Crisis and Legitimacy in Atlantic American Narratives of Piracy

1678–1865

Alexandra Ganser

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Alexandra Ganser
Department of English and American Studies
University of Vienna
Vienna, Austria

For Martin, Rio, and Elvira, my favorite time pirates: thank you for all the love.

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Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction: The Pirate as a Figure of Crisis and Legitimacy

Pirates are everywhere today. Over the last decade, there have been numerous reports of Somali and new Caribbean 'piracy' in the news; data 'pirates' are persecuted by the defendants of copyright law and intellectual property; eco-activist groups on the high seas, often on the border of transgressing laws that protect global corporate business rather than oceanic ecosystems, are termed pirates in the media while they themselves have also adopted piratical symbols like the skull and crossbones. Similarly, "Pirate Parties" throughout Europe, though perhaps past their heyday, have used the label to question the future of representative democracy in favor of more direct forms of government. In popular cultural contexts, pirate symbols are used by the fashion and many other industries and, since Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* series and a number of pirate-themed computer games, have become prominent figures on the screen again. All of these examples actively draw on the figure of the pirate and its ambiguous semiotic qualities as a symbol used for both Othering and identification.

In an Anglophone Atlantic context, it is between the colonial era and the mid-nineteenth century that pirates emerged as prominent figures. In prose writing alone, the popular cultural, sensational appeal of pirate-inspired adventure stories, captivity narratives, popular histories and romances, and many other genres-in-the-making, was used in terms of the figure's potential to articulate moments of ontological instability and

1

epistemological crisis through an adequate ambivalent trope.[1] The present study critically examines literary renditions of the pirate from 1678, the publication year of the earliest and probably most widely known book-length pirate narrative, A. O. Exquemelin's *Buccaneers of America*, to the American Civil War, when the pirate figure was used in battling the legitimacy of Southern Secession. Prose narratives of piracy were significant for the formation and development of a number of popular genres in print culture across the Atlantic: published trial reports, gallows narratives, execution sermons, broadsides, and criminal biographies in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in which condemned pirates occasionally found an opportunity to justify their actions; popular history and the historical romance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which romanticized the pirate as a revolutionary outlaw; the captivity narrative during the so-called U.S. 'Barbary Wars' against North African city-states (1801–1805, 1815), in which former American captives of Muslim 'pirates' in the Mediterranean who were sold into slavery compared these corsairs to the triangular slave-traders; or caricatures of Southern 'pirates' at the beginning of the Civil War, which were printed on Union envelopes to deplore Secession.

The etymological source of the word "piracy," the Greek verb *peiran* (to attempt, attack, from the root *per-*, which literally means "to attempt something"), refers to ventures into risky business or the unknown, activities which characterized Mediterranean marauders in classical antiquity who became known as pirates (Rennie 2013, 11). Historians often characterize pirates by their shifting, and hence unreliable, national, racial/ethnic, and at times even gender affiliations (e.g., Rediker 2004; Creighton and Norling 1996)—the main reason why they have vexed political theorists and legal scholars for centuries in their attempts to define the pirate's legal status and his/her illegitimacy. Disputes about who was to be called pirate have always articulated power relationships and struggles over authority and legitimate violence, as the famous anecdote of the pirate and the emperor, related in St. Augustine's *City of God*, illustrates: "For elegant and excellent was the pirate's answer to the great Macedonian Alexander, who had taken him: the king asking him how he durst molest the sea so, he replied with a free spirit, 'How darest thou molest the whole world? But because I do with a little ship only, I am called a thief: thou doing it with a great navy, art called an emperor'" (Book IV, quoted in Pérotin-Dumon 1991, 196).[2] Taking up related questions raised by various strands of pirate scholarship (e.g.,

Rennie 2013; Schillings 2017), I explore the pirate's primary discursive function as that of a personified question about legitimacy in diverse critical contexts. Throughout this book, I am asking in what ways a transoceanic American cultural imaginary teased out the pirate's ambivalent potential as a figure of identification and Othering, as outlaw folk hero and deplorable criminal, to negotiate scenarios of legitimacy and crisis in Anglophone North America.[3]

Because of their semantic ambiguity and the elusiveness of their identity, pirates have defied normative regimes of representation; as a literary trope, piracy has allowed for a symbolic (re-)negotiation of various identity constructions (such as British colony versus independent Republic; or united versus divided, free or slaveholding States during the War of Secession). My study inquires into ways in which narratives of piracy articulate, on both the textual and the meta-textual levels, oppositional discursive positions regarding questions of legitimacy, using piracy's destabilizing potential with regard to constructions of racial, ethnic, and gender difference. I argue that narratives of piracy continuously and dynamically swerve between dominant and resistant cultural positions, between, for instance, resistance to the Atlantic slave trade and participation in it; or between the subversion and affirmation of normative gender roles. In addition, narratives of piracy frequently turned the pirate from an agent of disruption, questioning the social order, into a figure of affirmation and containment.[4] This study hence casts piracy as a discursive category on a continuum between the propagation of colonial adventure and accumulation on the one hand and critical commentary on exploitation, colonial violence, and racialized, gendered, and class oppression on the other. This dismantles the mythology of piracy as either leftist, anarchic utopia (e.g., Bey; Kuhn; Wilson) or capitalist avant-garde (e.g., Leeson, Storr)—one of the main oppositions critics have relied on in various conceptualizations of the pirate. In what follows, pirates appear as repentant sinners on the verge of execution; as defiant rebels against colonial authorities; as crafty tradesmen whose aim is profit and gain, but also as fast and excessive spenders; as radical philosophers and religious dissenters; as slave-holders and as liberators of slaves; as cartographers, scientists, and picaresque traveler-adventurers on the margins of empire; as atrocious and as egalitarian masters; and as multinational proponents of an alternative order.

One of my main hypotheses is that pirate narratives articulate a Freudian return of the repressed—of colonial violence and resistance— in critical moments of North American history. Defined by maritime theft and illegitimacy, the pirate figure represents the "specter of slavery" and "the phantom of luxury," as David Shields labels the two crucial hauntings of colonialism (and later imperialism) in the Americas in reference to the British *imperium pelagi* ('empire of the seas,' 1990, 18). I aim to show that textual economies of piracy, despite their narrative resistance to a race-, class- and increasingly nation-based Atlantic order, are always already undermined by the enslavement and exploitation of indigenous and African/Afrodiasporic populations as well as by the triangular trade increasingly encompassing the entire Atlantic world in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Literary and cultural studies of piracy by scholars such as Gesa Mackenthun, Nina Gerassi-Navarro, or Paul Baepler—to name but a few—have explored the narratives forming the basis of most theories of piracy, contributing significantly to the current state of piracy research and enabling us to see piracy as a complex phenomenon that cannot be contained within either a Marxist or a free-market grand narrative. Instead, the figure of the pirate is informed by both its implication in colonial political economies and its dissociation from, even scorn of, dominant colonial practice. The plethora of Anglo-American texts on piracy from the late seventeenth until the mid-nineteenth centuries dismantles any 'either/or' preconceptions in the characterization of piracy. In any case, pirates appear as textual constructions recalling historical agents that provoked colonial authorities in a multipolar (post-)colonial Atlantic world to write back, to contain the pirate: to turn him (and to a much lesser extent her) from an agent of disruption, questioning the social order, into a figure of affirmation.

The simplistic opposition between pirates as figures either of a colonial avant-garde or of resistance will be complicated by a close analysis of a variety of pirate narratives. My study introduces pirates as figures symptomatic of intense ontological and epistemological periods of crisis, in which perpetual struggles over (cultural, legal, political, economic) categorization and meaning were more intensely debated than at other times and intermittently resolved—in one direction or another—by a plethora of cultural narratives. These texts tease out the complexity of piracy as a cultural and economic phenomenon as well as the many contradictions at the heart of the fledgling merchant empires and their slave

economies. Voicing both critique and complicity, pirate narratives and images, I am arguing, functioned as seismographs for the turmoil and upheavals produced by this trans-Atlantic and increasingly trans-Pacific economy. Located at the intersections of Atlantic American and hemispheric studies, (post-)colonial studies, and a New Historicist approach that reads texts from the angle of their historical-cultural context while viewing literature itself as productive of this very context, this book sets out to explore the pirate's popular appeal in Anglophone America from a transatlantic angle, taking into account the figure's history of translation from Europe to the Americas and focusing on the function of pirate narratives and the "cultural work" (Tompkins 1985) these texts perform.

In the context of historical crisis scenarios (see below), the figure of the pirate raises questions about the stability and legitimacy of (legal, political, cultural) categorization. I ask in what ways narratives of piracy act as manifestations of a perceived crisis and analyze the pirate in popular narratives as negotiating interlocking ideas of legitimacy not only due to the figure's ambivalent discursive position but also because the term "pirate" itself evokes a categorical putting-at-risk of self and society. Reading narratives of piracy as symptomatic of categorical crisis, I explore in what ways the pirate was imbued with (de)legitimatory meaning in the context of historical crisis scenarios, both in canonical and popular literature, which each interpellated their readerships to reflect on pressing issues of legitimacy.

The oceanic element in definitions of piracy has traditionally contributed an element of wilderness (as historically opposed to civilization) that has been crucial for various political and juridical debates over piracy and its definition, in which legitimacy has always been decisive: "The binary opposition between the pirate and civilization is … manifested by an actor who represents piracy and a state which represents civilization" and "civilized order" (Schillings 2011, 297; also 2017 for a more detailed analysis). Consequently, the pirate has been imagined as lacking allegiance with any state, as "a fragment of the sea, i.e. the ungovernable wilderness" (297). Piracy's oceanic setting, defined by "exceptional legal rules" (Heller-Roazen 2009, 10), has invited the proclamation of a state of exception that legitimizes the reduction of political subjects to "bare life." Civil rights and other norms are fully suspended (though not abandoned) and exceptional measures are taken, as Giorgio Agamben explores in his work on biopolitics and Western political thinking's definition of sovereignty as power over life. The state of exception, Agamben explains, "is neither external nor internal to

the juridical order, and the problem of defining it concerns precisely a threshold, or a zone of indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other" (2005, 23). Defined in such a relation of exception, the pirate is included in the legal order only by her/his exclusion through the sovereign (1998, 18). Conceptualizing exception as a "limit figure" that embodies the "radical crisis" at the heart of legitimacy and political authority (24–25), Agamben highlights its ambiguity as a 'both/and' concept that cannot be made to denote one thing or the other (here: inside *or* outside).[5] The operation of sovereignty—the inclusion of subjects that essentially defy categorical insertion into a binary order by the claim to an exception—thus produces "bare life" as its originary activity (83).

Since classical antiquity, maritime pirates have been contrasted with land-based thieves because of their greater motility (i.e., capability of movement) and the sea allowing for a more rapid escape:[6] piracy negated territorial and political borders, operating from spaces which were initially beyond the claims of states and empires (Beasley-Murray 2005, 220, 222). In the mobile world of the various Atlantic migrations, from the Puritan Great Migration to the triangular slave trade and nineteenth-century immigration, the figure of the pirate encompasses traits of all the major characters of that mobile world: the trader, the adventurer, the pilgrim, the slave, and the indentured laborer as well as the slaveholder and-trader. In historical and literary discussions of piracy, major anxieties about an increasingly mobile society were voiced. Discourses about legitimate and illegitimate mobility appear as a defining aspect in pirate narratives, as piratical mobilities have been cast as *both* a threat to *and* as supportive of European colonial expansion and the imperialist project. The menace of uncontrollable geographical and social mobility that pirates signified was therefore closely related to social mobility and discontent with one's inherited class position. In the early modern era, just as control over people's mobility was increasingly nationalized (Cresswell 2006, 12–13), pirates emerged as emblematic of another new world: "the world of Hobbes, Galileo, and Harvey, … an infinite, restless entanglement of persistent movement" in which "happiness itself was based on the freedom to move" (14). Piracy narratives articulated this emergent world, a world full of colonial dreams and nightmare realities. Ships and the sea, coasts and islands are main settings of this literature, which

presents them as paradoxical spaces in which the dream and the nightmare are articulated in conjunction—as conflicted imperial and resistant sites and as fluid, permeable spaces of conflict and struggle, all the more so because ships and the coasts and islands they populated signified major stages of cultural contact and encounter. Because of their central position in the colonial economy in general and for slavery in particular, pirate ships became a popular literary topos, especially for writers critiquing slavery (see Sect. 3.1). As such, the ship and the sea emerge as the main textual spaces in which hegemonic and anti-hegemonic mobilities take effect.[7] 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. 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.

Salvatore Poier summarizes that "the status of 'pirate' is not related to a specific set of activities that are, in and of themselves, 'criminal' as "this category took shape through the relationships with those who were labelled 'pirates,' the constituted power, the mob, and the future of a newly discovered territory" (2009, 39) such as America. The post-classical, modern development of the category of piracy is thus intricately tied to a liminal geography of American coloniality. Especially in the discourse of international law, the pirate emerged as a foil for the integration of European nation-states, which tried to project the law of the land, a territorial order, onto maritime spaces (Heller-Roazen 2009, 100–101). Yet what is at stake in critical discussions of piracy is clearly not just legalistic description—after all, as Anne Pérotin-Dumon reminds us, "there is not, and never has been, an authoritative definition of piracy in international law"—but also the analysis of "what authority made the laws" and "what power was at stake" (1991, 198) in definitions—and representations, as I am arguing—of maritime piracy. Jon Beasley-Murray suggests that the historical legal construction of piracy as Other obfuscates that "[p]iracy cannot be simply demarcated as a constituent exterior to the civilized state" as "[t]he pirate is not the colonial other; the pirate inhabits

and crosses the permeable membrane that divides enemy from foe, civilization from its other" (2005, 224). In the aftermath of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century debates over law-making, power, warfare, and violence, especially with regard to the seas and whether they were to be *mare clausum* or *mare liberum* (Pérotin-Dumon 1991, 205; Thomson 1994, ch. 4 & 5; Heller-Roazen 2009, ch. 11), early eighteenth-century images of the pirate increasingly drew on a lack of national and ethnic character and an alleged non-humanity. Pirates were at times represented as cruel, subhuman, cannibalistic Others on a continuum with the 'Indian' or 'savage'; a monstrous, uncivilized, animal-like creature and a parasite (Kempe 2010, 160, 263) that threatened the *translatio imperii et studii* once he left his assigned role of privateer or military aid in national endeavors (Kempe 2008, 397). Indeed, as Schillings remarks, the difference between pirate and privateer marks a threshold between "the inside and the outside of the law" which "renders certain forms of *reference* to sovereignty by violent actors … potentially legitimate to the sovereign, and therefore worthy of re-inclusion in the law" (2015, 31). Along similar reasoning, western states also framed non-Christian sea actions as piracy, such as in the so-called Barbary conflicts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Pérotin-Dumon 1991, 213). When non-state, allegedly uncivilized and/or indigenous agents that cooperated with each other diverged from the course of a state-controlled imperialism (and, for instance, started building alternative social communities), legal and political theorists and decision-makers sought to delegitimize such endeavors.

Following Pérotin-Dumon and others, I interpret the pirate's primary discursive function as that of a personified question about legitimacy (304)—hence the pirate's discursive ambivalence between 'good' and 'bad,' folk-hero and criminal, Othering and identification. This ambivalence also marks the figure of the pirate as more than well suited for a leading role in narrative negotiations of various scenarios of crisis. Historically, piracy has led states to take exceptional measures from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Such measures are, in Agamben's view, always results of (what is constructed and represented as) political crisis (2005, 1). The semantic category of piracy, defined by its legal and spatial exceptionality, has indeed been mobilized most frequently in times of crisis—cultural-symbolic, political (foreign and domestic), economic, and social. Of course, crisis is not factual, but is itself a narrative construction, produced by a discursive environment that frames individual or

collective perceptions of crisis (Fenske et al. 2017; Grunwald and Pfister 2007). Sociologists and political scientists have theorized crisis using various approaches, most notably Marxist (in reference to the repeated crises of capitalism discussed by Gramsci; see Jones 2006, ch. 7) and governmental ones.[8] The concept of crisis, from the Greek verb *krinein* ("to select and judge, to decide, struggle," Koselleck 1978, 617), has been used in different contexts, all of them referencing a point in which an existential decision, such as that between an old order or a new one, needs to be made. The problematic of crisis as a dualistic concept (between justice and injustice, or freedom and slavery, for instance) has been countered by Goethe's notion of crisis as a process and as transformation (624) as well as by the inclusion of what Reinhart Koselleck, in his classical 1982 summary of the conceptual development of crisis, has termed "possibilities crossing dualistic conceptions of crisis" ("quer [zur dualistischen Krise] verlaufenden Möglichkeiten," 626; my translation). Crisis, in Koselleck's understanding, implies a transformation of difference categories and of loyalties (630); it entails "transdifferent" (Breinig and Lösch) moments of semantic and symbolic instability.[9] In any case, the diagnosis of crisis, he argues, has always served as a "title of legitimation for political action" (625: "Legitimationstitel politischen Handelns," my translation). This makes the nexus of crisis and legitimacy a highly productive categorical point of departure and frame of inquiry for the present study.

As Ansgar Nünning and others argue, narrative is central to the construction (and resolution) of scenarios of crisis, as crises constitute "medial transformations and (re-)presentations of situations in specific stories and narratives" ("mediale Transformationen und [Re-]Präsentationen von Geschehen in bestimmten Geschichten und Erzählungen," my translation): "Thus crises are observable in literary and cultural studies only in their textual and medial manifestations, i.e. in the discursive presentation of a particular story as a narrative of crisis" ("Literatur- und kulturwissenschaftlich beobachtbar sind Krisen somit erst in ihren textuellen bzw. medialen Manifestationen, d.h. in der diskursiven Präsentation dieser bestimmten Geschichte als Krisenerzählung," Nünning 2007, 61, my translation; see also Nünning 2009). Similarly, Stuart Hall suggested that in times of greatest crisis, the manufacture and manipulation of public consent is crucial to the maintenance of power: "[M]oments in which the equilibrium of consent is disturbed, or where the contending class forces are so nearly balanced that neither can achieve

that sway from which a resolution to the crisis can be promulgated, are moments when the whole basis of political leadership and cultural authority becomes exposed and contested" (quoted in Davis 2004, 111). In what ways do narratives of piracy expose, and at times contest, such cultural-symbolic structures, and how do they act as manifestations and negotiations of crisis? These are the primary questions discussed in my readings.

In my study, I am not myself diagnosing historical moments from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century as marked by crisis, but rather look at periods that have been perceived and analyzed as such in both contemporaneous and historical accounts. The 'discovery' of America, for instance, was characterized as a pivotal crisis for the political system of Europe (Koselleck 1978, 634, 639), resulting, in the seventeenth century, in a "foundational" (82) "crisis of legitimation, an overlapping set of political crises, involving religious and civil wars, and international conflict" (Kahn 2002, 67). The epistemological crisis concerning the establishment and maintenance of difference categories at the basis of western knowledge-production was triggered by the scientific revolution and the simultaneous contact with America: beginning with Columbus' letters, many reported wonders had to be integrated into existing symbolic orders and emergent western systems of knowledge/power (Foucault); the quantity and quality of sensational news from faraway corners of the globe provoked a crisis of the concepts of truth and authority as well as of the cultural meaning of testimony and witnessing. This crisis was answered symbolically by the transformation of the pirate into a colonial agent and scientist before and around 1700, which I examine in the opening chapter. This period was also a time of crisis in colonial relations: when colonized groups turned against their colonizers and started to collaborate, both politically and economically, with illegitimate agents such as pirates or smugglers, as was the case at the end of the seventeenth century, piracy became an important literary topos. I begin with an analysis of A. O. Exquemelin's *Buccaneers of America*, reading the text's staging of cultural encounter as reflective of these crises. The text inspired a series of ethnographic narratives about the New World by former 'pirates' at the close of the seventeenth century (e.g., William Dampier, Basil Ringrose, Bartholomew Sharp, and Lionel Wafer), written as evidence of their authors' gradual transformation into scientists (which I compare to Exquemelin's): they adopted a discourse of science and

helped legitimize colonial plunder—material and symbolic—as beneficial to the European "empire of knowledge."

The second part of that chapter moves, together with historical pirates, from the Caribbean to the coasts of New England in the early eighteenth century. It focuses on Puritan anti-piratical sermons and gallows narratives which prominently articulated piracy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as sinful, devilish, and destructive for the community. In fact, the condemnation of piracy served to consolidate the society of third-generation Puritans, many of whom saw the increasing secularization of a theocratic society and the colony's socioeconomic developments as a threat to their covenant with God. This crisis was not only of a religious kind; in the Puritan understanding, the concept of crisis had distinct medical connotations and related to existential questions of survival or death. Thus, public executions of pirates and the sermons and broadsides produced for these events used the figure of the pirate as an Other against whom to renew social cohesion. In this sense, I read Cotton Mather's and other Puritan comments on piracy as a second discursive moment around 1700 responding to the perception of a collective crisis.

In Chapter 2, I explore the trope of piracy as it was summoned in the context of the (post-)revolutionary Atlantic that culminated in the crisis of colonial legitimacy in the North American colonies. It is no coincidence that Thomas Paine titled his revolutionary pamphlet series *The American Crisis* (1776–1783), bolstering the morale of the American colonists in "times that try men's souls" (91). Neither is it a coincidence that at the very moment of the political declaration of independence, in which the crisis of colonial legitimacy was performatively resolved (Derrida 1986), the sign of the pirate was externalized by the claim that the British monarch was a pirate, thus lending America the natural right to independence. Historical romances in early American literature, such as James Fenimore Cooper's *The Red Rover* (1827), used romantic/Byronic piracy to narrate the legitimacy of the revolution, appropriating the pirate as a foundational figure and an ideal type of patriotic outlaw masculinity, suffering a tragic end for a just cause. Even in narrating the crisis in gender relations, as revolutionary femininities first gave way to Republican motherhood and then to the "cult of true womanhood" (Welter) in the course of the nineteenth century, revolutionary pirates were prominent figures in popular literary production geared toward a broader and increasingly female readership, as in Lieutenant Murray's (i.e., Maturin Murray Ballou's) *Fanny Campbell* (1844). Former revolutionary heroines (here in the form of a patriotic female pirate) were domesticated in

such historical romances and novelettes to make palpable the ongoing transition to a more conservative nineteenth-century femininity. Nevertheless, the text at the same time betrays a discourse of nostalgia for an earlier, revolutionary version of womanhood, disturbing any smooth transition from pirate to "angel of the house." Read side by side, these historical fictions perform similar cultural work in legitimizing America's revolutionary past and imperial future for different audiences.

