesome villain and a heroic rebel. (cf. Turley 44-61) Ganser points out: "Perhaps, then, Foucault concludes, we should see the literature of crime, which proliferated around the figure of the pirate in Puritan New England, as a two–sided discourse[.]" (Ganser, *Crisis*, 94)

I will shortly present an example of a historical pirate who has become a "sort of saint, his memory honoured and his grave respected," (Foucault, *Punish*, 67) namely the German pirate Claas Störtebeker, who lived during the Middle-Ages and became an enemy of the Hanse.[27] He is venerated through a memorial in front of the Maritime Museum in the Speicherstadt in Hamburg[28] and a yearly Störtebeker themed open–air theatrical production in Ralswiek on the island Rügen[29]. Störtebeker's glorification hinges to a large part on the proceedings of his execution, meaning that this hero is simultaneously a condemned criminal. In the case of Störtebeker, his execution is actually one of the the main ingredients which constitute the positive element of the myth surrounding his person. According to German folklore, Störtebeker made a last agreement with authorities. His crew was to line up and all members of his crew should be saved who were passed by Störtebeker's beheaded, walking body. Depending on the version, he managed to save five or eleven of his crew members or kept walking until someone stopped his walking body. (Blasel, 36) The execution is needed for the posthumous glorification and mystification of Störtebeker; the central and identifying feature of the myth is Störtebeker's attempt to rescue his crew with his dead, walking body.

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27 For the increasing mystification of the historical Claas Störtebeker, see e. g. Puhle, Matthias. *Die Vitalienbrüder*. 148-159 and Postel, Reiner. "Der Pirat, der Volksheld und der Kopf unterm Arm."
28 Cf. https://www.hamburg.de/sehenswuerdigkeiten/3447862/stoertebeker-denkmal/ Accessed on 28. September 2021
29 Cf. https://stoertebeker.de/ Accessed on 28. September 2021

This constellation offers a prime example of the described oscillation between lawlessness and heroism. The altruistic element of saving the lives of his crew during his own execution allows for a heroic interpretation. Moreover, Störtebeker opposes the monstrous hangman and saves his crew from the executioner by giving his own life. Störtebeker is not only altruistic, but he also opposes the hangman and demonstrates how inhuman the act of execution is. At the same time, his behaviour makes room for the question of how justified his own execution is, as someone who fights authority to save his crew must be considered a good man.

Not only can half-historical reports about pirates be read as two-sided discourses, historical pirates can only be transformed into heroes of myths. Both the fact that half-fictional texts on pirates can be read as two-sided-discourses and the mystification of historical pirates such as Störtebeker may have helped to pave the way for the manifestation of an ambiguous motif in world literature later. Characters such as Long John Silver and Jack Sparrow who can be perceived as ambiguous, not really "good," but not really "bad" either, are fictional examples of the same oscillation of the 'criminal' between villainy and heroism as observed in the historical examples.

## 1.3    Creation of an Alternative Society

### 1.3.1    The Decision to Become 'Abnormal'

Foucaultian thought focuses to a large part on categorisation and evaluation of human behaviour, whether this behaviour follows the required norm, or can be defined in any way as 'abnormal.' In *Discipine and Punishment* Foucault discusses these strategies in great detail for different institutions which change or correct behaviour, such as the prison or asylum. Humans are conditioned to fit into fixed roles to display normative behaviour via the title elements, discipline and punishment.

Discipline and punishment take the form of a labelling system, which is based on the

ability to adapt:

> In short the art of punishing, in the régime of disciplinary power, is aimed neither at expiation, nor even precisely at repression. It brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, though this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal (the 'shameful' class of the École Militaire). The perceptual penalty that traverses all points and differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*. (182-183, emphasis in original)

Human behaviour is controlled by rules. Rules set boundaries of what is prohibited as well as ideals of what has to be aspired. Judging how well one keeps a set of given rules judges the ability to adjust and conform. This system is the embodiment of normalisation.

 Taken that the 'pirate' of the popular imagination was mostly neither shanghaied, meaning knocked unconscious and brought aboard against his will, nor pressed,[30] the pirate has chosen to flee from this system of normalisation. The process of being written out of society was self – induced. Fictional pirates are mostly depicted as having chosen to be outlaws, outsiders, and *hostis humani generis*. They have chosen to be 'abnormal.' Being expelled from society means that rules and their suppressive restrictions do not apply to them any more. The pirate life gains its attraction by the freedom to disobey the rules of society. Suchsland and Alvarez state:

> Die Freiheit, die der Pirat symbolisiert, liegt in der Willkür, die sich nicht an Regeln halten muss. Er raubt und plündert oder bleibt großzügig – ganz wie er möchte, im Zwischenbereich, in dem sich Legitimes und Illegitimes verbinden, wobei seine Unberechenbarkeit auch eine Form revolutionärer Bedrohung bedeutet." (9)

Suchsland and Alvarez postulate that the pirate acts arbitrarily. But, pirate life also needs organisation by rule and conduct. Pirates follow their own rules, the pirate articles. Piratical freedom is not as much characterised by arbitrary behaviour, but the creation of their own rules.

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30 Literature features only few examples of victims pressed into pirate societies. See for example Robert Michael Ballantyne's *Coral Island* (1858) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889). The character Tim Fletch in *Crossbones* (2014) is a present-day example.

## 1.3.2  Creation of an Alternative Society Following Its Own Rules

The 'pirate' is an extreme example of social exclusion, of being 'abnormal,' because in his status as *hostis humani generis* he takes a position even outside humankind. This understanding of being 'inhuman' (the literary understanding of *hostis humani generis*) (Heller-Roazen, 17) ties in with Foucault's observation about the staging of the 'abnormal' 'criminal', who, as mentioned above, "designated as the enemy of all, [...] appears as a villain, a monster, a madman, perhaps, a sick and, before long 'abnormal' individual." (*Discipline*, 101). Hans Turley observes that "indeed one could argue that the pirates belong to no class at all, for they 'declare war against *all* humankind.' Since they have turned their backs on normative society, they are defined as pirates – and *only* pirates – and thus defined by their transgressive cultural *and* economic defiance." (40, emphasis in original) Pirates disregard prescriptive categories in the context of power relations, social status or gender.[31] Someone who has been declared "inhuman" does not have to adhere to any normativity any more.

Pirates are thus excluded from socio-cultural norms, which means that they lack a socio-cultural background for the construction of identity. Steinhoff points out that "their representations have suggested that pirates transgress not only numerous geographical but also cultural borders." ("Mobile Signifier" 104) The 'pirate' does not belong to a culture, allowing the intermingling of people with differing cultural backgrounds. Suchsland and Alvarez point out: "Die Freiheit der maritimen Existenz ist das Gegenteil von Uniformität, eine positiv konnotierte Heimatlosigkeit, […] wo man sich an jenem Ort zu Hause fühlt, an dem man vor Anker gegangen ist." (9) A pirate crew is set up by groups of different socio-

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31 cf. For a change in social status and power relations see: Ganser, Alexandra. *Crisis and Legitimacy in Atlantic American Narratives of Piracy 1678–1865*. ——. "'That the *Enchantments* of the *Sea*, may not have too strong and quick a Force upon some': Seafaring Mobilities in Transatlantic Narratives of Piracy around 1700". ——. "The Pirate Ship as a Black Atlantic Heterotopia: Michel Maxwell Philip's *Emmanuel Appadocca*". For a breech of gender see: Steinhoff, Heike. "Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and the Pirate as Mobile Signifier in *Captain Blood*, *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*" ——. *Queer Buccaneers: (De)Constructing Boundaries in the PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN Film Series* ——. "Yo-ho, A Pirate's Life for Me" – Queer Personalities, Heteronormativity and Piracy in *Pirates of the Caribbean*", Turley, Hans. *Rum Sodomy and the Lash: Piracy, Sexuality and Masculine Identity*.

cultural descent and yet united in their belonging to a shared mobile home, the ship. In fact, **pirates create their own system of belonging,** erasing former difference and creating commonality in its stead.

Pirates live in alternative societies, contrasting monarchical authority (and colonial suppression) with a democratic structure. (cf. e.g. Ganser, "Heterotopia" 71-73, von Holzen 67) Pirates are not only socially excluded because they have created a new framework of belonging, but they also live in a different state form. **Pirates create their own governmental system**.

Self-government is a strong form of antagonism against those in power. It is another form of challenging the aforementioned Foucaultian relation between 'criminal' and 'sovereign(s)' which is solely based on power. The 'pirate' is not only an outsider to society due to denial of authority and its laws (opposing the sovereign), the 'pirate' is an outsider due to the creation of his own society with its own set of laws (annulling the sovereign). Jones points out that pirates "operate not only as *antagonists* to the modern state, but as *alternatives* to the modern state." (28, emphasis in the original) Here, the 'criminal' does not only fight state authority, but he replaces it.


## 1.4     Other Places – the Heterotopia

The piratical society can thus be defined as a heterotopia – an "other space" "in which the real sites [...] that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (Foucault, "Spaces" 3). The famous concept, introduced in the speech "Of Other Places" and re-appearing in a slightly different form in the introduction to *The Order of Things* describes a place which mirrors and inverts existing places, a spatial contrast.

### 1.4.1    The Ship as the Ultimate Heterotopic Site

In "Of Other Places" Foucault defines one space as the ultimate heterotopia, the one space uniting all contraries, the ship. As I intend to find a working definition for the term "pirate," I will now move from the Foucaultian concept of the 'criminal' to the heterotopic ship. Ships grant pirates a large part of their freedom; e. g. ships grant pirates the freedom of mobility. Moreover, it is the inseparable connection to ships which narrows down the definition of 'criminal' and brings it closer to "pirate."

Foucault describes the ship as the one counter-site that inverts and mirrors all aspects of society. One of the elements that makes the ship a desirable place of Otherness is the pirate:

> [T]he boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea … [F]rom port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their garden. … [T]he ship has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development … but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without ships, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of **pirates**. ("Spaces," 27, emphasis added)

Foucault defines the ship as the ultimate instrument of development and inspiration for imagination. The ship serves mankind in rational and irrational ways alike; it guarantees development in technological and economic ways as well as inspiration for daydreams.

However, imagination is symbolised here by a series of elements which are exchanged for each other: "espionage" replaces "adventure," the "police" is swapped for "pirates." Ganser observes: "In an uncharacteristic, almost lyricist romanticism, Foucault associates piracy with dreams ("that have not dried up") and adventure here." ("Heterotopia," 57) Foucault thus argues the romantic rebellious pirate is much more amiable than law enforcement Here, pirates are openly glorified and portrayed as something desirable, something this world should not miss. Pirates are necessary so that dreams do not die out. The fact that pirates commit maritime violence and are thus the exact opposite of the police (one party being criminal and the latter law enforcement), is not touched upon.

What is more, this description does not take the dependence of a ship to its home-country into account: "[I]t seems, Foucault's formulation becomes poetic rather than analytical and neglects, due to an assumed structuralist oppositionality, that the ship has never 'existed by itself' but has always depended on its economic, political, discursive, and material technological environment and on unequal power relations." (Ganser, "Heterotopia," 28) Consequently, the only ship that qualifies for a heterotopia is a ship independent of home nations, mercantile structures, and navies: the pirate ship.

David Harvey argues argues that heterotopia "reduces itself on the theme of escape." (160) He describes heterotopia as "an eclectic mess of heterogeneous and different absolute spaces within which anything 'different' – however defined – might go on," (160) drawing attention to the simplified nature of Foucault's presentation. He sharply criticises Foucault's conclusion that "the ship is the heterotopia par excellence" (Foucault, "Spaces" 236). To illustrate his point that heterotopia as defined by Foucault is a simplified concept, he compares it to an advertisement of tourism for ocean liners:

> The commercialized cruise ship is indeed a heterotopic site if ever there was one; and what is the critical, liberatory and emancipatory point of that? Foucault's words could easily form the text of a commercial for Caribbean luxury cruises. (Harvey, 160-161)

Harvey compares Foucault's concept of heterotopia to a holiday cruiser and links it to commerce and capitalism. He thus illustrates his viewpoint that heterotopia is a simplified concept and that the ship as heterotopia per excellence reduces the concept of heterotopia to escapism. The ship is not only romanticised in the context of what might be an adventure novel meant for British boys, such as Robert Michael Ballantyne's *Coral Island* (1857), it is also presented as the embodiment of escapism, representing a touristy longing for the Caribbean.

However, Harvey, in turn, generalises the holiday cruiser and reduces his viewpoint in turn on the passengers. The comparison to advertisement for cruisers fails to consider the

working party onboard: sailors, officers, kitchen staff etc. Consequently, the distinction between places of open, voluntary access (open to the holiday traveller) and forced seclusion ("forced" in the meaning of having to earn your living) makes for spatial division within the 'ship.' This kind of ship combines both forms of sea-fare, that of voluntary and forced entry. The holiday cruiser hosts both realms, split into the areas of passengers and working parties: discovery and restriction, freedom to see new places and insulation to the work place. The cruiser is a heterotopia split into several spatial realms, a heterotopia split in itself. Calling a ship a heterotopia does not only generalise the different forms of sea-fare, it also generalises the different groups on board a ship, turning workers and passengers into one mass. Gesa Mackenthun observes that this "social spatiality of ships" challenges the Foucauldian understanding of the heterotopical ship, which is seen as one uniform, isolated place. ("Topographies" 61) Even without a mutinous or alternative distortion of ship spaces (Mackenthun, "Topographies," 60-62), it is in fact set together by many spaces (instead of presenting one uniform other space), which are strictly delimited from each other, such as the captain's cabin and the forecastle, the lodgings of the crew. This inner spatial split of the ship is only erased on a pirate ship on which crew members often share ship spaces equally, as represented for example in *The Pirate Devlin* series.

Yet, even the aspect of equally shared ship spaces does not make the pirate ship an ideal ship cruising the Caribbean. In the example of the ocean liner, the pirates are not the tourists, but the workers who have to operate the ship. The ideal of cruising the Caribbean thus only applies to those who are passengers aboard a present-day ship, not those who have to work. The escapist longing for the Caribbean is demarcated as what might be a desirable goal for a large group of contemporary audiences. Yet, it applies even less to the concept of a pirate ship, because, all its connotations of the easy-life aside, and despite the fact that ship spaces are shared equally, a pirate ship is a working place, too. Imagining a long, carefree cruise in

the Caribbean applies to passenger aboard the mentioned cruiser, but not aboard a pirate ship.

However, it is exactly this link to contemporary time – the difference between cruising the Caribbean then and now which allows for the escapist moment in pirate fiction. The discourse of the ship has changed over time. In present-day culture, it is mostly associated with holidays. This longing for what might be a modern-day ideal, a long holiday in the Caribbean, is why the idea of escapism works perfectly for pirate fiction. Kevin Frank observes:

> In *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pear*l, when Barbossa strands Jack Sparrow on a deserted island for a second time, Sparrow explains to Elizabeth Swann that his "miraculous" escape was really the good fortune of having been rescued by striking a deal with rumrunners who hid their cache there. "You spent three days lying on a beach, drinking rum?" she says, and he jokingly replies, "Welcome to the Caribbean, love," an anachronistic reference to modern-day tourism ("Rum and Sun —Welcome to the Caribbean!") that depends somewhat for its punch on the audience's touristy relationship to the Caribbean. (59)

Being aboard a ship in the Caribbean thus represents an ideal of our time, imprinting a modern longing on 'historical' fiction. Analogously to Sparrow, who is marooned on a lonely island and thus spends his days lying on the beach and drinking rum, a weird mixture of the predicament of the character and its interpretation as a touristic activity, the pirate ship represents confinement for the fictional pirate who sails it and freedom for the recipient. The pirate ship stands for confinement and freedom at the same time, a concept that draws on the escapist interpretation of a modern-day audience that associates the Caribbean rather with tourism than the hardship of maritime history. This concept is based on the change of the discourse of the ship, too. A modern-day longing overshadows and outweighs the logic of the plot-line and allows for a re-interpretation of the narrative.

## 1.4.2   The Pirate Ship

The pirate ship can be seen as a symbol for freedom. It hints at cruising the Caribbean, an ideal for large parts of a contemporary audience. In pirate fiction its stands for an alternative order and freedom. The pirate ship also fulfils all criteria listed by Foucault for a heterotopia.

Yet as it features an alternative form of shipboard governance, it mirrors and inverts the hierarchical order of the naval and merchant ship. If a merchant or coloniser qualifies as heterotopia, the pirate ship is a heterotopia of the heterotopia.

This aspect of Otherness and seclusion points to the heterotopia of deviation. (cf. Foucault, "Spaces," 5) The heterotopia of deviation is a site "in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of these are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons […]." (Foucault, "Spaces" 232) Representations of the pirate space, meaning pirate ships and pirate towns, have been identified as heterotopia of deviation in pirate fiction. Ganser shows how the depiction of the pirate ship in  Philip Maxwell 's *Emmanuel Appadocha* can be seen as a heterotope ("Hetereotopia" 55) and Steinhoff illustrates how the depictions of pirate ships and towns in the first three *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies can be interpretated as heteropian spaces (*Buccaneers* 100-105). Steinhoff points out the following concerning the first three *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies:

> Tortuga and the *Black Pearl* present such places of alternative ordering. They are heterotopias of deviance [sic], i.e. places in which those individuals are placed whose conduct and appearance deviates from the required norm, which in the trilogy means in relation to the social codes and values of society in Port Royal. (101)

Individuals who offend by 'deviance' do not fit in with "the required mean or norm" (Foucault, "Spaces" 232), and so become objects that are marked as 'Other' and have to be removed from society. (Foucault, "Spaces" 232) Individuals are separated into the binary system of 'norm' and 'Other.' Then the latter are removed.

The pirate ship does not only fall into the category of being 'deviant;' it also falls under the category of 'criminal.' Ganser points out:

> The double nature of the pirate ship, mirroring colonial relations while simultaneously inverting them in critical moments, can be read as a Foucauldian (1986) heterotopia of the crisis of colonial legality and of deviation: a site outlawed by a dominant order that labels it piratical, thus placing the enslaved or otherwise colonized subject, whose economic and military actions are unsanctioned, into a realm of illegitimacy and disenfranchisement (*Crisis*, 7)

Pirates are excluded from society – they becomes *hostis humani generis*. The 'criminal' does thus not only face punishment, but forced seclusion as well. The heterotopia of deviation is a site "in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed." (Foucault, "Spaces" 232) The 'pirate' is unable to leave his space, because he is expelled from society and confined to the piratical, heterotopic space.

Yet this form of seclusion is not interpreted as negative, or as a loss of freedom, as it allows for the creation of a better society. Ganser points out that: "Unlike the prison, however, the pirate ship can function as a mobile inversion of dominant social relations and hence is also a site of social experimentation and potential empowerment—arguably the reason why it represented an attractive setting for revolutionary or abolitionist writers." (*Crisis*, 7) The rules of normative society do not have to be followed any more. Thus, "pirate ships turned the spatial insulation and isolation— the very qualities that induced Michel Foucault to call the ship an instance of heterotopia, a territorialized site of a different spatial order—into an asset. ([Foucault] 27)" ("Heterotopia," 72) Pirates live in total seclusion from normative society; they live in their own space, their own society, following their own rules – **their own system**.

Despite the newly won advantage of an alternative socio-cultural ordering, the pirate society is still subjected to strict regulations. It can only be entered under certain conditions as it must be secluded and inaccessible to outsiders. This seclusion further underlines the understanding of the pirate space as  heterotopia, but it also encloses its inhabitants inside. (Ganser, "Heterotopia" 56, Steinhoff, *Buccaneers* 103) Entry is organised in form of the signing of the pirate articles. At the same time, pirates accept the conditions of their new society. Signing the articles is binding, the new member has agreed to accept and follow the given terms. Entry is thus bound to rules, which, in this case, means exchanging one set of rules against another, leaving one form of power structure for another. Even a pirate cannot do as s/he pleases; the idea(l) of freedom is an illusion when it comes to not being bound by rules

any more.

Although the pirate ship constitutes a heterotopia, the pirate ship differs in one crucial aspect from many other examples that Foucault gives, such as the theatre, the fun fair, the garden, the library: the piratical place is entered inexorably. A return to normative society asks for rehabilitation (cf. von Holzen 143-145 and Pfister, *Pop-Kultur,* 36-38) and means subsequent exclusion form the pirate society – a reversion of the process. After all, the new life in the pirate society resembles a gilded cage.

### 1.4.3   The Difference Between Heterotopia and Utopia

This aspect of confinement is the main difference between heterotopia and Sir Thomas More's utopia. More's utopia describes a counter-society ruled by justice and equality – in contrast to hegemonic, monarchical rule. (cf. More, Thomas, Sir. *Utopia*) As mentioned in the introduction, Utopia and the pirate society thus embody the same idea: an island (or ship) free of monarchical influence, governed by an alternative, just system.[32] Consequently, historical as well as fictional pirates are supposed to live on a utopian island, yet, as they find themselves in a gilded cage, their idyllic utopia turns into a heterotopia. Ganser explains: "Because of the very fact that piratical narratives like Exquemelin's present a heterotopian (rather than classically utopian) discourse, [...] they are not at all free from the power structures that surround them." (*Crisis*, 17) It is exactly these "power structures that surround them" (Ganser, *Crisis*, 17) which make it impossible to leave the piratical society, which encloses the inhabitants inside. Leaving means being persecuted by the law. The pirate society can thus hardly be described as idyllic and ideal, utopian, but rather as alternative and other

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32 For a philosophical approach on "Pirate Utopias" (52), see Bey, Hakim. "The Temporary Autonomous Zone." Bey, Hakim. *T.A.Z : The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. He states that alternative sites outside of and, most of all, invisible to the social normative system, such as homeschooling in contrast to a state goverend school for example, (71) can be compared to "pirate utopias." (52) For a historical perspective on piratical societies as utopias see another book which was published by the same author using his real name: Wilson, Peter Lamborn. *Pirate Utopias: Moorish Corsairs & European Renegadoes*.

(=hetero), in other words heterotopian. According to Foucault, a heterotopia is the more realistic, more ugly equivalent of More's utopia. Foucault defines utopias as "fundamental unreal spaces" (3) and heterotopias as "kind of effectively enacted utopias" (3). In *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault, however, offers another differentiation between utopia and heterotopia. (Casey 462) Here, the heterotopia represents the unspeakable, which will bring language as we know it to collapse (Foucault, *Order* XVIII). Utopia and heterotopia are separated by the imaginary nature of the first and the real status of the latter: "This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the *fabula*; heterotopias (such as those so often to be found in Borges) […] dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences" (*Order*, XVIII). Heterotopias differ from utopias due to their disturbing character.

This definition of heterotopia as the unspeakable applies to the fictional pirate space. An ostensibly safe harbour is just another form of detention. This harsh truth "dissolves our myths" (Foucault, *Order*, XVIII) and kills the ideals of pirate fiction. Seeing them by daylight reveals their flimsy, insubstantial, and unlogical character. An apparently ideal piratical society that is nothing but a new place of detention following set rules "sterilize[s] the lyricism of our sentences." (Foucault, *Order*, XVIII) So, the "myth" of the utopian pirate space is destroyed by its manifestation in form of a gilded cage.

Moreover, some pirate captains are new tyrants who reign by fear. In these cases, democracy, or rather democ(k)racy, is based upon terror and murder, most famously in the case of Blackbeard, who, according to the semi-historical biography as found in the *General History*, insists "that if he did not now and then kill one of them, they would forget who he was." (Johnson, 59) The pirate society can also be a new form of terror, control, and subjugation.

Despite the apparently ideal character of the new society, the pirate society is still a form

of confinement, a paradox, considering that pirates are celebrated for their alternative life style and freedom. Foucault considers confinement a grave form of punishment. In *Discipline and Punish*, confinement eventually replaces the execution: "[t]he high wall, no longer the wall that surrounds and protects, […] but the meticulously sealed wall, uncrossable in either direction […] will become […] the figure of punishment" (116). As a result, those recognised as 'deviant' and 'criminal' find themselves locked up. The fact that they have entered the pirate space by their own volition does not change their position. Pirates have decided for another form of incarceration. Pirates have fled society; but simultaneously they have locked themselves into the pirate space. The aspect of containment remains. The pirate remains confined to his own system.

## 1.5    Maritime Hierarchy and Mutiny

Considering the aspect of confinement, meaning that the pirate life leads to a form of voluntary incarceration, the pirate ship should be seen in a more negative light. In fact, the democratic 'pirate' ship gains its positive connotations solely by the means of contrast to the 'normal' ship, a ship governed by the principle of hierarchy. Aleta Amirée von Holzen points out:

> Tatsächlich konnte die historische Piraterie auch deshalb eine verlockende Alternative zum Leben der Marinematrosen sein, weil insbesondere die Schiffe der Handelsmarine notorisch unterbemannt waren, die Arbeit sehr hart und schlecht bezahlt war, die Befehlshaber ihre Untergebenen misshandelten und viele Matrosen überhaupt erst an Bord gepresst worden waren. (55)

The fact that marines were pressed into service adds to the understanding of the naval or merchant ship as a form of incarceration. Ganser points out the similarity between a ship governed by hierarchy and a prison:

> In the seventeenth century, Samuel Johnson had compared the ship to the prison and characterized sea-laborers as the most miserable among workers (qtd. In Rediker, *Villains* 43). Harsh discipline and hard work, law wages that often remained unpaid, meagre or rotten supplies, disease, violence, and the constant threat of punishment characterized the imperial ship. [...] The ships of the merchant marines and the Navies functioned as imperial machines in which sailors were reduced to "hands". ("Heterotopia" 71-72)

The merchant and navy ship bore semblance to a prison, the sailors faced hunger, sickness, physical assaults and constant control.

What is more, sailors are a homogenised group, meaning part of a system that does neither allow for individuality nor free will. This mass of identical workers has to be enforced to follow orders blindly and to accept hierarchy unquestioned. Higher ranks, the officers, watch over the lower ranks, the sailors. Sailors are judged by the functionality and usability. Every act of rebellion, mutiny, asks for severe punishment.[33] A ship governed by hierarchy thus perfectly embodies the main principles of "discipline" and "punish." Foucault's romanticised understanding of a ship could not have differed more from the reality of maritime history.

The idealistic interpretation of a pirate ship as the better alternative offering a much better way of life must thus be seen in the right perspective. It offered a better life to sailors who were pressed into strict service and runaway slaves. I argue that the positivity ascribed to historical Golden Age piracy and its fictional representations alike hinges on this contrast to the miserable life of sailors and slaves. In this moment, pirates are not primarily seen as criminals, but as humans freed from one or other form of slavery. They were literally enslaved by another man's system.

## 1.6    Piratical Heroes and Villains

This breaking free from former enslavement has to be put into perspective as well. Pirates gain their freedom by leaving the system that has enslaved them. Thus, they are not really saved, but are rather expelled from society and can only live in secluded, secret spaces. This freedom too is tarnished.

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33 See for example Herman Melville's novella "Billy Budd, Sailor," a text that focuses on the necessity to punish an act of mutiny. Set shortly after the Spithead and Nore Mutiny in England in 1797, mutiny has become the one threat weakening the British navy. The novella was discovered as an unfinished manuscript and published posthumously in 1924.

Yet the expulsion from society gives a new freedom. It gives the freedom to decide whether to serve the general good or to follow sheer egoism. The pirate's "lack of political anchorage enables him […] to embody the enemy or the hero" (Gerassi - Navarro, 188). The pirate motif can be used as either hero or villain; the motif is changeable and ambiguous.[34] Pfister thus distinguishes between evil pirates and heroic privateers. (cf. "Piraten – Pop – Kultur") In sum, the pirate can be interpreted as rebellious hero or bloodthirsty villain; both forms oppose authority.

This distinction between good and evil pirates can be seen as an embodiment of a two-sided discourse within the motif. The pirate hero fighting colonial suppression represents the struggle against authorities to identify with; the pirate villain acting out cruelty demonstrates the justification of execution. Heroic rebel and cruel villain represent the appealing and the repulsive side of the 'criminal.' This aspect can thus be excluded from a working definition of the "pirate." The word "pirate" refers to both, piratical villains and piratical heroes alike. Only one aspect is relevant; both heroic and villainous pirates create their own systems to escape the system of another man.

## 1.7   Illogical Parts of the Pirate Discourse

Despite the creation of a new system pirates can never escape the system that surrounds them, i.e. the normative society. They can only exist as long as they remain socially and spatially insulated, demonstrated by the fact that piracy is an acknowledged crime and leads to the gallows. This is normalisation to the highest degree. The members of this group are so much

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34 For the role of piratical hero and piratical villain in the adventure novel and film see Holzen, Aleta-Amirée von. *Abenteuerkonzepte im Piratenfilm*. (2007), for a distinction between "heroischer Freibeuter" und "ruchloser Pirat" see Pfister, Eugen. "Piraten – Pop – Kultur, Wandel und Bedeutung eines kulturellen Piratenbildes", for changing representations of female pirates see Steinhoff, Heike. "Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and the Pirate as Mobile Signifier in *Captain Blood*, *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*," for the ambivalent nature of 'pirates' in *Pirates of the Caribbean* see Steinhoff, Heike. *Queer Buccaneers: (De)Constructing Boundaries,* for the pirate as ambivalent figure and the formation of nation in Spanish America see Gerassi-Navarro, Nina. *Pirate Novels: Fictions of Nation Building in Spanish America.*

created to "be like one another" (Foucault, *Discipline* 181-182) that they are all subjected to the same treatment. In this way they do not differ from the homogenised group of the sailor workforce. The sailors have not won back their individuality, they have just exchanged one homogenised group for another. This proves further that the pirate is a theoretical construct – even one with inherent paradoxes. The fact that the new piratical identity does not diversify but homogenise does not diminish the popularity of pirate fiction and the ideal of diversity it stands for.

Additionally, Golden Age piracy is not a reaction against suppressive colonialism. In fact, in most cases Golden Age pirates stem from a monarchical world themselves. Contrary to possible expectations, the enemy of the colonial forces is not a defeated colonised victim,[35] but an offspring of the colonising world. The pirate is not a reaction towards colonialism – he is dependant on it. Pirates cannot be regarded as freedom fighters; they are nothing but opportunists taking advantage of the situation.

The fact that the piratical ideals of diversity and rebellion against colonial exploitation are nothing but a shadowy misconception does not diminish the popularity of pirate fiction. Pirate fiction celebrates ideals, and at a closer look these ideals evaporate. The utopian idealisation of pirate fiction is carried by genre expectations and escapism, not by actual elements of the plot-line. The pirate motif is set together by illogical and contradictory constitutional elements. His only defining feature, the one element that allows for all these misconceptions, is thus the fact that the pirate creates his own system.

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35 Cf. For a vengeful Indian prince whose family was killed during the Great Mutiny of 1857 in India and who consequently ferociously attacks the British with an armed vessel (meaning that an inhabitant of a colonised country attacks ships of the coloniser) see the famous case of Cpt. Nemo (Prince Dakkar), main character of Jules Verne's *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les mers* (1869-1870) who recurs in *L'île mystérieuse* (1875).

## 1.8    Dichotomies

The pirate motif is not only contradictory in itself, but also evasive when it comes to a definition. Turley states that the 'pirate' evades binary definitions:

> [T]he pirate […] is represented by Johnson, Defoe and other writers as the not-criminal, not-merchant alternative to the seafaring merchant, the criminal, or at times, the privateer. […] Although the pirate is not a legitimate merchant, and is therefore a criminal according to English law, he is paradoxically portrayed at times by Johnson, Defoe, and others as *not only* a criminal but a hero, and thus opposes himself. The pirate's refusal to be pinned down in any dichotomous position in either the economic or the sexual model highlights […] the instability of dichotomies represented by gender, sexual desire, masculinity and capital. (42, emphasis in original)

The ambiguity of the pirate motif highlights the instability of the binary nature of socio-cultural norms. However, the fact that the 'pirate' may be staged as a criminal and a hero at the same time does not dissolve the dichotomy between legal/illegal and society/*hostis humani generis*. The fact that it is possible to see a criminal as a hero does not diminish the fact that his actions are considered illegal. It merely gains him sympathies of others, as pointed out in the previous sections.

What is more, the 'pirate' is, according to his positioning as *hostis humani generis*, never "not-criminal." (Turley, 42) In this case he would become a privateer and cease to be the enemy of mankind. The privateer embodies another definite contrasting concept (next to "not-merchant" etc. (Turley, 42)), as he has hold of a national identity and legal authority for his undertakings alike – lacking the status of 'criminal.' 'Pirate' and 'privateer' are not part of the same discourse and represent another dichotomy: legal and illegal ship-raiding.

Turley defines the 'pirate' by negatives, like "not-merchant," employing a set of dichotomies. Accordingly, the 'pirate' is supposed to be "pinned down" (Turley, 42) in several various dichotomous positions. Turley employs the strategy of defining by negatives: instead of a positive description, the 'pirate' is "not – x." Dichotomies are the best strategy to approach the 'pirate.'

In sum, one cornerstone of the definition of the 'pirate' is a contrary position. The pirate can only be traced as a phenomenon of contrast (*hostis humani generis*, alternative state form,

heterotopia etc.). In other words, 'piracy' is always the contrary of an already existing phenomenon; it never "achieve[s] a pure and absolute autonomy from the dominant institution in opposition to which it constitutes its own identity." (Mackie 35) Mackie argues:

> Yet, this failure of "pure" oppositionality, ideological or practical-strategic, does not invalidate the socio-cultural power of these groups [referring to pirates and maroons]; rather, if anything, it constitutes one feature central to their continuing currency in a postcolonial world where lines between law and outlaw, black and white, inside and outside, disappear almost as quickly as they are, often opportunistically, calculated and imposed. (35)

The dependence on the status quo as well as colonial forces in terms of definition and economical existence does not diminish the popularity of pirates. Pirates live in antagonism to existing socio-cultural norms and economic structures. Von Holzen points out: "[Die] in Anspruch genommene Freiheit [...] [beruht] vor allem auf der (mutwilligen) Verneinung 'herkömmlicher Werte.'" (56) The pirate does not only oppose power structures and defy authority, he also takes liberty to ignore morals. The pirate is defined by contrast to a functioning society; he defies authority, laws, norms, and morals alike.

The pirate lacks a definition of his own, the 'pirate' is put together by a set of contrasts Similar to Plato's allegory of the cave, the 'pirate' is a shadow of the real forms – only that those shadows always show a distorted, contrary version of the original object. As a result, the 'pirate' discourse is an empty discourse, lacking a definite object (and episteme). Instead, the discourse is formed by outside forces which represent the 'norm.' Inside the discourse are only the shadowy copies of their contrasts. All these contrasts add up to the creation of a new system.

## 1.9    "I Must Create a System or be Enslaved by Another Mans"[36]

The phenomenon which keeps the pirate motif alive can thus be described best by William Blake's quote "I must create a system or be enslaved by another mans." (*Jerusalem*, E 10) As pointed out above, pirates are defined by creation of their system. Yet, this new system is,

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36 Blake, William. *Jerusalem*, E 10

naturally, always the contrastive opposite of the already existing system, normative society. The creation of the new system is dependent on the existence of a system of another man. The established system, normative society, is the foil the alternative system is founded on. Analogously, to this contrastive positioning of the old and the new system, the pirate exists as a contrast to "another man," the authority in power. The pirate motif is defined by a set of contrasts, the contrasts to the system of another man.

The enslavement in the system of another man, be it as a sailor on a navy or a merchant ship or even a slave, makes for motivation and justification of a new piratical society alike. The only way to escape this enslavement by another man is the creation of their own system.

As pointed out in the introduction, Blake put this quote in the mouth of his character Los, who can be described in a very simplified definition as the embodiment of the human imagination. The glorification of these piratical ideal self-government can be found frequently in pirate fiction despite their actual implementation in the respective narratives often being contradictory or illogical. I have shown in the previous sections that pirate fiction is not grounded in any logical construction and that these ideals are faulty or contradictory in themselves when seen by daylight. Imagination overrules reason (a scenario Blake would describe as Los overrules Urizen, the embodiment of reason). It is the fictional, imaginary realm which allows for the creation of this new system. The fact that the single constitutional elements do not really fit together is secondary.

This central element of creating one's own system and the freedom that allegedly comes with it allows for a utopian reading and escapist function of fiction which is centred on criminals and their breaking the law. The "pirate" is defined as an entity who creates an own, contrary system to escape the prevailing system of another man.

**1.10 Additamentum: The Pirate Motif and Utopian Fiction**

I have mentioned above that the piratical society is more heterotopian than utopian, still I discuss contemporary pirate fiction in a utopian context. This is because I do not reduce the utopian aspect to the piratical society. I rather use "utopia" as a state of perfect bliss, something desirable, something that is far away and cannot be obtained. I thus do not see the piratical society as a utopia, but pirate fiction as fiction coined by utopian elements.

As already pointed out in my introduction, only a few literary genres can be dated back to one text only, but the utopia as a genre was born when Sir Thomas More picked up a pen to write his eponymous *Utopia*, a text that depicts a foreign society on a faraway island, a society that is described as ideal. That the actual society described in More's text may not look so ideal to present-day readers does not diminish the fact that the name "utopia" entered language to describe an ideal society. More's text has also spawned many similar utopian texts to follow its heels. Famous examples other than those I have already mentioned in the introduction are Tommaso Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (1623) and Edward Bellamy's *Looking back* (1888).

The utopia as a genre is strongly bound to its negative counterpart, dystopia. Here, the depicted society is a negative one, often at its worst. Some of these novels belong to the canon of world literature, such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) which criticises a world based on technology at the cost of human emotions, and the novels of George Orwell I have already mentioned in my introduction. They depict a negative world ruled by totalitarism and communism: *1984* and *Animal Farm*. What is interesting here is the depiction of communism as a threatening political organisation; Orwell's novels are the dark shadow of egalitarism and equality. What is idealised in pirate fiction shapes two of the most famous dystopian novels in world literature. This shows that both genres, utopia and dystopia, are closely interrelated and have to be seen as two sides of the same coin.

In cultural studies, the term "utopia" as the definition of a literary genre is weakened in favour of a much broader understanding of works of art that can be considered utopian. This refers mostly to products of mass culture. Frederic Jameson observes in his study *Political Unconscious* (1981):

> In this sense, to project an imperative to thought in which the ideological would be grasped as somewhat at one with the Utopian, and the Utopian at one with the ideological, is to formulate a question to which a collective dialectic is the only conceivable answer. Yet at a lower and more practical level of cultural analysis this proposition [the effectively ideological is also, at the same time, necessarily Utopian] is perhaps less paradoxical in its consequences, and may initially be argued in terms of a manipulatory theory of culture. Such studies, which are the strongest in areas like the study of media and mass culture in contemporary culture, must otherwise rest on a peculiarly unconvincing notion of the psychology of the viewer, as some inert and passive material on which the manipulatory operation works. (286-287)

Jameson observes that most studies leave out the consciousness of the viewer and assume that the mind of the viewer can be formed into the desired form. Jameson continues:

> Yet it does not take much reflection to see that a compensatory exchange must be involved here, in which the henceforth manipulated viewer is offered specific gratifications in return for his or her passivity. In other words, if the ideological function of mass culture is understood as a process whereby otherwise dangerous and protopolitical impulses are "managed" and defused, rechanneled [sic] and offered spurious objects, then some preliminary step must also be theorized in which these same impulses-the raw material upon which the process works-are initially awakened within the very text that seeks to still them. (287)

The viewer is kept from rebellion by making him watch a rebellion in fiction, thus, his cravings for anarchy, "otherwise dangerous and protopolitical impulses" (Jameson, 287) are gratified and the prevalent system at work is save from critical thought or even rebellious acts, making fiction a political instrument of thought control. This concept proves flimsy and unlogical when applied to present-day pirate fiction. Pirate fiction depicts democracy as the utopian element, yet undermines this ideal at the same time and illustrates its faultiness. What is more, I argue that it is not the democratic structure that makes pirates so fascinating, because in this case fiction might rather focus on Ancient Greece than Golden Age piracy. The appeal of piracy lies in the aspect of freedom, to be free of socio-cultural laws. The utopian element in pirate fiction is not connected in any way to political structures. As mentioned in my introduction, the crucial point about pirate fiction is that in this case the utopian element is

breaking the law. This does not mean, however, that the to be mollified viewer has actually contemplated breaking the law. I argue that the utopian element here is of a merely theoretical nature, bound to idea(l)s of resistance against authority.

While other genres also heavily draw upon the depiction of violence, murder, and crime, such as detective stories, the act of committing a crime is seldom interpreted as utopian. In a similar vein, while films like the *Ocean's* series (*Ocean's Eleven* (2001), *Ocean's Twelve* (2004), *Ocean's Thirteen* (2007)) also put the criminal group centre stage and turns them into characters one might sympathise with, these films lack an utopian appeal. The activities of these robberers do not necessarily represent a better and alternative life style. Pirate fiction combines the depiction of charming trickery, brutal violence, and utopian elements at the same time. I argue that these elements too are contradictory to each other and further prove my research argument that the pirate motif as found after 2003 is fragmentary and loosely put together by unconnected elements.

In sum, the utopian element is cause and effect of this fragmentary motif at the same time. In other words, pirate fiction is fragmentary because utopian elements are connected not to an ideal society, but a society set together by criminals, liars, and murderers, a stark contrast to the inhabitants of canonical utopia. The utopia and its inhabitants are at odds with each other. On the other hand, this fragmentary motif is only kept together by the utopian trigger of the freedom of choice. The real utopian element, the element that does arguably trigger the target audience, is the creation of one's own system. This is not about a utopia given, but about creating your own utopia to escape the enslavement to a system another man has created. At the heart of the appealing character of pirate fiction lies the wish to create a world after one's own desire, meaning one' s own utopia, one' s own system.

**2.      The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal, *Hostis Humani Generis*, and the Pirate Hero**

Pirate fiction is mostly coined by what Foucault calls a two-sided discourse. It is centred on a glorified criminal, whose deeds are condemned and admired alike. The piratical hero must fulfil both requirements; on the one hand he must be a criminal who can be identified by the audience as such and, on the other, he must be amiable enough to gain recipients' sympathies. Even semi-historical accounts were already written by following this principle. Captain Charles Johnson's *General History*,[37] for instance, evokes reader affection and rejection alike. Hans Turley observes:

> Unlike judicial minds which observe pirates as *ipso facto* criminals, Johnson complicates matters; he contrasts the 'bestial' natures of pirates […] to other pirates' heroic attempts to maintain a *different* kind of society […]. Johnson vacillates between depicting the pirate as economic outlaw and portraying him as political exemplar. (Turley, 79, emphasis in original)

This resembles Foucault's observation that gallows speeches glorify the criminal by the means of topic choice, interpretation of the presented deeds, and wording. (cf. *Discipline*, 68) The latter is often achieved by illustrating pirates as opponents of the class-system. (Turley, 80) As mentioned in my introduction, the most efficient feature to glorify the pirate is the focus on piratical democracy. Alex Thomson observes:

> The mythology of the pirate is based on a simple topological model. As exotic outsider, or as drunken hooligan, the pirate derives his status from being outside or beyond the law, a situation doubled in the case of the notorious female pirates. The revisionist model offered by Linebaugh and Rediker [in maritime history <A/N>] does not put this into question, but takes pirate democracy to be the figure of a virtuous and self-organising community […] This is to reverse our perspective on piracy: no longer simply illegal, illegitimate and outlawed, being outside the law becomes the very virtue of the pirate. […] The historians presume a topological model of legality based on a simple opposition […] their analysis of pirate democracy inverts conventional distribution of the value within the figure (an inversion whose affective path has already been mapped in the popular romance of the heroic swashbuckler) rather than threatening the overall schema. (221-222)

Pirates, as they are perceived in (popular) culture, are defined by their opposition to normative society. Pirate are defined by being deviant, even more so in the case of the female pirates, who add a further layer of deviance by subverting gender roles. Reading pirates as rebels

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37 Captain Johnson, Charles. *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724). For further information see my introduction.

turns being a criminal, being outside the law, into a desirable position and an attractive alternative to sociocultural norms.

I first give a brief overview on the development on motif history and the beginning of the romanticisation of Golden Age piracy in fiction. I show on the example of James Michael Barrie's James Hook how the pirate, who was once perceived as terror of maritime history, was turned into a whimsical figure on the (world) stage. In a next step I investigate two present-day serial productions which allow for a closer investigation of main characters due to their recurring presence and more sophisticated backgrounds (as opposed to characters of non-serial productions). I have chosen two different media as well as examples from two different cultural backgrounds which allows me to cover a wider range of representations. My examples are the British novel series *The Pirate Devlin* and the American blockbuster film series *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I show how the needed oscillation between hero and criminal, which makes up the pirate motif, is constructed. In case of the first example I investigate how instability largely adds to the ambiguity of the main character with the help of the theme of the heroic privateer as observed by Pfister, relation to surrounding characters, reception theory, and multi-voiced narration. I also focus on instability in my second example. Here, I largely focus on how this instability is constructed by a strategic use of film language. I analyse how the cinematic tradition of the ghost ship was used for the series, how the film series makes extensive use of repeating scenes with changed meaning, and I provide an exemplary scene analysis to illustrate how sujet and fabula are at odds with each other. I further show how different masculinities and their established connection to the figure of the pirate add to the perceived instability of the films. I focus on how anarchy and rebellion of another system, the discourse of the rock star, were imported and strategically employed. This reference also showcases the aspect of performativity of (gender) roles in general and in the context of stage productions or the silver screen in particular. I demonstrate how both

performative acts, the rock star and the pirate, are intertwined with each other on multiple layers, making for a dense web of performances, identities, and discourses interacting with and informing each other. In a last step, I here too focus on the interrelation of pirates and the surrounding characters, namely the British.

The pirate motif asks for the contradictory constellation of a main character who can attract readers or viewers but must also be involved in illegal activities: theft, robbery, murder. By analysing the strong tendency to instability I analyse how the fragmentary character of the pirate motif in present-day pirate fiction helps to keep up these contradictory motif requirements and updates this dilemma for the newest wave of pirate fiction.

## 2.1 How to Sell the *Enemy of Everyone* (*Hostis Humani Generis*) as a Crowd Puller

The beginning of the idealisation of the pirate goes back to the English Romantic era. Despite the ambiguous role of Shakespearean pirates who can be interpreted as positive, as mentioned in the introduction, the romanticisation of the pirate as a heroic and attractive character has its roots in the beginning of the 19th century. As mentioned in the introduction, Grace Moore states that while pirates were mostly portrayed as ferocious and evil during the 18th century, they were idealised, and most of all, romanticised in the 19th century:

> The pirate was radically reconfigured during the nineteenth century, his reputation undergoing a significant process of rehabilitation as his role shifted from the terror of the high seas to a much more mainstream figure. One of the key texts behind this refashioning of the pirate was Byron's *The Corsair* (1814),which swiftly became an early nineteenth-century publishing sensation. It sold over 10.000 copies on the day it was published. (Moore, 3-4)

One of those archetypes of a romanticised pirate, Byron's corsair Conrad, is not only a pirate, but also a Byronic hero. Mel Campbell points out: "In the character of Conrad, Johnson's piratical subject [referring to Johnson's *General History* and Hans Turley's concept of the "piratical subject" <A/N>][38] becomes a classic Byronic hero: defiant, alienated and misanthropic (and misogynist), yet also sensitive, honourable and faithful." (15). Due to its

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38 Turley, Hans. *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash*. cf. my introduction

tremendous success, considering that "[i]t sold over 10.000 copies on the day it was published (Moore, 3-4)" *The Corsair* must be considered a highly influential text. Campbell argues "what twenty-first century audiences understand as 'pirate chic' was more decisively shaped [more than by Daniel Defoe's novels *Captain Singleton* and *Robinson Crusoe*, as Turley argues <A/N>] by a Romantic literary tradition in the early nineteenth century." She rejects "Turley's thesis that the key maker of the piratical subject is a transgressive sexuality" and exchanges it for the argument that "the *aestheticization* of the piratical subject" in the *General History* heavily influenced the following recasts of fictional pirates. She points out "that this text had [impact] on two of the most significant Romantic works on piracy to follow it, Lord Byron' s *The Corsair* and Sir Walter Scott' s *The Pirate* (1821)." (Campbell, 11) Whereas Turley argues that a main marker of the pirate as a sexually deviant character is the interpretation and representation of the pirate as a sodomite, Campbell claims that pirates are marked by aesthetic markers, such as the black flag and a piratical dress-code, (12-14) which signify to the reader that "pirates are not inexplicably evil villains: they are anti-heroes who operate under a different moral code." (14) Their Otherness and position as rebels who set up their own society, their own system, is marked visually. The pirate is thus linked to visuals: "In this way, aesthetic markers move beyond mere exotic spectacle, instead becoming signifiers of this alternative society." (Campbell, 14) In sum, the pirate is made attractive by his outsider position to society which makes him an interesting and mysterious being, a person in outlandish clothing following a foreign code one cannot even fathom.

The 19th century also brings forth two enigmatic fictional pirates who will dominate cultural perception for the decades to come: Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver of *Treasure Island* (1883) and James Barrie's Captain James Hook of the Peter Pan plays. The latter went through a long development. Victor Emeljanov points out: "Captain Hook's development as a pirate was not, however, entirely straightforward and the dramatization of

piracy in *Peter Pan* was as complicated and ambiguous as it had been for a number of Hook's predecessors." (236) James Michael Barrie intended a return to earlier depictions of pirates as brutal villains, in contrast to productions like William Schwenk Gilbert's and Arthur Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* (1879), a comical musical play in which all pirates are gentlemen. In due manner, they are all married to noblewomen, and thus restored to society, at the ending. The pirates of Penzance have never been proper pirates in the first place, "which explains their inadequacies as swashbucklers and their inability to terrify." (Emeljanov, 236) Barrie, in turn, "was determined that his pirates would not be Gilbert and Sullivan travesties." (Emeljanov, 238) Yet, the actor who was assigned the role of Hook, Gerald du Maurier (the father of Daphne du Maurier[39]) does not seem to have complied with these expectations and changed the nature of Hook drastically. Emeljanov points out: "Based on Maurier's performances, then, Hook was both a thrillingly piratical figure as well as a humorous one." (238) This clash between the expectations of the play writer and the actor's performance foreshadows the much later conflict between Disney and the actor Johnny Depp who, according to media reports, had differing ideas and plans for the character Sparrow as well. Here, too, it is the aspect of performativity of (stage) roles which coined the representation of the pirate.

Hook was changed further once the play was turned into the novelised narrative *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911). (238) In the end, Hook's portrayal ended up as one of parody:

> When Hook exults at the prospect of making the captured boys walk the plank, his speech is punctuated by the sound of his confederate Smee tearing pieces of calico to make the pirates' clothes and stitching them together by a sewing machine. […] Even Hook's speeches contain elements of parody, in particular his outlandish oaths "split my infinitives," "uvula and tonsils," and "Gaius and Balbus." All these touches restore an ambiguity that may not have been part of Barrie's original plans [...]. Certainly the critics saw du Maurier's interpretation as a burlesque of piracy. (Emeljanov, 240-241)

The fearsome pirate determined to kill Peter Pan gives way to a whimsical figure who even

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39 Daphne du Maurier is mostly known for having written the texts which served as hypotexts or inspiration for films by Alfred Hitchcock, namely "The Birds," (1952 / 1963) *Rebecca* (1938 / 1940), and *Jamaica Inn* (1936 / 1939). Gerard du Maurier in turn stared in the Hitchcock film *Lord Camber's Ladies* (1932).

appears as comical while trying to kill the lost boys. The gruesome and brutal part of the pirate is softened and weakened by making him comical. The interpretation of Hook as a gruesome villain or somewhat entertaining character is a question of balance between horror and comical effects.

This example demonstrates that comical, amiable pirates were of much higher popularity than villains in the 19th century. Barrie's attempts to recreate a piratical villain were thwarted. The pirate is supposed to be a somewhat positive, likeable figure, marked by his outlandish clothing and customs, which carry potential to make him both laughable and admirable.

## 2.2. (De)Construction of Genre Conventions: *The Pirate Devlin*

Mark Keating's *The Pirate Devlin* - series is centred around Patrick Devlin, who attains 'freedom' in his late twenties after a life of hard work and humiliation. He gains rather quickly a leading position in his new surroundings; he becomes a pirate captain. The sequel introduces him as famed and, more importantly, feared pirate captain, implying further promotion. The first notion which may come to mind is that of a rags-to-riches-story, but as I will point out in the following, the account of Patrick Devlin is far more complex. All novels are archetypical quests; the pirates are in search of specific objects. These objects are under strong guard, which requires deceit and skill. The series remains unfinished so far, officially explained by contract issues. (cf. blog of the author Mark Keating)

### 2.2.1   A Wronged Man Having No Choice?

The plot of *Fight for Freedom* shows semblance to the theme of the *heroic privateer*, as pointed out by Pfister:

> Piratennarrative zeichnen sich stets durch gewisse Einschränkungen aus: Zum einen hatten sich die Helden nie wirklich freiwillig zu einem Leben als Piraten entschieden. Meist waren sie – zu Unrecht – von der Gesellschaft verstoßen worden. Der heldenhafte Pirat zeichnet sich außerdem dadurch aus, dass er sich auch weiterhin an einen (ungeschriebenen) Ehrenkodex hält. Sowohl der unfreiwillige

Einstieg in die Piraterie als auch der persönliche Ehrenkodex ermöglichten ihm zu guter Letzt aber die Rückkehr zu Recht und Ordnung. Das Leben als „freier" Pirat blieb eben Episode. Damit aber diese systemerhaltende Aussage auch als solche funktionierte, bedarf es neben dem Vorbild des ehrenhaften Freibeuters auch das Gegenbild des ruchlosen Piraten. ("Pop-Kultur" 38)

The heroic privateer, as defined by Pfister, was expelled from society against his will. He thus never embraces the life of a criminal and sticks to a moral code of honour. Devlin is a classic example of someone who has been unjustifiably expelled from society. He is an outsider to (English) society for various reasons. He is a wanted man because a bullet left in poultry under his watch ruined someone's teeth in Ireland (Keating, *Fight*, 57), an innocent murder suspect in England (57), a French soldier (57), meaning a soldier for the enemy, and above all an Irishman, adding further negative prejudices in the minds of surrounding characters (126-127, 134, Keating, *Diamond*, 106). To estrange him even more, his piratical actions, an unhappy coincidence, next to the fact that being Irish makes him presumably Catholic, raise suspicions that he may be a Jacobite (Keating, *Fight*, 127-128). He is thus thought to be a direct enemy of the crown; he is seen as "Jacobite terror." (129) Although the sequel proves many pirates to be Jacobites indeed, such as Blackbeard. Keating interprets history by claiming that Blackbeard "re-christened her [his ship <A/N>] *Queen Anne's Revenge*, a typical pirate gesture for in their eyes their only crimes were loyalty to the late Queen and a Stuart sentimentality." (Keating, *White Gold*, 87) Devlin lacks the patriotic feelings of the other pirates; he claims: "Not my country." (Keating, *Diamond*, 239) So, even if only a supporter of the Jacobite movement in appearance, Devlin does not have any other option than a pirate life. He carries unjustifiably almost every mark of an outsider to (English) society one can think of. While this unjust expulsion befits the *heroic privateer*-theme, his lack of patriotism contradicts it. What's more, Devlin does not only lack patriotism for England, he lacks any notion of loyalty to any notion all together. Before joining the pirates, Devlin defects and leaves the French marine. He readily betrays French intelligence to the British for his life and that of the other crew members. Keating only partly follows the

established plot-line and lays emphasis on the individual by removing the political, patriotic dimension. This disconnection between patriotic elements of the heroic privateer theme and the narrative at hand further illustrates the fragmentary character of the pirate motif. Elements can be singled out and be used as seen fit.

The narrative is informed most prominently by the idea that a wronged man has gained his freedom by joining the pirates. This prequel serves as a background and forms the strongest part of the characterisation of the main character. Keeping this story in mind (of righting a wrong) is vital to coin the reception of the character's actions and decisions. It serves as excuse for criminal activity. Marketing strategies reinforce this reading. The cover of the edition used here has the slogan "Born a Pauper, Sold as a Servant - He Had One Chance to *Fight for Freedom*" printed above the title. The slogan which cumulates in "fight for freedom" hides piratical activity. The short sentence "sold as a servant" hints at slavery, although Devlin is far from transatlantic slavery. Still, this associative link is used to give piracy an air of glory – it adds further emphasis to the "fight for freedom."

The sequel features an adapted version of the paratextual slogan within the novel, easy to identify by the identical underlying rhythm and sentence structure. It adds the aspect of becoming a captain: "Sold by his father, servant to his master, chosen by his men." (Keating, *White Gold*, 37). The first phrase is clearly aimed at raising sympathy through parental betrayal, whereas the last part outlines the leading qualities of the main character. The pirate, as he is presented in this series, might simply be another sea-faring picaro, a wronged man with a heart good enough to be chosen for a leader. This notion is backed by the fact that Devlin is a trickster hero. He tries, when possible, to take ships without shedding blood (e. g. Keating, *Fight*, 136-145 and *White Gold*, 34 and cf. my chapter "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality").

However, Devlin actually wins his freedom twice; this event is repeated throughout

the novel series. As mentioned above, Devlin defects to the British when facing defeat. The change of sides from French to British does not only save his life, but also the crew of a French warship when they fall victim to an English men-of-war:

> It was in the spring of 1712 that he had liberated an Irish sailor of a French sloop of war. He had smiled that first day when the Irishman stepped forward out of the line of captives to offer their services to the King's officers rather than have them slaughtered for their lack of English. Coxon had subsequently received his Post-Captaincy for the level of intelligence he was able to provide his admiral whilst still at sea. The Irishman had saved many lives that day. (Keating, *White Gold*, 68)

His quick response to a crisis and adverting of danger, together with winning the admiration of Coxon saves him the fate of a French prisoner of war. Devlin makes changing to the winning side when faced with defeat in a naval battle his survival strategy; first he changes from French to British, then from British to the pirates. This repetition weakens the impact of the life-changing moment when he joins the pirates significantly.

The reference to the heroic privateer is weakened further by the fact that it was not Devlin's intention to join the pirates. When the ship Devlin is on is attacked by pirates, the pirates are so impressed by his excellent fighting skills that they decide to take him into their services (Keating, *Fight*, 16-17). As his master Coxon is left behind in Africa, suffering from a life-threatening disease (29-31), Devlin must be something of a leftover on the ship. The reasons why he is not attending his ill master are not given. In the event of attack, it is Devlin who defends the ship, while the first officer and navigator have locked themselves into the cabin to burn the charts. (17) While the leading ranks are displaying cowardice, it is the captured Irishman who had been fighting on side of the French before he was captured by the English (hence, someone surely opposed to the English) who defends the ship of his absent master. His motive to do so remains unclear, rendering his character more complex. At least it can be concluded that Devlin has never had the intention of joining the pirates, as he is offered to join the ranks of the pirates because he was fighting them back viciously.

His turning pirate is thus not as much an outstanding and life changing event as context, genre expectations, and the paratextual slogans would imply. It seems rather that the

pirates may be the next party Devlin has opportunistically joined. The narrative of a better life in a piratical society is (de)constructed. Keating draws on this archetypical narrative of the heroic privateer and questions it by pairing it with the preceding episode concerning the French war sloop.

What is more, instead of setting this crucial moment of a life-changing event, when Devlin meets the pirates and "the two worlds collide[d]" (Keating, *Fight*, 54), centre stage, it is only told in restrospective (53-55). It forms the prequel to what is yet to come. This lack of an immediate account of the most important event of the novel series is striking. It forms the backbone of the series, but it only functions as such: a backstory. The event seems distant due to this retrospective narration. This gives it the air of a glorified past.

This narrative strategy of presenting the crucial turning point only in retrospective also adds confusion. Throughout the series, several characters re-narrate the events – and their perspectives differ profoundly. This event is not as clear-cut as it should be considering that it serves as excuse for all piratical activity within the book.

### 2.2.2   Question of Perspective: a Multi-Voiced Narration

Although the novels feature an omniscient heterodiegetic narrator, I argue that the constant shift in focaliser allows for a multi-voiced narration. This technique of a multi-voiced narration helps to undermine the portrayal of Devlin as a good man. Coxon constantly gives accounts which differ from Devlin's narrations; two different depictions of events constantly clash with each other. Thus, the perception of Devlin as a good-hearted and brilliant man changes drastically once the focaliser shifts to Coxon:

> How could it be Devlin? Coxon found it inconceivable that a man he had known, trusted, could willingly turn pirate. The lure was there for any common man, no doubt, but surely not Devlin? Coxon himself had beaten many of the unsavoury aspects out of the man. He had shown him attitudes to raise himself from the gutter. Perhaps he had been too kind. He had taken the magnanimous bearing of his father and shown respect to the Irishman, even taking time to confer knowledge upon the man. On discovering that the former butcher's boy could read, Coxon had loaned him his copy of Dampier's memoirs and bestowed him access to the logs on Sundays. Devlin was good company. A bright young

> man, born wrong. […] [T]here would come a day when he would stand before him. That day would end with Devlin cowering like an apologetic dog. One that had slept on the floor of Coxon's own cabin, now biting the hand that had given him a semblance of dignity beyond his birthright. (Keating, *Fight*, 134)

The train of thought leads from doubt to disappointment, ending in spite. Coxon had seen himself as a father-figure for Devlin and now feels frustration at his going down the wrong path. Devlin ends up as "apologetic dog" (*Fight*, 134) in his revenge fantasies, a lost son suddenly transformed into an animal. Meanwhile, adding an ironic edge, and implying that Coxon might be more responsible for Devlin's development than this thought report implies, "Dampier" (*Fight*, 134) might not have been the best choice of read. It refers to William Dampier's *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697) and Dampier's activities he describes in this book can be regarded as piratical.[40]

Yet, in truth, Coxon had projected an idealisation on Devlin, making a man who had no choice but living as his servant his only friend:

> Coxon had rewarded that man by making him his steward. More than that, Coxon, a stranger to ballroom culture of his officer peers, found companionship in the young man who was not only literate but could also divine the mathematical intricacies of navigation as if they were psalms to be recited. Coxon had seen something of himself in the Irishman. (Keating, *White Gold*, 68)

Coxon's claims of friendship and benevolence towards his servant contrast with his habit of referring to him as "the Irishman," clearly displaying distance and degradation. Coxon idealises Devlin and tries to impress his own ideas on him. In the end, Devlin's actions bring disgrace upon the head of his former master, by marking him a supposed Jacobite as well (262), even if the former does so unknowingly. Devlin can probably free himself of Coxon, but Coxon cannot free himself of Devlin: "I have fought in two wars […], yet I shall be remembered for the man who became pirate under me." (Keating, *White Gold*, 83) Coxon's decision to take Devlin in has tarnished his reputation. This mixture of disappointment,

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40 Cf. "Yet despite the efforts by Ringrose, Wafer, and most notably Wafer's friend William Dampier ('the best know sailor-narrator of the seventeenth century' (Munter/Grose in Ganser 423) who became a member of the Royal Society due to the publication of his travel narrative) to legitimize the (semi- or illegal) piratical expedition by framing their narratives as science books, their texts also demonstrate the problematic of authority in this imperial endeavor." (Ganser, *Crisis*, 35)

bitterness, and resentment on the side of Coxon hints at unreliable narration, making the text more hazy, fragmentary, and contradictory.