The first foreign policy crisis with which the young Republic was confronted was the war with the so-called Barbary pirates at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Here, again, the delegitimizing rhetoric of Othering foreign agents—in this case, an Oriental(ized) Other—by calling them pirates was prominent in popular narratives. Captivity narratives about the experience of abduction and enslavement by Muslim 'pirates'—like Royall Tyler's *Algerine Captive* (1824)—redirected piracy from North Africa to North America, thus questioning the legitimacy of slavery in the United States, taking up the conjuncture of piracy and slavery that had been voiced in the Declaration of Independence and preparing the grounds for nineteenth-century abolitionist discourses. During the crisis over slavery in the nineteenth century, piracy signified the criticality of legitimacy in the context of a Black Atlantic literature (Gilroy 1993), exemplified by Trinidadian M. Maxwell Philip's little-explored novel *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854) and Herman Melville's canonical novella "Benito Cereno" (1855/1856), both of which I explore in my third chapter. While Philip explores piracy as a plot of revenge, Melville reflects on the slavery crisis as fundamentally a crisis of knowing and telling, voicing ontological insecurity as masters and slaves become indistinguishable once the tale introduces the suspicion of piracy. The conjuncture of piracy and slavery is also used (in a different context) in popular anti-Southern discourses during the Civil War, the major domestic crisis of the nineteenth century. Decorated Union letter envelopes depicted Jefferson Davis and the seceded South as prototypical pirates, stealing Africans and betraying the United States by means of a Secession thus delegitimized. These envelopes also epitomize the shift toward the visual in representations of piracy beginning in post-Civil War America.

Though the focus of my readings is on the literary representation of piracy, constructions of the pirate figure in public discourse and visual

culture are included in this study as images of pirates frequently inter-acted with the written word, especially in popular texts. The figure of the pirate as well as the symbols associated with her/him, such as the Jolly Roger flag, have, from the day of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century broadsides, been used to market pirate texts and to evoke certain stock associations such as violence, death, and piratical nonrecognition of nation-states and their laws, even if today they have been commodified in nearly every form of material and popular culture, from coffee mugs and soccer logos to children's toys and fashion. Rather than completely separating visual and verbal discourses of piracy during the period under scrutiny, I address their interrelatedness in cultural expressions of the pirate figure across the Atlantic. My final subchapter of analysis, exam-ining satirical cartoons, draws special attention to the importance of visual culture for the cultural articulation and negotiation of piracy. Tapping into a vast archive that still constitutes a hidden repository of cultural expression at the onset of the Civil War, this final section also highlights the increasing importance of visual representations of piracy starting in mid-nineteenth-century print culture.

The different genres and sorts of material under discussion, spanning almost two centuries, warrant comment especially in the context of a disci-pline like American Studies, which is often compartmentalized into special period studies. While I certainly will not be able to delve as deeply into the details of each of the crisis scenarios that contextualize my readings as many of my specialized colleagues in colonial and early American studies or Civil War studies, I hope that the diachronic scope of this book enables a broader view with regard to a trope that itself has crossed centuries and has been adapted and changed from one decade to the next. As much as these scenarios and the corresponding pirate narratives are different from each other, they share a characteristic conjunction of maritime piracy and questions of legitimacy. The narrative and visual texts under considera-tion all ask their readers to investigate the nature of legitimate action, even violence, and they do so according to their own needs and means. In each chapter, I have juxtaposed canonical texts with popular and/or less well-known material that warrants closer examination: the buccaneer narratives of the late seventeenth century, which are little known except for popular versions of Exquemelin's and Dampier's writings, and Cotton Mather's well-examined sermons in chapter 1; Cooper's classic *Red Rover* (though little read today) and Ballou's popular historical romance *Fanny Camp-bell*, long out of print and only recently commented upon by scholarship,

in chapter 2; and in chapter 3, Melville's "Benito Cereno," which has received continuous critical attention since at least the 1950s, side by side with M. M. Philip's *Emmanuel Appadocca*, a Black Atlantic novel rediscovered in the late 1990s that is still little discussed. Placing these texts next to each other, my study demonstrates not only how the pirate figure has moved across lowbrow and highbrow genres, adapting to different generic affordances, but also highlights once more the artificiality of these categorizations. Only by paying attention to such hitherto little explored archival material can we begin to understand the cultural mobility of the pirate: across oceans, genres, media, decades, and centuries, continuing with the new media of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, from silent film to computer games. Reading such material side by side creates a dialogue between diverse genres that often drew on the same source material but was rearticulated in distinct ways and consumed by different strata of readers.

However, the present book is necessarily also limited, analyzing mostly prose narratives (with the exception of the final section). Though in the same two-hundred-year span, various other genres also engaged with and thrived on pirates and piracy—from the early modern ballad to the antebellum popular stage—I focus on prose narratives for two reasons: first, the pirate emerged as a popular figure together with the early modern development of the travel narrative and the adventure story, which led to the creation of the novel in the eighteenth century. Hence a diachronic perspective is best possible by focusing on a genre that dealt with pirates continuously for two centuries (and more). Second, I am most interested in how cultural *narratives* about legitimacy (with regard to the law, to maritime theft, to violence, to slavery and revolution) were constructed continuously through the figure of the pirate from the colonial era to the War of Secession. How Atlantic and later American populations told, wrote, and read stories about pirates brings to the fore prevalent anxieties with regard to shifting norms and understandings of legitimacy in conjunction with categorical differences of race, class, gender, and nation, and shows us how such anxieties were resolved in literature.

In times of collectively perceived crisis, clear-cut categories of cultural difference tend to become unhinged despite increased efforts to affirm boundaries between self and Other. While the outcome of categorical crises either reaffirms and renews or redefines and changes these boundaries, the very fact that these boundaries are discussed intensely hints at cultural and/or political anxieties and insecurities that put established

categories of difference into doubt. Accordingly, pirate narratives could both question or cement cultural difference; yet reading them against the grain, the texts under consideration, informed by the crisis discourses prevalent at the time of their publication, defy any kind of dichotomous difference construction as they present multiple perspectives on piracy. They are characterized by polyphony, dissonance, and textual ambiguity, terms related to the concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia (as they are etched out by Mikhail Bakhtin in his theorizations of the novel ([1929] 1984 and [1934–1935] 1984).[10] The main mode of analysis I employ in this study is that of contrapuntal reading, a method of (post-)colonial discourse analysis proposed by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) which brings to the fore heteroglossia, voices hidden and suppressed by the main narrative and the textual consolidation of crisis for the sake of an optimistic portrayal of colonialism or patriotism. As a practice of deconstructive reading (rather than "a statement about the actual structure of colonial texts" [Mackenthun 2006, 12]), contrapuntal analysis shows "a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (Said 1993, 59).

Said's analyses mostly refer to the canonical prose writing of the British Empire in its heyday in the nineteenth century, a fact that has often been criticized as Occidentalist or aesthetically elitist and conservative (Clark 1999, 6; Mackenthun 2004, 35). Further points of criticism relate to the notion of counterpoint itself, derived from Western classical music (Bach, Schoenberg, Glenn Gould), which assumes a basic unity in a piece of music in which point and counterpoint act together rather than against each other. Also, Said's under-theorization of the process and method of contrapuntal reading and his arguably much too schematic idea of oppositionality have been criticized (Kennedy 2000, 107, 110). While Said's reconciliatory assumption of an ultimately harmonious text is indeed problematic, also with regard to his literary analyses (Mackenthun 2004, 332 n. 2), the notion of the counterpoint nevertheless remains useful in its metaphorical quality, emphasizing the importance of submerged, dissonant voices that run counter to the main narrative within a cultural text. I retain the concept despite its problems because it enables readings of non-canonized texts whose polyphonic qualities have been rarely addressed. Following Mackenthun's arguments in her examination of Said's concept and its adaptability to the study of the oceanic context of antebellum American literature, the notion of counterpoint

insinuates that aesthetic complexity in (post-) colonial texts is a result of their "'difficult mobility' between the metropolitan center and the colonial periphery" (2004, 335; 2006). Contrapuntal reading presupposes the placement of imperial/colonial texts into a framework no longer limited by imperial and national borders. As Said argues, referring to Gramsci's notion of hegemony:

> Western cultural forms can be taken out of the autonomous enclosures in which they have been protected, and placed instead in the dynamic global environment created by imperialism, itself revised as an ongoing contest between north and south, metropolis and periphery, white and native. We may thus consider imperialism as a process occurring as part of the metropolitan culture, which at times acknowledges, at other times obscures the sustained business of the empire itself. The important point … is how the national … cultures maintained hegemony over the peripheries. How within them was consent gained and continuously consolidated for the distant rule of native peoples and territories? (1993, 58)

Contrapuntal reading hence constitutes a form of "reading back" (Do Mar Castro Varela and Dhawan 2005, 52), a reading from the perspective of the colonized in order to unveil the presence of the "coloniality of power" (Walter Mignolo quoting Anibal Quijano 2000, 16), the "system that organized the distribution of epistemic, moral, and aesthetic resources in a way that both reflects and reproduces empire" (Alcoff 2007, 83) inscribed in cultural expression, both on the level of representation and epistemology.[11] It allows for a point of view between imperial narrative and postcolonial perspective and constructs a counter-narrative in the act of reading, which time and again pierces through the surface of single texts: Kennedy calls Said's model a "dual approach to literary texts" (2000, 106) grounded in an epistemological critique of nationalism and Western humanism that rests on his understanding of cultural expression in the colonial context as hybrid.[12] For Said, the main point is to disclose the pervasiveness of imperial power in writing on the one hand and to highlight anti-imperial resistance on the other, as these resistant energies, following a Derridean, poststructural conception of textuality, can never be brought to silence but retain a spectral presence in the text.[13]

The method of contrapuntal reading reverberates with similar analytical approaches to identify the fraught interrelationship between European cultures and transatlantic colonialism, including slavery and the slave trade, as they have been employed by scholars like Peter Hulme (1986) or,

in the context of African American Studies, Toni Morrison (who speaks of an absent "Africanist presence" in American literature, 1992). My critical analyses draw on all of these approaches, their main point being to disclose the pervasiveness of white western/imperial power in these texts on the one hand and to make transparent anti-imperial resistance on the other (Kennedy 2000, 106). Following a poststructural conception of textuality, such resistant energies can never be brought to silence but remain a disturbing presence in the text. They evoke, indeed, a much more general crisis at the heart of language-based cultural production: the continuing crisis of the sign. Pirate narratives, emphasizing shifting identities and ambivalent characters and plotlines, can be viewed as emblematic of such a logocentric-epistemological crisis, resulting, from a postcolonial perspective, from the criticality of legitimacy (of colonialism, of struggles for independence, of slavery) produced by the 'discovery' of the New World.

My study chimes in with a number of concerns that are currently voiced in the context of American literary and cultural studies scholarship, examining the cultural work of Anglophone American-Atlantic narratives of piracy that have been discussed so far mostly in single articles and book chapters. American Studies has turned to the sea for more than two decades: taking up earlier work like Thomas Philbrick's *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction* (1961), Paul Gilroy (*The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1993), Cesare Casarino (*Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis*, 2002), Gesa Mackenthun (*Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature*, 2004), Paul Gilje (*Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution*, 2004), Robin Miskolcze (*Women and Children First: Nineteenth-Century Sea Narratives and American Identity*, 2007), Margaret Cohen (*The Novel and the Sea*, 2008), or Hester Blum (*The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives*, 2008), to name but a few, have rewritten American literary history, advancing the maritime imagination as a fundamental, yet neglected aspect of American culture.[14] Reverberating with Henry Nash Smith's diagnosis that the American economic and military frontier, up to the mid-nineteenth century, was primarily imagined as maritime ([1950] 2009, 12) as well as with the fact that the Middle Passage was constitutive of race relations in the Americas, these studies turn away from a predominantly territorial conception of American culture. Regarding the turn to the sea and the ubiquity of

pirates in Atlantic American popular culture from the seventeenth century to the present, piracy has received renewed interest in literary and cultural studies. Since pirate narratives have often staged cultural encounters with regions inaccessible to the general reading public in the metropoles of Europe and North America, they are significant also in their repercussions for incipient inter-American and Orientalist discourses. Thus my book suggests that pirate narratives are valuable for colonial, early American, and antebellum literature and culture studies, debating, for instance, the legitimacy of the American Revolution or of the slave system in the context of Atlantic European empire-building and American expansion, and using moral and religious as well as racial and gendered discourses for this purpose.

In addition, I hope to contribute to popular culture studies that have, since the 1990s, begun to explore past popular cultural figures, forms, and texts, such as broadsides and ballads, pamphlets, and cheaply sold historical romances or dime novels.[15] In the context of a genealogy of popular culture in America, the pirate has always been an important figure of mass appeal. His/Her popularity was essential for appealing to a non-elite audience to whom normative concepts of nation and empire, femininity and masculinity as well as race also needed to be brokered. These readers, of course, developed their own ways of appropriation, one of them being the pirate's heroization—whitewashing the ethnically hybrid figure along with the translation of "a revolutionary multiracial mob into storybook (white) American heroes" in early American literature, as Cathy Davidson suggests (2004, 23).

Last but not least, since the threat of piracy—its instability and unreliability as a legal category and its implications of violence and uncontrollability—has always met a need to be negotiated in popular symbolic economies, I am proposing to read pirate narratives as fictions of legitimation in the context of the interdisciplinary field of Law and Literature. Historian Lauren Benton (2010) reconceptualizes early modern pirates as oceanic lawyers who knew the ropes of many legal loopholes and ruses to remain within "the precarious membrane of the law" (*qua* Burgess 2014, 5)[16]; she describes such piratical agency as an expression of "vectors of law thrusting into ocean space" (Benton 2010, 112), transporting legal norms across colonial spaces—not without calling these very norms into question. Pirate narratives make visible contextualized ideologies of law (McGillivray 1994, v), and their main function can be seen in creating what Martin Kayman terms "communal narratives of justice" (2002, 16).

As cultural texts of "jurisgenesis," they are concerned with the creation of a normative universe, "a world of right and wrong, of lawful and unlawful, of valid and void" (Cover 1992, 95), and, in the context of negotiating normativity, with race, class, and gender constructions informing this creation.

NOTES

1. I am using the term ambivalence not merely as referring to the static opposition of conflicting signs, but rather as highlighting constantly shifting dynamics of signification (see Weber 1987, 148).
2. In a comment on this anecdote, Schillings argues that the binary opposition between civilization and maritime wilderness enacted in the definition of piracy is linked to the general construction of "'civilizational' legitimacy" (2011, 301).
3. On the problem of the United States as a postcolonial nation, see Buell (1992) and Mackenthun (2000).
4. As a case in point, Mark Hanna argues that the War on Piracy (1716–1726), for instance, was "waged just as much in the rapidly expanding print media on both sides of the Atlantic" (2015, 372).
5. In this context, cf. Agamben's understanding of the floating signifier as corresponding to the state of exception "in which the norm is in force without being applied" (2005, 37).
6. For an overview of legal definitions of piracy, its political significance, and its repression between 1450 and 1850, see Pérotin-Dumon, who also offers a brief "sociology of piracy" (1991, 197).
7. Peggy Kamuf argues that fiction itself functions like a ship: "Between boarding a ship at sea and stepping into the 'unreal' of a fiction the difference is unremarkable, especially when fiction takes as its invented locale the very enchantment of this bordered space that emerges from the surrounding blankness [of the ocean], … always on the verge of sinking again into the formless, figureless blankness, the sea of white ink" (1997, 201).
8. For theoretical approaches to crisis from a social science perspective, see e.g., Japp (1975).
9. On the concept of transdifference, see Lösch (2005) and Breinig and Lösch (2002), also Ganser (2008, 25–30).
10. See his "Discourse and the Novel" (1934–1935) and *Problems of Dostoyevski's Poetics* (1929). While I am drawing on Bakhtin when I use these terms, I believe that polyphony is a crucial characteristic in narratives of colonial contact in the Americas even prior to the emergence of the novel in the eighteenth century. The narratives under scrutiny here

can be seen as important forebears to the novel. Yet Bakhtin's suggestion of authorial control over multiple discursive voices is unconvincing, given the more complicated notion of text(uality) in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries. On the role of cultural contact in the Americas in the development of the novel, see Spengemann (1994).

11. For a lucid summary and critique of Mignolo's concept and his overall project of a decolonial epistemology, see Alcoff (2007). Mignolo uses the notion of the coloniality of power throughout *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge, and Border Thinking* (2000).

12. Bakhtin's distinction between intentional and organic hybridity (or heteroglossia), which Mackenthun finds important in order to differentiate between colonial texts that have unconscious contrapuntal qualities and those that intentionally employ semantic conflict at the level of historical reflection (2004), is of course problematic from a poststructural perspective on texts (which has complicated, if not abandoned, intentionality as a category for analysis).

13. In fact, Derrida's notion of deconstruction rests upon a "crisis" of the sign: "the instance of *krinein* or of *krisis* (decision, choice, judgement, discernment) is itself … one of the essential 'themes' or 'objects' of deconstruction" (1991, 273; Kayman 2002, 16).

14. Also worth mentioning are collections of essays on this topic such as *America and the Sea: A Literary History* (1995, ed. Haskell Springer), *The Sea and the American Imagination* (2004, ed. Klaus Benesch, Jon-K. Adams, and Kerstin Schmidt) or *"The Sea Is History": Exploring the Atlantic* (2009, ed. Carmen Birkle and Nicole Waller).

15. For influential monographs in this field, see Ashby (2012), D. Cohen (1993), Cullen (1995), Leventman (2006), Neuburg (1983), and Streeby (2002).

16. For the colonial era, Burgess even suggests that "the fissure between Crown and colonial law on piracy is so profound … that it goes beyond negotiation and argues instead for the germination of a completely separate Atlantic legal identity" (2014, 227).

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Pirate Narratives and the Colonial Atlantic

2.1 THE BUCCANEER-PIRATES: ARTICULATIONS OF CULTURAL CONTACT AND CRISIS, 1678–1699

2.1.1 *The Caribbean Scenario in the Late Seventeenth Century*

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the West Indies appeared as the most valuable colonial possessions of England and France[1]: "The sugar islands provided their metropolitan powers with enormous wealth; they offered adventurous Britons and Frenchmen places to change and make fortunes; and, by affording places to which to transport criminals and vagrants, the islands served as relief valves for urban overcrowding and other social pressures" (Krise 1999, 7). The significance of the West Indies as the hub of empire (*qua* Eric Williams) in these decades is evidenced culturally by the abundance of travel and exploration narratives in transatlantic literature, starting in the seventeenth century; travel as "a sign of empire" was pertinent in "representations of the Elizabethan Sea Dogs, the swashbuckling pirates, and the fortune hunters" which "all reveal an underlying expansionist and exploitative motivation—a drive to seize whatever wealth was available" (7).

Travel and exploration literature constituted the Caribbean not only as a zone of cultural contact, "the first American frontier" (Mackie 2009, 125) in which various populations and cultures—European, native, and African (American)—met, but also as a zone of crisis in political, economic, symbolic, and epistemological terms. The fact that piracy was

27

an important theme in this literature, with the pirate representing the ultimate outlaw-criminal on the one hand and a heroic model for a masculine, upwardly mobile colonial subjectivity representative of "the new moneyed economy" (Krise 1999, 13) on the other can be read as emblematic of the precariousness and criticality of colonial legitimacy. The Caribbean buccaneer-pirate, in various representations, highlighted the political and economic contest over the possession of and/or control over the West Indies, the struggle in the symbolic appropriation of these territories, and the uncontrollability of its agents, politically as well as culturally. In the last decades of the seventeenth century, narratives of piracy in the Americas such as Alexander Olivier Exquemelin's *De Amer-icaensche Zee-Roovers* (1678; Engl. *The Buccaneers of America*, 1684), Basil Ringrose's "pot-boiler" (Munter and Grose 1986, 28) *Dangerous Voyage and Bold Attempts of Captain Bartholomew Sharp* (1685), William Dampier's *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), or Lionel Wafer's *A Description of the Isthmus of Darien* (1699),[2] often set on the fringes of the Caribbean colonies (and further moving on to the Pacific coast via the Darién isthmus), voiced the complexity of cultural contact and *trans-latio imperii maris* as well as the uncontrollability of this process in the Americas.[3]

This chapter asks in what ways the pirate is represented as a figure of crisis in these narratives, a liminal figure between legitimate and illegitimate orders, between Europe and the Americas, wilderness and civilization, and clear-cut ethnic and national allegiances. I argue that in these texts, the pirate emerges as a critical, *coastal* figuration, a hybrid and fluid figure of contact and undecidability that, because of its liminal and paradoxical qualities, carried the potential of both questioning and affirming a burgeoning, yet highly precarious colonial system. In what follows, I thus explore to what extent pirates "were a reproach to plan-tocratic notions of law and order based on hereditary hierarchies of class, race, and gender" (Craton 1997, 53).

The spatial metaphor of the coast, structured by the temporalities of departure, arrival, and cultural encounter, highlights both the potential-ities and limitations of contact between self and Other. It refers to a space in which semiotic systems become unstable and difference is nego-tiated anew as territorial orders are in suspension. Piratical narratives of this period demonstrate the increasing desire to discursively control this fluidity and to semantically incorporate the popular, transgressive figura-tion of the buccaneer-pirate into the imperial project. As such, the pirate

book was increasingly appropriated by scientific discourses and obtained a substantial function in epistemological empire-building, the "second conquest" of the Americas (Bauer 2003, 3); by the end of the seventeenth century, pirate narratives constituted a "small but crucial niche in the publishing world" (Burgess 2014, 82).