The sentiment that Coxon had been something like a father-figure is not shared by Devlin: "[f]our years as factotum to John Coxon, sleeping on the floors of cabins and rooms in Portsmouth and London." (Keating, *Fight*, 40) What looks like grace to Coxon, implying the mercy of letting a French prisoner sleep on his floor and hence sharing his room with him, looks like humiliation to the Devlin, the difference between bed and floor symbolising the difference in social status between the two. Devlin denies any emotional link between him and his former master: "He didn't teach me Cap'n. I jewed his clothes and I listened." (Keating, *Fight*, 58) Surely both reports contrast with each other and seem to be reduced to the positive and the negative respectively. It remains unclear whether Devlin has freed himself out of humiliating servitude or if he had not rather been saved by Coxon, who does not only spare him the fate of a French prisoner, but also teaches him by hiring his books to him. Even the word "master" is ambiguous; it can apply to servitude as well as to the teaching position. The text leaves it open to interpretation whether this is a case in which someone regained justice and dignity by turning pirate or if he betrayed his former master who saved him. Devlin's subsequent piratical, and thus, criminal, activities can only be justified in dependence on how the text is interpreted.

In a second example of contrastive reports, the strategy of a multi-voiced narration is used to reinforce the given image instead of undermining it. Another such voice telling an alternative version of events is that of former pirate captain Seth Toombs:

> He awoke hours later, he told them [his new pirate crew <A/N>], to find that he had been betrayed by his new navigator. A former servant to an English captain that he had rescued himself from his indenture had repaid that favour by abandoning him alone on St [sic] Nick when his plans to kidnap Valentim had ended with the deaths of trusted men. One traitor was still alive. Devlin was still alive. (Keating, *White Gold*, 211)

Despite these accusations, Devlin only inherits Toomb's position because the former is thought dead. (Keating, *Fight* 92) Although the men seem to prefer their new captain due to

the better effectiveness of his approach (142) which gains him support of the crew, the accusation that Devlin would have usurped Toombs is factually untrue. He even has to face a strong row when he returns without his comrades. (92-93) In this case, the accusations against Devlin are wrong. This unjust accusation of treason reinforces the image of a wronged man.

In the first example the multi-voiced narration creates a contradictory presentation of events the reader cannot untangle, whereas on the latter the text makes it clear that Toomb's reports are falsified. This mixture of multi-voiced narrations that can be untangled, or cannot be entangled, creates a dense text of different reports of events instead of a clear-cut narration one might expect in quest orientated adventure novels. This instability of narration helps largely to create a main character who cannot be fathomed by the reader and whose intentions are not clear. I will explain this more in the next subchapter. This shadiness of the main character largely adds to the construction of a character who can easily be seen as "good" and "bad" at the same time, because in this case, these categorisations are often a question of individual interpretation. The text allows for the required oscillation between hero and villain because it is fragmentary and filled with contradictory narratives.

### 2.2.3   Ambiguity Constructed Through Gaps in the Text

Devlin's actions and decisions can often be seen as ambiguous. His intentions are not revealed and cannot be fathomed by the reader. In the context of reception theory, these are gaps in the text than can be filled in by the reader. I will discuss two examples in the following to illustrate how this character is constructed by the strategic use of gaps. I will explain further how the text constructs Devlin as a character that cannot be understood by readers by likening him to the motif of the great detective in my fifth chapter "Intertextual Construction of the Pirate Motif."

In my first example, Devlin seems to appease Coxon by the benevolent gesture of

giving him the formula for porcelain, a sure guarantee for Coxon's rehabilitation, accompanied by the personal gift of Miguel De Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, book II, a friendly gesture towards his former master. His (claimed) intention is avoiding a fight and the loss of many lives on both sides (420-427). This gesture of reparation towards his former master on whom he has brought so much misfortune, even if unintentionally, paired with thoughtful consideration how to spare many lives might be interpreted as good deeds and morally correct behaviour. Still, at a closer look, the gesture might just as well serve as a bribe to avoid defeat; the personal gift may be part of clever manipulation. The presented events do not reveal Devlin's nature or intention. Devlin's intention may be the retribution of a good man or it may be the cunning of a manipulating master-mind criminal. In the end, readers can pick their preferred reading, be it the good-hearted picaro or the evil mastermind. The openness of the text allows for both readings so that readers can fill the gap to their liking.

In the second example Devlin does not only steal a large treasure, he also leaves behind a display of brutality in a ford after he and his crew have taken the treasure away:

> The crows cawed as they tore and scraped at the hanging flesh. Someone had set ten poles ripped from the stockade walls into the ground beyond the gate. Sitting, straining forward as if alive, bound by their fraying wrists, the black desiccated forms of what had once been their countrymen were fixed to each stake. The tallest of the sitting corpses, still apparelled in a fine blue waistcoat and breeches, hung skeletal and eyeless beneath a black flag. (Keating, *Fight*, 334)

It goes without speaking that treasure hunts are immanent to pirate fiction, but the display of bodies after removing the gold adds a further element of gore which is absent in other texts, such as *Treasure Island*. Captain Flint uses bodies as markers to point to the treasure (Stevenson, 174); Devlin, however, reduces them to a mere demonstration of power. This display clearly counteracts the personal code of honour which would be required for the heroic privateer motif as observed by Pfister. Devlin humiliates his victims after death. Even if the aforementioned display of dead human bodies does not inflict further physical harm on the victims, it does not fail to have its effect upon those who find them:

> The grim design, now seared into their coldest memories, would slouch back, even years from this

place, whenever the stench of decay or the gleeful writhing of maggots forced them to recall the grinning skull set in the ring of a compass rose, above the cross of a pair of pistols [design of Devlin's flag <A/N>]. (Keating, *Fight*, 334)

Devlin might be following a strange compromise between sparing lives and scaring others by directing cruelty towards dead bodies. This may be a clever way to walk the thin line between the good-hearted hero and gruesome villain the pirate is supposed to be. This scene is thus open to two readings. This display of dead bodies is either the work of a good man who holds a newly won command over pirates and who needs to demonstrate his capability to the crew and future victims alike, but who only does so by directing violence against dead bodies as opposed to harm living beings. In a second reading, it is the display of power, threat, and revenge.

Keating takes further steps to illustrate the brutal behaviour of the pirates. Chapters preceding a kill are partly devoted to the future victims and thus create sympathy for the victims. The pirates' killings appear more gruesome due to the reader's intimacy with the victims:

Favre Callier enjoyed the time alone on the cliff top. From the small calico tent that was his sentry post on the west of the island he could see for twenty miles around him. […] He spent the hours of his watch with charcoal and paper, refining the multitude of sketches that he kept in his leather satchel. He had painstakingly drawn, over the last few wekkeks, all the foliage that the small world outside his tent offered; now he drafted portraits of his comrades, their barracks and any ships that appeared in the offing. For occasional inspiration and relief from the monotony of his forenoon watch, he walked the short distance to the edge of the cliff and cautiously watched the breakers and white catspaws licking the rocks below, silent and gentle from this height. […] (180)

Later, upon discovery of the carnage, "Duphot was drawn to the leather satchel of Favre Callier, abandoned, some of his sketches littering the ground, lifting weakly in the mild breeze." (229) The body of Callier is swapped for his sketches, which are are lying on the ground and "lifting in the breeze" in his place. Besides the reference to "litter" may indicate the dehumanising function of a pirate's victim. It is an obstacle to be removed which later "litters" the ground. The fact that something which was treasured dearly by the victim – his drawings – is thrown away as refuse hints at respectless and merciless behaviour. It also indicates the waste of life, symbolised in the waste of his sketches and his talent. However,

Callier is not killed by Devlin, but Dandon, keeping Devlin's status as noble hero intact. (220) Devlin merely commandeers the blood-thirsty crowd.

Why a noble captain should wish to command blood-thirsty men in the first place stays unclear. In contrast to the hero of *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), Devlin is not driven by a will to escape and parading a feigned command. It is more likely, in my eyes, that Devlin simply needs brutal pirates to obtain the treasure he fancies. The hunt for this treasure asks for brutal pirates as it is well guarded by the French. (133)  Thus, a noble captain may need brutal pirates as a tool in order to gain his riches:

> The approaching dawn would also bring the prospect of the French gold ever closer. On seeing the *Shadow*, it had rekindled the flame of the idea within him. The folded parchment had provided him with a chance of greatness. The possibility of wealth he and his kind should never know, only marvel at it in tales from Tew and Avery and their fabled riches pirated from sultans and treasure ships. But just like them, he could not gain it alone. […] 'Opportunity makes a thief.' He recalled the words from some page behind in another world, and he glowed from the sense of it […]. (112)

This passage does not only illustrate how he perceives his piratical associates, but also puts the paratextual slogan into perspective. After all, Devlin does not only fight for his personal freedom, but also fights to gain riches which are far above his status. The phrase "[t]he possibility of wealth he and his kind should never know" still aims at the image of readjusting justice, still, the fact that Devlin craves for riches stands at odds with the idea of a servant who has found personal freedom on the high seas. Devlin's true motivation of gathering riches hints at a criminal. In addition, he does not show any intention of helping the poor or to share the riches with "his kind" (taken he is referring to servants). This further illustrates that Devlin is not fighting injustice, but is merely interested in his own gain. The criminal intention is weakened because it is paired with the idea that a man unjustly expelled of society has finally found respect and freedom. The novel pairs both aspects and thus illustrates that the pirate motif can be constructed with contradictory element without hindering the credibility of the narrative.

This pattern of selfish greed is seemingly broken in the sequels. Devlin does not keep

the retrieved objects – the formula for porcelain production, the Pitt diamond, the cross of fire – for himself. Giving up the desired objects still serves his own purposes, such as becoming a privateer for the Portuguese (Keating, *Cross*, 401-406) or protecting his crew (Keating, *Diamond*, 325-330). This apparent change of mind to give up the riches serves as part of his strategies and thus still demonstrates his greedy character. Now the graving for riches gives way to ambition and the wish to be in control.

Another example of cruelty is the torture of Valentim Mendes. Mendes is made to choose between dying or losing a hand. (101-103) However, as Mendes is the supposed murderer of the former captain Toombs (102) – Toombs is well alive, through horribly scarred (339-340)) – this act of revenge gains Devlin the sympathies of the crew. (94-95) Here, cruelty and revenge are needed to enable him to control his crew: "Revenge was inevitable: it had always been their way." (102) Brutality is a necessary means to strengthen his new command. Devlin adapts to the piratical rules and embraces their ways. The fact that he does so all too willingly proves that his hesitation to exact torture is very short-lived. Devlin assimilates into his new surroundings. On a more abstract level this proves that piracy is inseparable from violence; a pairing which dismantles present-day escapist and utopian notions. (cf. *We Are Pirates* in the chapter "Intertextuality")

Devlin may wish to command the pirates, but he does not show any affection for his crew. Devlin demonstrates his idea of loyalty when confronted with a trap in the sequel: "And Peter Sam? He means perhaps more to the men than I. How would they feel if I let their man be taken? What kind of lord would I be to them?" (Keating, *White Gold*, 43) This example demonstrates cool calculation about mutiny, while excluding every aspect of empathy or loyalty for the kidnapped man at the same time. It can thus be assumed that the emotional speech given to his crew is given for strategic reasons only: "This is not for coin, lads. It's much to ask you to sail for no profit, but none of you have questioned, and for that I am

proud. And as for that, know I would come for any one of you taken from us." (48) The subsequent representation of his inner thoughts "He would carry them in his pockets now" (48) points to manipulation and so indicates once more that Devlin regards his crew as tools.

This casts a different light on the fact that Devlin often uses deceit to spare not only the lives of the victims, but also those of his crew: "but you must admit that my plan caused the least harm to us both" (138). What might look like mercy may be the simple economy of treating his tools with care. Still, it surely gains him reader sympathy.

His decisions can mostly be seen in these two perspectives. During an encounter with Blackbeard he steps up to protect an innocent man, his future friend Dandon (Keating, *Fight*, 172-173), claiming he came down to protect his men (171). Still, it is unclear whether the bravado is supposed to manifest loyalty for his newly gained command (172) or reflects a true sense of faithfulness. The same applies for his offer to sacrifice himself in a duel for the lives of his crew (Keating, *Diamond*, 260-274), which may alternatively be part of his plan to resurrect the piratical feelings of the enemy, a retired privateer (260-273). In the end, the character and his motivations are out of reach for the reader. Manipulation does not stop with his crew, it may include the reader as well, who might fall victim to the fidelity displayed. In short, it can be said that Devlin's position as leader of an utopic society is questionable; he might regard his crew as another part of ship equipment.

### 2.2.4   Empire of Pirates

Another strategy to glorify Devlin is the constellation of characters in relation to each other. Devlin is taking on a powerful Empire. The fact that his opponents are much more powerful than himself adds to his perception as a trickster hero, a brilliant David, who can outwit a mighty Goliath. In the end, it might be the appeal of the much weaker David, who can surmount a mighty and sinister opponent which does not only evoke associations to the Robin

Hood myth (Pfister, "Video Games," 201), another trickster stealing from unjust British authorities, but may also construct a positive hero. The personality of such a David-character might be secondary.

The glorification of Devlin is strengthened further through the depiction of an evil, even piratical British Empire. These novels aim at illustrating the Empire as the 'real' pirates. The pirates are thus elevated by the means of contrast. As brutal as they may be, as cunning their schemes may be, the Empire proves to be much worse. In the first novel, Coxon is ordered to protect the gold of the French (Keating, *Fight*, 133), but once arrived, sealed, secret, and quite different orders are revealed. The gold is to be brought back to England and the pirates to be blamed for the loss. (260-263) The British are depicted as villainous, planning to steal the gold from their ally and to blame another party – the pirates. They justify their decision with the imminent Jacobite threat: "the gold, for its own security, needed to be safeguarded by the British crown, in the interests of the French, naturally." (262) The depiction is highly ironical; in a case of anthropomorphism the gold is claimed to have an interest in its own security, whereas the French are "protected" from being unwilling financial backers of the Jacobites. The irony on text level emphasises the irony on plot-level; the British, the supposed antagonists of the pirates, prove to be more piratical than the actual pirates by cheating on friend and foe alike.

This incidence seems to have a strong impact on Coxon's worldview: "[A]nyone can steal. Anyone. The pirate has always been. Always will. Sometimes they hide beneath the coats of gentlemen, but it all ends the same." (*Fight*, 272) His intention is to influence or patronise Devlin, yet his remark also mirrors his own recent experiences. He seems to be more horrified at his own evaluation as dispersible once the goal is achieved (*Fight*, 263) than the treacherous plot of his superiors. Coxon's remark that pirates "hide beneath the coats of gentlemen" (*Fight*, 272) illustrates that the line between pirates and English is not clear-cut

and that Coxon sees some of his superiors as pirates, too.

The portrayal of British governor of the Bahamas, Woodes Rogers, further blurs the lines between British Empire and pirates. He is to offer the pirates a pardon issued by the British crown, the Proclamation, and to bring it to Nassau. Rogers demonstrates his power with random killings. Although only one drunkard disturbs the official meeting, it is ordered that the eight men standing next to him are to be hanged as well (*White Gold*, 93-104). Unjustified killings, be it murders or executions, are characteristic of a villainous character or entity. This decision stands in stark contrast with Devlin's methods of deceit to spare lives on both sides. Men are randomly chosen to be executed. This callousness on side of the British governor white-washes Devlin's brutality at the ford, which was directed towards dead bodies only. In comparison with the brutal behaviour of the Empire Devlin's methods seem moderate.

Rogers is also inconsiderate of the consequences of his actions. In a rash act, he kills a straying cat. The friendly behaviour of the animal towards Rogers results in its death (127-130), reinforcing the notion of unjustified murder. Yet this killing is not only unjustified, it is also thoughtless. The cat would have reduced the number of rats, an important task in a new colony plagued by a fever. (123-126) When Rogers complains about the cats, Coxon points out that someone has to fight the rats. (130) Consequently, the killing of the cat illustrates that random killings result in severe problems, like the rats spreading disease. The implied tipping of the biological balance hints on a metaphorical level to mutiny. A large number of rats brings catastrophe just as well as an angry mob. Woodes is inconsiderate of possible side-effects, a character trait which would traditionally be associated with the careless pirate life. Keating's pirates, however, are much more considerate and careful than their British antagonists, which points, in the long run, to a higher degree of understanding.

The British Empire is further portrayed as piratical by comparing pirates with

privateers.[41] Keating frequently points out that both commit the same crimes, the only difference being that the latter are sanctioned by the crown: "[p]rivateers – but pirates with a few extra strokes of ink" (*White Gold*, 126). Rogers, who is a historical privateer, is described as "[h]e had raided treasure ships and sent countless enemies to the dark bed of the sea. A pirate in all but name, were it not for the brown oilskin that contained his letters of marque." (*Fight*, 336) The fact that Rogers is just another pirate who happens to act in the name of his majesty sheds a new light on the random killings. Rogers kills pirates as if they were vermin, despite the fact that he is, actually, were it not for his letter of marque, one of them. Therefore, Rogers is a hypocrite.

Rogers is not only a hypocrite, he is also a traitor. He betrays the Empire to hide his own failure. (127) Coxon is once more confronted with a superior giving amoral orders, another pirate in a gentleman's coat. Later, Coxon himself gives in to piratical behaviour – including torture – provoking mutinous reactions by his officers (cf. *Cross*). In the end, even he "ha[s] become one of them" (291). The officers of a piratical Empire finally become full-blown pirates by giving in to selfish reasons. While the narrative progresses, the British become increasingly piratical themselves.

While the Empire grows increasingly piratical, some of the pirates see themselves as political exiles, Jacobites:

> They were political exiles awaiting that day when Hanover fell and they could return home to a righteous welcome. Their profession had nothing to do with criminality at all. Piracy was how they ate, for what choice did men have whose country had been stolen from them? Aye, and you can swallow as much shit as you like but it won't feed you. (87)

The crucial point is the denial of criminality, turning piracy into a political action. However, Blackbeard's intention is not to support the Jacobite movement, but to increase his own wealth (87-88), which proves his justification to be supportive of the Jacobite movement to be a bland lie. The very same lie works quite well for the British, though, by excusing the theft of

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41 For more information see my introduction.

French gold with the Jacobite movement as pointed out above. Both parties use the Jacobite rebellion as an excuse to cover up their selfish reasons. The dividing line between pirates and the British blurs. Pirates and Empire mirror each other.

The fact that pirates and privateers are illustrated as the same kind of criminal – or hero – contradicts Pfister's heroic privateer theme I have pointed out above. The crucial point of the theme is the loyalty to monarchy and country, which re-establishes the privateer as lawful citizen (Pfister, "Pop-Kultur," 36-38). Yet, this applies to Blackbeard as well, who uses Jacobite thinking as excuse for his piratical activities. Both sides, pirates and the British alike, use patriotism as an excuse to justify their actions. The theme of the heroic privateer is undermined. For both sides, pirates and the British alike, the heroic deeds for king and country only serve as a cover-up for piracy motivated by greed.

Thus, the framework of this narratives confronts the ambivalent pirate with an evil Empire. Pirates and British officials are presented in direct comparison. This contrast contributes largely to the whitewashing of Devlin. Devlin too craves the gold and tries to take it as peacefully as possible, whereas the British forge clandestine plans, intend to blame someone else for the theft and to eliminate Coxon as soon as he has fulfilled his purpose. Both parties plan to commit the piratical act of stealing the gold, but the British plan to take the gold of an alley, an act even more treacherous than piracy. Furthermore, they add the crimes of deceit and the planned killing of an innocent. Devlin might regard his crew as ship equipment, but does not plan to kill them after they have completed their task. Even if the pirate is portrayed as an ambivalent character, he is elevated in contrast to a more evil Empire.

## 2.2.5 A Fragmentary Text

In sum, the narrative stays close to the theme of the heroic privateer, but presents a character who does not quite fit in with the theme. Devlin is an ambiguous character full of contrasts.

Every attempt to put Devlin in a box will most likely fail. The piratical character is put together by contrastive elements; the constitutional elements making up his character, or is life story, fail to flesh him out as a character whose motivations could be traced.

In sum, the novels often portray Devlin's actions in a way that allows for a positive interpretation of his decision, but undermines them at the same time. In addition to that, events are repeatedly narrated twice under a different perspective, using a shift of focaliser. Those different views contrast with each other. The strongest element marking Devlin a heroic character is thus genre expectation; his positioning as main character sets him into a firmly established framework of narrative conventions. This convention is backed further by the introduction of villainous characters who work for the British Empire and exceed the pirates in callousness and viciousness. This structure bears a superficial semblance to the heroic privateer theme as observed by Pfister, but undermines the theme at the same time as Devlin lacks the patriotic motivation as well as a personal moral code to befit this literary tradition. The Pirate Devlin series makes use of this literary tradition and questions it at the same time by introducing a much darker character who is far from the swashbuckling heroes. The fact that Devlin must be considered a greyish character at best breaks and thereby questions the genre convention of a heroic pirate guided by morals. In this example, the motif of the pirate hero is (de)constructed, illustrating the constructedness of the pirate motif in general.

## 2.3    Filmed Instability: *Pirates of the Caribbean*

*Pirates of the Caribbean* is the most popular pirate fiction of present-day culture. It combines the piratical narrative with elements of the supernatural, such as ghosts; carnivorous mermaids; zombies; voodoo magic; and the curse of the Devil's Triangle. The pirates fight the British in the parts I-III, in parts IV and V their enemies are another pirate, Blackbeard, and a cursed Spanish pirate hunter, Almando Salazaar, respectively. The series focuses on the main character Jack Sparrow; other main characters change throughout the series.

Despite being the most influential and most popular pirate franchise of present-day culture, it is thus not pirate fiction in a strict sense, but a cross-over between pirate fiction and supernatural horror fiction. This franchise sets pirates into the context of supernatural horror, such as the ghost ship tradition. It also breathes life into elements of maritime lore, such as Davy Jones Locker, man-eating siren-mermaids, a colossal kraken to drag ships into the deep, the edge of the world where the ships fall down etc. The series seems to aim at bringing sea-yarns to screen. This combination is by no means new; Rauscher points out that prior examples, namely the game series *Monkey Island* and Tim Power's novel *On Stranger Tides* (1988) already combine the pirate trope and the supernatural: "Angesichts übernatürlicher Seefahrer-Mythen, wie dem fliegenden Holländer, dem unheimlichen Davy Jones, der die Seelen verstorbener Matrosen auf dem Meeresgrund in Empfang nimmt[42], oder den Voodoo-Ritualen der Karibik, erscheint es überraschend, dass diese Kombination nicht bereits früher ausprobiert wurde." (197)[43] The combination of the pirate motif with elements of the supernatural is thus fruitful and logical. However, the other examples discussed in this thesis, which I call "post-Sparrow," go without supernatural elements. This defining feature of the prevalent pirate narrative of present-day culture has not been continued.

Here, the pirate is in a triangular constellation between an evil, power seeking Empire and evil, inhuman creatures. Steinhoff points out: "Gekämpft wird gegen 'böse' Piraten – Gesetzlose –, die in *Pirates of the Caribbean* in Form von Untoten, Zombies und Seemonstern in Erscheinung treten, aber nnauch gegen das britische Establishment und seine repressiven Strukturen." ("Hollywoodkino," 144) The opponents are hereby clearly separated into human and non-human. Zhanial observes: "With the exception of Lord Cutler Beckett, the villains in the series are presented as supernatural characters forced to lead an undead

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42 The films combine the Flying Dutchman with Davy Jones by naming the ship of the latter *Flying Dutchman*, but originally they are two different characters.

43 The only exception of a very early combination of the pirate motif with the supernatural are semi-historical depictions of Blackbeard, who has been frequently associated with the supernatural. (Zhanial, *Postmodern*, 46-47)

existence between life and death to emphasise their evilness[,]" (*Postmodern*, 46) whereas "the series in general rather tends towards romanticising the pirates and stressing freedom as piracy's most positive trait." (*Postmodern*, 93) This is mainly achieved by contrasting the pirates to literally monsters.

Zhanial traces this tendency to Othering evil pirates to Victorian pirates who are mostly mutilated:

> Disney's evil pirate captains are marked by physical mutilations, too. Barbossa has a scar below his right eye and in the fourth instalment a wooden leg, and Davy Jones lacks both a leg and an arm. Remarkably, with their skeletal (*The Curse of the Black Pearl*), animalistic (*Dead Man's Chest* and *At World's End*) or zombie (*On Stranger Tides*) appearances, the evil pirates as clearly symbolise the 'Other' as their Victorian predecessors in literature. Nonetheless, it is important to note how the link between physical mutilation and criminality is modified and updated for the twenty-first century. The theories of degeneration that influenced the depiction of pirates in the nineteenth century are no longer accepted today and have been replaced by fantasy. The representation of the evil pirates as cursed might also be related to the recent popularity of the Gothic genre and fantasy stories. In the Disney series, the supernatural disfigurement of characters, whether pirates or not, is used to stress their evilness. (*Postmodern*, 193)

The most important Victorian pirates, Hook and Silver, however, are highly ambiguous, popular characters and far from clear-cut villains. Their mutilations thus do not seem to cause rejection in readers and / or viewers. What is more, a missing hand or leg are less repulsive than the appearances of the probably most famous crippled characters in world literature, both based in Paris, namely hunchback Quasimodo of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) and Éric, the Phantom of the Opera, of Gaston Lereux's eponymous *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (1909-1910). These two French texts explicitly thematise the mutilation of the main characters and their subsequent rejection by society. In fact, in both cases, one of the central plot elements is living secretly in a Parisian building to avoid the general public, Notre Dame and the underground premises of the Opéra Garnier respectively. The mentioned pirates, the Victorian Hook and Silver, as well as the modern day Barbossa and Davy Jones, however, are far from hiding, but are always in plain sight and mostly in a commandeering position. Zhanial does not take these very different representations of mutilation into account which focus on expulsion and add a large question mark on "the link between physical mutilation

and criminality" (*Postmodern*, 193). I thus want to distance myself from a viewpoint that the horror fiction deployed in *Pirates of the Caribbean* might have been preceded by an exploitation of mutilated bodies.

The depictions of bodily mutilations must be seen on a larger scale: peg legs, eye patches, and scars are canonised visual markers for pirates in visual media. Zhanial ignores further that Victorian pirates are text based, whereas the supernatural monster pirates of Disney cater to a large part the aspect of cinematic spectacle. These films were obviously meant as such as most of these films were produced in 3D. The crucial fact is rather that supernatural pirates are more dangerous, stronger, faster, and more difficult to kill. The evil pirates are depicted as inhuman to humanise characters such as Sparrow by the means of contrast. The ambiguity of the pirate motif is tipped in favour of a more positive depiction by contrast to inhuman monsters which are more scary, more mysterious, and more dangerous than an ambiguous pirate might be.

In a manner similar to the previous examples, pirates are idealised by the character constellation and their relation to each other. I will show in an exemplary way how the motif of the ghost ship and its cinematic tradition helps to generate piratical heroes by contrasting them to evil ghost-pirates.[44]

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44 Frank points out that all pirates as depicted in *Pirates of the Caribbean* are connected to the Gorgon. The gorgon or Medusa has snakes for hair, which he compares to dreadlocks. The fact that the films depict their pirates with dreadlocks is thus supposed to solve the problem "how to make really scary pirates who, also because of the whitewashed Disney ride and older Hollywood renditions of such types, have been reduced to mere caricatures in contemporary imaginations." (59) He concludes "the film therefore merely continues the practice of exploiting the Caribbean. It does so through racial Othering with dreadlocks[.]" (62) However, in comparison to the depiction as real monsters, such as ghosts, zombies, or half-fish beings, the impact of this rather secondary rendition as monstrous via comparison and association is lessened. The film series clearly differentiates between human and non-human pirates, creating thus the needed contrast between heroes and villains to drive the narrative on.

**2.3.1 Evil Supernatural: The Ghost Ship Tradition**

Within the series, evil is marked by Gothic key elements, at least, when it comes to enemy pirates. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 31-40) In the first film, Barbossa and his crew suffer from a curse which has turned them into ghosts. Steihoff observes:

> Captain Barbossa and his crew represent kidnappers and monsters […] They are the living dead or undead, neither fully alive nor fully dead, evoking notions of uncleanness as they transgress binary oppositions of life and death, human and supernatural, 'abnormal' and 'normal'. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 33).

The pirate-ghosts symbolise the abject, due to their positioning in between life and death (34) and the visual representation of death trough decaying corpses. (Phesant-Kelly, 74). Here, the element of gore is of a much more immediate effect than in the novel series, as a visual medium confronts and engages the recipient in a more direct way with decaying corpses. Yet, it is not only the pirates who are cursed; their ship, the *Black Pearl*, is cursed as well. The narrative of a cursed ship and a cursed crew is thus part of the ghost ship tradition. Zhanial observes: "The first instalment, *The Curse of the Black Pearl*, wittingly links the revelation of the evil pirates' skeleton existence to the appearance of the moonlight, thus tapping into the viewer's knowledge of Gothic and vampire stories." (*Postmodern*, 47) Yet, I argue that the pirate-ghosts are not associated with the Gothic tradition, but are actually a continuation. As pointed out above, I see *Pirates of the Caribbean* as a crossover between pirate fiction and supernatural horror fiction. Frances Phesant-Kelly has observed that "*Black Pearl* [referring to the first film instead of the ship <A/N>] also draws on the zombie genre," (69) but due to the appearance of zombies in the fourth instalment and their variance in appearance and behaviour, I will not regard Barbossa and his crew as zombies in the following. Instead, I will name a direct precursors to exemplary illustrate how the pirate-ghosts continue the ghost ship tradition.

The first precursor to the narrative of the cursed *Black Pearl* is the intradiegetic graphic novel series "The Tales of the Black Freighter" embedded as a mise-en-abyme, a

graphic novel within a graphic novel, in Alan Moore's graphic novel *Watchmen* (1986/87). The ship's name, *Black Freighter*, serves as forerunner to the *Black Pearl*. Both ships are pitch-black and both carry a crew of undead which attacks a harbour city. Moore describes his ghost ship as hellish:

> By the time the men are aboard the ship and have noticed the dreadful, deathly smell that seems to exude from the ship's timbers, it is too late. The [...] sailors learn that the ship is a vessel from Hell itself to take on board the souls of evil men so that they may walk its blood-stained decks for all eternity. (Moore, Treasure Island Treasury of Comics, p.1)

Both crews, that of the *Black Pearl* and of the *Black Freighter* alike, are driven by the curse of eternal life. Barbossa and his crew seek the last piece of gold missing from the chest of Aztec gold to become mortal again. The crew of the *Black Freighter* is in itself another manifestation of hell. It is "a vessel from Hell itself" which forces "evil men" to sail on it "for all eternity." (Moore, Treasure Island Treasury of Comics, p.1) The fact that its deck are blood-stained adds to the horror. As the crew is immortal, the blood must stem from victims. This is not an ordinary merchant, but a predator ship, a ship constantly seeking prey to kill. The men are forced to continue their brutal piratical life-style until the end of time under the presence of constant reminders, the blood-stains, of their deeds.

In my second example, a visual quotation creates an intertextual link to another well-established Gothic monster, Dracula. The shot of the black ship nearing the harbour during night-time in *PotC* I bears strong semblance to the respective shot in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), featuring another black ship carrying the undead as Dracula arrives in Whitby via ship. In both the novel of the same name by Bram Stoker (1897) and filmic adaptation, Dracula has already killed the entire crew at this point. The only creature aboard the black ship is an undead monster, bringing doom to the sleeping harbour city. These examples show that Barbossa and his ghosts follow a long tradition of motif history.

Barbossa and his crew are thus a cross-over between pirates and undead monsters. This makes for some significant changes to the established pirate motif, e.g. their intention is

to release their spell instead of spreading havoc arbitrarily. They still seek blood and gold, something which might be considered piratical, but they seek it literally as ingredients to annul their curse. Gold and blood are represented in the missing piece of gold taken from the Aztec chest and the blood of the Turner family, so, it is one specific piece of gold and a distinguished bloodline they seek. This specification of the pirate's lust for blood and gold – instead of representing the thrive for violence and wealth in general – questions the established pirate motif.

This combination results in turning the pirate motif on its head. In contrast to other pirate-narratives, the pirates actually intend to return the treasure instead of finding it. (Pheasant-Kelly, 85) Moreover, they do not intend to spill blood by killing and torturing their victims, but they need to bring it to the cursed chest of gold and sprinkle the gold with it. The fact that they seek the blood of their victim reminds of vampires and harks back to *Dracula* again. In an ironic twist, they need the blood to release their spell and end their status of undead immortality; vampires, however, need the blood to continue their existence. The Disney franchise thus invokes and inverts the reference to the vampire motif at the same time. The pirate motif and elements of the horror genre are intertwined to form a new form of evil ghost-pirates.

### 2.3.2   Monstrosity

Steinhoff suggests that the pirate-ghosts represent "a distorted mirror of British imperialism, patriarchy and also of American or Western capitalism" (35) for their "lust for material wealth and the greed by which they are consumed." (35) They signify "normative cultures' own desires, deviant lusts and passions, or in Freudian terminology, its 'it'" (36). To visualise this concept they are portrayed as monsters (36). Pheasant-Kelly argues that Barbossa and his crew represent capitalism in connection to the banking crisis. (85) However, human pirates

crave wealth as well, as has been pointed out before on the example of Devlin, as well as the human pirates in the film series. Thus, all pirates should represent cultures' 'it'. The ghost-pirates differ from colonised (which are not present in the movie at hand), colonisers, and even pirates (like e.g. Gibbs or Cotton) alike which renders a political positioning of the pirate-ghosts difficult; they are a group of their own. Moreover, the curse of the Aztec gold represents the punishment for Spanish colonisation.[45] The pirates have stolen from the coloniser instead of the colonised; they function as antagonist to all colonial forces instead as their representatives. This renders a postcolonial reading in my opinion difficult.

What is more, the film series features more than one undead crew: Davy Jones commands a crew of half-human, half-sea-animal undead creatures aboard the *Flying Dutchman*; Blackbeard commands zombie officers aboard the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. This repetition of undead pirate crews weakens the impact and significance of the ghost-pirates. Seen in this light, the ghost pirates are just the first of a series of monstrous undead pirates and thus do not carry a special significance.

Fradley interprets Davy Jones's crew in turn as a monstrous representation of homophobia:

> In contradistinction to the diversity of the Black Pearl [sic], the crew of the Flying Dutchman [sic] are an unearthly vision of diseased interpellation. As with Sparrow's accursed 'black spot,' one does not have to look too hard to uncover AIDS metaphors amid these accursed and semiotically suggestive non- people. Unlike the egalitarian transnationalism and multiracial inclusivity of the Black Pearl [sic], the Flying Dutchman [sic] is characterized by deindividuation and the monstrous undoing of selfhood. 'Part of the crew, part of the ship,' intone the abject wretches in what could easily be read as a vicious sideswipe at the enforced collectivism of identity politics. (305-306)

However, the black spot is an implicit intertextual link to Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, a trope so inherent to pirate fiction that it hardly allows for any other interpretation or symbolical meaning. As mentioned above, monstrous pirate crews are a recurring motif in the film series

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45  A similar constellation of Aztec gold being stolen from another colonial force, the Spanish, can be found in *The Sea-Hawk* (1940). Aztec gold changes hands from Spanish nobility to English privateers – only to be returned later for the sake of the lady. Analogously to *PotC* I, one colonial force robs another. When confronted with protest, Geoffrey Thorpe puts to question how willingly the Aztecs have parted with their gold in the first place, implying that stealing from thieves cannot be morally wrong.

which renders a specific interpretation of one of them difficult. Seen as a whole, they represent the much larger picture of a classical pattern of horror fiction. Every sequel introduces new monsters which differ from the precursors. This pattern may be comparable to the "monster of the week," as it can be found in horror-themed TV series, such as *Supernatural* (2005-2020) and *Sleepy Hollow* (2013-2017).

Zhanial, however, points out that the film series undermines these horror elements with scenes which can clearly be described as slap-stick humour, implying thus a further mixture of genres:

> Thus, the postmodern reworking of genre conventions affects the fantastic, too, because through comically subverting the horror normally invoked by corpses and ghosts, the films implicitly question whether contemporary viewers – who most likely also possess a wide knowledge of horror films – can still be scared by walking undead beings. All the sequels stick to this technique as well and partly diminish the terror inspired by the undead creatures through comedy. (*Postmodern*, 48)

She argues that the films question if recipients "can still be scared by walking undead beings." (*Postmodern*, 48) Yet, zombie narratives are a genre in their own right, and I argue that Disney does not intend to question whether another completely unrelated genre is still thriving. Moreover, this question can be discarded in the light of the popularity of the TV series *The Walking Dead* (2005 - ). A more likely explanation for the mixture of horror and comedy is that the franchise is meant to please two different target groups, adults and children. *Pirates of the Caribbean* is a Disney franchise planned as family entertainment and thus not aimed at shocking or scaring the viewer. Not all horror films are intended to paralyse the viewer with fear. The comic elements may offer relief for children that the monsters on screen are something to be laughed at and are thus not so scary after all. The comical reliefs make the horror elements family friendly entertainment and guarantees in the same breath that the pirates can be portrayed as monsters without diminishing the target group to adults only.

*Pirates of the Caribbean* makes extensive use of the ghost ship tradition by introducing several ships and crew to which this definition applies in varying degrees. In a

strategy similar to the one deployed by Keating, the pirates who function as "heroes" of the franchise are white-washed by the constellation they are in. When Devlin's method seem humane in comparison to a ruthless Empire, Sparrow and his companions appear less menacing when compared with monstrous pirates. The position of the pirate as a good character is relational.

### 2.3.3   Jack Sparrow: *Amicus Humani Generis*

The central character of the series, Sparrow, is such an example of a good pirate. Although he is frequently interpreted as an unheroic character, motivated by selfish goals only, I will show in the following that he is just another Disney hero hidden in filthy rags. I argue that Sparrow might have been planned as a British spy infiltrating the pirates, creating a moment of surprise in one of the later sequels, but that this option was never taken advantage of. Sparrow is characterised by his ostensible fickleness and unreliability. Fradley points out: "Sparrow, [...] remains unconfined by any kind of ontological constancy, oscillating wildly between madness and sanity, heroism and villainy, genius and idiocy." (304) Sparrow is a character ostensibly coined by inconsistency, yet, I show in the following that he frequently follows a static behavioural pattern and that many of his actions can be seen as a strategic move to confuse and trick his opponents.

Von Holzen observes: "[Sparrow] verkörpert gewissermaßen die 'gute Seite' der Piraterie." (von Holzen, 256) But it is also true that Sparrow appears ambivalent. She observes further: "[M]an [weiß] letztlich nie genau, auf wessen Seite er denn nun steht" (von Holzen, 256). Jacqueline Furby and Claire Hines point out that

> [f]rom one point of view, Captain Jack does perform some classically heroic actions for the benefit of others. In *Dead Man's Chest* [sic] [correct: *The Curse of the Black Pearl* <A/N>], for instance, he dives into the sea to rescue Elizabeth from drowning, and he also (temporarily) [sic] [correct: permanently <A/N>] forfeits his own quest for immortality towards the close of *At World's End,* when he helps Will, who has been mortally wounded […] From another point of view, Captain Jack constantly switches from ally to rival in his relationships with Will, Elizabeth and others, and most of his schemes are in pursuance of self-interested motivations at any cost. This is illustrated by any one of a number of

double-crosses, dispossessions and deceptions instigated by Captain Jack against just about every character who makes some sort of an 'accord' with him over the course of the films. (129)

In fact, it is for the most part impossible to determine Sparrow's motivation. His actions are often open to several readings. It can be said, however, that Sparrow does not always seem self-centred. When it comes to loyalty he even diverges from rather callous piratical rules. The piratical code prescribes that everyone who stays behind is to be left behind. Sparrow, however, comes to the rescue for his long-time friend Gibbs to save him from the gallows in the fourth film. Later, he expresses feelings of remorse for not having reacted earlier. Sparrow tries to contrive Gibbs' freedom in exchange for a pair of magical chalices, thus his reasoning is supposed to convince Blackbeard to set him free. It can be assumed that he tries to protect his friend by claiming that he was driven by remorse only. His faked disinterest in Gibbs is a lie which can be recognised by the viewer as such. Gibbs was freed during his trial because Sparrow intervened by taking the place of the judge, whom he has tied up but left alive. Sparrow has not only saved his friend, he has also left the judge alive, markers for a witty, but heroic character. This behaviour stands in stark contrast to Devlin of the first example who only rescues one of his crew to save his command. I argue that this difference in characterisation in comparison to the later embodiment of the pirate motif clearly contradicts Zhanial's observation that Sparrow being "epitome of the pirate as thief and trickster" means that "[s]ince he is both part of the pirate community and a comment on conventional clichés, his character most consistently eludes a clear categorisation into good or bad." (81) In this case, the trickster has rescued his friend by outwitting everyone and without shedding blood.[46] After negotiating with Blackbeard to save Gibbs he also gives Gibbs his magical compass to escape, another gesture of benevolence. Likewise Sparrow shows a strong protectiveness about Turner during the first movie, e. g. he develops a secret code which first serves as a

46 Although it must be said that his rescue does not go down as planned because their subsequent carriage ride suddenly ends in a British courtyard and leads to their arrest, which implies that British authorities let them escape the courtroom only to arrest them later. But I will elaborate on the strange relationship between Sparrow and the British, which amounts to a frequent repetition of the same pattern (capture of Sparrow, an exchange between him and British officials, and his subsequent 'escape') later.

warning for Turner, later as a hidden signal that he is on his side. The use of code is another element pointing strongly towards spy fiction. Sparrow may be difficult to predict, but he is loyal to and protective of his friends. The fact that he constantly denies these ties by claiming that he was disloyal to Gibbs or keeping his alliance with Turner a secret gives him a tactical and strategic advantage over his opponents who are thus uninformed as to who his allies are. This ignorance on side of his enemies makes it impossible to use his affiliations against him. This constant confusion about relevant allies as well as keeping affiliations a secret (or faking them) may also be associated with spy fiction.

Aleta-Amirée von Holzen argues that Sparrow acts out of selfish reasons only, as can be seen in the fact that he only agrees to help Turner after knowing his identity (257-258) using the knowledge whose blood they need to blackmail Barbossa. However, Sparrow is indebted to Turner's father who was the only one who stepped up for him to save him from marooning. Thus, Sparrow may feel inclined to help his son to pay a depth. Still, even if his protectiveness towards Turner was reduced to loyalty, it does not diminish the fact that Sparrow frequently follows altruistic behavioural patterns, yet disguises his motives. Zhanial argues: "a feature that all pirates in the series share is that they first pursue their own interest and are mainly interested in maximising their profits, and not in selflessly helping others[,]" (*Postmodern*, 81) yet, also points out that Swann makes clear to the other characters that Sparrow, by saving Swann "has acted heroically and selflessly." (*Postmodern*, 81) Sparrow's popularity is surely largely grounded in the fact that he is, after all, frequently the hero of the day.

His positioning as a hero is even highlighted further in the fourth instalment in which he displays the same protectiveness about Angelica Blackbeard[47], a former lover. Zhanial observes:

The villain Blackbeard tries to exploit these stereotypes [the hero and the angel] to his advantage when

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47 I will refer to this character by the Christian name in the following to distinguish her from her father.

he starts a game of Russian roulette with seven loaded guns and consciously positions Angelica in the role of the victim / damsel. He thus forces Jack to jump down the cliff in order to ensure Angelica's well- being and sends him, like a conventional adventure hero, on a quest for the goblets. Temporarily, Jack seems to take over this role, and his concern for Angelica is reflected in the conditions he brings forth before handing over the requested goblets to Blackbeard. (*Postmodern*, 63)

Sparrow temporarily takes on the role of a traditional hero. Not only does he decide to protect the damsel in distress, but he is sets out for a classical quest. Ironically enough, he is sent to retrieve two chalets, which bear close semblance to the Holy Grail (except for the ironic twist that there are two of them which are exactly identical)[48] – thus evoking the cinematic tradition of the search for the Grail which can be considered the quest of quests in Western culture. This visual reference to the Grail places Sparrow firmly in the context of Arthurian knighthood, the probably most popular and most idealised prototype of heroism and chivalry.[49] According to my observation that Disney has rather hidden a traditional hero in filthy rags than created a new pirate, Sparrow is firmly linked to the bearers of the grail, a connotation that marks him rather as chosen and worthy than ambiguous and cunning. In this framework of mise-en-scéne and intertextual relation Sparrow is closer to the chivalry of Lancelot and Arthur than the cunning tricks of James Hook and Long John Silver, an intertextual reference clearly demarcating him as a hero.

Despite these intertextual references, his role as hero is still open to debate and is never depicted openly as such. Zhanial states that: "Despite the fact that Jack tries hard to represent the pirate as (criminal) outlaw, and is constantly treated as such by the British authorities, the movie series includes numerous instances that position him as hero, who contributes considerably to the victory of good over evil." (*Postmodern*, 82) She claims that

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48  This link to the Grail is later strengthened further by visual and narrative references to *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). cf. footnote 50.

49  Zhanial interprets the meeting of the Brethren Court and their vote of a female king representing Asia as parody of the Arthurian legend of the round table, arguing that *Pirates of the Caribbean* parodies Arthurian chivalry instead of using it. (87) I argue however, that the explicit intertextual references to the Grail myth and its reworking in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (cf. footnote 50) hint at the tests a Grail heir has to pass to prove his worthiness (such as e. g. Wolfram von Eschenbach's Perceval in the eponymous epic (1200-1210) and Jones in the mentioned film). These trials are translated to the test of the Fountain of Youth. This test and approval of the hero strongly outweigh any element of parody. Sparrow is once more the hero of the day by rescuing Angelica and thus assumedly passing the test of the Fountain.

Sparrow tries to maintain a criminal image, but secretly acts as a hero in the decisive moments. As mentioned above, I argue that Sparrow might have been planned as a British spy infiltrating the pirates, but that this idea was never revealed in the series. I will elaborate my claim later. Moreover,

> [i]n all these moments, Jack renounces all personal ambitions towards riches, fame, or immortality, and instead acts for the well-being of his friends. Ironically, Jack's selfless deeds are not openly praised or valued, but put into perspective. For one thing, the deeds often make matters worse for Jack[.] (*Postmodern*, 82)

Sparrow does not only rescue his friends, he also puts himself at a disadvantage when doing so. Although the narrative thus clearly presents a hero, it is the filmic representation, meaning a lack of acknowledgement, which weakens Sparrow's position as heroic character.[50] Fradley observes: "Sparrow [...] does at times appear to subordinate his own interests to those of the young, would-be romantic hero and heroine [,]" (60) clearly marking him as altruistic. Zhanial sees this positioning as a hero weakened by a lack of self-motivation. She claims: "the decision whether Jack commits the deeds willingly or is more compelled to do so by external circumstances, is left to every single viewer. *Pirates of the Caribbean*, therefore, in typical postmodern fashion paradoxically refrains from completely resolving the question whether Jack should be regarded as a hero or not." (82) I argue, however, that the viewer is guided in his perception of Sparrow as an unheroic and heroic character at the same time by a clash of filmic conventions. A heroic character is presented in a unheroic way (as seen best in his gestures); the film plays with film language and the ability of the viewer to decode them to generate this clash of heroic and unheroic perception of a character. This perception is not "left to every single viewer." (Zhanial, *Postmodern*, 82) In her article, she further elaborates on the idea that Sparrow may be forced to take the role of hero against his will: "[t]he *Pirates of the Caribbean* series rather questions whether he really wants to take over this role [the hero] or not. In some instances, Jack rather seems to be forced against his will to play the hero

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50 I show in the following subchapter exemplary on one scene how the film constantly undermines the heroic narratives of Sparrow by a contrasting representation. cf. my subchapter "Whitecap Bay: (De)Construction of the Heroic Sparrow."

in order to ensure the victory of the good characters and his friends, but strikingly, he does so without difficulty." (Zhanial, "Indebtedness," 174) However, it cannot clearly be determined whether he really acts against his will. In a more likely reading, in a strategy similar to concealing who his allies are, Sparrow conceals his abilities to be underestimated by his opponents. This strategy of playing the fool is largely successful. He is clearly underestimated by Norrington during their first encounter in the first instalment, who is to learn later that Sparrow has just stolen the biggest ship of the fleet with only a blacksmith apprentice for help. Rauscher points out that Sparrow may cultivate his bad reputation as a diversion: "Die Trickster Strategien nutzt er jedoch nicht, um, wie Burt Lancasters Captain Vallo, seine Gegner zu täuschen, sondern um den eigenen, etwas schiefen Mythos zu befördern, den er im Gegensatz zu einem Erroll Flynn oder Orlando Bloom gar nicht erst gerade rücken will." (199) Further, his reputation as worst pirate ever makes for his strength as it makes him unpredictable. But despite all ostensible mishaps he always achieves in doing the right strategic move at the right time. (Rauscher, 199) His apparent inability may thus be seen as a cover-up to be underestimated by his opponents.

After all, in my eyes, at least some of the questions put forward by Steinhoff ("Do Captain Jack Sparrow's sympathies lie with or against the British? Is he planning to help Will Turner or only seeking his own fortune? Does he repeatedly save Elizabeth Swann due to his noble and heroic character or out of anti-heroic selfishness?" (*Buccaneers*, 45-46)) can be answered. As Sparrow exposes himself to British authorities to rescue Swann from drowning, I argue that this deed must be seen as an act of self-sacrifice. Aleta-Amirée von Holzen states that Sparrow would only come for the rescue because the British soldiers are unable to swim (258). Anyway, being the only person capable of fulfilling the task at hand does not diminish the role of the hero, as can be seen on the thriving of the superhero franchise. The fact that he acquires further knowledge during the process (258) was unplanned and unforeseen,

accordingly it does not support the reading of his selfishness. Sparrow ostensibly oscillates between selfish and altruistic behaviour.

His character is mostly presented as unpredictable and incomprehensible. Steinhoff observes:

> [H]is representation [often] reveals a discrepancy between his behavior when he is on his own (and fearful) and his performance in front of others (as the brave pirate). The narrative never suggests, however, that none of these representations reflects the pirate's 'true' character. (*Buccaneers*, 54).

Yet, even this pattern of a changed behaviour in front of others or when alone is broken.  For instance, Sparrow displays an anxious demeanour in front of his crew when he is afraid of the kraken and orders to set course to any accessible land possible. The crew reacts with fear; this moment generates further tension and threat on screen. Sparrow's exaggerated demeanour creates a comical effect. Yet the fact that a fearful Sparrow only inspires even greater fear in his followers points to a representation of him as a hero. Something that scares the captain is something which is of danger to the whole crew. Another example for the inconsistent and contradictory representations of Sparrow is the discrepancy between his apparent permanent state of drunkenness and his efficiency when it comes to defeat his opponents. Zhanial points out: " throughout the series, in the decisive moments Jack is always sober enough to carry out the required tasks, so that one might speculate whether his staggering gait and slurred speech could also be seen as just another aspect of his conscious performance of the role of the (in) famous pirate captain." (*Postmodern*, 199) This aspect too points to a reading that Sparrow aims at being underestimated by his enemies. No-one takes a drunken man to be much of a threat. In sum, Sparrow is so difficult to judge because his performances either contradict each other or are at contradiction with the obvious facts.[51]

In sum, Sparrow's motives mostly seem inscrutable, yet the analysis shows that he has a strong tendency towards altruistic and heroic behaviour. Although he does not always

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51 For a comparison between piracy as performance in Sir Walter Scott's *The Pirate* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* see Zhanial, Susanne. *Postmodern Pirates*, *Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean, 190-191.

behave like a hero, it is his predominant trait of character. Thus, Sparrow is nothing but another Disney hero. His piratical fickleness is mostly a cover-up, or, in my reading, the camouflage of a spy; his piratical nature exists in appearance only. Disney has sold one of its heroes as a pirate. Something which may seem innovative proves to be a rather ordinary product in-line with Disney tradition at closer investigation.

### 2.3.4 Whitecap Bay: (De)Construction of the Heroic Sparrow

Next to contradictory elements on plot-level, the films are further destabilised by contrary filmic representations. This instability on the level of *fabula* is created by repetitions of the same scenes with a different filmic language or filmic representations that clash with the narrative. I will exemplary present discuss an example for each scenario, a repetition of a scene with changed filmic language and a scene in which the mise-en-scéne contradicts the narrative.

The first example is Sparrow's entry scene. Sparrow is shown twice, in the first and the third film of the series, as standing atop a ship in a triumphant pose. However, the scenes differ largely from each other. Steinhoff observes:

> Already his introduction sequence establishes Captain Jack Sparrow as a character marked by strong ambiguities. Standing on the crow's nest of a ship, he sails into Port Royal: stern face, dark eyes under a black pirate's hat, legs spread apart, his black coat and hair flying in the wind to a swelling score. It is a seemingly dramatic and heroic entrance – until the next shot shows Captain Jack Sparrow jumping down into a dinghy, quickly trying to save it from sinking. From this moment on, the character's representation constantly oscillates between heroic, anti-heroic, comical, and campy. (Steinhoff, "Pirate's Life," n.pag.)

The very same entrance scene is repeated in the third part, signifying Sparrow's triumphal return from the Locker (von Holzen, 307). This time he is standing atop the *Black Pearl*; the leaking dinghy is swapped not only for a majestic, but also his favourite ship. Conflicting filmic representations can be found throughout the whole series; the whimsical entry in the first film is echoed by a heroic entry in the third film. This effect is strongly depending on the recipient's memory of his first entrance. This repetition of the same scene with contradictory

filmic language intensifies the notion of instability.

In the following, I will analyse a scene of *PotC* IV in detail in order to illustrate the contrasting filmic representation and the effect it creates. The chosen scene takes place at Whitecap Bay and features Sparrow, Blackbeard, his pirates as well as the carnivorous, man-eater mermaids. Blackbeard has ordered his crew to catch a mermaid despite this lethal danger. Sparrow, however, motivates Blackbeard's men to drop the fishing nets they hold to catch a mermaid and to flee. This is an act of mutiny, for Sparrow starts commanding Blackbeard's men while Blackbeard is even present. Blackbeard has demonstrated earlier that mutiny is punished with hanging. Despite this demonstration of power on the side of Blackbeard, Sparrow still tries to rescue the men from their role as cannon-fodder (or, in this case, mermaid-fodder). Sparrow has also initiated an earlier mutiny and shows willingness to take the (deathly) responsibility for it. Yet even Blackbeard seems to consider him too valuable an ally to hang him and chooses to kill the cook in his place. Sparrow has started a mutiny and intends to take the punishment for it, something which can be considered brave and heroical behaviour. Despite the sure knowledge of the punishment for mutiny, Sparrow commits a second clear act of mutiny to save the men. Sparrow now becomes a mutineer to save the lives of Blackbeard's crew, taking the risk of capital punishment for this act of mutiny. In addition to that, he rescues Angelica by cutting the lash a mermaid has wrapped around her ankle. This shot is accompanied by a short quote of the 'Jack Sparrow' theme, echoing the code-language of the Indiana Jones movies, which usually feature a short quote of the main theme once Jones has overcome an obstacle. This intertextual borrowing of another film series' language further marks Sparrow as a heroic character.[52]

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52 Another reference to Indiana Jones are the aforementioned chalices. In both films, the chalices are used to drink water, but the choice of the right chalice is vital. Only the right chalice gives life, the alternative will kill. In *Pirates of the Caribbean* IV, one chalice prolongs life while the other kills. In *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* the rightful grail-heir has to pass the last test by recognising the Grail among a vastness of chalices, the Grail saves life whereas all the others kill, too. Blackbeard's dissolving after having been tricked by Sparrow to drink from the wrong chalice is visually identical to the dissolving of the Nazi antagonist after having taken the wrong choice as well. (see also Zhanial, *Postmodern*, 34-35)

The next instant, this heroic representation is undermined. When Sparrow realises that a horde of mermaids is following the attraction of the lighthouse, posing a new threat to the whole crew, he runs to it, loosing his sword – and so his only means of defence – on his way. Despite this heroic narrative – Sparrow extinguishing the lighthouse to dispel the mermaids although he has lost his weapon before and thus saving the crew – the mise-en-scéne does not show Sparrow as a hero. Sparrow does actually act like an action hero on the plot level, but is not represented in an accordant acting style. Sparrow's heroic act of extinguishing the lighthouse is weakened by his 'typical' (theatrical) gestures, though: spreading his arms and swaggering, his mimic implying disorientation and so counteracting any heroic notion. Zhanial interprets these exaggerated gestures as pastiche of the pirate film: "Through these exaggerations, Jack functions as an ironic comment on the swashbuckler and his incredible stunts, which have been accepted as an integral part of the genre without further questioning their probability." (276) Yet, in contrast to this "ironic comment," the explosion of the lighthouse-top and his springing into the sea are shown in slow-motion from a low-angle shot, bearing reminiscence to action movies. It is rather that the portrayal of Sparrow consists of a combination of heroic and unheroic depictions, as this reference to action movies is spoiled by the wide-spread arms. The next shot shows Sparrow underneath the water surface with a stern look, watching the fleeing mermaids, a shot showcasing his accomplishment. Consequently, the filmic representation oscillates between portraying Sparrow as a hero (narrative, borrowing film language from other films, such as the short sequence of the Sparrow theme and the look of accomplishment at the ending) and breaking the representation of a traditional male hero at the same time with Depp's acting style. Sparrow's ambiguous characterisation is further emphasised by incoherent filmic representation.

### 2.3.5   The Masculine Hero: Piratical Ideals and the Construction of Masculinity

Depp's mentioned acting style makes for a large part of this ambiguity. The trope of the hero is often linked to a certain form of masculinity, a masculinity not performed by Sparrow. The same principle of contradicting plot-lines and filmic representation also applies to the performance of gender roles. Sparrow is conceived as unpredictable and complex because he is portrayed as a character who performs different roles and these performances do not always comply with the narrative. Steinhoff states: "Die Inszenierung suggeriert nicht, dass es 'unter der Masquerade' eine 'wahre' Identität gibt. Captain Jack Sparrow 'performt' multiple Identitäten, festzuschreiben ist er nicht." ("Hollywoodkino," 161)  Sparrow is not congruous with might be considered a stereotypical, socially prescribed gender role of masculinity, which adds further to the ambiguity of this character. His gestures, which might be considered effeminate, stand in stark contrast with a traditional representation of manliness in general and male pirates in particular on screen. It thus puts the construction of manliness to question and illustrates its performative character. Steinhoff points out that

> the campy and ambiguous quality of Captain Jack Sparrow's performance can also function to highlight the discursive construction of identity on screen as well as the performative character of identity off screen. […] (*Buccaneers*, 54)

The filmic representation thus draws a parallel between fictional characters and the performative act of gendering. Yet, a performative act in a theatrical, staged context differs significantly from a performative act in real life. Judith Butler observes:

> [I]t seems clear that, although theatrical performances can meet with political censorship and scathing criticism, gender performances in non-theatrical contexts are more governed by more clearly and more punitive and regulatory conventions. Indeed, the sight if a transvestite on stage can compel pleasure and applause while the sight of the same transvestite on the seat next to us on the bus can compel fear, rage, even violence. (Butler, "Performative Acts," 410).

Butler gives two reasons why the very same performative act is embraced in a theatrical context and rejected in a real-life scenario. The "transvestite" in a theatre is perceived as a stage act, as another reality, something apart from the every day life of the viewer. So they can always comfort themselves that the perceived gender ambiguity was not real, but only acted

out to create an illusion. A gender non-comforming person on the bus, however, does not create a theatrical illusion. They break the dividing line between perception and reality, meaning that one cannot trust one's own perception. Whereas deception in theatre is wanted and expected, it accounts for uncertainty and disorientation in real life. It destabilises our world perception. (Butler, "Performative Acts," 410-411)

The same principle of a distanced stage act of performativity applies to *Pirates of the Caribbean* and Sparrow. Sparrow is even more distanced from the viewer than a "transvestite" on stage would be. First, they is on screen and not on stage (which would mean immediate contact as viewer and actor would be in the same room). Secondly the film series is strongly rooted in the supernatural. There can never be any doubt throughout the film series that what is presented on screen was fiction. This gender ambiguous pirate is amidst pirate ghosts, zombies, and carnivorous mermaids. *Pirates of the Caribbean* always presents itself as unreal which removes Sparrow and their gender ambiguity to the safe room of "not related to our lives."

Even plot-intrinsically, Sparrow does not interact with normative society. Sparrow is a pirate and hence an outcast. Sparrow is not a part of society, but a rebel who lives anarchy. If such a character acts out different gender norms than those expected of him, it could hardly shock or surprise anyone. Sparrow lives outside of society; he does not have a group he belongs to and he does not even have lovers or friends – who would care about his sexual orientation least the gender role he enacts? It is made clear throughout the series that Sparrow lives in his own world by his own rules, so, here applies the scenario of he transvestite on a stage who "compels pleasure and applause." Sparrow is not only fixed on a stage full of fantastic supernatural events, he is also an outcast within this fictional universe.

I will thus not further pursue studies concerning the possible cultural impact of this representation, but focus on how the representation of Sparrow sheds more light on the pirate

motif in present-day culture. Sparrow is the embodiment of my argument that the pirate as found in contemportrary pirate novels and films is set together by illogical and contradictory constituional elements.

### 2.3.6 Deviant Piratical Masculinities

Sparrow has to be seen as a fictional character without any reference to real-life scenarios. Thus, discussing his gender role is not about tackling gender roles per se, but their representation. Toni Tholen observes:

> Die Untersuchung von Männlichkeit [wird sich] nicht primär auf einzelne männliche Protagonisten, etwa mittels einer simplifizierenden Figurencharakterisierung, beschränken können. Vielmehr gilt es, männliche Figuren in ihren Beziehungen zu anderen männlichen und weiblichen Figuren zu sehen und darüber hinaus diese Beziehungen als Prozess zu betrachten. (Tholen, 14)

To see Sparrow's Otherness, it is necessary to first pinpoint the norm. What is 'normal' masculinity in the film series? In accordance with my working thesis, the pirate, and his masculinity are defined by contrast. Piratical masculinity is what normal masculinity is not. Yet, this constellation would ask for a dichotomy of masculinities, a masculinity which is wanted and one which is unwanted. But this approach is too shallow to grasp gender roles which may be subject to change throughout a text:

> In literarischen Texten nach Konfigurationen von Männlichkeiten zu suchen, bedeutet mehr, als vereinzelte Männerbilder dingfest zu machen. Denn Konfigurationen erfassen die unterschiedlichsten Perspektiven mit, aus denen heraus Männer- und auch Frauenbilder entstehen. Sie stellen gleichsam Knoten- und Verdichtungspunkte von Projektionen, Perspektiven und Bildern dar, die zu geschlechtlichen Attributierungen gehören. […] Der Gedanke einer beweglichen Konfiguration von Männlichkeit lässt schließlich auch Veränderungen an und von Männerbildern erkennbar werden. Wenn hingegen in Texten nur nach fixen Männerbildern oder -mythen gesucht wird, besteht die Gefahr, doch letztlich nichts anderes wiederzufinden als dichtotome Geschlechterstereotypen. (Tholen, 14)

As I focus on the pirate motif in regard to motif history and its representation in different media, I agree further with Thulen that an analysis of the representation of gender roles must always focus on content and form (sujet and fabula) alike:

> Die Notwendigkeit, literarische Männlichkeiten als Produkte von literarischen Narrationen zu begreifen, bedeutet zugleich, die Analyse und Interpretation von Texten nicht nur auf inhaltliche und motivische Besonderheiten zu reduzieren. Ein solcher Inhaltismus liegt indessen nahe, wenn man als interpretatorisches Ziel benennt, Männer*bilder* in der Literatur ausfindig machen zu wollen. Das soll

nicht heißen, auf den Begriff des Männerbildes tunlichst zu verzichten, sondern wichtig ist, die in den Texten geschlechtlich konnotierten Denk-, Fühl- und Handlungsweisen, aber auch bekannte, immer wieder auftauchende Männermythen (Odysseus, Don Juan, Herakles, Hiob Dracula, Tarzan etc.) im Zusammenhang mit der *Form* ihrer narrativen Inszenierung zu sehen. Denn die literarische Form ist entscheidend dafür, allererst vertiefte Einblicke in die *Konstruktion* von Männlichkeit zu gewinnen. (Tholen, 18)

The representation of the gender-roles of Sparrow oscillates between traditional representation and innovation. Represented gender roles can be conform with viewer expectations or confront them. So, Sparrow is part of a long tradition of the representation of a pirate: "As *Pirates of the Caribbean* draws its inspiration from the flamboyant impersonations of Tyrone Power and Errol Flynn, so in turn their films drew inspiration from the novels of Rafael Sabatini and the representations of pirates by Howard Pyle for magazines like *Scribener's* and *Harper's Monthly*." (Emeljanow, 223) Zhanial interprets Sparrow as a mixture of all preceding forms of the pirate motif, which she identifies as the Byronic hero, the Victorian villain, and the Hollywood swashbuckler:

> Jack is therefore neither a straight descendant of the dark Byronic anti-hero and the Victorian villain, nor of Hollywood's swashbuckler. Instead he shares some character traits with all of them. Like the Byronic pirate, Jack is a defiant, and largely anti-heroic outlaw, who prefers to keep apart from his man and his past a secret. From his Victorian ancestor Long John Silver, Jack takes over the capability to use words to manipulate listeners. Furthermore, like Silver, Jack is an ambiguous character whose true intentions and affiliations are difficult to determine. His filmic predecessors serve as an inspiration for tricks and stunts, and for the representation of the male pirate captain as a love interest for (female) characters. ("Indebtedness," 174)

Sparrow combines elements off preceding literary representations. What sets him clearly apart, however, are his swaggering gestures which often hinge on the comical. They are frequently interpreted as effeminate. These eccentric gestures contrast with former filmic representations of pirates, such as the characters played by Errol Flynn. Zhanial points out:

> For the pirate movies in the early and mid-twentieth century, the Hollywood studios engaged good-looking male actors, including Douglas Fairbanks, Errol Flynn, Tyrone Power, and Burt Lancaster and thus fostered the production of an image of the male pirate captain as an attractive, heroic, and heterosexual outlaw. Rather than being a direct descendent of this cinematic tradition, Jack Sparrow is an ironic comment on it. ("Indebtedness," 172)

Whereas pirate films established the role of the handsome male pirate captain, Sparrow is interpreted as an ironic comment on it. However, considering the image of Johnny Depp, his casting can hardly be termed a break in the tradition of casting handsome actors to play the

pirate captain. What differs is not the attractiveness of the male lead, but his acting style and reputation as an unconventional actor. I will explain this point later in more detail. It is not his looks which differ, but his swaying gestures and mimics which may be seen as effeminate and are thus opposed to what is usually shown as ideal manliness on screen. Steinhoff thus terms Sparrow "a dandified version of the hypermasculine pirate." (48) Suchsland and Alvarez argue: "Auf seine Weise ist der Kino-Pirat ein Dandy, der übers Meer flaniert, ziellos, neugierig, getrieben von den Umständen." (9) They further point out:

> Auch seine stilisierte Kleidung, ob Augenklappe oder das Tuch um dem [sic] Kopf, die bunten Farben, der teilweise nackte Oberkörper, das Exotische, das Piraten umweht, oder der bei der Heldenfigur immer sehr gepflegte Schnurrbart verkörpern ein dandyhaftes Moment, eine bestimmte Schönheit, die karnevalesk wirkt und trotz aller Ausstrahlung auf Frauen auch bi- oder homosexuelle Elemente birgt. (9)

The pirate is seen as exotic, Other, and handsome, a character attractive to women, but also inclined towards bi-and homosexuality. This constellation points towards the character of the dandy. Yet, this reading remains open to debate, first of all the term "dandy" implies sophistication as well as an exquisite taste, which also expresses itself in the choice of clothing. A famous example is Oscar Wilde's Dorian Grey, who bears little to no semblance to Sparrow. Second, in the case of Sparrow, the fact that his gestures may be read as effeminate does not imply a dandy and, in turn, a dandy must not be linked to effeminate gestures. It can be said, however, that Depp's acting style breaks with a heroic depiction of a man with highly trained physical skills. The mentioned cinematic forerunners are marked by "breathtaking stunts and sword-fights." (Zhanial, "Indebtedness," 172). The depiction of Sparrow contrasts sharply with this tradition. Zhanial observes:

> Jack's unusual behavior [also] parodies the athletic skills of Hollywood's movie pirates. Despite the fact that the viewer sees him engaged in a number of sword duels and chase scenes throughout the series, his stunts are never entirely serious in tone and often explicitly exaggerated. ("Indebtedness," 173)

Whereas in earlier pirate films stunts were used to impress the viewer and showcase the extraordinary skills of the lead, Sparrow's stunts lean more into the comical than the artistic.

They can be seen as a parody. However, Sparrow cannot be reduced to a character that brings comical relief: "Nonetheless, Jack cannot be considered only as a parody of earlier filmic pirate captains, because he is given heroic moments in the movies as well." (Zhanial, "Indebtednes," 173) Sparrow is frequently the hero of the day, as has been shown above. Still, Sparrow is definitely connected to "burlesque slapstick" (Rauscher, 199, my translation), an element which undermines a heroic reading of this character. As pointed out above, Sparrow is mostly depicted as both, as hero and comical character at the same time, the necessary discrepancy resulting from a clash between plot-line and mise-en-scéne. This discrepancy disrupts conventional representations of pirates. Steinhoff observes: "By reproducing and updating the figure of the pirate, Captain Jack Sparrow exposes the artificiality and constructedness of the myth of this heroic and hypermasculine character." (*Buccaneers*, 54)

Although Depp's acting style clashes with prior pirate films, the pirate has actually been interpreted as a sodomite as early as the 18th century. The representation of Sparrow thus follows a long tradition. Hans Turley points out that deviant behaviour in the context of sexuality is even part of the piratical identity:

> [T]he feminized sodomite is positioned against *both* the heterosexual man and the heterosexual woman. […] This triangular situation recalls the ways the pirate is positioned as a deviant criminal beyond his economical transgressions. The monstrous "nature" of the sodomite in this early-eighteen-century pamphlet reflects the outrageous descriptions of the behavior and physicality of individual pirates in the *General History*. But while the sodomites transgressions are mostly left to the imagination, the pirate's offenses, diverse and not explicitly sexual, are graphically described. (Turley, 78)

The pirate is thus far removed from society, despite his being a criminal outcast he also differs when it comes to reproduction and biopower.

With that being said, the understanding of the pirate as a hypermasculine figure as found in earlier pirate films has a long tradition as well. Carolyn Eastman points out that the depictions in the *General History*, especially the illustrations, are strongly influenced by hypermasculinity:

> [C]onventions for depicting pirates as dangerous, lusty, gendered heroes have a long history, one which is as much rooted in the book trade as in the 'man's life at sea'. These representations were born during the 'golden age of piracy' […] and were reworked and codified in numerous illustrated books published in Europe and circulated through the Atlantic world. These volumes developed, reiterated, and augmented stereotypes about pirates to attract and titillate European and American readers who could afford illustrated books and whose lives adhered to far more conventional standards of behavior than the ones exhibited by the fictional pirates. Early modern readers encountered pirates as a series of literary and pictorial conventions that emerged in the late seventeenth century – drawn swords, eccentric clothing, and glaring scowls at the viewer – that strongly enhanced the books' emphases on masculinity and sexuality. (Eastman, 95-96)

The gender role of the pirate, the hypermasculinity, is constructed by books and illustrations. It is thus of a mere fictional character. Pirates are a fictional product embodying an ideal gender role, especially one contrasting with the one the readers of such texts would have to adhere to, namely husband, worker, and father.

The striking fact is here that both scholars refer to the same text. Whereas Turley interprets the *General History* as a text depicting the pirates as sodomites, Eastman shows how it underlines the hypermasculinity of the pirate. I will not delve into the question who might have the right interpretation here because first I do not believe that there is a definitive right answer and, secondly, this question is irrelevant for my argument. The point is that the pirate motif is so fragmentary and surrounded by myth that it can cater to oppositional readings at the same time.

Taking the (filmic) tradition of the hypermasculine pirate and the line of the sodomite together, it becomes clear that the pirate motif is divided into two subcategories of gender roles: the sodomite and the hypermasculine man. Both subcategories can be found in the depiction of the pirates in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, "the pirates [are] either hypermasculine beasts (e. g. evoked by Captain Barbossa's and his crew's frequent allusions to a potential rape of Elizabeth Swann, an offense that they however never commit) or potentially 'situational homosexuals'." (Steinhoff, 57) Sparrow sways in between both extremes: "Sparrow's indeterminacy and conflation of exaggerated effeminate gestures with more stereotypically hypermasculine characteristics makes him a heroically problematic figure."

(Fradley, 303) Moreover, "Thus characterized as polymorphous and indeterminate, Jack Sparrow's ambiguous queerness effectively reconfigures male heroism by undercutting associations of piracy with phallic potency and rapacious hetero- masculine certitude." (Fradley, 303) Sparrow is the hypermasculine hero who performs in a queer way; this character thus combines both traditions of depicting piratical masculinity.

In sum, even a text as early as the *General History* is already open to different interpretations. Whereas Turley sees the representation of the pirates as embodiments of the sodomite, and thus a deviant form of sexuality, Eastman interprets its depictions as representations of aggressive heterosexual sexuality and hypermasculinity. The pirate is open to different interpretations which shows all the more the fragmentary nature of this motif. That is why the motif can encompass different sexualities.

All of these readings have one thing in common: they are instrumentalised. As has been pointed out before, the interpretation of the pirate as a sodomite helps to further underline his Otherness, deviant behaviour and opposition to a functioning society. In the case of a hypermasculine reading, pirates serve as background for male escapist (and sexual) fantasy:

> Such portrayals specifically to the bourgeois and elite male readers who made up the vast majority of the consumers for such books. […] It is not hard to see that publishers intended such tales and images for male readers: their construction of manliness via the figure of the pirate, and in cultivating male readers' enjoyment of the pirates' sexual peccadilloes, constituted a fundamental part of the subject matter." (Eastman, 110)

In this reading, the reports about piratical exploits are seen as an early version of the *Playboy*, offering food for male escapist day-dreaming. The pirate lives out what the male reader, who lives in a prescriptive society, can only dream of. All readings translate to one thing: the pirate has chosen to perform a gender role which differs from normative society. Whatever gender role the pirate decides to take, be it a homosexuality or hypermasculinity – it is deviant.

**2.3.7   The Pirate as Object of Desire**

The sexuality of the pirate invokes desire in a twofold manner; the masculine pirate is as well

agent of desire as s/he is the object of it. It is strongly interrelated with female or male

homosexual desire. This can be seen on the example of the Pirate Romance, a subcategory of

pirate fiction.[53] But even outside of that genre, the pirate is often the object of attraction. For

instance, Bond-creator Ian Fleming uses the pirate motif when he wants to describe the

mixture of erotic attraction and fear Bond inspires in one of the Bond girls. Fleming's novel

*The Spy Who Loved Me* (1962) is completely written in the homodiegetic voice of the

Vivianne Mitchell and thus offers another perspective on Bond, Bond as he is seen through

the eyes of a woman. Strikingly, the female focaliser gazing on the male body associates a

pirate:

> He was wearing no shirt or coat, but there was some kind of harness across the sunburned, sweating
> chest that glistened in the light of the flames, and a heavy looking automatic hung, butt down, below
> his left armpit. His eyes were bright with tension and excitement and his smoke-streaked face and
> tousled hair made him look piratical and rather frightening. (Fleming, 162)

I have observed elsewhere that:

> This vivid description of Bond shares some similarities to the hero of a piratical romance: the bare
> chest, the unconcealed weapon, and the rugged and dirtied face all connote something of the pirate.
> But although this paragraph is coloured by erotic desire (Vivienne notes the sweat glistening on Bond's
> bare chest), the connotation is not romantic. In Vivienne's eyes, Bond is not the jolly pirate of the story
> books; instead, he is a fearful figure. [...] For Vivienne, the word "pirate" refers to Bond's nature and to
> her own fearful reaction to it. In this instance, the reader views Bond's piratical nature as something far
> less charming; through Vivienne's eyes, Bond is, at first, a dangerous gunman rather than someone
> who merely plays with the line between good and bad. (Hagen, "Fleming's Pirates" 12)

Here, the association of the pirate is not connected to the Pirate Romance; it rather illustrates

how Mitchell is suddenly appalled by her new acquaintance. She realises what many fail to

grasp, that Bond is a hand hired to kill, an assassin. Although she will defend him later, this

passage uses the pirate motif to illustrate her reaction when she sees Bond's true nature. The

gentlemen has turned into a pirate, eager to strike with "eyes bright with tension" (Fleming,

162) and "rather frightening." (Fleming, 162) Her reaction towards this new form of

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53  Cf. my introduction

masculinity, new to her, oscillates between admiration of the wild adventurous hero and rejection of the merciless killer, the two central ideas making up the cultural construction of the pirate. Mitchell displays a reaction divided between the two faces of the pirate, romantic hero and brutal murderer.

In the case of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, this hypermasculinity is the requirement to get the romance plot between Swann and Turner even started. Thus, this idealised, hypermasculine pirate has to be constructed first. Steinhoff observes that Swann "as a young girl […] does not dream of princes but of pirates". (*Buccaneers*, 62) Swann constantly pushes Turner until he befits her ideals. It is her who "'outs' him with the interpellating words 'he's a pirate' and therewith constructs Turner as her own piratical hero." (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 63) Turner, whose behaviour towards Swann is coined by "insecurity and tenderness" (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*,66) does not befit the hypermasculine image of the pirate. Steinhoff observes "[y]et, in the course of his journey to find Elizabeth Swann, he displays an increasingly rebellious, transgressive and indeed piratical behavior." (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*,62) Turner undertakes this journey on both a physical and metaphorical level. On the one hand, he sets out to rescue Swann who has been abducted by pirates, on the other hand, he is a "'correct' citizen" (62) and has to adapt to Swann's piratical ideal. The hypermasculine pirate is the foil after which Turner is modelled. Zhanial observes:

> Nevertheless, the movies do not only make fun of him and the archetype of the young adventure hero, but slowly transform Will into a pirate and thus repeat the genre's own transition from the swashbucklers and temporary pirates of the first wave to the full- fledged pirate heroes of the second wave. Indeed, after his death, Will is resurrected as captain of the Flying Dutchman, and with the typical head scarf, necklace and half- opened shirt and as actively steering the ship, Will now strikingly invokes Tyrone Power as Jamie Waring in *The Black Swan*, the first pirate movie to feature a genuine pirate as protagonist. (*Postmodern*, 269)

However, Turner does not die, but is saved in the last second when Sparrow stabs the heart of Davy Jones and thus transposes the curse that grants immortality on Turner. Turner does not have to wait for his afterlife to be transformed into the pirate hero, as can be seen on the fact that he is still alive once the curse is lifted. Thus, Turner, who has been characterised as a

"New Man," "a concept that arose in the 1980s and encompasses a softened, if not 'effeminate' form of masculinity[;] [s]ensitivity appears as one of its key features," (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 66) is transformed into something archaic, a form of masculinity associated with wilderness and straight forward, bold behaviour when approaching women. Zhanial states that the concept of the "New Man" is paired with androgyny: "These indications of a possibly feminised man and / or androgynous sexuality are further supported by the films' dialogues, in particular, Jack Sparrow's inquiries after Will's sexual virility." (270). However, this statement is highly problematic, as, first of all, the gender role of a feminised men and his sexual virility are not linked. Secondly, this constellation makes for irony. Sparrow is the one character whose sexual orientation is subject matter of much academic discourse, but it is agreed upon that this fluidity of gender identity makes him all the more piratical. In logical consequence, this androgyny should mark Turner as piratical, too, but it is clearly indicated by the narrative that Turner is still to adapt to a piratical identity. Thirdly, this characterisation of Sparrow may explain why he constantly teases Turner. The fact that it is the most ambiguous character when it comes to sexuality of the whole series who questions Turner's virility, makes for an ironic constellation, adding both to the constructedness of the film series as well as its humorous air.

As said before, Turner is still to become a pirate because this is paramount to find acceptance by Swann. The pirate functions as an abstract idea in Swann's mind after which her love interest has to be formed. It is the long tradition of extreme masculinity associated with the pirate, be it homosexuality or heterosexuality, which allows for this constellation. However, here, it is Swann who creates ideal masculinity. It is her sexuality which drives this process forward, not his. The ideal masculinity as a male escapist fantasy has been turned on its head. *Pirates of the Caribbean* allows women to imagine their men as pirates instead of men imagining themselves as pirates. In contrast to *The Spy Who Loved Me*, the association of

the pirate is not negative. However, whereas Bond has formed his personality long before he ever met Mitchell and thus displays his true nature, Turner adopts a role Swann assigns to him. As the woman is the creator of Turner's male identity, he transforms into the desired object. Turner is so much  of a "New Man" that he creates his own self according to the wishes of the female love interest. This is a form of self-sacrifice; Turner adopts and performs a gender role which is assigned to him. Paradoxically, the more manly his performance becomes, the more unmanly, in the meaning that he adapts to the wishes of the female lead, becomes his personality. Turner only performs a role ascribed to him by a female character. Regarding his motivations, he remains the "New Man." He is ready to sacrifice himself, meaning his identity, for the woman's dreams, something which can be characterised as driven by tenderness.

The pirate, however, represents the opposite of the "New Man." The pirate can be considered a subcategory of a culture of warriors. Herbert Sussmann states: "In a culture devoted to raiding and pillaging, such as the Apaches or the Vikings, all men are warriors." (13) Pirates, who are defined by raiding and pillaging, definitely fall into this category. Pirates are fighters, and they mostly try more or less successfully to embody the masculine pirate, independent of their sex (cf. my chapter "Female Pirates").

Modern society, however, does not ask any more for warriors. The gender role of masculinity changes in accordance with the requirements of society. Sussman, in equalising the development of gender roles with Darwinian evolution, observes:

> [H]uman society has changed; we are no longer hunter-gatherers. Primitive man lived as hunter and fighter because under the conditions of early human life, such roles for men were functional. And it must be emphasized, as we shall see, that the primary determinate for masculinity lies in being functional or useful to society. If certain skills and bodily forms evolved in the past, new skills are evolving in the present as social needs change. In modern society, except in certain domains such as the armed forces or professional football, physicality is no longer functional for survival. Instead within a technologically advanced corporate world, the skills needed by men are intellectuality and self-subordination within a corporate structure. (Sussmann, 4)

According to this discourse, modern society demands for men who function under certain

working conditions to be useful to society, which is here represented in the prescriptive, dominating, and spreading British Empire. Steinhoff states that the British men appear as effeminate. She explains: "the British with their wigs, powdered faces, and mannerisms appear strikingly 'feminized' and – by implication – disempowered to a contemporary audience." (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 40) They have adapted to a new form of masculinity required by the changing times.[54] When Sparrow says that here will be fewer things in the new world, he also refers to a form of masculinity which is at the brink of extinction.

Turner has to change from male functionality – law-abiding, class-conscious (he refuses repeatedly to call Swann by her first name), and hard-working as a blacksmith – to a more physical, and more importantly, malfunctioning form of masculinity, one that is not beneficial to society. This is, in fact, the only way to successfully end his journey to Swann. Swann and Turner are separated by class-boundaries, thus, Turner must learn to be malfunctioning to society and break its rules.

Yet, the fact that Turner has always practised sword fighting marks him as a warrior after all. When it comes to rescue Swann, he is the warrior who rushes into action whereas the British remain unmoving, behind charts, planning and calculating. Their masculinity adheres to intelligence and subordination to the system. Turner takes the first step of his journey towards Swann by rushing into action and defying authority at the same time. He is the pirate-warrior whereas Swann's fiancée Norrington sticks to the prescribed gender role of cool calculation. It is here that Turner displays for the first time his potential to perform the role

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54 Fradley interprets this feminisation as a queer rupture with the established narrative of colonialism: "Intriguingly, however, through the ostentatious wigs and effeminate Georgian finery adorning Port Royal's ruling class, the strictures of colonial rule are themselves coded as demonstratively 'queer.'" (302) Yet, the colonisers in their function as hegemonic normative force must represent the norm by definition. Their standard is the standard others are meant to follow. Their masculinity is a new form of masculinity. As pointed out above, the adapted, subdued, weakened, or "feminised" masculinity of the British is mostly coined by the fact that they follow orders and try to be useful to society. The more they deviate from those norms, the more they disregard their duty to serve society (like Governor Swann who bends the law for his daughter, Turner who learns to woe a lady far above his class or Commodore Norrington who temporarily joins the pirates) the more piratical they become. The transformation to a pirate comes hand in hand with a more ragged and wilder understanding of masculinity, a masculinity that does not adhere to rules and is not defined by its usefulness for the general good.

Swann desires. Here, her fiancée, still firmly rooted in the British establishment, and her love interest part ways. This crossroad predicts the outcome of the love triangle and presents Turner as winner.

Masculinities as presented in the film series follow the dividing line between conformity with society and non-conformal behaviour. Thus, when Sparrow turns down the offer to become a privateer and join the British, meaning to subordinate to the corporate system, he does not only defend his freedom, but also an older understanding of masculinity. Sparrow does not only refuse to become a cog in the wheels of an ever milling-away Empire, he also defends the role of the pirate warrior. Paradox as it may seem regarding his effeminate gestures, Sparrow is in fact representative of a form a masculinity which is not subordinated to the means of society. He refuses to be functional and in doing so refuses the form of masculinity assigned and offered to him. Wig and gentlemanly behaviour are exchanged for filthy rags and feet on the king's dining table. As effeminate as his gestures may be, Sparrow defends and lives a more masculine gender role than the characters around him.

### 2.3.8 Rock Stars as Pirates: a Matroska of Performative Acts

Not only is Sparrow portrayed to perform a gender role differing from those around him, meaning that it deviant to socio-cultural norms, the films also draw explicit attention to the role of an actor as one who performs, harking back to Butler's observation about performance in a theatrical context. Steinhoff observes:

> [t]he highly theatrical representation of the pirate, in particular, hints at the performance of the actor Johnny Depp *as* Captain Jack Sparrow. It is in this sense that the film is always on the verge of exposing its own artifice. (*Buccaneers*, 53,emphasis in original)

Steinhoff points out that Sparrow's appearance and apparel bear close semblance to that of a rock star:

> His gestures reproduce stereotypically gay or effeminate moves and reflect a high degree of self-conscious artificiality and stylization. With his dreadlocks, kohl-black eyes, golden teeth and numerous rings, Captain Jack Sparrow appears like a piratical diva or rock star, marked by a spirit of glamorous

extravagance [...]. (Steinhoff, Bucaneers 48)

Sparrow is, in fact, closely linked to real-life British rock stars, namely Keith Richards of the *Rolling Stones* and Paul McCartney of *The Beatles*. Both have cameos in the film series as Sparrow's family. After Depp claimed to have based the character of Sparrow on Stones guitarist Richards, Disney decided to break the fourth wall by casting him as Sparrow's father, translating the process of inspiration for a fictional character into biological fatherhood on screen. McCartney plays the role of Jack's uncle, placing Sparrow firmly in the context of rock stars. Steinhoff observes that Richards' cameo "shows how the sequel strategy highlights the 'made' quality of the film" (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 128) by adapting the relation between character and his real-life inspiration into a real son-ship on screen. Yet, the additional cameo of McCartney weakens this reading, strengthening the interrelation to rock stars in general instead. Zhanial argues among a similar vein: "Scenes like the ones described here, by blurring the lines between actors, roles, and performances, have a further function because they self- reflexively highlight the status of the film as fiction." (*Postmodern*, 72) Yet this interpretation too fails to explain the further addition of a cameo of McCartney. I think that Richards and McCartney were chosen and placed strategically to further integrate the discourse of the rock star into the franchise.

*Pirates of the Caribbean* links pirates to rock stars. They are defined by eccentricity, an excessive lifestyle, and a larger than life persona. Zhanial points out:

> The comparison is indeed an apt one, because pirates and rock stars are often perceived in strikingly similar terms: as rebellious characters operating against an establishment / mainstream, violating the 'rules' of legislation / the music business, rapidly accumulating money with their voyages / tours and spending (a lot of) it quickly, often for celebrations and alcohol. (*Postmodern*, 108)

She claims that Pirates and rock stars share their rebellion against the "establishment" (whatever may be considered 'establishment') and by accumulating great riches with far travels. However, no rock star would be a rock star if he rebelled against the music industry. A rock star has to play by the rules set up by his employers, in this case, the management, like

everyone else, next to keeping his contract with the label, marking his ostensible anarchy and rebellion as a clear illusion. In other words, this rebellion is a performative act on a stage and insofar closer to pirate fiction than pirates in general. But there are also more parallels: both the pirate and the rock star are stylized as sex symbols (pirates are often portrayed as extremely attractive and the concept of a groupie is self-explanatory). The fact that they are constantly on the move gives them the opportunity to visit foreign places but also brings ennui and instability in the meaning of quickly changing surroundings. Once arrived, the freedom of mobility in towns and public spaces is strictly limited, due to the risk of discovery by law enforcement or fans, creating a golden cage within the apparent freedom of mobility. The public understanding of the lives of pirates and rock stars has a glamorous reputation which may outweigh the unpleasant aspects to be faced in reality, a reality that is mostly simply ignored in the public discourse. Both representations are loop-sided concerning the utopian elements and hinge on idealisation with a strong focus on sexual attraction, the accumulation of wealth, freedom, and admiration. In the end, no-one wants a pirate or a rock star to be human or even normal.

*Pirates of the Caribbean* combines both discourses, as the cameos of real life rock stars definitely add to what might be perceived as 'coolness' of the film series, a coolness which is at odds with the reputation of family entertainment monopoly Disney. This element of coolness gives the Disney films a rebellious air and a touch of the forbidden fruit. The films hint via discursive structures at drug consumption, smashed guitars, and excess, a strategy which makes this Disney production piratical in itself. By activating these hidden links to what is generally considered amoral it becomes definitely one of the black sheep in the Disney universe.

But the cameos have a further function on plot-level. Surprisingly enough, all chosen rock stars are British. As I will show later that Sparrow is considered a Briton as well, he is

placed among a group of rebellious Britons – the wild side of Great Britain.[55] The inclusion of British rock stars who are on the side of the pirates contrasts with the depiction of the British as an enemy force, comparing a fictional Britishness of the past with a real-life Britishness of today. This parallelism of fictional past Britishness and real-life recent Britishness creates a *mise-en-abyme* which contrasts two ideas of Britishness. This portrayal of conflicting versions of Britishness further adds to the instability of the film series and undermines the dichotomy of pirates and British colonial force. This portrayal of rebellious, piratical Britons further illustrates that there is no homogenous depiction of Britishness in the film series, as I will point out in the following. Sparrow is thus not the only rebel among the British – he is joined by real-life examples. The pirate Sparrow who is a Briton in the film series is paired with British rock stars who represent the same discourse of anarchy and rebellion in real-life Britain.

The pirate is thus constructed by reference to another discourse, that of rock music, transferring its spirit of anarchy, rebellion, and freedom unto the pirate. The pirate gains substance by hiring these elements from another discourse all together. This intertwining is strengthened further by Depp's real-life activity as a rock musician with the band *Hollywood Vampires*, adding a further metafictional level. Placing Depp, the actor and rock musician, next to other musicians breaks down the fourth wall. The pirates are not only rock stars by comparison; real musicians have been cast to play pirates.

The discourses intermingle off screen and well as on screen, raising questions about their constructedness and performativity. Zhanial argues: "[T]he representation of both pirates and twentieth- century rock- stars is grounded in 'reality', but the public's fascination is the product of numerous stories that have been reiterated, adapted and appropriated in different

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55 One can only wonder why they have never invited Iron Maiden singer and frontman Bruce Dickinson (Paul Bruce Dickinson), a rock star, fencer, and (former airline) captain. Most of his stage outfits of the current tour (*Legacy of the Beast*, 2018 - ) are more or less reminiscent of pirates. This effect is created by the kind of shirts he has chosen, a stage prop sword, and a hangman's noose.

media." (*Postmodern*, 107) However, in case of the rock star, too, there is no 'reality' to start out with. Aspiring rock stars model themselves to fit into the required role; they learn to do the required performance. (cf. e. g. Dickinson, Bruce. (Paul Bruce Dickinson) *What Does This Button Do, an Autobiography* (2017)) Moreover, fictionalisation of rock stars, in the meaning that they are main characters in novels, films or series, is a rather rare phenomenon, at least in comparison to the massive fictionalisation of the pirate. The "reality" in this case means that the "rock star" is just another role to be played (on a stage), another role constructed by performativity. One cannot actually be a rock star; one needs a stage and an audience to perform as a rock star. This aspect of constant performativity harks back to Sparrow and his relation to Richards. Rausch observes:

> Wenn er [Sparrow] leicht geistesabwesend, mit den Augen rollend und wild gestikulierend, die Schnapsflasche stets in greifbarer Nähe, durch die Häfen der Karibik torkelt, weiß man, wie bei seinem Vorbild Keith Richards nie ganz sicher, ob er seinen vermeintlichen Zustand nicht einfach als Performance inszeniert, da diese nun einmal zum liebevoll gepflegten Image gehört. (199)

The rock star is a construct almost as artificial as the fictional pirate. The fact this role is always performed on stage in front of an audience, harking back to Butler's observations about real life performativity and performativity in a stage setting, further underlines the performative and artificial nature of this role.

Thus, in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, several performances interact with each other. It features Keith Richards performing Keith Richards, who in turn performs Sparrow's father. Richards does not only play Sparrow's father on plot-level, but also demonstrates the basic nature of performativity. The performative act of Richards was copied to perform Sparrow – there is no "real life" Richards, who could have inspired Depp to model Sparrow. Depp has copied another performative act. Both Richards and Sparrow are performative acts. Later the performative act of Richards is turned into the performative act of Sparrow's father, clearly marked as such when Teague, Sparrow's father, plays a guitar. Zhanial argues: "In the first cameo scene, Richards/Teague is wittily depicted as playing a guitar, so that the borders

between the musician and his role as well as between on- and off- screen performance(s) are blatantly blurred." (*Postmodern*, 72) Now, two performative acts overlap each other, creating a matroska of performative acts.

One more matroska is the performative act of "Johnny Depp." The extravagant interpretation of Sparrow is not an isolated event in Depp's work. Other roles are performed in a similar acting style involving exaggerated gestures and mimics, such as Barnabas Collins in *Dark Shadows* (2012), Ichabord Crane in *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), Tonto in *Lone Ranger* (2013) or William Blake, the namesake of the poet painter, in *Dead Man* (1995). Mark Douglas points out:

> Depp's star persona is shaped by his early career-defining performance in the title role of *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), where his sensitivity, innocence, and gender ambiguity are emphasized. Similarly in *Ed Wood* (1994), again in the title role, Depp's comic performance of the transvestism of the cult movie director emphasizes how gendered identity is constructed through masquerade (offering an early precursor of the gender ambiguity he was to display in *Pirates of the Caribbean)*. (165)

Gender ambiguity is an integral part of Depp's star persona and has been shaped since the begin of his career.[56] These characteristics, effeminate gestures and exaggerated mimics, are thus probably more a part of "Depp" than "Sparrow." The reputation and star persona of the lead actor has already coined the perception of Sparrow by role memory before the first shot was ever caught in a camera. This peculiar acting style associated with the actor's name is another performative act. "Depp" and "Sparrow" are thus inseparable. To further strengthen this connection, it is said that Depp created Sparrow after his own preferences, even despite protest on the site of Disney. This helps to give Depp a piratical air, the rebel who has faced down the producer Disney. Depp has become a pirate to create the pirate Sparrow; in short, character and actor are one. Sparrow would not exist without Depp. Even if this story may be dismissed as a marketing strategy, it shows how much Depp's reputation as independent actor, rock star, and rebel interacts with the character of Sparrow. It is not only Depp's acting style which binds Sparrow to him; it is also his public persona. The public persona "Johnny Depp"

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56 See also Fradley, 306-307.

is another performative act – a fourth matroska to create "Sparrow" ("Richards," "Depp the rock star," "Depp role memory," "Depp the rebel"). This makes for a dense fabric of performative acts which all add meaning to what is seen on screen without actually being part of the intrinsic narrative. I argue that the predominant interference of this net is that of the rock star because it is the only interference that touches upon two references, "Richards," and "Depp the rock star."

Disney could not have created a pirate film, whose main characters must be ambiguous, without incorporating illegal and amoral behaviour somehow. Yet, this is strongly at odds with their position as family entertainment monopoly. Thus, rebellion and anarchy are created by incorporating the coolness and spirit of rebellion of the discourse of the rock star into the films on several levels. Disney has developed a strategy to include rebellion and amoral behaviour by hinting at it without actually showing it. Yet, the mere hint at what I have called the "forbidden fruit" may satisfy the hunger for rebellion in the audience. In this way, Disney can create ambiguous pirates without actually showing their amoral behaviour on the silver screen because it is left to the imagination of the viewer.

The crucial point is that both systems, that of rock music and pirate fiction, are reliant on staged rebellion and the moment of consumer catharsis that comes with it. Both the music business and producers of pirate fiction have learned to stage anarchy and rebellion and exploit them for profit. In sum, both performances, rock stars and fictional pirates, are made possible by an audience willing to watch the spectacle of anarchy and willing to pay for it.

### 2.3.9   Pirates Versus Empire?

This moment of anarchy is largely created by the juxtaposition of pirates and the British. In a similar vein to the prior example, the pirates are defined by their difference from the British. Be it their apparel, their behaviour or their different government, the pirates differ from the

British in every aspect possible. The pirates gain their allure by this contrast. Piratical

freedom is constructed by contrast to the hegemonic British Empire. Steinhoff observes

> In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the dichotomous confrontation between the pirates and the British establishment provides the basic narrative conflict. […] The shifting allocations of good and evil and the resulting wavering of viewer sympathies with these apparently dichotomous groups of characters, ways of life, and cultures tempers the notion of clear-cut boundaries and provides the films with their destabilizing potential. Moreover, it is the trope of piracy itself that often functions as a marker of instabilities and the transgression of boundaries that define the social, spatial and cultural standards of the dominant order on screen and off. […] [T]he pirate often appears as a transgressive element, a liminal figure that inhabits other and self to such an extent that a clear-cut separation of the two is impossible. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 28)

British society and pirates, normativity and the Other define each other. However, the

categories "pirates" and "British" are unstable. What is more, they are not identical with

"good" or "bad." Pheasant-Kelly observes that:

> Ultimately, the line between "good" soldiers and "bad" pirates becomes blurred – and at times it is unclear which side Sparrow supports […]. In fact, most of the main characters change loyalties over the course of the franchise, including Norrington, Will, Elizabeth, Barbossa and Governor Swann. Furthermore, the film [sic] [all films <A/N>] persistently encourages [sic] the spectator to identify with the pirates and their way of life, emphasizing the attraction of freedom in contrast to the stultifying, barbaric and repressive regime of the English. (78)

Some characters change sides repeatedly, like Hector Barbossa, James Norrington, and

Joshamee Gibbs. Neither are alliances between characters long-lasting or even intended as

loyal, honest commitments. Moreover, allies and opponents of the lead characters can be

found on both sides, such as Governor Wetherby Swann, who helps the heroes and the pirate

Blackbeard who opposes them. Yet, the films thrive by the cinematic tradition of the pirates as

a force of resistance against colonialism.

Pirates who defend the weak and suppressed colonised against evil and suppressive

colonisers are an established trope in cinematic narratives:

> Hollywood's pirates were not always portrayed as antagonists, and this is particularly true of the most remembered on-screen swashbucklers, such as Errol Flynn, Tyrone Powers, or Burt Lancaster. In each of these cases, the pirate heroes and their loyal crews appear as morally and politically legitimate agents operating in an illegitimate world. More than just dashing swashbucklers or defenders of the oppressed, pirates were full-fledged members of an authentic political order, providing moviegoers with alternate constructions of political authority, individual citizenship, and cultural allegiance that could be easily contrasted with the delegitimized politics practised by the film's true villains—despotic and tyrannical state authorities who either threatened the pirates, the pirates' home nation, or the world. (Bond, 312)

Pirates are presented as idealised outlaws who defend the common public against an unjust

authority. This constellation is remniscent Foucault's two-sided discourse of the criminal. The pirate is a criminal, who must be condemned on the one hand, but, on the other, s/he is also someone who fights authority and is thus worthy of admiration.[57]

In *Pirates of the Caribbean,* however, "pirates no longer fight to bring freedom to others by overthrowing corrupt officials who terrorize small island populations" (Bond, 318). The pirates themselves take the roles of the victims of colonisation:

> The capitalist system, personified by the cool and manipulative Lord Beckett, is coded here as a tyrannical regime, while the pirates are represented as the common folk, consisting of marginalized people such as blacks, women and children. […] *At World's End* thus paints a picture of the pirates as the oppressed, as those who perish under globalization. (119)

The pirates have to fight for their own survival instead of protecting others. The two-sided discourse is thus broken. Pirates do no longer oscillate between criminals and heroes. They are defending themselves. The "justifiable *causus belli* – the threat of their *own* survival" (318, emphasis added) proves problematic at a closer investigation. 'Survival' for a pirate community (and especially in *Pirates of the Caribbean*) means the freedom to roam the Caribbean and to raid and plunder. These descriptions include by definition criminal activity and the ransacking of English ships. Under these circumstances the justifiable *causus belli* and threat of extinction (or severe damage) lies, seen from a legal and moral perspective, on the side of the East India Company (EIC). It is the EIC that has to fight for its survival. It is the EIC that is threatened by an enemy and has to defend itself. It is the EIC that has a *causus belli*. The pirates are the aggressors instead of the victims. As none of the pirates of the film-series look as if they were starving there is no justifiable *causus belli* on their side. The fight against the EIC is justified by narrative and filmic conventions only. It is an established filmic trope that pirates justly fight the colonisers. The fact that the parameters have been changed in the example at hand by leaving out any suppressed colonised does not seem to weaken

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57 At a closer look, this dichotomy between colonisers and pirates lacks any logical grounding. Pirates are not the opponents of colonisation. Their very existence forbids this constellation. Pirates do actually profit from colonisation and so hardly want to abolish it. The ending of colonisation would deprive pirates of their 'income' (by the loss of merchant ships to raid).

recipient acceptance. Audiences consume established plot-lines, even if they have been taken apart and lack logic.

The reading of the EIC as threat is justified by their hegemonic character. Steinhoff and von Holzen point out that the EIC represents capitalism (cf. Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 115-123, von Holzen, 271, 295). Beckett is the only character motivated by pure greed only, so he might be the 'real' pirate. (von Holzen, 295) At the same time due to the fact that he corrects Wetherby Swann that he now goes by the title of Lord, his strongest motif might be ambition. He was obviously not born into nobility – rendering the extermination of pirates just the next step to climb the ladder.

To add further to their villainy, the EIC are depicted when executing civilians, even children. They have to be stopped to prevent further hangings. The EIC also has Governor Swann murdered, the only relative of the heroine. Yet, Governor Swann is not only the father of the heroine; he is also a British official. Murder of a British official marks the EIC as ruthless and criminal. By murdering a British official they have left the boundaries of British authority. They are acting independently. In other words, the EIC has gone rogue.

The pirates are thus not opposed by British hegemony, but by a separate force which has gone astray. The EIC acts as independent force. Having murdered two British citizens (Swann and the captain supposed to smuggle Swann to England) they are as nationless as are the pirates. They have betrayed their home nation. The EIC represents trade instead of the English monarchy. Colonial expansion is exchanged for aggressive establishing of a trade monopoly. It is merchants who want to hold power over the seas and not a monarch. Thus the pirates face down their true enemies, the merchants they attack. The pirates do no longer battle a hegemonic colonial monarchy, but the merchants themselves they have robbed priorly. The merchants intend to expand their trading network and thus their prime objective is removing the pirates who inhibit their trade.

What's more, trade has become so powerful that the EIC overrules British authority and kills British citizens. British culture and colonialism in the meaning of establishing a trading network have been separated. This is a necessary step to make way for different interpretations of the British. The EIC are only an evil splitter group of the British. The British, as a whole, however, take on several different roles within the film series.

### 2.3.10  Breaking a Dichotomy – Depictions of the British: Victim, Oppressor, and Threat

The British are mostly depicted as representatives of the conflicting, predominant, and opposite way of life. Fradley observes: "From the opening moments, then, piracy is positioned in ideological opposition to the patriarchal hierarchies of colonial society and, by extension, the stifling logics of heteronormalcy." (302) The depiction of the British as common enemy also unites the pirates: "[T]he first instalment seems to be structured on an archetypical opposition between good and evil pirates. However, the dichotomy is put into perspective by introducing, with the British colonists, a third party that acts as common enemy of all pirates." (Zhanial, *Postmodern*, 80) The pirates, in turn, as a homogenous group in this case, function as necessary contrast to this established system:

> Sparrow's appearance in the staid and oppressively regulated confines of Port Royal underscores his ideological role as a heroically disruptive force who embodies a form of performative social critique. Casually bribing his way into the port, Sparrow minces through the stilted colonial environs with delicious irreverence before eventually stealing a ship from the British naval fleet and sailing out of the colonial waters of Port Royal with characteristic insouciance. (Fradley, 303)

Sparrow successfully moves through the colonial world while disregarding its rules. He is thus "a form of performative social critique." (Fradley, 303) The films are largely based on the principle of (de)construction and in a first step, the step of construction, the contrary parties of British and pirates are established as a dichotomy.

Yet, roles are not as clear-cut as they may seem. British and pirates alternately take the roles of victims and aggressors. What's more, in a manner similar to the two different

readings of the *General History* regarding the representation of masculinity, the depiction of the British is open to different interpretations. Whereas Fradley points out that the strict British system represents "heteronormalcy," (302) Steinhoff argues that the British are depicted as feminised, as I have explain earlier. (cf. Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 40) The critical point for my argument, however, is that the depiction of the British is open to different readings, and, even more so, inconsistent.

In the beginning of the film series, the British are depicted as victims:

> Within the diegetic world, the British colony represents the normative and dominant societal order while the pirates are positioned as various forms of threat to this society. In the first film this is most evident in the representation of the cursed pirates, Captain Barbossa and his crew. They function as the 'evil other' that endangers, disturbs and destroys the idyllic colonial life of Port Royal. The tone for the pirates' representation is already set in one of the film's first scenes, in which British guard Mullroy mockingly asks Murtogg, 'You've seen a ship with black sails that's crewed by the damned and captained by a man so evil that Hell itself spat him back out?' (*Pirates I*, 2). These words, which introduce Captain Barbossa and his crew as more than devilish, are reinforced by the pirates' visual representation. In their first appearance on screen, the cursed pirates emerge from the depth of the sea, bringing darkness and storm. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 32)

The British settlement falls victim to pirate ghosts. In the sequel, however, the very same visuals are used with exchanged roles. The colonial force now arrives as a threat to the rather piratical characters Swann and Turner:

> In *Dead Man's Chest* Lord Beckett's arrival in Port Royal is introduced as the advent of a dark and disturbing storm. In the form of an impressive flashback, the visual representation links the arrival of Lord Beckett's armada to the arrival of the cursed pirates in the first film: Once again the source of evil comes across the water and sets out to disturb the 'order' of Port Royal. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 42)

Roles are swapped: when pirate-ghosts first threatened the colony, it is now the colonial forces threatening the pirates.[58] Moreover, a former supernatural threat is replaced by a real threat: the colonial forces finally controlling the paradise and utopia of the Caribbean. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 42) The EIC plans the extinction of pirates and thus generates a threat valiant enough to offer material for two movies.

Pirates and British thus take their turns in functioning as good or evil forces, being the

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58 Analogously to the repeated scene of Sparrow's entry standing atop a mast of a ship, the series relies again heavily on the ability of the viewer to remember the prequel and set both scenes into perspective to each other. Scenes are repeated providing very similar mise-en-scéne, but changed drastically in their meaning, which adds further to the notion of instability. What one sees on screen may look familiar, but is definitely not the same as has been seen before.

victims or the attackers. The same rotation of the roles of hunter and prey can be seen on a much smaller scale in the example of the carnivorous mermaids. A pirate crew sets out to hunt down carnivorous mermaids, only to almost end up as their dinner; the mermaids set out to hunt the men only to be confronted by fishing nets. Interchanging the roles of hunter and prey largely adds to the instability of the film series.[59]

### 2.3.11 Sparrow: *Amicus Populi Britannici*

The fourth film even unites the British and the pirates; the long-term rivals Barbossa and Sparrow meet again in front of their king. Both are British citizens. While Barbossa is officially introduced as a privateer, the status of Sparrow is revealed more covertly. He is introduced to the king with the significant ending that George II is also the king of Sparrow. Sparrow is considered a subject to George II, which automatically marks him as a British citizen. This means nothing less than that Sparrow is not under the status of *hostis humani generis*, and, accordingly, that he is not a pirate. Unfortunately, the film series leaves open as to why Sparrow can actually be a pirate and a British citizen at the same time. I hypothesize that Sparrow is in fact a British spy who uses his pirate identity as camouflage. Yet, although many incidents support this reading, as I show in the following, the film series never openly discloses this possible character constellation.

This sudden change in status is emphasized by a change of surroundings. The pirates are not only based in the 'real world' (as opposed to the many supernatural ships of the series), but have obviously exchanged the supernatural Caribbean for the genuine Great Britain. Zhanial observes that the narrative "start[s] in a more 'civilised' place, [...] and only

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59 Steinhoff interprets this interplay of hunter and prey as metaphor for patriarchal power and female resistance: "Die Sirenen üben eine Art gewaltsame und tödliche Rache am Patriachat. Letzteres wird im Film durch die unterschiedlichen Männergruppen, die sie jagen und ausbeuten wollen, verdeutlicht. Einerseits sind die Sirenen auf Grund ihres hybriden Wesens und ihrer tödlichen Macht dabei als monströs gekennzeichnet, andererseits wirft die Narration die Frage auf, wer in dieser Genderkonstellation die ›wahren‹ Monster sind." ("Hollywoodkino," 155) Independent of the actual interpretation of the metaphor, whether masculinity fights femininity or, as I would suggest, whether an intruding power fights a native, 'Other' civilisation to exploit it, the result remains the same: the question who are the true monsters in this constellation.

in the course of the narrative do the characters travel to more exotic locations." *(Postmodern*, 34-35) The detailed introduction of George II  is a stark contrast to the former tone of the franchise which is strongly rooted in the supernatural. Now, the series grounds its narrative firmly to a "historical" time and space.

This rather sudden reference to Sparrow as a British citizen contrasts with the depictions in the preceding films. Here, Sparrow's ethnic and national background seems ambivalent:

> Whereas his pronunciation and Johnny Depp's established position within the mainstream Hollywood industry provide Sparrow with connotations of whiteness, his dreadlocks, dark make-up and Depp's visible Native-American roots mark him as ethnically and 'racially' other. […] From a post-structuralist perspective, Captain Jack Sparrow presents a character whose outward appearance, i.e. skin color, hairstyle and speech do not signify monolithically, and whose alliances to any party on screen are never clear. (*Buccaneers*, 55-56)

Pheasant-Kelly argues in a similar vein, namely that Sparrow is Othered:

> [T]here is a racial element in the contrast between the whiteness of the soldier's costume and the dark rags (and, often, skin color) of the pirates. [...] Connected to this racialized otherness is the portrayal of Jack Sparrow. (77)

In the fourth instalment, however, the British crown does not only eye Sparrow with a keen interest, the British also seem to imply that he has the status of a privateer already by naming him a subject to George II. Be that as it may, Sparrow is most of all one thing, a British subject. The dichotomy between British and pirates collapses.

Turning Sparrow and making him one of them is a large part of the plot of the film series. Sparrow is (ostensibly) courted by the Empire for several times. Becket offers him a letter of marque in *PotC* II. The respective dialogue, referring to the compass which points at the most desired object bears references to homosexuality (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 50), but also indicates that the British intend to win Sparrow over. As the British repeatedly try to enlist Sparrow in their services, it can be assumed that Sparrow is supposed to become a privateer. Regarding my reading that he is a spy already, this may either be part of his camouflage and an arranged system to exchange information or he may be a spy who has

gone native.

Sparrow is confronted with higher ranking personnel during the progress of the series – Governor, Lord, King – but never ends on the gallows, as one might expect. In *PotC* I Commodore Norrington openly admits his treason by letting Sparrow escape by openly ordering to give him a  head start. In doing so, he follows the respective advice of the governor, who points out that piracy might be the right way. The British authorities decide to let Sparrow go free. The next person on the hierarchical ladder, Beckett, seeks a personal encounter with Sparrow instead of having taken him prisoner and brought to execution immediately. The next face-to-face encounter involves the king. Even here, Sparrow is not condemned, but asked to join their forces instead. Some minutes before Sparrow had impersonated a judge in order to free his friend Gibbs, an action which leaves no doubt about his criminal status, nevertheless, he is not taken to the dungeon but a banquet. Sparrow is visually marked as a prisoner; his hands are bound in chains and he is dragged along the corridor by British soldiers. Consequently the demand to join British forces in the following comes unexpected. This reading gives a new meaning to the aforementioned rebuke that George II is the king of Sparrow, for it does not only ask for the due respect Sparrow is supposed to show to his king, but it also appeals to his loyalty and duty to serve king and country. Sparrow is brought in to do his duty and serve his country.

As mentioned before, Sparrow is repeatedly approached by the British. In *PotC* II he is offered a letter of marque. Yet, Sparrow does not intend to sign a letter of marque and consequently accept pardoning by the British crown. Naturally, offering a pardon to Sparrow who is "the most popular character for audience interaction and participation" (Jess-Cooke, 214) should not mark the British as villains. Yet, the focus does no lie on the pardon, but on the restrictions a letter of marque would bring. Piracy may be dangerous, it may be illegal, but it grants freedom. Being part of the British navy, however, means subordination and control.

Von Holzen points out that Beckett, the representative and bodily personification of the EIC, opposes the idea of 'adventure' by his wish for ultimate control, visualised in a growing chart on his office wall.[60] Adventures, however, are dependent on the extraordinary and unknown. (von Holzen, 271) The unknown can only exist in the landscapes which have not been fixed on a map yet. Even the island of the cannibals is already part of the EIC trading route; the spices carry its symbol, implying that a growing number of harbours and trading routes are controlled by the trading company. (von Holzen, 271, Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 118) Piracy is connected to adventure and thus requires not only the unknown, but also the freedom of mobility. Zhanial points out: "Since *Pirates of the Caribbean* has tied piracy to freedom, and being a privateer would require to work for a particular nation and ruler, gaining such a position cannot be the ambition of a genuine pirate." (*Postmodern*, 91) Thus, the strong restriction a pardon would bring together with the limitation of Sparrow's freedom of will and his freedom of mobility turns an offer of mercy into a villainous threat. This mercy comes at a price, which is the loss of freedom. If Sparrow were indeed a British spy, this constant offer and subsequent refusal would strengthen his camouflage and make Sparrow more convincing as a pirate because he constantly refuses a pardon of the British. Denying co-operation with a party in public diminishes suspicions of actually working with them.

The contrast between British restriction and piratical freedom is also represented in their navigational tools. In contrast to the maps of the British and precise navigation, Sparrow's compass does not point north but to the most desired object. It symbolises his eccentricity (von Holzen, 261), unpredictability in alliances and reasons (Furby, Hines, 129-130, Pheasant-Kelly, 68), as well as his rebellious character (Pheasant-Kelly, 68). Yet, the compass may also be a symbol for freedom. As it points to the most desired object, it clears the way to fulfil one's dreams. It does not only tell Sparrow how to achieve his heart's desire,

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60  For further elaborations how the different nature of the maps of the EIC (wall painting) and the pirates (movable circles) symbolise the differences between the antagonists, see von Holzen, 295 and Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 115-118.

it also points out to him what his heart's desire is. It thus stands in direct contrast to cartography and control of trading routes. The compass acts unpredictably and against laws of logic. Moreover, it makes cartography obsolete. It represents the way of pirates; they follow their hearts instead of maps. Whereas the Empire produces maps and tries to fixate the world on paper, the pirate is free to roam it and to follow where ever his heart leads him. The two ways of navigation, maps versus the compass, represent two different ways of life.

Yet, the compass too is an ambiguous object. It is magically bound to Sparrow; as soon as he parts with it, Salazar is released from his prison in the Devil's Triangle.[61] Is it betrayed, and given away, it unleashes evil. It then gives freedom to someone else, Salazaar. The compass thus works twofold, as much as it brings freedom to Sparrow, it also imprisons Salazaar into the  Devil's Triangle. The compass does not stand for ultimate freedom, but for a weird balance of freedom and imprisonment which is not further explained within the film series.

This freedom the compass provides is not only contrasted with, but also threatened by the continuous spread of the EIC. It will lead to the extinction of the pirates, symbolised in the metaphor that the world would become smaller as observed by Beckett. This means that more and more parts will be discovered, cartographed, and controlled. The more parts of the sea are controlled, the less room remains for the pirates. It is not the world in general which becomes smaller, but the world of the pirates, i.e. the space in which they can move. The pirates will not only lose their freedom to move freely, they will cease to exist. Sparrow thus corrects that the spatial dimension of the world will remain the same, but that its content will be diminished. Steinhoff observes:

> This [the metaphor <A/N>] indicates that whether constituting a spatial compression or a reduction of diversity, globalization and imperialism are represented as homogenizing process dominated by white Anglo-Saxons and 'their' states. *At World's End*, for example, begins with a mass hanging of pirates, a

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61 However, this is only true for the last instalment. In the earlier films Sparrow can part with his compass without unleashing evil. This new plot-element is a clear break with the already existing fictional universe established by the prior films.

> state-sanctioned massacre that is accompanied by the suspension of public rights. [...] In the course of the film this oppression spurs a transnationally organized form of resistance. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 119)

This metaphor illustrates the loss of freedom. A world which loses its diversity has fewer choices to offer. The idea that the world becomes smaller implies that the colonial empires are growing fatter and swallowing up the rest, including personal individuality. Here, colonialism is identical to normativity. As soon as the colonisers stretch out their hands towards Sparrow to make them one of their own they become an enemy entity.

Thus, the offer of a pardon is staged as a threat to Sparrow. Turner remarks that Sparrow would not regard employment as freedom, meaning that he does not want to exchange his pirate life for the service and duty of a privateer. This comment is highly ironical, as it is not only Sparrow who will be chained to navy service and deprived of his dream to roam the Caribbean freely, but also the recipient who would lose his or her option for escapism. The reference to a job routine creates the link to the recipient and his drudgery in his daily work life. Pirate fiction can serve escapism by offering an adventurous alternative to dull chores. (cf. Pfister, "Video Games," "Pop-Kultur," 38). If Sparrow agreed to such terms and served under daily routine, his life would not differ much from that of the recipient seeking escapism. The fourth film visualises this loss of freedom on the example of Barbossa, who has joined the British forces. Zhanial observes: "*On Stranger Tides* connotes the privateer negatively. This becomes clear through Jack's reproach that Barbossa has degraded himself by accepting the King's offer (*PotC* in Zhanial, see *PotC* IV 3)." (*Postmodern*, 91) He does not only wear an uniform and a wig once he has become a privateer, but he also starts to use cutlery to eat an apple – a repetition of preceding footage under changed conditions in which he is repeatedly shown biting in an apple. Biting into an apple, a manner of eating that does not conform to socio-cultural norms, or at least would not be considered as proper table manners, has been replaced by an exaggerated sticking to cultural norms by eating an apple

with a knife and a fork. This symbolises the change from a wild lifestyle to an adapted way of life that is ruled by manners and etiquette. To put a definite end to piracy he forbids the sailors to drink rum. As rum may be seen as representative of the pirate life this last step removes all connotations to piracy. The suppressive British system has hold over the pirates again and has robbed them of their divergent lifestyle and freedom. If Sparrow too agreed to British service, he would become just another officer, one of numerous British sea officers, and thus lose his appeal. Sparrow appeals to the audience because of his divergence and deviance. If he joined the British and become normal, adhere to their rules, and give in to normalisation, the character of "Sparrow" would disintegrate. The aforementioned several layers of performativity would fall apart because Sparrow would perform a new role, that of an officer and hereby erase the connotations to a rock star, to another form of masculinity, to the star persona of the independent actor Depp. Sparrow is defined by his divergence from the norm; he is everything that the British are not. Thus, following the metaphor used by Becket and Sparrow, the world would not have become smaller, but it would have fewer things in it, and one of these things would be Sparrow.

Sparrow is everything that the British are not. The British thus function as means of contrast. They do have a stable function after all; they embody the norm against pirates can construct themselves by divergence. In accordance with my theoretical framework, Sparrow is constructed and defined by contrast. Once he adapts to the British society and becomes a privateer, he simply ceases to exist. The pirate can only exist in contrast to the predominant norm, the British life style. Contrast is his or her defining feature. The pirate can only exist as an opposite to something else.

**2.3.12 The Freedom to Be Selfish**

Piracy thus encompasses two ideals: the freedom of mobility, represented in uncartographed areas, and the freedom of self-development in contrast to serving as an officer. Thus, the ultimate goal for the pirates in *Pirates of the Caribbean* are not riches, but freedom. Sparrow seeks a ship and thus the freedom of mobility. Freedom of mobility is symbolised by a ship; in fact, Sparrow even equals freedom with a ship. (*PotC* I, 01:34:32) The passage first describes a ship as an object, naming its constitutional parts before offering the explanation why a ship (here, the *Black Pearl*) is indispensable for a pirate. It thus puts the definition of "piracy" in a nutshell: freedom of mobility gained by theft of a ship.

The second kind of freedom, the freedom of self-development appears in different forms. Barbossa and his crew e. g. seek the Aztec treasure only to get released from their curse. It is freedom they seek; gold is only an ingredient to achieve this. In contrast to what might be considered archetypical of a pirate narrative, the pirates in this franchise do not crave the gold itself to gain wealth, but they need it as an ingredient to lift a curse. The curse here stands for another form of enslavement, something that restricts their their way of life by robbing them of sensual experiences. The freedom of self-development is also paraphrased in the sequel. Sparrow taunts Swann that she would secretly wish to act out egoism. Yet, this exceeds the principle of self-development. Especially the reference to egoism gives the description a negative air, something which is not in accordance with most religions and considered evil. Freedom is here defined as self-fulfilment in its most basic meaning: the satisfaction of the self without regarding any interests of others. Freedom in this context is translated to the freedom to be selfish, to diverge from religious principles and social restrictions. After all, the pirate lives off society instead of serving it. S/he acts by selfish impulse only.

This principle of ruthless selfishness is illustrated when Swann takes Sparrow's advice

to heart and sacrifices Sparrow to the kraken to save herself and the crew. Zhanial observes that "the broad grin he displays when he officially declares her a 'pirate' signals that he has enjoyed another, even though short, triumph." ("Indebtedness," 172) This so-called "triumph" is very short-lived indeed as it results in his own demise. At the end of the second instalment, when all characters meet in the hut of Tia Dalma to mourn Sparrow, piracy loses its glamour. By following this philosophy through, the narrative has lost its beloved main character. Swann has understood what piracy truly means and has decided to sacrifice Sparrow. This moment is the end of swashbuckling romance and burlesque adventure, the end of glorious piracy. Piracy demands victims and now it has demanded the most beloved pirate of the film series. Piracy, as a philosophy of freedom which does not not hesitate to sacrifice others, has been revealed as the ruthless practice that it is. Piracy has been used against the pirate in the end. Sparrow has been killed by his own philosophy. In the long run, it was not the British who annihilate Sparrow by forcing him to assimilate into normativity, but the pirate by turning his own school of thought against him.

Here applies the famous saying that the revolution has eaten its own children, a proverb that has become famous during the French revolution after the incarceration and execution of the revolutionist and Jacobite Maximilien de Robespierre. Robespierre was largely responsible for the Reign of Terror only to be beheaded later by the revolutionists. Thus, the revolution has eaten its own children, as one of the leading politicians responsible for it falls victim to the revolution he has helped to start. Analogously to the events taking place during the French revolution, the anarchist Sparrow falls victim to his own rebellion. This outcome proves that piracy, as a concept, is unstable and fragmentary. The ideal of piracy has just killed off not only its founder, but also its most charismatic member. The representation of piracy as an ideal has been (de)constructed. Living out this uninhibited version of self-interest has dire consequences. Not only do the characters mourn Sparrow,

they are soon to realise that he was needed to release Tia Dalma; they have to bring him back from the dead, undo the deed. Acting on the selfish impulse does have consequences after all and it is the pirates who have to suffer from it. This idealised understanding of piracy, the ultimate freedom to do as you please, has proven to be fatal. Piratical freedom is supposed to be the opposite of subjugation to social order, yet it only produces chaos and self-destruction. The respective film ends with the memorial of Sparrow, the characters holding candles in mourning, an image which can hardly be interpreted as symbol for an alternative lifestyle and an uplifting representation of freedom of choice.

## 2.4    Conclusion

The analyses show that the pirate motif is constructed by the dichotomy between piratical rebels and the evil British Empire. Both examples, however, add nuances, greyish characters, and instability to this antagonistic concept. Instability is dominant in both examples, in the first it is generated via multi-voiced narration, in the latter via constant (de)construction of categories and repetition of scenes with different meanings. These elements of instability emphasise the unstable and fragmentary nature of the pirate motif, in the meaning that these narratives do not provide clear-cut plot-elements; that events can be interpreted differently; that gaps allow for different, and individual readings. The pirate motif is couched into narratives that do not allow for clear-cut and definite accounts of events

Despite this sense of insecurity the examples generate, both narratives thrive on the dichotomy of pirates versus colonial, hegemonic Britain. The dichotomy between pirates and British Empire is paramount in constructing the pirate as such in the first place. This illustrates the point I have made in my theory chapter when forming a theoretical approach to pirate fiction, that the pirate is defined as the opposite of an existing system. Pirates are what the British Empire is not; they are defined in contrast to the colonial power.

This distinction, however, is not linked to the categories of good and bad characters, of heroes and villains, as both examples features heroes as well as villains on side of the British and pirates alike. As I have shown, these categories are never clear-cut, a concept that adds further to the instability of the narratives. These narratives are rather filled with grey characters than clear-cut shining heroes and blood-stained villains. I argue that the dichotomy is thus based on the oppositional pair of conform to socio-cultural norms and not conform to socio-cultural norms instead. Whereas the British represent conformation to normativity, the pirates represent and embody deviance and rebellion. The dividing line between colonisers and pirates is drawn by their willingness to adapt to a given system. This is the only distinguishing feature, as both colonisers and pirates are depicted as greyish characters.