The works under consideration are, in Ouellet's words, "marqués par cette 'crise de la conscience européenne' dont a si bien parlé Paul Hazard" (2004, 56),[4] the French historian whose seminal study *La Crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715* (1935; Engl. *The European Mind*, 1953) diagnosed an intellectual and moral crisis (xx) in this period of "revolution" (xv) in which "heresy" (xvii) in various forms articulated all the main ideas that would set the scene for the French Revolution. Emergent discourses of reason and right sought to replace duty and religion, the leading hermeneutic paradigms of European (especially French, English and Dutch) world-views. It is no coincidence that these countries were also the maritime powers dominating the Caribbean at the time; it is noteworthy, in the same vein, that Hazard starts his account by discussing the growing taste for travel and travel literature—he mentions English Barbary captivity narratives and Dampier's travel-books explicitly—as the seed of the new order in the early 1700s. It brought forth a change from stability to movement, paralleling a development from the 'classical' to the 'modern' mind and the influx of new ideas: "The exploration of the globe having resulted in discoveries that have destroyed many of the *data* on which ancient philosophy reposed, a new conception of things will inevitably be called for" (8). As perspectives changed with travel, so relativity was introduced as one of the "lessons derived from the idea of space" (11). In this "sea-change,"

> … all the fundamental concepts, such as Property, Freedom, Justice and so on, were brought under discussion again as a result of the conditions in which they were seen to operate in far-off countries, in the first place because, instead of all differences being referred to one universal archetype, the emphasis was now on the particular, the irreducible, the individual; in the second, because notions hitherto taken for granted could now be checked in the light of facts ascertained by actual experience. (10)

An obsession with fact and experience, garnished with doubt (as the beginning of science) and probability, resulted in a new, Lockean empiricism that historians of science such as Barbara Shapiro and philosophers

such as Edmund Husserl (in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*) have seen as a response, even outcome, of this crisis, even though few have emphasized the role of imperial travel as much as Hazard has. Philip Edwards characterizes the period by a "movement from experience to the written word, and on the mutations of the written word as it moves into print" (1994, 6).

Both Shapiro and Hazard draw a parallel between this epistemological crisis, with its scientific consequences, and the increasing predilection for a plain, prose style on the literary market (Shapiro 1983, 240–41). The appropriate genre for historiography, for instance, was no longer seen in poetry; metaphor was out of vogue, while factual, experiential, testimonial discourses were the reaction to doubt and skepticism, promising the highest point of certainty possible in the realm of science (29; absolute certainty was only possible in "God's knowledge" and "compelled assent" was a prerogative of logic and mathematics). Simplicity and clarity were associated with truth (247), and new literary forms such as the travel account "readily adopted the impartial presentation of matters of fact as their standard" (261): in this way, England developed *A Culture of Fact* (Shapiro) that, however, is to a much greater extent transatlantically framed and entangled with England's imperial projects in the Caribbean than Shapiro's work suggests.

In the same period, the transatlantic pirate narrative undergoes a similar discursive transformation—from the presentation of spectacular buccaneers, mentioned by Hazard as counter-discursive, anti-rational, and speaking to the readers' appetites for pleasure and fancy (1953, 361–64), to the scientific, reasonable pirate-privateer whose works are published under the aegis of the British Royal Society. This is a gradual change, as all pirate narratives have to straddle the tension of their age between truth and pleasure, scientific and literary values (Shapiro 1983, 250). The genre of chorography, in which these texts can be located, offered a model that combined spectacular (travel) narrative and scientific observation, natural and human history, geography and ethnography (Shapiro references Dampier in her discussion of this genre, 1983, 301 n. 41). Located to a large extent in the coastal zones of the American isthmus, the pirate chorography can be viewed both as a result of what Neil Rennie calls the "primitive colonialism" (2013, 110) of Caribbean buccaneers and as conditioned by a critical moment in the coloniality of English and European knowledge-formation that the genre sought to overcome.

2.1.2   *The Buccaneer in Literature: Points and Counterpoints*

In the last three decades of the seventeenth century, the literature of piracy related to the Caribbean coast and the isthmus of Darién (in contemporary Panama) illustrates the instability of traditional categories of knowing and understanding.[5] Fragmented, unstable, and unreliable voices and texts point to the epistemological crisis in the aftermath of cultural contact which resulted in a deep ambivalence between knowing and believing, intimacy and distance, authoritative gestures at consolidation and polyphonic disruption throughout the larger genre of early modern travel literature. The subgenre of expedition accounts by piratical explorers and proto-colonialists (who plundered the Americas without or with semi-official legitimation) is pervaded with a colonial violence marked by brutal subjugation and exploitation both physical and symbolical, a consequence mainly of European competition and conflict about the domination of the Americas. The pirate, who, as a legal subject, was characterized since antiquity as the enemy of all, especially of all nations, in contrast to the privateer (who was legitimized by an official letter of marque), is a liminal figure in these texts, moving between legitimacy and illegitimacy, between anti-mercantilist and proto-democratic counterculture and capitalist avant-garde.[6]

Narrative articulations of piracy vary significantly depending on genre; around 1700 the genres involved were mostly chorographic travel literature,[7] gallows narratives, and sermons preached and printed on account of public executions of former pirates, especially in Puritan New England and London. All of them, however, no matter whether they were written by participants in semi-or illegal expeditions themselves or by local authorities trying to suppress piracy, share a characteristic polyphony and inner narrative tension as they negotiate a crisis of religious and moral authority (in the case of the sermons and gallows narratives), of political legitimacy, and of hermeneutic understanding and ordering.

Drawing on Said's method of contrapuntal reading, I argue that the polyphonic and fragmented nature of these texts presents a disruptive force in the imperial project, as polyphony is at the core of representations of cultural contact and crisis. While these narratives bear testimony of the attempt of colonizing alterity both through physical and symbolic acts of violation and appropriation, they are at the same time unable to fully mask the multiple, often resistant colonized voices.

If the method of contrapuntal reading is applied to late seventeenth-century literature, the empire is of course a fundamentally different one than that of the nineteenth, and thus also afflicts writing in a different way: while the nineteenth-century empire is politically and economically consolidated, seventeenth-century French and English imperialism is in the very process of constructing and legitimizing its own identity vis-à-vis the Spanish predecessor, which had surpassed its zenith of colonial power already at the end of the 1500s, via an articulation of difference: Protestant England was to emerge as a benevolent alternative to Catholic Spain, its mission of "terror" (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 110) and the resulting genocidal cruelties toward the indigenous populations in the Americas, made popular through the Black Legend, *la leyenda negra*.[8] Emphasizing difference between the Spanish and the English had been a discursive practice since the reign of Elizabeth I, who, in Ted Motohashi's ironical phrasing, "contrary to the evil Catholic King of Spain, truly cared for the well-being of the native population" (1999, 91), and continued in the representation of cultural contact and cooperation with indigenous populations in piratical chorographies (Kempe 2010, 179). Exquemelin reports that

> … the Indians had hidden themselves in the forest, and the Spaniards could think of no better method than to bring in dogs to track them down. When any were found, the Spaniards hacked them to pieces and fed them to the hounds. Since that time, the Indians have been so terrified they dare not show themselves, and most of them have perished … . I myself have seen caves in the mountains full of human bones … . ([1678] 1969, 48–49)

Up to today, scholarship on piracy that simply reads the anti-Spanish Caribbean pirate as a figure of liberty (of proto-democracy, of free trade [Leeson, Storr], of egalitarianism, of anarchism [Kuhn], etc.) can be read in continuity with this Anglo-centric, nationalistic representation of the pirate as "a genuine emancipator" (Motohashi 1999, 91). The celebration of the pirate is thus also related to other cultural forms of missionary Protestant rhetoric in the context of colonial struggle and nation-building, as Nina Gerassi-Navarro (1999) has argued.

The process of English expansion in the Americas fascinated the English literate classes, who were in touch with colonial markets not only through monetary investment in commercial ventures but also via

the consumption of Caribbean luxury goods such as sugar, tobacco, and cocoa—and of writings about the New World. Travel accounts, as Mary Louise Pratt argues in this context, "created the imperial order for Europeans 'at home' and gave them their place in it … . [It] made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable to the citizenries of the imperial countries, even though the material benefits of the empire accrued mainly to the few" ([1992] 2008, 3). The literature of piracy, with its promise of economic potential, the mapping of certain American landscapes as Edenic, and an emphasis on "prizes" of gold and silver, participated in this best-selling genre (Arnold asserts that the book "quickly convinced the elites of northern Europe that the early successes of the buccaneers demonstrated that the Spanish Main was … finally ripe for plucking," 2007, 10). The dissemination of the *leyenda negra*, rendering the Spanish nation the stereotypical embodiment of repression, degradation, brutality, religious and political intolerance, and intellectual and scientific backwardness (Powell [1971] 2008), was a strategy of legitimization to spur patriotic support of the English colonial project, which also motivated piratical ventures, as narratives of piracy highlight; in early English travel writing, Motohashi explains, the Spaniards are "excluded as a third term, because they have transgressed the 'universal'—European and Indian—code of human ethics" (1999, 94). Their defeat promised "a commonwealth based on an imaginary reciprocal accord and well-being" for both autochthonous populations and the English. In addition, the *leyenda* is an effective strategy to "designate Self as pure and as remote from hybridity as possible" by producing an "alien race close to its own European origin," emphasizing difference between the two: "This is the moralised logic behind the English colonising ideology as a latecomer to the expansionist venture."[9]

The popularity of piratical literature might also be attributed, apart from its appeal to fantasy, colonial enthusiasm, and sensationalist appetite and credulity, to its coincidence with the burgeoning taste for the lowlife picaresque in Europe, one of the most important developments in late sixteenth-century literature.[10] This form of fictional autobiography flourished first in Spain and then in many European literatures through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Beeching 2000, 20); told from a first-person perspective, the picaresque relates a series of adventures of a usually lower-class, uneducated protagonist who is witty and sly enough to move up the social ladder. The travels and adventures—some of them voluntary, some involuntary—are told in a series of episodes and find

an ending in the reintegration of the *pícaro* into the social order. J. S. Bromley emphasizes that the resemblances between the *pícaro* and the pirate in their libertinism were a result of the fact that both these outcasts, lowly social misfits, had nothing to lose: "willing to lose everything on the throw of a dice, then begin all over again … . Living from day to day, at the mercy of events, the picaresque rogue is seldom his own master for long, yet living on his wits he can assert his independence and turn the table on masters no more virtuous than himself" (9–10, quoted in Latimer 2009, 76).

For these reasons, piracy narratives share many of the characteristics of the picaresque (homodiegetic first-person narration, travel and adventure, episodic structure, transgression of social and legal norms), but attribute much more space to the narrative articulation of cultural contact, nature observation, and technical information (navigation, climate, etc.) as they are fundamentally fragmented in terms of generic form. The fact that Daniel Defoe, one of the main authors to translate the genre into English fiction in the early 1700s, turned to earlier narratives of piracy for many of his adventure books, indicates that seventeenth-century transatlantic piratical narratives are important forerunners of the Anglophone picaresque.

A contrapuntal reading of late seventeenth-century accounts of piratical ventures hence needs to take heed of the fact that the imperial subjects represented by these authors and narrators were themselves fragmented and fluid, border crossers on the margins of an empire in the making. In the process of discursively solidifying these new colonial subjectivities, these publications strive to create indigenous voices as pro-English, while African-Americans emerge, if at all, as mere traces of colonial violence. The texts themselves invite a contrapuntal reading, as their narrative voices are full of doubt and mistrust in their American environments (both natural and cultural), unsteady in their alliances (e.g., with indigenous and creolized Spanish populations; with the English imperial design and a proto-Creole alternative),[11] and thus often hard to grasp. In Peter Hulme's phrasing, these are instances where "the text stutters in its articulation" and offers "levers to open out the ideology of colonial discourse, to spread it out, in this text, in an act of explication. … [N]o smooth history emerges, but rather a series of fragments which, read speculatively, hint at a story that can never be fully recovered" (1986, 12). Counter-discourses disappear behind chorographic description and re-emerge as disturbances to a linear patriotic narration. I propose to characterize the

multiplicity of these voices as piratical and coastal in order to emphasize their transgressiveness, instability and fluidity, but also their criticality in terms of legitimate authorship and coloniality.

In the following, I compare Exquemelin's 1678 *Zee-Roovers*, the earliest model of such piratical chorographies, with those of his English successors in order to highlight the shift taking place before the turn to the eighteenth century, as piracy was appropriated in writing and instrumentalized for a scientific imperialism in the context of a symbolic and factual empire-building that rested on gaining the authority of knowledge over the Americas.[12] As Sarah Irving has argued in the context of the epistemological shift from allegorical, pre-modern, to taxonomic, modern science (proclaimed by Michel Foucault), "America was *conceptually* significant, as it gave shape to a tradition of empire as dominion over knowledge" (2007, 28).[13] Similarly, Payton records a shift from "the enchanted worldview of romance to the disenchanted worldview of scientific modernity" (2013, 240) in his discussion of Exquemelin. 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 and Grose 1986, 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. From a contrapuntal perspective, these narratives thus both hide and reveal the discomfort and fragility of colonial (symbolical and political) economies as "the material and discursive construction of imperialism becomes its own critique and the process of its development becomes its own overturning" (Payton 2013, 342 in reference to Hardt and Negri).

2.1.3   The Caribbean Buccaneer-Pirate as an Embodiment of Crisis

The term buccaneer, though it became conflated with pirate in the seventeenth century—also via popular accounts of piracy among the buccaneers since the 1640s—referred to Caribbean hunting communities that resisted subjugation by the French crown. Originally French Huguenots (a presence in the West Indies since the 1520s) and later joined by remnants of Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army and other radical Protestants of various European nations (Hill 1984, 20; Latimer 2009, 11), the buccaneers can be viewed as showing an early form of

creole consciousness; Exquemelin reports that they "strongly resented the attempt to bring them under subjection, in a land which belonged neither to the King nor the [French West India] Company, and resolved not to work rather than be dominated" ([1678] 1969, 62). In addition, the buccaneers were often welcomed and supported by colonist groups against official policies, as they often supplied them with cheap slaves and commodities (Latimer 2009, 235; English and French smugglers had even sold firearms to the Caribs, which they used in their fights against the Spanish colonizers, 62). Buccaneer leaders' names like the Dutch-born "Rock the Brazilian" (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 80–82) are also indicative of creole rather than imperial identification.

The name for these "masterless men" (Rediker 2004, 286), sailors and indentured servants, unemployed workers and artisans, who took refuge as hunters in the forests of Hispaniola, Tortuga, and other fringe zones of the colonial empires, points to the cultural and linguistic hybridity of this group specifically and to the Caribbean contact zone in particular, placing the buccaneer on a continuum with the "Indian" and the Maroon/*cimarron* (runaway slave): "boucan" has been traced etymologically to the Taíno Arawak word for the place and wooden grating used to smoke-dry meat, a method the European refugees had learnt from these natives (who, by the late seventeenth century, had mostly died through diseases or been enslaved) and shared as a practice with the maroons (see Bev Carey's "Jerk Pork Connection," 1997, 66; De Lourdes Edwards 2007, 627; other sources call it a Carib word, e.g., Beeching 2000, 9). Buccaneer communities had their own code of social conduct and organization (the "custom of the coast" / Fr. "coutume de la côte," later also called "Jamaica discipline" in reference to the Jamaican pirates; Latimer 2009, 239), including the homosocial bonds of matelotage.[14] They turned into pirates and mercenaries when the Spaniards, seeking to dissolve these outlaw communes, destroyed the wild herds of cattle on which their hunting society subsisted. Although the buccaneers were eventually eliminated by the English when they had made peace with Spain, both English and French agents in the Caribbean made frequent use of these men's excellent marksmanship and raiding skills in their wars against the Spanish trade monopoly. Thus, they were both resistant to and complicit in the colonial wars between the three major European empires, which instrumentalized yet never fully controlled their Caribbean "task force."[15] Rennie calls them "Europeans who had become

American savages [sic] … colonists in reverse, colonized by savagery, trib-
alized and culturally reinvented" similar to the later frontiersman (2013,
16).

As pirates, the buccaneers were defined *ex negativo* by their lack of
any official, national backing. Their implicit political heterogeneity and
indefinability represented a general threat to political categorization and
order—the buccaneers have been described as unfathomable, unreliable,
uncivilized, 'barbarous' and cruel, even monstrous, in contemporaneous
accounts such as Exquemelin's, prone to gluttony and squander, defiant
to industry and labor: a threat to the *translatio imperii* particularly in
times of peace, when they could no longer be contained legitimately
as privateers within the imperial project and endangered international
colonial agreements: "Where previously a weak or tolerant state had toler-
ated smugglers," for instance, "now their resistance made them pirates"
(Pérotin-Dumon 1991, 199). Economically, they stood for the opposite
of the accumulative ethics that marked mercantilism and proto-capitalism,
defying labor, frugality, and rational economic behavior—instead, the
buccaneer-pirate was idle and profligate, an almost Bataillean figure of
excess. As a figuration of alterity, he thus ranks in close relationship with
the 'cannibal,' the 'savage,' and a number of outlawed subjectivities who
tried to retain agency in the colonial theatre such as the maroon (but
in opposition to the slave, who is defined by a denial of subjectivity and
agency). In the foreword to his 1926 German translation of Exquemelin's
Zee-Roovers, for example, Hans Kauders describes the buccaneers as "men
of prey" (originally "Raubmenschen," my translation), drawing on the
distinction between the raw and the cooked as a mark of civilization
explored by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Straus four decades later: they
"plunged upon the culled bull and sucked the marrow, still warm from
his bones, … devoured the meat, their only food, even raw if necessary,
… [and] tortured their human victims most cruelly" (1926, 13).[16]

Yet even the representation of "monstrous pirates" in Exquemelin (or
in Puritan anti-piracy sermons, for that matter) cannot hide that this
alterity offered a way of life beyond official control, which for many was
the only alternative to indenture, enslavement, and lethal exploitation.
Captain John Smith explained the attractiveness of piracy for the English
also in political-economic terms, writing that "King James who from his
infancie had reigned in peace … had no imployment for those men of
warre so that those that … were poore and had nothing but from hand to
mouth, turned Pirats" (quoted in Latimer 2009, 30). Others had been left

out of work and in debt in the course of the transformation of the plantation system into a slave economy (95); the phenomenon of Caribbean piracy and buccaneering can be understood as a symptomatic consequence of unemployment and of the uncontrollability of colonialists who developed an agency of their own. The moment of 'turning pirate' meant that sailors appropriated a mobility they had so far known only as a result of (usually economically motivated) coercion.

Out of a mass of sailors, plantation workers, indentured servants, and to some extent even slaves, all of whom became part and parcel for the stabilization of a fledgling Atlantic economy of accumulation in the seventeenth century (geared toward profit for its European centers), an Atlantic proto-proletariat was formed, as Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker argue, formulating the concept of a "Red Atlantic" of expropriation and capitalism, proletarization and resistance—parallel to Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic (Armitage 2001, 479; Linebaugh and Rediker 2000, 61). This early modern working class, essential as it was for the economic development of both land and sea, seems to have been informed by word of mouth about the fact that pirates organized themselves according to proto-democratic principles (one man, one vote), that they offered social security to some extent (such as injury compensation and pensions),[17] that their only master was the crew and its chosen captain, and that this life promised more freedom, if not less hardship. The fact of communal solidarity, sharing, deliberation, and consensual problem-solving is often emphasized in the contemporary literature of piracy: the buccaneers are "extremely loyal" (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 72); they "resolve by common vote where they shall cruise" (71); "the men decide whether the captain should keep [a captured ship] or not"; and they "helped one another all they could, those who had money sharing with those who had none" (232; see also Ringrose 1685, 150, 159, 162; Dampier 1697, 12: "none should live better than others, or pay dearer for any thing that it was worth").

Harking back to Christopher Hill's classic essay "Radical Pirates?" (1984) and Eric Hobsbawm's theorizations of *Primitive Rebels* (1959) and *Bandits* (1969), Linebaugh and Rediker's interpretation seems somewhat overdrawn if read against the texts under discussion in this chapter. While the narratives by Exquemelin, Ringrose, Dampier, and Wafer all mention collaboration with autochthonous peoples and the presence of Africans, they also make clear that members of these groups were hardly

equal participants in the buccaneer-pirate communities. Quite to the contrary, *both* the buccaneers and their enemies used these groups as slaves, servants, and military personnel.[18] A passage from the third part of Exquemelin's *Buccaneers* sets forth the ambivalent terms on which their ventures are based—the exploitation of women, African-Americans, and indigenous subjects:

> The rovers are on such friendly terms with the native people they can stay and live among them without risk of harm, and without a care in the world. The Indians give them all they need, in exchange for which they give the Indians nothing but old knives, axes and tools … . When a rover comes there, he buys a woman from the Indians for an old axe or knife, and for this fee she must stay with him till he leaves … . A man who has taken an Indian wife has nothing to worry about: she brings him his daily food, as is customary among the Indians. The man need do nothing but a little hunting or fishing. A white man need not even do this, but may order an Indian to do it for him. … These Indians are a great asset to the rovers, as they are very good harpoonists [and] extremely skilful. … In fact, an Indian is capable of keeping a whole ship's company of 100 men supplied with food. … ([1678] 1969, 219–20)

The buccaneer-pirate crew is located in a colonial land of Cockaigne structured by an economy of color in Exquemelin's terms, as the "Indians" are constructed as stationary and at the service of the mobile rovers, and autochthonous women are sold for a fee, an act that virtually enslaves and immobilizes them as long as their (white) masters wish. At the same time, the relations between the buccaneers and "Indians" are described as harmonious; the text here does not paint the natives as cannibalistic, savage enemies, but as welcoming the buccaneers and as being happy to serve and labor for them. The superiority of whites—however "motley" their crews—is clearly upheld by such passages. Yet if, according to Hanna, many reports of "black or multiracial crews were fabricated" and related to fears of slave revolts rather than actual black pirates (2015, 384; see also my reading of Melville's "Benito Cereno"), this conception of pirates as "motley" testifies to their radical potential as subjects of resistance.