I argue that the grey characters are to a large part necessary to keep the pirate motif alive. Both main characters, Devlin and Sparrow, can be seen as heroes and as villains, a double view necessary and vital to create the mythos of the pirate motif. First, the pirate must be a hero and a criminal to comply with Foucault's two-sided discourse of a criminal. The pirate must be convincing both as a hero and a villain. But, secondly, this principle also works the other way round, meaning that erasing the border between law-abiding citizen and villain generates the needed contrast to white-wash and elate the pirate. By depicting law-abiding persons as the true villains, even representatives of the British Empire of the EIC respectively, someone who does evil while ostensibly following the law, the impact of actually breaking the law is softened. Again the pirate is construed by the means of contrast and relativity. The representation of fictional pirates is reliant on the framework of the surrounding characters. The pirate motif cannot be defined by itself, only by its relation to the other groups of characters.

The interpretation of the pirate is relational. The pirate is constructed in contrast to another man's system, the system of the villain who has learned to execute his villainous

deeds under the mantle of law and order. The pirate, who opposes this system of law and order openly, thus gains not only an air of rebellion, but also of honesty; the pirate does not even attempt to hide his criminal activities, but lives them out in open day-light. He takes the position of Foucault's criminal who proclaims his heinous deeds at the gallows, on open display and visible to everyone. This is the criminal that can trigger the two-sided discourse and cause admiration and loathing alike. The villain who hides inside of the system, who has learned to manipulate law to his own gain, only triggers the latter. This constellation marks the villain who has learned to play by the rules as the true criminal and contrasts him to Foucault's criminal. I argue that these are two different discourses of criminals, which allows for staging one as the hero, the one who openly opposes socio-cultural norms and laws and thus displays his true nature and protests against what may be perceived as suppressive normativity, and the one who acts according to socio-cultural norms and laws and thus not only hides his criminal intend and deeds but also is only interested in his own gain.

This interdependance between an open display of rebellion and recipient sympathy can also be seen in the choice to pair the discourse of the pirate with the discourse of the rock musician. The rock star too opposes rules and norms openly and quite visibly on stage, highly illuminated by the lightning rig so that none of his staged offensive gestures or deeds may go unnoticed. Breaking rules and norms is made to look attractive, but, strikingly, it is never the recipient who breaks the rules. The recipient does nothing more than following the spectacle, the spectacle of pirate fiction or the spectacle of a rock show on stage. Recipients can live out anarchy by watching without getting into trouble with breaking the law themselves. The whole principle of staged rebellion hinges on escapism. The stagedness of rebellion is vital to this concept. This harks back to Foucault's observations regarding the gallows' speeches. In both cases, the moment of rebellion is constructed with the help of a stage and an audience. The rock star, too, has to stand in front of a crowd and star them down in defiance to gain his

or her rebellious air.

In sum, the pirate motif is highly dependent on its relational constellation to the surrounding characters. Pirates can only appear as a heroes because they represent anarchy and rebellion. Their rebellion must be visible in open daylight and it must be bound to spectacle. In accordance to my working definition, harking back on William Blake's "I Must Create a System or be Enslaved by Another Mans,"[62] the pirate motif is defined as the contrast of an already existing system. The pirate hereby contrasts society and the secretive, cunning villain alike. The pirate motif does not have a definition of its own, but is created by its contrary relation to the system of other men.

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62 Blake, William. *Jerusalem*, E 10

### 3.    "Where There Is Power, There Is Resistance"[63]: Piratical Freedom, Equality, and Democ(k)racy

One of the strongest aspects that makes for the attraction of the pirate discourse of (historical) pirates and fictional pirates alike is piratical democracy. Fictional piratical societies have been repeatedly identified as Foucauldian heterotopias (cf. Ganser, "Heterotopia," Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 100-105, Michely, 222-227, my theory chapter "Birth of the Pirate"). Yet, as grand as these ideals may seem, their realisation can prove difficult. The freshly established democracy may be vulnerable to manipulation. Moreover, the democracy is further weakened by the low morals of its denizens.

I have hypothesised in my theory chapter that the topos of the piratical society is a paradox. I have observed that the piratical society bears more semblance to a prison, a gilded cage, than to a free society. Once entered, the piratical society can no longer be left. I have further explained that a piratical utopia is contradictory in the terms of motif history. A literary utopia is inhabited by ideal citizens which is at odds with the ambiguity which is an integral part of the pirate motif. Piratical societies are thus often depicted as (de)constructed utopias. The need for new rules and the fact that these rules are often set up by distinct individuals, leaders, makes the piratical society vulnerable to manipulation and often turns democracy into democ(k)racy, a mockery of democracy. One might thus argue that the depiction of what might be considered a utopia, a better society that is insulated and thus isolated from the normative societies, is turned into a disastrous dystopia or a more realistic heterotopia. I begin the following chapter with a short overview of motif history and, among others, briefly illuminate how pirates can fall prey to a cunning leader on the example of Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver of *Treasure Island*. I then analyse the representation of piratical societies in contemporary fiction, namely the NBC series *Crossbones* (2014), the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film-series (2003– ), and Daniel Handler's novel *We are Pirates* (2015) and

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63 Foucault, *History*, 95

investigate how they differ from normative society, how they are conceptualised, and how they too are undermined. Before delving deeper into the topic of supposedly utopian, alternative societies, however, I will have a closer look at the depiction of the society and cultural systems which it converts and mirrors. As I have pointed out in my theory chapter, piratical democracy must be seen in the context of shipboard hierarchy; piratical equality in the context of spatial separation of ranks (officers versus sailors) on a ship. I will delve into the representation of British culture in general and British-Jamaican culture in particular in *Crossbones* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* and how they are mirrored and inverted by their piratical counter-parts. By doing so, I will discuss the representations of piratical societies to shed further light on how present-day pirate fiction deals with the dilemma of combining the genre of utopia and its idealised citizens with the ambiguity inherent to the pirate motif.

## 3.1   Pirate Articles: Law, Guidelines, and Means of Manipulation

Some fictional representations of piratical democracy incorporate this problematic paradox of an ideal society filled with crooked individuals. In the probably most famous pirate novel, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), pirates adhere firmly to their democratic rules. So firmly that, in fact, their adherence to these rules weakens them and thus makes them easy prey for the eloquent Long John Silver. The pirates decide to dispose of Silver as their captain as they disagree with his leadership. Silver, however, manages to verbally outwit his accusers by charging them in turn of wrong procedure. Thompson observes:

> Stevenson, who follows closely Johnson's account of pirate articles in *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724), must know that to sign up with a pirate band requires an 'Oath taken on a Bible reserved for that Purpose only' (Johnson quoted in Thomson, 213). 'It'll do to kiss the book on still, won't it?' asks Dick. 'A Bible with a bit cut out!', Silver replies: 'Not it. It don't bind no more'n a ballad-book.' (Stevenson in Thomson 161) […] Gulled by Silver into abandoning their attempted disposition, the pirates reinstate the leader they have dared to challenge. Silver's disavowal of the mistakes they attribute to him may be a desperate piece of showmanship, but his fundamental rebuke has some validity. […] Their insubordination, although entirely in accordance with the rules laid down in the articles, is their downfall. Pouring scorn on their pious belief in due process, Silver reminds us that part and parcel of the degeneracy of *Treasure Island*'s pirates is their quaint and irresponsible addiction to a heavily legalistic but formally democratic mode of decision-making. (212)

In an ironic twist, the pirates turn back to Silver's authority to find consolidation that the procedure can still be maintained despite one of the required objects, the Bible, being damaged. Silver, who sees his chance to fully restore his authority, denies this request.

This rule set up by Silver may be seen as an arbitrary decision as the original rule taken from the *General History* only prescribes a Bible without specifying whether the Bible must be intact. Silver uses the pirate articles for his own gain, by insisting that they must be adhered to in great detail (details the original articles do not give) – making up the required detail throughout the process.

This pedantry concerning the pirate rules can also be found in *Pirates of the Caribbean* III, which features the one and only original pirate code, a gigantic ledger that contains all rules which are binding for all pirates of this world – an ironic continuation of what Stevenson has started with Silver's insistence that the pirate articles must not be broken at any account. However, *Pirates of the Caribbean* shows how to deal with that, too, as several characters frequently point out, that actually, the code would be more like "guidelines."

In *Treasure Island*, however, it is only Silver who has understood that the pirate articles may be subject to personal interpretation whereas the others cling to them desperately. Thomson observes further:

> If Stevenson's pirates are to be regarded as democratic, however, it is in the sense of mob rule current at the time of which he is writing, and might be rather be ranked alongside the contemporary complaints cited by the revisionists Linebaugh and Rediker that 'there is so little Government and Subordination among [pirates], that they are, on Occasion, all Captains, all Leaders' (Linebaugh and Rediker in Thomson 163). Craven, intemperate and bibulous, Stevenson's pirates are obsessed with their own pirate codes and conventions. […] The contrast with Long John Silver is particularly striking. Where Billy Bones was struck down by an apoplexy on receipt of the Black Spot back in the Admiral Benbow Inn – as if a single piece of paper embodied the full force of the law – Silver seems to be not so much exempt from the strictures of pirates' code as immune to them." (213)

Piratical democracy does not give way to more justice and equality, but to chaos. Everyone wants to have a say now; everyone wants to be in a powerful position now. The one thing they fear, however, are their own rules. Only Silver is unimpressed when confronted with piratical

procedure. He knows that he can turn the tides and manipulate the other pirates. Piratical laws are of no more interest to him than is the law of normal society.

Silver is not the only of Stevenson's characters who manipulates the pirate articles to his own purposes. This is not a single occurrence then in Stevenson's work, but rather something he took to be typical of a cunning pirate. Thomson points out:

> Stevenson turns typical pirate governance into a device of Ballantrae's [of *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889)] (who insists on maintaining Teach as Captain for the same reason [the quartermaster being the more powerful party on a pirate ship]) to better manipulate his fellow rogues. Both the Master and Long John Silver appear to subject themselves to pirate law, but also to flaunt it or manipulate it at will. This ambiguous position is consistent with both their distinction among the pirates themselves – *with* them perhaps, but not *of* them – […]. (214)

Both Ballantrae and Silver use the pirate articles as they see fit. Putting themselves in an apparently weaker position only gains them more influence. Their pretence to adhere to pirate articles in truth only gives them more power to manipulate the other crew members. They thus remain separated from the pirate crews; they are not assimilated into the society they make use of. Piratical democracy is undermined.

### 3.2    Democ(k)racy, a Democratic Society Ruled Secretly by its King: *Crossbones*

The NBC series *Crossbones* (2014) is centred on a democratic society hidden in the Caribbean of the 18th century and governed by Edward Teach. Edward Teach is the name of the historical pirate who became famous as Blackbeard. A British spy, Thomas Lowe, is sent to assassinate Teach. He successfully infiltrates the island, only to defect to the pirates later on.

Zhanial asserts that *Crossbones* diminishes the romanticisation of the pirate in favour of a more "historical accura[te]" (*Postmodern*, 283) depiction:

> [B]oth series [*Crossbones* and *Black Sails* <A/N>] seem to aim at a new historical accuracy. They rid the pirates and their Golden Age of the romantic associations established over the last centuries, and instead present them and their lives as they presumably more likely were, i.e. as dirty, bloody, violent, and determined by rudimentary medical treatments, shifting political alliances [sic] and intrigues. (*Postmodern*, 283)

This statement is highly controversial as it is still open to debate what a "historical accura[te]" (*Postmodern*, 283) depiction or understanding of pirates would be. As pointed out in the introduction, the most important sources on Golden Age piracy, the *General History* and the *History of the Buccaneers of America* are semi-fictional. Two of the claims are also inaccurate in the case of *Crossbones*. Teach and many other characters are far from dirty. Teach is presented as ultimately neat; he is mostly shown as wearing flawlessly white clothing. Neither are their medical methods primitive. Lowe, the surgeon, is depicted as very skilled in his profession; he manages to turn an unborn in the womb of the mother and so to save the lives of both mother and child. He further treats Teach by drilling a hole in his skull, a procedure Teach survives unscathed.

 *Crossbones* is far from what might be perceived as a historical depiction of piracy. On the contrary, analogous to the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series *Crossbones* links pirates to the realm of the supernatural. Whereas the former is firmly grounded in maritime lore and thus hinges on the genres of fantasy and horror, *Crossbones* links pirates to science fiction, speculative fiction, and alternative history. Two facts qualify *Crossbones* for a alternative history. First, Teach, known as Blackbeard, has survived the (historical) fight with Robert Maynard (which caused the death of the historical Teach) and thus outwitted most of the English authorities who believe him to be dead, and secondly the series features a submarine which also makes for the connection to science fiction.

 But first and foremost *Crossbones* is based on the idea of the pirate society as a better, democratic society and negotiates the question whether such a society is possible throughout the series, hereby putting strong emphasis on the utopian character of pirate fiction. If historical pirates did, indeed, live in a democratically organised society on a hidden island is secondary. As I will show in the following, the series draws attention to how this fictional society is organised, displays its flaws, and ultimately questions the reliability of a (faked)

democracy.

### 3.2.1 Societies and Their Mirrors: Heterotopias

Santa Campana, the pirate village, is an example of a piratical society. It is characterised by its contrast to the British Empire. Zhanial observes that "like the television series' [*Crossbones* and *Black Sails* <A/N>], Disney's trilogy, especially the second and third instalments, establishes an opposition between an evil representative of the British Empire and the pirates, and then arouses sympathy for the outlaws." (*Postmodern*, 283-284) *Crossbones* introduces the British Empire first before it moves on to the pirates. The pilot starts with a voice-over introducing the British Empire, which is described as all-encompassing power of the 18$^{th}$ century:

> At its height, the British Empire was the most powerful force humanity had ever known. Fully 1/5 of the world's population lived and died under the British flag. Yet its true power was not on land but on the sea where they ruled with the most brutal and efficient military force that has ever been: the British Navy.

The British Empire is presented as a threat. "Fully one fifth of the world's population lived and died under the British flag" implies British hegemony and dominance. The colonies do not only "live and die under the British flag," they have to follow British rules, and, more importantly, British rule. The repetition of "power" and "powerful" implies strength, whereas "brutal" clarifies what that power is used for: suppression. This reading is underlined by a corresponding use of visualisation. The series repeatedly includes footage showing a British soldier keeping watch by standing at a bulwark and observing the sea. He is surrounded by a calm sea and green grass, instead of palms, exotic shrubbery or parrots. The Caribbean headquarters of the British, Jamaica, thus look British rather than Caribbean. This deliberate change of scenery strengthens the impression of hegemonic rule. The choice of footage depicting regular and tidy areas of grass instead of exotic plants implies that Jamaica has been subordinated to British rule. Even the landscape seems to have taken on an air of Britishness.

This depiction of the British as a hegemonic threat is elaborated in the following text:

> But the oceans that this navy sought to control were vast, unknowable and full of terrible danger. And for all the Crown's might, its ships were often lost to starvation, to storm and tempest, and to pirates. So it was in 1712, the Crown offered a prince's fortune to whomever could create a device that would allow its navy to navigate this great emptiness with a precision never before known. With this device, the Empire would increase its dominion over the world. But without it, the ships of the Crown would continue to be easy prey, not only from the gods and monsters of legend, but from a monster far more brutal and far more real.

"With this device, the Empire would increase its dominion over the world" illustrates the danger of a power-hungry force seeking world dominion. In sum, the beginning helps to establish the dichotomy underlying the series by depicting the British as hegemonic and suppressive force.

Santa Campana is the very opposite of the British Empire. While thousands "live and die under the British flag," the citizens of Santa Campana have formed their own society, following their own rules and rule. The visuals contrast accordingly as well; the intermitted screenshots used to represent the island show a tropical paradise with white beaches, palm trees, and other exotic plants. Santa Campana is depicted as exotic, thereby forming a stark contrast to the British-looking Jamaica. As both islands are located in the Caribbean, the difference in appearance symbolises the difference between the respective insular societies rather than a difference between landscapes formed by natural surroundings.

### 3.2.2 The Democ(k)racy

In Santa Campana, Teach has set up a society governed by democracy and equality. Runaway slaves, personified in the character of Nenna, share this abode with sailors turned pirate, such as Jack Ryder, and political rebels, Jacobites, personified in the Balfour couple. All citizens seem to have the right to vote and all are apparently subjugated to a set of rules, the laws of the island. This constitution is a direct imitation of the pirate articles.[64]

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64 Pirate articles have to be signed by every new crew member. They consist of a set of rules to governing general conduct as well as to regulating recompensation in case of permanent injury (an early form of insurance) and the share of pelf.

The inhabitants of Santa Campana vary in terms of ethnicity, class, and gender. Zhanial argues that this representation aligns with other present-day depiction of pirates: "in consisting of members from different nations, races and both sexes [...] Disney's pirate crews are certainly more akin to the ones in *Black Sails* and *Crossbones* than to those of the early and mid-twentieth-century Hollywood movies." (*Postmodern*, 284) In contrast to *Pirates of the Caribbean*, however, *Crossbones* openly thematises the differences in class, ethnicity, and gender in case of the character the runaway slave Nenna.

Due to the apparently peaceful co-existence of such different groups, Michely defines Santa Campana as a heterotopia of deviation: "It inverts the social standards governing abjection and makes room for a social ordering that accommodates its otherwise deviant citizenry." (222) In other words, all those who are marked as 'Other' for various reasons in normative society can live in equality on the hidden island. She states further:

> Santa Campana is more, however, than a heterotopia pure and simple. For Foucault, the ship is the perfect heterotopia. Its unique pulling force for the imagination lies in its movement, in its ability to travel back and forth between different heterotopic sites […] While Santa Campana is stationary, however, it is, however, in and by itself an inherently hybrid site: satisfying Foucault's third heterotopic principle, it brings together in the one geographical location the multiple trajectories of the British Empire "that are in themselves incompatible." (Foucault quoted in Michely, Other spaces, 25) What is more, Santa Campana is capable of redoubling this principle by becoming site of amalgamation for the Empire's multiple heterotopias (such as brothels and colonies) which were formerly connected by shipping routes only. [T]he imperial subjects, slaves traitors, prisoners, and prostitutes build a new multiethnic republic […]. (227)

Michely identifies Santa Campana as ultimate heterotope as it combines several heterotopic aspects. However, when Foucault identified the ship as the ultimate heterotope, as it moves in between different heterotopic sites and thus connects them, Michely states that it is the piratical society on land which fulfils best this criterium, erasing the necessary element of maritime mobility at the same time. Pirate societies, as a general rule, are placed on a ship or are reliant on ships and therefore bound inseparably to the topos of the ship and maritime mobility. As I have pointed out in my theory chapter, the ship is one of the defining elements of the pirate. The idea of the ship and its cultural connotations – freedom, mobility, discovery,

exoticism, etc. – is an integral part of the pirate motif. The same accounts for Foucault's definition of what his ultimate heterotopia may be – a ship. Santa Campana, a pirate society on an island, is thus a much weaker example of a heterotopia as are other pirate societies, and what is more, the reliance on ships, which accounts for insular Santa Campana as much as other pirate societies, cannot be moved out of the picture.

What is more, the reading to interpret a piratical society as heteropia does not apply to Santa Campana exclusively, but, as has been pointed out by Steinhoff and Ganser, to other fictional representations of pirate societies as well (cf. Ganser, "Heterotopia," Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 100-105), weakening Michely's ascertion of an outstanding position as ultimate heterotopia further. Michely also observes that Santa Campana consists of a multi-ethnic society, but this also applies to other examples, like the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series or *The Pirate Devlin* series. Santa Campana is a piratical society and can be seen as a heterotopic site, thus following the genre conventions. Santa Campana is part of a literary tradition to depict and interpret pirate societies as heterotopias. It does diverge, however, when it comes to the practical implementation. As I show in the following, this democratic society is nothing but a façade. Santa Campana is ruled by the Commodore who does not only decide about regulations, conduct, and residence permit, but, as the season finale shows, also about life and death.

The island is harmonic in appearance only; underneath lurks a rotten and unjust society. This contrast is mirrored in the visualisation of Santa Campana. Whereas repetitive shots of a blue sea and a blue sky next to a white beach imply a paradisical setting, the houses of Santa Campana are subject to decay. What may look ideal at a first glance is in truth rotten. The decorations inside the houses contrast further with this run-down status of the houses; luxury goods imply wealth. This illustrates on a visual level that this is a piratical society, pirates can afford expensive decorations because they are pelf, but they lack either the

necessary infrastructure or the interest to keep their houses intact. Especially the entrance gate of the city is nothing but a ruin, and, significantly, is not connected to a surrounding wall. As a shot from the bird eye perspective shows, the entrance portal stands alone and is thus of symbolical meaning only. The settlement can easily be entered by walking on the grass next to the portal. Still, all inhabitants and all newcomers enter through the portal. This illustrates visually that Santa Campana is a society reigned by illusion, the illusion of justice, the illusion democracy, the illusion of a city gate. This gate is the visual embodiment of democ(k)racy, a society that exists in appearance only.

Every member of the community must prove his or her value to the society. Lowe, a British spy infiltrating the island, has to work as a surgeon; James Balfour, a condemned Jacobite, is set to task to construct a replica of a chronometer stolen from the British. When Balfour stops taking opium and his hands become shaky, Teach threatens Balfour by pointing out that there is only room for him and his wife Kate as long as he fulfils his duty. The moment he stops being useful, their citizenship is at risk. Michely observes: "Being in the position to bestow and withdraw communal belonging in Santa Campana, the Commodore becomes the primary site of projection for his citizens most existential fears: If they have no place with him, they have no place at all." (228) The ostensibly free society ruled by democracy and equality is in reality a cage. If Balfour does not carry out Teach's will, he and his wife will lose their protection from the British.

Similarly Teach threatens Rose, the madam, directly should she ever reveal her involvement in one of his secret plans. This open threat of murder goes unpunished as Rose is too afraid of the Commodore to invoke the laws. This is a classic example of abuse of power. It complies with my observation that the pirate abode is a gilded cage. This is why Teach is able to threaten Balfour; the Balfours are wanted by British authorities and are thus dependent on the security of the hidden island. They are outcast of normative society and hence need the

pirate society to find peace and security. Rose knows of her dependency on the Commodore and thus accepts the threat as such. This gilded cage is ruled by threat, threat of expulsion and exposure to British authorities, threat of murder.

Something similar applies to Nenna, the aforementioned runaway slave, who can only find freedom in Santa Campana. Yet she does not socialise with the group – she differs from the other members, and what's more, she lives off the other members by stealing or holding back pelf. Nenna is depicted as a queer character. She stands in stark contrast to the other female characters who are depicted in long dresses and corsets whereas the first is depicted as wearing trousers and having a very short haircut. She is not only a lesbian as is demonstrated by her sexual encounters with Rose, but also the only female who accompanies the men on piratical raids. She is known for her ruthless brutality and feared by the whole community. The series introduces her as one of the first characters the spectator sees, jumping aboard a ship during a pirate attack and attacking victims. She is thus one of the first pirates shown to the spectator, in a depiction that clearly underlines the violent aspect of piracy. It is Nenna who is chosen to represent the violent aspect of piracy, but, as the series unravels, it becomes clear that this is rather a question of individuality than representative of all pirates living in Santa Campana. Lowe later acknowledges that she is a dangerous threat. All other women restrict their activities to the domestic sphere, either as partners, e. g. El Sharad and Kate, or as prostitutes, e. g. Rose and Nelly. Although Michely states that Kate holds a position of power, this is only partly true and her role is still firmly embedded in traditional gender roles. Michely asserts:

> In this transitional environment, social ordering in terms of sexual difference appears to give way to a form of gender equality that is based on the individual's utility for the heterotopia. […] Disembarking on the quay in Santa Campana, Lowe and Fletch encounter Lady Katherine Balfour, the island's quartermaster, who is dividing spoils from HMS The Petrel [sic]. In this capacity, Katherine is in command of a small workforce of men whom she unceremoniously orders around. (225)

Despite her power over the workforce, Kate still has tasks which are thought of as womanly.

She sorts the new acquired items, assigns Lowe his accommodation, and visits a British outpost to buy further provisions. Even though she holds power over others, her position is the equivalent of the female head servant. Her role is that of a position firmly established in the British gender and cultural norm of the depicted time. Her role is so conform with the established system that it further undermines the heterotopic concept. Nenna, in contrast, sticks out not only due to her masculine behaviour and looks, but she is also the only non-white character. Her presence and strong role within the community help to implement the idea of piratical equality, yet her clear demarcation as 'Other,' even within the piratical community, brings this equality to fall in the same breath. Nenna is different, in the context of gender as well as in the context of ethnicity. People fear her because of her brutality and ruthlessness, which estranges her even more from the community.

This feeling of estrangement is mutual; Nenna is depicted as having no interest in socialising. She is ruthless and dangerous, even dangerous to the community. As mentioned above, she steals from the community by holding back goods she has stolen during the raids. As pelf must be distributed evenly, she is deliberately breaking the island's law. She plans to buy an estate for herself with the money. When threatened to be exposed by Rose, she kills her. Nenna knows the internal structure of the alternative society, including the roles its members perform and uses this knowledge ruthlessly.

Nenna does not aim for equality within the pirate society; she lives from it. She stages her death to go unpunished for her various crimes (theft and murder) and is never seen again. It can be assumed that she has bought the much-vaunted estate and started a new life. Nenna uses the pirate society to establish herself in the 'real' society. The piratical ideal is meaningless to her. The one character who is supposed to benefit the most from an utopian society featuring equality is the one who leaves it.

It might be argued that this rise on the social ladder would not have been possible in

another society for a former slave. Nenna can only acquire the needed riches to buy an estate with theft. Only piracy can open the doors for her to be an accepted member of normative society. But this reduces the pirate society to a mere means instead of a goal, a society to be exploited instead of one to live in.

Thus, it is only partly true that as "[a] multi-ethnic republic, Santa Campana is built on the principle of difference, and on a suspicion against any social arrangement that presents itself as a natural given." (Michely, 238) The fact that it can be assumed that Nenna succeeds in buying the estate overthrows the utopian notion of Santa Campana. First, Nenna only uses the pirate society to gain the financial means to realise her dreams, and secondly, she does leave the utopian society behind, which means that it is another society, the non-utopian normative society, she seeks. The life in the normative society is more attractive than life in the pirate society, something which is clearly at odds with a utopian society which should be the aspired ideal instead of its counterpart. As soon as another society becomes more attractive than Santa Campana, it loses its ideal and thus utopian status.

In the end, Santa Campana has failed to break the conventions of normative society: "For all its attempts at alternative social ordering, thus, Santa Campana does not abandon the symbolic order." (235) In the season final, the make-up of their society is identical to normative society. After Nenna has left, female gender roles are restricted to those of wives or prostitutes. Michely observes that the final episode reunites two heterosexual couples to raise a child. This shot of Lowe talking to the two families is a graphic representation which strongly hints at a return to the traditional socio-cultural normativity. (240) Although she argues that this change is brought about by the new leadership of Lowe after the deaths of Teach and his first and second wife (240) (the ostensible death of Teach is a ruse, as he can be seen on a shore in the last scene of the series – it can thus be assumed that he was banned from Santa Campana), I argue that it is the decision of Nenna to leave this society, the only

character who differs from socio-cultural and gendered norm, which demarcates the return to the established status quo. The series is centred on the attempt to create another, better society only to end with an exact copy of the norm which lacks its most representative icon, the former slave who has become a queer and feared warrior woman.

Santa Campana does not only fail as a utopian society in the context of gender and ethnicity, its rules also fail to provide justice. The laws of the island are more often than not manipulated by the citizens. Instead of invoking the island's law, Rose blackmails Nenna by threatening to expose her. Rose thus uses the threat of punishment as blackmail to gain Nenna's hidden treasure for herself. Nenna subsequently kills Rose to avoid exposure. The cut throat of Rose, who is choking and struggling to breathe, is the visual embodiment of the failure of the new society. It is also a mark stone that will change the society forever, as I explain in the following. This plot-line is a cascade of stealing: the pirates steal from merchants; Nenna has stolen from the community of Santa Campana; Rose tries to steal from Nenna. In the end, the ideal looking society remains a rotten assembly of thieves and robbers. The law serves as an excuse and a means to gain personal advantage.

Thus the law does not curb crime; instead it gives birth to a series of new crimes. After Nenna has killed Rose, she does not only stage her own death to escape the punishment for the murder of Rose, she also fakes a trail of evidence which leads to Lowe, who is consequently threatened with capital punishment. Nenna stages her own murder to have Lowe executed and to escape punishment of her multiple crimes, another manipulation of the laws for personal gain. To accomplish this, she finds a helper who bears a grudge against Lowe: Balfour. Balfour was tortured and crippled by Lowe when Lowe was investigating the Jacobite movement. Balfour resorts to false testimony motivated by personal revenge and incriminates Lowe. Balfour manipulates the laws to have his revenge on Lowe. Both Nenna and Balfour incriminate Lowe and invoke the laws of the island to meet their own means.

This plot against Lowe that is intended to misuse the island law for personal gain strongly supports my argument that a piratical utopia is a contradiction in itself. Pirates are by definitions criminals, whereas inhabitants of literary utopias are, as pointed out in the introduction, usually depicted as ideal, law-abiding, moral conscious persons. I argue that *Crossbones* hinges on this paradox and demonstrates that a pirate community is unlikely to strive for ideals because its individuals are still driven be greed, revenge, and lust.

In the following events, the utopian ideal is (de)constructed further. When Lowe's innocence is revealed, Balfour is sentenced to forty lashes for false testimony. This depiction of violence serves two different purposes. On the one hand, it demonstrates that the new society is built on violence which casts a shadow on its ostensible ideal character. On the other hand, this is a direct copy of the system used aboard merchant and naval ships. Lashes are a common punishment for sailors. This retreat into old ways and imitating the status quo demonstrates that Santa Campana has put a new appearance to the old system at best. Santa Campana is ruled by the same rules as is a merchant or naval ship: obey the rules or face the consequence of the lash.

However, this event finally changes the pattern of misusing island rules for the better. Balfour is in such poor health that this punishment would most likely end lethal for him. The community remains resolute and insists on upholding the law. Lowe rescues Balfour by taking his place, and thereby using the law to make amends for his past deeds. Again, the law is manipulated for personal means, yet, I argue that in this case it results in saving a life, in forgiveness, and in equalling stakes.

The lashes are shown in changing close-ups of the characters, the pain stricken face of Lowe, the clenched jaw of Ryder who can finally exact his jealousy on Lowe for the favour he has found with Teach, the sympathy of the bystanders. As the whipping progresses, the scene is muted in favour of melodramatic music to underline the suffering of Lowe. In this moment,

Lowe breaks to his knees, amplifying the depiction of suffering. The whole scene is reigned by an intense depiction of suffering, suffering as atonement, suffering in someone else's place. I argue that this scene illustrates that the new society has led to suffering, the suffering of many which cumulates in this open display of torture. Similar to the depiction of Rose's choking after a cut throat this scene implies that the utopian society has failed; instead of bringing about happiness it has lead to intense suffering.

Yet, the beating is stopped before the forty lashes are completed. Teach re-appears after a long bout of unconsciousness seemingly as a deus ex machina. Yet, when Lowe inquires why the beating had stopped, Teach affirms that it was not him who stopped the punishment. The person who intercedes in the name of Lowe, Oswald Eisengrim, is the very same who swore to murder him earlier in the series because Lowe had killed his partner, Alan Mersault. One of the citizens has finally shown mercy and deviated from the prescribed rules. I argue that Lowe's sacrifice and his willingness to take Balfour's place in torture starts another cascade, one of mercy and forgiveness. The murder of Rose has, in the long run, lead to the ultimate downfall of the pirate rules. The community finally becomes an ideal utopian place – but only by breaking its rules. The rules only serve as various examples of manipulation. The new society must learn to break its rules to become a better society. *Crossbones* makes explicit that the way to a utopia does not lie in setting up new (pirate) rules, but by improved morals of its inhabitants. A utopia is not constructed by setting up new rules in an insular society, but by improvement of the moral compass of its inhabitants. In doing so, the pirates become the ideal citizens the literary genre of utopia usually depicts. *Crossbones* depicts pirates that are so idealised that they do not comply with the ambiguity any more that is a defining element of the motif. Still, the series does not imply that they lose their status as pirates. This demonstrates further the instability and constructedness of the motif as found in modern-day pirate fiction.

I hypothesised that piratical freedom is an illusion as one set of rules is exchanged for another, as can be seen here on the depiction of a man strapped to a wooden frame with his back exposed and covered with bloody strokes of lashes, an epitome of maritime literature and integral part of the archetypical depiction of the life of sailors. As much as Santa Campana may appear as novel and different, as mentioned above, the prevailing system of punishing disobedience with the lash remains the same. Moreover, *Crossbones* makes obvious that exchanging rules is pointless if the inhabitants of this society habitually manipulate and break the law. A great number of criminals remain true to their identities as criminals as they still adhere to their crooked ways and break or manipulate the island laws to further their own means. The pirates' behaviour within their own society does not differ in any way from what they would do within a normative society. The pirates find it as difficult to adapt to their own society and to follow their own laws as to abide by the normal laws. Thus, this pirate society is not a utopian society to them, but the mere equivalent of normative society. Laws are only made to be broken. Yet, this is, in fact, the only way to create a better society. Only when they have learned to break the law out of altruism or mercy, by pardoning Lowe, does the piratical community finally become a better society.

Even the founder of this idyllic utopia, Teach, undermines the laws to use them for his own plans. When his long-term friend Valentine does not agree with Teach's plans and insults him in front of the island's citizens, Teach plots a staged assassination on himself, ostensibly planned by Valentine. Valentine is subsequently accused of assaulting Teach and the island populace demands his execution. Teach feigns resistance to this verdict and points out his friendship with Valentine, only to be defeated by the inhabitants who insist on the law. The scene shows close-ups of the respective characters, emphasising the conflicting viewpoints and isolating them from each other at the same time. The scene takes place at night-time, the dark adding to a threatening atmosphere. On a metaphorical level, the inhabitants are very

much literally in the dark about what is going on, demonstrated by a last close-up that shows Teach winking at Valentine. Teach has managed to manipulate the inhabitants to unwillingly do his bidding. He rules the island through manipulation and deceit. Teach is the king of Santa Campana, but his "reign" remains hidden from the populace.

Yet, Teach reveals his secret plot to Valentine to demonstrate his superiority and power. Valentine has provoked Teach by accusing him of being the king of the island. Teach pretends to be offended and explains that he was merely the Commodore. Later, before Valentine's execution, he tells Valentine in mockery that he would rescue him if he could, but that he was not the king of this island. Teach had predicted that his request would be outvoted by the island populace. The attempt to save his friend is feigned; he wants Valentine to hang. His subsequent wink to Valentine illustrates this mockery. Teach's plan also involves the denigration of Valentine. By manipulating events in such a way that they will produce the desired effect, Teach creates the illusion that the democratic society has outvoted him. He thereby proves to Valentine that he is, in fact, the king of this island, but that the citizens are oblivious to his secret power. By feigning defeat he proves to Valentine the very opposite of powerlessness, namely that he does hold the strings.

His position as the king is strengthened further by the visuals as well as details in the narrative. To demonstrate his regency, Teach is repeatedly depicted in a high chair, very much like a throne. Later, the throne is shown next to a cradle, implying the birth of a royal heir. However, it is not his own child Teach is taking care of, but the baby of Nelly, the first baby to be born in the new society. The decision to take newborns from their mothers to be with the ruler shows how much power the ruler, Teach, has over his community. The act of claiming a newborn is a demonstration of power and designates him as a ruler after all. The baby is regarded as representative of the new society, symbolising its prosperity. Michely observes:

> To him, the child's birth seems to be nature's vindication of the alternative order of Santa Campana. […] The Commodore's use of the possessive pronoun "our" is slightly ambigious, since there is the

possibility that he might himself have fathered the child. It is more likely, however, that he understands himself as the symbolical father of this child born into the national community. This claim of metaphorical fatherhood again implies a very intimate form of power over each citizen. (237)

Although Teach might indeed be the biological father of the baby, it is the patriotic bond which draws him to the child. Teach sees himself as father of the new nation and so, by conclusion, also the father of the firstborn into the nation: "Upon entering Santa Campana, the individual enters at the same time a quasi-filial relationship with the Commodore, who offers social equality and protection in exchange for commitment to the heterotopic order." (237) This implies that the power Teach holds is more based in the emotional than in the juridical realm. This scene also implies another reading, however. By claiming the child as his, as a product of his nation, Teach further strengthens his position as the ruler of the island. The baby who is not only allowed to sleep in the personal room of Teach, but also sits on the throne with him is instantly made a princess. This idealisation is given an ironic edge by the facts that her mother is a prostitute and the pregnancy only leads to childbirth because it remains uncovered. Still, Teach claiming the child for a short while – the baby is depicted with her mother in the later episodes – elevates the baby's status to that of a princess, visualised in the cradle next to the throne. Yet, in another ironic twist, with her princely bed she is celebrated as the firstborn of a democracy. The lines between monarchy and utopian democracy blur. This strange status of the princess, who is all too sudden returned to normal citizenship, illustrates further the undefined status of Santa Campana as an acclaimed democracy which is nothing but another monarchy under its make-up. Teach bestows and withdraws a princely position as he sees fit.

In addition to claiming the child Teach, proves his role as a ruler further by appointing ranks, giving Santa Campana even more semblance to a monarchy. He promotes Ryder to the rank of captain. Again, Teach has undermined the concept of democracy as pirates are supposed to cast a vote for their leading personnel. What is more, he designates his partner

Selima as his successor, a system inherent to monarchy instead of democracy. Michely asserts:

> The Commodore's marriage proposal, then, has to be read in light of the question of succession. […] Selima's acceptance implies a commitment to their shared future as well as to the future of Santa Campana. While the exchange follows a patriarchal pattern of empowerment, with a male authority legitimizing female agency, the Commodre perforates the patriarchal in favor of matriarchal rule according to which Selima will become her people's mother. (233-234)

While the decision for a future queen may bear heterotopic potential due to female empowerment, the fact that Teach bestows this power strengthens the fact that his is, indeed, rooted in patriarchal thinking and king of this island. Further, "[e]mpowering Selima to complete *his* vision, the Commodore ensures his remembrance as the founding father of the nation, and […] his own symbolic position therein. (234, emphasis in original) In other words, the Commodore chooses a successor whom he can control and teach to follow his precepts. The fact that he decides in favour of the person who is closest to him may point to trust, but it may also point to the power he holds over her. Instead of relying on democratic vote, which would mean that the inhabitants would decide who might be the qualified best, Teach relies on his own judgement and installs a successor while he is still alive - a successor to be taught and formed after his ideas.

In sum, the apparent democracy is in reality a monarchy under a different name. The utopian society appears only as such on the surface. The piratical habitat as a heterotopia is an illusion. The ideals supposedly forming the backbone of the new society are constantly undermined. Teach has not created an ideal society, he has established a new system to control his subordinates – a system so cleverly arranged that they do not know that they are controlled.

### 3.2.3 Santa Campana as a Panopticon

Santa Campana represents an improved panopticon. Foucault uses the panopticon to illustrate his argument in *Discipline and Punish*.[65] The panopticon, a circular prison with a watchtower in its midst, allows for control of the imprisoned with the illusion of permanent surveillance. The inventor and operators use mind-control to achieve this. The imprisoned are unable to detect whether the watchtower is occupied or empty. They are controlled via the mere threat of surveillance. Power control is psycholocigal.

The inhabitants of Santa Campana live under the illusion of freedom and self-government, an illusion which does, in turn, make up their prison. Teach is the controlling power, the equivalent to the watchtower in the panopticon. In a manner analogous to the panopticon, the inhabitants are subordinated to mind-control; their belief in self-government, democracy, and their own laws keeps them from questioning events. All Teach needs to do is fake opposition to the island rules to have the inhabitants defending their rules. This direct defensive reaction to protect their island laws keeps the citizens from actually questioning the events. Doubt on Valentine's guilt would weaken Teach's power.

The new panopticon is much more effective, as its prisoners do not recognise it as a prison. Santa Campana is not only a gilded cage, it is also an invisible cage when it comes to law-making. The illusion of a democratic society makes the inhabitants all the more vulnerable to Teach's mind control. His new system is more effective than any open command could ever have been. His command is all the more effective because it does not appear as such. Teach has not created an utopian paradise; he has developed a more effective system to rule.

Yet, Teach does not only hold the strings in secret; he is a tyrant. In the long run, he remains true to "his" motto "that if he did not now and then kill one of them, they would

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65 Cf. my chapter "Birth of the Pirate"

forget who he was." (Johnson, 59) This quote is famously connected to the historical Blackbeard. Teach demonstrates that he sticks to his motto by pretending to kill Ryder. He attacks Ryder onboard a ship, stabbing him, and throwing him overboard. It is not clear at this moment what his motivations are to kill Ryder, his best friend.

There are four readings for this pretence of murder. Teach might have acted out of revenge as Ryder had an affair with Eh Sharad, Teach's partner. Yet, in fact, it was El Sharad who asked for Ryder's death – as a wedding gift. Teach might have fulfilled his engagement vow by killing Ryder as wished by his fiancé. In a third reading he might have killed Ryder because Ryder opposed his plans. Teach sets out to attack a Spanish treasure fleet, yet changes his mind and plans when he sees his arch enemy, the governor of Jamaica, Jagger, and orders to attack Jagger instead. Ryder openly opposes Teach's decision to attack Jagger. In this moment, democracy is turned into shipboard hierarchy as Teach demands that Ryder must respect Teach's higher rank. He accuses Ryder of mutiny. Thus, in a fourth reading, the murder might serve as a warning to the others. However, mutiny can only exist in the context of hierarchy; it cannot exist in democracy. Foucault points out that "where there is power there is resistance[,]" (*History*, 95) power and resistance construct each other. Thus, mutiny (resistance) can only exist in contrast to hierarchy (power). Pirates, however, are supposed to take their decisions by vote. The moment Teach declares Ryder a mutineer he ends piratical democracy. Whatever his motivation may have been, jealousy, fulfilment of a promise, removing an obstacle or a power demonstration, in every case he attacks Ryder without a preceding trial. By doing so, he has ignored and broken the laws of the island. Teach has uncovered the prison bars of the panopticon ruled by a fake democracy he has so carefully constructed. Subsequently, the inhabitants decide to stand up against Teach, but, it is already too late. Teach's plan to bring utter destruction upon Santa Campana has just unfolded as a cannonball of the British shatters the room, a clear visual representation that Teach is, indeed,

about to destroy the settlement he has founded, hereby even accepting damage of his own abode. Teach willingly accepts the destruction of all he has build. This visual representation proves that Teach suffers of a deranged mind.

Teach is not only a tyrant, he also follows his own agenda – in the long run he plans a serious attack on Santa Campana. The purpose of his newly-built prison is finally revealed: an epic battle with the British. Teach does have a vision for a new society after all. Yet, he is mislead in his function as founder of a new society. He thinks that every great civilisation needs a catastrophe to grow strong. Accordingly, to make his new society strive, he plans to provide them with a founding myth. He argues that pain and suffering will weld them together and allow them to construct their identity as a united people. The civilians are caught in this prison of a gilded cage which only prepares them for battle or death. Teach is a maniac who misjudges the needs of his civilians. Yet, he is also highly intelligent and does not only manage to hide his true intent, but also to bring it about in secrecy.

Teach plans nothing less than the destruction of his own society. For all its democratic set-up, Teach hold the strings in the background, advancing death and construction step by step. Instead of leading a utopian society into a bright future, he constantly leads them towards certain death. Ryder is the first to realise the truth, which does not only lead to his attempted murder, but also makes him an unwilling pawn to bring this destiny about. Ryder survives after Teach has thrown him overboard because he is rescued by the British. Believing that he has struck a deal to protect the inhabitants of Santa Campana by delivering Teach, Ryder reveals the position of the island to the British. By doing so, he has taken the last step necessary to complete Teach's plan; he has led the enemy, the British, to his very doorstep. Teach has outwitted Ryder and even turned him into the last pawn needed to fulfil his plan. The man who intends to stop Teach becomes unwittingly his most effective agent.

In the final showdown, it is the British spy Lowe who decides that Teach must be

defeated. Lowe has started to believe in the society he has infiltrated. Subsequently, Lowe defects. In the final episode he fights against the British – his employers. Yet, he does not kill Teach, but expels him from Santa Campana. The ending implies that now that someone has become leader of the island who believes in the utopia, the vision of an ideal society should finally materialise. It is more likely, however, considering that the islanders had repeatedly used the laws to their own advantage, that the ideal society will never become a reality as it is put together by thieves and thugs. Pirates have already broken the law by becoming pirates. A society formed by pirates may look ideal and idyllic in its make-up, but it still lacks the law-abiding citizens needed to become a just society. If they did indeed manage to turn Santa Campana into a full-fledged utopia, the inhabitants would have to develop a moral compass so strong that they would refrain from pirating. As mentioned before, a pirate society as found in pirate fiction can never comply with a literary utopia as depicted in the respective genre.

The narrative of *Crossbones* shows that a piratical society may aim at ideals, but fails to fulfil them because it is invented and formed by pirates. The concept of a just piratical society is a contradiction in itself. The piratical heterotopia is thus another non-existing ideal. In direct contrast to the utopian societies depicted in utopias, the ideal piratical society only exists in theory, in words. It fails to materialise as its inhabitants lack the moral conduct of the citizens depicted in utopias. Utopia, as a genre, asks for perfect, morally conscious citizens. Thus, as I have mentioned earlier, the requirements of pirate fiction, which needs ambiguous, shady characters, is irreconcilable with utopian fiction. I argue that pirate fiction cannot depict an ideal society as this society must be set up by crooked characters.

### 3.2.4  British Jamaica

Santa Campana is the utopian opposite of British Jamaica in particular and British culture and the hegemonic Empire in general. Yet, it is not the British Empire in itself that is portrayed as

evil. The voice over at the beginning introduces the British Empire as a hegemonic normative force, yet, throughout the series, villainy on side of the British Empire can be traced back to individuals: Father Daniel, who betrays Kate; the dishevelled soldiers who seem to have forgotten their status as soldiers and have become villainous ruffians instead; Lowe in his function as Beggarman who has crippled the Jacobite Balfour; and most of all, the villain of the series, Jagger. Jagger's orders for torture are examples of utter cruelty. He does not only order to have Kate buried alive, a string visual representation of cruelty and torture, but he also picks up a ripped out eye-ball of Fincham with an analytical, calm expression on his face. He does not show any signs of remorse or repulsion, a strong visualisation to characterise him as ruthless and merciless, probably even a sociopath incapable of empathy. He makes wrong promises to Antoinette, who suffers from a deranged mind, and thereby worsens her condition – an act which must be considered psychological torture. The British Empire as such does not play a role on the series; all interactions are close-up and personal. Teach and Jagger are old rivals; thus, in the final episodes the fight between pirates and British Empire is turned into a showdown between Teach and Jagger. Ryder points out that Teach is trying to equal scores with his old enemy. The supposed clash between two forms of government, democracy against monarchy, is in fact nothing but a personal feud.

The British Empire does not function as the normative standard, simply because it is not part of the series. The series restricts the representation of the British Empire to the representation of British Jamaica. Moreover, the series consists of individuals – on side of the pirates as well as on the side of the British. The British society is informed by individuals just as much as is the utopian Santa Campana. The only exception are the soldiers keeping watch over the sea in Jamaica – watching out for enemy vessels. Their faces are never shown, the viewer can only see their backs, which gives a notion of cogs in a clockwork. The soldiers are mere instruments to keep the powerful machinery of the British Empire, as described in the

initial voice over, at work.

In the end, the evil suppressor, the British Empire, is reduced to the manic governor of Jamaica. The fact that the soldiers who keep Kate prisoner are depicted as dishevelled is a visual indicator that the Caribbean is far off the British homeland. The British colony differs from the British homeland. This depiction contrasts with the initial voice-over which implies that all people "living and dying under the British flag" live normative lives that follow conduct and lifestyle of the British isles. In truth, however, it is the changed climate, unsuitable for the soldiers' warm uniforms, that most likely accounts for their dishevelled appearance. Setting up a British culture in a foreign region and different climate has proven more difficult than thought. The dishevelled soldiers are a visual representation of failed colonialism, of a failed attempt to implement British customs. Something similar happens to Elizabeth Swann in *Pirates of the Caribbean* I, who is given a dress with a corset by her father as a gift. He proudly tells her that this was the latest fashion in London.[66] In a manner analogous to *Crossbones*, "Britishness" is represented by the governor of Jamaica, and he too struggles to maintain and copy the British culture and life style by clothing his daughter in the latest fashion of London. Yet, this attempt to transport British culture fails as well. The hot climate makes a corset even more unbearable which leads to Swann's fainting. The latest fashion of London proves unsuitable for the hot climate of Jamaica. Colonisation clashes with the nature of the colony, literary.

Jamaica is thus only partly a representative of British normative society because in reality it unsuccessfully tries to copy the mother isles. Jamaica is a wilderness of its own. Jamaica has become another place, a heterotopia, in itself. Thus, the dichotomies of pirates/British, 'Other'/normativity, democracy/monarchy prove fragile and faulty. In reality,

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66 Steinhoff points out, that the fact that the corset is introduced as Londoner fashion "serves to position the film in a specific socio-historical context and ties the corset's constraining impact to the spread of British mainland culture." (*Buccaneers*, 76) However, this is less of a spread than a conscious imitation of the mainland culture.

two heterotopias face each other, the only difference being that one part tries to imitate the original British culture, Jamaica, whereas the other tries to oppose it, Santa Campana.

The dishevelled soldiers also imply that the red-coats (and so, metaphorically, the British Empire) have become savage. The Jamaican British are closer to the pirates than their homeland counterparts. This can also be seen in the cruelty of Jagger, the man who terrorises an outpost of the British Empire. He is a worthy opponent of Teach, which means that he must be brutal and ruthless. In this case, Jamaican Britishness and Caribbean Piracy are actually alike. All these individuals have left the UK and have become savages, the only difference being the side they play on. The contrast between piratical 'Other' and British heteronormativity is another concept that only exists as an illusion. After a closer investigation it dissolves.

### 3.3 Pirate Lords Voting for a Pirate King: *Pirates of the Caribbean*

### 3.3.1 The Depiction of Piratical Democ(k)racy

*Pirates of the Caribbean* features a democracy which is only partly a democracy: eight pirate lords vote for a king. The lords are identified by a token which they pass on to a successor. Similarly to *Crossbones*, democracy is undermined by the designation of ranks. Pirate Lord Sao Feng even chooses his prisoner, Swann. Swann does not only gain a voice in the brotherhood and the right to vote for the king of pirates, she also wins the election and becomes the new sovereign. The crowing of Swann as sovereign of the pirates may look like a strong example of female empowerment (cf. Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 78) yet, Swann does not have any influence on her promotion. Feng chooses her because he mistakes her to be the human incarnation of the goddess Calypso; Sparrow votes for her because their interests are among the same lines. Thus, not only is democracy undermined by designation, favouritism, and strategic placement of candidates, but equality in the context of gender is nullified as

well. The ideals of democracy and equality are a superficial cover-up which cannot withstand a closer examination.

Piratical equality is erased in this very structure of the piratical society, as it is governed by the aforementioned system of lords who vote for a king. The lords are those who have defeated the goddess Calypso and thereby hold power over the sea. Thus, the lords do, in reality, not lord over the pirates, but they lord over the sea itself. Having power over the sea is a recurring motif in the series, in the fifth instalment, *Salazar's Revenge*, the parties involved seek Poseidon's trident which gives, among other magical powers, power over the sea. The chronometer in *Crossbones* promises the same: whoever has hold of it is master over the sea. Thus, it can be argued that the sovereignty of the eight pirate lords is grounded in their sovereignty over the sea. Their sovereignty is not of a theoretical nature, such as aristocracy or family bounds, their sovereignty is justified by the power they have over the sea itself. This fantastical element of factually mastering the sea allows for a society in which the lords are truly superior. This society is thus not ruled by a more just system of democratic vote, it is voted by a system of physical might. Still the fact that the lords hold power over the sea renders their rule more justified than a rule grounded in birthright. The rule over the sea justifies the rule over the other pirates, who are dependent on sea-fare, as well.

In the end, the pirates here do not even try to hold up appearances and to fake a democracy. Since they all answer to a king, these pirates live in another monarchy and even refrain from any pretence that it was otherwise. This fact is only tuned down by choosing the female lead character for this role in the third part of the franchise, which helps to keep up the illusion of an alternative and better society. Yet, in case of the most popular present-day pirate franchise, piratical democracy has even ceased to exist (or has at least been strongly reduced to a voting right for lords only) and is replaced by lordship which is grounded in having power over the sea.

### 3.3.2   Heterotopia

In a manner analogous to *Crossbones*, the piratical society gains its utopian character by means of contrast to British colonialism. Steinhoff observes:

> Tortuga and the *Black Pearl* present such places of alternative ordering. They are heterotopias of deviance, i.e. places in which those individuals are placed whose conduct and appearance deviates from the required norm, which in the trilogy means in relation to the social codes and values of the society in Port Royal. (*Buccaneers*, 101)

The society is defined by its contrast to the normative society of British Jamaica. Steinhoff points out that Tortuga is the embodiment of a male fantasy:

> It has a mirroring and disillusioning effect with regard to all the other places that remain (esp. Port Royal) while it simultaneously functions as an explicit counter-site to normative society: Contrary to the strictly regulated, class-conscious and hierarchical life in Port Royal, Tortuga is a place of excess, night-life, gambling, sex and violence." (*Buccaneers*, 102)

She thus assumed that Tortuga represents a kind of brothel (101). Roles in a brothel, however, are fixed. When Tortuga is supposed to represent a male fantasy where women take the roles of prostitutes, piratical freedom fails to guarantee equality in the context of gender. When women are supposed to be wives in Port Royal; they are supposed to be prostitutes in Tortuga. One form of suppression is exchanged for another. In both systems, men are clearly dominant. When Sparrow summons his crew, the one woman present can well be considered the quota woman. Thus, the piratical society keeps gender roles and gender-motivated restrictions intact.

Although men may be dominant, in this so-called male-fantasy Tortuga male gender roles are just as prescriptive as the female. Men must be drunkards prone to violence, leaning towards promiscuity and gambling. This is a very specific form of masculinity (one embodied e. g. by James Bond, who was invented nearby Port Royal in Jamaica. This blurring of lines between the pirate motif and the enigmatic male icon Bond (cf. Hagen, "Fleming's Pirates") sheds light on the concept of the masculine gender role tied to the pirate motif). By being so specific, the masculinity of Tortuga is also prescriptive. Tortuga is ruled by a prescriptive gender norm, prescriptive to both sexes. This depiction of the piratical society is thus far from

a better, more free society as, analogously to *Crossbones*, it sticks strongly to the status quo when it comes to the implementation of gender roles.

### 3.3.3    The Piratical Society and American Ideals

Steinhoff further identifies the society as representation of American ideals:

> Tortuga is portrayed as the last port that has not been taken by the East India Trading Company. It represents an imaginary and yet historically rooted pirate stronghold. "Tortuga" means "Turtle Island" and refers to an island in the Caribbean. However, "Turtle Island" is also the mythical name that Native Americans gave the North American continent. […] Constituted as a multi-cultural society of 'deviant' characters and outcasts, the representation of pirate culture in Disney's trilogy indeed fits the notion of an American 'salad bowl' and evokes associations with master-narratives like the American dream. The suggestion that the pirates are organized according to proto-democratic rather than absolutist principles emphasizes such a metaphorical reading of Tortuga and also the pirate ship as as illusory, yet diegetically 'real', 'New World' ideals. (*Buccaneers*, 111)

Yet, as has been pointed out before, pirates had been organised democratically before the US even existed. Piratical democracy is grounded in history. In this case, democracy is stronger tied to the pirate discourse than to the national identity of the producer of the film.

It is not only democracy which is older than the US, the same accounts for piratical equality. And still, piratical equality is just another form of normativity. As I have pointed out in my introduction and theory chapter, once an individual is declared *hostis humani generis*, nationality, ethnicity, class, and gender are erased. The salad bowl is thus rather a melting pot, as once they are classified as *hostis humani generis*, all pirates belong to the same discursive category. The pirate society does not consist of several ingredients which keep their individual character traits; at the gallows they become one homogeneous alloy. The noose nullifies all differences.

The illusionary character of the piratical ideals suggests that the American ideals are insubstantial as well. This idyllic representation shows an America how it should be instead of focusing on real-life problems of immigrants and minorities, such as the growing Chicano*a population and First Nations. It was First Nations who named their continent "tortuga," the

group that was expelled and repressed. The First Nations had to leave "tortuga;" they were forcefully relocated. The original inhabitants have to leave "tortuga" and lose their freedom; they were robbed of their country. I argue that thus the colonisers are the pirates, plundering and murdering their way to their new life and fulfilment of their dreams. The pirates are the invading force that has taken "tortuga" by force, making it their paradise throughout the process. In this reading, the pirate must be a dark and negative force which robs the natives of the "tortuga" country.

The piratical ideal is thus stripped bare to show that ultimate freedom and a new life come at a prize: murder, robbery, and mistreatment of others. The criminal takes the land from the First Nations, but the piratical / American dream of freedom and a new life grants this settlement of a new country an air of heroism and revolution. This reading is only possible in contrast to repressing homeland monarchies. The pirate/frontier hero is defined by relations; his defiance against the British monarchy glorifies his cruelty against his victims. As I have pointed out in my theory chapter, the victims of the pirates are seen as necessary casualties in a war for the greater good. Here, if the pirate is seen as an American hero and set into context of Frontier romanticism, these 'necessary' casualties are the First Nations.

Steinhoff interprets the struggle of the pirates against British authorities as forerunner for the later American War of Independence with the pirates taking the role of the Americans:

> Significantly, *Pirates of the Caribbean* evokes US-American myths such as the figure of the outlaw, the frontier, individualism, mobility and multi-culturalism and imaginatively transfers these master-narratives to a place outside the geographical location of the USA. US-American history is fictively reenacted  by the young heroes' fight against the British monarch (Port *Royal*) and the pirates's struggle with 'over-civilisation'. […] Moreover, as a Hollywood blockbuster seeking to attract a global audience, *Pirates of the Caribbean* depicts even this specific (non-U.S.) place as a potentially indistinct and imaginary location. At the same time, the film fills it up with national values derived from U.S. history and ideology, and thus serves them up – to a national and global audience – as global values. (111-112)

However, the former American colonies are not the only group who has fought British suppression. Other examples are the Sepoy Mutiny, also known as the Indian Rebellion of

1857, or the medieval Wars of Scottish Independence. Thus, several examples in history qualify as master narrative of *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Many groups have fought the British (or, in case of the Scottish, fought the English) throughout the centuries. These many examples of resistance against British/English suppression make it difficult to interpret *Pirates of the Caribbean* as a metaphor for the American Revolutionary War. It might just as well stand for another group which fought the British/English.

In addition to the vagueness of choosing one example only, another fact forbids seeing the narrative as a metaphor for the American War of Independence: these films at least partly hark back to Jamaican history. Port Royal is not a fictive town, but a town in Jamaica. Jamaica does not only have a long history of British colonialism – it gained its independence only as late as 1962 – it is also strongly rooted in pirate mythology. Piracy has engulfed Jamaican identity for centuries; piracy is a predominant part of Jamaica's history and cultural memory. I argue that the historical references to Jamaican history outweigh any metaphoric relocation of American history.

The only mythical and fictional pirate stronghold is Shipwreck Cove, the place where the pirate lords meet to vote for their king. This meeting is set up by members of different ethnic groups. Since pirates are in their very definition nationless – *hostis humani generis*, the enemy of everyone – their ideals can be considered global already, such as the piratical democracy.

In sum, neither are these ideals American nor have they been relocated: democracy is a central element of the mythos of the pirate and representations of British Jamaican Port Royal are frequent in pirate fiction (cf. e. g. the discussion of *Crossbones* above), marking this a typical spatial topos of the genre instead of a mystified place.

What's more, the nature and definition of piratical activity forbids this idealised reading of a mere projection of American ideals. Pirates are defined by criminal activity. They

steal from British merchants and harass British trading routes. Their crimes exceed the Boston Tea Party. The pirates in *Pirates of the Caribbean* are fighting for their "right" to attack and plunder merchants. This fight for a "rightful" freedom is a fight for the freedom to rob, steal, and plunder. These pirates defend their position to be able to carry on their criminal and unlawful activities. All this vanishes under a very patriotic cover-up, supported by film language and intertextuality. Pirate sovereign Swann mounts the shrouds to give a war speech which inspires all pirates to attack the enemy, the EIC. The fact that the EIC is, in a way, "right" about attacking criminals is hidden in their presentation as ruthless murderers. (cf. my chapter "The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal") The idea of justice and rightfulness has deliberately been turned on its head. This society is set up by robbers, robbers who do not want to part with their source of income, merchant ships. This rather blatant truth is hidden behind cinematic exuberance and the architextual genre convention of rebellion against an evil Empire.

While these pirates are indeed fighting for freedom, whatever form that "freedom" may take, they are not fighting for independence. Pirates live off the colonisers' trading routes. It does not lie in their interest to seek independence of the colonisers because they live off them. Pirates are criminals who are outside of society instead of fighters for independence who want to set up their own nation. They rather hide in the dark to ambush the wealthy and live off their goods. The moment they stop attacking ships and steal their cargo they cease to be pirates. Thus, the pirates cannot be seen as representative of the War of Independence, or American ideals, the pirates have still to be considered criminal entities. The alternative society strives to live off others. This is the heterotope of deviant in a very peculiar form, one which feeds off the society it is supposed to mirror. The abject turn tables, use normative society for their own benefit, and fiercely resist any attempt to stop them from doing so.

### 3.3.4    Great Britain, British Jamaica, and the British

A heterotopia is "another place" - it is defined by contrast to what is perceived as normal places. The piratical society is thus constructed by opposition to everything else. Here, in a similar vein to the prior example, the contrasting element is Great Britain in general and British Jamaica in particular. The depiction of the British society[67] thus serves as blueprint against which the pirate motif is constructed as deviant.

One major aspect of British cultural identity is the class system. Steinhoff points out that the relationship between Swann, the daughter of the Jamaican governor, and William Turner, a blacksmith apprentice, "is associated with transgressive and deviant behavior." (112) She concludes that "the strongest opponents to the marriage of the hero and the heroine are they key figures of the British establishment, Governor Swann and Commodore Norrington, Elizabeth Swann's official fiancé." (113) She observes further that in contrast to the first part, the class-difference was not paid much attention to in the parts II and III, because Governor Swann and Norrington "have given in." (113) She explains this shift of focus with the fact that "both films [are] predominantly set outside the colony and present Will Turner and Elizabteh Swann as largely independent of normative society." (113) She concludes that "addressing cross-class relationships and suggesting that their ultimate survival is only possible outside or by changing normative society, this romanticized representation of class-transgressing love can also be said to bear certain democratizing potentials." (114) Thus "*Pirates of the Caribbean* never explicitly connects notions of class-transcendence to images of American nationality, but rigid class structures are clearly shown as associated with the British aristocratic system." (113) Hnilica argues along a similar vein. She observes that the

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67 Steinhoff argues that in an ironic twist, the depiction of the hegemonic British Empire mirrors present-day conceptions of American hegemony: "This is most evident in the way the film's critic of globalization, which is 'safely' directed at the British imperialist machinery within the diegetic world, can easily be turned against Disney itself. Given its position as a transnational blockbuster, *Pirates of the Caribbean* is haunted by its own narrativized critique. As a mainstream Hollywood film it is part of the very flow of global consumer culture that it seems to denounce. […] In such a reading, contemporary notions of American Empire can be substituted for British colonialism." (*Buccaneers*, 122)

abduction of Swann by the pirates is to her advantage. She explains: "Aufgebrochen wird damit eine dysfunktionale Familienkonstellation, denn Elizabeth Swann will Commodore Norrington nicht heiraten, liebt sie doch […] heimlich Will Turner." (92) She interprets Sparrow as a substitute father to Turner and father-in law to Swann, who paves the way for the love marriage. (92) She thus concludes: "Piraterie erweist sich also als Institution, die Ehen stiften kann." (92) Yet, part II starts with the interrupted wedding ceremony of Swann and Turner. Even if it may be interrupted, this wedding ceremony demonstrates that their relationship has found acceptance within the British colony. Although their ceremony is hindered by British officials, representatives of the EIC, this is not due to the fact that their union was unsanctioned in any way, but because both are wanted as criminals – both have helped Sparrow to escape. The romance is not threatened by the British class system, but the fact that Swann and Turner have broken the law by helping a death-condemned to escape. Their relationship, however, how deviant it may be, had found acceptance within British-Jamaica – a place far from the British homeland.

I thus want to revaluate the symbolism of Swann's aforementioned corset[68] as a symbol of failed colonialism, a symbol for the class system from the mother isles. Zhanial interprets the corset as a symbol of patriarchy. (cf. Zhanial, "Indebtedness," 170 and Zhanial, *Postmodern Pirates*, 96) Fradley interprets it as a symbol of patriarchy and colonialism:

> In the first of a series of visual and thematic tropes that recur throughout *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the symbolic import of costume is swiftly established. Painfully strapped into a corset, Swann's clothing is flagged – both literally and ideologically – as a cruel imposition; a visual metaphor for the hegemonic codes of white patriarchal authority that underpin Port Royal. Indeed, 'colonialism' itself becomes a metaphor for containment and the ideological dogma of the normative by contrast with the inclusive and egalitarian nature of the subaltern pirate community. (302)

The corset graphically demonstrates that Port Royal has been subdued and forced into the

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68 The symbolic meaning of the corset representing gender roles and socio-cultural norms also plays a central role in *Anne of the Indies* (1951). Here, it is used to contrast two different forms of femininity against each other, embodied by Anne, the cross-dressing, aggressive pirate, and Molly, who is a prime example of the angel of the house. For further reading see e. g. Zhanial, Susanne. *Postmodern Pirates, Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean*, 242-243; 271 and Steinhoff, Heike. "Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and the Pirate as Mobile Signifier in *Captain Blood*, *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*," 113-115.

expectations of the patriarchal colonial force. Steinhoff too sees it as a combination of patriarchy and the British class system of the main isles, embodied by her father and fiancée. (cf. Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 75-77). She points out that the "corset"s constraining impact" symbolises "the spread of British mainland culture" and "[t]he link between the spread of British mainland culture and scenarios of threat" is strengthened in "the representation of Beckett's arrival at the beginning of the second film." (*Buccaneers*, 76) However, importing the corset and presenting it to his daughter was a conscious decision of her father whereas Beckett's arrival is indeed a forced intrusion. What's more, Beckett does not represent the British navy, but the EIC, a trading company. I will explain this point further in the following. I show that Swann's father changes his mind throughout the narrative, thus refusing to follow British conformity and distancing himself from patriarchy. With the engagement to Norrington annulled, only the British culture remains as suppressing element. I argue that the corset represents failed colonialism as it proves unfit for the life of Swann. Given that it was the strong heat of the Jamaican climate which causes Swann's fainting, indicated by a shot of the sun and a cut to a frantic fanning Swann, and thus illustrating how much the British culture is unfit for a life in Jamaica, I want to stress that here it should be primarily regarded as a symbol of failed colonialism. The corset must be seen in the same light like the way too warm uniforms of the soldiers in *Crossbones*. In both cases, British clothing, and thus, British culture, cannot be installed in the colony Jamaica. In this case, several power systems imprisoning the daughter of the governor of British Jamaica overlap, but can also be regarded individually, thus forming a prime example of intersection. It is first and foremost British culture which inhibits Jamaica-inhabitant Swann, symbolised in the corset; the fact that she should marry a man who is just about to be honoured by the British military (meaning that he has served the British colonial system well); a class system that forbids her love relationship to Turner; and the interception of her marriage by boats coming from Britain. Despite being

born British, Swann does not identify with her British identity. The corset is pressed on her by the class system. (Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 75) Her positioning against the colonial system she is born into forestalls her later position as pirate sovereign and is thus basically a necessary plot-element to drive the narrative forward. Her painful experience with the corset helps to construct the needed ostensible contrast between British and pirates, normativity and resistance, socio-cultural conduct and anarchy, a dichotomy that will be taken apart later as I show in the following paragraphs. But, (de)construction always asks for both elements, construction and destruction, and in a first step this dichotomy needs to be established, and one of its most powerful visual symbols is the corset.[69] Fradley observes:

> In critiquing normative definitions of social and familial belonging, the popularity of *Pirates of the Caribbean* bespeaks a displaced collective longing for utopian 'queer' alternatives. In contradistinction to the adventurism and unrestricted freedoms of pirate life, then, the world of colonial subjects like Elizabeth Swann is one that is rigorously *mapped out* with no permissible deviation. (302, emphasis in original)

The reading of Swann as entrapped in normative prescriptions of cultural practices relies on the dichotomy between British and pirates. The later positioning as pirate sovereign is thus a contrast to all the prescriptive power systems mentioned above: gender, class, and ethnicity. Swann has swapped her corset for the position of a male (pirate king), the sovereign who is not restricted by the class system, and the stateless pirate lacking national bindings.[70] It also illustrates that questions of identity are often questions of intersection, as several power systems are overthrown: Swann parts with patriachy, the class system, and her nationality at the same time.[71] In this case, the predominant suppressor is the British society. The film series

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69  The removal of the corset (it is cut by Sparrow to save Swann from drowning on land) is interpreted either as empowerment granted by the sea (cf. Fradley, 308) or first step into piracy (cf. Zhanial, 271).

70  Fradley interprets her change from colonial suppression to monarchic ruling as female empowerment: "Swann's narrative transformation from colonial subject into swashbuckling pirate king is emblematic of both the mutability of identity in *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the way in which femininity is regularly marked as empowered with the gendered imaginary of the series." (309) However, this empowerment is temporary only as Swann later stays behind to fulfil her role as housewife and mother.

71  Steinhoff argues that Swann's representation constantly crosses the boundaries between male and female as well as several ethnic identities: "[H]er representation increasingly blurs masculine and feminine features and […] the female pirate can function to denaturalize the associations of masculinity / femininity, male sex/female sex […] When […] Elizabeth assumes the role of Pirate King, her representation not only blurs masculine and feminine features, but ethnic and national markers as well: the white heroine, whose skin appears increasingly tanned, is dressed in Asian clothes and is heir to the pirate Lord Sao Feng. This ethnic

uses Swann and her relationship to her father to question the role of the British colony, British Jamaica, and its relationship to the mother isles.

British culture as depicted in *Pirates of the Caribbean* must thus be divided into the homeland and the colony. Turner and Swann have found acceptance within the colony, mostly due to the love of Swann's father who is the governor of Jamaica. The interceptors come from outside, from the homeland. Footage of a prepared wedding, the bride waiting in her wedding gown, porcelain cups and plates stacked and ready for the reception, is intercepted with footage of landing soldiers. All shots are done in down-pouring rain to create a dark atmosphere and dispel associations to what is generally considered a perfect wedding celebration. Weddings are usually depicted in sunshine instead of a Caribbean downpour. Again, it is the Jamaican climate which clashes with British culture. The cups fill with rain water; the wedding dress is completely soaked through. On a metaphorical level, the bad weather foreshadows that the wedding will not take place. If British-Jamaica has sanctioned this cross-class marriage and has thus created its own counter-culture that deviates from Great Britain, it may now fall victim to forced intrusion by the Empire. This reading is, however, contradicted by two major facts: Swann and Turner are wanted for a crime and both are wanted by a trading company instead of the British army. *Pirates of the Caribbean* largely follows the principle of (de)construction. Ideas are presented and constructed, like a British-Jamaican alternative society that accepts cross-class marriages evoking the scorn of the homeland, only to be torn apart later.

As mentioned above, these intruders do not represent Great Britain, but the EIC. Thus, Swann and Turner are not arrested by the British crown, but a trading company. This is

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hybridity and positioning of the heroine as captain of an Asian pirate crew can be read as both a sign of colonial domination of Asian countries and a reference to the instability and constructedness of national identity." ("Mobile Signifier", 123) She interprets this merging of national markers as representative of US-American values. However, the positioning of pirates as *hostis humani generis*, a legal position which renders them nationless, hints at a reading that Swann becomes increasingly piratical by adopting markers of the Asian pirate crew she has joined. She merges into her new surroundings, implying that the piratical identity is indeed a new and international one.

why they are still arrested although they have found acceptance in their surroundings, a British colony. This constellation is highly problematic, considered from a political angle, because the EIC arrests no-one less than the daughter of the governor of Jamaica. Swann and Turner are not only British citizens, inhabitants of British Jamaica, Swann is even part of a family in a leading position within the Empire. The EIC intruding from the homeland is attacking a part of its colonial system. In other words, British Jamaica has gone astray from the homeland. The homeland has to bring its colonies under control again. And yet, it is not the army which suppresses the colony, but the EIC. Swann and Turner are not in conflict with British authorities per se, they are in conflict with a trading company because they have supported piracy. In the long run, the procedure of contrast works the other way round as suggested by Steinhoff and Hnilica. Turner and Swann do not decide to become pirates and live outside society to fulfil their romance. Instead, they are deviant because they have helped a pirate and are thus expelled of Jamaican-British society.

As much as the fulfilment of their love-relationship may fit in with piratical ideals, piratical democracy and equality in particular, it must be said that this contrast is non-existent. Swann and Turner have found acceptance in British-Jamaican society – it is their criminal, piratical past which haunts them. Moreover, since British-Jamaica has to accept their union due to the influence and power of its governor, the marriage breaking class boundaries cannot be considered an American ideal. It was planned in a British colony in the Caribbean, a foreign place into which British culture should be imported. Similarly to the climate which is unfit for British culture, the strict British class system is unfit for the happiness of the only daughter of the governor. He thus takes advantage of his outpost position and allows for a union which would indeed be impossible in the homeland. As has been said before, British-Jamaica is a second heterotopia, another place which tries to mirror Great Britain but only represents a counter-image.

Governor Swann makes further use of his position as governor of a colony. He tries to rescue his daughter by smuggling her out of prison, claiming that he has made an arrangement with a captain for whom their name still had some meaning. Their escape is cut short because Beckett, leading the EIC garrison responsible for executing Swann and Turner, has murdered said captain. Beckett has murdered a British citizen.

This scene demonstrates that Beckett is not a representative of the Empire, but acting out of his own motives. He corrects Governor Swann that he has obtained the title of Lord now, implying that he has most likely married into nobility. Beckett is proud and ambitious, someone who tries to improve his own position. He is acting our of selfish motivation. Judging by his conduct, he is closer to the pirates than the British, even not refraining from murder to achieve his goals. (cf. von Holzen 295) Thus he is not a representative of the Empire, but a villain motivated by greed. Moreover, the representation of the British is not homogeneous. Loyalties within the British ranks are split: the murdered captain sides with old ranks and authorities, the Swanns, others side with new nobility, Beckett.

British culture may be a normative society, yet, in a manner analogous to *Crossbones*, the British main characters are individuals. Governor Swann is interested in the happiness and safety of his daughter and eager to embrace diverging behaviour (allowing for a cross-class marriage, attempting to smuggle his convicted daughter out of prison) to achieve this. In the end, even if his motivations are more understandable than the sheer greed of Beckett, he is as selfish and power-misusing as Beckett. Both representatives of British authority undermine the law for their own means. Similar to Santa Campana, laws and rules are manipulated to realise personal means. In this case it is not only the piratical law that is manipulated, it is the British law as well. In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the dividing line between pirates and British is not clear-cut. Thus, the pirate society mirrors a society which is a homogeneous and normative society in appearance only. Not only does the colony differ from the home isles, the

supposed homogeneous group is set up by individuals with different priorities and loyalties. The "British" are thus a group set up as much by mottled members as are the pirates.

In the end, what seems to be a clear-cut dichotomy disintegrates into groups and individuals on side of the British. The pirates do not face the British navy, but the EIC, neither do they get in touch with British culture, but with a colonial outpost. In comparison, it is the pirates who form a homogeneous group which contrasts with various British splinter groups and a society divided by loyalties. In this world, the pirates form a unified society which contrasts with a culture that has fallen apart to pieces. The Empire has grown too large and has already started to disintegrate. It is the pirates who represent conformity, in a good sense, and unity, instead of the rather not-so-United Kingdom. The pirates represent a positive force because their cross-over between a democracy and a monarchy is working in contrast to the already rotting Empire. They do not represent the alternative to a prescriptive, normative society, but to a malfunctioning, disintegrating one. When *Crossbones* breaks the distinction between the British and pirates by showing that the only difference between them is what side they play on, *Pirates of the Caribbean* disintegrates the dichotomy by depicting the British as a conglomerate of splinter groups. The dichotomy between British society and pirate society is (de)constructed. On the one hand, the piratical government as depicted in *Pirates of the Caribbean* is just another monarchy instead of a proper democracy, in the other, the colonial society, the British, is so deeply divided that it cannot function as an oppositional other.

## 3.4    Living the Pirate Life by the Book: *We Are Pirates*

Daniel Handler's metafictional novel *We Are Pirates* (2015) is set in present-day America and deals with a a group of very different individuals who decide to imitate pirate fiction. The underlying air of the novel is that of satire. Two teenage-girls, a teenage-boy, a Haitian nurse and an senile old man steal the boat used by a theatrical group which plays pirates and set out

to sea to attack and plunder other ships. Their adventure leads to carnage, manslaughter, defeat, humiliation, quarrel within the group, and separation. While one member takes all the riches with him (twenty thousand dollars), another pays for this adventure with his death. This short summary illustrates that the ideals found in pirate fiction prove to be inappropriate guidelines for real life. It is not only the pirate life itself that cannot be mimicked by the longing protagonists, as they lack the equipment to attack a cruiser, it is also the ideals of freedom and equality that cannot be translated into their real lives.

The setting differs largely from that in the other texts, as in this metafictional text pirate fiction represents the ideal to be imitated by the fictional readers within the novel. Pirate fiction and its impact on its recipients form the backbone of this pirate novel. Yet, it is not that the piratical ideals would prove to be faulty, it is the weaknesses, selfishness, and naivety of the readers that bring them to fall.

### 3.4.1   Democracy as Folly – A New Form of Democ(k)racy

The want-to-be pirates try to imitate piratical democracy by choosing their most knowledgeable member as captain. He claims to have spent most his life in the navy (59) and possesses a large collection of pirate novels which he knows by heart (68-69, 134). Now, however, he lives in a nursery home because he has become senile (56). His naval career is a sheer product of fancy and his expertise is grounded in maritime fiction solely. Even if the teenage girls and the nurse who vote for him as captain had known that their captain had made up his job experience as a sailor, they should have known better than making a senile old man their leader who more often than not forgets their names or fails to recognize them at all.

Their plan to become pirates is thus grotesque in its very beginning. It seems as if the future pirates had tried everything to sabotage their own endeavour: they chose an inept captain; steal a ship that is meant for theatrical purposes and thus not sea-worthy; they attack

a cruiser ten times the seize of their own ship; they lose orientation in the San Francisco Bay. Later, the situation becomes even worse when Amber realises that captain Errol must have been on regular medicine in the nursery home. His disorientation increases and as a result, he becomes aggressive and uncontrollable. In their euphoria and naivety they have forgotten to consider that the old man might need medicine regularly.

The novel fails to explain why his nurse Manny does not take this aspect into consideration. An adult and fully trained nurse who agrees to take a senile man out of a nursery home and aboard a ship may be more out of his wits than the man he was supposed to take care of. Moreover, he even accepts this man as captain and commander, someone whom he has nursed before. This curious behaviour is explained by racial discrimination on side of his superior. But even poor working conditions and discrimination fail to account for a grown-up losing his better judgement and putting three minors and an older person at risk. Moreover, racial discrimination does not explain why he inverts power relations; the nurse, who has power over a senile patient, suddenly accepts this senile patient as his commander. The transition of Manny to a want-to-be pirate is symbolised by his theft of the parrot of the nursery home. As soon as he opens the cage and steals the pet of the nursery home to become a pirate (111-112), he seems to join into the folly of two teenagers and a senile. Yet, whereas the first may be easy to influence, the question remains why the nurse can be convinced of a plan that was madness before it even begun. This completely hideous power constellation – having the weakest group member at the top – is partly responsible for the disasters they face. Fictional piratical ideals are applied blindly. The little group applies rules taken from fiction without taking real-life factors, "real-life" in their intradiegetic world, such as the disease of their leader, into consideration. Despite all these illogical decisions, the group succeeds at first to form an alternative society. They have created a society of utter equality, independent of ethnicity, gender and, most of all, age. It is this last decision which brings about their

downfall. It is assumed that equality also erases all differences between sane and insane; teenagers and adults. The concept of equality is turned into the absurd. The ideal has been converted into folly.

### 3.4.2   A Failed (Pirate) Romance: Teenage Drama Undermining Equality

The group follows their ideal blindly; turning pirate is supposed to bring them ultimate happiness. Gwen pines for a boy who does not return her affections, thus, in accordance with pirate fiction, it is planned that they abduct Gwen's love-interest and take him with them. Many pirate romances start with an abduction and end with fulfilled love. The teenage girls believe that they can repeat this pattern and bring about the desired effect by simply imitating pirate fiction. Their plan, absurd as it would be even if conducted properly, soon enough clashes with "reality" as Amber repeatedly confuses the names of Gwen's crush and his younger brother. In the end, the wrong brother is lured into a trap. Cody, the younger brother, decides to join them nevertheless, as Cody, in turn, has a crush on Gwen. In the following, Gwen can never overcome her disdain for the unwanted younger brother who tries to impress her despite all her hatred. She constantly accuses him of not having read any pirate book and, as a result, of being in complete ignorance. Pirate fiction becomes the necessary tool for their undertaking, an assumption, which is, of course, completely absurd. More to the point Gwen misses to realise that his older brother, had he been abducted in Cody's place, as planned, would lack this knowledge just the same. Gwen's frustration of being denied her ultimate "prize," the boy she wants, forms the first clash between her dream of becoming a pirate and "reality." Gwen is so frustrated that she keeps on lashing out to Cody, which only spurs his eagerness to impress her. During their first raid and Cody's attack on a helpless woman, the focaliser lies shortly on Gwen: "But Cody, brand-new to this, was an amateur. He'd never even read *The Sea-Wolf*. Without permission or preparation, he raised his clever and struck it

down on Cath's bare thigh" (171). The fact that Jack London's *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) is not a pirate novel, renders the whole line of argumentation even more ironic. The girls do not know their pirate fiction, either. Cody is "brand-new" because he has not read any pirate fiction before; yet, this is their first raid, which means that all crew-members are "brand-new" to this. The fact that they do not see that they are "brand-new" to being murderers illustrates all the more their confusion. Gwen sees Cody as an "amateur." This description from Gwen's eyes gives insight into her disdain for the new crew-member, the unwanted suitor. Cody's desperate attempt to assimilate to the group by injuring the woman only earns him even more hatred from Gwen. This underlying current of attraction, denial, and teenager romance disrupts their dream of equality and freedom deeply. Turning pirate should gain Gwen everything she wishes for, even the affection of her crush. In reality, she finds herself pestered by an unwanted suitor whom she refuses to accept as a fellow shipmate. Her accusations of him not having read any pirate fiction demonstrate that she wants to exclude him from their crew. Their society starts out with an unwanted member – the death of equality. Looking for freedom and equality only leads to the truth that there are wanted and unwanted members for this utopian society. Hence, the ideal is broken by the weakness of those who try to live it. The greater good of an alternative society falls victim to teenage-quarrels.

### 3.4.3   Excessive Violence: The True Meaning of Being a Pirate

The result of having a more than inept captain and a quarrelling crew is disastrous; their first adventure ends in carnage. Their victims do not take them seriously:

> Why wasn't this working? Everyone was on deck, brandishing knives, and still those two were just looking at them curiously, as if there was nothing that could hold them, as if pirates were so out of bounds as to actually be unimaginable. But Gwen had imagined this for years! For a long time, anyway. Weeks! (Handler, 167)

Reality clashes with Gwen's imagination. Their victims do not consider the group a threat; their first raid proves to be a failure. The group is not scary enough; they fail at being pirates.

The group's appearance – three teenagers, one older person and only one adult steering a pirate ship intended for theatrical purposes – is too grotesque to convey threat.

The couple may find it difficult to take these pirates seriously because of their choice of ship, a theatrical pirate ship that is only partly seaworthy instead of a more powerful, seaworthy vessel. This choice reveals them at once as the dreamers and wanna-be pirates that they are. They are no pirates in the sense of maritime marauders; they are pirates in the meaning that they imitate pirate fiction. They imitate pirate fiction as if it were a protocol; they imitate a fictional pirate raid. It may be assumed that the couple does not stare at them in disbelief because piracy would be so unimaginable, they stare in disbelief as the group tries to imitate piracy as it is found in fiction, "brandishing knives" (Handler, 167) instead of more powerful weapons, steering a theatrical pirate ship instead of something more seaworthy. Little did they expect that the teenagers were ready to actually use their kitchen knives and turn their fantasy into a gruesome reality.

The pairing of "**unimaginable**" (Handler, 167, my emphasis) and "Gwen had **imagined** this for years!" (Handler 167, my emphasis) further illustrates the clash between the group and the outsiders. When they dream of and believe in pirates, pirates are unimaginable to others. Whereas the group dreams to be different, the 'Other', by being pirates, they are, in fact, the 'Other' because they believe in pirates. Their plan to become pirates is thus dependent on the belief of others. As their victims do not take pirate fiction for "real," as the group does, the victims do not consider them a threat. The attempt at an alternative life style falls victim to the disbelief of the outsiders. The mere wish to be pirates and the strong belief in piratical ideals does not turn pirate fiction magically into "reality."

This clash of fiction and "reality" is emphasised by setting the focaliser in the quote above on Gwen and her mixture of frustration and protest: "But Gwen had imagined this for years! For a long time, anyway. Weeks!" (Handler, 167) Gwen has to correct her own

thinking. When she protests that she had been imagining this for years, implying that her sheer belief must turn this procedure into a reality and dispel the disbelief of her victims, she realises that she is lying to herself about the time span. The following correction "weeks" (Handler, 167) suggests a comparison to doggy years; teenager years translate to weeks in the adult world. This comparison creates a comical effect, but, on a more serious note, it also demonstrates her obsession as well as her status as a confused teenager.

Teenager confusion and daydreaming soon give way to violence when one of the victims turns tables and threatens Amber. Gwen kills Roger Cuff, their first victim, more or less in self-defence as he touches Amber's leg and threatens her with his gun, clearly intending to rape her. (169) After Cody has taken in the situation, two girls next to a man they have just murdered, he hits Cath Vogel, who had accompanied Cuff, into the thigh. (170-71) Most likely assuming that it takes murder to become a proper pirate, he does not want to appear weak in the eyes of the girls. What is more, he would not want to appear weak in comparison to the girls. He wants to be finally accepted. However, Gwen had already decided for herself that according to the rules of pirate fiction, it would be best to let Vogel live. After Vogel is wounded, the group decides that now she must be killed. The decision that the girls would have to kill her is not grounded in any logic, but also motivated by what they believe to be the rules of pirate fiction. The dream to become pirates leads to a spiral of violence. First, they need violence to achieve their goal – stealing the provisions on board of Cuff's boat – and to defend themselves after Cuff points a gun at them. The next act of violence, however, is unmotivated. Although the danger to the group is over and they have already pocketed their riches, Cody attacks a helpless woman. He commits an act of violence only for the sake of violence. The girls then decide that a wounded victim must be a dead victim. The second killing is motivated by the expectation to become pirates. The dream of freedom and another life has been exchanged for violence.

The group does not realise that pirate fiction cannot be read as a manual. Piratical ideals of equality and communality are translated into gore and violence. This depiction focuses on the faultiness of piratical ideals and at what price they come. Handler makes the connection between piratical freedom in an alternative society and the price paid for it, the murder of innocents, plain obvious. The author thus illustrates the contradictory constitutional elements of the pirate motif.

The spiral of violence later turns the members against each other. Errol becomes increasingly aggressive since he seems to lack his sedimentation. Hearing the voice of his son, Gwen's father, in a radio advertisement, functions as a trigger for uncontrollable rage: "Sold my house to buy his own and left me stranded with insults of flowers" and "Rogue! Scum! Culprit!" (238) Cody sees his chance to gain Gwen's favour and starts fighting with the old man. Shortly before the situation escalates, Amber threatens the fighting teenager and old man with the gun stolen from their first victim. The alternative society starts to disintegrate; its members devour each other. Finally, when Amber shoots a bullet to regain control, she sinks their ship, putting an end to their pirate lives. I argue that shooting a pistol, another act of violence, robs the pirates of their most important item and means of mobility, the ship. The pirates have destroyed their own community and robbed themselves of their heterotopic site, the ship.

### 3.4.4   Betrayal: the End of Piratical Communality

Yet, it is not Amber who is responsible for their destruction; it is the nurse. He is guilty in numerous aspects. He is the only one who can be accounted as guilty of their various crimes, among them theft and twofold murder, as he is the only adult capable of acting among them. Yet he escapes fairly early and more successful than ever. He also leaves a group of persons whom he has legal responsibility to care for, one of his patients and a group of minors, to

themselves – desolate on an island and in the possession of a weapon. He does not only betray his professional honour and social responsibility, he also destroys the pirate society. In addition, he keeps all treasure, the stolen money, to himself. As soon as he has hold of their treasure, he escapes. He does not share the stolen money with the other want-to-be-pirates and he also leaves them to themselves. The piratical ideal of an alternative society is, similarly to *Crossbones*, defeated by greed and lack of loyalty on the side of one its members – the most 'sane' member. As soon as opportunity appears, he takes advantage of the naivety, weakness, and obsession with a fictional world of the others. He is the only "real" pirate among them in the meaning that he starts a new life somewhere with the stolen money, getting away with his crimes throughout the process. He is far from the ideals of equality and a piratical brotherhood. He is the only successful pirate because he ignores the piratical ideals and betrays his supposed shipmates. His denial of piratical ideas gains him his success as a pirate. Accordingly, the novel presents the 'pirate society' as a paradox. The only successful pirate is the pirate who lives off his shipmates. The only way to be a successful pirate is to betray the pirate society. The others, who strongly believe in their society, fail exactly because of their belief in these ideals. In this reading pirates must be greedy and ready to betray each other to be successful. The pirate society is shown to be an illusion, an element of (meta)fiction which cannot be translated into the life of the protagonists.

The successful pirate is a criminal and amoral person, far from any utopian narratives which feature ideal citizens. Trying to live as pirates reveals the core of pirate fiction: criminal activity and cunning. Cut to the bone, only greed, criminality, and dishonesty remain. This society is closer to a dystopia, reined by violence, failure, and self-destruction, than a utopia. The piratical ideal society exists only in (meta)fiction, in words, but not in what is diegetically perceived as reality in the novel.

**3.4.5 Pirate Fiction as Blueprint for a Better Society**

In this case, it is a discourse indeed, because the piratical ideas only exist in pirate fiction and prove non-existent in the intradiegetical world of the novel. The piratical society is the utopian ideal which drives forward the narrative, only to disintegrate throughout the narrative. The fact that it proves inapplicable further illustrates its discursive character. Here, the pirate society is a fiction within fiction, creating a *mise-en-abyme*. (cf. metafictionality and architextuality in *We Are Pirates* in my later chapter "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality")

Pirate fiction is an empty discourse, it thus leads to a form of madness; all involved are fully obsessed by fiction. Gwen expects their adventure to follow exactly the pattern of a piratical story. The group does not only imitate pirate fiction, they firmly believe to live it. The underlying idea is that as soon as they have stolen the boat they have evoked the pattern of a pirate story upon themselves. Gwen constantly compares their experiences with pirate fiction. She expects pirate fiction to be the manual after which all following events will unfold. Thus, she assumes that problems should occur, but not so early; if they attack a ship ten times the seize of their ship, they will be lucky afterwards as it will be their initiation. Even the weather is supposed to follow the expected pattern. The group has lost its grip on reality and firmly believes they can enter pirate fiction, a fictional word, just by repeating the first element of a traditional plot-line of a pirate story: stealing a ship. In the same way, they expect piratical equality to just unfold itself. They do not realise that they would have to work on the inner relations and dynamics of the group. The group believes that the pattern of pirate fiction will magically set everything all right, even the disease of their leader. I argue that this behaviour is a strong form of escapism since the members of the group do not want to take responsibility for their actions. The set of rules provided by pirate fiction will guide them and bring everything about. Yet, all they find is the hollowness of the discourse encompassing pirate fiction. The content of pirate fiction cannot be translated, repeated or imitated in any

way in "real life."

This example has a metafictional extra layer. Pirate fiction forms the model to be copied. The utopian pirate society is pure fiction. Still, analogous to *Crossbones*, the society fails because it is set up by members who either do not want to conform to the new society or are unable to to so. Manny has consciously decided to cheat upon the other members; Gwen lacks the discipline to truly live out equality; the captain becomes completely disorientated throughout the novel as no-one thought of packing his medicine. Like in the other examples before, the utopian society may only be seen as such on the surface – a group that unites persons who differ in ethnicity, gender, and most of all in age. Yet, despite its make-up, the utopian society is as much a non-existent construct as is in the examples discussed before.

## 3.6    Conclusion

The presented examples depict piratical societies that are supposed to be heterotopic sites ruled by democracy and equality, but fail when it comes to the application of these ideals. Although piratical democracy is highly attractive as it gives back freedom to those who were under the power of hierarchy, it is constantly undermined by those who live it. It may be a fake democracy which is still ruled by a king, it may be ruled by those who can master the sea or it may be undermined by immature behaviour of teenager quarrels. In all of the examples discussed above democracy is non-existent; the first is nothing but a monarchy under a different name, the second a democratic monarchy, and the third displays democracy, when applied blindly, as mere folly. The new societies are ruled by injustice, embodied in a designation of ranks and unwanted members. In contrast to Stevenson's novels, in which one individual respectively manipulates the pirate code to his wishes, piratical democracy falls apart completely in present-day pirate fiction.

In all examples the dichotomy between society and heterotopic society disintegrates to

a more complex and more fragmented picture. Not only is British Jamaica set apart of the the British isles, but the British also do not conform to a uniform mass. Moreover, antagonists face off each other in conflicts which must be described as personal. Protagonists are motivated by personal gain, on side of the pirates and British alike. A seeming conflict between two different forms of government and a new, ideal society against the oppressive hegemonic force dissolves into structures of manipulation for personal advancement. The subsequent fights and killings too are based on personal conflict instead of a clash of two different systems, two different societies or two different world-views. In the third example, in which the coloniser is logically missing, the opponent takes advantage of the naivety of the teenage girls and attempts rape. In the end, in all examples the clash of two different systems gives way to much more common motives: greed, lust for power, pride or revenge which are not connected to the respective form of society. The difference in socio-cultural make-up loses its impact because action(s) are motivated by aims common to both systems.

In two of the presented examples one member of the pirate society uses the community for its own gain by holding prices back. Nenna and Manny seek acceptance in normal society. Both face ethnic difference and find acceptance by acquiring riches. Thus, the pirate society loses its utopian character because it is not desirable for these two characters. These two protagonists do not seek piratical equality, but superiority in the normative society. They are what might be called evil pirates because they seek riches to retire in normal society instead of living out piratical ideals in a hidden, different community.

All presented heterotopic societies fail to live up to utopian ideals. Their inhabitants are selfish, ruthless, and greedy. Societies made up by robbers and murderers are not prone to become idyllic utopias. The pirates stick to their crooked ways and ignore their own law just as much as they did ignore governmental law. As pointed out in the introduction, pirate fiction oscillates between the utopian fiction that would require perfect inhabitants for a perfect

society, and the ambiguity of the pirate motif. The protagonists are driven by greed, be it a legacy as founder of a new nation, the freedom to stick to their criminal ways or even a love interest. These selfish interests contrast with piratical ideals of democracy and equality. In the end, the protagonists are mostly interested in their own gain.

One might expect depiction of piratical societies are meant to be places of different social ordering and governmental structures, but, underneath the utopian surface, they are nothing but societies ruled by deceit, selfishness, and greed. Piratical ideals such as democracy and equality prove to be insubstantial. The examples show that piratical ideals are fragmentary and undermined by the pirates themselves. They put to question the idealisation of the pirate in the cultural understanding by presenting what might be interpreted as different, utopian piratical societies and (de)constructing them throughout the narrative. Present-day fiction has moved past the respective claims in maritime history by drawing a contrastive image of pirates. Here, piratical ideals clash with the criminal nature of the pirate. Fiction has thus taken on the function of commenting upon a discourse coined by maritime history. Fiction does not take history as an inspiration, nor does it comply with the popular understanding of pirates, but takes the ideal piratical society as something to be questioned. Here, maritime history and contemporary pirate fiction part ways.

## 4. Cross-Dressing Female Pirates on the Examples of Anne Bonny and Mary Read: James Nelson's *The Only Life that Mattered*

Female pirates are a complex subcategory of the pirate motif. Female pirates are often considered more subversive than male pirates because they add to felony the element of cross-dressing. Representations of the female pirate fall into two categories. One group performs a female gender role while cross-dressing, such as Elizabeth Swann and Angelica Blackbeard in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series. The second group makes use of cross-dressing to pass for men. I focus solely on one example of cross-dressing female pirates who pass for men, namely a present-day re-shaping of Captain Johnson's[72] semi-historical account of the biographies of Anne Bonny and Mary Read. These two women can be regarded as the most famous female pirates.

Bonny and Read have been constantly remodelled after the respective zeitgeist, increasingly intermingling fact and fiction throughout the process (Rennie, 251-255). I analyse a present-day adaptation of the two most famous female pirates. This novel departs from the tradition of the female warrior and the female sailor bold, as these women do not experience cross-dressing as empowerment. I will show how this break with the literary tradition adds further to the predominant feature of instability that characterises the pirate motif as found in present-day fiction.

I analyse Nelson's novel with a focus on the performativity of gender roles. I focus mostly on piratical masculinity, female cross-dressing, and the attempt to imitate a non-existing original. This chapter thus functions as a direct continuation of my analysis regarding piratical masculinities and the performative character attached to the pirate in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. In a last step, I will compare the novel to Johnson's account and discuss two changes that have been made for a present-day retelling of the biographies.

By changing from the silver screen, namely *Pirates of the Caribbean*, to the print

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[72] Captain Johnson, Charles. *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724). For further information see my introduction.

media of a novel, the performative aspect of an actor on screen makes room for textual representations of gender roles. The concept of theatricality and its connection to the pirate motif thus have to be adapted. It cannot be translated into a mise-en scéne, such as the acting style of Depp or the cameos of Richards and McCartney, but is now included into the narrative: comparisons to theatrical play or children's play feature prominently in the text. Aspects which were restricted to fabula in the film series now also encompasses the sujet. This translation of theatricality to the plot-level can be attributed to the change of media. Options for playful integration of external discourses, like that or the rock star, are very limited in a print medium and must thus be replaced by other strategies to illustrate the performative character of the pirate motif.

This chapter helps to illustrate in how far present-day pirate fiction breaks with literary traditions and motif history by changing the perception of the cross-dressing female warrior. It thus shows that present-day adaptations of pirate narratives are subject to instability. The fact that both women do not find empowerment by cross-dressing demonstrates that contemporary depictions of pirate communities are far from utopian.

## 4.1    Cross-Dressing: an Overview

Cross-dressing relies on the constructedness of gender. Gender is to a large part implied by clothing that is supposed to represent the respective sex, such as a tie for man and high heels for women. These markers can be used to perform a gender opposite to sex. Marjorie Garber points out in her famous study *Vested Interests* (1997) that the fact that the colours associated with the sex of infants and toddlers had changed over time (before World War I, small boys were dressed in pink and girls in blue) led to much consternation as it is the opposite to what we are used to in nowadays culture. (1-2) She explains: "In a society in which even disposable diapers had now been gender-coloured (pink for girls, blue for boys, with anatomically correct

extra absorbency in front or middle) the idea that pink was for boys was peculiarly destabilizing. Notice that it is the connotation of the colours, and not the perception of the genders, that has changed." (2) Nowadays pink is associated with gay pride. (2-3) Clothing and associated colour shades are a powerful marker to mark and construct gender.

Yet, it is not only clothing that helps to construct gender, even more so it is behavioural patterns, gestures, habits (like wearing make-up). In her Freudian psychoanalytical study "Womanliness as a Masquerade" (1929) Joan Rivière comes to the conclusion that the feminine gender is nothing but a mask one puts on. She states: "The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and and the 'masquerade.' My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing." (213) Judith Butler has famously concluded in *Gender Trouble* (1990) that gender is always a performative act. She observes in the introduction written in 1999 for *Gender Trouble* (1999):

> I originally took my clue on how to read the performativity of gender from Jacques Derrida's reading of Kafka's 'Before the Law.' There the one who waits for the law, sits before the door of the law, attributes a certain force to the law for which one waits. The anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and installed: the attribution conjures its object. I wonder whether we do not labor under a different expectation concerning gender, that it operates as an interior essence that might be disclosed, an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenom that it anticipates. In the first instance then, the performativity of gender revolves around this metalepsis, the way in which an anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. Secondly, performativity if not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual […]. (XV, 1999)

Butler compares the construction of gender to a legal institution. The person sitting in front of a door, waiting patiently, has accepted the rules and the power of those behind the door. This power of the invisible authorities behind the door, however, is constructed and strengthened by the person who so patiently waits for them and accepts their authority. Regarding gender, we are in a similar situation. Whereas the waiting person creates power by waiting for it; we create gender by looking for it. Gender is created by the actual search for it. Secondly, gender is created by established rules, norms and behavioural norms which are repeated. The fact that

gender is independent of sex is demonstrated best by drag.

Drag illustrates that gender is constructed independent of the biological sex. This does, however, not mean that drag performances copy some sort of original version. Butler explains in her later work *Bodies that Matter* (1993): "To suggest that all gender is like drag, or is drag, is to suggest that 'imitation' is at the heart of the *heterosexual* project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender […]." (125) As pointed out in my second chapter, Butler concludes drag performances can unsettle individuals who feel insecure in a world in which they cannot rely on their perceptions. The world thus becomes unstable and unreliable. Garber adds that drag unsettles the system of categorisation. She points out: "but rather that *transvestism is a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture*; the disruptive element that intervenes, not just as a crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself." (17, emphasis in original)

Thus, literary representations of drag and cultural perception influence and challenge each other. Garber observes: "What this book [*Vested Interests*, <A/N>] insists upon, however, is not – or not only – that cultural forces in general create literary effects, nor even – although I believe this to be the case – that the opposite is also true." (17) Yet, it is well-proven that literary representations can influence cultural developments. Ganser points out that real-life women found inspiration and strength in Maturin Murray Balou's *Fanny Campbell, the Female Pirate Captain: A Tale of the Revolution* (1844), the story of a cross-dressing female pirate. Female readers could chose to ignore the rather conventional ending of the novel and embellish their reading of the narrative with accounts of real life examples such as cross-dressing Molly Pitcher and Deborah Sampson. (*Crisis*, 151)

Yet, this constellation is misleading insofar as it may be assumed that all drag performances are automatically aimed at subversion. Judith Butler points out in her study *Bodies that Matter* on the example of a cross-dressing young Latino man who longs for a

husband, a house, and a washing machine, that some drag performances aim at performing a stereotypical gender role and thus undermine notions of subversion. Butler explains:

> Although many readers understood *Gender Trouble* to be arguing for the proliferation of drag performances as a way of subverting dominant gender roles, I want to underscore that there is no necessary relation between drag and subversion, and drag may be used in the service of both the denaturalization and reidealization of hyperbolic heterosexual gender norms. (215)

Cross-dressing can either question and challenge what might be conceived as the status quo or it can just as well aim at implementing and strengthening it. Butler concludes: "At best, it seems, drag is a site of a certain ambivalence, one which reflects the more general situation of being implicated in the regimes of power by one which is constituted, and, hence, of being implicated in the very regimes of power that one opposes." (125) Yet, as I am looking at historical cases of cross-dressing which allows women to enter masculine realms they would never be able to enter when performing the feminine gender, namely the ship and the battlefield, I argue that in the cases of the cross-dressing sailor, the cross-dressing pirate, and the female warrior, women gain the freedom of agency.

## 4.2    Motif History: Othering the Female Cross-Dressing Sailor

The literary depiction of women who took to cross-dressing to pass for men who work as sailors is a frequent and wide-spread phenomenon. Female pirates are thus part of a larger literary tradition, that of the female sailor. The motif of the female sailor was highly popular in its heyday, the period between the seventeenth century and the Victorian age, as pointed out by Dugaw:

> Cross-dressing heroines held sway in British commercial balladry from the seventeenth century to the Victorian age. Moreover, such heroines were an imaginative preoccupation in other genres as well: romance, epic biography, picaresque, comedy, tragedy, opera, and ballad opera. But the ballad gives us the Female Warrior in her most explicit form, and the only form in which she survives today in folksongs. ("Sailors," 37)

The female warrior was a character who drew the masses during the mentioned period.[73] It

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73 For the development of the two-sex model after the seventeenth century, see Laqueur Thomas, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Laqueur argues: "Sex before the seventeenth century […] was still a sociological and not an ontological category." (8) He explains that only after the seventeenth century

was aimed especially at the market of working classes:

> A ballad commonplace, disguising women sailors and soldiers appear in thousands of versions of over 120 separate songs sold to a genuinely popular market. Carried about by peddlers and vendors, cheap ballad sheets were sold on street corners and docks, at crossroads, markets, and fairs, to people from the lower orders-apprentices and laborers, milkmaids and servants, soldiers and sailors, small shopkeepers, artisans, adolescents, children, and so on. (Dugaw, "Sailors, "37)

The female sailor was a common and frequently repeated motif. It still fascinates present-day readers. Dugaw points out: "[the cross-dressing heroine], popular for more than two centuries, especially among the lower classes […], is for us an engaging if enigmatic figure […] who defies simpleminded [sic] explanations of human sexuality and gender identity." ("Sailors," 35) The depiction of female pirates can be regarded as part of this phenomenon. Female pirates are not an exotic and extraordinary occurrence, but part of a larger literary tradition.

Despite their large success, these texts did not always support female liberation. Dugaw shows that despite being celebrated as heroines in the seventeenth century, cross-dressing women were depicted as the Other in the eighteenth century. The labelling of non-normative behaviour as abnormal may have been a marketing strategy to sell more copies. The cross-dressing sailor, who enters a male-only society, is constructed as the Other, the abject, something which is not part of human society. Dugaw points out that "[a]ccounts of [cross-dressing sailors] [...] show how objectifying constructions of property and female delicacy serve each other to render the transvestite heroine a disturbing and puzzling affront." ("Sailors," 53)  Dugaw argues further:

> For Euro-American culture since the eighteenth century, the organization of gender difference has rested upon the widespread acceptance of this ethos with its presupposition of physical and emotional frailty as the 'natural' mark of 'women,' and the converse, physical and emotional invulnerability, the 'natural' mark of a 'men.' This value system is an ideology tied to historical and social circumstance. ("Sailors," 35)

After the eighteenth century, women who do men's work and work physically are perceived as being at odds with ideals of womanhood, which amount to passivity, frailty, and weakness. The sociocultural normative understanding that men are strong and thus supposed to do

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sex was perceived as two different biological categories. The literary tradition of the female sailor may thus first have thrived from this new way of thinking, only to be thwarted by it at a later time.

physical demanding work and women are meant to stay at home and avoid physical strain strongly opposed the role of the female sailor. The female sailor thus becomes the Other, a strange being in between who does not fit into normative categories but crosses ostensibly clear-cut borders. Dugaw argues that ultimately, "[a]n increasingly commanding concept of female delicacy pulled against and ultimately put an end to the conventions and convictions that made possible the celebrated sailing and soldiering of these cross-dressing-women[.]" ("Sailors," 53) The increasing prevailing of these idealisations, especially female passivity, lead to a decrease in popularity of the female sailor. (Dugaw, "Sailors," 53) This does not mean that the female sailor vanishes; she is rather tamed. Wheelwright observes: "Balladeers and novelists worked to shape the female tar into a more acceptably feminine form by couching her story in the melodramatic conventions of contemporary literature." (Wheelwright, "Tars," 194) As I have already mentioned in my introduction, one of these examples is *Fanny Campbell*. I want to refer again to this quote by Ganser:

> Yet while the patriotic woman of the 19th century, as I am arguing in my reading of *Fanny Campbell*, enjoys recalling her adventurous, revolutionary past, she accepts that the times have changed and a new model of femininity is the order of the day. The former revolutionary heroine, a patriotic female pirate, is being domesticated in such popular tales in order to make palpable to its plethora of female readers a more passive image of womanhood and to girdle the emergent feminism of the 1840s. (*Crisis*, 116)

While the heroine cherishes her memories of her past as a warrior, she readily accepts that she should embrace another form, a more socially acceptable form, of femininity.

This pattern partly still applies to present-day pirate fiction. In case of the present-day *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, for example, cross-dressing and an increasing masculinisation of Elizabeth Swann are seen as clear markers of female empowerment. Steinhoff argues that cross-dressing gives way to empowerment which falls to a "petite, yet resolute woman in a dress" (*Buccaneers*, 83) who has just been declared pirate king. Zhanial argues along the same line:

> On board the Black Pearl, Elizabeth wears male clothes, a hat, pirate boots and weapons, but is also clearly recognisable as female through her long, open hair and soft facial features. Her appearance

therefore suggests that piracy – or the existence as an outlaw – offers a woman certain freedoms from society's bonds and its expectations about sex and gender. (*Postmodern*, 98)

While still displaying female markers, cross-dressing is interpreted as female empowerment. The ending, however, positions Swann next to the former heroines who take up a conventional life and joyfully remember their piratical past. Steinhoff observes: "Throughout the trilogy the heroine has transcended various class and gender boundaries and thus facilitated the romantic union with Will Turner, a union which at the end of the first and the third film paradoxically proves to relegate her into the role of conventional femininity." (88)[74] This plot-line thus bears similarity to Campbell, who joins the military in the first place to find her love interest. I will show that Nelson's Bonny is modelled to follow the same narrative pattern as Campbell and Swann, who, after a short piratical episode in her life, returns to rather conventional life.

Despite these restrictions, the motif of the female pirate proved to be of a robust longevity, which guarantees its survival, constant reappearance, and a strong grip on book stores and cinematic box offices until present-day. The female pirate in general and the fictionalised biographies of Bonny and Read as found in Captain Johnson's *General History*, in particular, are frequently repeated topoi in fiction. Many texts re-tell the two biographies, adding fictional elements and re-shaping them according to their narrative needs.[75] Thus the chosen example is not an isolated phenomenon. Furthermore, narratives centred on the female pirate Bonny often present a Bonny who can excel Rackham, making for conflict, crisis of identity, and frailty of gender performances. (cf. Rennie, 255) Nelson's novel *The Only Life that Mattered* thus stands in a long line and tradition of various and numerous adaptations of the *General History*, recounting the lives of Bonny and Read, which in turn, continues the

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74 See also von Holzen, Alitea-Amirea. *"A Pirate's Life for Me!" Von* The Black Pirate *bis* Pirates of the Caribbean – *Abenteuerkonzepte im Piratenfilm*, 305 and Rauscher, Andreas. "Das Meer als Manege, Vom Fluch des klassischen Piratenfilms zu den *Pirates of the Caribbean*," 202 and Zhanial, Susanne. *Postmodern Pirates, Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean. 100.

75 For an elaborate list of fictionalised biographies of Bonny and Read and how they help to establish as fact what had started out as fictional additions to fill in gaps in the historical records see Rennie, *Treasure Neverland*, 251-261.

tradition of the motif of the female sailor.

## 4.3 The Female Pirates Read and Bonny in Captain Charles Johnson's *General History*

Depictions of female pirates are related to the literary tradition of the female sailor. The fictional representation of female, cross-dressing pirates is thus neither an isolated, nor an extraordinary phenomenom. Wheelwright observes that "Johnson's moulding bears more than a passing semblance to other eighteenth-century tales of 'female warriors' and cross-dressers, which suggests that the re-telling was shaped along conventional lines." ("Tars," 181) I argue that in line with other 18th- century depictions, Captain Johnson too uses the female sailor as an oddity to gain the interest of the masses.

Captain Johnson's text does not only picture piracy as an alternative way of life which offers personal freedom, but it also draws explicit attention to the women who partake of it. Marcus Rediker points out: "Captain Charles Johnson recognised piracy as a 'Life of Liberty' (Johnson in Rediker, 391) and made the matter a major theme of his book. Bonny and Read took part in an utopian experiment beyond the reach of the traditional powers of state, family, and capital, one that was carried out by working men and at least a few women." (Rediker, 15) Bonny and Read are Othered by drawing attention to their female sex:

> Captain Johnson (who may or may not have been Daniel Defoe) recognized a good story when he saw one. He gave Bonny and Read leading parts in his study, boasting on the title page that the first volume contained 'the Remarkable Actions and Adventures of the two Female Pyrates, Mary Read and Anne Bonny. (Rediker, 3).[76]

Captain Johnson puts the female pirates centre-stage, which can be seen in the example of the marketing strategy of naming them in the sub-heading and thus placing them on the frontispiece. Pirates may be an adventurous and fascinating breed, but Captain Johnson assumed that the trope of female pirates would surely gain readers' attention. This marketing strategy of setting cross-dressing females centre-stage has been successful: "*A General*

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76 For the debate if Defoe might have written the *General History*, see my "Introduction."

*History* proved a huge success: it was immediately translated into Dutch, French, and German and published and republished in London, Dublin, Amsterdam, Paris, Utrecht, and elsewhere, by which means the tales of the women pirates circulated to readers around the world." (Rediker, 3) The quick spread of the text into various languages and cultures shows that the female pirates gained fame rather quickly. But, on the other hand, it may also imply that the text was under such huge demand because of the mentioning of the female pirates on the frontispiece in the first place, which made readers curious and motivated them to buy the text.

Turley even reduces Bonny and Read to their status as an oddity. He states that "Read and Bonny would never be remembered, if, first, they weren't women, and second, their stories didn't emphasize the 'whore / faithful mate' dichotomy." (97) Bonny and Read are reduced to cross-dressing next to the question whether their choice of sexual partners is appropriate for the feminine sex or not. I show that this is a simplistic and flat approach to the most famous female pirates. The link between the cross-dressing female pirates and scrutinising their sexuality is much more complex, as O' Driscoll points out. The narrative suggests that the two pirates befit the two mentioned stereotypes:

> If heterosexual love is depicted as bringing out Read's modesty, it does the opposite for Bonny—it reveals her lust. Unlike Read, she is not represented as sexually virtuous: she meets the pirate Captain Rackam and leaves her husband for him, dressing as a man and joining his crew, having a child with him and then re-joining the pirate ship. (364)

But, the accounts of Read and Bonny are not only part of the tradition of the female warrior and the female sailor, they also firmly belong to accounts of the female criminal. O'Driscoll shows that both literary traditions, the female warrior and the female criminal, overlap in the accounts of Bonny and Read, making for an odd mixture of genre conventions. She observes: "The template creates a clash of interpretation, because the two models of female representation contradict each other. The balladry tradition offers celebrated and heroic warrior women, while the texts centred on the female criminal turns women into abject spectacles that are increasingly eroticized and objectified." (370) She explains that literature

of the 18ᵗʰ century evolving around the female criminal functions as contrast to the predominant depiction of femininity in the novel, the domesticated femininity, and turns female criminals who enter public spaces into objects to be scrutinised and sexualised. (370-373) Questions concerning Bonny's and Read's choice of partner(s) must thus be regarded in the light of the discourses surrounding the female criminal, an abject woman who is made the object of the (male) gaze.[77]

The fascination with female pirates, warriors and criminals, thus exceeds a mere interest in women who do not conform to socio-cultural norms. Female pirates transgress normative society even more than male pirates do. When the piratical society subverts sociocultural norms, the female pirate subverts this all-male piratical community. Turley states: "[T]hese representations of the female pirates, in turn, subvert conventional gender norms for the reader because Anne Bonny and Mary Read are pirates in the first place. And pirates are, with the exception of Read and Bonny, masculine men who bond with other men." (Turley, 98) His statement that pirates "bond with other men" (Turley, 98) fails to explain the pregnancies of Bonny and Read which are revealed during their trial. The pregnancies indicate that Bonny and Read are not the only exceptions to the rule that "pirates are [...] masculine men who bond with other men." Both Read and Bonny must have had a partner among the pirate crew. What is important here, however, is that the female pirate subverts sociocultural norms even more than her male counterpart as "pirates are […] masculine men." (Turley, 98) Pirates are the subversion of socio-cultural norms, but as pirates are expected to be male, the female pirate is the subversion of the subversion.

Female pirates claim a male only society as their own. Rediker observes: "They added another dimension altogether to the subversive appeal of piracy by seizing what was regarded

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77 O'Driscoll concludes: "The pirates are a turning point because they present a different conceptualization of gender than is seen in the balladry tradition; yet they do not yet problematize or sexualize the appropriation of masculinity [...] [T]hey do not make a firm link between cross-dressing and transgressive (same-sex) sexuality […]." (373)

as male liberty." (15) Luzia Vorspel states the female pirate is mostly represented as a prime example of a strong, transgressive woman in literature:

> Die meisten Piratinnen in der Literatur sind Beispiele für selbstbewusste, naturverbundene (mit großer Liebe zum Meer), freiheitsliebende, auch in sexueller Hinsicht selbstbestimmte Frauen, die mit den Geschlechterrollen spielerisch umgehen, sich nicht scheuen, Waffen zu tragen und zu benutzen, das Bild von weiblicher Passivität durchkreuzen und eher negativ konnotierte Gefühle wie Rachegelüste ausleben. (Vorspel, 195)

I argue that they do not only play with gender roles, but in case of the example to be discussed, the heroines try to combine several gender roles, male and female alike. Their identities oscillate between several gender roles; their gender identities become fluid.

This change of fluidity in the context of gender is made possible by the spatial seclusion of a piratical society. Steinhoff observes that the ship as a heterotopia[78] allows for alternative socio-cultural norms concerning gender roles:

> Auf der einen Seite ist es ein Ort, der durch männliche Homosozialität gekennzeichnet und für Frauen verboten ist. Es überhöht die patriarchale Ordnung von Port Royal, birgt zugleich aber auch ein homoerotisches Potential […] Auf der anderen Seite eröffnet das Piratenschiff jedoch auch grenzüberschreitende Möglichkeiten für weibliche Charaktere, wenn es als ein Ort erscheint, der die heteronormativen Geschlechterrollen verkehrt und der Frau – in der Rolle der Piratin – verhältnismäßig viel Handlungsfähigkeit zuschreibt. Dies ist auch historisch sichtbar, wenn man an berühmte Piratinnen wie Mary Read und Anne Bonny denkt. ("Hollywoodkino,"153)

The pirate ship is home to several different queer societies, be they a homoerotic society that expels women, or a place enabling female empowerment or even female liberation. Piratical societies are seen as spatially secluded utopias which allow for different forms of queer identity and queer sexuality.

Johnson does not only depict Bonny and Read as cross-dressing, taking liberties by breaking gender conventions, but also lays a strong emphasis on sexuality. Carolyn Eastman states: "Replete with transvestism, sex (consummated and otherwise), and a disdain for gender propriety, these biographical vignettes enhanced the themes that appeared throughout *The General History of the Pyrates*: they portrayed pirates as rejecting gender conventions and sexual decorum." (110) Piratical freedom is not only freedom in the meaning of cruising

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78 For the connections between the pirate society and the Foucaultian heterotopia see my introduction and my chapter "Piratical Freedom, Equality, and Demo(c)kracy."

the Caribbean, it is also a freedom in the context of performing gender fluidity, and, most of all, living out sexual liberation. This observation harks back to O'Driscoll's argument that Bonny and Read must be seen in the context of depictions of female criminals.

Eastman states that this sexual liberation extends to the realm of the reader. She states: "Above all, Johnson's book emphasizes the pleasurable titillation of Read's and Bonny's cross-dressing in a series of set pieces highlighting gender confusion and sexual behavior." (109) This sexualisation of female pirates is further highlighted by the accompanying engravings:

> The book's images further invited male readers to see these women as pleasurably dangerous sex objects; the Dutch edition of 1725, for example, displayed them in breeches, heavily armed, and striking jaunty and mildly threatening poses, while their long tresses and full breasts confirm their sexual appeal and availability. (110)

In this reading, Bonny and Read are reduced to exciting erotic objects; the engravings of the *General History* function as erotic material. This reading does not focus on the depiction of sexuality as a liberation of the female pirates, but on the fact that these depictions objectify and eroticise the female pirates for readers. This objectification of the female pirates confirms the observation of Stanley that "[w]omen who behaved in this way had to be captured and their gaze adjusted; perhaps in writing about women robbers and transgressors, men were metaphorically taming them and restoring the approved balance." (59) Masculine authorship indulging in feminine felonies was thus not supposed to celebrate female emancipation, but to (re)gain power over the women who behaved in non-conformative ways. These "wild" women are tamed metaphorically on paper. In this reading, the transgressive behaviour depicted in these narratives is interpreted as erotic material. Accordingly, these texts are not meant to emphasise female empowerment and liberty, but to cater to masculine sexual pleasure: "It is not hard to see that publishers intended such images and tales for male readers." (Eastman, 110) Eastman argues that the weapons and "mildly threatening poses" (Eastman, 110) are not meant to intimidate, but to turn the women into more interesting

objects. The female pirates are on display, an arrangement planned as carefully as a pin-up poster. This tradition of eroticised depictions cumulates in a broad display of their breasts. While the images of the 1724 editions were still gender ambiguous, the 1745 Dutch edition depicts Bonny and Read as female. (O'Driscoll, 358-359) O'Driscoll's points out:

> In the 1725 Dutch images [...] Bonny and Read are immediately read as female, and their masculine attire seems to the modern eye more like an erotic party costume than real clothes. The 1724 image hints at a narrative that is in fact delivered—a story of piracy and potentially unnatural women whose interesting histories and characteristics are gradually revealed (and eventually confirmed by the sight of their breasts). (359)

In this last step, the female pirates lose their gender-bending potential all together as the cross-dressing is revealed as such.

## 4.4 Lack of Female Empowerment

Although Bonny and Read are on open display for the reader, the fact that both of them are in heterosexual monogamous relationships contradicts the interpretation that they were meant to be wild women to bring pleasure to a male readership. Both women are faithful to their partners, a fact that weakens a reading of wild women whose sexual liberation needs to be tamed by male authors and male readers alike. Quite the contrary is true. Bonny and Read are not tamed by the male gaze of the audience; Bonny and Read are tamed by firmly embedding them in what might be call classical romance stories. Bonny and Read are depicted as permanently oscillating between different identities and different gender roles, making both, identity and gender role, fluid. Wheelwright observes:

> While Bonny and Read embody these most masculine of values [superior martial skills and more physical courage than their male crew], in keeping with the female warrior tradition, Johnson ensures that the women are portrayed as equally feminine by fleshing out stories of their romantic encounters." (Wheelwright, "Tars" 183)

Despite their cross-dressing and breaking with normative gender behaviour, Bonny and Read are portrayed as heroines of love-stories, a topos which is traditionally reserved for the feminine gender. Zhanial argues that their framing into a romantic plot is meant to create a

striking contrast to their position as ruthless and brutal fighters:

> Johnson's emphasis on the two women's capacity for love could be seen as a narrative device consciously employed to stress their humanity and increase the reader's amazement, since their capability for tender feelings contrasts sharply with their exceptionally fierce behaviour displayed among the pirates and especially in battles. (*Postmodern*, 238)

This means that the credibility of the gender role of the male pirate, which is connected to that of the warrior,[79] is weakened by making the female pirates weaker and softer than the male pirates. In this reading, the female pirate must supposedly be portrayed as gentle to excuse their behaviour on the battlefield. As pointed out in my second chapter, the masculine gender role is partly connected to that of a warrior and negotiates this interdependence at the same time. Claiming that the love stories "stress their humanity and increase the reader's amazement" (Zhanial, *Postmodern*, 238) only reinforces the prejudice that women should rather be tender than aggressive. This "amazement" hinges on the fact that women are not supposed to perform the role of the warrior. Moreover, in logical consequence, the female warrior must appear as inhuman when a romance plot is needed to "stress their humanity." The claim that romance was needed to gain reader sympathy stresses that only women who conform to gender stereotypes can find acceptance. I argue that this strong emphasis on love-stories does not make Bonny and Read more likeable to the reader, but tames them and emphasises their ostensibly lacking ability to fully perform the masculine gender role of the warrior. Bonny and Read are strategically feminised by genre conventions, a clear example of undermining female empowerment.

Equally ambiguous is the concept of adopting a male gender-role and cross-dressing. Whereas cross-dressing leads to female empowerment, it weakens female independence in the same breath. Wheelwright observes that "female swashbucklers of popular literature provided an alternative image of women and inspired others to challenge the rigid definitions of sexual difference[,]" (*Amazons*, 13-14) but "[c]ross-dressing for women often remained a process of

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79 cf. "Piratical Ideals: Construction of Masculinity" and "Ideal Masculinity, the 'New Man,' and Hypermasculinity" in my chapter "The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal."

imitation rather than a self-conscious claiming of the social privileges given exclusively to men for all women. Their exploits challenged existing categories of sexual difference but the terms of the debate usually remained the same." (11) Stanley points out that cross-dressing is "an expression of the [usually male author's] narcissistic assumption that men are the prototype and women the adaptation, the pirat-ess [sic], the mini-version of 'proper' male pirates." (45) I show that the example at hand goes even further by erasing the subversive element of cross-dressing all together.

## 4.5    Re-Telling the *General History*

### 4.5.1   Anne Bonny and Her Role Models:   Cross-Dressing as an Attempt to Copy the (Non-Existing) Original

Anne Bonny is depicted as seeking freedom, but instead of using cross-dressing as a means of empowerment, she uses cross-dressing as a means to implement her romantic ideal of living a bohemian life with her lover, free from restrictions of society. Bonny is not interested in female empowerment, instead, she constantly tries to force a male partner into her desired life-style, herby enslaving herself into dependence on the masculine partner. I will show in close-reading of both Bonny and the men whom she perceives to be her originals whom she wants to copy with drag that Bonny is not depicted as a heroic or positive character who could serve as a role-model for female liberation.

#### 4.5.1.1 Forming the Ostensible Original: James Bonny

Bonny is a character who bears close semblance to Elizabeth Swann and Elizabeth Bennet: she dreams of a piratical hero and models the respective love interest into the desired gender role. (cf. my chapters "The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal" and "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality") But, in contrast to the other examples, she tries to construct her object of desire twice, firstly she tries to model her husband James Bonny into a masculine pirate and

secondly "Calico" Jack Rackham. The fact that Bonny tries to form two men after her ideals makes the attempt to model the men after her own expectations all the more dehumanising. Bonny takes to cross-dressing only to rob her male partners of their freedom. Bonny can be characterised as egoistic at best and she lacks the qualities of the female warrior, namely patriotism and devotion. Bonny misuses others for her own happiness. This text thus casts a dark shadow on cross-dressing. Neither is it a means for empowerment, nor is the heroine a role-model for female readers.