Pirates and buccaneers knew captivity and robbery, disenfranchisement, rape, and enslavement more often as agents than as victims. Quoting W. Jeffrey Bolster's seminal monograph about African-American seamen,

> [b]uccaneering tempted black seamen with visions of invincibility, with dreams of easy money and the idleness such freedom promised, and with the promise of a life unfettered by the racial and social ideology central to the plantation system. Unattached black men operating in the virtually all-male world of the 'brotherhood of the Coast' realized those yearnings to a degree, but also found abuse and exploitation, as well as mortal combat and pursuit. (1997, 13)

To romanticize the buccaneer-pirate communities as either formations of resistance against or as complicit with an eventually benevolent, liberatory colonial project is thus a gross simplification; as liminal figures they did not find themselves beyond dominant relations and discourses, especially with regard to race and gender. In addition, the very fact that a wide range of piratical texts entailed proto-ethnographic, geographic, and nautical descriptions is evidence of the close relationship between the pirate and the explorer, who, in the case of William Dampier, was actually one and the same. Scholarship of Caribbean piracy, then, has to "resist the reduction of cross-cultural encounter to simple relations of domination and subordination" and "must acknowledge not only its complicity, but also its power of re-figuration and aspiration towards a more benign ethics of alterity" (Clark 1999, 3–4). The pirate at the end of the seventeenth century oscillates between a figure of alterity, defined by aberration from legal, social, religious, and cultural norms, and a figure of identification, who produced a fantastic imaginarium in which the armchair colonialists "whose lives have never taken them far from their mother's kitchen" (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 188) back in Europe could imagine the New World as a place of abundance, liberty, and adventure; the designation of a new world itself suggested limitless possibilities for European economic, political, religious, and social renewal (Frohock 2004, 21).

In sum, the pirate-buccaneers can be understood as an embodiment of political, economic, and cultural-epistemological crisis. Pirates mark the erratic return of the repressed in the burgeoning colonial order due to the unpredictability of their actions and alliances; the defiance of an accumulative economy; and the threat they posed to categories of cultural categorization in the context of their 'going-savage' and their 'going-native,' collaborating with autochthonous groups and appropriating indigenous ways of life.

2.1.4 *Exquemelin's* Zee-Roovers/Buccaneers of America

The first book-length narrative to afford its readers "an inside look at Caribbean buccaneers" (Arnold 2007, 10) was *De Americaensche Zee-Roovers* of 1678 by Alexander Olivier Exquemelin, originally published in Dutch and in the course of only a few years (rather loosely) translated into German (Nuremberg 1679), Spanish (1681), English (1684), and French (1686) in numerous editions,[19] which made it a transnational best-seller by seventeenth-century measures. The book presented European readers, often of "the wealthy Calvinist merchant class" (Arnold 2007, 13) with "a novel and shockingly candid portrait" (Frohock 2010b, 56) of the buccaneers, catering to the contemporary taste for the sensational and the spectacular, which was tightly intertwined with the imperial project of discovery, as Stephen Greenblatt has argued for the Renaissance context in *Marvellous Possessions*. The book became a standard source for subsequent piracy literature and fiction (e.g., by Captain Charles Johnson and Daniel Defoe). Published under the name of a (probably French) indentured laborer who became barber-surgeon for pirate captains François L'Olonnais and Henry Morgan,[20] its author was actually not sufficiently fluent in Dutch to have written the book by himself (Beeching 2000, 19); it was most likely his Amsterdam publisher, Jan ten Hoorn, who brought Exquemelin's oral account (or perhaps French manuscript) into the form in which it was eventually published (Ouellet 2004, 53).

In the text, which is persistently marked by its collective authorship, by traces of orality, the process of translation, and linguistic, narrative, and formal hybridity,[21] the implied author-narrator recounts his service in the French West India Company in Tortuga until the company's expedition is dissolved for bankruptcy and he is sold to a cruel master. Sick and on the verge of dying, he is bought by a philanthropic surgeon who lends him the money to buy back his freedom after his recovery. Wanting to return the money he owes and lacking other means of its acquisition, Exquemelin enlists with the buccaneers for five years before returning to Europe (he would return to the Caribbean in 1697, participating in the attack on one of the most important Spanish ports, Cartagena de Indias, in present-day Colombia).

Exquemelin's book is the most genuinely transnational, compared to Ringrose's, Wafer's, or Dampier's (whose cultural function can only be understood in the context of British empire-building); in her influential essay "Traveling Genres," Margaret Cohen cites the *Buccaneers* as a prime

example of sea voyage narratives "whose national location is often hard to pinpoint due to the itinerant quality of their authors and publication histories" (481). Traditional concepts of authorship, of Dutch (or French) literature, of original and translation are difficult to apply here:

> … on revient … à une période antérieure où la notion d'auteur original avait beaucoup moins d'importance … . Quant aux éditeurs, ils ne nient pas la réalité de l'auteur: ils s'en servent plutôt pour cautionner la véracité du livre qu'ils publient. Lors même qu'ils utilisent le texte de l'auteur comme un simple canevas, ils affirment avec emphase sa qualité de témoin pour donner de la crédibilité à une entreprise littéraire fort éloignée, thématiquement et idéologiquement, de ce qu'on imagine être l'original. (Ouellet 2004, 36)[22]

Falling between the cracks of any national literary historiography, Exquemelin's text has received little scholarly attention so far—despite the fact that transatlantic and transnational studies are by now a well-established perspective in literary and cultural studies.[23] It presents a rare testimony of the Red Atlantic, written from the perspective of an indentured servant who underwent severe hardship under the command of various abusive masters—both outside and inside the buccaneer communities. As literature from *below* in terms of class and from *between* in terms of national tradition, it exposes colonial labor relations and systematic abuse that official histories glossed over for good reason:

> [o]fficial histories provide no platform for exposing [colonial] abuses; the point of critique can come only from the perspective of the humble, solitary eye-witness, who has intimate knowledge, but also a moral distance, and who consequently can see that the horror of piracy, which consists of atrocities concealed and advanced through discursive manipulation, is also the horror of imperialism generally. (Frohock 2010b, 68–69)

All this happens under the pretense that the book is merely a description of horrific sea-rovers, when in fact it uses 'the horror of piracy' as *pars pro toto* for 'the horror of imperialism.'

The first seven chapters recount the author-narrator's travels to Tortuga and Hispaniola, accompanied by a detailed description of the islands' nature as marvelous and Edenic (spurred perhaps by his medical interest in plants, de Lourdes Edwards 2007, 626), explanations of the

political relations between various European colonizing agents, the plantation economy and its harsh treatment of indentured servants and slaves, and an in-depth account of the buccaneers. Exquemelin's plea for better treatment of indentured servants by plantation owners of all nationalities articulates an Atlantic proto-proletarian consciousness across national borders that is quite stunning for the time:

> [The planters] trade in human beings just like the Turks, selling bondsmen among themselves as people in Europe deal horses. … They make big promises [recruiting them among European peasants], but when the lads get to the island they are sold and have to work like horses, harder in fact than the Negroes. For the planters admit they must take greater care of a Negro slave than a white bondsman, because the Negro is in their service for life, while the white man is theirs only for a period. They treat their bond-servants as cruelly as the [buccaneer] hunters do, showing them no pity at all. ([1678] 1969, 64)

The narrator goes on to describe the harsh working conditions, the bad diet, various illnesses (bodily and psychological) among them, and brutal torture such as smearing their wounds with lemon juice, salt, and red pepper after a beating. "They are forced to work with blows, often until they drop down dead. Then the planters complain, 'The rascal would rather die than work.' I have often seen such cases, to my great sorrow" (64). Exquemelin also relates various examples of their attempts at resistance: of indentured young men who run away and starve to death, who kill their master and are hanged. He differentiates between various national practices on the Caribbean islands, but emphasizes that "[a]trocious cruelties" are common to the plantations regardless of the nationality of their owners. His charges mention tyrants like the planter Belteste on St. Kitts (65), who "dared to say it made no difference to him whether he should be damned or saved, so long as he could leave enough wealth behind him for his children" (66) or English planters who "treat their servants no better, but with greater cunning," continuously lengthening the period of indenture so that many men "have been enslaved in this manner for fifteen, twenty and twenty-eight years" and following "a strict law that when anyone owes the sum of twenty-five shillings … he may be sold as a slave for a certain period."

The subtitle promises "a pertinent and truthful description of the principal acts of depredation and inhuman cruelty committed by the English

and French buccaneers against the Spaniards in America," countering the myth of the *leyenda negra* as it locates inhuman cruelty among English and French Protestants as well; in his report of buccaneer society, Exquemelin describes them as the worst masters of slaves and indentured servants, for example, "cruel and merciless to their bondsmen: there is more comfort in three years on a galley than one in the service of a boucanier" (55). Yet the book does not take sides with Spain either; "depredation and inhuman cruelty" are committed by all kinds of Caribbean agents in the book. The buccaneers themselves are represented as far from an egalitarian alternative for the Caribbean subalterns; the figure of the buccaneer is coastal in Exquemelin not just in terms of his localization on Caribbean (as well as Pacific) coasts, but also with regard to cultural contact, as the narration devises a colonial continuum between 'savage' autochthonous populations, Spanish colonizers, and Protestant newcomers through the representation of violence in all of these. The pirates are located somewhere between these identities. The buccaneers, Richard Frohock explains, "are not an anomaly in the colonial experience but rather an exemplar of the violence and exploitation perpetrated by imperialist centers" (2010b, 66). Exquemelin's text relativizes the construction of the pirate as Other, contesting the dominant construction of a binary opposition between legitimate and illegitimate Caribbean agents.

Numerous illustrative engravings (possibly by Jan Luykens, Arnold 2007, 13) emphasize this intermedially (e.g., Fig. 2.1): killings, subjugation, and methods of torture used by the buccaneers are described and depicted in gory and excessive detail (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, e.g., 11, 39, 106; also Payton 2013, 339), reminiscent of contemporary horror films, but are not limited to any one of these groups. To the contrary: the narrator authenticates his descriptions of torture methods, for instance, by naming an "Indian who had often treated his enemies in this manner, and it has also been seen by Christians living among these tribes" (39). The littoral space of the Caribbean itself, as the center of colonial struggles in the seventeenth century, rather than any specific group there, is constructed as violent.

The etchings articulate another paradoxical colonial continuum, representing the buccaneers both as 'uncivilized' brutes and as European gentlemen—emigrants who have successfully claimed agency in the Americas, despite their often gruesome deaths (which are represented in a manner of poetical justice).

Fig. 2.1 Engraving in Exquemelin's *Buccaneers of America*, used in both the Dutch original and the English translations (Courtesy of Library of Congress)

The portrait gallery of the most notorious buccaneers indeed turns them into heroic "gentlemen of fortune," as they often insist to be called in Exquemelin's book. In this way, the text negotiates social mobility, highlighting the coastality of class difference: reaching the Caribbean

coast entails the opening-up of a rigid European social system governed by both class inheritance and the beginning of the myth of American freedom and a classless society. In contrast to the legitimate colonizer, the pirate's ascent seems to be predicated on exploitation and criminal transgression, but Exquemelin's colonial continuum disturbs this binary vision.

The violent continuum is extended beyond the Caribbean coast toward the Pacific via Panama but also reaches back to Europe. Emphasizing violence, deviance, and difference in the West Indies in terms of both nature and cultures, Exquemelin presents an exotic, transgressive, and spectacular Caribbean Other and a space of marvel and awe to the metropolitan reader (a hermeneutic strategy that primarily creates satisfaction among colonial audiences that expect this topos of the ethnographic narrative, Hartog 1988, 230–37). But because he has to bridge the hermeneutic gap of the Atlantic, the text relies on comparisons, analogies, and similes, yet another of the major hermeneutic strategies to render the 'exotic' and the unknown believable and comprehensible (225–30). With Europe as a reference point, for instance, Exquemelin compares "the coming of the hunters and the privateers" to Caribbean coastal towns with that of "the East India ships and men-of-war" to Amsterdam ([1678] 1969, 54), which are both accompanied by wild feasts and wastefulness; more frequently, foreign plants and animals are set into relation with European flora and fauna. As ordering and structuring instruments, these similes aim at pacifying the colonial chaos of the Caribbean, but read contrapuntally, they construct the dark side of coloniality as not beyond, but at the very heart of Europe: without the *absent center* in constant reference, America cannot 'mean' anything. Taking into account these ambiguities of narrative identification and distancing, the pirate-buccaneers are hard to pin down conceptually; they appear as mobile subjects in a colonial continuum of economic exploitation, violent practices of oppression, and resistance, a continuum that begins in Europe and stretches across and beyond the Atlantic. They are neither mere outlaw disturbers of imperial maritime undertakings, nor, conversely, straightforward supporters of these ventures. Exquemelin articulates, with the figure of the buccaneer at the center, a culturally hybrid population on the fringes of metropolitan control and comprehension.

The subtitle also indicates an authorial attempt of dissociation from the pirates, necessary first in order not to endanger Exquemelin's legal position as their servant rather than fellow buccaneer, and second not

to undermine his authority by associating him with these outlaws. The tension between familiarity and distance is pertinent throughout the book; as Richard Frohock has argued, Exquemelin "must show himself to have been close enough to have observed events firsthand, but sufficiently removed that the disrepute of piracy does not tarnish his character" (2010b, 57). This is apparent already on the title page, billing the narrative as written by one "who himself, *of necessity*, was present at all these acts of plunder" (my emphasis).

Narrative dissociation works on another level as well: although the Spaniards are made responsible by the book for the mistreatment and destruction of the indigenous populations, in accordance with the *leyenda negra*, the narrator does not side with any national-colonial project as his voice remains at a distance from any sort of national loyalty as well as from the buccaneers themselves (see also Payton 2013, 340). Only when Exquemelin thematizes his personal history autobiographically, authorial distance is briefly interrupted; these sections establish a firm narrative "I": "As a servant of the [French West India] Company myself, I was among those sold, and had just the ill luck to fall into the hands of the wickedest rogue in the whole island" ([1678] 1969, 34; the "wickedest rogue" here does not refer to a slave-holding buccaneer master, but Tortuga's deputy governor). When he is resold to his savior, he recounts: "When I was free once more, I was like Adam when he was first created. I had nothing at all, and therefore resolved to join the privateers or buccaneers." Evoking biblical innocence also in terms of knowing—Adam when he was first created instead of Adam after having eaten from the tree of knowledge—in this representation of his agency's rebirth, the narrator implies that freedom also means the necessity to take care of one's subsistence. Legitimizing the buccaneers by calling them "privateers" here, the narrator strives to present himself as indigent and socially detached, an outsider rather than a voluntary associate (Frohock 2010b, 58). This disassociation is also strengthened at the beginning of chapter six, when he refers back to how he "was driven to join the pirates"—now using the term to delegitimize them as he does not "know what other name they deserve, as they were not backed by any prince" (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 67). It is significant that the various denominations—buccaneer, privateer, pirate—are often used interchangeably in the book, demonstrating the narrator's great ambiguity in terms of the(ir) linguistic and legal categorization—his coastal vision of the pirate as a figure suspends clear categorization. His cautiously careful dis-identification of course also

owes to his own ambiguous legal position as (quasi-indentured) servant of the buccaneers—he refers to "my own master" among them, for instance (82)—while being treated with respect for his skills as barber-surgeon.[24] Yet a third aspect is the preservation of narrative authority by distancing himself from the pirates. The narrative voice remains liminal, at the crossroads of identification, as familiar categories seem out of joint.

The establishment of narrative authority and authenticity is indeed crucial in Exquemelin's and similar chorographical-piratical texts. One of the major questions about the genre of the seventeenth-century pirate narrative thus relates to the strategies necessary to lend authority and credibility to sensational stories about pirate-buccaneers. As Richard Frohock argues, the historian's interest in Exquemelin and the question of truth versus fiction is less fruitful than considering how Exquemelin "continually engages with issues concerning language and authority," as he "was fascinated with the challenges of producing credible accounts of experience and with the techniques and politics of manipulating narrative for empowerment" (2010b, 56). The nature of crisis in Exquemelin, as I argue, is one of authority and the word, a crisis of narrative form and of identification with the coloniality of power in terms of its dichotomous categories of rational and irrational, civilized and savage, good and bad.

Frohock has identified mainly two narrative modes in Exquemelin: the first-person authorial voice that is presented as credible and independent, and the critical dialogic voices inserted through the frequent use of reported speech, including that of the "linguistic rebel[]" (2010b, 57) of the buccaneer. Arguably, there is a third mode that helps him not to undermine this delicately constructed authority (e.g., by being identified as a criminal pirate), that is when the narrator completely obliterates his own voice (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 58); becoming heterodiegetic, he thus hides behind factual observation (but reappears whenever further authorization is needed). Consequently, the relationship between narrator and narrative becomes fraught and unclear—especially when cruelty and excess, sumptuousness and wasteful squandering are reported and Exquemelin veils his own role in the events. Here the buccaneers are clearly "they":

> They squander in a month all the money which has taken them a year … to earn. They drink brandy like water, and will buy a whole cask of wine, broach it, and drink until there's not a drop left. Day and night they roam

the town, keeping the feast of Bacchus so long as they can get drink for money. The service of Venus is not forgotten, either. (54)

For that is the way with these buccaneers—whenever they have got hold of something, they don't keep it for long. They are busy dicing, whoring and drinking so long as they have anything to spend. Some of them will get through a good two or three thousand pieces of eight in a day—and next day not have a shirt to their back … . Yes, and many other impieties. (81–82)

Women, again, are the providers of service, while men are mobile, consuming subjects, roaming the towns; other providers of military and labor service, unsurprisingly, are "Negroes" and "Indians" (as they are termed throughout the book). The narrator, although to some degree part of the piratical crew himself, obliterates his presence and role in these events completely (rather than addressing a moral dilemma as witness of these scenes or as immoral participant), creating the impression of passive and objective observation, concomitant with the seventeenth-century "invention" of the concepts of truth, objectivity, and rationality (Shapiro 1983). The use of the first-person narrative "I," although it creates involvement and presence rather than distance, can also be read as a strategy of individual dissociation from the collective "buccaneers." Nevertheless, on 38 of about 200 pages, the first-person plural narrative "we" appears mostly vis-à-vis autochthonous groups (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, e.g., 211) or regarding collective decision-making processes; occasionally, Exquemelin also uses an authorial plural developing into a "we" that includes the reader ("Having … described these ceremonies of the sailors, we will now continue our journey," 27; "While our rovers are engaged in this work, I will briefly describe," 115), thus constructing a colonial collective that includes the European armchair adventurer. The entire narrative appears extremely fragmented by the frequent changes in narrative mode, leaving much space for the reader's imagination, but also creating disorder and chaos in the reader's mind—despite all efforts in the construction of narrative authority.[25]

Exquemelin needs help in this narrative construction work: as the narrator repeatedly emphasizes, he derives his authority first from a discourse of witnessing and testimonial. Second, he emphasizes knowledge of informants of various cultural backgrounds and their trust in

him: "trustworthy persons" (45) like the above-mentioned "Indian" whom he lends his voice—not in order to render subaltern voices audible for his European readers, but for his own advantage, catering to the enhancement of his credibility and reputation as an informant. In a contrapuntal reading, however, the fact that he uses "savages" as voices of authority also shows the dependence of metropolitan publications and their credibility on the native informant.

In contrast to Dampier's, Ringrose's, and Wafer's narrators, Exquemelin's voice is much more insecure and frail, certainly also because he is exiled from official colonialism through the experience of indenture, the economic failure of the colonial endeavor, and a lack of opportunity for re-integration into any national 'home' society.[26] The coastal subject of the contact zone is unable to discursively control chaotic colonial identities-in-transculturation, buccaneers as well as "Indians" and Spaniards, swerving between admiration and indignation, collaboration and resistance. In the case of the pirates, their portrayal ranges from respect for their fraternity and mutual loyalty to contempt of their way of life and sheer horror of their "barbarous" (200) ways, for example when he reports that they almost exclusively live on meat, "even eat apes" (106), literally lick the blood of their enemies (106) and in times of starvation "determined to eat the Indians" (118) and "had been found picking the corpses of the fallen Spaniards" (206).[27] In this way, Exquemelin's book demonstrates that the Caribbean, as a space of all kinds of imperial and colonial struggles, turns everyone into "savages"— even "cannibals"—effectively de-ethnicizing and de-essentializing these terms, central to colonial epistemology.

This paradoxical attitude is perhaps most explicit in Exquemelin's report of Henry Morgan and his raid on Panama, in the second part of *The Buccaneers of America*. The narrator is fascinated by Morgan's popularity and his leadership skills, which, despite his cruelty, earned him the solidarity of up to a thousand buccaneers, plundering the Spanish riches in his command. The episode starts with an avowal of belief in the glorious fate of the Protestants in their battle against the Spanish Catholics: in a providentialist vein typical of all of the texts under consideration in this chapter, the "curious reader shall see how God permitted the unrighteousness of the buccaneers to flourish, for the chastisement of the Spaniards" (167): the legitimacy of the buccaneer-pirates, however monstrous, is that they are needed to combat enemies of equal monstrosity, in reference to the *leyenda negra*; "God allows the cruelty

of the buccaneers in order to exact vengeance on the Spaniards for their deplorable history of cruelties in the Americas" (Frohock 2010b, 66). The violence and success of the monstrous buccaneers is expressive of a higher power, which not only explains Morgan's ruthlessness, but is presented as necessary in order to save the New World for Protestantism and England (Arnold 2007, 12).[28] Ironically, this providentialism constitutes an English reproduction of Spanish colonial discourse, which also fashioned itself as God's plan (Frohock 2004, 33).