The heterodiegetic narrator makes it clear that Bonny, who is still Cormac at this point, does not really love her future husband: "Anne liked James Bonny, seaman. But she was deeply in love with the idea of him: a young sailor, a footloose and wild companion, one who had roamed the world before and would take her along now." (25) The description given here does not befit a sailor. "[A] footlose and wild companion" (25) refers to a pirate. A sailor can never fulfil that description because he is on the lowest position in a strict chain of hierarchy. For a sailor, life consists of obeying orders. There is nothing "wild" (25) about it and neither has he "roamed the world." (25) What sounds like modern-day sight-seeing was a hard way of earning one's living. Bonny marries a sailor as a first step in moulding a man into her piratical hero.

Bonny seeks freedom from the life of the daughter of a plantation owner: "She was married, and she was free. Her father had kicked her out of the house for insisting that she would marry the broke and homeless sailor James Bonny. And now, because of that, William Cormac had no hold over her at all." (25)  Bonny regards her marriage as an act of defiance against parental control. She sees herself coming closer to the reckless life she craves: "She was poorer now than she had ever been in her life. Destitute. It excited her." (25) The key word is "excited" (25), which refers to a state of delirium and sexual arousal alike. Bonny is depicted as very sensual and most of her liberties are connected to the sex drive. For her, the

pirate life means fornication outside of socio-cultural norms. The fact she considers marriage as a way to freedom may thus seem ironic. Indeed, this marriage only leads to Bonny's desired result, freedom, as Bonny has full power over her husband. She constantly cheats on him while he is forced to watch, unable to do anything about it. It is her who decides that they will move to Nassau, the capital of pirates at this time, against his protests. Bonny wins her freedom by robbing another of his freedom. This constellation clearly illustrates the paradox underlying the pirate motif. It can be said in general that the freedom the pirate wins always comes at the cost of limited freedom for another, such as the freedom to travel safely and unmolested.

What may look like a cross-class romance similar to those in *Pirates of the Caribbean* (cf. my chapter "The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal") and *Pirates and Prejudice* (cf. my chapter "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality"), is nothing but a marriage out of cool calculation on both sides. Both partners seek a better life, Anne Bonny one of freedom, James Bonny one of riches. He does not love his wife. Instead, he craves to live an easy life in riches by marrying into a rich family. (25) Bonny is not bothered by the fact that her husband does not love her: "Anne kissed him back, put her arms around him, squeezed him tight. He was thin, girlishly thin, and though he was strong and agile in the way of topmast sailors, he was limp now and unresponsive. But Anne did not care. She was delirious with joy, with excitement." (25) The description of James Bonny as "girlishly thin," (25) as seen by the focaliser Anne, implies that Anne is not overly attracted by her new husband either, whose description as "girlishly" marks him as unattractive in a heterosexual context. Not only does she not care that he does not love her, she is not attracted to him. And still, she is excited to marry him. Bonny is not excited about marrying James Bonny, but "James Bonny, sailor," (25) putting his profession and thus functionality first – to her, he is nothing but the key to a new life of freedom. He is the ticket for a passage to Nassau. He serves as a stepping stone to

her ideal life. At the same time, she imagines a simple sailor as her piratical hero. That James Bonny will never be able to fulfil this role, is actually part of the scheme; Bonny expects to be in full control of her new husband. But James Bonny is not the puppet open to manipulation his wife had bargained for: "Raw desire did not sweep away any other consideration, as Anne thought it would, as it always had with any other man, and she did not find that a hopeful sign." (26) Both had intended to get another, a better life, for Anne it is the freedom to wander the world, for James it means exactly the opposite: putting an end to his work, being able to stop wandering the world. The rich daughter wants freedom at the expense of being poor, whereas the sailor seeks financial safety at the expense of a sedentary life. James cannot join in the excitement of his newly wed wife: "But James Bonny, who, at twenty-two years of age, had been free with the whole world before him and not a groat in his pocket for the past eleven years, was not swept away with the romance of the thing." (26) This cross-class romance is doomed to fail as both members crave antagonistic ways of life. This marriage is motivated by cool manipulation on both sides.

Marrying a sailor can be seen as an attempt to find an original to imitate the masculine gender. Yet, James Bonny, who seeks a sedentary life, can thus not be considered an original that Bonny could copy. Bonny is still far from realising that there is no original to copy, she just deems her husband as inappropriate.

This episode also forms a stark contrast to the Pirate Romance (cf. my introduction). Bonny does neither serve as a role-model for female liberation nor as a heroine of a love story. The loveless marriage proves that Bonny is not weakened or tamed by binding her to a love story, as Zhanial had claimed for Johnson's text. Instead, it illustrates that Bonny is depicted as a manipulative and selfish character who cannot function as a role-model for female readers. In contrast to Swann and Bennet, Bonny constructs her piratical hero to lead a pirate life herself. Bonny constructs the piratical life right from the beginning with meticulous

detail. When James Bonny is no longer useful for this piratical self-creation, as he is an unworthy original to copy, Bonny changes for Rackham.

### 4.5.1.2 Living Up to the Predecessor: Jack Rackham

Rackham, however, does not want to be a pirate. He has disposed Charles Vane of his position as captain and taken his place instead. I show that Rackham constantly compares himself to Vane, making him an ideal that he has to live up to. But soon enough he feels scared and overwhelmed. The threat of being replaced, just as he had done with Vane, is constantly gnawing at him. In this interpretation Rackham is depicted as constantly anxious and as having low self-esteem; his bold behaviour in battle and extensive womanising are nothing but bravado. He is a man who is constantly afraid underneath this mask: "Calico Jack Rackham wanted to wipe his palm, but he was afraid. He could feel the big sword slip in his sweating grip, but he was not sure what to do." (216) Rackham is not made to be a pirate, combat scares him in a way that he loses grip on his sword – making the situation all the more dangerous. As he is in the leading position of captain now, he must take care to ensure that no-one actually realises that he is afraid. (216) He must act his role well. The depiction of Rackham illustrates that being a pirate does not always lead to a more enjoyable life. Rackham's frantic behaviour and fear of exposure clearly clashes with depictions of the pirate community as utopian.

Soon Rackham falls short of Bonny's expectations. After having retired he had spun her plan to go pirating along unaware that this would soon become a reality. (118-123) He only starts raiding ships again to be able to keep his relationship to Bonny intact. He did not actually plan to become a pirate again, and what's more, he does not want to:

> What objections could he raise? That he did not want to go pirating? God, she loved him exactly because she thought him some dangerous rogue! That he was afraid? She would spit in his face […], and then off to bed of some bastard who was a real fearless villain and not just a sham of one dressed up in bright calico clothing! (123)

He plays the pirate and sees himself as an imposter. In contrast to the examples discussed before, the recipient gains insight into the man who is constructed as a pirate by his love interest. Rackham is painfully aware that Bonny only loves the idea of him. Thus, he tries to embody that idea and play his role. Rackham consciously tries to function as the original Bonny can copy, yet, feels like an imposter at the same time as he compares himself to Vane, making for a confusing net of constructed identities to be copied followed by expectations to live up to.

Rackham is even afraid of losing the selfish Bonny to someone who is more of a rogue than he is, i.e. someone who can function as a better original for her. The wording "a **real** fearless villain" (123, my emphasis) proves that Rackham sees himself with low self-esteem and conceives his own identity construction as faked. He describes himself as a "sham" (123) of a rogue, admitting that he was only playing a role. The last description "dressed up in bright calico colours" (123) even hints at self-loathing. The calico clothing is Rackham's trademark, the reputation and persona he has created for himself. This thought report reveals that he loathes this self-constructed identity, that he loathes his very trademark.

Rackham's condition worsens; he deteriorates into a state of mind which comes close to a mental illness. His constant fear seems to already have caused an ulcer:

> The dread, the hard thing in his stomach, was not a passing fancy. It had settled in […] It was all his fears, wound up so tight that they became something solid and took up residency in his guts. (282)

In a second reading Rackham's fears may have taken on a permanent form and thus make him constantly feel that his stomach was tight. Rackham falls ill because of his constant worrying and loses more and more strength throughout the process. In the later stages he takes to drinking and as a consequence loses weight. Then he is unable to perform sex with his lover. Ultimately he is unable to perform the role of the masculine pirate.

He thus cannot live up to Bonny's expectations nor to his own. He is prone to constant

worrying and fretting. Thought reports show that Rackham turns over various scenarios of catastrophes in his mind. He is constantly afraid of the perils that may lay ahead, such as:

> It was the poor hunting they found, the few pathetic boats they robbed, the potential discontent of the men who might turn him out, like he did old Charles Vane. It was the certainty of the noose if they were caught, with him having accepted the governor's pardon and then gone on the account once more. It was the possibility of disgrace and the possibility of piling the sloop on a rock and the yellow jack and the thousand things that plagued a man such as he. (282)

As has been pointed out before, he is retelling the tale how he took the command from Vane – a sign of fear as well as guilt. He fears the consequences of a decision he has taken, the decision to break the law anew. This consideration seems odd, as piracy does not become more criminal when accepting a pardon first. The mentioning of the pardon is more indicative of regret. Rackham regrets that he has given up the pardon. As Rackham does not want to admit this to himself, he turns the ignoring of the pardon into a bigger crime in his mind, as if he had somehow betrayed the governor. He is afraid of "disgrace." (282) Lethal dangers, being marooned by his crew and execution by state officials, the "noose" (282) are paired with fear for his reputation. Rackham does not seem to differentiate between lethal threats, threatening one's life, and social threats, threatening one's social identity. In his constant worrying, all fears merge into one. This is illustrated further by the next two items: the risk of shipwrecking and a disease. Different risks and threats whirl around in the mind of Rackham. The following problems are presented in more detail – a narrative device to fill the reader in with more information about the plot-line:

> It was the *Pretty Anne* [the ship [A/N]]. She was growing increasingly decrepit, beyond what the pirates were able to repair in their secluded coves on their sparsely inhabited islands. They would have to get another ship, but that meant his [sic] finding one and than successfully capturing it. (282)

Here, Rackham contemplates his responsibilities as a captain, the highest position in command – a position he is not strong enough to bear. The solution to his problem, finding a new ship and capturing it, does not appear as a solution, but another problem, another threat. Solutions just present themselves as new obstacles to be overcome. The piratical freedom is reduced to a chain of obstacles and responsibilities. All he is able to see are constant threats to

his life or reputation. Instead of relishing the pirate life, he focuses only on the consequences:

> It was the *Guarda de Costa*, the Spanish guard ships that patrolled the Cuban cost. […] The Spaniards would draw and quarter him, disembowel him, burn him at the stake, impale him so that it would take days to die. When he thought of it, it made the hard thing in his stomach turn over, made his insides feel less than solid, so he tried not to think on it, but he could not help it. Of all the enemies he faced, it was the Spaniards he feared the most. (282)

Rackham now focuses on visualising the dreadful horrors which may lay ahead instead of dreaming of riches, food, and his lover Bonny. He envisions these tortures the Spanish might inflict on him in great detail and completely lacks any references to a swashbuckling jolly life.

Rackham is a character who feels threatened by the pirate life. This rather unusual depiction of a pirate breaks with conventions pirate fiction, which mostly depict pirates as sovereign, strong, and self-conscious characters, such as Stevenson's Long John Silver. This novel does not only (de)construct the piratical utopia, it makes clear that for Rackham it is rather a dystopia. Performing as a pirate in this novel is always a question of relation to other characters. Bonny needs an original to copy, but so does Rackham. Rackham, in turn, only performs this role to impress Bonny. Rackham usurps Vane to become a captain, to become the pirate in command, to be regarded as a pirate by his crew members. Performing as a masculine pirate is always relational to the surrounding characters and their respective performances. In this case, the social identity seems to outweigh the personal identity construct.

However, in the case of Rackham, the identity problems are grounded in mental illness. A psychoanalytic reading reveals that Rackham suffers from mental illness; not only does he suffer from anxiety, he also suffers from the anxiety of the anxiety which leads to a form of inferiority complex:

> Jack wondered if other captains felt these fears. Old Charles Vane, who always seemed so cool, did he have that hard thing in his gut? It was difficult to believe. And if not, did that mean, that he, Calico Jack Rackham, did not have the stuff of which captains are made? That possibility frightened him most of all. (283)

Rackham seems to suffer from what is known as the imposter syndrome – he feels inadequate for the position he holds, overwhelmed by the tasks he has. Again, he compares himself to

Vane. He accepts Vane as superior captain, someone who always "seemed so cool." (283) He hereby admits his own crime of injustice by taking the command from Vane. What's more, as he finds it "difficult to believe" (283) that Vane was subjected to these doubts, too, Rackham doubts his own validity for the highest command. What "frightens him most of all" (283) is the fact that he may not be born to be a captain, that he may be not strong enough – or in other words, unfit to perform the required masculine gender role of the leading warrior. Here too Nelson displays a strong a belief in the inborn quality of gender roles. Rackham, in a way, believes that he is not man enough to be a captain. He believes that masculinity is not inborn for him, whereas it was inborn for Vane. This makes for a pessimistic, deterministic world view that adds to the dystopian air surrounding this character. Rackham is not only unable to live up to what he considers ideal masculinity, but what is worse, he also believes that he is born too weak to perform it. This illustrates that performing as a masculine pirate is here depicted as an ideal that is out of reach. This shows that the pirate is something intangible, out of reach. The swashbuckling happy pirate has made way to a Rackham who suffers from anxiety, an imposter syndrome, and who deeply regrets having given up his pardon.

This doubt in his abilities as a leader, and so, his doubt in his manliness, later manifests itself in impotence. The mental doubt of his manliness has manifested as physical certainty: "Ten minutes of that awkward, irritating play and Jack sat up, closed his eyes, threw his head back. He looked as if he might cry." (321) Their sexual encounters had been the backbone of his relationship with Bonny: "It was when they were coupled like that, with a motion so perfect that it did not seem possible that they could be two separate people, it was then that Anne and was certain that she and Calico Jack were together through some force greater than simple coincidence." (287) Rackham wanted to perform the role of the exotic pirate lover for Bonny, but ultimately finds himself confronted with impotence, the most explicit loss of masculinity. Consequently, "Anne […] missed the beautiful, attentive lover

with whom she had run away." (320) Rackham's attempt at performing another role, a role he does not feel comfortable with, has lead to self-destruction and disaster. Similar to Bonny's cold marriage, the depiction of this scenario too clashes sharply with motif history which depicts the pirate as extraordinary lover, such as the established trope of the Pirate Romance (cf. my introduction) which idealises the pirate as perfect partner, and most of all, perfect lover. Impotence is something absent from the majority of pirate fiction. This text consciously (de)constructs an established trope of pirate fiction and thus illustrates further the constructedness of this motif. The role of the exotic pirate lover is so demanding that it leads to a loss of virility. This proves further that the pirate motif is contradictory. Instead of empowering the man who tries to perform as a masculine pirate, the discourses and expectations surrounding this performance disempower him.

This text does not only contrast the Pirate Romance, it also stands in stark contrast to texts that emphasise notions of gender equality. Here, it is the feminine character who forces her partner into an idealised role he cannot live up to. This ideal leads to self-doubt, harm, and ultimately bodily dysfunction for the male character. Female empowerment that leads to impotence of the sexual partner in a heterosexual relationship can hardly be described as an ideal.[80]

### 4.5.1.3 Piracy as Playacting: Anne Bonny

Bonny does not only dream of a piratical hero, she also wants to be a masculine pirate herself. Bonny gains freedom from the restriction of socio-cultural codes of conduct by cross-dressing, yet does not disguise her female sex: "She was dressed in loose sailor's trousers and

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80 Yet, these problems may also have been induced by Anne's disappearing interest in her lover: "Anne closed her eyes, tried to enjoy herself, tried to summon up her former passion. Jack's mouth tasted of brandy and rum and the smoke from his pipe and some other vague memories. His mouth had always tasted that way, but now there was something decayed about it, something miserable and desperate." (320) This passage makes clear that it is not so much Rackham who has changed – it is made clear that the odour has always been the same– but Bonny's reaction towards it. She has lost sexual interest in her lover and thus he becomes despicable to her. This changed perception on the side of Bonny will most likely not miss its impact on Rackham.

a big cambric shirt she had stolen from Jack." (148) The fact that she has stolen her shirt from Rackham does not only mean that she is cross-dressing, but also that she has stolen a piece of Rackham's (masculine) identity. By wearing his clothes she imitates Rackham's performed gender role and thereby challenges him at it. The display of more of her body than would have been considered appropriate seems to give rise to heterosexual pleasure, marking this use of cross-dressing as gaining freedom from socio-cultural restrictions. Bonny enjoys the inappropriateness of her behaviour as well as the danger it brings about: "There was a brazen freedom about going barefoot, walking around in the company of rough men with her legs entirely bare from her mid-calf down." (148) She does not only relish cross-dressing because it gives her a feeling of freedom to walk barefoot instead of wearing stockings and heels, but it excites her even more that her clothing breaks conduct and reveals much more than would have been considered appropriate. The focaliser on Bonny describes her company as "rough men," showing that Bonny's empowerment lies in showing her body but being protected from unwanted advances or even ambush. I argue that the emphasis on the fact that these men may be dangerous exceeds a mere liberation from social constraints. Bonny is depicted as a character who wants to break the law, who feels the most alive when in danger (as I will show later), who wants to be a pirate in every way possible, and showing her legs to dangerous man seems to be a part of what she considers to be "piratical."

Bonny also sees her rebellion against social conventions as a rebellion against her upbringing, embodied in her father: "She loved that. Her father would have had an apoplexy if he could have seen her." (148) In accordance with my observation that piratical ideals can be summed up with William Blake's "I must Create a System of be enslav'd by another Mans," (*Jerusalem*, E10) she lives by the principle that she must create a system before she is enslaved by a man's.

Yet Bonny is never using cross-dressing as a means to pass for a man. Her sex is

known to the other crew members – in contrast to Read whose female sex remains a secret to most characters for the most part of the story. When she joins the ship, she is always known as the captain's consort, thus every man on board is not only informed about her sex, but he also knows that she is the partner of the captain. Due to his leading position, no-one dares to touch or challenge her. This constellation of power a pirate captain holds over his crew allows for Bonny's freedom to expose her legs on board without risk of unwanted advances. Bonny has never gained masculine power by cross-dressing. Neither has she learned to change her gestures and behaviour accordingly to successfully perform a masculine gender role. The novel depicts this persistence of femininity as the reason why Read, a woman herself, can detect immediately that Bonny is a woman: "Mary looked back at the captain and the pirate next to him. […] The way she moved her body, her stance as she stood with arms folded across her chest, the way she smiled, all the myriad nuances Mary had trained herself not to do. This was a woman." (167-168) The novel seems to argue that femininity is inborn, as this quote claims that Read, who was raised as a boy, had to discipline herself not to display what is described as her true nature. Despite this wrong depiction of gender roles the text is still of interest as it depicts the two women as radically different when it comes to performing gender roles. Read has understood that there is more to performing the masculine pirate than cross-dressing, because this also requires a change of behaviour, while Bonny considers cross-dressing sufficient. I thus argue that Bonny considers cross-dressing more a charade than a performance of another gender role.

Despite the cross-dressing Bonny has become the equivalent of the captain's wife now. She is "the pirate next to him [the captain]." It is also her spatial positioning which helps Read in identifying her as a biological woman. It is the power of her male partner which allows for her freedom, not her own. Bonny has fallen for an illusion. As I have also proven in numerous other examples, piratical freedom is often depicted as an illusion.

Bonny's wish to be a pirate drives the narrative forward and is responsible for her own development as well as that of Rackham. As Bonny has not only a clear idea what Rackham should be like, but also wishes to embody the ideal of the dangerous, lusty, and masculine pirate herself, she compares Rackham's efforts at this gender role with her own. They differ, however, significantly in their set of character traits. Bonny has a violent streak in her – she has injured a male aggressor (who tried to rape her) so severely that he has to spend a fortnight in bed to recover. (23-24) This moment serves as a starting point for the following action: "Anne learned a great deal that night, about herself, about her power over others, and about her own potential. She was amazed and frightened and intrigued, all at once, by this demon she has discovered within her." (24) Bonny discovers her physical ability, her aggression, her lust for violence. The reference to a force of hell does not leave much room for a swashbuckling tale. Piracy is nourished by evil, evil Bonny has found within herself.

Rackham, however, lacks the violent streak that Bonny observes in herself. Bonny is put aback because he does not use violence. (232) She has to be taught by Read that this was actually Rackham's best trait of character: "I think your Jack does just the right thing, frightening them half to death and then showing them mercy. It's his most admirable trait, the fact that he doesn't hurt his victims." (232) Bonny doubts her lover: "I would not like to think he was afraid." (232) She is unaware of the  fact, that Rackham is much weaker than herself in the context of combat and courage. Cowardliness in a man is something she has no sympathy for. Thus, when Bonny realises that Rackham is becoming weaker and weaker, disappointing in his function as a lover as well as a captain, she openly provokes a duel with him. (328-329) She hereby challenges his leadership and manhood alike. However, Rackham does not fight back; the duel never takes place. At this point, Bonny does not only become an equal, but even a superior. Her courage by far exceeds that of Rackham. It that sense, she performs the role of the masculine pirate much better than Rackham ever did. In accordance

with Butler's observations, Bonny has to learn that drag does not copy an original. The moment Bonny has learned that Rackham is not an original to be copied, she finds the strength to display her own authority and challenges the captain. However, as the duel never takes place, her victory is of a more hypothetical nature.

Yet Rackham is, as pointed out before, firmly in the grip of anxiety. Both characters are antagonistic to each other, not only when it comes to their disposition to fighting. Bonny relishes fighting and compares the thrill she feels before a battle with sex: "Anne felt the flying water hit her face and her neck, felt the sloop bucking under her and she wanted to yell with exhilaration. It was like sex, this wild ride, and the climax would come when they plunged down on their victim's deck, swords flashing, guns blasting away." (153) To her, both experiences are similar, both are dangerous and forbidden. The carefree attitude of the male character and the apprehension of danger in the female character point to a reading that women in the eighteenth century are aware of the always present threat of pregnancy and the dangers childbirth can bring. For Rackham, having sex functions as a retreat. To him, sex is the opposite of battles; this is where he performs best, where he is at ease. Rackham is free to have sex with as many women as he wants; Bonny finds herself with child twice. Bonny is also married and considered an adulteress. Something which is normal to the pirate Rackham is a dangerous adventure, a social taboo, and a bodily risk for the pirate Bonny. Bonny seeks danger and adventure whereas Rackham wishes for a scenario in which he feels safe.

Despite these differences, sex is the central element of their relationship. It is no coincidence that it is sexual pleasure which binds them together in the first place, when Rackham educates the married Bonny and teaches her everything he knows. (114) Sex represents freedom for both of them. For Bonny, it is freedom in the form of a dangerous, extramarital adventure whereas for Rackham it represents freedom in form of his ultimate self-assurance. Rackham can educate Bonny; he is in the stronger position. Yet, when Bonny

also craves adventure other than sex and attempts to perform masculinity, Rackham's life becomes unbalanced. Not only does his partner wish for a life he abhors, crave for an ideal man he cannot be, but she also challenges him at performing masculinity. As characters in this novel constantly construct their selves in relation to others, their social identities are strongly coined by power relations. Only when sexual encounters of Rackham and Bonny result in a pregnancy, are the tables turned. The subsequent pregnancy puts Rackham in the stronger position again.

**4.5.1.4 Doubting the Female Pirate: Bonny's First Pregnancy**

Bonny informs Rackham proudly about her pregnancy: "I must tell you something, and I'll warrant it is something you have never heard from your fellow buccaneers before." (234) She takes pride in her unique position as a female pirate. She suggests that she is the only pirate who has ever been with child. That ideal turns sour when Bonny, used to cross-dressing, has to wear dresses again: "It felt odd, encumbering. She had not had so much cloth draped over her in almost a year." (239) She clearly envies her friend: "Beside her, Mary leaned easily on the bulwark, still one of the men." (237) Read is not only "still one of the men" (237) because her sex is still unknown to the crew at this point, but she is also "still one of the men" (237) because she is not pregnant. Read can still perform masculinity, the gender role Bonny desires, whereas Bonny is forced to abandon it due to her pregnancy. Moreover, her changed body puts her in disadvantage in comparison to men: "She was more agile than any of those apes, she prided herself on that fact, and annoyed her [sic] to be so clumsy and in such need of help." (242) Bonny compares herself with the male pirates again, pointing out that she bests them in performing as a masculine pirate by being more agile. At the same time, she downgrades the men to "apes," (242) a moment of disdain which illustrates her jealousy of the male sex. Were it not for her pregnancy she would still be able to excel. She feels disdain

about her pregnancy which puts her in a position to need the help of those whom she could best. The dress further hinders her movements, an additional factor to make her aware of her femininity, something despised and unwanted.

Bonny becomes increasingly estranged with her own body which leads to a crisis of identity. The gender she wants to perform and the gender she now has to perform are at odds with each other. Bonny cannot fulfil the self-set expectations, which results in a weakening of the self-constructed identity construct: "Anne felt herself grow bigger and more awkward and she hid her secret fears of childbirth and felt the identity that she had so carefully crafted for herself slipping further and further away." (264) At this point, she realises that her charade as a masculine pirate is just that. Her pregnancy forces her back to sociocultural norms and femininity associated with the female body. She feels "the identity she had so carefully crafted for herself slipping further […] away." Cross-dressing is here linked to construction of a new identity and once Bonny is unable to cross-dress any longer because of her pregnancy, she suffers from a feeling of loss of identity. Expectations and reality clash, whereas Bonny took pride in being a female pirate she is to realise that her new bodily situation makes it impossible for her to raid ships or climb the shrouds. Nelson (de)constructs the topos of the female pirate on the example of Bonny's first pregnancy. Expectations and bodily restrictions clash, making for an insurmountable rift between the experienced body and the desired gender performance. This clash further illustrates the constructedness and illusionary character of the pirate motif. The ideal of being a feminine pirate, the only pirate who can give birth, evaporates. This illustrates further that an ideal pirate life is depicted as a dream that does not come about, the piratical utopia never materialises.

The situation worsens for Bonny when Rackham abandons her on an island during the latter part of her pregnancy. Bonny abhors her new life. Now she is performing femininity again. (253-254, 263-264) Rackham in turn, seems to grow stronger, now that he is free of the

responsibility of the pregnancy and the possible risks to the health of mother and child. (239)

Bonny's exclusion from the ship after she is forced to perform femininity stays in accordance with a traditional and conservative world view according to which women must not be aboard a ship, safe for passengers. Rackham thus regains the superior position: "There was a hint of accusation in his voice, as if to say, *If she does not care to be left, she should not have gotten herself pregnant*." (254) This attitude denies his own role in Bonny's pregnancy. Nelson draws his characters in a clear-cut binary gender-model. Rackham's order that Bonny must give birth on an island is a display of power. In this reading, Bonny may perform the role of the masculine pirate better than he does, but, in the long run, it is Rackham who is of the male sex and does not have to be involved with the birth of a child he has fathered. Leaving her behind due to her condition, which means exclusion of the pirate life, makes Bonny painfully aware of her womanhood. Bonny's attempt at performing as a masculine pirate, Rackham's rival, has come to a sudden end. Now Rackham has regained his masculinity by subduing Bonny. Nelson depicts the performative act of the masculine pirate as a competition between several characters. In this case he uses the biological sex to depict a short-lived victory on the side of Rackham.

After Bonny gives birth to her child and the future of the child is secured, Bonny joins the crew again and reconciles with Rackham. Yet, their relationship reaches a crucial turning point when they are attacked by the Spanish cost guard. As pointed out before, Rackham fears the Spanish inquisition the most. This is when both partners come to realise that their attitudes to danger are oppositional; whereas Bonny feels energised and excited, Rackham falls into stupor:

> She savored the insane thrill of it all, […]. She thought it would be all right if she died that night, because she did not know if she could tolerate one mundane second again, after this crystal clear intensity of emotion. She was looking up at Jack […] and she could tell that he was not enjoying this fatal circumstance as she was. (297)

Bonny feels pity for Rackham whom she imagines must be bought down by the responsibility

for the crew and tries to comfort him. In truth, Rackham is frantic. As this paragraph uses Bonny as focaliser, the reader must remember the earlier thought reports of Rackham about his fear of the Spanish cost guards to deduce what is the matter with him. This paragraph stays with Bonny as a focaliser and represents her point of view only. This narrative device emphasises the misunderstanding between the two as the reader knows more than the focaliser and character Bonny does. Bonny misjudges the situation completely:

> *Poor, dear Jack*, Anne thought, *so much on his mind. It's easy for us to love this so, without the weight of responsibility.* She reached up and ran her hand up his calf and he jerked in surprise, scowled down at her, and she smiled at him. "Never you fear, Jack, my love, we shall do for these bastards yet!" she shouted up at him. It was in the spirit of the thing, to make such bold and improbable predictions, but Jack just grunted and turned back to watching the enemy's inexorable approach." (297)

Bonny shouts at Rackham that they could take down their enemies, the pirate hunters on board the Spanish ship, because "[i]t was in the spirit of the thing." (297) She keeps to a prescribed code, to something she considers piratical. In what will prove to be a fatal error, Bonny thinks she can encourage Rackham by proper pirate behaviour. Rackham, who despises the pirate life and the danger it brings, feels appalled. Both are playing a role. Bonny tries to do what seems to be the right thing to do as a pirate, whereas Rackham has finally fallen out of the role and finds himself incapable of performing it any longer. All he can do is stand and watch.

Yet, Bonny does not give up in comforting her partner:

> "Jack, we shall have their ship, what say you?", Anne called, and when Jack did not respond, she said, "Jack, do you attend?" Jack scowled down at her again. "Yes, yes, goddamm it, I bloody heard you." he hissed in a voice that startled Anne. "Jack." Anne spoke as soft as she could and still be heard over the noise. "Whatever is the matter?" "The matter?" Jack have a humorless laugh. "We are to be captured by the dons, you stupid mindless bitch! Or do you not realize that?" (297-298)

By calling her a "stupid, mindless bitch" (298) Rackham does much more than just insult her. He points out her female sex, marking her self-assumed identity as a masculine pirate an illusion. The question "Or do you not realize that?" (298) further attacks her intelligence and questions her abilities as a masculine pirate. It further suggests that she was delusional, at least this is how she understands his verbal attack:

> Anne stepped back. She could not have been more shocked if Jack had slapped her. Suddenly all of the chaos of the battle was lost to her. She could no longer hear the cannon, the shouting, the beating of blades on the rail, the distant sound of the Spaniard's guns. She could hear nothing but those words – *stupid, mindless bitch* – and she heard them over and over again. A minute before, her life had been reduced to the purest simplicity, a fight to the death; nothing could be more clear and unequivocal, and she loved it. Now all that was gone. Now the world that she had embraced and come to love did not seem quite real, as if she suddenly realized that all along she had been watching a play. Now she suspected that she did not understand a thing. (298)

Bonny concludes that not only the identity she had crafted for herself, but also her whole world view had been nothing but an illusion. She realises that she has never been a member of this all-masculine society at all. It is in this moment that Bonny realises that drag does not copy an original, because the original, the masculine pirate is non-existent. This crucial observation is strengthened with the metaphor or a theatrical play.

Her observation that she had only been watching a play in a theatre comes very close to the truth. It is Rackham who has put on a show; it is Rackham who has been playing a role all along. This moment of doubt on the side of Bonny together with the metaphor of theatricality illustrates the illusionary and imaginary character of the pirate motif. Here, the instability of the pirate motif in translated unto plot-level. It becomes an element of the *sujet*. As already briefly mentioned, whereas *Pirates of the Caribbean* illustrates this theatricality by inviting rock stars for cameos in the film series, and making Richards the "father" of Jack Sparrow, both on screen and off screen (cf. my second chapter), this novel makes the aspect of theatricality explicit by integrating it as a metaphor into the narrative. This moment has to be considered metafictional as the text displays and thematises the issue of constructedness.

As mentioned above, Bonny's feeling to have imitated a (theatrical) performance also harks back to Butler's observation that drag does not copy an original. Cross-dressing Bonny, a prime example of drag, realises that she has copied a counterfeit, that the original she has believed to copy does not exist in the first place. Here, Nelson moves away from a deterministic gender view and moves more towards modern conceptions of gender studies. This change towards an unstable perception of gender is another example of (de)construction.

Whereas roles seemed clear-cut during the plot-element of the pregnancy, they now dissolve into performativity, hinting at the question whether drag / cross-dressing can copy an original.

This feeling of estrangement stays with Bonny throughout the rest of the novel, causing constant doubt. Bonny has started to question her world view whereas Rackham increasingly fails at performing his role. He succumbs to his anxieties which have already started to affect his body, as pointed out above. Bonny fails to understand that Rackham suffers from a mental issue, but is able to realise that something is wrong with him: "And yet, there was something out of place. He was not Calico Jack, not entirely. He seemed more like someone doing an impersonation of the old John Rackham, someone who had the act almost perfect, but was missing a certain undefinable element, so that the impression was not quite right." (365) Bonny expresses her doubts by sticking to the metaphor of a play in a theatre. Rackham appears like someone who plays the role of Rackham, but does not succeed in playing it convincingly. The illness has rendered him too weak to keep up appearances any longer. Rackhams's inefficiency at playing his former role as "Jack Rackham" leads to a deep crisis for Bonny. At the beginning, Bonny was even wearing one of Rackham's shirts, imitating his performance explicitly by claiming a material object. Here, performance and identity are linked to a material object that is culturally inscribed to another: it belongs to Rackham, and is normally worn by Rackham when he performs his role. The character Bonny perceives cross-dressing as explicitly copying someone who is perceived as a role-model. Once Rackham fails at playing the role of Rackham, Bonny lacks an original to copy. As mentioned above, this text illustrates Butler's observation that drag does not imitate an original. Bonny realises that imitating Rackham does does not help her to form a temporary identity for herself, as Rackham is already comparing his performance with Vane's.

This growing insecurity on the side of Bonny further emphasises Butler's observation that there are no original gender performances:

But still she could not shake the feeling. Try as she might to assure herself that nothing had changed, that things would get better from here, she could not quite believe it. If Jack was just playing at being the old, bold John Rackham, then she knew that she, too, was just playing at her former self, just pretending to harbor the same reckless optimism that drove the newly wedded Anne Bonny to Nassau and into Jack's bed. (365)

Bonny tries to convince herself that "nothing had changed" (365); in other words, she is still oblivious to Rackham's mental condition. Rackham is, in fact, unable to play his old role any longer as he has lost the stamina to keep up the illusion. This passage illustrates that Bonny sees her own identity as dependent on Rackham's: "If Jack was just playing at being the old, bold John Rackham, then she knew that she, too, was just playing at her former self." (365) Rackham does not only serve as a role-model for her, but she she also needs the protection of a pirate captain who allows for her cross-dressing femininity to be a female pirate in the first place. Bonny cannot construct an identity for herself that would not rely in some way on Rackham. Bonny perceives her own identity as a social identity, she only sees herself as how others would perceive her, as a consort to Rackham.

The text thus clearly shows that Bonny's attempts at female liberation are not successful. Bonny seeks freedom in the wrong places; she always defines herself in dependence of a man. Her first act of rebellion and attempt to gain freedom is a forbidden marriage, her second act adultery, the third being the consort of a pirate captain. Now that the pirate captain is unable to perform his role as pirate captain, Bonny loses her role as his consort. Although Nelson does not repeat it, it can be assumed that the text implies that Bonny once more "felt the identity that she had so carefully crafted for herself slipping further and further away." (264) Nelson shows Bonny as a character who has constructed the identity of a feminine pirate for herself (despite the cross-dressing she is still the partner of the captain and at first takes pride in her pregnancy) but constantly realises that she cannot live up to her own expectations.

She feels disorientated: "Sometimes she spoke with Mary and tried to work up the

courage to ask Mary for help. *Tell me what to do, where we should go, do not let me make a fool of myself*, she wanted to say, but she could not, not yet, not even to Mary." (372) Now that Rackham cannot function as a kind of anchor for her any more, she seeks guidance and a new role model in Read, a cross-dressing woman. Bonny apparently assumes that if cross-dressing, drag, cannot copy an original, that she must imitate another who performs drag, Read. The character of Bonny refuses to accept that there are no original gender identities that can be copied and applied to oneself. This novel depicts the pirate motif as a performance, a performance that leads to utter confusion as it is based on the faulty assumption that drag, the female, cross-dressing pirate, imitates an original, the masculine pirate.

Bonny thus considers the female pirate as a form of charade. The strong notion of theatricality, of playing a role reappears later, slightly changed, in context of the friendship between both women:

> She [Bonny] stepped forward boldly, grabbed up Mary's cut hand, and pressed her own to it. Mary could feel Anne's palm, slick against hers, the blood mingling. "There," Anne said, with a sheepish half-smile. "Blood sisters. Bloodied in combat together." Mary smiled back at her. There was something so childlike, so innocent about that gesture, as if she and Anne were, for that moment, not genuine pirates at all, but little girls playing pirates in the garden. And then Anne, embarrassed by he sincerity of the moment, pulled her eyes from Mary, spun around, arms extended, and shouted "Ah!" She crossed the cabin and sprawled back on the pillows atop the locker. "This is the life, eh?" (229-230)

Whereas the first comparison refers to an actor in a theatre, playing pirates is now compared to child's play. Read's thought report which compares them to "little girls playing pirates in the garden" (229) points at the illusory character of Bonny's world view. Bonny is a dreamer, she is "a little girl playing pirate." (229) Although they are "bloodied in combat together," (229) the violence and brutality of the preceding battle fades in comparison to this "childlike gesture." (229) The reality of combat and pillaging is exchanged for children who pretend to be in battle.

The text thus focuses on a rather common understanding of performance as opposed to Butler's concept. First, playing a role is compared to a stage production in a theatre, then it is

compared to child's play as for children piracy is mere make-belief. Both forms of performance share two aspects, for once they are temporary, and, they are conscious acts of performance. Playing a role as an actor as well as child's play are conscious acts of temporarily adapting another, illusionary identity. These performances are conscious acts whose illusionary and imaginary character is known to the participants. Both women follow two concepts of performativity here. They perform as masculine pirates, but both compare their performances to ordinary, common place performances, thus robbing their cross-dressing of its subversive potential and marking it as carnivalesque. Both characters use comparisons that imply that they perceive their cross-dressing much more as a pretence as a way of embracing their social identity and expressing their momentary identity narratives.

This moment of carnivalesque mimicry, playing a role that feels somehow wrong to Bonny, is further illustrated by the fact that she feels embarrassed by the "sincerity of the moment" (229). Her following gestures and exclamations seem exaggerated and staged. She spins around the cabin with extended arms, reclines on the pillows and declares that "[t]his is the life." (230) This behaviour has to be seen in the same light as her attempts of encouragement towards Rackham, she only acts out what "[i]s in the spirit of the thing." (297) Similar to Rackham, she covers her uncertainty by overdoing what she considers to be piratical behaviour. Her following behaviour is even more so child's play than the preceding oath.

By comparing Bonny to a child, Read implicitly points out her naivety. Bonny is marked as an innocent child here who does not understand yet the implications of her actions. To Bonny, the pirate life is an adventure. Read seems to see her younger friend as immature and inexperienced, someone who cannot grasp the full scope of her surroundings yet. In this moment, Read sees Bonny in the same light as does Rackham. Rackham's remark that she is incapable of understanding that capture by the Spanish leads to torture is in the same vein,

albeit negative. Both characters perceive Bonny as naïve and inexperienced. Bonny is interpreted by both characters as child-like, in the meaning that she does not understand the implications of the actions she mimics. She imitates what she observes in the pirates, her equivalent for adults, without fully understanding the meaning of the acts she imitates, meaning that she does neither fully grasp that piracy is an equivalent to blood-shed, as illustrated by the fact that Bonny and Read are covered on their victims' blood when she swears her childlike oath, neither can she grasp that it can lead to severe punishment, as illustrated in her incomprehension of Rackham's panic attack. To her, piracy is a game to be played without consequences. Bonny is blind to the violent and criminal aspects of piracy. She sees piracy as playacting that is of no consequence, an act she can take on and take off. This understanding of a criminal activity as a carnivalesque disguise illustrates further that the pirate motif as found in present-day fiction is presented as fragmentary and contradictory. Piracy is reduced to cross-dressing and the unfruitful attempt to copy an non-existing original, the masculine pirate. Aspects of violence and legal persecution are blackened out, making for a character who is perceived as immature and naïve by the surrounding characters. Most of all, Bonny's cravings for piracy, danger, and adventure are carried by notions of escapism. Cross-dressing as a masculine pirate is thus meant to be liberatory and subversive, by paving the way to these goals, but, as the novel shows, this liberation does not take place. This (de)construction of the subversive element of cross-dressing further illustrates the contradictory character of the pirate motif in present-day fiction.

### 4.5.2. Cross-Dressing as a Means of Survival: Mary Read

I will show that Read befits the topos of the female warrior better than Bonny. But the modern-day adaptation tunes this topos down by depicting Read as weak, as someone who mostly follows orders or the dreams of others. She ultimately becomes a pirate against her

will. I show in close reading how this characterisation destabilises the female warrior in general and the female pirate in particular.

Read, in contrast to Bonny, never chose a life of cross-dressing. She was raised as a boy. Being an illegitimate child, her mother passed her off as her legitimate older son who had died shortly after Read's birth. (64-65)

Wheelwright points out that Read, as she is presented in Johnson's account (for which Johnson rewrote witness accounts given in court) succeeds in both masculine and the feminine gender roles:

> The impact of Johnson's subtle rewriting is to turn Read from a member of a close-knit pirate crew into a figure who possesses equally exaggerated masculine and feminine virtues. As a pirate, she and Bonny are the bravest men on board. […] Yet she also displays a woman's vulnerability by falling in love, becoming pregnant and finally renouncing piracy. […] By the time Read appears in the witness box, Johnson tells us that her life had changed dramatically; she was heavily pregnant, deeply in love and her desire for a quiet life becomes more believable." ("Tars", 184)

Read is traditionally depicted as oscillating between masculine and feminine gender roles. The markers for her performance of a feminine or masculine gender role are mostly spatial. Read oscillates between the battle field and kitchen, between setting sails and doing laundry. These are activities and spheres which are traditionally marked as domains of the masculine or feminine gender which define roles respectively. Read can make her home in both spheres, which makes for her exceptional capacity to perform both gender roles.

In contrast to Wheelwright's observations, the example at hand does not imply a story arch of change and development, involving a life that had "changed dramatically," but a life of short gaps and lack of what was desired in the first place. In this adaptation, Read craves for a life as a wife and mother, but finding herself not in the right circumstances, she rather takes to cross-dressing and performs as a masculine soldier and a masculine pirate.

In contrast to Bonny, who was raised according to feminine gender roles, keeping household and wearing petticoats, Read was raised as a boy and later served in the military. She thus knows much more about fighting, battles, fear, and dying than Bonny ever will.

When fighting feels like an exciting, orgastic adventure to Bonny, Read knows of all its horrors. What feels like a child-like guise to Bonny, cross-dressing and entering a fight, is brutal reality for Read. Read is thus a much stronger representative of the female warrior than Bonny.

Yet, Nelson does not allow for any glorious or heroic notions, let alone subversive potential for the choice to cross-dress and subsequent empowerment. He depicts Read as disillusioned. Once battles are stripped bare of ideals and objectives, it is only the cruel reality of war that remains, namely blood and disfigured bodies:

> She had seen enough of real warfare to know it was not more glorious to die in the midst of an epoch-making fight. She knew death in all its guises, knew the twisted, broken bodies, the dull eyes staring towards heaven, the flies swarming around gaping wounds, knew it was just as horrid in a foraging raid as it was in a battle between the great armies of nations. (30)

To Read, ideals have lost their meaning. She does not fall for the mad rush of excitement the pirate life brings to Bonny. All Read can associate with fighting are mangled bodies and death. Read is used to the military life, meaning obeying orders without asking any questions:

> Mary, in point of fact, didn't care a pile of dung who sat on the throne of Spain. But she was a cavalry soldier, had been a foot soldier before and a sailor aboard a man-of-war before that. She had spent most of her life masquerading as a boy and a man, serving the king of England under arms. She went where she was told to go, and killed whomever she was told to kill. (28-29)

Read does not have a will of her own, she goes "where she [is] told to go" and even kills "whom she [is] told to kill." Read does not even care what she is fighting for, as it is of no interest to her who is king of Spain. To her, being a soldier is the equivalent to being a tool.

Despite all her usefulness, Read is aware that she is an unwanted. She expects that she would never find acceptance as a female warrior:

> [Had] she been discovered, she would have been tossed out of the regiment within the hour. Regardless of all the notable actions, the duty above and beyond the call, all the dead Frenchmen she had left in her wake, it would be, at best, her sword broken over a captain's knee, the red coat stripped from her back, and an escort to the edge of the camp. At the worst, they would hang her. (32)

The thought report illustrates Read's apprehensions. She pictures that she cannot fit into society, that she will be an outsider forever. Having chosen a masculine profession as a woman, she would be eyed with suspicion. Even more so, having served in the military might

be considered treason, a crime asking for capital punishment. Yet, Read knows how to master her situation: "Not that she felt at any danger of discovery. She had played the man long enough that that fear no longer nagged at her." (32) Read is thus portrayed as a female warrior who dreads discovery and the consequences of her actions. Cross-dressing brings her empowerment, but also worry and danger. Here, too, the present-day adaptation clashes with the literary tradition by presenting a female warrior who does not only lack patriotism, but is also depicted as afraid of the potential consequences.

### 4.5.2.1 The Illusion of the Naturally Born Woman

Read finds herself in a deep crisis when she falls in love with her tent-mate Frederik Heesch. Torn between the life she lives, the life of a masculine soldier, and her feelings and cravings as a heterosexual woman, she finds herself in a crisis of identity: "[A]s long as Frederik did not know the truth of her sex, then she could never be more to him than tent-mate, comrade-at-arms, protector." (32) Read decides that she wants to perform a feminine gender role. When her love interest Heesch informs her about his plans for the future, opening an inn, she starts to day-dream:

> She pictured the inn, the great fire burning in the front room, servants bustling about, Frederik greeting guests, supervising in the big kitchen. A warm, well-lit space, the glow of the fire illuminating the plaster walls, the rich tapestries. (31)

This description is a stereotypical representation of what might be called "domestic bliss." The place is welcoming, a home not only to the owners, but also to the guests. It is "warm," "well-lit" and "[illuminated] by the fire;" all these descriptions describe a place of comfort.

Then, Read takes the liberty of adding her own person to Heesch's daydream, thus adopting his dream as her own:

> She put herself in the image as well. In her imagination she was wearing a fine silk dress and frilly petticoats, a cotton mob cap, her long hair hanging free down her back and shoulders. Perfume. She saw herself taking her ease in a big copper bathtub. Frederik putting his arms around her, kissing her cheek, telling her how much he loved her. (31)

Read craves femininity and an end to her life as female warrior. She longs to exchange the horrors of the battlefield for a home. Analogously to her life as a soldier, Read does not decide for herself what she wants. She readily embraces the day-dream and future plan of Heesch. Read must thus be seen in the same light as Bonny. Both try to construct an identity for themselves in dependence on a masculine partner, Rackham and Heesch respectively.

Read is driven by admiration; she deeply admires Heesch for his altruism: "How many men in that army would have harboured such a dream? Most would dream of their own tavern, where they could become insensibly drunk for free. But Frederik wanted to cook and see to the comfort of others." (31) Heesch is thus the exact opposite of a greedy, blood-shedding pirate. This admiration for Heesch shows that Read does not wish for a pirate life; she longs for a peaceful home. I argue that Read is thus the exception to the rule. Read as portrayed in this novel is the one character in my analysis of pirate fiction who does not long to be a pirate. For Read, piracy is not linked to utopia. For Read, the utopia lies in what is normally depicted as the drudgery of commonplace life in pirate fiction. The character of Read further demonstrates the instability of the pirate motif, as the depiction of Read lacks all notions of a piratical utopia.

### 4.5.2.2 Cross-Dressing as a Prison and the Confines of Being a Woman

After marrying Heesch and opening the desired inn, Read relishes her freedom to perform a feminine gender role:

> [A] hundred times a day the old instincts to hide her sex would flash in her mind, only to be set aside with the realization that she did not have to do that anymore. She had never realized how much maintaining the lie had consumed her, what an extraordinary effort it had taken, until she no longer had to do so. (68)

To her, living as a wife an innkeeper is identical to freedom. Read perceives cross-dressing as restricting, performing a masculine role as exhausting and dangerous. Nelson makes use of a world-view in which femininity seems to be inborn to Read and hiding it is a strenuous effort

for her. I argue that Nelson uses this essentialist depiction of gender as a means to show that Read is a pirate against her will. Read is born a woman; Read is born to be a mother and a wife. Her circumstances force something foreign on her, cross-dressing, which will make her, in the long run, a pirate against her will. Nelson writes against the convention of the female warrior and the established trope of a piratical utopia alike. This further demonstrates how fragmentary the pirate motif of present-day fiction is. The characterisation of Read breaks with established conventions which clash with the tradition of the patriotic female warrior, the ballad of the female sailor, and pirate fiction alike.

Nelson continues the depiction of cross-dressing as a trap, a trap with lasting consequences. The soldiers who knew Read under a masculine identity, Michael Read, are unable to cope with the transformation to Mary Read. This intolerance of her former acquaintances makes for an odd mixture of feminine dress and masculine behaviour on the side of Read:

> Mary wore silk-dresses and let her hair flow free under cotton mob caps, and the soldiers who had known her before as a horse soldier did not know how to treat her now. They would hem and haw and stammer over their words until Mary sat with them, a mug of beer in hand, straddling a bench like she was on horseback again, and talking the language of the soldier, which was still her language when she chose. She would set the room roaring with some off-colored story and then they were all brothers-in-arms again. (68)

Read never manages to fully escape the masculine gender-role; to find acceptance she must use coarse language and straddle a bench in an manner considered unwomanly. I argue that by forcing Read back into behaviour patterns that are considered masculine, the male soldiers force her back into the masculine gender, an act of power that refuses to acknowledge that Read had been performing drag. Accepting the new feminine gender role would be equivalent to fully embracing the fact that Michael Read is a construct of drag. The moment when drag becomes equal to their own masculinity is depicted as a threat to the soldiers. Thus they force Read back to the identity they know, Michael Read. The depiction of the behaviour of the soldiers complies with Butler's aforementioned observation that drag can cause apprehension.

These men would have to admit that they cannot trust their senses when it comes to recognising gender.

**4.5.2.3 The Exception to the Rule: A Pirate Against Her Will**

However, this episode of domestic bliss comes to a sudden end with the death of Heesch. Read feels vulnerable without her husband, realising that the life of a widow does not have many prospects. Suddenly, the female gender-role becomes a prison to her, the former freedom turns into incarceration: "Without Frederick, Mary found the trappings of a woman intolerable and she longed to slip back into the comfortable guise she had known most her life." (69) What had former be a "an extraordinary effort," the "maintan[ance]" [of the] lie," (68) is now "the comfortable guise she had known most of her life." (69) This comfort is grounded in familiarity. Performing a masculine gender-role feels like a pair of worn-out and comfortable shoes to her. Without her husband, all that the feminine gender can offer to her are "trappings." Nelson's account thus puts more emphasis on her ability to cope emotionally than her inability to cope financially, as found in Johnson's text. Wheelwright observes: "Johnson assumes his readers will accept the logic of such a statement, which, however covertly, acknowledges a widow's difficulty in coping alone." ("Tars," 186) Nelson thus depicts both women in the same vein. Bonny and Read experience their feminine identities in relation to a masculine partner. The loss of this anchor leads to disorientation. The contemporary adaptation puts questions of identity at the foreground rather than questions of material survival, highlighting the alternative lifestyle a pirate life may offer instead of the easy accession of comfort and wealth.

Yet, cross-dressing and performing as a man ties Read to a world of violence. During the crucial turning point of a piratical attack, "[s]he sighed. Was there no place on this earth where she could go to be free of this violence?" (145) Read manages to win the respect of the

pirates with her fighting skills. The report of a pirate clearly shows that he sees her as an equal, equal in combat: "'This is the one almost done for me, Jack. Mean little bastard, fierce as a snake. [….]' There was no malice in his voice. He reported the fight matter-of-factly, perhaps even with a bit of admiration." (169) Read does only succeed in performing a masculine gender-role, she also succeeds in assimilating into what is considered the men's world of combat and gains their respect. Of the three main characters, she is the only one who succeeds at performing the gender role of the masculine pirate.

Read has impressed the pirates so much that she is offered to join their ranks. This leads to a second crisis of identity, when Read finally starts to question her motives:

> Hers had been a life of campaigning, structured by the rigid hierarchy of the military, where people like her did not question the reason for which they fought. And she never had. But now, lying in her dark bunk, she began to wonder why she had not. On the deck above, people just like her – foremast sailors, the most ill-used of creatures – debauched themselves on the food and drink of the fat Riga merchants. And they were doing more than debauching themselves. Their was a symbolic quality to their madness. They were thumbing their noses at all rules and laws and any measure instituted among men for the purpose of holding such people as them in check. And it occurred to her that her vision of herself – a good soldier who followed orders – was a lie, every inch of it. She had been thumbing her nose at all rules and laws every second she spent playing the man. (174)

Read does not crave the justice the pirate life seems to bring about, even if she contemplates the "symbolic quality" (174) of the lower class devouring the delicacies of the rich. Read compares her cross-dressing, which is considered illegal during the period the novel takes place in, to piracy. Both are illegal activities and Read now equals the female warrior with the female pirate, ignoring that the first is serving her country following notions of patriotism whereas the second commits violence in the name of greed. Read is still depicted as a character who is largely disinterested in politics or even justice. According to my argument that Read is the exception to the rule, Read does neither believe in an alternative society nor is she interested in breaking rules of socio-normative society. To Read, piracy is not a utopian ideal.

For Read, the most alluring aspect of the pirate life is the exotic setting, the Caribbean:

> *The West Indies are so very beautiful. God, can I go back to the mud and the cold and the shit, after*

*seeing this?* The very though of it made her feel sick. The warmth and the brilliant sun seemed to burn her misery away, and she could not bear the thought of leaving it. She did not think she would ever again have the strength to stand up under the heavy grey skies of Europe. (175)

The Caribbean does not only offer alluring surroundings with an agreeable climate, it has also the side-effect that the "sun burns her misery away." (175) Her new surroundings are so different from Europe, which she only describes with extremely negative vocabulary, such as "mud," "shit," and "heavy grey skies," (175) that she can escape remembrance of Heesch's death. This is a tactic of survival as Read considers herself too weak in spirit to bear Europe and its rough climate. Read does not become a pirate to gain freedom; Read becomes a pirate to escape the feeling of loss of her former life as wife and inn keeper. In accordance with my observations, the depiction of piracy is often strongly connected to notions of escapism and idealising the Caribbean. This passage illustrates both. In this example, escapism and touristy longing are not restricted to a potential recipient, but have entered text level and sujet. Read's motivation to become a pirate is grounded in escapism only. For Read, piracy is something of a last resort to escape from her grief.

### 4.5.2.4        Read as the Voice of Contradictory Elements of the Pirate Motif

This clash with other novels and films which depict piracy as utopian is illustrated further in the fact that the novel details Read's long journey of contemplating, judging, and considering piracy. I show that these long passages of thought report reflect the contradictory elements of piracy depicted in fiction.

At first she feels appalled at the bearings of the pirates, especially Rackham's theatrical gestures. In contrast to Bonny, she can see right from the beginning that Rackham is consciously playing a role: "He [Rackham] gave an elegant bow, hat in hand, foot extended. 'I thank you, people, for your hospitality. You have been the perfect hosts...' Mary could see the others grinning at this. *Is it all play with these people*?" (175) The word "play" has two

possible meanings here. It may refer to a theatrical play, foreshadowing what Bonny would conclude later on the island when attacked by the Spaniards. It may also refer to a kind of game, of playfulness. The pirates take a cruel delight in playing with their victims. It may also refer to a children's game foreshadowing the oath Read and Bonny are about to share as "if they were little girls playing pirates." (229) Both metaphors feature prominently throughout the novel and link piracy to both a stage setting and child-like make-belief. Here, the metaphors illustrate Read's attitude to piracy who perceives it as bravado.

Despite her clarity of thought, however, she is taken in with the democracy of the pirates. Read, used to following orders blindly, is confronted with a world of self-governance:

> Populacy, democracy, here it was. An impossible system of governance, the road to anarchy and confusion. Any born aristocrat would tell you that the common people could not govern themselves, and yet here were the most debased of men on earth doing just that thing, and obeying their own laws like a bishop obeys the word of God. (188)

I argue that it seems quite unclear here what position Read sees herself in as her thought report shows contradictory attitudes. She looks down at the pirates she is observing, calling them "the most debased of men." (188) She does not fully identify with her new peer group. Despite her judgemental comment, she also shows admiration. Wild pirates during a raid are law-abiding when it comes to their own code – "obeying **their** rules like a bishop obeys the word of God." (188, my emphasis) While breaking the rules had been their defining feature before, the common people who "[a]re thumbing their noses at all rules" (174) they turn out to be perfect citizens when it comes to obey their own code of conduct. What's more, she is surprised at the efficiency of this system. What should be "the road to anarchy and confusion" (188) because "common people cannot govern themselves" (188) turns out to be a functional system of governance. Read shows confusion as to what to make of the pirates. Appalled by their behaviour, but admiring the self-governance, her flickering thoughts reflect the contradictory and fragmentary character of the pirate motif.

Yet, as insecure as Read may be about judging the pirates, one thing remains clear:

Read finds herself in a world which is the exact opposite of the military world she used to live in:

> It was unlike anything that Mary ever experienced, Mary who was so accustomed to hierarchy, to officers layered upon officers for the better management of the lower sort. She could only shake her head in wonder at it, that such things could exist. (188)

Read, never an officer herself, but always a soldier of various assignments, starts to identify with this egalitarian system. Now the "lower sort" (188) clearly refers to herself; she was one of those "manage[d] [by] officers layered upon officers." (188) She has taken a step towards embracing her new surroundings, shipmates, and way of life. In accordance with my observations in my theory chapter, piracy is constructed in contrast to the status quo, as the contrary element of the existing socio-cultural norms. Read's admiration of piratical self-governance can be summed up with the quote by William Blake that I have pointed out to be crucial in summing up the piratical ideal as depicted in present-day fiction: "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Mans." (*Jerusalem*, E10)

Despite her admiration of piratical democracy, it still takes Read some time to adapt to the idea of actual piracy, meaning attacking and plundering. She sympathises with the victims, having been a victim of the pirates not so long ago. She finds herself in a moral conflict when she is assigned to man the lookout, searching for prey:

> Lookout was a perfectly pleasant task in that fine weather, and Mary would have relished it were it not for the implications of what she was doing. Seeing a vessel on the horizon meant plunging into real piracy – standing with weapons at the rail, chanting, the leap onto the victim's deck – and not just sailing around as they had been doing. It means the lash of conscience as poor, innocent sailors died under her gun or sword. (197)

Read likes the pirate life as far as it means cruising the Caribbean. This example illustrates further that the idealisation of piracy hinges to a large part on the popular ideal of an eternal holiday in the exotic and agreeable backdrop of the Caribbean. The ship is cruising aimlessly, "just sailing around," (197) and Read can take in the beauty of her new surroundings from above. Yet, the ship's journey may be aimless, but it is not without purpose. It is her job to spot prey. Read knows that this will lead to a "lash of conscience as poor, innocent sailors

died under her gun or sword." (197) Piracy gives the freedom of cruising the Caribbean, but it comes at the price of killing innocents. Analogously to Bonny's attempt at piracy which comes at the cost of the well-being of two men, the relaxation Read experiences in the Caribbean comes at the cost of innocent lives. This novel makes explicit that piracy comes at a cost. Similarly to the example mentioned above, Read's thoughts voice the contradictory character of piracy as depicted fiction.

Read, who is used to a life in the military, which means fighting combatants of the same skill and the same intentions as herself, is aware of the difference to attacking sailors: "Not soldiers, paid to kill. Not an enemy who would have killed her in any event. But mariners like her, who wished nothing more than to be left alone." (198) Thus, the question Read asked herself when attacked by the pirates "Was there no place on this earth where she could go to be free of this violence?" (145) still haunts her during her first raid as a pirate, just that this time, she is on the other side, on that of the attacking pirates. In either way, be it as a victim or as an attacker, Read cannot escape a violent life. Read excels in the role of the female warrior so much that the role of the warrior and the violence it brings repeatedly come back to haunt her. The crucial point is that Read abhors violence and clearly refuses the role of the female warrior, making for a stark contrast to the literary tradition.

Yet, when in the military, "[s]he went where she was told to go, and killed whomever she was told to kill" (29) she has to decide now what to do. Now she is responsible for her actions. Read hesitates a moment when she spots a schooner, aware that it is her who will bring doom on the sailors' heads: "She sat there and stared and pictured the building terror on the schooner's deck […] She did not want to put the men in that situation. She did not want to terrorize, did not want to kill. Not any more. Not for the sake of plunder." (198) Read still abhors violence, she does "[not] want to kill [a]nymore." (198) The addition of "not for the sake of plunder" (198) implies that the thought of killing out of mere greed horrifies her.

Although Read claimed that she never cared who sat on the Spanish throne, meaning that she never fought out of patriotism, she still distinguishes between killing as a duty and killing as a felony. She is sensible to the fact that killing soldiers in a war differs from attacking innocents for the sake of robbery. Yet Read knows that she has passed a point of no return and cannot spare the victims: "[s]potting hapless victims, running them to ground, capturing and plundering them, it was their *raison d'être*." (197) This sentence puts the definition of piracy into a nutshell, harassing the innocent and steal their goods. As pointed out above, Read's attitude towards piracy is subject to quick changes. At first she despises the pirates for their exaggerated, theatrical behaviour, then changes to admiration for a functioning system of self-governance, only to feel appalled at the prospect of attacking innocent, and, most of all, untrained sailors. Whereas soldiers are trained in combat and thus make for equal opponents, sailors are untrained and easy victims.

As pointed out before, Read is the exception to the rule, the pirate who does not idealise piracy, so, in logical consequence, she is subject to doubt when she is responsible for the attack of a merchant. Read is the pirate who sees raiding at first through the eyes of her victims, as illustrated by the thought reports, instead of imagining the mad thrill of fighting, like Bonny does. In all examples discussed within this thesis, Read is the only pirate depicted with a moral conscience that doubts piracy itself.