After reports of great starvation among the troops and Spanish and indigenous resistance (Exquemelin [1678] 1969, 189–92), the text continues to describe Morgan's methods of torture in detail. The women of Panama City are not spared, though they are depicted as susceptible to the gallantry of the buccaneers. Again, the narrator distances himself from the violence of the pirates and reports that he secretly helps the Spanish victims of the buccaneers. Eventually, he appears similar to the Spanish women themselves, who had been warned that they would not be able to bear the sight of the "buccaneers' deformity" (202) since they were more like animals than Spaniards (metonymically used for humans); when they first encounter the pirates, however, they shout, according to Exquemelin: "Jesus, the robbers are just like us Spaniards, … as courteous as if they were Spanish!" Again, a colonial continuum (rather than an opposition) of behaviors is affirmed—here, the difference between 'bad' Catholic Spaniards and 'good' Protestants, between buccaneer savagery and humanity is held in suspension by the dissonant, contrapuntal voices of female colonists, which no official history would record. This polyphony likens the women of the town to the narrator: they both appear indecisive in their view of the pirates, expressing both disgust and admiration.

Morgan, who had risen from an indentured servant to a plantocrat partly backed by the Jamaican governor Modyford, felt misrepresented. As he was trying to rehabilitate himself and make a political career (he had become a nobleman and vice-governor of Jamaica in 1674 and had turned against the buccaneer-pirates, now fearing for his position when the Catholic King James II succeeded to the throne), he sued the two English publishers that had sold "Esquemeling's" book in two different translations in a premiere in the history of English law, since it was the first case of libel: "He was not a pirate, he said; he was a privateer, and therefore respectable. He … insisted that 'there are such thieves and pirates called buccaneers who subsist by piracy, depredations and evil

deeds of all kinds without lawful authority, that of these people Henry Morgan always had and still has hatred'" (Latimer 2009, 256; also Arnold 2007). Morgan won and received compensation money, and the publisher Crooke subsequently issued an apology for the association of Morgan with piracy.[29]

In sum, by alternately stressing similarity and difference between the Caribbean and Europe, Exquemelin's text is testimony to a transatlantic population-in-transculturation on the fringes of metropolitan control, inhabiting, in the words of Eric Wolf, "the margins of constituted society and liv[ing] off the flotsam and jetsam of its resources" (1982, 154–55). These multiethnic populations, a "great mingling of races" according to Exquemelin ([1678] 1969, 36)—Europeans, autochthones, *cimarrones*, and slaves—are met with both sympathy (even identification) and distance, rendering the narrative heterogeneous and full of inner tension, emblematic of a crisis in epistemology, a crisis of knowing and telling that accompanied the colonial project in the Americas.

2.1.5   Attempts at Consolidation: Pirate-Scientists' Texts

Exquemelin's chorographic adventure book achieves no narrative closure, but "the acceleration of a public dialogue about buccaneers and others who fabricated discourse to conceal imperial plundering" (Frohock 2010b, 69). Anglophone pirate narrative published in the two decades following Exquemelin's book partook in this discourse.[30] In these later works, the narrative voices representing Protestant pirates in the Caribbean are stabilized and consolidated as the pirate disappears and is displaced by the privateer as a sign of legitimacy. Buccaneer authors and their editors used new strategies of legitimation—they discontinued the use of the word pirate, dedicated their writings to officials in England, published their accounts as part of collections of travel writing, and presented their actions as an increasingly benign Protestant reconquest in the service of English (and a failing Scottish) imperialism.[31] Former pirates like Morgan contested representations of themselves as brutal outlaws, legitimizing themselves (and thus also saving themselves from the gallows) as important agents in the context also of a symbolic empire-building that rested on gaining the authority of knowledge over the Americas.

In the 1680s and 1690s, a pentalogy of pirate narratives was published in the context of Captain Bartholomew Sharp's plunders, the most

successful one by William Dampier. In chronologic progression, they develop into travel narratives that hide their piratical context, as their titles demonstrate: Basil Ringrose's *The Voyages and Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp and Others, in the South Sea: Being a Journal of the Same* (1684)[32] and *The Dangerous Voyage and Bold Attempts of Captain Bartholomew Sharp* (1685), published as the second volume of Crooke's 1684 English edition of Exquemelin's *Bucaniers* [sic] *of America*; Dampier's *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697, published in five editions within less than a decade and reprinted many times in collected editions [Edwards 1994, 17]), Lionel Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), and Captain Sharp's *Journal of His Expedition; Written by Himself of the Same Year*. In England, the seventeenth century "saw an ever more successful attempt to bring the pirate into the fold of ... imperial aspirations," which also holds true for the textual strategies to represent the figure (Sherman 2002, 28); Crooke's 1684 English edition of Exquemelin, now dedicated to the rehabilitated Henry Morgan, had prepared the ground for this development. Yet while Exquemelin's transnational narrative voices ambivalence and ambiguity in terms of the narrator's positioning and the articulation of the Caribbean buccaneer-pirate, the historical context of an increasing anti-piracy sentiment (and according to laws such as the 1698 *Act for the more effectual Suppression of Piracy*)[33] made English privateer-pirates such as Ringrose,[34] Dampier, or Wafer largely obliterate cruelty and savagery, whitewashing their expeditions into heroic acts of patriotism and exploration and attempting to consolidate the crisis of authority and knowing (Edwards 1994, 22–28). Accordingly, the use of the word "pirate" and even "buccaneer" decreases continuously in these books, and the plundering recedes "behind increasingly inflated characterizations of the conqueror's generosity and benevolent intent" (Frohock 2004, 25); but despite these imperial efforts, even these texts cannot entirely subjugate the dissonant voices of piracy as a coastal phenomenon of the Caribbean contact zone. Read contrapuntally, such efforts at consolidation of a coastal figuration are always already haunted by the voices they try to suppress; the ghost of the Other, *pace* Derrida, can be found as traces in the text if we read it against the grain. The dissonant voice of piracy as a coastal phenomenon of the Caribbean contact zone does not disappear.

The general historical context for these narratives is fundamentally that of British empire-building and the tradition of British semi-legal piracy since the reign of Elizabeth I, *The Pirate Queen* (Ronald 2007).

After the successful destruction of Spanish hegemony in the Caribbean—achieved by the destruction of the Spanish Armada under the leadership of "gentleman pirate" Sir Francis Drake in 1588, English plans to increase its powers in the Americas were not always successful in the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Oliver Cromwell's Western Design (1654) had marked another epochal moment in English expansion that David Armitage defined as "the imperial moment of the English republic," forsaking the more peaceful approach of the Stuarts (quoted in Latimer 2009, 118).

Yet as a campaign, the Western Design was by no means a success in the short term (Latimer 2009, 118; also Frohock 2004, 29–35), the only important addition to the English colonies being Jamaica (1655). In the wake of such failed endeavors during the Restoration, England was supported by the revitalization of her tradition of "gentlemen pirates" à la Sir Francis Drake or Sir Walter Raleigh in weakening the Spanish trading monopoly, but her privateers frequently turned into true pirates going 'on the account' without valid letters of marque or in times of official peace with Spain, France, and Holland, when the English Crown dissociated itself from piracy. The publication of Wafer's account, marking the end point of this chapter, immediately followed the *Act for the more effectual Suppression of Piracy* and preceded by a mere two years the publication of *Piracy Destroy'd; or, A short discourse shewing the rise, growth and cause of piracy of late; with a sure method how to put a steady stop to that growing evil* (1701), which construed piracy as a social plague, evoking the ancient accusation against pirates as *hostes humani generis*:

> The practices of such folk were, of course, delinquent and violent, but they had long been so. The appearance of this negative campaign against them in public opinion was not accidental. It coincided with the launching of a new commercial policy of the state, which was directed against French and English pirates naval and judiciary "campaigns" … . (Pérotin-Dumon 1991, 215)

The late seventeenth-century pirate-privateers collaborated with various populations in the Caribbean, as Francis Drake had with the Maroon Diego (Castillo 1981, 31–43; Campbell 2011, 32–33): the Drake myth of an epic, glorious, and benevolent Protestant colonialism, fortifying the Black Legend (Frohock 2004, 40–44; Hanna 2015, 166), paradoxically helped in the birth of the figure of the uncontrollable Caribbean pirate, a

somewhat floating signifier without stable identifications or loyalties. The pirates were both essential and a nuisance for the expanding empire as they could be narrativized as vehicles for Protestant providentialism but introduced resistance through the insertion of contrapuntal voices and figures of alterity.

The accounts by late seventeenth-century English adventurers also proudly espouse the collaboration of the pirate-plunderers with autochthonous populations in the Darién like the Kuna and Miskite (Mosquito), who had been known for their successful opposition against a supposedly shared Spanish enemy. As a major theme related with great self-confidence, the representation of such collaborations as mutually beneficent further propagated the idea of a Protestant mission in the New World that legitimized English imperial ventures by constructing a universal rationale for Protestant superiority.[35] Here, piratical action is for the greater good of empire-building: the pirates become privateers not because they really possessed commissions (or any other form of official support) for their raids, but through the representations of their ventures and moves as patriotic derring-do. In Ringrose, for example, the buccaneers not only become part of the indigenous struggle against Spanish oppression, they even allow Spanish colonizers/settlers, whose bravery is praised (1685, 30), to change sides and work with the pirates (18)[36]: the *leyenda negra* is thus further de-ethnicized (not all Spaniards are violent and backward) and English/Protestant imperialism is represented as a project for the benefit of the greater good in the Americas, another "Western Design" that also included geographical renaming and other performances of territorial possession (see 51–52). Two Spaniards, Exquemelin had reported in a similar vein, were shot dead for supporting English pirates and taking up arms against their King ([1678] 1969, 125). Dampier, in his account of the first crossing of the isthmus into the South Seas (the "New Voyage"), begins his relations by claiming Miskite allegiance to the English King: "They … acknowledge the King of England as their Sovereign" and "take the Governor of Jamaica to be one of the greatest Princes in the World" (1697, 11); the Kuna are portrayed as eagerly inviting his company as allies against the Spanish:

> … [T]he Indians of Darien … were a little before this become our Friends, and had lately fallen out with the Spaniards … and upon calling to mind the frequent Invitations we had from these Indians … to pass through their Country, and fall upon the Spaniards in the South Seas, we from

henceforward began to entertain such thoughts in earnest, and soon came
to a Resolution to make those Attempts which we afterwards did. (180–81)

As Ringrose (1685, 12) reports, a mixed buccaneer-Kuna troop seeks
revenge for the alleged rape and impregnation of their leader's (called the
"King of Darien" in Ringrose 1685, 12, and "Emperor" in Sharp 1699,
e.g., 2–4, and Ayres 1684) oldest daughter by a Spaniard. The buccaneer-
pirates' heroism takes on almost romantic proportions as dutiful and just
avengers for the maltreated Indians. Ringrose's first, anonymous publi-
cation urges for sympathy with the "miserable Natives … kept in great
subjection": they "do not generate as formerly, though they are a stout
people, and have amongst them good comely Women: the reason of it,
as we conjecture, is, the depressure of their Spirits, by the tyranny of the
Spaniards …; the means of Propagation not taking its natural effect upon
people so absolutely dejected with oppression, as they most certainly are"
(1685, 69). But while Dampier constructs a commonwealth in which
"Indians" participate, acknowledging Charles II as their sovereign, the
titles of "King" and "Emperor" in Ringrose and Sharp suggest other-
wise[37]; Ringrose's first account even turns around the power relations
in his preface, claiming that Sharp's exploits were made "in service of
the Emperour of Darien" (n.p./A2) Andreas; in fact, Sharp plundered in
Darién with a commission from the deputy governor of Nevis (Hanna
2015, 156).[38]

Perhaps the best known and most significant narrative in the context of
'scientific' piracy, *Dampier's New Voyage Round the World* is emblematic
of the buccaneer's domestication. "The most celebrated seaman between
Drake and Cook" (Sherman 2002, 29), Dampier, born into a farming
family, became a "New World Upstart," helped manage a plantation in
Jamaica, worked with log-cutters in Campeche, Mexico, plundered as a
buccaneer, and, after his return to England in 1691, published the *New
Voyage*, whose "clear prose and keen ethnographic eye placed [Dampier]
squarely among those Restoration scientists who valued direct experience
… ."[39] Dampier dedicated his book to the Royal Society's president,
emphasizing his own "hearty Zeal for the promoting of useful knowledge,
and of any thing that may never so remotely tend to my Countries advan-
tage" (1697, n.p./A3) in a dedication, Dampier expressing his hopes that
he will be judged "capable of serving his Country, either immediately, or
by serving you"; he included maps (e.g., Fig. 2.2) and lengthy nautical
and hydrographical parts in subsequent editions of his *Voyage*, all of which

Fig. 2.2 Map of the Isthmus of Darién and Bay of Panama, from William Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* (Courtesy of Linda Hall Library)

eventually rewarded him with the command of a South Sea expedition and the selection by Woodes Rogers as navigator for his circumnavigation under Queen Anne. In this context, Johns (2009, ch. 3) as well as Craciun (2013, 174–75), who explores Dampier's publications from the perspective of a book historian, refer to a "piratical enlightenment" that began with the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695, allowing for a fifteen-year period (until the copyright Act of 1710) of unlicensed publication of piratical-scientific adventure books.

Dampier had fought with the Royal Navy in 1673, but after a battle wound and further turbulences joined the buccaneer Captain Sharp in 1679. The discourse of his narrative is the most scientific of the texts considered in this chapter, thereby also evading the sign of piracy: "As for the Actions of the Company, among whom I made the greatest part of this Voyage, a Thread of which I have carried on thro' it, 'tis not to divert the Reader with them that I mention them, much less that I take any pleasure in relating them" (1697, n.p./A4). The pirates are reduced to a "Company" here, and sensationalist appetites of spectacular battles and tortures are quenched in favor of scientific description; this meta-text clearly positions the intended audience as interested in science, not sensation. (Still, the book became highly popular, as Willard Bonner has shown, and made Dampier famous; 1959, 34–36.) In this vein, Dampier also adds that this shift of focus, however, "would not prejudice the Truth and Sincerity of my Relation, tho' by Omissions only." Thus Dampier fashions himself as the scientific imperial protagonist, dissociating himself from the buccaneers and presenting himself as a man of letters, and distinguishing between "Actions" (perpetrated by his traveling companions) and his own role, limited to the task of "Chorographical Description" (1697, n.p./A4; see also Edwards 1994, 30): Dampier says that he reluctantly writes about piratical adventure and assures his readers in his Preface that pleasure (his own or the readers') is not at issue here, distancing himself from the sensational taste for pirate stories of his day. At the same time, he needs the pirates for his audience's critical, methodological "satisfaction" in order to establish a credible context.[40]

Numerous revisions and editions have turned the text increasingly in this direction of science writing (Frohock 2004, 93–94; Lane 2007). The Sharp pentalogy's various efforts at silencing criminal agency (the prime context of the narrative) are not as innocent as they may seem, however, considering the fact that this editorial policy leads to the concealment or euphemizing of the rape of sixty enslaved African women on a Danish slaver the crew had taken as a prize and cynically renamed "Batchelor's Delight" (Lane 2007; Franklin 1992, 244). Read against the grain, the sheer number of "Indian" and "Negro" slaves mentioned as well as their numerous attempts at escape and mutiny are telling the reader enough about the conditions of the enslaved (e.g., Ringrose 1685, 155, 159, 165; Kuhn 2010, 65). Unsurprisingly, scholarship has commented little on Dampier's involvement in the slave trade, or the fate of the "painted

Indian" he brought to England and planned to display for profit (Munter and Grose 1986, 423), for that matter.[41] It tends to present discovery and adventure as European feats, neglecting the navigators' complete reliance on native guides that is voiced throughout the Sharp pentalogy. Instead, Dampier became famous overnight after the publication of his *Voyage*, was lionized by Samuel Pepys and Sir Hans Sloane, and is remembered today as a national hero; his portrait is part of the National Portrait Gallery and his "discoveries" have remained national lore: "From the start Dampier was known, not as just another Esquemeling [sic] … but as a man of dependable knowledge gained from varied experience" (Bonner 1959, 32).

Nevertheless, Dampier's silences are ruptured because he needs context and circumstance to authenticate his narrative; the coastal sign of the pirate disturbs the slick account of the *Voyage*. Especially in the first edition, similar to Ringrose and Wafer, the amount of African and indigenous exploitation (1697, e.g., 2, 158), references to blank or fraud commissions (e.g., 39, 45, 68, 192), and the suspicion that autochthonous groups had interests different from the buccaneers' (arising in the context of the narrator's obligation to explain either their collaboration or hostility, e.g., 11, 13) yet again evoke epistemological insecurity, a consciousness of difference, and a crisis of trust and comprehensibility. Dampier and his peers present a mixture of science and colonial propaganda—and with it, disturbing the main discourse, colonial horror and aversion. Fear of rain, of mutinous slaves, of starvation; the feeling of being "at a loss" (e.g., 13, 163, 252, 309); reports of drowning, hanging, and abandonment pervade the text.

An ethnographic anecdote from Lionel Wafer's *New Voyage* highlights the limits to the ethnographic/scientific curiosity that increasingly shaped the discourse about cultural contact on the Caribbean coast and the American isthmus, with its "legendary aura as flowing with gold and silver" (Latimer 2009, 210) in pirate literature. While "Indians" in Exquemelin are represented in many subject positions—savages, Spanish collaborators, friends, allies, useful workers, informants, and 'authentificators' for the buccaneers—Wafer describes them *in extenso* out of a primarily ethnographic interest in a discourse of scientific exoticism (see Barnes and Mitchell 2002). Prominently placed in the middle of his narrative, Wafer describes the high occurrence of albinism among the Kuna:

> There is one Complexion so singular, among a sort of People of this Country, that I never saw nor heard of any like them in any part of the World. The Account will seem strange, but any Privateers who have gone over the Isthmus must have seen them, and can attest the main of what I am going to relate; tho' few have had the opportunity of so particular an Information about these People as I have had. (1699, 134)

Apart from its symbolic act of legitimation (using the designation of "privateers" and thus legalizing their actions *post-festum* so as to produce a favorable public opinion at a time when anti-piracy campaigns successfully shifted public opinion about pirates to the negative), the quote also shows how ethnographic description at the end of the seventeenth century had to bridge discourses of sensational discovery, most attractive for a metropolitan readership, and scientific credibility. There was a paradox between a desire for auctorial self-marketing as rare eyewitnesses of often spectacular events and facts (like light-skin "Indians") and the necessity of supporting testimonials in order not to be discredited as delirious or fantastical. As Steve Clark points out:

> The travel narrative is addressed to the home culture; by its very nature, however, that to which it refers cannot be verified, hence the ready and habitual equation of traveller and liar. This in turn requires the production of counter-balancing stratagems of sensory corroboration and complex decorums of witnessing, whose innovative plain style prefigures and is assimilated into the early novel. (1999, 1)

Readers were indeed inclined to discount travel narratives reporting exotic or spectacular matters (Frohock 2010b, 59), a fact that had to be countered by travel writers. Among the narrative strategies developed in this context, Clark mentions hyper-empiricism, the illusion of an experiential present, and gestures of trustworthiness (1999, 2); the authority of experience is often present in hyperbolic form. Consider, for instance, Exquemelin's report on the caiman: "… this I have seen for myself. I shall set down a few more of the observations I have made on the cayman, for I doubt if any of the authors who have written of these reptiles have ever had such experience of them as I have" ([1678] 1969, 45); a few lines later, he again repeats "This I have seen myself" (46); again on the very next page, the narrator reports that "[a] hunter was once the cause of my seeing something so amazing I'd have been unable to believe it if anyone

else had told me the tale" (47). Invoking the authority of presence and experience by referencing the seeing as knowing (Hartog 1988, 273) is but one strategy of creating credibility, however. In the context of the need for supporting testimonials, native inhabitants are utilized by both Exquemelin and his successors—transcending the latter's national historiographic framework—because they are often the only available witnesses. In the case of Wafer's account of the period he spent apart from his group among the Kuna (who helped him cure his battle wounds and allowed him into their society) this is even more pertinent, as he is the sole white person to "give an account."[42] Such native groups are constructed discursively as noble rather than as ignoble savages, since they are presented as collaborators rather than enemies: the Kuna are emphatically nobilized (they have "Kings" or "Princes") and thus their credibility is enhanced as the narrator's principal witnesses. Authorial credibility was thus dependent on a representation of autochthonous people that was strategic rather than scientifically objective.

But this strategy ultimately cannot contain dissonance and hermeneutic gaps. For an explanation of the phenomenon of albinism, for instance, Wafer inserts the voice of the Kuna "Chief" (1699, 132) Lacenta, one of his native informants, in reported speech quotations: children who were born white came to be so "through the force of the Mother's Imagination, looking on the Moon at the time of Conception" (138). Wafer gives no further commentary, neither affirming nor deriding this explanation, but instead explicitly asking the reader to do so. The representation and translation of cultural difference is halted by the coastality of knowledge—indigenous belief-systems and a European science mediated by an in-between agent struggling for a narrative authority he does not have in this scenario. Compared to the other texts examined in this chapter, the discourse of cultural contact is less violent here, and rather full of speechlessness and awe, evoking Stephen Greenblatt's description, in *Marvellous Possessions*, of the reaction of wonder in cultural contact scenarios. This can be explained by the fact that Wafer is the only one of these authors who actually 'went native,' living with the Kuna for some months and adopting their fashions and body-paintings, while he was ailing from an accidental gunpowder explosion that had severely damaged his knee. His account is shaped by repeated claims to an authority of experience, having lived with the "Indians" and participated in their daily lives, their feasts, and hunting expeditions.

In such coastal contexts, neither here nor there, Eurocentric scientific categorization is suspended, as the narrative is entirely dependent on its Kuna informant, whose account is beyond the control of authorial calculations. Such native knowledge constituted the actual basis for the mapping and categorizing of the Americas, its populations and environments, serving imperial/colonial interests. In a contrapuntal reading, both the incorporation of native voices like Lacenta's and the suppression of cognitive dissonance can never be complete and can never purge the narrative from irreducible difference. In this view, ennobling the Kuna leaders through the use of western titles of nobility is only a narrative crutch: the European narrator-protagonists cannot look inside the indigenous mind, "knowing" whether their "Information" was correct or whether their interest was another, such as deceiving or mocking the European adventurer. As Michael Taussig has examined in detail in his study of the mimetic arts of the Kuna in the colonial scenario, this was a frequent strategy employed by the colonized.[43] In his words, "the tale of Lionel Wafer … shows just how Darién Indians succeeded in taking advantage of the rivalries between European nations and of the instabilities of the European frontier" (1993, 137).

According to Exquemelin's interpretation of the "Indians'" distrust of strangers, the Spaniards introduced suspicion to a formerly harmonious society in the Americas:

> In my opinion, the reason why the Indians shun all contact with strangers is that when the Spaniards first came to this country they subjected the inhabitants to such cruelty they looked on the conquerors with terror. … After their experiences they dare trust no white men, looking on them all as Spaniards. Indeed they could not trust the other Indians even, for some tribes had taken sides with the Spanish, and cruelly tormented their fellow country-men. ([1678] 1969, 214)

Moments of doubt are pivotal for a contrapuntal reading of colonial relations and cultural contact. In all four narratives mentioned in this chapter, doubt about the trustworthiness, predictability, and calculability of autochthonous subjects and of second-hand information in general play an important role as moments of crisis—in the deliberation of further action or course, but also in narrating. The "Barbary ape" episode in Exquemelin is symptomatic here: a Spaniard, the author-narrator reports, had told him "of a sort of people who live in these mountains, of the same

stature as the Indians, but with short curly hair and with long claws on their feet, like apes. Their skin resists arrows and all sharp instruments" (97); apparently, they had never been heard to speak and captured Spanish women as slaves. Exquemelin calls them "wild men" following several Spaniards who "assured [him] that these creatures are human, and that they have seen them frequently: I give it here for what it's worth. Truly, God's works are great, and these things may well be." Perplexed with skepticism and incredulity, the narrator returns to a mythic, religious worldview incompatible with his empiricism regarding more knowable and believable facts.[44]

The pirates themselves are also shown to play with the colonial crisis of epistemological reliability in their freewheeling use and barter of letters of marque and of national symbols such as flags, both of which they usually had in store in multiplicity. In the repetitive performance of mock battles, treachery and deception, and what I call national cross-dressing (i.e., the use of "flags of convenience," Langewiesche 2004, 5) in Exquemelin and his successors (e.g., Ringrose 1685, 4, 94, 123), they disturb the signifier/signified-connection, exposing its conventionality and thus upsetting categorizations on which economic and military relations in the Americas relied. The cross-dressing of ships also echoes the cross-dressing of women as pirates in history and literature that literary critic Marjorie Garber has famously analyzed as signifying crisis—both in terms of gender roles and other cultural differences (see Sect. 2.2).

Such moments of doubt and insecurity are typical indicators of epistemological crisis at a time in which, as Ralph Bauer has argued in reference to Stephen Shapin, traditional trusting systems had come into crisis through an "inflation of empirical knowledge, accelerated by mechanical reproduction through print" (2003, 4). The turn to the eighteenth century also marked the turn from an earlier naïve empiricism to an extreme skepticism (10, in reference to Michael McKeon). Thus the great cultural investment in modern science as the building of an empire of truth, an "epistemic mercantilism" in Bauer's phrasing:

> The poetics of this mercantilist production of knowledge demanded a division of intellectual labor between imperial peripheries and centers, the effacement of colonial subjects, and the transparency of colonial texts as the providers of raw "facts." … In theory, these imperial economies of knowledge production thus resembled the mercantilist economies of material production, based as they were on a regulated and protected balance of

exchange … . In practice, however, these imperial epistemic economies … existed but as logocentric utopias that engendered their own modes of geo-political resistance and were frequently undermined by colonial subjects. (4)

2.1.6   The Creole Pirate

Science, Richard Frohock demonstrates, was a new path for representing British engagement with the Americas, having considerable power in displacing, but in many ways also replicating, the image of the conqueror (2004, 81–82). It is in this context that we have to view Anna Neill's argument that the buccaneers are increasingly domesticated in the narratives succeeding Exquemelin's as scientific agents; the ethnographic, geographic, and nautical parts far outweigh violent episodes of combat, and the pirate turns into a scientist out on an expedition in 'the field':

> Such literature at once illustrated the condition of human beings in an earlier "pre-civil" state, and at the same time suggested that it is less might than civilized reason that determines entitlement to colonial territories and resources. Although by the very violence of their actions, the buccaneers … had confounded this distinction between civilized colonizer and savage colonized, the increasingly direct interest of the state in scientific discovery in the last third of the seventeenth century had the effect of bringing them more closely into the fold of civilized statehood—either as objects of its disciplinary control, or … as reformed, re-civilized sovereign subjects and men of science. (2002, 166)

Yet the pirate does not emerge as a glorified figure in any of these texts; Exquemelin in particular shows "intonations of scorn and irony" (Frohock 2010b, 62—even though this does not necessarily lead to "the reduction of buccaneer civility to nothing more than a ploy," as he concludes). Excess and squander ("economic follies," 65), brutality and solidarity stand next to each other as colonial paradoxes beyond authorial control. The narrative tensions in Exquemelin certainly make the book appear more effectively critical of piracy and colonialism, on the level of representation, than Dampier's or Wafer's, who had no interest in criticizing English expansion, as Exquemelin "creates a novel socio-ideological platform for contesting the multiple languages competing to represent the imperial Caribbean world. The effectiveness of his cultural critique depends less upon making his own truth unassailable than

on interrupting, contesting, and destabilizing the discourses of others through his distinctive portrayal of the buccaneers" (57). But is this effect really as intentional as Frohock suggests?

The sign of piracy, entailing uncontrollability, (ab)errancy, and unreliability, returns even in the imperial travel narrative based on buccaneering expeditions such as Captain Sharp's. These contrapuntal signs can be seen as indicative of an early creole discourse,[45] voicing resistance to metropolitan colonial epistemologies of order in response to the unequal power relations between New and Old World economies of knowledge: "the colonials in the 'bowels' of nature would provide the epistemic raw material, and the metropolitan natural philosopher would refine it into 'truth'" (Bauer 2003, 17; also Ordahl Kupperman 1995). In this sense, the sign of the pirate also entailed the piracy of knowledge (Bauer 2003, 160)—indeed, often the most valuable piratical booty were letters, notes, accounts, charts, maps, and oral information (171); yet contrapuntally, the proto-creole pirate questions the legitimacy of a metropolitan monopoly over knowledge claimed by the agents of the new sciences when he asserts his narrative authority and emphasizes his privileged position vis-à-vis the European as a first-hand witness and informant. Resistance is less an act of authorial or narrative intention, then, than a form of piratical disturbance of the new logocentric imperial claims.

2.2   Puritans and Pirates: The New England Anti-Piracy Sermon, 1700–1730

2.2.1   Piracy in New England

Piracy was not limited to the Caribbean coasts at the turn to the eighteenth century. It declined during Queen Anne's War (1702–1713), but was again on the rise in the entire Atlantic World after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, which left many sailors formerly employed by European navies without income, some of them turning to piracy. A second North American context in which the sign of piracy was used in an attempt to consolidate crisis was the "maritime civilization" (Fernández-Armesto 2003, 59) of Puritan New England, where it had become an increasingly visible phenomenon as many pirates shifted their activities northward when the Caribbean waters became too tightly controlled (Pérotin-Dumon 1991, 215). In a handful of publications which tackle the issue of piracy directly—printed execution sermons[46] about condemned

pirates that were increasingly prefaced or appended by confessions, warnings, dialogues, or factual accounts—Cotton Mather (1663–1728),[47] the renowned Puritan minister of Massachusetts Colony and one of the most influential public personae of his day, reacted to the increasing number of New England piracy trials by warning against the disruption of the religious and social order of the colony, a concern that ran deeply in his generation of Puritans. The turn from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century marked a time of crisis in New England, as the new charter in 1692, following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, sought to tighten control over the colony by appointing royal governors in England. This development had triggered an atmosphere of political turmoil and division among the settlers; in the context of religion, a spiritual crisis had already led to a watered-down, "Half Way Covenant" in 1662, accounting for a younger cohort of colonials two generations removed and increasingly failing to meet the standards of the original conversion experience. An increasing commercialism, accompanying the expansion of the colonial settlements after King Philip's War (1675/1676) and the growth in population, similarly provoked anxiety and fear about the (exceptionalist) vision of Puritan America as a New Jerusalem and a City Upon a Hill (John Winthrop) that was to be a better version rather than an imitation of European social structures. While the "Indian" had emerged as a figure of alterity in Puritan conversion texts—his/her conversion could never be fully trusted as his/her capability thereof was doubted, the pirate emerged as the latest figure of crisis. He embodied the first crisis of white conformist masculinity and appeared as an in-between figure that was capable of conversion but at times would prove inconvertible. Accordingly, he was constructed as an ambivalent figure in the context of a heavily racialized and gendered Puritan rhetoric, a secular figure of illegitimacy whose containment by Puritan discourse was needed to reaffirm conceptions of an exceptional American male subjectivity in a transatlantic colonial-imperial continuum. "As one crisis followed another," Williams argues, "New England churches, instead of withdrawing from the world, embraced it" (1986, 830); the pirate constituted one such secular embodiment of a sinful world the ministers attacked.[48]

In this chapter, I am reading Puritan anti-piracy sermons as narratives of crisis that, despite fervent efforts of containment in the context of a much-needed reaffirmation, exceed these efforts by a hybrid narrative dynamic resulting from the use of sensationalist elements, piratical

voices, and economic discourse. I am arguing that the popular, widely received sermons by Cotton Mather and Benjamin Colman examined in the following are pervaded by energies of resistance that could lead their readers to sympathize with, instead of merely condemn, the piratical questioning of social and religious authority as well as economic legitimacy—especially in a theocratic environment that exerted an "iron-clad hold on local printers, who could not print the 'trash' that characterized the secular crime literature of England" at least up to the period of "Anglicization" (Crosby 2010, 8; see below); New Englanders thus habitually used to "feed their desire for crime writing by turning to ministerial pamphlets."

2.2.2   Cotton Mather's Anti-Piracy Sermons

Published between 1704 and 1726, Cotton Mather's anti-piratical execution sermons functioned as didactical instructions for actual pirates to repent, for sailors to be deterred, and for his congregation to extol piracy as sinful and spiritually destructive. Printed so that they would reach beyond Boston, "to Rhode Island and Carolina, to England and India" (Hanna 2015, 253), crime narrations like the pirate execution sermon became discourses to promote law and order, imposing "structure on socially disruptive experiences" and "negating the misrule inherent in unlawful action" (Williams 1993b, xi). In practice, Mather frequently tended to pirates sentenced to death in order to lead them to redemption and save them from hell: in his *Diary*, we find him taking "a long and sad Walk" with the condemned, "from the Prison, to the Place of Execution," along which he "successively bestowed the best Instructions [he] could, upon each of them"; arriving at the gallows pole, he prayed with them and the "vast Assembly" of spectators (1717, 1957, 488).[49] Daniel Williams sees Mather's anti-piratical activities as a response to the tendency of New England sailors to turn pirate to such a degree that Boston was called a "New Algiers" already in 1689 (in reference to the early modern Barbary 'piracy'; Edward Randolph quoted in Hanna 2015, 182). Three years earlier, Increase Mather openly acknowledged colonial complicity with pirates in a sermon entitled *Solemn Advice to Young Men: Not to Walk in the Wayes of Their Hear, and in the Sight of Their Eyes; but to Remember the Day of Judgment* that was reprinted, not coincidentally, in 1709 (53; see Hanna 2015, 251). Now,

> [t]o counter this tendency, [Mather] sought to make special examples of all condemned pirates in Boston jails … . But while he worked to save pirate souls from the fires of hell, he was as well attempting to reaffirm the same social and religious values that the pirates had first defied. Aware of the immense public fascination with the spectacle of execution, Mather used those about to be 'turned off' to illustrate the futility of sin and the inevitability of judgment. (Williams 1987, 235)

Metaphors of mobility and shipwreck inform most of Mather's anti-piratical sermons. This range of verbal imagery can be linked to both the 'life is a journey' metaphor of the Scriptures and the "departure of God" rhetoric, which, together with metaphors of sickness, deprivation, and loss, was used by an earlier generation of Puritans responding to generational conflict and spiritual crisis (Elliott 1975, 99). Yet the journey across the Atlantic was of course also the foundational experience for the Puritan project in the New World; John Winthrop's "City upon a Hill" speech aboard the *Arbella* as well as Danforth's "errand into the wilderness" have been seen as the basis for its mythology (Wharton 1992, 45). Reflecting also the increase in the seafaring trade after 1640, the language of the journey and of seafaring was an important resource for Puritan preachers, even though the colonists themselves hardly had a seafaring background (McElroy 1935, 331–33).[50] For the Puritans, the space of the Atlantic was symbolically loaded, as successful voyages were seen in the framework of what Udo Hebel calls the Puritan "providential hermeneutics" (2004, 17): as a "sign of providential protection, of spiritual, later patriotic, fitness," making "sacred what was otherwise secular space" (Wharton 1992, 47, 52), while shipwreck and piracy were framed as signs of a fall from grace. The Atlantic scenario thus became the Puritan "trial by water" (also Hebel 2004, 15–16).[51]

In accordance with this symbolism, Mather conceives of sinners as "pursueth by Evil" and "Runawayes" (1723, 19) in his *Useful Remarks*; they are "Fugitives when they leave that Master," Jesus Christ (20). These metaphors also express the ideal of spiritual steadfastness that is Mather's concern in his endeavor to renew New England's covenant with God. Mather's third-generation Puritan outlook somewhat paradoxically seems to return to earlier lamentations of aberrance and transgression in these sermons, which often contain elaborate lists of sins and failures. The increasing bitterness of Mather's rhetoric, gradually approaching that of his father Increase, points to a significant cultural shift (Bosco 1978,

170): Mather's anti-piratical execution sermons as well as other sermons directed explicitly at sailors addressed the condition of the New England covenant and the future spiritual estate of the young; they sought to guide an increasingly transnational tribe of seafarers in the Puritan spirit, but that spirit continued to lose its powerful grip on the colony at the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.[52]

Of course, the genre per se afforded the threat of damnation and the admonition to repent, and Mather and others routinely used the "[d]ying words of a Malefactor" (*Warnings* 42) in closing, often in direct speech for a heightened effect of immediacy, in order to extol an example of repentance for other sinners in their audience. Not surprisingly, these sermons are less in tune with Mather's "language of assurance" (Elliott 1975, 188); the frequent use of exclamation marks and italics in an otherwise "plain style" (Cohen 1993, 7) are used as markers of an almost desperate insistence, betraying Mather's emotional involvement in the conversion of the "poor condemned Pyrates," as one of many single-line entries in the minister's *Diary* has it (1957, 729).[53] Yet his earlier sermons also emphasize the glory of a God whose benevolence could be reached by sincere repentance, even if that repentance came only minutes before the actual execution. The appearance of a benevolent and merciful rather than fearful deity aligns the younger Mather with the spiritual shifts of the late seventeenth century from pessimist visions of impending doom to a more optimist millenarian version of New England's destiny (Elliott 1975, 177–78). Mather's work on piracy, even though it turned increasingly bitter, resonated with his introduction of the "new theme of national salvation" (191) into Puritan discourse, comparing New England favorably with the rest of the world and warning the community of repeating old-world mistakes. This is exemplified by the fact that the choice of condemned criminals to demonstrate the steps to salvation was unique to American Puritans (Williams 1986, 831).

2.2.3   *"To Direct the Course of Sea-Men"*

The desire for social stability and the reaffirmation of existing hierarchies is expressed by Mather's repeated advice that the colonial American subject follows the Calvinist doctrine of predestination not only in religious terms but also in terms of social status. As Mather has one of his repenting pirates advise: "Stay in your Place & Station Contentedly, & be Thankful to God for all things that happen to you" (1723, 33;

station signified both a sailor's function aboard ship and his place in society). The conflation of social and geographical mobility in Puritan discourse is significant also in the context of Puritan migration and expansion, including the transatlantic recruitment of immigrants for settling the backcountry in the relatively peaceful decades after 1713 (Conforti 2006, 133–37): God-governed and state-sanctioned mobility is crucial for the development of new Puritan communities in Mather's texts, while piracy is constructed as illegitimate in its aspirations to free the subject from the Calvinist providential order. In Mather, piracy becomes a trope to set the outer boundaries of legitimacy in terms of trade, mobility, and subjecthood for an entire community.

Mather's aggressive marketing of his books and pamphlets, noted by Daniel Cohen, specifically targeted ships when he gave numerous free copies to ship's officers for the benefit of their sailors (1993, 5). In 1700, Mather preached a sermon entitled *The Religious Marriner. A Brief Discourse Tending to Direct the Course of Sea-men in those Points of Religion Which may bring them to the Port, of Eternal Happiness* to the sailors of Boston. In the printed version of this speech, the minister uses metaphors of mobility to guide the sailor and lead him on the "right course," a discourse also used in the execution sermons (e.g., 1717, 36). Right in the preface, Mather acknowledges the importance of the site of sailor existence in the formation of collective identity, as he addresses his sermon to a new oceanic collective, a "Sea faring-tribe" (4) the author calls "the Waters" in an explicit parallel to "the Grecians" and "the Romans" (3). In fact, Mather argues that sailors "at all times … bear [Resemblance] unto the Waters, upon which they are now Sailing"; "their Living on the Waters Entitles them to this Denomination, just as a Country or City, gives a Denomination to its Inhabitants." This comparison of course does not lead Mather to treat sailors as subjects of a different country, to different laws and ethical codes; paradoxically, it is the fact that they are at home on the sea rather than land-based that builds the center of his warning, as the influence of the seafaring environment on the sailors' moral character forms the central topic of this work. This choice can be read as a reaction to the ever-growing seafaring population since the mid-seventeenth century, whose mobility was perceived as a threat to colonial society. As McElroy argues somewhat polemically:

> When [young men gone to sea] returned home, they found life dull and prosaic; more than ever, the ocean seemed the gateway to freedom. … Avarice or ambition rarely sent any boy to sea; most of them were thinking

of the adventures of every Jack-tar acquaintance and his yarns about 'rivers of rum, mountains of sugar, and fish that fly in the air.' (1935, 334–35)

The increasing population of sailors was in dire need of spiritual guidance in Mather's view. In accordance with his self-fashioned righteousness and megalomaniacal pride,[54] the title page of Mather's *Religious Marriner* quotes Matthew 14, 25: "Jesus went unto them, walking on the Sea"; Mather positions himself as the savior of a people drawn to sin through seafaring customs—drinking, swearing, adultery, and other "special vices of the sea" (1700, 14).[55] In an act of interpellation that, to some extent, *creates* the stereotypical pirate rather than merely reporting him, Mather's prose characterizes seafaring as "riotous living" and the sea as a "school of vice" (5), an observation that the minister claims to reach back to Plato. Preaching to an audience of sailors of New England, the minister warns against "those false courses of sin" (7), emphasizes the sailors' importance for the Commonwealth under the auspices of a sense of Protestant mission (Mather complains of the "Sinful Neglects of the protestant Nations to make their Navigation, Subservient unto the Illustrious Design, of conveying the Knowledge of the most Glorious Lord, unto all parts of the Universe," 10), and urges his audience to be "faithful in Christ, where alone, your Souls may be *Anchored* with Eternal Safety" (10). Other metaphors similarly connote mobility as dangerous, direction as crucial, and sessility as preferable: "*steer clear* of the *Sins*," "*Depart from Evil*" (14), "don't go out of the Way, when you Go to Sea" (19). Admitting the importance of seafaring for the British colonial empire, Mather sees it as a necessary evil:

Truly, 'Twere much to be advised, That the *Enchantments* of the *Sea*, may not have too strong and quick a Force upon some, to make them rashly leave *Good Callings*, by Which they might competently subsist ashore. I am far from condemning all that leave their *Callings*, and go away to *Sea*; but this we have seen, where one hath *Advanced* himself, more than two have *Ruined* themselves, by doing so. (20)

Before continuing his sermon with a long prayer fashioned for the sailors to imitate aboard ship, Mather warns against "bloody *Murderers*, *Pyrates*, and Atheists … . There are some, in such Ill Terms with Heaven, that if one could help it any way in the World, one would not care to carry them:

Tis no safe thing, to be of their Mess!" (21–22). Adapting his vocabulary to the imagined violence of seafaring life, Mather's sermon draws on and enforces the spectacular representation of pirates as "the worst Enemies …, who barbarously butcher all that may discover them" (30). The exhortative sensationalism of his rhetoric carries much emotional appeal through the use of such graphic verbal expressions, italics, and exclamation marks.