Her further thought report illustrates that Read still abhors piracy: "*Some bloody fucking pirate you are. She could not have it all ways and she knew it. Either you are a pirate or you are not a pirate, and I signed these bloody articles out of my own free will.*" (198) Read seems to regret her decision but to realise at the same time that she must accept the consequences of her actions as she signed the articles out of her own volition. Yet, I argue that at this point she was bedazzled by the piratical democracy. This sudden change between excitement about self-government and the later hesitation to give signal to attack a merchant

is a prime example of idealisation of piracy. The positive prospect of anarchy and self-governance makes Read temporarily forget about the real nature of piracy. Read had forgotten about these aspects when she was taking her decision. She only takes the absence of hierarchy into consideration, but manages to be oblivious to the violence and brutality this life will bring. I argue that now she finds herself in a life even more violent and more aggressive than life in the military, because this violence is born out of greed. Read falls into the trap of what a utopian pirate life may be like, meaning that the positive aspects of democracy and freedom overshadow the violence and criminal activity. This character voices the basic contradiction of a piratical utopia: self-governance comes at the price of terrorising the innocent. This contradictory perceptions on the side of Read of piracy, disgust at their behaviour, excitement about the governmental system, and abhorrence of felony, illustrate my argument that piracy is depicted as contradictory. Furthermore, pirate fiction is at odds with a literary utopia. As pointed out in my introduction, a utopia is inhabited by ideal citizens with a strong moral compass. A piratical utopia, however, is made up of thieves and murderers. I argue that Read is the only character who touches upon this contradiction as Read is a pirate against her will. She would rather be a wife and mother if given the choice. For Read, cross-dressing as a masculine pirate is a means of coping with her emotions. Read was for a short moment blinded by the positive aspects of piracy only to abhor the reality she has to face at a later moment. It may thus be said that Read is the only character who regrets her decision to become a pirate. The moment Read develops a moral conscience, an obligatory element of a literary utopia, she starts to despise piracy.

Read must thus compromise: "She could not have it all ways." This compromise manifests in the decision to hand responsibility over to the victims, so that it is not her decision any more: "*If they do not fight*, she thought, *they will not be harmed. The choice is theirs*." (19) The thought report pointing out that it was not her choice but that of the victims

illustrates that Read tells herself that she is washing her hands in innocence, just like Herodes hands the responsibility for the decision to release Barrabas instead of Jesus to the crowd. I argue that she has assumed the comforting thought model of a soldier again in which she does not have to decide for herself. Read must find a way to cope as a strategy of survival: "The odd circumstances of her life had taught Mary Read to see moral issues in stark black and white." (19) Nelson claims that this is the only life strategy Read is accustomed to. Had she not learned to pass off as a boy from a very early age on, she and her mother would not have been supported by her paternal grandparents. Had she not learned how to perform as a masculine soldier to join the military, she would not have been able to support herself. Had she not learned how to kill, she would not have survived in battles. And now, had she not learned to adapt to piracy, she would break down in misery in Europe which has become intolerable to her. Whereas piracy is a dream come true for Bonny, it is just another stopgap for Read to distract her from her feelings of loss.

To Read, freedom is the absence of piracy. She all too readily parts with cross-dressing when the opportunity arises. Instantly offering to stay behind with Bonny on the island when Bonny is about to give birth, Read falls in love with the quiet life she finds there. She can finally live in the Caribbean without having to combat. Read decides to take the liberty to discard her men's clothes: "The Caribbean was luring her deeper into its arms. She could not endure her European clothes, not there. She would not play the man there in paradise." (255) Wearing feminine clothes now, Bonny fails recognise her and "[d]espite herself, Mary giggled, and even as she did she thought, *Dear Lord, when was the last time I giggled?* She was feeling a sort of relief such as she had rarely known. She had not felt this way, she did not think, since the days of the Three Trade Horses." (257) Giggling is not only a sign of happiness, it is also a character trait traditionally associated with the feminine gender. Nelson draws in a deterministic world view to illustrate that cross-dressing feels somehow wrong to

Read. I argue, that in conclusion, it is piracy that feels wrong to her. Read may have come to peace with her qualms to attack a merchant, but she is happy to stop cross-dressing, and thus, stop piracy, when given the chance. For her, freedom does not come with piracy on the high seas, for her it comes in a domestic surrounding on land. This illustrates again that Read is a contrasting character to most of the other fictional pirates.

Living on the island, Read has a chance to temporarily live the life she wants, to get a glimpse of paradise. This place is a "paradise" (255) in the meaning that it is an agreeable spot as well as the strong religious piety of its inhabitants, giving "paradise" (255) thus a Biblical implication. Read finds rest at a place which is neither welcoming nor alluring to a pirate, a church: "Mary sat on the low wall, looked in the direction that the Virgin was staring. At her back, the big church, and beyond that, the jungle with its wild sounds." (258) The "Virgin" (258) and the "church," (258) markers of the Christian religion, hint at a peaceful place. Read has changed the mobility of a pirate ship and the brutality it brings for the stability and quiet of a place of religious worship. Read is looking "in the direction the virgin was staring." (258) This direction of glance bears symbolic meaning. Read, who abhors brutality and murder finds her peace by gazing in the same direction as the Virgin, her namesake. She finds herself in accordance with social, moral and religious rules. After she has shed her skin as a masculine pirate by changing her clothes, she is free to agree with religious morals as well. Read is free from all that imprisons her, the masculine gender, the piratical activity. She has become a woman sitting in front of a church – the exact opposite of the masculine pirate on a ship. Gender, morality, and spatial relations are juxtaposed: male/female, pious/criminal, fixed/moving.

## 4.6    The End of Utopia: Shattered Dreams

While Rackham is subject to mental and physical decline, the two female characters end up with shattered dreams. I will discuss the shattered dreams of the female characters in more detail in the following sections. This scenario of ultimate defeat, not only in the meaning that the pirates are captured and brought to trial, but also that they have to admit defeat when it comes to their aspirations, further illustrates the illusionary character that is inherent to present-day pirate fiction. Similar to Handler's *We are Pirates* (cf. my chapters "Democ(k)cary" and "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality"), the wished for ideals of piracy do not materialise.

Read has to part with her aspiration to live out a feminine gender role. Back on the pirate ship, Read experiences a new crisis of identity when a young man is pressed aboard who bears close semblance to Heesch. She reveals her sex to Jacob Wells, yet refuses to sleep with him as they are not married. Read wishes to be married, to have socially sanctioned sex, yet cannot gain the required sanctification. As Bonny points out: "[T]here is little chance for marriage out here, and preachers are not so easy to come by in our trade." (225). The remark is full of irony, ridiculing the idea. Preachers are not only "not to easy to come by," (225) a preacher would never marry a pair of pirates.[81] Pirates are outlaws; they have ceased to be members of society. The laws of society, leave alone of religion, do not apply to them any more. Again, Read wishes to glance in the same direction as the Virgin like she did in the Spanish colony, but she finds herself unable to do so. Her outlaw identity clashes with her wish for the feminine gender identity of a wife. This is the climax of the development that Read is a pirate against her will. In the final stages, she rebels against the pirate identity, a fact that clearly destructs any notion of a utopian, better life. The fact that Read craves religious sanctification proves the more that she abhors breaking the rules. This character illustrates that

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81 The novel does not seem to take into consideration that a captain can marry a couple aboard a ship. Pirate fiction often makes use of this option, for example, Barbossa marries Swann and Turner in *PotC* III.

present-day pirate fiction depicts piratical, utopian ideals as misleading. The life in a society that constantly breaks the law does not lead to happiness for Read as it denies her the normal life she craves; her life as an outlaw makes it possible for her to marry again. Nelson emphasises this aspect and thus turns Read into a tragic heroine. Read strikes as misguided and disorientated and does not seem to fit into either category of the literary tradition, neither female warrior nor female criminal.

Bonny is the sole survivor of the pirate crew as her father, whose power she tried to escape of at the beginning, shows up as a deus ex machina. In a circular movement, Bonny rejoins her father at the end and decides to rear her daughter. What started out as an attempt to defy paternal and masculine authority ends with subjugation to patriarchy. Once she has realised that an ideal pirate life is non-existent and equalled the pirate life with a theatrical play, she willingly accepts the roles of daughter and mother alike. Bonny ends the narrative embracing two hetero-normative feminine gender roles, a pardoned sole-survivor, a situation which will erase her piratical past. The ending implies that Bonny has been "cured" of cross-dressing, breaking conduct, and performing a masculine gender-role. If any female pirate has ever been completely tamed in a narrative it is Bonny in the example at hand. Bonny's biography, as presented here, amounts to a piratical version of the *Taming of the Shrew.* Similar to the examples mentioned above, female liberation is (de)constructed and the female pirate serves as an example at best to illustrate that women should rather be at home, caring for their infant, instead of roaming the Caribbean sea.

## 4.7    Dystopian Zeitgeist: A Comparison to Johnson's Text

Nelson's hypertext changes two vital aspects from the hypotext, i.e. Johnson's semi-historical account.[82] Johnson's text leaves the ultimate fate of Bonny open: "She was continued in

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82 For a definition of "hypotext" and "hypertext" see my chapter "Intertextuality and Pirate Fiction."

prison, to the time of her laying in, and afterwards reprieved from time to time, but what became of her since, we cannot tell, only this we know, that she was not executed." (131) This gap in the text is a powerful device of reception theory, as every reader can fill the gap in as s/he wants. This openness of the text adds a strong element of hope and catharsis, as it implies that Bonny may have been saved and may have continued a life in liberty of socio-cultural norms.

Nelson, however, subjugates Bonny to patriarchy and makes her renounce everything she had believed in at the beginning of the novel. Whereas she prides herself at the beginning that her father would be disapprove of her behaviour, she accepts all too happily a return to socio-cultural norms at the end. The fact that she is the sole survivor ensures that she cannot commemorate her former life with her friends or her lover. This is a true new beginning, but not one linked to empowerment, liberation, or utopian living. Nelson adds a characterisation to Bonny that is not inherent to the hypotext: Bonny gives up her dreams and world views. This change makes the present-day novel much more dystopian than the hypotext.

Johnson's account of Read at first makes clear that "It is no doubt that many had compassion for her, yet the court could not avoid finding her guilty," (124) something which stays in accordance with Nelson's depiction of a pirate against her will. However, he also gives plenty of reason why Read was found guilty with a famous quote that illustrates the ruthlessness of pirates:

> Rackham […] fell accidentally into discourse with Mary Read […] asking what pleasure she could have in being concerned in such enterprizes where her life was continually in danger, by fire or sword; and […] she must be sure of dying an ignominious death, if she could be taken alive? She answered, that as to hanging, she thought it no great hardship, for were it not for that every cowardly fellow would turn pirate, and so infest the seas, that men of courage, must starve. (124)

This quote which basically says that only those brave enough to risk the noose are worthy to be pirates brings Read closer to ideals surrounding the female warrior in as much as that she is depicted as brave and idealistic. This bold stance marks Read as a pirate, and a pirate by conviction.

Nelson robs Read of her famous quote and turns one of the most reckless pirates of the literary tradition into a pirate against her will. Nelson implies that Rackham has made up this dialogue, but refrains from giving any details as to how much he has actually invented. The report is vague: "Jack […] did recall a conversation **somewhat along these lines**." (386, my emphasis) Nelson makes use of the same strategy of a strategically placed gap Johnson has used in Bonny's account. The reader must fill this gap and decide whether Read has said the very same thing, if Rackham quotes her out of context or if he distorts her words. The text lays emphasis on a distortion of some kind, but does not give any more details: "Jack shut his mouth, afraid that he had already said to much, that he had dulled his credibility with too many words." (386) Be that as it may, the important thing is that Read is robbed of what may be her most famous quote and one of her defining features. The bold and idealistic Read is turned into a weak, opportunistic being who is denied her dream of becoming a wife. Robbing Read of her pride and turning her into a character who actually loathes cross-dressing and criminal behaviour strongly undermines any utopian notion inherent to earlier pirate fiction.

The accounts of both women are changed in a way that blackens their biographies in a meaning that positive aspects are erased. Bonny is subjected to patriarchy instead of implying a lucky escape whereas Read is robbed of her pride in piracy. The present-day adaptation refuses to give both women a glimpse of hope and depicts both in utter defeat when it comes to pursuing their dreams. This change towards a much more negative depiction of piracy marks a change from utopian depictions to dystopian.

## 4.8    Conclusion

Nelson's novel breaks with literary traditions of the female warrior and the cross-dressing pirate alike. It is remarkable that he does not invent new heroines to illustrate these changes, but re-models the most famous female pirates of history. By giving new histories and new

characterisations to Bonny and Read, Nelson does not only change pirate fiction, but also touches upon how culture perceives maritime history. Nelson retells the account of Johnson and invents a new narrative for history, a new version of the female pirates. His re-telling is thus in congruence with White's observations, (cf. my introduction) that perceptions of history are already pressed into narrative structures and that these narratives can be subject to change.

I argue that the question of historical accuracy is not relevant for the topic at hand. I want to lay emphasis on this conscious change of weakening the female warrior. Even if depictions of the female warrior have always been ambivalent, as Johnson may have used the female cross-dressing women as an oddity to increase his selling rates, this change does not even allow for ambivalence as both women are depicted as weak in their decision taking and as aimless.

Whereas the novel seems to follow Butler's observation that drag cannot copy an original as the original does not exist, this realisation does not lead to empowerment or liberty, but decline. Moreover, cross-dressing is reduced to a theatrical performance and child's play respectively, putting it firmly into the context of pretence and make-belief. Cross-dressing loses its subversive element all together and is turned into fancy dressing. This stark break with literary traditions marks for a dystopian approach to piratical ideals. It is not only cross-dressing that is turned into a charade, it is the idea of piracy. Piracy is depicted as a game of make-belief, a concept driven by theatricality, a game played by naïve children. Be it Rackham who despises his own trademark of colourful clothing, Bonny who feels like observing a theatre in a play or Read who is a pirate against her will, all three main characters are shown as regarding piracy as a form of playacting, as something not quite tangible. This depiction demonstrates the instability of the pirate motif of contemporary fiction. The texts show that piracy is not a utopia, but the illusion of a utopia enacted by those who have at

some point decided to partake. This text aims at the utter destruction of utopian notions connected to the piratical society, by changing a historical narrative. If even historical characters were unable to regard piracy as a utopian ideal, how could the present-day reader hope to get even close?

## 5. Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality

To illustrate the constructedness of the pirate motif,[83] a motif set together by constitutional elements only loosely connected to each other, if at all, and, what's more, even contradictory to each other, I will devote one chapter to the construction of the pirate motif in interrelation with other fictional texts and other genres. In doing so, I can show how the construction of the pirate motif is dependent on architextuality (intertextual relations based on classification) as well as demonstrate its highly metafictional and postmodern character. By demonstrating that pirate fiction is more closely related to other texts of fiction than to what might be perceived as history, I will lay bare its fragmentary character and often utopian nature. This strong dependence on intertextual references and frequent cross-overs with other narratives shows that pirate fiction is fragmentary.

## 5.1 On Intertextuality

Intertextuality has been constantly defined and  redefined, most prominently by Julia Kristeva and Gérard Genette. Before delving further into my analyses, I will set out the definitions I use. I use the term "intertextuality" as coined by Genette:

> Ich definiere sie [die Intertextualität [A/N]] wahrscheinlich restriktiver als Beziehung der Kopräsenz zweier oder mehrer Texte, d. h. in den meisten Fällen, eidetisch gesprochen, als effektive Präsenz eines Textes in einem anderen Text. (10)

Intertextuality refers to a noticeable direct connection between two texts, such as for example Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1604-05) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosenkranz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967). Stoppard sets two side-characters of Shakespeare's play centre-stage to discuss issues of metafictionality and poststructuralism. The characters are oblivious that they are, indeed, characters of a play. A more complex example is Thomas Harris novel *Red Dragon* (1986), as title and content refer to William Blake's painting "The Great Red Dragon and the Woman

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83 I have pointed out in my introduction that I use the term motif for the smallest recurring unit within different narratives.

Clothed in Sun." (1803-05) Here, the interrelations are far more complicated as the original "text" is a painting. Further, the protagonist Francis Dolarhyde's development into a serial killer is motivated by his obsession with this painting. The painting is thus part of the fictional universe of the novel, whereas Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are oblivious of the fact that they are protagonists of the play *Hamlet*. I use this very short and simplified illustration to show how complex and variant intertextual relations can be.

Genette uses the metaphor of palimpsests to illustrate the described phenomenon. Palimpsests date back to the time before the widespread use of print and paper. When texts were still written on materials like vellum, writing materials did not have the single-use and disposable nature paper has today. Sheets were too valuable to be discarded and, what's more, they were reusable. Consequently it may happen that the precursor text may still be seen within the lines of the new text. Palimpsests allowed the reader to read the precursor text, the equivalent to the original text, in between the lines. The same applies to intertextuality on a metaphorical level. Looking at *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, it is almost impossible to miss *Hamlet*. It is impossible to miss the almost eponymous painting when reading *Red Dragon.*

The original text is defined as hypotext and the new text which incorporates parts of the hypotext as hypertext. (cf. explanatory note in the issue used) A metatext is a text which deals with the hypotext in a discurvise manner, discussing its nature. It is a text about the hypotext whereas a hypertext includes the hypotext. The hypertext is usually a work of fiction; the metatext a secondary text. (13) Paratext refers to everything which is part of a novel, a poem, a publication, but is not part of the narrative itself, like the cover, the title, a subtitle, a biographical note of the author etc. (11-13)

Architextuality, a more complicated and theoretical form of intertextual interrelations, is based on classification. Architextuality encompasses genre expectations. Genette specifies:

"die Gesamtheit jener allgemeinen und übergreifenden Kategorien – Diskurstypen, Äußerungsmodi, literarische Gattungen usw. – denen jeder einzelne Text angehört." (9) The most basic form of architextuality is the actual text sort a narrative belongs to:

> Der fünfte […], abstrakteste und impliziteste Typus ist die oben definierte *Architextualität*. Hier handelt es sich um eine unausgesprochene Beziehung, die bestenfalls in einem paratextuellen Hinweis auf die taxonomische Zugehörigkeit des Textes zum Ausdruck kommt (in Form eines Titels wie *Gedichte*, *Essays*, oder *Der Rosenroman* usw.). Bleibt sie vollkommen unausgesprochen, dann entweder dehalb, weil Offensichtliches nicht mehr betont werden muss, oder, im Gegenteil, um jegliche Zugehörigkeit zurückzuweisen bzw. dieser Frage überhaupt auszuweichen. Jedenfalls wird von einem Text nicht verlangt, daß [sic] er seine Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gattung kennt und deshalb auch deklariert: Weder bezeichnet sich ein Roman explizit als Roman noch ein Gedicht als Gedicht. (13-14)

A narrative is always specified as a certain form of text and a certain form of art. This classification is not immanent to the narrative itself. These intertextual relations are at work outside of the actual text and narrative, in the external power structures surrounding a text, such as genre expectations, publication processes, and marketing strategies. Architextuality discusses the relation of one text to all other texts which belong to the same category. Although it does primarily refer to the text sort (novel, novella, short story, poem etc.), I argue that in this case it is the framework of what is considered an established piratical narrative. Architextuality deals with questions such as "What elements are needed to make a narrative a pirate narrative?", "What do pirate narratives have in common?" etc.

## 5.2    Intertextuality in Pirate Fiction

Intertextual interrelations as defined above are widespread in pirate narratives. The pirate narrative is a rather perfect example for Genette's "palimpsest;" a pirate narrative often reveals remnants of other texts underneath its surface. The piratical narrative can serve as hypertext as well as hypotext; the pirate text can be the influential text as well as the text that is influenced. Bond inventor Ian Fleming e. g. uses the different facets of the pirate motif to evoke different subtexts within his novel series. He uses the pirate motif to add further, hidden information which is not spelled out explicitly within the text itself. (cf. Hagen, "Fleming's

Pirates") This wide range of different forms of intertextuality further illustrates the highly constructed nature of this motif. I will discuss five different examples of intertextuality to shed further light on the constructedness of the pirate motif.

I will discuss five different uses of intertextulity, ranging from adaptation (a direct intertextual relation between two texts) and architextuality (one genre influencing factual and fictional texts of other genres) to metafictionality (a text which is centred on protagonists who constantly discuss and imitate pirate fiction) hereby creating a new pirate narrative. I hereby use different media, a TV series, a novel series, a non-fiction book, a spin-off of a Jane Austen novel, and a stand-alone novel. This variety of media and genres allows me to cover a broader range of pirate fiction and cover a multitude of different forms of intertextual relationships.

The NBC series *Crossbones* features a main character who has invented a good and a bad identity for himself, marking it as an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevensons's novella "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." The next three examples feature texts which were infused by architextuality; one text was influenced by genre conventions of another genre. In the first example, *The Pirate Devlin* series, the pirate narrative is the hypertext, it is the new text which is based on other texts, analogous to *Crossbones*. In the other two examples, the fictional *Pirates and Prejudice* and the factual *Pirate Hunters*, the pirate narrative is the hypotext, the text or genre on which the new narrative is based. *The Pirate Devlin* series draws heavily on elements of the detective story to colour its main protagonist as brilliant thinker who defeats his opponents rather on an intellectual level than violent combat, thus marking him as a pirate who does not use physical violence. I see the constant use of elements of another genre as an example for architextuality. Elements of the detective story are employed to create a new layer of meaning in the novels. The next example is the oppositional scenario. *Pirates and Prejudice* is influenced by genre conventions of pirate fiction. It uses the well-known plot-line of Jane Austen's novel for a starting point and offers

an alternative story-arch and ending. The new plot-line is informed by genre conventions of pirate fiction, resulting in a piratification of Austen. The fourth example, a non-fiction text, recounts the search of two deep-sea divers for the wreck of a pirate ship. However, as I will show, the text is not purely factual. Layers of factual report and pirate fiction overlap; elements of pirate fiction are used to tinge the report and give it a more glamorous light. In my last analysis I will discuss the mentioned example of metafictionality. In *We are Pirates* the pirate narrative serves both as hypo- and hypertext. Pirate fiction is used to construct a new pirate narrative. The protagonists constantly talk about pirate fiction, its nature, and try to imitate it. They thus mark the novel a prime example of postmodern constructedness.[84]

## 5.3    Pirate Narrative as Hypertext: Influenced by or Based on Other Texts

### 5.3.1    Adaptation: Pirate Narrative Influenced by Another Text - Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde Become the Commodore and Blackbeard: *Crossbones*

The main protagonist of the NBC series *Crossbones,* Edward Teach, has invented for himself two different personas, the Commodore and Blackbeard. The Commodore is supposed to be the just and good leader, whereas Blackbeard is a villain who spreads terror and fear. Eva Michely states: "Vacillating between his incarnation as the mythically evil Blackbeard and his recently adopted, more benign role of the Commodore, he creates a life narrative that is recalcitrant to conventional genre boundaries." (228) I argue that the trope of a split persona, divided into a good and bad personality, is an adaption of Robert Louis Stevenson's novella "The Mysterious Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (1886). *Crossbones* is an intertextual adaption of an already existing narrative. I show that the Stevenson narrative functions as key to interpret the new narrative of *Crossbones*.

Stevenson's novella features a scientist who develops a drug to erase his tendency to

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84 For analyses of intertextuality under the lens of postmodernism and motif development in the *Pirates of the Caribbean*-series see Zhanial, Susanne. *Postmodern Pirates, Tracing the Development of the Pirate Motif with Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean.

do evil by distilling it into a second persona. The second persona, Edward Hyde, is an abomination of nature. Not only is he extremely ugly and displeasing to the eye, he is also ruthless and prone to violence. In the long run, the evil Hyde overpowers the doctor. He threatens his creator with unwanted and uninitiated changes; Jekyll finds himself suddenly transformed into Hyde without having drunk the respective potion. In *Crossbones*, however, the scenario is more complex as Teach invents two personas for himself and oscillates between good and bad by performing the respective role.

The Commodore is Teach's ostensible benevolent alter-ego; this persona has a good reputation. Blackbeard was killed – at least this is what the colonial authorities and citizens believe – and Teach has adopted a new identity. One of the many advantages of this change of identity is that it prevents discovery that the criminal known as Blackbeard is still alive. But, there is more to this change of name. Teach creates a new persona for himself. Analogous to Jekyll, who distils all his evil into Hyde, Teach distils all his good into the Commodore. The Commodore is the leader of a pseudo democratic community. He is revered and beloved. The Commodore is the leader of a utopian society, of a system ostensibly more evolved than monarchy. All of this is nothing but an illusion as Teach still holds the strings in secret. (cf. my chapter "Democ(k)racy") Despite this deceit, Teach has created a new role for himself and he performs it with perfection. The fact that it is just that, a performance, does not weaken its efficiency. Teach has created a Jekyll for himself and the people surrounding him seem to believe that the Commodore was indeed a much better person than Blackbeard ever was.

I argue that Teach performs this role so well that he starts to believe in it himself. Teach is depicted in the context of domestic life. He is about to marry his partner El Sharad and he takes care of the first baby born into the new community. Yet, Teach seems to be oblivious to the fact that he is married already. Teach has visions of his wife, who is locked away as a raging madwoman in Jamaica, yet claims not to know her. He refers to her as a

"spectre." It remains unclear whether he is lying or if he is indeed unable to recognise his wife. The fact that he wants to create a new life for himself strengthens the latter reading. Probably he does not want to recognise his wife. In another reading, Teach may have managed to suppress the conscious memory of Blackbeard. The splitting of character into the Commodore and Blackbeard allows for the reading that the Commodore does not recognise the wife of Blackbeard. It is the well-known and well-established trope of Jekyll and Hyde which allows for this constellation.

Two readings are possible for this change of mind and identity. In one reading, Teach wants a clean slate as he seemingly starts a new and good life. He founds an idyllic, utopian society. He wants to marry a new wife. He has left Blackbeard and the horror associated to this name behind. In another reading, however, pretence is just another strategy to win the trust of his unsuspecting subjugates. When terror and horror fail, you must win your followers over by means of trust. Blackbeard has found a new way to manipulate the other pirates by becoming the trustworthy Commodore.  Michely observes: "This carefully fostered duality is the perfect tool of domination" as it combines the elements of threat and reward. (228) This reading implies however that Teach can change between his different personas at will. I argue that his insistence that the name Blackbeard must not be used any more next to the wish to marry points to an intended permanent change of personality. I show that Teach's change back into Blackbeard is motivated by the intertextual character of the narrative.

As much as it may look like a cunning strategy to use a good and a bad persona, inventing new identities is a sport to Teach. Teach may not be "Teach" at all, as Valentine points out that he once knew him under the name of  "Thatch." This remark points to the debate whether the historical individual known as "Blackbeard" was named Teach or Thatch. But in the context of the narrative, it means that inventing new identities and performing them is habitual behaviour for Teach. Valentine also points out that Teach frequently changes his

name. Teach does not have one stable identity; even "Teach" has been constructed in the past to replace "Thatch". The main protagonist can be compared to a serpent which sheds its skin every year. Teach sheds his identities. Thus, a family father (Teach's children are dead) becomes a pirate and the pirate becomes the leader of an island community only to become something of a family father again. The serpent has shed its skins so often that its development has moved in a full circle.

Yet, despite shedding his skin so often, Teach cannot free himself of his memories. Memory comes back in back flashes, torturing him with visions of his wife Antoinette and his dead children. Antoinette killed both of their children after Teach's capture. The mental decline of his wife and the subsequent murder of their children seems to be the one thing which causes feelings of guilt. He must have committed many deeds of horror in his days as Blackbeard, but it is Antoinette and their children who return to him to haunt him in his visions. He has, although indirectly, killed his own family. The recurring visions, especially those involving the children, are thus manifestations of guilt.

Even though Teach escaped the staged murder of Blackbeard and tries to become the Commodore afterwards, he cannot free himself of the knowledge that Blackbeard has killed his family. The attempt to move in a full circle of identities, from family father to father of a new family, has failed. Memory and present experiences overlap in the form of visions. I argue that holding a new born triggers the memory of his own children. "Blackbeard" is the one skin the serpent cannot shed.

Blackbeard's past haunts him not only in visions, it ultimately manifests when Antoinette kills El Sharad. Teach wanted to start a new life, but fails at the execution of this plan. In the long run, it is not Antoinette who keeps coming back to him, first as a spectre and later in person to kill his fiancée, but Blackbeard. Blackbeard is the true spectre haunting Teach. Antoinette is representative of the life he has left behind, of the life he tries to run

from. Antoinette is the embodiment of his guilt and with her return, the past has caught up with him. The attempt of creating a new identity and a new life has failed. Analogously to Stevenson's novella, in which Jekyll is haunted by Hyde and the consequences of his criminal activities, the Commodore is haunted by the past of his alter ego Blackbeard.

This phenomenon is also observed by other characters. Both of his antagonists, British spy Lowe and Jagger, the governor of Jamaica, point out that Teach has invented Blackbeard and cannot free himself of the monster he has created. This monster once served its purpose, but now it seems to have developed a life of its own. Analogous to the case of Jekyll, the monster develops a life of its own and overpowers its creator. But in contrast to Jekyll, Teach had not wanted to remove his evil, he had needed to distil it to gain an evil reputation. Pirates are often depicted as strategists who instil numbing fear in their victims so that the victims call for quarters (cf. *The Only Life that Mattered*, the *Pirate Devlin Series*). Fear makes victims easy prey and spares the pirates the necessity of fight. When Teach invents Blackbeard, he follows the same line of thought.

The pirate Blackbeard is thus a construct and points once more at the constructedness of the pirate as an idea. It is an identity so driven by cruelty that this cruelty leaves a permanent mark on Teach, causing permanent damage. I argue that the evil he has invented has clouded his vision and makes it impossible for him to tell good and evil apart. In the showdown of the last episode he has his own citizens killed to strengthen them. Teach loses his ability to judge. Blackbeard has taken over and infuses his good intentions with evil. In this adaptation, Jekyll's ideals have been polluted with Hyde's menace.

In fact, Teach could never shake off the evil of Blackbeard. The Commodore is nothing but another pirate. After all, he adheres to the principle of creating a system to not be enslaved by another man's; he creates an alternative society, a society which he rules himself instead of being governed by the king. He also plans to sink a Spanish fleet of galleons

carrying gold. The chronomoter will enable him to locate the sunken ships. To retrieve the ships, he had his engineer design a submarine for him. This plot-line follows a classical pattern of a piratical narrative: the pirate attacks a ship carrying gold from its colonies to the respective kingdom, retrieves large quantities of gold, and hides them at a secret place which location is only known to him (cf. *Treasure Island* or *PotC* I). *Crossbones* varies from this story-line as the Commodore in so far as depicted as leader of a democratic community. Yet, in order to fund his visions, he still sticks to the piratical method of pillaging and raiding. When it comes to implementing the ideals of the Commodore, it is the pirate Blackbeard who holds the reins.

When faced with mutiny, Teach suddenly changes his mind and reminds those who surround him that he was still Blackbeard. As pointed out in my other chapter, piratical democracy turns into democ(k)racy when confronted with real resistance. Teach does not only resume his position as the one in command who gives orders which are not to be questioned, thus openly undermining democracy, he also resumes his former identity as feared pirate who instils terror. The monster Blackbeard pretends to kill one of his own crew by wounding Ryder and throwing him over board.

This stage act is nothing but another strategic move of Teach. Ryder, hurt in body and soul, is rescued by Jagger and immediately agrees to lead the British to the secret abode of the pirates. Teach wants the inhabitants of Santa Campana to fight the British, because he considers combat necessary for their development as a nation and community. In his thinking, every great nation is born out of a catastrophe. The betrayal of Ryder is a strategic move. Ryder is thus nothing but a pawn and his pretended murder nothing but another performative act. Assuming that Teach wanted Santa Campana attacked, it can be deduced that he intended Ryder to survive. Teach tells the others that he is still Blackbeard to protect his leading position. Ryder has challenged his authority, politically, by questioning his command, but also

privately by cheating on Teach with El Sharad. Teach must regain his position of power and so he returns to his old principle of threat. He creates the illusion that Blackbeard had returned, a man who would kill everyone who dared to oppose him. In truth, this is only the pretence of Blackbeard's return as Ryder survives this ambush.

Blackbeard's true return lies in the root of Teach's motivation for throwing Ryder overboard. He harms his own community to do them good. When attacking Ryder, Teach performs knowingly as Blackbeard, by threatening his crew, but he does not know about the monster that has poisoned his soul already with the wish to harm his own community. In accordance with Stevenson's novella, it is Hyde, the evil persona, who gets hold over her alter-ego and reins in the end. Whereas Jekyll finds himself changed involuntarily into the bodily form of Hyde, Teach loses his mind and ability to keep his dual personality apart. Just like Hyde destroys Jekyll, Blackbeard takes over and vanquishes the Commodore.

This explicit intertexual reference proves once more the illusionary, performative, and fragmentary character of the pirate. Teach performs different identities to gain an advantage. He does not only stage scenarios, like a faked ambush on his on person, he also plays different roles within his own scheme. This all points to a strong form of performativity and theatricality. Moreover, the duality of Teach's changing identities underlines further the instability and lacking coherence of the pirate motif. Teach oscillates between good pirate and evil pirate until the lines begin to blur, for the character Teach and the recipient alike. The re-telling of Stevenson's novella in a piratical framework illustrates the performative and illusionary character of piratical tropes and ideals.

On a metafictional and architextual level it can be said that presenting the pirate as a positive force has failed; the evil of Blackbeard constantly returns and takes over. Stevenson's novella thus becomes a metaphor for pirate fiction as a whole. The attempt to purify the pirate by removing his evil and bad character traits fails – the evil returns and vanquishes the good.

## 5.3.2 Architextuality: Pirate Fiction Influenced by Another Genre - When a Pirate Borrows His Methods from Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes

Patrick Devlin, hero of the eponymous novel series, is portrayed as a character of superior intelligence. He is thus able to outwit his opponents and win his battles by cunning strategy rather than violence. This restraint from violence makes him a merciful thief. I argue that this air of intellectual superiority is created by drawing heavily on both content and structure of the detective story.

The detective story features a brilliant main character who is more intelligent than other characters and readers alike, such as Edgar Allan Poe's Auguste Dupin or Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. This superiority is created by several textual devices, such as the principle of fair play or the Watson figure. The detective story and detective novel are about solving puzzles. The fair play principle guarantees that the readers can solve the puzzle by themselves while reading as they are given all clues necessary to solve the case at hand. (Buchloh, 37, 41) They can thus enter a direct competition with the great detective.

One of the means to guarantee the fair play principle is the Watson figure. The Watson figure is a character who follows the detective and is in constant dialogue with him. This character thus creates and dissolves distance between the great detective and the reader at the same time. As the Watson figure functions as constant focaliser, the reader is denied access to the inner thoughts, the deducing process, of the detective. This constellation thus increases the distance between reader and the great detective. In case the reader works out a puzzle quicker than the Watson character does, the reader feels closer to the detective. This strategy thus decreases the distance between reader and great detective. (Nusser, 48-49) In sum, the genre of the detective story is focused on solving riddles and the intelligence needed to do so. These aspects apply to the fictional world, in which characters enter a competition to solve the riddle, as well as the realm of the reader, who is invited to join this competition and outwit the

protagonists or other readers. These principles create an air of awe for one outstanding individual of superior intelligence, the great detective.[85] I argue that in the present example this individual is the pirate Devlin.

In the second novel *The Hunt for White Gold* Devlin instructs his ship surgeon and friend Dandon to intoxicate two rich passengers in order to take over their ship without shedding blood (34). When the surgeon asks how he is supposed to achieve this goal, he is told: "If I have to tell you, Dandon, I have sorely overestimated our acquaintance." (34) The following chapter invites the reader to work out a strategy by him- or herself by pausing the action (35-49). This pause bears strong semblance to the *fair play* principle. Devlin is the brilliant strategist who has worked out a plan and he expects his companion, the Watson figure, to follow suit. The following pause in action implies that the reader has to follow suit as well. The puzzle, the question how to achieve this goal, is offered as a riddle which implies the same way of interactive reading, meaning interacting with the presented puzzle, as does the detective story. An other example for the *fair play* principle deployed within the novel series is a wave anomaly signifying a coffer-dam in the fourth part *Cross of Fire.* (233-237) Here too Devlin talks to his crew mates giving the necessary hint to the surrounding characters and the reader alike before the solution, the coffer-dam, is revealed.

Another element Devlin shares with the great detective is the use of hubris. Devlin's condescending "If I have to tell you, Dandon, I have sorely overestimated our acquaintance" points to hubris. We learn from Peter Sam when the focaliser is on him: "He knew when Devlin wanted to parade himself." (Keating, *Cross*, 234) This open display of arrogance is a defining element of the great detective. Jens Becker and Paul Buchloh observe:

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85 For a detailed analysis of the structure, function, and history of the detective story / novel as well as the motif of the great detective see Becker Jens, P. and Paul G. Buchloh (ed.) *Der Detektivroman,* Nusser, Peter. *Der Kriminalroman.* Suerbaum, Ulrich. "Der gefesselte Detektivroman. Ein gattungstheoretischer Versuch." *Der Kriminalroman, Poetik, Theorie, Geschichte.* ed. by Jochen Vogt, Harrowitz, Nancy. "Kapitel Neun, Das Wesen des Detektiv-Modells, Charles S. Peirce und Edgar Allan Poe." *Der Zirkel oder im Zeichen der drei Dupin, Holmes, Peirce.* ed. by Umberto Eco and Thomas A. and Knight, Stephen. "The Case of the Great Detective." *Sherlock Holmes: The Major Stories with Contemporary Critical Essays*. ed. by John A. Hodgson.

die meisten Figuren vom Typ des "Great Detective" [sind] derart karikierend überzeichnet (man denke an Sherlock Holmes, Auguste Dupin, Hercule Poirot oder Lord Peter Wimsey) daß [sic] es schwerfallen wird, sich mit derart arroganten und affektierten Gebilden zu identifizieren. Aber alle Arroganz eines Holmes oder Dupin hat seine Beliebtheit nicht vermindert und die Tatsache, daß [sic] die "Great Detective"-Figuren bewußt [sic] als irreale Karikaturen gezeichnet sind, hat nicht verhindern können, daß [sic] sie für real genommen wurden und bekannter wurden als ihre Schöpfer (18)

The great detecive is in fact even so arrogant that his behaviour should be appalling. Devlin too insults indirectly his friend. And still, this display of arrogance does not hinder the popularity of these characters. They are so loved that they are better known than their creators. This popularity rubs off on Devlin. Devlin is constructed as an amiable character by drawing on the popularity of another literary motif.

To strengthen this intertextual reference further, Devlin habitually smokes a meerschaum pipe. The meerschaum pipe is one of the iconic objects associated with Sherlock Holmes, although this assumption is based on the illustrations instead of Doyle's texts: "Holmes smokes a straight pipe […] But once an illustrator gave him a big curved meerschaum pipe, it seemed so right that it stuck, though it's [sic] none of the early illustrations." (Knight, 379) The meerschaum pipe is also used by Auguste Dupin. (Poe, 331, 334) This icon enforces the architextual reference as it points to the two great detectives at the same time.

This reference to the great detective in general and Holmes in particular is also constructed by an implicit intertextual reference on plot-level. In the third novel *Blood Diamond* Devlin feigns a fire in the French palace to locate the concealment of the eponymous diamond. (Keating, *Diamond*, 206-213) This story-arch is an adaptation of Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia." It reproduces the game plan of Sherlock Holmes who forces Irene Adler to betray her hideout for the compromising photos by a faked fire. (Doyle 23-24). Both main characters, Devlin and Holmes, also use disguises to enter the respective premises. Devlin is coloured by character traits, icons, and strategies of the great detective.

However, Devlin is not as isolated as a great detective would be; he relies on the help

of his friends. Dandon even has his revenge for Devlin's condescending remark by paying Devlin back: "I merely wish to allude to the fact, Patrick – and your failure to observe such tells often concerns me – that for a man who never goes out Ignatius makes a fine mess of puddles in his home." (Keating, *White Gold*, 167) The reader had been made aware of the mentioned puddles before. (145) The novel still sticks to the fair play principle; the reader may come to the same conclusion before. Yet now it is the Watson figure who looks down on the great detective. This change breaks with expectations coined by architextuality. The break with the literary tradition of the detective story marks the text as an innovative product. Dandon speaks of "failure" and "concern," seriously doubting the ability of his captain. In any other context this remark would have been considered mutiny. But in a piratical society, equality does not only empower others, it also enables the captain to actually rely on the help of others. Devlin has a partner to help him. The clash with the great detective who seldom needs help makes this constellation all the more obvious. The clash with architextual expectations helps to illuminate the particularity of piratical societies. In this case, it is the break with architextuality which draws attention to fraternity among pirates and helps to strengthen this element of the pirate motif.

In sum, architextual references to the great detective help to shed the light of superior intelligence on Devlin – a character who can easily outwit his opponents. The pirate is characterised as a hero by borrowing elements of another popular heroic figure – the great detective. The break with expectations, regarding the outstanding isolation of the great detective, further underlines the Otherness of a piratical society and illustrates that in contrast to the great detective who is a highly superior lone wolf, pirates rely on each other. The references to another genre help shaping the pirate motif and hereby lays further bare its constructed character. Devlin is more related to Sherlock Holmes than any historical pirate. This strong similarity, especially when it comes to borrowing plot-elements from Doyle's

short stories and novels, illustrates the constructed character of the pirate motif. In this case, pirate fiction is closer to a strictly structured literary genre, that of crime fiction, than any historical account.

## 5.4 Pirate Narrative as Hypotext: Influence on Other Texts

### 5.4.1 Architextuality: Pirate Genre Informs Spin-Off Fiction - Piratification of Jane Austen: *Pirates and Prejudice*

The novel *Pirates and Prejudice: a Pride and Prejudice Variation* (2013) by Kara Louise introduces pirates into another famous novel loved by academics and lay persons alike: *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Its plot-line starts after half of the narrative of the classic – Elizabeth Bennet has just turned down Fitzwilliam Darcy's proposal – forming a spin-off offering an alternative narrative and ending. Several layers of intertextuality overlap. *Pirates and Prejudice* is a continuation of an already existing novel featuring a different outcome. To achieve this, it merges pirate fiction into this alternative story arch. Turning *Pride and Prejudice* into a pirate romance gives the author the advantage of a completely new approach to the problem of turning abhorrence into affection. She thereby draws upon elements of the pirate romance as well as the hypermasculinity of the pirate to accomplish her aim.

In this alternative timeline, Darcy is mistaken for a dangerous pirate captain whom he resembles after having neglected his appearance out of grief over the rejection. He is subsequently persuaded to embody the pirate Archibald Lockerly to lure the real pirate out of his hiding place. As one might expect, he encounters Bennet, who is sailing home from a visit to her aunt's on the island of Scilly. Bennet does not recognise the man whose marriage proposal she has rejected and immediately feels drawn to him. Darcy takes advantage of this situation and is able to win her love under the guise of the commoner captain Benjamin Smith who has embodied a pirate to help the police. The crucial turning point in their relationship has been translated into an adventure story on the sea. The character of Darcy has been more

or less exchanged for another, as Darcy is meant to embody someone else. Yet the fact that he is – indeed – Austen's Darcy adds a further level of intertextual complexity. Darcy is a well-known character, and an adaptation featuring his character must portray him in a way that remains in character. Thus, Darcy can never be turned into a real pirate, a bold, swashbuckling hero drinking alcohol and cursing, but only into a replica of one.

This swashbuckling version of Darcy also brings about another form of masculinity. Although pirates mostly serve as villains and threats in this novel, I argue that elements of piratical ideals have been infused with the altered role of Darcy in order to change the course of the romance plot. Although Darcy only performs as a commoner who in turn performs as a pirate, the ideals associated with fictional pirates still apply to him and thus make him much more attractive to Bennet.

When Bennet meets Smith for the first time she knocks him down with a stone mistaking him for Lockerly, who has just taken her and the other female passengers captive (87). Driven by remorse, she dresses the wound she has caused (88-89, 98-99). Although Darcy claims to be captain Smith he is still wearing the clothes he has donned to perform as Lockerly. Thus, here, we have a man who has the benefit of having the dashing looks of a pirate, but is a commoner who even works for the police. Despite being a well-esteemed gentleman in reality, it is the performative act of a commoner who wins Bennet's heart. This constellation forms a new variant of the pirate romance. The element of tension, an entanglement with a criminal, has been replaced by a romance with a hero who is with law enforcement, meaning that he fights crime instead of causing it. Yet, he still has all positive and appealing elements of a pirate because he embodies one.

Darcy oscillates between different masculine gender roles which change depending on which performative act he has taken on at a time. As Bennet is held captive by the real pirate Lockerly, as has been pointed out before, Darcy can be staged as the hero who comes to the

rescue. Yet the fact that Bennet has attacked and in fact wounded him so that she can tend to a wound she has inflicted, as mentioned above, allows for both a hero who is vulnerable and a strong and independent heroine who can defend herself. This vulnerability is accounted for by thought report of Darcy, who still feels strongly about Bennet, as for example "[h]e had forgotten how enchanting she was when she laughed." (102) This allows for a man who on the outside represents the rather ferocious and strong masculinity of the pirate, simply by looking like a pirate, but who on the inside resembles the gender role of the New Man. Darcy incorporates two masculinities at the same time.

Yet, Darcy resembles the masculine pirate only by appearance. Although skilled at fencing, Darcy is a gentlemen not used to physical labour let alone real combat. Bennet repetitively observes that his hands are smooth, whereas Lockerly's are rough. Darcy also fails to actually fulfil the role of the hero to rescue the damsel in distress. When Darcy is engaged in a sword fight with Lockerly Bennet has to come to his rescue and knock Lockerly down with a stone. Despite her hero's weakness and her own role in this victory, this element of fighting helps to construct the piratical masculinity in the brain of Bennet. The fighting hero, or, the warrior, is a male gender role: "The warrior is an individual, but, as with all forms of masculine identity, he derives this identity from the values and structures into which he is born." (Sussmann, 12) Bennet idealises her hero and thereby constructs him at the same moment. As Darcy fails to vanquish the opponent in real life, Bennet corrects this failure in her dreams, thereby following the values and structures dictated by society. The following night she has a dream which strongly resembles the plot-line of a classical pirate romance:[86]

> Parts of the dream were hazy, but she recalled how rough arms suddenly went around her. Although she could not see who had so forcefully grabbed her, she knew it was Lockerly. He pulled a sword and approached the captain, who had drawn his. The stood for some time staring at each other, neither of them moving. The captain finally said, "I am not afraid of you!" There was a fight, and she could not remember much more. She could not even remember who won the fight. She bit her bottom lip as she tried to recall more. The she slowly smiled as the end of the dream came to her. She remembered standing next to the captain at the helm. Lockerly had been tied up and taken down and locked in the hold. Captain Smith turned to her and wrapped his gentle arms about her, pulling her close. She readily

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86 Cf. my introduction

> welcomed his affection and looked up at him. Ever so slowly he lowered his head and met her lips with his. (112)

The hero, Smith / Darcy, rescues the damsel in distress, instead of the damsel rescuing herself. He announces loudly that he is not afraid. He defeats the villain, subdues him and takes away his power (tying him up), and then seduces the all too willing heroine. This dream sequence features a classical form of the male gender role of the warrior - hero as well as a stereotypical narrative. Darcy is moulded even more into a pirate in Bennet's dream. The hero has defeated the villain and in direct contrast to the arms which had "forcefully" grabbed her, wraps his "gentle arms" around her. Bennet literally dreams of a hero who can defend her against the evil pirate – a role Darcy of Pemberly cannot fulfil. Darcy needs to perform as Smith to evoke this dream in Bennet. What Bennet fails to realise, however, is that her hero is, indeed, unable to fulfil this role. It is she who rescues Darcy, instead of the other way round. Bennet is so taken in with the archetype of the heroic plot-line that she does not realise what a difference this makes.

Knowing that Smith is, indeed, Darcy, she blames her sudden change of emotions on fiction:

> But an even greater mystery was why she had begun to have such ardent feelings for this man! Mr. [sic] Darcy, of all people! Perhaps she had read too many gothic novels about women kidnapped by ruthless villains who were then rescued by a handsome, gallant hero. He had certainly come to her rescue. Had she merely seen him as her gallant hero? She bit into her bottom lip as she reflected that she had always considered him handsome, just too disagreeable arrogant for her value of it. (154)

She is completely oblivious of her hero's weakness. Thus, in a manner similar to Swann in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series, she constructs her own hero. To find acceptance, Darcy must be modelled after her expectations first. It is only after she has seen, or rather, imagined this other side of him, that she falls in love with him.

Despite this discrepancy between fact and make-belief, the romance between Bennet and Darcy is now starting to prosper. Even after his change back into Darcy, Bennet still loves her piratical hero. Darcy only dons his piratical attire one more time – at a masquerade ball.

Although Bennet dresses up as a gypsy, Darcy immediately recognises her because he mistakes her for a female pirate (234-235). Piracy serves as a sign of recognition for the both of them. Bennet gives Darcy a replica of a ship for a wedding present, as a "reminder of our adventure." (264) Their piratical adventure becomes the central and defining element of their relationship. Although Darcy declares to abhor disguise of any kind, a quote which prompts Bennet to recognise his true identity (134, 141) he takes advantage of his change in performance to incorporate another persona. This example shows how much Darcy can influence Bennet. By putting on a completely different set of performances he manages to appeal to her. This change of role, register, and performance allows Darcy to win Bennet over.

He has to undergo a strict training regime first, teaching him how to change his performance to become someone else. Darcy has to learn how to change his language; he must exchange his refined speech for that of a commoner. He also has to change his gait and his body language. He has to change his clothing style, wearing the flamboyant dressing style of Lockerly, including a white shirt with billowing sleeves instead of his usual attire of a gentlemen (28-34, 44-46). In short, he has to change his complete outward appearance – speech, body language, and clothing style. All these choices are examples of performance. Darcy is about to change his performance, which results in a new identity, Captain Smith. He thus changes his identity as well as his classification in class and gender.

Playing the commoner Smith allows for another form of masculinity. Bennet later admits that the turning point in their relationship was when Darcy grabbed her hand after she had injured him (248). This breach of protocol may be pardonable for the commoner Smith, but would be unthinkable for Darcy. The downfall and weakness of this system is that Bennet is lured into loving a constructed persona, a persona displaying a set of performances Darcy would never exhibit. This issue is resolved during a later meeting of the two, where Darcy has to erase any memory Bennet may have for Smith with erotic advances (249-252). In doing so,

Darcy leaves his register and performance, by adopting the daring and bold behaviour of Smith. It is not as much that Bennet actually forgets Smith but that Darcy actually becomes Smith. He incorporates some of the performances he has learned into his own persona. Similar to Turner in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, he too is willing to adapt his character to the dreams and wishes of the lady. He consents to actually become the pirate she wishes for. Both, Darcy and Turner, exhibit the same submissive behaviour. Darcy has to learn to perform a bolder role of masculinity to be accepted by Bennet. The ragged and wild air of the pirate that still wavers around Smith helps to make the love relationship flourish. The pirate motif is used to add a different from of romance to the well-known Austen novel.

Playing the role of Smith has another advantage for Darcy. The commoner is now below Bennet in class whereas Darcy is above her. Now their cross-class romance is turned on its head. Darcy can be bold and daring because he is flirting with a lady above his status and pretend that he does not know any better. Whereas Darcy looks down on her and her family relations, the commoner Smith looks up to her. To Smith, the Bennet family is out of reach and therefore desirable, whereas Darcy looks at them with contempt. The gentleman positioned higher in social class becomes a badly-educated worker positioned below Bennet, a change of situation which greatly benefits their romance. This is all the more true as Bennet abhors the restrictions, rules, and codes of the aristocratic society. She therefore finds it easier to relate to Smith who seemingly does not know these rules and does not stick to them. Bennet could never have imagined to become the mistress of Pemberly because she fears the restrictions that this position would bring and regards the spatial and familial proximity to the de Burgh estate as a prison. But she readily day-dreams about the hero and commoner Smith whose world is ostensibly full of adventure and free of these very restrictions. Smith's world reminds Bennet of freedom of restrictive society. To Darcy, the world of the commoner Smith looks most inviting, too. It allows him to move freely and to woo his lady. What binds both

together is the freedom of Smith's world. This craving for freedom from restrictive society is a piratical ideal. In the end, it is their piratical adventure that binds them together because both seek the freedom that the world of Smith brings with it. They also translate this into their ordinary lives because they organise a clandestine meeting without a chaperone exchanging a lot of erotic caresses. (424-252) This bold behaviour out of etiquette has evolved during their shared piratical adventure. The refusal of etiquette, following one's desires instead of the rules prescribed by society, is another piratical ideal. They create their own system, thus following the one defining element of the pirate.

As a further consequence of this piratical interplay Catherine de Burgh withdraws her approval of marriage with her daughter Anne as Darcy has masqueraded as a pirate (254). Darcy becomes an unsuitable match. He is downgraded and becomes despicable. He thus becomes a pirate after all in the meaning that he is expelled from higher society as a consequence of his actions.

The narrative is driven by piratical ideals. Pirates are not only a threat, but also the role-model for a life free of socio-cultural restrictions and norms. When Darcy performs as a pirate he creates a fake world of pirates, a world which does not exist. He is the pirate that does not exist par excellence. Even if Smith is not a pirate he stands for everything the couple wishes for: freedom from restrictive society, a piratical ideal. The motif of the pirate is so fragmented that its elements can be applied without even using a pirate per se. Only the imitation and shadow of a pirate, Smith clothed as a pirate, is sufficient to reach the intended goal.

The world of pirates allows the couple to find their true desires and identities and to connect with each other. Both seem to abhor the conduct required by aristocratic society but do not have the means to communicate this to each other. Smith's world is an example of a counter-society, far away from the terror of de Burgh or watchful, critical eyes of bystanders.

They need the counter-society of the pirates to connect and share their inner thoughts. Formal figures of dances are exchanged for touching of hands and dressing of wounds, a much more intimate and direct contact than a ballroom atmosphere could ever allow for.

Smith creates his own system in which he can approach Bennet. He creates an alternative performance, role, and identity. The commoner Smith only lives through the desire of Bennet. Bennet can only love the chimera she has created by reading too much "gothic fiction." Here, the piratical hero is non-existing, a vehicle for ideals and based on architextual structures.

### 5.4.2 Architextuality: Pirate Genre Influences Factual Text - Present-Day Treasure Hunters as Pirates: *Pirate Hunters*

Robert Kurson's non-fiction account *Pirate Hunters: Treasure, Obsession and* [sic] *the Search for a Legendary Pirate Ship* (2015) retraces the footsteps of deep-sea divers John Chatterton and John Mattera during their search for the *Golden Fleece,* wreck of a pirate ship. Fact and fiction, historical facts and present-day events overlap constantly, thus turning the account into a prime example of a metafictional mise-en-abyme. The narrative recounting maritime history and the narrative of the present-day divers reconstructing this history converge. While pirates spend their days accumulating riches, the divers spend their days trying to recover these riches. In this example, three layers overlap: pirate history, a contemporary salvaging expedition, and the framework of pirate fiction which binds it all together.

The expedition, predictably, starts with a round of beers during which each member of the diving crew elaborates what he wants to buy once they have obtained their riches: "[T]hey took turns listing how they would spend whatever treasure they might find aboard the *Golden Fleece*. This is what each man vowed to do with his haul." (Kurson, 31) The word "haul" implies a salvaging expedition as well as a pirate raid, thus mingling both concepts. This is

followed by detailed lists featuring the respective items for each member of the expedition. They "vowed" to use the money in the expressed manner. The fact that these things are not only listed but that the lists are also reproduced in the book adds urgency to the pledge. A fixed list makes this pledge binding and obligatory. This mystical vow might be taken of a pirate novel, pirates swearing an oath what they were about to do with their riches once they had hold of them. This oath is supposedly meant to motivate the involved throughout the hardship they are about to face – divers and pirates alike.

In case of the divers, these hardships are numerous and variant in their nature. The whole undertaking must be financed, and special and expensive equipment must be obtained (6) – problems historical pirates would have faced as well. Having the right equipment is always mandatory for a treasure hunt. Records have to be studied in marine archives (199-122) – the equivalent to navigation and the odd treasure map which has to be decoded. Moreover, a competitive party shows up, trying to find the treasure first. The intruders have to be fought off (212-218). All these incidents could just as well be elements of a pirate novel. The non-fiction account echoes pirate fiction in a twofold manner. On the one hand, it imitates the content by focusing on a treasure hunt; on the other, it imitates its structural elements by presenting obstacles which threaten and delay the treasure hunt.

At first, Chatterton and Mattera have to be convinced to take on this high-risk undertaking. It is risky in that the exact location of the wreck is unknown. Their partner, Tracy Bowden, uses imagery of the pirate myth to make this expedition more attractive to the younger divers:

> He [Bowden] would give them 20 percent of the *Golden Fleece* if they found the pirate wreck for him. There might be gold, silver, and jewels aboard. There might be swords, muskets, pirate beads, peg legs, and daggers. Even skeletons. Or there might be nothing at all. In any case, Bowden wanted something bigger than treasure. He wanted Bannister, the greatest pirate of them all. (6)

Keywords are used to trigger the fascination with pirates, starting out with treasure: "gold, silver, and jewels," leading to weapons and things traditionally associated with pirates:

"swords, muskets, pirate beads, peg legs, and daggers," next to the climactic "skeletons," ending in the rather sober "nothing at all." The risky nature of the undertaking adds even more to the sense of adventure.

The addressees of this speech are adventurers, two men larger than life. Chatterton has gained fame by identifying the wreck of a German submarine, fame which led him to an expedition of what is arguably the most famous ship wreck, the RMS *Titanic*, and the position of a moderator in a TV show about mystery shipwrecks (8-11). Mattera has started out as a millionaire when he was still underage, leading a successful company specialised in personal security only to sell it before he reached forty (11-14). Both are driven by an essential need: Chatteron considers a place where no-one has been before, a wreck which is almost inaccessible, as the chance of finding one's true identity (9-10); Mattera is fascinated by history. History is not only a record of the past to him, but also a study of humanity. (12) Thus, the undiscovered pirate wreck calls to the inner needs of both of them. This inner need is, naturally, nothing else but the call for adventure. Both divers are driven by the same old call as the pirate captain, Bannister, was. His story is presented as a colourful narrative:

> Bannister, Bowden explained, was a well-respected seventeenth-century English sea captain in charge of transporting cargos [sic] between London and Jamaica. One day, for no reason anyone could explain, he stole the great ship he commanded, the *Golden Fleece*, and embarked on a pirating rampage, a genuine good guy gone bad in the 1680's, the Golden Age of Piracy. In just a few years, he became one of the most wanted men in the Caribbean. The harder the English tried to stop him, the more ingeniously he defied them. Soon, he'd become an international horror. The Brits swore they'd stop at nothing to hunt him down and hang him. The Royal Navy pursued him on the open seas and used the full force of its might to find him. In those days, no one eluded a manhunt like that. But Bannister did. And his crimes got bolder and bolder. Finally, two navy pirate ships pinned the pirate captain down, trapping him and his ship on an inescapable island. At the sight of a single frigate like these, most pirate captains threw up their hands and surrendered. Confronted by two? Even the toughest would drop to his knees and pray. Not Bannister. He and his men manned cannons and rifles, and they waged an all-out battle against the two Royal Navy warships. The fighting lasted for two days. Bannister's ship, the *Golden Fleece*, was sunk in the combat. But Bannister won the war. Battered, and with many men dead and wounded, the navy ships limped back to Jamaica, and Bannister made his escape. It was a stunning escape for the English and made Bannister a legend. Through the ages, however, his name had been lost to time. (4)

Bannister is clearly glorified as a hero. Not only has he defied normative, prescriptive society, but he has also fearlessly taken on a much more powerful opponent. He is a nuisance to the

British authorities who have "sworn" to hunt him down at all costs. No matter how threatening or desperate the circumstances, Bannister does not give up.

And neither do Chatterton and Mattera. They too will face desperate circumstances which may provoke many men to give up. They too do not back down when confronted with obstacles. They too create a legend – the finding of a pirate ship. The piratical glory rubs off on the two divers. In addition to this stamina and strength of both parties, they also share their decision to lead an alternative way of life. Bannister gave up an ordinary life to become a pirate, for the sake of adventure. And so do Chatterton and Mattera. They give up a secure salvaging expedition, a Spanish treasure galleon, for the insecurity of a new mission (6-8, 14-15). They give up all they had known before for a new and risky mission. Now, in their own way, they too have turned pirate.

Both are taken in by the extraordinary story of Bannister:

> Between them, they'd dived the most famous and fascinating shipwrecks in the world – *Titanic*, *Andrea Doria*, *Lusitania*, a mystery German U-boat, *Britannic*, *Arizona* – but neither could imagine anything cooler or rarer than a Golden Age pirate ship, especially one captained by a gentleman sailor turned rogue who had defeated the Royal Navy in battle. Every diver, at some deep level in his soul, dreamed of discovering a pirate ship. Yet it never seemed to happen to anyone. Now, Chatterton and Mattera were being given a chance to find one as thrilling as history had ever known. (6)

The two divers function as focalisers in this paragraph. They are clearly taken in by the captain who has "gone rogue" next to the appeal and rarity of a pirate ship. It is not only the prospect of immense riches to be found aboard, but also the challenge and immense difficulty to accomplish this task. It is the dream of almost every diver. Now, the focaliser shifts from too individuals to all deep-sea divers, only to return to Chatteron and Mattera once more who are offered this dream on a silver plate. The pirate myth functions as ultimate motivator for a change in plans on their side.

Kurson explains that finding a pirate ship is the Holy Grail of shipwreck diving. First of all, pirate ships were rare; there was never a huge number of them in comparison to navy and merchant ships. Furthermore, not all of them did sink. The number of pirate wrecks siting

on the bottom of the ocean is not very high. It is also extremely difficult to locate the wrecks as pirate ships did not have any logs or fixed trading routes to stick to, in contrast to externally controlled ships like navy and merchant ships, whose starting point and destination may be known. Pirate ships roamed the sea freely. Their sole intention was to remain hidden. They are therefore not only hard to find, but they are also hard to identify. As long as the diving group in question does not excavate an object carrying the name of the ship – it is close to impossible to prove that a found wreck is indeed a pirate ship. (24-25)

Finding a pirate ship is the dream of many deep-sea divers, albeit a very unrealistic one. This is a true treasure hunt, in the meaning that the sought object is rare, hard to come by, and the stuff that dreams are made of.

Yet, in this case, there is more to this expedition than the prospect of excavating such a precious find; its story is even more appealing than pirate fiction: "[i]magine a proper English gentleman stealing the ship he'd been trusted to sail, going on a whirlwind crime spree, then doing battle with two Royal Navy warships. And winning. You didn't even see stuff like that in the Johnny Depp movies." (14) The "Johnny Depp movies" clearly refers to the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series, thus creating an explicit intertextual reference to the best-known present-day pirate franchise. In a direct comparison it is claimed that the historical account was the better story. This means indirectly that the book has the stronger narrative, too. This rather provocative reference to pirate fiction places the novel firmly in the genre. Even a negative reference to pirate fiction – this narrative even exceeds the contemporary pirate films – triggers a whole set of reader expectations via architextuality.

However, the longer the divers hunt for treasure the more they find themselves hunting for piratical ideals. The divers become increasingly fascinated by pirate history throughout the process. Delving into the archives and pirate history leaves its mark upon them. The hunt for treasure becomes the hunt for a legacy, as can be seen on this dialogue: "'So, the treasure's all

yours?' one of the guests said. 'Might not be any treasure,' Mattera replied. 'And besides, treasure's not the point.' Now the man looked confused. 'Treasure get found all the time,' Mattera said. 'But a Golden Age pirate ship? That's once in a lifetime. That's forever.'" (82) They have come a long way from the lists of aspiration objects to be bought with the found riches which were presented at the beginning. Material wealth becomes secondary.

Pirates and their way of life are idealised in the following. They are, for example, supposed to bring justice to the often mistreated hands. In a day-dream of Mattera, pirates attack a merchant vessel. The scene is seen through the focaliser of the merchant captain. It describes in detail the horrors flashing through his mind:

> And that was if the captain was lucky enough to die in the fight. If he survived, the pirates might boil him alive, cut out and eat his still-beating heart, pull out his tongue, crush his skull until his eyeballs disgorged, hang him by his genitalia, throw dice for the privilege of chopping off his head. (163)

Cruelty is described vividly, marking the pirates as brutal and sadistic. It is clear that pirates are expected to torture a defeated victim to instil fear in other victims. At this point, pirates should be seen as monstrous and barbarous. Yet, this negative depiction of pirates is ephemeral. In the end, the pirates bring about justice. The pirate captain asks the crew how their captain has treated them and decides: "'And so, sir,' he says, 'the same shall happen to you...'" (163) This decision turns cruelty into payback. The captain will have to suffer what he has made his crew suffer. Had he been a good captain, he would not have to suffer at all. Sadistic torture, motivated by a mad wish for violence is turned into justice and justification of the weak who are unable to defend themselves – the sailors. This attack on authority and hierarchy turns the pirates into heroes. The cruel robbers turn into heroes of justice within a blink of an eye.

Yet, even when not directed against an unjust captain, extreme violence is condoned:

> By squeezing a man's eyes from their sockets, roasting him on a baking stone, or extracting and eating his still beating heart, pirates did more than punish resistors or force them to turn over hidden booty. They also sent a message to the rest of the world: *Do not struggle against us. We are crazy. It always ends better if you just go along.* To guarantee they were heard, they often spared a lucky few, sending them home to spread the terrible word. (172)

Violence against resistant victims is a means to avoid further fighting – to instil so much fear in future victims by reputation that they give up without a fight. The pirate flag signalised that "a choice was at hand." (172) Yet, this is a choice between consent to be robbed or torture. The account fails at this point to draw a clear picture; the account is one-sided and prejudiced. Violence is depicted as a necessary means to achieve the end, the end being the accumulation of wealth by theft. The fact the pirates may spare their victims during the process does not turn them into heroes. The account exaggerates one aspect to shed a positive light on maritime violence.

The criminal status of pirates is presented as the ultimate benefit of the wreck of a pirate ship. The pirates' status as *hostis humani generis* is the greatest asset of this wreck – it cannot be reclaimed by any third party: "One of the guests asked if Chatterton and Mattera were afraid that a government might claim the *Golden Fleece*. Chatterton shook his head. That was the beauty of a pirate ship, he explained. She didn't belong to any country.  No government could claim her." (81-82) The fact that pirates were considered the enemy of everyone, criminals without a nation, turns into a huge advantage for the treasure hunters. Further, the fact that pirates were criminals helps the present-day hunters to keep the stolen booty. It is thus of more advantage to search for a wreck of a ship sailed by criminals than to search for a ship with lawful owners. The spirit of lawless freedom infuses the present-day narrative.

But none of this bravado, the spirit of lawless freedom, could explain why Bannister, who "had everything […] – respect, admiration, money, a future […] risked it all to turn pirate" (169). Mattera is advised by famous shipwreck divers Jack Haskins, Robert Marx, and Carl Fismer to dig into the past and find Bannister's motivation to be able to actually locate the wreck. Mattera thus reconstructs what might have been Bannister's motivation: leaving behind a legacy. Pirates lived democratically and Bannister wanted, so concludes Mattera, to

preserve this knowledge. Bannister wanted to leave a mark upon history so that people would remember (piratical) democracy. (176-180) This conclusion is mere speculation. It cannot be reconstructed what the motivation of the historical Bannister might have been. It is here where history and pirate fiction overlap and pirate history is turned into another piratical narrative. The story of Bannister is reconstructed and told – yet, it remains just that, a narrative.

Bannister is supposed to knowingly and wontedly have attacked the British navy to leave a mark upon history. This pirate was not after the accumulation of riches after all; he wanted to preserve a life form which he considered the better way – equality and the right to vote. (175-178, 180) Now, material wealth has completely given way to ideals. The pirate is not hunting treasure in the meaning that he hunts for riches; he hunts for treasure to change the course of history:

> [I]n the 1680's, as empires joined forces to drive pirates to the bottom of the sea, a man like Bannister couldn't be sure that democracy would survive, or even that future generations would know such an audacious idea had taken hold. To make people remember he would need to do something epic – something people couldn't ignore. Pillaging more ships wouldn't cut it. Stockpiling treasure would leave no mark at all. But fighting the Royal Navy would have impact. Defeating them in battle would make equality echo through time. (180)

Piracy is no longer about raiding ships and gaining wealth. The defining element of piracy is democracy. Piratical activity, "pillaging more ships," (180) "stockpiling treasure," (180) and "fighting the Royal Navy" (180) are reduced to mere means to make democracy strive. The accumulation of wealth is deemed unimportant. This is mere speculation, too, and is highly reminiscent of pirate fiction. As pointed out above, the same change of mind applies to the divers on the level of the frame-narrative. The divers are no longer hunting for riches; instead they intend to save and preserve Bannister's legacy. They will finish what he has begun and fulfil his vision.

At this point, both narratives combine and form one narrative. Bannister needs Mattera and Chatterton to fulfil his plan. Bannister wanted to leave behind a shipwreck to preserve the knowledge about piratical democracy; so he needs the present-day divers to uncover his secret

and tell his story. The last element in this chain is the author, Kurson, who tells Bannister's story. Treasure, here, is knowledge. Knowledge about the past must be uncovered, told, and made known. Yet, this constellation seems highly idealised and implies that Bannister would have planned for these future events. This constellation makes for a crafty narrative, turning two different narratives taking place in two different epochs into one long narrative telling the story of the preservation of piratical ideals. But it is a forged construction. It is the act of story-telling which binds it all together and gives the salvaging expedition a higher purpose. This account is thus firmly rooted in pirate fiction. By drawing on piratical ideals, the violence of the pirates as well as the salvaging expedition gain a heroic air. To strengthen this construction, both narratives mirror each other. Both parties have made sacrifices to bring this about. Bannister has sacrificed his ship to preserve democracy; Chatterton and Mattera have sacrificed salvaging the galleon, sacrificed their ship, to do just the same. This account consists of one long pirate narrative and two different pirate narratives mirroring each other at the same time, thus forming a mise-en-abyme.

Later, the narrative turns pirate fiction on its head. Whereas pirates following the theme of a treasure hunt need a map to locate their treasure, the divers need a map to identify the wreck they have found: "In this single drawing, it was as if Taylor had reached back through time and told Mattera and Chatteton 'You were right'" (256). The map is not the first, initiative element of the treasure hunt, but the last, identifying element. The theme of the treasure hunt has thus been turned upside down. After all, this narrative is a present-day treasure hunt which only mimics a piratical treasure hunt. This change proves that the theme has been updated to contemporary conditions.

The ideals have been updated to present-day culture as well. Matterton and Chattera lose the riches they have found abroad the wreck due to a legal dispute with their partner Bowden. (272) But every one of them has learned a valuable lesson. Chatterton has learned

that there is always an alternative way. (273) Mattera has learned to listen to his heart when it calls him to adventure. (274) Both men have gained valuables which are immaterial. Their "treasure" are piratical ideals, too, just like Bannister's gain was an ideal. Bannister found democracy in an age of hegemonic monarchy while Chatterton and Mattera found ideals, equivalents of freedom, of modern-day culture. These two messages, the ideals of Mattera and Chatterton, which would translate to "never give up" and "follow your heart," are tropes which are associated with piratical freedom. In the end, they have found the pirates, meaning that they have found that which the idea of "pirates" stands for, namely freedom to follow one's dreams.

In a final step, the transition from factual account to pirate fiction is completed. Mattera doubts the historical record which reports Bannister's execution. Rather, he suggests that Bannister escaped and another man has been hanged in his place. (264-266) A rather grim outcome of the historical record is turned into a colourful happy ending befitting a pirate narrative. Here, the merging of factual and fictional as well as the architextual framework become the most visible. The divers construct their own ending to the story they have been unearthing, one more befitting their dreams. Here, the pirate Bannister is subjected to personal day-dreaming of Mattera and his friends. The pirate has finally become a construct serving the purpose of day-dreaming for present-day men. This day-dreaming infuses the whole account. The men are fuelled and inspired by the story of Bannister. The more they try to find Bannister, the more they turn his story into their own, until, in the very end, they declare the historical report to be counterfeit because it does not fit in with their expectations, aspirations, and dreams. They need this changed ending to give purpose to their own expedition. They want to be the finders of a wreck of a heroic pirate captain, so they turn Bannister into one. History is subjected to personal purposes and needs. History is re-told and re-invented. It only serves as starting point to tell their own, new, and different narrative. The historical Bannister

becomes more and more irrelevant. Only the idea he stands for, the preservation of knowledge, is of importance.

Thus, this account is a prime example of how pirate history is re-shaped to serve needs of contemporary day-dreamers. Mattera and Chatterton draw strength by identifying with Bannister, their personal hero. Violence and gore become secondary in comparison to the democratic ideal. Negative elements are weakened and positive aspects exaggerated to create exactly the one pirate the two divers need. While searching for their pirate, they actually create him. This example illustrates perfectly my argument that the pirate as an idea has become alive by the dreams of its creators. The pirate as an ideal is defined by his invention of democracy – by his creating his own system.

## 5.5    Pirate Narrative as Hypo- and Hypertext

### 5.5.1    Metafiction: Pirate Fiction Influenced by Pirate Fiction – The Affirmative Nature of the Exclamation "We Are Pirates": *We Are Pirates*

Daniel Handler's novel *We are Pirates* (2015) is an example of metatetxuality as well as architextuality. Its protagonists constantly discuss pirate fiction trying to reconstruct and relive it. As they hereby focus on general aspects and layers of pirate fiction as a genre, which they see as prescriptive rules of what a pirate must be, they point out the major aspects of a whole genre. The novel fulfils the characteristics of two forms of Genette's classification of intertextuality – two categories of texts which discuss other texts or text sorts, texts explicitly commenting on other texts. This classifies the novel as highly postmodern.

The novel comments upon and discusses other novels as well as their influence on the protagonists. Yet, the protagonists are to find out soon enough that fiction and reality are incompatible. Their victims do not take them seriously (167), they fail to steer their boat (193-194), they soon fall into disarray (240-243). Swashbuckling romance turns into grim and brutal reality as can be seen on the example of gore when the girls kill their victims (169-

171). The novel shows how piracy as an ideal contrasts with piracy as a reality. By laying bare the illusionary character of pirate fiction, the novel comments about the delusion of swashbuckling romance.

Pirate fiction serves as role model for the protagonists, the "manual" of how to live a better life. In this way, it also becomes the prescriptive structure for the novel itself. They take this task quite literally and the result sometimes even touches upon the ridiculous: "On board were benches with hinged tops for emergency storage, and they threw the life vests overboard. They had decided to jettison these, as no such things could be found in the books they had read." (146) Ignoring the fact that life vests are a modern-day invention and thus could never appear in books written centuries ago, they assume that they must remove every obstacle standing in between them and pirate fiction. The next object that has to go is a Bible: "Gwen had shown him a captioned drawing. Captain Nebekenezer […] burying his Bible. In divine precepts being so at variance with the wicked course of his life that he did not choose to keep a book that condemned him in his lawless career." (147) Rules of behaviour, as described in pirate fiction, are imitated in detail in the hope to turn fiction into reality.

In a similar vein, the codex of the newly formed pirate crew is concocted by quotes taken from various novels:

> "Who are they?" Perfectly, this was a question that had been put in chapter three of *Seaward Sinister*, which Errol knew practically by heart. "We are *pirates*!" he crowed. "We are men, men and women without a country. We are outlaws in our lives and outcasts in our families. We are desperate, and so we seek a desperate fortune. We band ourselves together now to practice the trade of piracy on the high seas." […] Errol said, his eyes looking off at chapter four. "There are rules. You must pledge to be together in a life-and-death bind. […] No cellular phones." "What?" Manny said. "They can use them to track us," Amber said. […] "Those who would go to sea for pleasure," Errol said sternly, beginning a slogan Gwen remembered from *Mutiny!*, "would go to hell for past time." (134-136)

This text is a conglomerate of intertextual references. The passage consist ostensibly to large parts of passages from other texts. Errol cites rules of conduct as he remembers them from various novels. Gwen, who functions as the focaliser, recognises the respective sources and points them out, hereby turning the quotes into explicit intertextual references. The structure

of this passage shows that the novel was based on other novels. It functions as a prime example for Genette's concept of a palimpsest; the underlying hypotexts are still visible. Likewise, the name Errol points to Errol Flynn, an actor famous for starring in many pirate films, adding a further level of intermediality. Only the point "no cellular phones" breaks this pattern. This must be an addition to the original quote as cellular phones are restricted to present-day reality. The explanation that they make the modern-day pirates vulnerable represents the only rule grounded in logic among the cited catalogue. Thus, the pirates try to imitate pirate fiction, yet have added one rule befitting modern-day culture. They are, at least at this moment, modern-day pirates indeed.

However, the mentioned novels do not exist, neither "Seaward Sinister" nor "Mutiny!" Thus, the palimpsest is nothing but an illusion. The intertextual references are made up. The novel thus implies a sense of postmodern constructedness which was made up by the author. The rules of conduct are ostensibly taken from other sources when, in fact, they were created by the author as well. The author has made up his intertextual sources as he sees fit. The concept of intertextuality rings hollow. This proves further the constructed nature of pirate fiction. In this case it is even put together by non-existing constitutional parts.

By telling the story of characters who try to imitate fictional pirates and presenting how they fare with this, the novel itself turns into pirate fiction. Even a squall is interpreted as necessary element of a pirate story; even the weather is supposed to follow a narrative pattern. When the protagonists expect to be caught in a storm, and actually are caught in a storm, they observe that only the timing is not right: "This happened in every pirate history – *any old port in a storm, Capt'n* – but Gwen had not thought it would happen so quickly." (220) The protagonists try to imitate this required pattern and constantly compare the current events with elements of pirate fiction, thus making this novel an example of architextualty. This new pirate novel constantly talks about pirate fiction – and thus, itself. It is also a strong example

for metafictionality. The constant clash between expectations and reality on plot-level turns it into an alternative, a failed pirate narrative. I argue that it still represents a pirate narrative, but a dark version, focusing on how piracy brings to daylight the evil in humans.

Piracy is brutal and murderous as the protagonists are to find out soon. Their first raid ends in violence and gore. It fails because no-one takes them seriously. They have to use their weapons to get their message across. Their planning does not work out as their victims are not scared of them. They see them as a group of eccentrics playing pirates rather than a real threat. Here, the attempt to imitate fiction becomes visible as such, a scenario reminiscent of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605). Yet, in contrast to Don Quixote, who attacks a windmill and thus creates a comical effect, the self-defined pirates kill their victims in a brutal manner. This dream of living a fiction has become dark and has turned the group into what they had been striving to become all along: murderers and criminals. In order to become pirates, they must become murderers. The mottled group all too willingly embraces this necessity.

The novel thus draws on the dichotomy between swashbuckling romance and brutal reality of maritime violence. The swashbuckling romance does not exist and cannot be imitated. The piratical ideals cannot be transferred to their lives because, in reality, piracy means brutality and criminality. Yet, the group does not only fail because their victims are not scared of them. They fail because of their own selfish behaviour. As pointed out in another chapter (cf. my chapter "Democ(k)racy"), they fail to establish the vaunted brotherhood and camaraderie. Thus, coming back to the Blake quote which I argue forms the backbone of present-day pirate fiction, "I Must Create a System or be Enslaved by Another Mans" (*Jerusalem*, E 10), the wish to create a system fails because every single individual wants to create his or her system and meanwhile destroys that of the others.

Utopian pirate fiction cannot be imitated. The highly postmodern nature of the novel

illustrates the constructedness of pirate fiction and (de)constructs piratical ideals at the same time. The metafictional character of the novel thematises within the narrative the clash between fiction and reality, pirate fiction and maritime violence.

## 5.6    Conclusion

The frequent use of intertextual references as well as the strong influence of architextuality further proves the constructedness of pirate fiction in general and the pirate motif in particular. These analyses show that the pirate motif is constituted by single elements which can be chosen and combined as seen fit. These elements can either be combined with elements from another genre, such as crime fiction, or they can be used to construct a new story-arch and ending for a novel by Jane Austen. Pirate fiction can also inform the underlying structure of a non-fiction account or it can be turned into a highly postmodern example of metafiction. The interrelation with other types of fiction, which are as frequent as they are variant, show that pirate fiction is a purely fictional genre, i. e. it is often only slightly connected to maritime history. In two examples, *Pirate Hunters* and *We Are Pirates*, maritime history and the real-life experiences of the protagonists respectively are interpreted by the model of pirate fiction, making for a strong use of architextuality. In another variant, it is the pirate himself, Bannister, who is constructed; the non-fiction text shows that the divers construct the piratical hero they need. Intertextuality is also another means to subtly influence the perception of the pirate motif, as has been shown with the help of the first two examples. To put it all in a nutshell, the frequent use of intertextuality as well as the strong leaning towards poststructuralism illustrate the constructedness of pirate fiction. My analysis has shown that the pirate motif can be easily combined with other established tropes or motives. This proves the fragmentary nature of the pirate motif. I have defined the pirate as a character who creates an alternative system in contrast to the established status quo of socio-cultural norms as a

working definition for this thesis. The pirate motif has thus a rather open and weak definition and can be employed in many different intertextual contexts. The pirate motif is so weak, open, and fragmentary that it can add flavour to an existing text as well as it can also be influenced by other text sorts.

# Conclusion

I have started my study with the argument that present-day pirate fiction does not represent a Caribbean past, but functions as vehicle for aspirations and cravings of our time, driven by escapism and genre conventions. Pirates represent various forms of freedom, be it the freedom from restriction through socio-cultural norms, the freedom from suppression through prescriptive gender roles or even the freedom of a never-ending holiday on a cruise in the sunny Caribbean. Pirate fiction is thus strongly rooted in escapism. In fact, it is rooted so strongly in its function as escapist remedy against the dullness of every-day life that a logically coherent structure of the narrative is not necessary. Pirate fiction consists of contradictory or fragmentary constituents. I have investigated why fiction focused on criminals who ambush and probably kill others can serve escapist purposes.

This study continues a line of research which has investigated form and function of pirate fiction from the 17th to the 19th century by adding the present-day period. It starts with the release of the most successful and most influential pirate franchise of contemporary culture – the first film of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series in 2003. Although the pirate film had its heyday in the 1930s-1950, it has been considered a dead genre for a long time. Earlier attempts to revive the pirate movie were utterly failures which cumulates in a Guinness record for the biggest box office fail, awarded to *Cutthroat Island* (1995).[87] *Pirates of the Caribbean* was followed by a number of other publications and productions in its wake which must be considered a revival of the pirate motif. This study continues the existing line by adding this all new, post-Sparrow embodiment of the pirate motif. On a theoretical level, I continue research focusing on the postmodern character of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and its followers as well as Foucaultian concepts in pirate fiction.

In my theory chapter, I have shown how Foucaultian concepts can be used to analyse

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87 *Guinness World Records*. <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/69937-largest-box-office-loss> [10/29/19]

pirate fiction. My analysis shows that the constituent elements of the pirate motif match several Foucaultian concepts, such as what he calls the two-sided discourse of the criminal and the concept of heterotopia. I have used these concepts to derive at a working definition of the pirate motif. Defining the pirate motif is a difficult task as the term "pirate" is so closely interwoven with numerous discourses, such as literary tradition of pirate fiction, popular-cultural understanding of pirates, copyright infringement, political parties, maritime history, and present-day maritime violence. To make grasping the pirate motif more difficult, the concept lacks an inner coherent logic, such as the requirement that the main character is supposed to be amiable, but also recognisable as an outlaw and criminal.

As glorification of pirates hinges to a large part on celebrating an alternative, freer life-style, I compare pirate fiction to the literary genre of utopia. The utopian trigger is here the freedom of choice, the freedom to break the law. The term "utopia" has lost much of its original meaning, as Thomas Moore intended it, and refers now to everything that is considered desirable and ideal. I dedicate my study exclusively to the literary genre and its conventions. I focus mostly on the requirement that inhabitants of a utopia have a strong inner moral compass – something that is irreconcilable with the pirate motif which must follow what Foucault describes as the two-sided discourse of the criminal. In other words, a pirate society can never be ideal, utopian, because it must be set up by abhorrent criminals. This antagonistic position of ideal society versus its not so ideal inhabitants makes for a massive intrinsic contradiction in the make up of the pirate motif as found in present-day fiction.

Concluding the findings of my theory chapter, I have pointed out that the pirate motif is defined by three principles: oppositionality, creation of a society and a new set of rules, and overruling of artistic functionality over logic. The first is the principle of contrary elements. The pirate as found in contemporary fiction lacks a definition of his own; he is constructed as opposition to existing society. The pirate is defined by antagonism; he is everything that

society is not: work contrasts with theft; a sedative lifestyle with shipboard mobility; the class system with equality; providing for a family with debauchery and promiscuity; socio-cultural norms concerning gender and ethnicity with a new piratical identity, nationalism with the status of the enemy of all; hierarchy with democracy. In short, the pirate is defined by negatives instead of positives. I then concluded that the defining nature of the pirate motif can be summed up with poet painter William Blake's quote "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Mans." (*Jerusalem*, E 10) The pirate is the all-encompassing contrary element, the opposite of the existing system. He creates his own system to escape the system of a hegemonic king, another man. Crucial is the act of creation, the founding of an alternative society following alternative rules. Thirdly, the fact that the pirate motif has its own inherent contradictions, such as formation of an ideal society by criminals and crooks, can be overruled by the functionality of fiction. Present-day pirate fiction must cater a certain consumer demand despite these illogical elements, otherwise it would have gone extinct again.

In the following chapters, I have shown in three different analysis' that present-day pirate fiction (de)constructs the ideals of piratical freedom. Piratical ideals are presented, but systematically taken apart afterwards. Pirate fiction frequently displays the failure of piratical ideals, demonstrating the contradictory nature of a utopia filled with criminals. In a fourth analysis, I have demonstrated the fragmentary nature of the pirate motif on text level by focusing on different forms of intertextuality. This strong reliance on intertextuality proves how much pirate fiction is indeed rooted in fiction instead of fact. It further illustrates that the pirate motif is shattered into lose elements that can be combined as seen fit.

My second chapter shows that the examples discussed are ruled by constant instability as to who are the heroes and who are the villains. This instability is necessary to generate what Foucault calls a two-sided discourse in literature, the phenomenon that accounts of

criminals evoke loathing and admiration alike. This instability is caused by different strategies, namely multi-voiced narration and gaps on text level, and unstable characterisations, clashes between narrative and acting style as well as inclusion of another discourse on filmic level. I will explain each in more detail in the following.

I have demonstrated on the example of the *Pirate Devlin* series that the question of heroes and villains if often dependent on perspective. The multi-voiced narration leaves this question mostly to the reader. This strategy is enhanced by employing gaps which ask for reader participation. In compliance with reader response theory, the question whether the main characters are rather good or evil is thus fully dependent on the individual reader.

Another strategy to create characters that are heroes and criminals alike, is a sudden change in behaviour. Characters which may have seemed amiable suddenly take decisions which evoke rejection, such as the decision of the heroine of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, Swann, to sacrifice Sparrow. It was even Sparrow himself who motivated Swann to change her behavioural patterns; Sparrow has orchestrated his own death by creating a new pirate. This revolution too has eaten its own children, following the concept through leads to the death of the arguably most beloved and popular character of the franchise, probably even the most beloved and popular pirate of present-day fiction. The spectator is shown the consequence of the piratical freedom to override all rules: ruthless behaviour which may result in a loss (the loss of the favourite character) s/he does not want to make up with. The respective film ends with Sparrow's memorial, the characters in mourning holding candles, a scene which can hardly be interpreted as an uplifting celebration of freedom of choice and a wild and free depiction of an alternative life style. This illustrates that a piratical utopia stands in stark contrast with a utopia in the traditional sense: its inhabitants do not follow a moral code and are willing to sacrifice each other. This illustrates the unstable and contradictory character of present-day pirate fiction. The piratical ideal of freedom has been effectively

destroyed by killing off its own spokesman. This example of pirate fiction has momentarily (de)constructed itself by depicting the consequence of living out piratical ideals which results in the removal of the most popular pirate. This illustrates that present-day pirate fiction lacks an coherent inner logic.

Especially the character of Sparrow is strongly shaped by contradictions, mostly between plot-level and mise-en-scéne. I have shown that Sparrow is a Disney hero in filthy rags. To destabilise this heroic concept even more, his reception is influenced by an external discourse, that of the rock star, addding notions of anarchy, rebellion, and excess. The character of Sparrow is coined by what I call a matroska of performative acts: the persona of "Johnny Depp," meaning his reputation as independent actor who has even faced off Disney to create Sparrow the way he wanted him to be; role-memory to the other roles of Depp; the intertwining with the stage persona "Keith Richards"; the intertwining with the stage persona "Johnny Depp" as member of the *Hollywood Vampires*. Sparrow is created by four performative acts interacting with each other. In fact, the concepts of "Sparrow" and "Depp" are inseparable. The inclusion of the discourse of rock music which is closely linked to excess, destruction, and drug consumption allows for allusion to the lure of the forbidden fruit which is necessary for pirate fiction without actually showing any of this on screen. In this way the producers can include the necessary element of dark, forbidden desires into pirate fiction while keeping the reputation of family entertainment monopoly Disney intact. What's more, this closeness to the concept of the rock star, marks the pirate motif all the more as a vehicle catering needs of escapism. As much as audiences crave for rock stars and hereby generate them by giving the financial means to make albums and extensive tours possible, fictional pirates are created by audiences paying into film production, thus prolonging their life-spans. As long as audiences crave the wild energy of anarchy both systems will survive. Analogously to the market of rock music, the existence of the fictional pirate too is fully

dependent on his audience and its need for staged rebellion.

In sum, the second chapter shows that the pirate motif is reliant on strategies of representation. The pirate motif is set together by illogical elements, clashes between expectation and turn of events, sujet and fabula, narrative and mise-en-scéne, characterisation and performance, are used strategically to cater to the required elements of the pirate motif, which add up to what Foucault calls the two-sided discourse of the criminal. In case of the film series, this construction is strengthened by the inclusion of external discourses. Although the pirate motif of present-day pirate narratives lacks a coherent inner logic in its representation, it can still cater the need of its target audience, as long as it fulfils the need for staged rebellion. The target audience will arguably be satisfied as long as fictional pirates create their own system.

Even the cornerstone of the idealisation of the pirate, the utopian society, proves to be unjust and faulty. In my third chapter, I have shown that the alleged utopian, ideal, and just piratical societies are utterly rotten, and unjust underneath their surface, manifested in manipulation, theft for personal gain, and unwanted members. A society set together by criminals, swindlers, and tricksters can only result in such an unjust society. The pirate is a thief and trickster per definition; a piratical society must thus be inhabited by cunning citizens to be a piratical society in the first place. This clash of definitions, the criminal nature of the pirate and his supposed good citizenship in his own society stand at odds with each other. This antagonism of two defining elements illustrates pointedly that the pirate motif is put together by contradictory constitutional elements. The pirate must fulfil both definitions, he must be a criminal and a citizen of a just society, two elements which cannot be reconciled with each other. Present-day pirate fiction solves this structural problem by presenting societies that appear as utopian at a first glance, but are fundamentally misused by their inhabitants, often for their own means. Strikingly enough, it is two members who face discrimination in the

normative society, a runaway slave in *Crossbones* and a Haitian nurse in *We Are Pirates*, who betray the other members of the society by stealing pelf. Both use the stolen wealth to establish a new life in normative society. Those members who should profit the most from an equal and egalitarian piratical society only use it as a means to gain influence and reputation in the normative society. These examples demonstrate the utter failure of piratical ideals. Piratical ideals fail because they have never been aspired in the first place. These two members never sought an equal and just society; they sought superiority, wealth, and power in normative society. The piratical ideal is sacrificed to gain these goals as the piratical community becomes the new victim from whom is stolen. The pirates have taken the place of the merchants of whom the predators are supposed to steal, but these predators steal from their neighbours. Equality and brotherhood are sacrificed for a wealthy position in the normative society. The ideal of a just and utopian counter-society cannot be any more dead. Piratical ideals are shown as faulty and malfunctioning. What is the purpose of ideals if their agents are morally corrupted individuals? In this way, piracy loses its appealing character.

Another strategy to diffuse the ideal of the utopian pirate society is a systematic deconstruction of the dichotomy between British society and the piratical community. In the cases of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Crossbones* the viewer is mostly confronted with British Jamaica instead of the British Isles themselves. Both show that British colonisation of the island of a foreign and warmer climate has not fully succeeded. This is enforced by visual markers, such as the dishevelled soldiers in *Crossbones* whose British uniforms are unfit for the Jamaican climate, as well as *Pirates of the Caribbean*'s Swann fainting in the Jamaican heat while wearing fashion from London, a corset. British colonisation clashes literally with Jamaican nature. In both cases, British Jamaica clearly differs from the mother isles. Jamaica has become a wilderness of its own, its officials often even more piratical as those they are supposed to arrest. Jagger, governor of Jamaica in *Crossbones* is driven by personal revenge

and ambition, Swann, father of the heroine and governor of Jamaica in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, breaks English rules and conduct by allowing the cross-class marriage of his daughter and letting the pirate Sparrow escape. The border between two different cultures, British versus pirates, is weakened, if not even erased. British Jamaica has already become piratical itself. Moreover, *Pirates of the Caribbean* does not present any conform group of the "British" at all, but a conglomerate of different splinter groups, as seen in the fact that the pirates face off the East India Company instead of the British navy. Both franchises make clear that this is not a conflict between two large groups, but often a conflict between individuals bearing personal grudges, such as Blackbeard and Jagger in *Crossbones* and Lord Beckett and Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean,* or a conflict between different splinter groups. The inhabitants of British Jamaica are not as radically different from the pirates as they should be. The dichotomy needed to Other the pirates by contrasting them with normative society is systematically taken apart. Pirate fiction thus demonstrates its own lack of a logical construction, a logical construction that is constructed merely by genre and viewers' expectations.

In my fourth chapter, I have proven that the piratical ideal of self-development, proves to be nothing but a set of theatrical performances. I have shown that the present-day embodiment of the most famous cross-dressing female pirates, Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and their captain Calico Jack Rackham as found in *The Only Life that Mattered* is heavily ruled by anxiety and frustration respectively. The biographies of these three historical pirates have become famous by Captain Charles Johnson's half-factual 18th century account *General History*. Nelson offers a modern, present-day novelisation of the three accounts. Bonny and Rackham are depicted as caught up in self-doubt and anxiety. Read, in turn, craves femininity and the roles of wife and mother. Read embodies the concept of escapism on the plot-level, as Read seeks escape from misery in the hope that a pirate life spares her the life of a widow.

Despite her love for the Caribbean, the pirate life is nothing but a short gap for her and is thus far from an ideal. The fact that Read, as a pirate, would rather be a housewife and mother is an ironic twist of piratical ideals. The same applies to Rackham, who is literary eaten by anxiety and worry when in his new role as a pirate captain he should have left all worries on shore. A pirate who is plagued by constant self-doubt and worry about an uncertain future is another ironic twist of the piratical ideal of a careless life. Bonny, in turn, embodies the realisation of faultiness of piratical ideals and subsequent submission into socio-cultural norms. The development of Bonny marks this narrative as a piratical version of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1623). *The Only Life that Matters* turns piratical ideals on their heads and into pastiches.

The novel thus (de)constructs piratical ideals, most prominently female liberation. In this case the narrative of the female heroine liberating herself is (de)constructed and ultimately destroyed. Bonny and Read can thus be compared to 19th century Fanny Campbell and present-day Swann, who, after a short piratical episode in their lives, return to rather conventional lives as housewives. (cf. Ganser-Blumenau, *Discourses*, 131, Steinhoff, *Buccaneers*, 88) What's more, Nelson text changes two crucial elements. Whereas Johnson's text ends with an unexplained disappearance of Bonny, leaving a gap for the reader to fill, Nelson's text specifies that she returns to her father to raiser her daughter, embracing roles that can be considered as conventionally feminine. Moreover, he removes what can be considered the most famous quote of Read. Read points out that if the punishment for piracy was not hanging, that more people would take up piracy. In other words, piracy is only for the brave. Nelson presents this quote as an indirect quote by Rackham, whose though report only points out that Read had said something along this line. Whereas Nelson removes a gap for Bonny, he creates one for Read. Now it is up to the reader to decide if Rackham quotes Read, if Rackham misquotes her, or if he has simply made the quote up. The portrayal of both women makes for much weaker characters. I interpret this as a dystopian *zeitgeist*, Bonny and

Read are depicted as much weaker, disorientated, and disillusioned than they had been in Johnson's text. The present-day adaptation changes cross-dressing piracy into something lacklustre.

In my fifth and final chapter, I have combined the former aspects of fragmentary and contradictory motif figments and shown how they apply on text level. The artificiality and constructedness of the pirate motif translates to a frequent use of intertextual references. The pirate narrative can hereby function as hypotext as well as hypertext, meaning that it can be the text that influences as well as the text that is influenced. The first two examples, in which a piratical narrative is informed by another text or genre further demonstrate the constructedness and artificiality of the pirate fiction. The paralleling of Teach with Jekyll who finds himself haunted by his Hyde or Blackbeard respectively demonstrates that idealisation of the pirate proves faulty. Evil, condensed in Blackbeard, a persona Teach has created to instil fear in his opponents and victims, returns and takes over. Even if a pirate splits his persona in a good and a bad persona, as Teach tries, the evil will take over, analogously to Stevenson's novella. This split into a good and a bad persona, which implements what Foucault calls a two-sided discourse, is of course highly reminiscent of Stevenson's novella. A piratical re-telling of Stevenson's novella, as found in *Crossbones*, is a logical conclusion of the necessary requirement of what Foucault calls a two-sided discourse. The second example uses cross-references to the popularity of the great detective to make the titular hero, Devlin, more amiable. The popularity of another literary motif rubs off on the pirate and thus strongly helps the two-sided discourse. A cunning trickster and selfish thief can be redeemed by giving him features of another beloved type of character, a strategy which helps to facilitate the needed reader admiration. This strong reliance on other texts illustrates further how much the pirate genre is dependent on forces from outside, reader expectations or interrelations with other genres because it lacks its own coherent logic.

In my other two examples, I show how pirates, in turn, spice up other narratives. Performing as a pirate helps Darcy in *Pirates and Prejudice* to become the desired love object of Bennet whereas the two deep sea divers in the non-fiction *Pirate Hunters* text make their pirate, the pirate whose wreck they are looking for, so much their own that they refuse to accept the facts. This non-fiction book is so heavily coined by elements of pirate fiction that the genres of factual report and alternative history overlap. Historical facts that are displeasing to the narrative are simply changed. For example, when the divers have finally found a report about Bannister in historical records it is deemed too unheroic and banal. Instead, they make up their own victorious version of past events, an action which also renders their own salvage project all the more significant. Moreover, brutality, violence, and greed are played down to emphasise piratical democracy. It is assumed that Bannister, the historical pirate, willingly sacrificed his ship so that finding his wreck would preserve the knowledge about piratical democracy. This unbalanced view on historical piracy is assumedly supposed to render the non-fiction report more interesting to its readers. The same strategy is applied by transferring some of the piratical traits on the deep-sea divers. In the end, the author inscribes himself into this project because it is his narration that is needed to finally preserve the legacy of piratical democracy. Historical piratical democracy is resurfaced from the depth of the seas only to be turned into another narrative strategy. This fictionalisation of pirate history in a way that is very transparent to the reader, because historical facts are explicitly denied and replaced, showcase the glorification of historical pirates. Unpleasant details of maritime history are erased and events are simply retold, turning a non-factual book into an alternative history. Maritime history is actively and openly re-invented, adding postmodern overtones to a book that is sold as a non-fictional account.

My last example illustrates the artificiality and constructedness of pirate fiction on text level. The protagonists try to imitate pirate fiction. The novels they quote are partially non-

existent; the author creates the illusion of an echo of former texts which do not even exist. Pirate fiction becomes a prescriptive element for the novel. The characters constantly compare their own experiences with what they have read in fiction and comment upon the clash between fiction and their reality they observe. Similar to *The Only Life that Mattere*d, the idea to become pirates and the reality experienced by the characters differs largely, a discrepancy which leads to frustration and disappointment. Yet, in this case, the expectations towards a pirate life are coined by pirate fiction, turning this novel in a strong example for metafiction. It is entirely constructed by architextuality as pirate fiction becomes the backbone and structuring element of a new novel which becomes a new pirate novel throughout the process. Yet this new pirate novel is a contrasting version when compared to the forerunners in motif history which ends in defeat, violence, and gore. The novel systematically takes piratical ideals apart, brotherhood (one member keeps all their treasure to himself), equality (Gwen refuses to accept Cody as a crew member), and democracy (they vote for a senile elder as their captain). The frequent use of intertextuality shows that the pirate motif consists of losely connnected elements that can be combined as seen fit. This proves that the pirate motif is indeed fragmentary in nature. Moreover, the fact that elements can be combined freely explains why pirate fiction can contain illogical or contradictory parts.


**Present-Day Pirate Fiction between Utopia and Dystopia**

My findings demonstrate that present-day pirate fiction systematically destroys piratical ideals. A positive interpretation of piratical ideals such as democracy and the freedom of self-development remain restricted to reader expectation, but a closer reading reveals their collapse. These findings help to answer my initial question why fiction focused on criminals can offer material for day-dreaming. One might argue that, though still present, the aspects of violence, dishonesty, and criminality are outweighed by the aspect of escapism. Present-day

pirate fiction, however, does not hide these aspects, on the contrary, it displays the faultiness of piratical ideals openly. This open depiction of unsuccessful ideals illustrates the artificiality of pirate fiction and demarcates it as such, namely as escapist, utopian **fiction**. Present-day pirate fiction makes daydreaming possible by openly showing the discrepancy between ideal and reality as perceived by the characters or by using contradictory, illogical constituent elements as a basis. The faultiness of piratical ideals and their malfunctioning tunes down the idealisation and glorification of pirates. The examples show that results of engagement with and exposure to piratical ideals may differ, one may become more docile and accepting when it comes to socio-cultural norms like Bonny and Gwen or one may carry some of the piratical spirit into one's own life like deep-sea divers Chatterton and Mattera. What remains the same, however, is acceptance of the fact that pirates are chimeras who live in our imagination. Pirate fiction is a system created to escape another man's, but, staying with the mythology of Blake, it is created by Los, the embodiment of human imagination. And this is where pirates are supposed to be, safely tucked away behind the veil of fiction.

The postmodern elements of metafiction and (de)construction are necessary to guarantee this distinction between fact and fiction. The fragmentary nature of the pirate motif in present-day fiction makes consumption much easier, as only those bits cater to identification that are compliant with utopian notions. Moreover, the (de)construction of piratical ideals ensures that pirate fiction is regarded as an escapist fantasy instead of a manifest glorifying criminality. Escapism based on a criminal life is possible because it is always marked as such: an escapist, momentary day-dream, shattered into illogical parts and lacking a coherent inner logic.

But, more importantly, present-day pirate fiction does not hide the amoral aspect of piracy which often manifests in a readiness to betray friends, Swann sacrifices Sparrow, Teach ostensibly kills Ryder, Manny betrays the rest of the group, Nenna steals from the community

etc. Present-day pirate fiction oscillates in between utopia and dystopia, personal freedom and the loss of loyalty. This oscillation allows for escapist readings of literature that puts criminals centre stage. What may look like liberation and an ideal way of life at first sight, reveals its ugly and dark side through the narrative, making it way less attractive. Present-day pirate fiction serves escapist purposes by allowing for a glimpse into an imaginary, alternative world in which one would not have to stick to restrictive rules – but shows in the same breath what the resulting society would look like. Present-day pirate fiction thus negotiates the question of personal freedom and responsibility for others. The popularity of this daydream of utter selfishness is only possible (and socially acceptable) because it is depicted as unattractive and malfunctioning. Pirate can serve escapist purposes because the expected utopias turn into dystopias, thus weakening prospective reader identification and marking escapism as a daydream. Under the dazzling make-up of white beaches and a crystal-clear sea, exotic clothing, and dashing sword-fights, the utopias turn into dystopias of betrayal, undercutting longing and identification and thus weakening the escapist thrive.

I argue that, as paradoxical as it may seem, the (de)constrcution of piratical ideals, the break with the established tradition of romanticisation, and the constant instability of binary systems found in present-day pirate fiction makes the utopian, escapist reading of fiction focused on criminals possible in the first place. Ideals of selfishness are presented as a momentary day-dream only to be utterly destroyed.

**Impact of This Study**

I too have created a system, in this study, I have not only defined the present-day pirate motif and thus provided a working definition for further research, but I have also established an approach to analyse said motif. By showing how the constituent elements operate independently of each other, I lay a basis which can be made fruitful for future pirate research.

I have mapped the present-day embodiment of the pirate motif and accounted for its functionality, thus continuing the existing line of pirate research. My approach may also prove useful for shedding further light on utopias.

Further research may be devoted to the motif of the pirate villain, an aspect I have excluded here due to spatial and temporal limitations. Another point of interest is the explicit use of gore in pirate fiction, which can still frequently be found despite its utopian character, and how these two aspects, idealisation of an alternative life-style and the graphical depiction of violence can be reconciled. Pirate fiction constantly oscillates between heroes and villains, fascination and abhorrence, utopia and dystopia, and thus still offers plenty of white spots on the map to lure researchers and audiences alike to cyan seas, palmed beaches, and dangerous adventures.

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## German Summary

### Zentrale Themen und Fragestellungen der Dissertation

Der Pirat fungiert als Kippfigur zwischen Anziehung und Abstoßung, Identifikation und Abgrenzung, Sehnsucht und Verdammung. Jedoch gilt es hier zunächst eine genaue Abgrenzung vorzunehmen. Aufgrund der vielschichtigen Verwendung des Terminus „Pirat", die von historischen Begebenheiten über Straftaten im Bereich des Copyrights bis hin zu politischen Parteien reicht, gestaltet sich eine genaue Definition als schwierig. Diese Dissertation beschäftigt sich ausschließlich mit fiktiver Darstellung von Piraten.

Die Arbeit konzentriert sich hierbei auf die „Post-Sparrow" - Era, also Werke, die nach dem ersten Teil der *Pirates of the Caribbean*-Reihe erschienen sind. Da Piratenfiktion, insbesondere die Untergattung des Piratenfilms, lange Zeit als ausgestorben galt, sich aber nach dem Erfolg des Disney-Films wieder großer Beliebtheit erfreute, sind Werke dieser Epoche als eigenständige Etappe in der Motivgeschichte der Piratenfiktion zu sehen. Diese Dissertation wird sich intensiv mit dieser neuen Ausformung der literarischen Gattung befassen und hierbei die Frage beantworten, wieso Fiktion, die unweigerlich auf kriminellen Handlungen beruhen muss, sich so großer Beliebtheit erfreuen kann. Piraten fallen in die Kategorie *hostis humani generis*, dem Feind aller, der direkt und ohne Gerichtsverhandlung hingerichtet werden kann oder gar sollte. Diese Arbeit thematisiert den Widerspruch eines solchen ultimativen Feindbildes und der Idealisierung von Piraten, die in der Fiktion zu beobachten ist. Piraten gelten oft als gerechter, da sie alternative Gesellschaften bilden oder als eine Art Rächer, der gegen die hegemonialen Kolonialmächte auftritt. Dass der Pirat die Kolonialmächte nicht bekämpft, sondern eher ausraubt, um sich selbst zu bereichern, spielt hierbei wenn überhaupt eine nur sehr untergeordnete Rolle. Dies kurze Beispiel zeigt bereits, dass das Piratenmotiv aus Einzelelementen zusammengesetzt ist, die teilweise widersprüchlich zueinander sind. Diese Untersuchung beweist, dass Piratenfiktion in der reinen Funktionalität auf Seite des Rezipi-

enten, dem Eskapismus, verankert ist. Hierzu wird zunächst das Piratenmotiv mit Hilfe von Elementen der Theorien Foucaults eingekreist, um überhaupt zu einer gültigen Definition zu gelangen. Das Piratenmotiv lässt sich mit William Blakes Zitat „I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Mans." (*Jerusalem*, E 10) beschreiben. Da keine deutsche Übersetzung von Blakes *Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion* existiert, habe ich es selbst als „Ich muss ein System erschaffen oder von dem eines anderen Mannes versklavt sein" übersetzt. Der Eskapismus der Piratenfiktion wird in erster Linie von der Sehnsucht nach Freiheit getragen, der Freiheit von der Unterjochung durch Gesetze, Moral, und gesellschaftliche Normen. Da Piraten ihre eigene Gesellschaftsform gestalten, entwerfen sie ihr eigenes System, ein Gegensystem zu dem System, dass ein Anderer entworfen hat. Der entscheidende Moment liegt im Erschaffen des Gegensätzlichen, Eigenen, das sich vom bestehenden Status Quo abhebt und somit von der Knechtschaft durch eine andere (Kolonial-)Macht befreit. Da diese Gegenentwürfe oft als Idealgesellschaften gesehen werden, ziehe ich ebenso eine Betrachtung der literarischen Gattung der Utopie hinzu. Denn auch hier zeigt sich, dass das Piratenmotiv unbeständig ist: Die Tatsache, dass Regeln von der Gruppe entworfen werden, macht Piraten anfällig für gewiefte Individuen, die das Unternehmen in eine „Democ(k)racy" (meine Wortschöpfung) verwandeln, eine Demokratie, die einer solcher nur dem Anschein nach ähnelt, also eine „mock democracy", als auch eine Demokratie die so ad absurdum geführt wurde, dass es sich um „mockery", Spott, seitens der Manipulatoren handelt. Ideale werden sytematisch (de)konstruiert und eine genaue Zuordnung von „gut" und „böse" ist oft unmöglich. Piratenfiktion ist die Verkörperung von Instabilität, und dennoch freut sie sich großer Beliebtheit. Am auffälligsten ist jedoch die widersprüchliche Konstellation den Feind Aller zum Helden oder gar Vorbild zu erklären und dennoch ein beliebtes und erfolgreiches Genre vorliegen zu haben, was Fragen nach der Funktionalität von Fiktion und Kunst im Allgemeinen aufwerfen sollte.

**Kapitelübersicht**

Diese Arbeit besteht aus fünf Kapiteln, einem Theoriekapitel und vier darauf aufbauenden Analysekapiteln, die sich verschiedenen Aspekten des Piratenmotivs widmen. Drei Analysekapitel befassen sich mit inhaltlichen Aspekten, während das vierte sich der Textebene, der Intertextualität, widmet. Diese Vorgehensweise erlaubt mir das Piratenmotiv sowohl in Hinblick auf sujet als auch fabula zu untersuchen. Mein erstes Kapitel "Birth of the Pirate: A Foucaultian Theory on Pirate Fiction" („Die Geburt des Piraten": ein Foucaultscher Theorieansatz zu Piratenfiktion) widmet sich verschiedenen Konzepten Michel Foucaults, wie z. B. die Heterotopie und deren Anwendung auf Piratenfiktion. Ebenso widme ich mich dem literarischen Genre der Utopie, um die Verherrlichung des Piraten in der Fiktion einkreisen zu können. Eine literarische Utopie ist i. d. R. nur so ideal wie ihre Bewohner, d. h. dass sie im Regelfall von Menschen bevölkert wird, die moralisch korrekt handeln. Obwohl Piratengesellschaften oft als ideal gezeichnet werden, stellt diese Konstellation einen nicht vereinbaren Widerspruch zum Motiv des Piraten dar. Ein Pirat muss immer ein Krimineller sein, um der Defintion des *hostis humani generis* zu entsprechen und wird somit nicht moralisch korrekt handeln. Folglich handelt es sich bei Darstellungen von Piratengesellschaften nicht um ideale Welten, Utopien, sondern Gegenwelten, Heterotopien. Aus diesen Analysen habe ich eine Definition des Piratenmotivs hergeleitet, auf der die folgenden Analysekapitel fußen. Ich zeige, dass das Piratenmotiv maßgeblich von drei Faktoren bestimmt wird. Der erste Aspekt ist die Gegensätzlichkeit, denn der „Pirat" wird in erster Linie als Kontrast zur bestehenden Gesellschaft definiert: Harte Arbeit kontrastiert mit dem vermeintlich leicht erbeuteten Gold und dem daraus resultierenden (kurzfristigen) Wohlstand, Sesshaftigkeit mit dem Umherziehen auf den Weltmeeren, das Versorgen einer Familie mit Unabhängigkeit und ggf. wechselnden Partnerschaften. Der utopische Moment der Piratenfiktion ist stets in Freiheit verankert, einer Freiheit von gesellschaftlichen Zwängen

und Gesetzen. Dies führt zu dem zweiten formgebenden Punkt: Piratenfiktion wird durch das Abbilden einer alternativen, vermeintlich besseren Gesellschaft bestimmt. In einem dritten Punkt beweise ich, dass Piratenfiktion sich über die Gesetzte der Logik hinwegsetzt. Piratenfiktion wird ausschließlich von Eskapismus und Idealisierung, also ihrer Funktionalität in Hinblick auf den Rezipienten, getragen, sodass inhaltliche Logikbrüche, wie der bereits ausgeführte unvereinbare Konflikt zwischen moralischen Bürgern einer Utopie und dem verruchten Charakter eines Piraten, offensichtlich (zieht man Verkaufszahlen und Popularität von Piratenfiktion in Betracht) das Narrativ nicht beeinträchtigen. Wie bereits erwähnt, umschreibt William Blakes „I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Mans" die Grundstruktur von Piratenfiktion.

In den folgenden drei Analysen zeige ich, dass das Idealbild des Piraten systematisch (de)konstruiert wird: der piratische Held, die Idealgesellschaft sowie die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter. In meinem zweiten Kapitel "The Two-Sided Discourse of the Criminal, *Hostis Humani Generis*, and the Pirate-Hero" (Der zweiseitige Diskurs des Kriminellen, *Hostis Humani Generis*, und der piratische Held) befasse ich mich mit dem Gegensatz von strahlenden Heldenfiguren und der Voraussetzung einer kriminellen Handlungsweise, die den Piraten ausmacht. Nach einer kurzen einführenden Motivgeschichte konzentriere ich mich auf den Namensgeber Mark Keatings britischer Romanreihe *Pirate Devlin* sowie die Helden des Disney Blockbuster *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Das erste Beispiel setzt hierbei auf eine fragmentarische Erzählweise und Rezeptionsästhetik. Mehrstimmige Erzählung und Leerstellen ermöglichen eine individuelle Lesart, bei der sich jeder Leser seinen guten oder bösen Piraten zurecht biegen kann, wie er oder sie es möchte. Im Fall der letzteren ziehe ich eine kurze Motivgeschichte des Geisterschiffs, eine Analyse von Männlichkeitsbildern sowie eine exemplarische Szenenanalyse hinzu. Das Kapitel zeigt, dass das piratische Heldentum stets durch Relation konstruiert wird. So wirken menschliche Piraten weniger gefährlich als

übernatürliche Monster-Piraten und ein Pirat kann manchmal ein besserer Held sein als ein Amtsinhaber einer unterdrückenden Kolonialmacht. Dennoch zeigt das Kapitel auch, dass ein Verwerfen von moralischen Werten zum Verrat von Freunden und Verbündeten führen kann, wie z. B. dem Tod Sparrows.

Ich ziehe ebenso eine Betrachtung der metafiktionalen Vermengung der Identitäten von Charakteren, Schauspielern und Rockstars hinzu. Im Falle von Sparrow führt dies zu einer russischen Puppe an Identitäten; verschiedene inszenierte Identitäten von Schauspieler, Rockstars (denn sowohl beim Ausnahme Schauspieler Johnny Depp, der sich nicht an Hollywood Konventionen hält, als auch bei der Rolle des Rockstars handelt es sich um Inszenierungen) und Charakteren (Sparrow und sein Vater Teague (Keith Richards)) werden ineinander geschoben. Diese Vermischung ist notwendig um Sparrow überhaupt erst zu konstruieren, ein Charakter der zweifelsohne eher *amicus humani generi* ist. Strategisch gewählte Gastauftritte britischer Rockstars, Keith Reichards und Paul McCartney, sowie die Tatsache, dass Sparrow - Schauspieler Depp in der Band *Hollywood Vampires* auftritt, brechen die vierte Wand und vermischen Glamour sowie Konnotationen zu Exzess, Zerstörung und Drogenkonsum, die der Rockmusik anhaften, mit den Piraten auf der Leinwand. Dieser Schachzug erlaubt es Disney den Reiz der verbotenen Frucht zu evozieren ohne sie auf der Leinwand zu zeigen; die Tatsache, dass man sich den Diskurs der Rockmusik ausborgt, ermöglicht die für die Piratenfiktion notwendige amoralische Versuchung in die Filmreihe zu integrieren und dennoch der Rolle Disneys als Monopol der Familienunterhaltung treu zu bleiben. Außerdem zeigt der Vergleich zur Szene der Rockmusik, dass sowohl Piratenfiktion als auch Rockmusik das Bedürfnis des Publikums nach Anarchie bedienen. Beide Systeme, Piratenfiktion und Rockmusik, leben von einem Publikum, das gewillt ist, eine inszenierte Rebellion gegen den Status Quo zu verfolgen. Das Kapitel zeigt ebenso, dass Piratenfiktion von widersprüchlichen Darstellungsformen abhängig

ist, sodass die einzelnen, in sich widersprüchlichen Teilelemente, die das Motiv ausmachen, alle vertreten sind. Dass das sich daraus ergebende Gesamtbild keiner Logik folgt, ist nebensächlich. Piratenfiktion wird in erster Linie durch ihre Funktionalität geprägt. Zentrales Element bleibt hierbei die Darstellung des Erschaffen eines eigenen Systems in Abgrenzung zu dem bestehenden System der Gesellschaft, kurz: inszenierte Anarchie.

In meinem dritten Kapitel „Where There Is Power, There Is Resistance": Piratical Freedom, Equality, and Democ(k)racy" („Wo Macht ist, ist auch Widerstand": Piratische Freiheit, Gleichheit und Democ(k)racy) befasse ich mich mit der piratischen Heterotopie. An den Beispielen der NBC Serie *Crossbones*, *Pirates of the Caribbean* und Daniel Handlers Roman W*e Are Pirates* zeige ich, dass sich die piratische Idealgesellschaft als Illusion erweist. Oft sind es gerade die Mitglieder, die am meisten von einer alternativen Gesellschaft profitieren sollten, die diese ausnutzen und bestehlen, um sich in der normativen Gesellschaft eine bessere Existenz aufzubauen. Dieses Kapitel ist widmet sich hauptsächlich dem bereits erwähnten Kontrast zwischen einer vermeintlichen utopischen Gesellschaftsform und den amoralischen Kriminellen, die sie ausmacht. Ein zentrales Element des Piraten-Diskurses ist das Aufstellen eines eigenen Regelwerks, über das demokratisch abgestimmt wird. Jedoch macht sie diese vermeintliche Stärke anfällig für Charaktere wie Robert Louis Stevensons John Long Silver, der es versteht, das piratische Regelwerk gekonnt zu seinen Gunsten um eine neue Regel zu ergänzen und somit die Vorherrschaft über die Gruppe zurückzugewinnen. Wie bereits erwähnt, handelt es sich bei der Darstellung piratischer Gesellschaftsordnungen oft um democ(k)racy anstatt einer besseren Gesellschaft. Im Mittelpunkt der Analysen steht die Frage inwiefern diese demokratischen Gesellschaftsformen denjenigen zum Opfer fallen, die sie entworfen haben, als auch ein Vergleich zu der Gesellschaftsordnung des Gegenentwurfs: britisch Jamaika. Hierbei zeigt sich, dass die Piraten nicht, wie erwartet, mit dem britischen Weltreich kontrastieren, sondern der karibischen Kolonie. In zwei der

Beispiele versuchen jamaikanische Gouverneure vergeblich, Brauchtum und Gepflogenheiten des Mutterlandes zu etablieren, die sich jedoch für Jamaika als ungeeignet erweisen. Dies wird beispielsweise an der Unvereinbarkeit der britischer Kleidung mit dem karibischen Klima versinnbildlicht. Zudem zeigt sich, dass die vermeintliche Dichotomie zwischen Piraten und Briten sich als Trugbild erweist; Konflikte sind oft eher persönlicher Natur als politischer, der karibische Außenposten ein genauso eigenwilliger Gegenentwurf zur Kolonialmacht wie es die Piraten sind, das Nicht-so-Vereinigte Königreich gesplittet in Untergruppen. Der simple Entwurf eines binären Systems von Piraten versus britisches Weltreich wird (de)konstruiert, was in großer Instabilität bzgl. der Kategorien „gut" und „böse" endet. Zudem schwächt eine Entwertung des Feindbildes des britischen Weltreichs die Rolle der Piraten als Utopiebegründer und Zufluchtgeber. Das dritte Beispiel beweist in einer metafiktionalen myse-en-abyme, dass Piratenfiktion nicht als Anleitung für eine bessere Gesellschaftsform genutzt werden kann. Auch hier führt der Entwurf einer piratischen Gesellschaftsform zur Selbstzerstörung. Das Kapitel zeigt, dass piratische Ideale systematisch ausgehöhlt und als nicht existent dargestellt werden.

In meinem vierten Kapitel „Cross-Dressing Female Pirates on the Examples of Anne Bonny and Mary Read: James Nelson's *The Only Life that Mattered*" (Cross-Dressing bei Piratinnen am Beispiel von Anne Bonny und Mary Read) widme ich mich der im Titel genannten zeitgenössischen Romanfassung basierend auf den semi-historischen Biografien Jack Rackhams, Anne Bonnys und Mary Reads. Bonny und Read waren wohl die zwei berühmtesten Piratinnen, die Cross-Dressing betrieben, um sich als Männer auszugeben. Ich vergleiche die zeitgenössische Adaption mit den Traditionen des mutigen weiblichen Matrosen und der weiblichen Kämpferin und zeige, wie ein literarisches Werk der heutigen Zeit mit dem Thema des Cross-Dressing umgeht. Die Analyse fokussiert auf den Aspekten der Gender Darstellung, der Frage nach Imitation, sowie Fragen der Identitätskonstruktion.

Desorientierung, Identitätsverlust und ggf. Anpassung an soziokulturelle Normen schwächen eine mögliche utopische Lesart von Piratenfiktion als Gegenentwürfe zu patriarchischen Systemen. Die zeitgenössische Adaption zeichnet beide Piratinnen als schwächere Charaktere als Kapitän Johnsons Original, ein weiteres Indiz, dass heutige Piratenfiktion utopische Elemente ins Dystopische verkehrt.

In meinem fünften und letzten Kapitel "Pirate Fiction and Intertextuality" (Piratenfiktion und Intertextualität) widme ich mich der Textebene zeitgenössischer Piratenfiktion. Ich stelle exemplarisch verschiedene Spielarten von intertextuellen Bezügen vor. Bei den Beispielen handelt es sich um: *Crossbones*, *The Pirate Devlin* series, Robert Kursons Sachbuch *Pirate Hunters*, Kara Louises *Pirates and Prejudice, a Pride and Prejudice Variation* and *We Are Pirates*. Diese Analyse zeigt, dass das Piratenmotif stark von Intertextualität abhängig ist. Hierbei kann der Piratentext sowohl als Hypo- als auch als Hypertext auftreten, d. h. dass es sowohl Szenarien gibt, in denen der Piratentext sich Elemente anderer Geschichten oder Gattungen bedient, als auch Adaptionen, die bewusst Elemente des Piratenmotifs nutzen, um bestehende Narrative zu ändern. Abschließend zeigt eine Analyse im Rahmen der Metafiktion, nämlich ein Roman in dem die Protagonisten Piratenfiktion imitieren und somit den vorhandenen Roman in einen neuen Piratenroman verwandeln, dass das Piratenmotiv fragmentarisch ist und diese Einzelelemente genutzt werden können, um ein Piratennarrativ zu konstruieren. Das Kapitel demonstriert, dass das Piratenmotiv aus beliebig kombinierbaren Einheiten besteht, die mit anderen Motiven, Themen, und gar Gattungen kombiniert werden können. Dies beweist den stark strukturellen Charakter des Motifs und erklärt ebenso die Toleranz gegenüber Logikbrüchen.

**Abschließend**

Die Analysen zeigen, dass piratische Ideale zwar thematisiert werden, innerhalb des Narrativs

aber als fehlerhaft dargestellt werden. Die systematische Zerstörung des Idealbildes erlaubt zeitlich beschränktes Tagträumen, das an kriminelle Handlungen gebunden ist, da die utopische Illusion gleichzeitig als fehlerhaft präsentiert wird. Zudem bedeutet die Zerstörung der Idealbilder, dass es sich hierbei um utopische Fiktion handelt und keinen Gegenentwurf zur bestehenden Gesellschaft. Diese Distanz zwischen Rezipient und Fiktion wird weiter durch die Darstellung der Desillusionierung mehrerer Protagonisten, die diese erfahren, nachdem sie versuchen, ein Piratenleben zu führen, verstärkt. Charaktere mögen durchaus etwas aus der Piratenepisode ihres Lebens lernen, wenn sie ins normale Leben zurückkehren, doch eins bleibt allen gemeinsam: Der „Pirat" ist eine Trug-Gestalt, der der Welt des Imaginären vorbehalten bleibt. Diese Beobachtung steht auch in Einklang mit dem Zitat Blakes, denn das von mir gewählte Zitat stammt von Los, der Verkörperung der menschlichen Vorstellungskraft. Und genau hier ist der „Pirat" auch verankert: in der Welt der Vorstellungen, Tagträume und Fiktion. Fiktion kann kriminelle Handlungen idealisieren, da sie sich als solche zu erkennen gibt. Dieser Eindruck wird verstärkt durch die postmodernen Elemente, die Fiktion stets als Kunstprodukt ausweisen. Außerdem besteht aufgrund der starken Fragmentierung die Möglichkeit, nur die Elemente in einer eskapistischen Lesart zu konsumieren, die ihr auch dienlich sind.

Als weitere abschreckende Maßnahme zeigen mehrere Beispiele, dass ein Verlust der Moral auch zum Verrat von Freunden oder Mitgliedern der piratischen Gesellschaft führen kann, das prominenteste Beispiel ist hier der Tod Sparrows. Mit anderen Worten: Piratische Ideale mögen einladend wirken, aber die Konsequenzen werden als abschreckend inszeniert. Eine egoistische Lebens- und Denkweise wird als kurzzeitiges Ideal präsentiert nur um anschließend zerstört zu werden. Diese Instabilität macht eine eskapistische Lesart und Funktionsweise erst möglich, da vermeintliche Utopien ins Dystopische verkehrt werden. Fiktion, die kriminelle Handlungen idealisiert, kann dem Eskapismus dienen, da die

vermeintlichen Ideale nur zeitweilig als Ideale gezeigt und abschließend relativiert werden.

Diese Arbeit liefert nicht nur eine Definition für das Piratenmotiv, sondern auch einen Theorierahmen, der für folgende Studien genutzt werden kann. Ebenso kann sie Forschungen zur Utopie bereichern. Dennoch besteht noch viel Forschungsbedarf im Bereich der Darstellung des piratischen Schurken sowie expliziter Gewaltdarstellungen. Im Bereich der Piratenfiktion gibt es noch viele weiße Flecken auf der Landkarte, die zum Setzen der Forschungs-Segel einladen.