Indeed, the representation of pirates as killers who did not distinguish between friend and foe served the official politics of the day that realized plunder was only a minor aspect of the pirate threat; more dangerous to imperial mercantilism was the fact that many sailors of the Royal Navy or the Merchant Marine, coming into contact with pirate crews, did not have to be forced to join them—to the contrary. The attractiveness of piracy for mistreated sailors was the main incentive for the blatant didacticism of Mather's preaching. The inclusion of speeches by repenting pirates, a feature the execution sermon shares with the jeremiad, was geared toward a younger generation that was to be reminded of the importance of the covenant (Bosco 1978, 168–69); after all, the Puritans were convinced "they would be held collectively responsible for the wrongdoing of individual members" (Cohen 1993, 7). Thus, ministers preaching execution sermons warned young men from a sinful course of life that would lead to the gallows, but also endanger the entire New England colony. In *Useful Remarks* (1717) Mather directly addresses the young men and sailors of Rhode Island, exhorting them that death is preferable to changing to the 'wrong' side: "Rather *Dy*, than go *With*, or do *Like* such Wicked men. *My Son*, *If such Sinners Entice thee*, *Consent thou not unto them*. No, Rather *Dy* than do it!" (1717, 22). The narratives annexed and appended to these sermons—speeches and letters dictated or written by the condemned pirates and sometimes "*Faithfully Collected*, *by Another Hand*" (29)—also serve this function (see also 37, 39, 41), as Mather and his publishers seem to hope for heightened effect. In 1724, Mather's diary relates the power of the pulpit (Elliott 1975) in one case of piracy. The entry is suggestive of Mather's belief in himself as a catalyst to bring about godly justice and besiege the pirates:

> I was carried forth to pray in an enlarged and expanded Manner, and with much Importunity, that we may see the glorious One do some remarkable Thing for the Destruction of the Pyrates, by which our Coast has been lately infested. The Prayer had so much Notice taken of, that many

People receiv'd and expressed strong Expectation from it, that within a few Days, yea, before the Week was out, we should hear something remarkable. Behold, before the week was out, there comes in a Vessel wherein five or six Captives among the Pyrates that were upon making horrible Ravages among our poor Fishermen, rose, and with much bravery kill'd the Chief of their Masters, and the rest they took Prisoners. The Joy of the City on this Occasion was very notable. (1957, 722)[56]

Mather might have exaggerated his own role here, but there is no doubt that both his spoken sermons and their printed versions, sponsored by friends and parishioners, were highly successful. The latter often sold as many as a thousand copies a week and ran through a number of editions; obviously, his instructions reached many New Englanders (Levy 1979, 39; Minnick 1968, 80). The printed sermons were usually written versions of Mather's *extempore* preaching, and many were elaborated with additional material and notes, but they closely echo the spoken versions. Other genres relevant for Mather's anti-piratical discourse, like the essay, also bore a direct relation to his preachings, as they rehearsed earlier arguments and pleas from the pulpit.

Mather's interest in piracy is not limited to his published works, as mentioned above; his extensive diary informs us of the context for his anti-piratical preaching. The first reference to piracy occurs in 1696, in a jeremiad-like list of grievances and failures of the colonies: "Some that have belonged unto this Countrey, have perpetrated very detestable Pyracies, in other Parts of the World" (1957, 215). Because piracy transcends the local, Mather likewise transcends his usual focus on New England society and the purity of the colonial community, linking "this Countrey" to "other Parts of the World," although the use of the present perfect tense makes it clear the pirates no longer belong to the imagined community of Mather's New England.[57] By the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, Mather had started to visit condemned criminals awaiting their execution in Boston jail. In April 1699, he mentions the "great number of Pyrates" he encountered during one of these visits; he "went and pray'd with them, and preach'd to them" (299), using Jeremiah 2, 26 ("The Thief is ashamed, when hee [sic] is found"); another such occasion is mentioned for January 1700, again making use of Jeremiah (17, 11: "He gets Riches and not by right; leaves them in the midst of his Dayes, and in his End shal be a Fool"; 331).

The *Diary* does not mention the "Tragical Spectacle" of the hanging of some pirates in Boston on June 22, 1704, on which the execution sermon *Faithful Warnings to prevent Fearful Judgments* is based, a lengthy appellation that directly addresses the "sinful" pirates, preaching repentance before they are punished. The sermon, subtitled *Uttered in a brief Discourse, Occasioned, by a Spectacle, in a Number of Miserables Under a Sentence of Death for Piracy*, sets up a strict dichotomy between the wicked and the righteous while paradoxically acknowledging, in accordance with Calvinist doctrine, the principal sinfulness of every person (1704, e.g., 5–6). Mather further distinguishes between penitent and unrepentant sinners (7) and again, devises a list of sins, which includes poverty as a consequence of men being "not Rich towards God" (10), but also a number of "Lusts" such as intemperance, "Unchastity," covetousness, and "Earthly-mindedness" (12). Mather theocratically conflates earthly and heavenly punishment by invoking the "Law of Death, for Capital Crimes" (13) on both a secular and religious level throughout the sermon:[58] "our pirates," Mather argues, have tried to hide themselves "in the Bottom of the Sea," but "wherever they hide themselves, I will search & sieze [sic] them, saith the Lord" (23). What in fact searched and seized the pirates, of course, was less "the Lord" than the law. Although Mather uses religious discourse and appeals to the conscience of criminals, piracy is thus condemned as *both* a religious and secular crime. Mather is more than a religious preacher; he also fortifies and installs in his audience, which usually comprised between 550 and 850 people (Minnick 1968, 79), obedience to worldly laws as the "Justice of Heaven" (Mather 1704, 25) is brought about on the Boston execution dock.

What triggers Mather's most fervent rhetoric is the frequent laxness and merriment with which the pirates await death, descriptions of which can be read both as pirates' resistance to repentance and as a message to the reader about how *not* to behave before death. He tries to rationalize this attitude somewhat benevolently as "in their very Chains, [they] have been so *stupefied*, as to flatter themselves that there was no Danger near unto them; They have it may be spent their Time in Drinking, in Gaming, in Profane Frolicks" (13; my emphasis) in an act of repressing their guilty conscience (14). The *Warnings* follow the classical structure of the Puritan sermon (Cohen 1993, 7); the second part, an "Application" (Mather 1704, 25) of the biblical "text" (the introductory passage from the Bible) and Mather's "doctrine" (i.e., his thesis on sin) in the first part, includes quotations, examples, and anecdotes of historical cases

of sinfulness and godly punishment to illustrate his admonitions.[59] In yet another list of sins, Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, swearing and cursing (32), adultery (34), and thievery (36) are chosen because they are most closely associated with the seafaring life and piracy, itself listed as a subcategory of thievery. Mather's direct address[60] of the pirates in the second part of the *Warnings* again reveals his astonishment upon the absence of fear of death and celestial punishment: "Be assured O Sinners, you have no Reason to be Merry or Easy, or Sleepy, in a state of Sin. You behave your selves, as if nothing were Amiss. What? When there is Evil pursuing of you!" (28–29).

2.2.4   (Re-)Anglicization, Puritan Exceptionalism, Conversion

Despite Mather's frequent focus on the exceptional role of New England as the world's foremost place of salvation, the framework within which he is preaching and writing is informed by a transatlantic culture of Puritanism, which can also be observed in Mather's continuing commentary on the persecutions in Europe or in his interest in German Pietism. The sensational execution sermon itself was adopted from English practice, but *printed* sermons, as Daniel Cohen asserts, seem to have been a genuinely American literary invention (1993, 3); furthermore, "[t]hat condemned criminals, whose behavior was hardly exemplary, were chosen to demonstrate the steps to salvation was a unique feature of New England Puritanism" (Williams 1986, 831), which attached more spiritual significance to the convicted, whose inner development in prison was closely observed. An exception to the standard practice of importing English literary genres and products, they gained rapid acceptance in America, especially among the Puritan ministers (Williams 1993b, xiii), and in fact made up, together with the religious confession and the criminal biography, the "first stage of narrative development of criminal literature in America" (Williams 1983, 8). This does not outweigh English influence, however, but rather renders the execution sermon a transatlantic genre (20). In *Instructions to the Living*, for instance, Mather quotes from older English Puritan clergymen like William Perkins of sixteenth-century Cambridge (1717, 35) and uses the case of a London execution of a thief and murderer in 1657, whose history was published as "The Penitent Murderer," to conclude the sermon (he quotes from its final section, in which eighteen ministers published their advice to the city and nation).

This transatlantic continuity can be explained in two contexts, one of them being the need for what Harry Stout has called a "new mythology" at the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century (1986, 118). The installment of the new charter in 1692, a consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 that saw a crown-appointed royal governor, had provoked turmoil and factional division among the inhabitants of Massachusetts; a new explanation for the covenant was needed in order to counteract the dissolution of an earlier theocracy and provide social cohesion by other means, marking a paradigm shift in Puritan religious discourse:

> According to the old orthodoxy, covenant keeping was not supposed to survive in an atmosphere of religious toleration [granted by the new government] and externally appointed magistrates. For over fifty years, ministers had routinely identified New England's covenant with an exclusive state-enforced orthodoxy. … New England had become just one more appendage to a vast and sprawling imperial network. Why then were they still a peculiar people? (Stout 119)

Typical for many third generations of immigrants, Mather and his peers perceived themselves as far less isolated from Europe, but thrust into a larger Anglo-American world "where … the faces of English institutions, customs, and officials would have to be recognized and reconciled to the original mission of New England" (123). This already points to the second, larger framework of Puritan transatlanticism in the eighteenth century: the oft-noted "Anglicization" of the American colonies as the political, economic, and cultural integration of the American colonies, most notably New England, into the imperial order after the Glorious Revolution.[61] Thus, British patriotism and investment in English culture infused eighteenth-century New England (though, as Joseph Conforti argues, this shift is more accurately described by the term "re-Anglicization," 2006, 164):

> To be sure, second-generation Puritan "creoles" had Americanized regional identity through the jeremiad and other epic, idealized historical accounts of New England's founding. In the eighteenth century, however, Puritan narratives of regional identity retraced New England's English origins. Inspired by the events surrounding the Glorious Revolution, Puritan descendants re-Anglicized the story of their ancestors' "errand" into the New World wilderness. The founders had come to New England in search

of the *English* civil and religious liberty that the Glorious Revolution finally established in the homeland. (Conforti 2006, 164)

Like his *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Mather's pirate execution sermons are not only heavily influenced by these developments, but they themselves partake in this type of discursive patriotism. Mather's *Instructions*, for instance, repeatedly express the wish that God ensure the success of the British crown in the endeavor to extirpate piracy, praising the clemency of governor Shute (1717, 7–9) and the King's "*Inflexible Justice* that we see joined with a Temper full of *Mercy*" (19). Eventually, his praise of British anti-piracy measures, which he compares in his *Instructions* to Pompeius' destruction of Carthaginian and Corinthian piracy (3; the anticipation of British success is also apparent in the *Instructions*' caption title, "The End of Piracy"), can be read as an attempt to convince the population of the advantages British rule brings for New England. Using the neoclassical comparative fashioning of England as Rome, Mather emphasizes the urgency of the piratical threat when he describes how the pirates of antiquity interrupted all commerce, starved Rome, commanded 400 towns, and developed their own Commonwealth, including elected governors (4). Thus, with the help of anti-piratical rhetoric, Mather discursively consolidates English rule as a force of protection.

Within this transatlantic framework of Puritan society and its increasing Anglicization during the eighteenth century, the pirate was constructed as an Other both in terms of national allegiance to the imperial center and political legitimacy as well as in terms of cultural and religious difference, a discourse that would set the stage for future methods of Othering the pirate. At the same time, the discourse of New England exceptionalism does not disappear. On the one hand, piracy threatens the British Empire and must be besieged for that reason; on the other, piracy is more specifically a danger to the socioreligious integrity of New England, founded on a covenant with God that requires constant renewal efforts, and thus must be kept out of New Jerusalem. As Mather describes piracy as part of God's providential framework, "newly fallen out among our selves" (1704, 48), the implication is that the colony must have sinned to deserve this punishment. Within the same logic, successfully ridding New England of piracy would mean the restoration of the covenant with God. This is the reason for Mather to construct anti-piratical activities as requiring a collective effort and fervor of prosecution. Notably, he feminizes pirates as sinful, even perhaps satanic seducers of the young men of New England

(in the following quote), thus recalling the Biblical convention of Adam and Eve; the American Adam is seduced to sinful, "piratical courses" that would lead to his (and, as *pars pro toto*, the settlers') expulsion from their New England Garden as God's punishment:

> There has been a Time, when some have come and *Seduced and Enchanted several of our Young Men, to Piratical Courses*; and there were some Unhappy Advantages, which the Sinners took, to shelter themselves in the Prosecutions of their Piracies. But the Government of New-England will by a severe Procedure of Justice, forever make it an Unjust thing, to Reflect on the Countrey, as if such dangerous Criminals might hope ever to be safely Nested here. All the Serious and Sensible People in the Land, have a great Horror upon their minds, That when they see a Theef, there may be no Consenting one way or another with him. (46–47; my emphasis)

In an anonymous foreword to Mather's sermon *The Converted Sinner* (1724),[62] success in England's increasingly vehement efforts to suppress piracy is contained within the same framework of New England's religious exceptionalism. The ardent prayers of the New England Puritans are thought to have had a direct relation to these successes: "We know of several Thousands, that in a little Time have *Perished Wonderfully*! And no where more *Wonderfully* than on the Coast of *New-England*, where the *Prayers* against them, have Distinguishing Ardours" (1724, n.p.).

Further, if pirates were seized and convicted, the Puritan congregation should strive to convert the sinners before their execution to purify both the pirate's soul and the New England conscience, which was increasingly ill at ease with the death penalty as the eighteenth century progressed (Minnick 1968, 86–88).[63] The language of purification, where sin is poison and repentance "vomit" (Mather 1717, 28), is notable in many of these execution sermons. In this context of conversion, the analogy in the construction of pirates and 'Indian' heathens is striking. Pirates are repeatedly described as barbarous (sea-)monsters, and "*Prædacious Animals*" (4), repeating the contradiction between rhetorical dehumanization and conversion inherent in the colonial missionary effort ever since Columbus' first letter from the New World. Mather's sermons "shifted from indicting the community for welcoming illicit sea marauders in the 1690s to pronouncing pirates as monstrous outsiders by the 1720s" (Hanna 2015, 393). Subsequently, the monstrosity and inhumanity of pirates became a persistent racial trope that would reappear through at

least two centuries, with gender and sexual deviance as additional layers of signification that texts about piracy could entertain (and entertain with).

In Mather's text, the chance at successful conversion, also important in the minister's efforts to "do good," turns barbarians and monsters, talked about in the third person, into "my friend[s]," who are now directly addressed (e.g., 10, 12). At the same time, caring for the souls of these "monsters" also proves the exceptional place of New England as the City upon the Hill, emphasizing the greatest humanity of the Puritans: "perhaps, there is not that Place upon the face of the Earth, where more pains are taken for the Spiritual and Eternal Good of Condemned Prisoners" (9). As not only the execution sermons show, the conversion of condemned pirates from atheism or from serving "*Other Gods*" like "*Satan*" (15) or gold and silver is of central importance for Mather.[64]

2.2.5   *Economies of Salvation*

Preparing for a sermon that was later profitably published in a run of 1,200 copies as *Instructions to the Living, from the Condition of the Dead: A brief Relation of Remarkables in the Shipwreck of above one Hundred Pirates*,[65] Cotton Mather asks himself "[h]ow to render the Condition of the poor Pyrates, who are coming on their Trial, serviceable unto the Interests of Piety in the World" (1957, 481), and a few days after decides he will "entertain the Flock" by a "Discourse on the Folly, of getting Riches, and not by Right," thus turning to the ethics of Puritan economic behavior. Despite Calvinist doctrine, which holds that salvation cannot be accomplished by any kind of indulgences, the language of Mather's conversion efforts is often that of a barter for salvation as he casts the benevolence of God into a rhetoric of bargain, trying to market conversion to the pirates: "O Wonderful Call! Salvation to be had for a Look [to the Saviour]!" (1717, 21). Similarly, the pirates' economic transgressions are condemned within a religious framework, drawing on a Puritan ethics that denounces materialism and the desire for wealth while emphasizing fairness and restraint in all business relations: "You have placed on the Riches of this World, the Dependence you should have, had only on God," Mather argues in his *Instructions* (1717, 15), and in *The Converted Sinner* claims that "The Riches which are the Desire of all Nations, have nothing in them to be desired, if weigh'd in the Balances against the Riches, which your Turn to GOD will invest you with all!" (1724, 11).

The necessity of virtue in one's economic strivings, noted by Werner Sombart and Max Weber in their explorations of the development of a protestant work ethic, is an important argument in Mather's condemnation of piracy. The *Instructions* suddenly end on page 39, when a new page header announces the second part of the sermon to be *Warnings to Them that make Haste to Be Rich*. The "sad *Spectacle*, a very black *Tragedy*" that is the "just Sentence of DEATH" for the pirates, is put into an economic context here: it is their "wicked Attempts to *get Riches and not by Right*" (1717, 40) that mark the pirates, like other thieves, as sinful. Yet Mather starts his propositions by saying that in less extreme forms, unrighteous economic strivings are a common sin of his time (43). Unlike in the rhetoric of monstrosity and inhumanity, piracy does not denote radical alterity in this economic context, but represents merely one form of transgression, an extreme in a continuum of breaching the eighth commandment.[66] Notably, the late Louis XIV is invoked in a direct address as the greatest pirate of all, although other "Hero's" as well are condemned as robbers:

> And here it may be complained, That while the Laws reach the lesser *Pirates & Robbers*, there are … much *Greater* Ones, whom no Humane [sic] Laws presume to meddle withal: *Monsters*, whom we dignify with the Title of *Hero's*: *Conquerors* and *Emperors*, but yet no other than a more splendid sort of *Highway-men*. Of these, *Many have done abominably*; But thou, the *Leviathan* lately at *Versailles*, hast excelled them all. (44)

Harking back to the animosities between England and France and the many political and military conflicts between 1689 and 1713 that had also been played out in the New World, this is a highly interesting passage in Mather's sermon, for it uses a type of argumentation that pirates themselves have employed to their defense since antiquity. It also hints at piracy as a practice of vanguard nation-building and expansion, such as by the notorious Elizabethan privateers, legitimized often only after its accomplishment. When Mather quotes the first book of Corinth, 3, 21, "*All things are yours*" in *The Converted Sinner*, he uncannily echoes the utopian economic ethics of piracy, which basically claimed the equal distribution of the world's riches to all. Time and again, thus, one finds instances of overlapping discourses that are taken more literally and translated into worldly reality rather than relegated to the spiritual realm by piratical practice. The language of trade is a language spoken by the

pirates as well as the Puritans and the general population, and comparisons between the "*the merchandise of Silver*" and "*fine Gold*" with the "*Merchandise*" of "the work of GOD" (21) seem to be so frequently deployed because it was a language that Mather's audience understood well.

Puritan riches in these sermons are of course of a radically different sort. Yet as Bernard Bailyn has demonstrated, the ideal Puritan standards for judging economic behavior in New England were largely confined to the first generation of merchants who "agreed that religious considerations were highly relevant to the conduct of trade, that commerce, required control by moral laws" (1955, 19). At the end of the seventeenth century, as a mercantilist colonial economy had been realized also with the help of the Navigation Acts and additional tariffs, wealth was flowing in mainly one transatlantic direction, and the New England economy struggled with the consequences (182). The suppression of piracy, together with "the tightening control of trade with the bullion-producing Spanish colonies, and a decade without war and privateering in the Atlantic world dried up other familiar sources of coin."

Pirates, on the rise again since 1713, were thus an important economic factor at least for parts of the New England population, as they were known for spending money freely in coastal towns. On a somewhat speculative note, pirates, like merchants, might even have contributed to the emergence of an empire of goods and a consumer revolution in the eighteenth century, as New Englanders were developing an appetite for imported products and became increasingly important as a market for the British Empire. As Conforti argues, the introduction of tighter trade regulations and the admiralty court system at the end of the seventeenth century "did not significantly hinder New England commerce, mainly because they were not consistently enforced" (2006, 174). Pirate ships scorned the mercantilist rule that did not allow any other than British ships in colonial ports and might have brought different and cheaper goods. Mark Peterson (1997), in his revision of the dominant narrative of New England Puritanism, which cast piety and prosperity as enemies, has taken one step further in arguing that worldly prosperity itself was integral to the sustenance of Puritan religious culture as well as the growth of New England, and these developments delivered a blow to the anti-commercialism of earlier generations. Peterson's arguments have been taken up by Michelle Burnham's study of colonial New England from the perspective of the world systems theory purported by

Immanuel Wallerstein and others, *Folded Selves: Colonial New England Writing in the World System* (2007). By studying sermons and other literary works of colonial America, Burnham skillfully demonstrates that the old debate among scholars of Puritanism seeing Puritan society motivated either by religious or economic considerations is ahistorical (2007, 6); from the beginning, Puritan writing was invested with the language of the market and shows a profound interpenetration of economic and religious discourses that parallels the aesthetic debate between a plain style of writing—the Puritan ideal that allowed metaphors only if they were derived from the Bible—and more elaborate literary expression. As Burnham argues, the language used by and about dissenters folded economic anxieties; "Piety and Profit," the title of one of her subchapters, were deeply entangled issues and mutually sustained each other (12). In this, she follows Philip Gura's view of "the economic origins of the American self" (1986–1987, 256) exposing "an ideological investment in an American national narrative that wants to insist on the spiritual and communitarian rather than the material and commercial origins of the United States" (Burnham 2007, 11), especially if seen from a global perspective of world economics rather than within the nationalist trope of religious freedom. Moments of crisis in Puritan society, *Folded Selves* argues, betray an "extraordinary anxiety about commerce and hostility toward merchants and traders who are accused of misusing not just money but language—of lying, deceiving, and cheating," thus highlighting the complicated ambivalence about, discomfort with, and resistance to American capitalism that produce a "paradoxical discourse of uncertain certainty" (37).[67]

   The anti-piratical sermons discussed here clearly betray the same entanglements and paradoxes. Judging from the increase of anti-piratical sermons after 1713, Puritan ministers like Mather seem to have felt that the increasing commercialism of New England threatened the moral integrity of their congregations and therefore appropriated the language of trade and exchange to ward off economic cooperation with pirates. The sermon form, "the sole form of legitimate public address" (Brown 1989, 34), was frequently used for such "ritual application[s] of theology to community-building and to the tasks and trials of everyday life," as Daniel Boorstin notes (1958, 12). Tackling an increasing commercialism, Mather explains the Puritan covenant with God itself in the language of trade as "*A Contract or Compact*" (1724, 27) in *The Converted Sinner*, and Jesus Christ is cast as a "*Debtor to the Law* for us" (42). The religious discourse

of the anti-piracy sermon is thus not one of anti-commercialism, but instead attempts to remind New Englanders of their duties as commercial agents and subjects.

In the same vein, we can read Mather's construction of piracy as a result of idleness in his *Useful Remarks*: "They that would not *behold the way of the Vineyards*, nor take to any way of Honesty & Industry, for Living ashore, have gone to make their Depredations on the *Waters*; But how has their *Portion been Cursed in the Earth*; and what a *Remarkable Curse* of GOD, has been upon them?" (1723, 22)[68] Piracy, as the more sinful version of seafaring, is perceived as the economic opposite of honest labor, and the labor of sailors at sea the more sinful version of work in the biblical vineyard, a metaphor for work ashore.[69] Rather than seeing piracy as the expression of resistance to the widespread abuse of sailors by maritime authority and the mercantilist system of profit and gain, it is defined by its accumulative ethics of exploitation. Interestingly, Mather would acknowledge the dimension of abuse a few years later in his account of the famous case of William Fly, after his attempt at Fly's conversion had utterly failed.

2.2.6   *"The Complicated Plot of Piracy": Hybridization, Resistance, Counterpoints*[70]

Mather's instructions for prayer and repentance in question-and-answer sections appended to the sermons, often containing an assessment of the repentant's sincerity (1717, 9–34), introduce a dialogism to the genre of the execution sermon that was fundamental for the development of the popular literature of crime, as it was, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, for the novel (cf. also Davidson, who explains that the novels in the early Republic "assayed the social terrain of beggar maids, the rural poor, illiterate immigrants …, prostitutes, pirates," 2004, 28). As sermons generally experienced a shift "from religious indoctrination to quasi-journalistic crime coverage" (Cohen 1993, 9) and from a language of spirituality to a rhetoric of adventure, sensation, and heroization in the early eighteenth century, they anticipated and nourished a significant development in early American literature.[71]

However heavily Mather may have edited the pirates' answers, which in the beginning amount to only a small percentage in length compared to the minister's admonitions, these dialogic sections usually leave traces of doubt and uncertainty on the pirates' side that are detectable in the

printed texts. While some of the condemned cry out for God's mercy, others express their conviction that they "*can do nothing*!" (1717, 13), repeatedly answer Mather's questions by "*I hope I do*" (15–16) rather than by "I do," or reply that they "*can't well tell, what to say to it*?" (34); Mather's answers likewise demonstrate insecurity about how seriously the pirates are to be taken in their repentance. Others try to defend themselves up to their last minutes of life, arguing that they were "*Forced Men*" (17) despite all the contrary evidence Mather lists, or own that their hearts are still "*grow*[ing] *harder*" (20) while Mather repeatedly emphasizes the importance of a softened heart for salvation (24). Despite the fact that Mather's version of heavenly mercy is at times very lenient ("Our Good GOD is One who *takes pleasure in them that hope in His Mercy*," 11), these hesitations appear as traces of resistance to Puritan doctrine and show a great imbalance between Mather's lengthy affective efforts at conversion and their actual effects.

Another tension in the Puritan execution sermon is to be seen in the contradiction between providence and agency, between the doctrine of predestination (relaxing gradually only after 1740) and the appeal to one's free will and choice (Minnick 1968, 82). Repeatedly, Mather exhorts condemned pirates to turn their hearts to God, to repent and pray for conversion, while at the same time arguing that "you cannot *Change* your own Heart!" (1724, 36) and constructing seafarers in general and pirates in particular as a cursed collective.[72] This contradiction did not go unnoticed by the pirates, as the printed conversations between Mather and the convicts demonstrate. "*We thought we could*," one of the pirates answers to Mather's call (37), adding a few pages later, toward the end of their conversation, that they "*know not what to do*" (42) and that "*we have understood nothing of it*!" (46)—even after all the instructions Mather has given them. Mather ends *The Converted Sinner*, a sermon entirely based on the demonstration of the pirates' sinfulness and its dire consequences, by stating that "these Poor Men may after all, be found among the Elect of GOD" (49), a closure containing a message that is the exact opposite of Mather's aim to convince the sinners of the need for conversion. This cannot but have been utterly confusing for sailors and pirates who were not well-versed in Calvinist theology and certainly not among the regular attendants of Puritan services. More than this, it could lead to resistance among the sinners.

Both Daniel Cohen (1993, 67–68) and Daniel Williams (1987) have elaborated on the case of William Fly, a pirate captain who refused to

repent, taunted his hangmen at his execution, and led Mather to publish *The Vial poured out upon the Sea. A Remarkable Relation Of certain Pirates Brought unto a Tragical and Untimely End* (1726). This publication is a case in point regarding the development of the sermon toward sensationalism briefly outlined above, as it shows how

> [s]pecial expedients were resorted to, designed to make the published sermon further appealing. Title pages were sometimes bordered in black with a skull in the center of the page, flanked on either side with crossed shin-bones. Certain key words were set in bold type in the title; e.g. SODOMY, MURDER, BEGOTTEN IN WHOREDOM, PIRACY, RAPE; titillating adjectives were employed. (Minnick 1968, 80)

The title page of Mather's *Vial* prints "PIRATES" in capital letters and boldface, and only a few lines later the word "SERMON" appears, also in bold, but somewhat smaller; a similar change is noticeable three years earlier in the *Useful Remarks*, which boasts of the "Pirate Speeches, Letters, and Actions described" it would offer.[73] Intertextual relations with other, more documentary genres of the emerging literature of crime and adventure thus became increasingly important.

One example of the sermon's hybridization is the partial use of a crime ballad by the English poet Richard Blackmore for the very beginning of Mather's *Vial*, certainly a concession to his audience, as Mather himself was opposed to any entertaining popular literary forms and Blackmore was an object of satire rather than a respected poet in his days. The choice might also hint at Mather's recognition of the fact that ballads were among the most accessible forms of literature, designed to be memorized and repeated; it could be known by all parts of the population, notwithstanding illiteracy (Burgess 2014, 80). What follows is first a factual, somewhat adventurous account of Fly's piracies that approaches the style of criminal biography (famously used by Captain Charles Johnson's report of the case in the second volume of the *General History of the Pyrates* of 1728, the source for many future adventure stories of piracy across the Atlantic world).[74] The next parts are two "Conference[s]" between Mather and the convicts, so that the actual sermon does not start before page 28 and ends on page 47, where another new element is introduced: a sensationalist description of "The Execution," reporting the pirates' behavior. This incorporation constitutes an instance of adapting literary forms to the desires of increasingly sensation-hungry audiences in

order to seize their tastes for Puritan ends; as Daniel Cohen avows, "one man's providence is another's sensation" (1993, 10), and some of the quasi-journalistic histories attached to sermons by Cotton Mather had no distinct spiritual significance in themselves. As the sermonic part of the publication began to decrease in popularity and readers might have focused on the more sensational parts of these works, its textual politics became one of greater complexity and mixed messages.

Already on the very first page of the biographical section ("A Remarkable Relation of a Cockatrice crush'd in the Egg"), piracy is explained as "a way of Revenge, they said, for *Bad Usage*" (Mather 1726b, 1); in the "Conference with the Pirates," the second part of the book, the narrative distance of indirect speech disappears as we read Mather's dialogue with the pirates in direct speech. Mather starts by exhorting them that they "must not think how to brave it out so sottishly and hardily, as I am told, some of you have made some Essay to do" (7), hinting at what was considered blasphemy by the Puritans. Benjamin Colman, the renowned Boston pastor, published an equally hybrid sermon-account of the Fly case and cites as evidence for Fly's blasphemy that "he wou'd sometimes even dare to ridicule the nose of Gods *Thunder*, as it rattled over him, Saying, *That they were playing bowls in the Air*, &c. and as the *Lightnings* sometimes slash'd upon them, he would say—*Who fires now? Stand by*, &c.—So he dar'd the dreadful Vengeance, which persu'd him swift as the *Lightnings* and suddenly struck him" (36). In Fly's first actual appearance on the next page, he denies the murder he is convicted of, which Mather in the following insists is a lie. The minister is confounded:

> M. *Fly*, I am astonished at your stupidity. I cannot understand you. I am sure, you don't understand yourself. I shall be better able, another time to reason with you.
>   *Fly* said, *It is very strange another should know more of me, than I do of myself. There are False Oathes ta[ken] against me*. (9)

As little as Mather can understand Fly's stubbornness, Colman can relate to the hardships of life at sea. The terrifying confrontation with elementary forces such as thunderstorms induces in Fly a sense of humor that was perhaps a matter of everyday survival, of coming to terms with the dangers at sea; the Puritan understanding reduces it to blasphemy, judging it by standards hardly applicable to life at sea.

Mather and Colman, the harsher judge of the two, both empha-size Fly's relentless self-defense and his disinterest edness in repentance (Colman calls Fly's behavior in prison the "greatest Instance of *obduracy* that has yet been seen," 1726b, 38). Fly's is not a singular case in this respect; Mather's *Instructions* relate the behavior of convict John Brown at the gallows, which is described "at such a rate, as one would hardly imagine that any *Compos Mentis*, could have done so. He broke out into furious Expressions, which had in them too much of the *Language* he had been used unto" (1717, 37). After a blank gap in the printed text that hints at the blasphemy that Mather refuses to reproduce (and therefore relegates to his readers' imagination), Brown "fell to Reading of Prayers, not very pertinently chosen"; Mather comments: "In such amazing Terms did he make his *Exit*! With such *Madness, Go to the Dead*!" (38).[75]

Daniel Williams implies a continuity between piracy and the American struggle for democracy and independence in his discussion of the Fly-Mather case on the grounds that pirate crews turned their ships into experimental, if unsustainable and short-lived sites of an alternative social order based on proto-democratic values like fraternity, justice, or equality at least among themselves (1987, 247). The historical character of William Fly is thus interpreted by Williams as a vanguard in his resistance against oppression, as Fly justifies his crimes as the appropriate response to a captain and a mate who had used him "Barbarously," claiming that "we poor Men can't have Justice done us" (Mather 1726b, 21) otherwise. Unintentionally, it is the publication of the sermons themselves that passed on the piratical counter-perspective to contemporary readers as counterpoints in the texts. As Fly himself boasts that he has already read Mather's *Converted Sinner* when the minister, at a point of despair in his efforts to convert Fly, offers to bring him the pamphlet, one might even speculate about Fly's intentional use of Mather's text to defend himself in front of a wider audience (17).

Indeed, the conversations between Mather and the convicts in these publications give us numerous instances of self-defense, an oppositional gesture that haunts the pirates' display of repentance even within a single text. While one consistent line of argumentation employed by the convict was that he was a "forc'd man," an argument that could save him from the gallows if he was able to prove it,[76] "bad usage" is most frequently invoked as the reason for mutiny, piracy, and the use of violence: Colman concludes his publication with the alleged last words and letters of the

convicts, some of who "said little, but warn'd all *Masters* and *Commanders*, against severity and barbarity to their Men, which (they said) they were persuaded is the reason of so many turning *Pirates*" (39). What is at stake in representing unrepentant pirates in this way is the potential creation of solidarity among those strata of the New England populace that experienced similar ways of mistreatment and oppression. The pirate would thus not appear as an Other to them, but rather as a social rebel and a radical agent of resistance. In the later context of the American Revolution, this discourse of oppression and piratical resistance would shift to bear anti-colonial and national ramifications rather than social ones.

In Mather's *Vial*, Fly turns the minister's religious ethics on its head when he says he cannot forgive his former commander for his harsh treatment: "*It is a Vain Thing to ly, If I should say, that I forgive that Man, and that I wish him well, I should ly against my Conscience, and add Sin to Sin*" (16); "*God reward them according to their Deserts*" (20). It seems that Fly's argumentation did not leave Mather unaffected. At the end of the pamphlet, in a report of the actual execution, Mather surprisingly pays homage to Fly's reasoning despite of his former anger. From addressing "poor *Sailours*" (44), Mather suddenly turns to their masters:

> I would presume upon an Address to the *Masters* of our Vessels, that they would not be too like the *Devil*, in their *Barbarous Usage* of the *Men* that are under them, and lay them under *Temptations* to do *Desperate Things*. We allow, Syrs, That you must be *Commanders* aboard, and you must keep a *strict* hand over your Men; and you may, as Times go, too often have occasions for *Severities*; But still, there must be no room for *Barbarities* … The Men must be used as *Rational Creatures*. … They are your *Brethren*. (44–45)

Though Mather might have incorporated this critique of maritime authority in order to contain Fly's criticism within his own narrative framing, seeking to control the public perception of the pirate when he could not control Fly himself (Williams 1987, 238), it is indeed questionable "who was really calling the ideological tune" (Cohen 1993, 68) in such instances of two-way appropriation.

Ideological controversy is detectable also in the discourse of class, Mather calling Fly an "upstart Captain" (1726b, 5) while Fly refers to himself and the crew as "Gentlemen of Fortune" (2), purporting to

have freed himself from in-born class hierarchies (Williams 1987, 247). Fly used the term to formulate a new self-description, demonstrating his belief to have transgressed class barriers. From above, the threat the pirates signified was perceived as directly related to social mobility and discontent with one's class position, obvious in Cotton Mather's use of the exhortation to "stay in your place contentedly."

Resistance could take many creative forms, even within the limited range of action available to Fly and his fellow convicts: the refusal of religious services offered, inattentiveness, gestures of ridicule at court or in church (Minnick 1968, 85), or recalcitrance and understatement in the conversations with the ministers. This does not go unheeded in the narrative attempt at containing piracy: when Mather asks for a full confession as a step toward salvation in his *Instructions*, for instance, Simon Vanvoorst, a convicted Dutch-American pirate, replies with "*Undutifulness unto my Parents; And my Profanation of the Sabbath*," which leaves the minister dissatisfied as he wishes "that you, and all your miserable Companions here, were more sensible of the Crime, for which you are presently to be chased from among the Living," that is, piracy and murder (1717, 16–17); Mather's increasing impatience with such recalcitrance is represented by the use of numerous dashes, gaps, italics, and exclamation marks in the printed conversations.

Similar counterpoints can be found in the first section. By avowing to stick to the facts, the text mentions that pirates were not entirely merciless, releasing captives that did not represent a threat (1726b, 3) and that their cruelty was born out of the necessity to defend and protect themselves from their enemies. Atkinson, a captive whom Fly kept because of his skills as a pilot, promises to take them to Martha's Vineyard, but "purposely miss'd the port, (whereat *Fly* was very angry)"; the captives incite a mutiny and "made themselves Masters of the *Snoe*" in an act similar to how the pirates had taken the ship. "On June 28. the Happy *Captors* brought in their *New Captives*, having *taken them Captives*, *whose Captives they were*" (5): if we presume that at least part of Mather's readership was potentially sympathetic or indifferent to the pirates that bolstered the economy of coastal towns in New England and were an attractive alternative for many sailors,[77] one can conclude that the main effect of passages like these is delight and entertainment rather than anti-piratical sentiment.

Of course, Mather himself displayed nothing but Puritan distaste for popular entertainment; in his instructive sermons, for instance, he advises young people to shun playbooks (1717, 48) and condemns the rough oral culture of the ship (e.g., Mather 1704). Though Mather's authority was by no means premised on the observance of his elite status, the minister's aversion to lower-class verbal expression also betrays his class privilege as he critiques the blasphemy of "Vain Thoughts," "Ears … more delighted with Scurrility than with Spirituality," and "a Mouth full of Rotten Communication" (1704, 26). Ironically, however, the minister sometimes makes use of the popular oral form of the tall tale as anecdotes of godly intervention for the sake of justice (e.g., when he relates how a "horrid fellow aboard a Ship" who was "belching out his Affronts to Heaven, and Swearing & Cursing at a most hideous rate" was struck with a God-sent flash of lightning that "pierced his tongue," 33–34). As Wayne Minnick asserted, the use of such anecdotes is highly unusual in Mather's other writings, as the minister "considered it criminal to demand more confirmation than the Word" (1968, 83). Accordingly, Mather spoke about his choice in an apologetic manner, implying that a convention against such material existed among the ministry, and justified his use of such tales by saying they were appropriate for the occasion (1704, 41). Minnick concludes that "[p]erhaps because he was preaching on this occasion to three pirates who, from indications in the text were not greatly impressed, Mather felt impelled to use this unusual kind of anecdotal proof" (1968, 83).

While the use of sensationalist elements certainly ensured a continuous readership for the Puritan execution sermon, Mather's choice also backfired, gradually lessening the attractiveness of the religious discourse used in the sermons and increasing sensationalist desires in his readers. This contradiction—the need to attract a larger audience on the one hand and the Puritan aversion against entertainment on the other—turns into irony considering the fact that the execution sermon itself was the most popular form of crime literature around the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.[78] What is more, the effects of the traces of piratical resistance that run as main threads through these sermons were certainly unintended, as they played into the hands of the equivocal attitude of an audience that was not necessarily on the side of the authority, as Michel Foucault argued in his study of "The Spectacle of the Scaffold" in *Discipline and Punish* ([1977] 1995, 65–67).

2.2.7   The Gallows Literature of Piracy: "Let Not the Lust of the Eye Poison & Pervert You!"

In his analysis of sea deliverance in Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Udo Hebel interprets the increasing concern for verisimilitude in Mather's writing as a recognition of pleasure and as an important category for reading (2004, 26–27). Entertainment by sensation (cannibals, sea-monsters) and seriality (as repetition and variation) entered the New England literary landscape, pointing ahead "to the more secular narratives … that would become part of American popular culture throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century" until "the transcontinental journey challenged the nature of American culture as a maritime culture and modif[ied] the role of the sea as the favorite frontier in American literature" (29). The process of Anglicization that New England underwent in the early eighteenth century also led, as Sara Crosby states, to the release of printers from religious censorship, enabling them to compose cheap "gallows literature" (2010, 8) like one-page broadsides that presented "authentic" (auto-)biographies of convicted pirates, final words and confessions, ballads, and eventually lengthier criminal histories—"genres which characterized England's popular street literature" and constituted a profitable business (Burgess 2014, 226).

The spectacular nature of the executions themselves geared their accompanying literary representations toward this sensationalism. Like the religious services during which clergymen delivered their sermons, the public hangings aroused much popular interest in early New England, as crowds often amounted to thousands of people who either lived in or traveled to the coastal towns in which the hangings were to take place (Cohen 1993, 3). In the words of Mark Hanna, "New England executions were typically orchestrated as communal, cathartic experiences where criminals admitted guilt, sought forgiveness, and warned witnesses to avoid the trade winds to perdition that swept away men seeking their fortune" (2015, 332). The spectacle itself was thus set up with explicit intentions by the establishment: "The Glorious GOD Expects, that we do the best we can, to make this a *Profitable* & a *Serviceable* Spectacle; and that our Foolhardy Sinners, *Knowing the Terror of the Lord*, may be *Disswaded* from *going on still in their Tresspasses*" (Mather 1723, 20).

Drawing on Foucault, the sensationalist aspects of both the execution itself (which Hanna calls a "ritual of terror," 2015, 331) and its representation in the literature of crime, of piratical terror answered by

the "terror" of God (22; see also Colman 1726, 19) and a state acting as God's hangman, serve an important function in the consolidation of existing hierarchies. Foucault argues that such spectacles speak a language of excess that goes beyond the mere redress of a crime ([1977] 1995, 48); it is a "spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance" (49) that worked through the presence of the criminal and represented a "policy of terror: to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign." In the context of early New England, the presence of the condemned sinner in church (where the execution sermon was usually preached) was of utmost importance and heightened the sensationalism of pirate executions. If the sermon was preached on execution day, all adjourned from the house of worship and trooped to the scaffold, with the minister accompanying the condemned man, conversing and praying; the multitude, up to 12,000 people that had come from all areas for the special occasion, frequently disturbed these conversations by wanting to be as near to the prisoner as possible (Minnick 1968, 79–80).

Accordingly, Captain William Fly's refusal to appear in public when Mather preached the execution sermon must be read as a resort to his own agency as someone who was already judged a dead man by the ministers, an act of resistance to participate in the spectacle of his own hanging at a point in which he had "*nothing more to Expect from the World*," as Fly puts it in the first conversation with Mather (1726, 15). During his time in prison, Fly goes on hunger strike and "declined appearing in the Public Assemblies … because, forsooth, he would not have the Mob to gaze upon him" (47); on the day of his execution, however, he adopts an entirely different strategy, fashioning himself after the heroism of English highwaymen and robbers he might have heard of through the transatlantic circulation of popular crime ballads and songs (Cohen 1993, 67–68). Mather reports how Fly manages to use the spectacle of the execution to his own ends, asserting the agency of a condemned man who had nothing to lose, bonding with members of the crowd, and putting on a performance of scorning death despite of his fear. Fly "concentrated on preserving his independence of mind by denying the significance of death and damnation" (Williams 1987, 234); as Mather reports, the pirate

> … seem'd all along ambitious to have it said, *That he died a brave fellow*! He pass'd along to the place of Execution, with a *Nosegay* in his hand, and making his *Complements*, where he *thought he saw occasion*. Arriving

there, he nimbly mounted the Stage, and would fain have put on a Smiling Aspect. He reproached the Hangman, for not understanding his Trade, and with his own Hands rectified matters, to render all things more Convenient and Effectual. When he was called upon, to *Speak* what he should judge proper to be spoken on that sad occasion, at least for the Warning of Survivers, he only said, That *he would advise the masters of Vessels to carry it well to their Men, lest they should be put upon doing as he had done.* (1726b, 47–48)

While the presence of the prisoner's body set the most convincing example according to the Puritan officials, the crowd, according to Foucault, was an even more important element in the semiotics of the execution. Their "real and immediate presence was required for the performance" ([1977] 1985, 57) in order to legitimize capital punishment, but the role of the people as spectators and interpreters of execution spectacles was ambiguous, as the carnivalesque dimension of the ritual bore the risk of the people turning the convict into a hero if he mocked authority. There was a reason to Mather's emphatic attempt at directing the reaction of the crowd to the execution spectacle into the desired direction: "Hear, Hear the Cry from the horrible Scaffold unto you. *Oh! Let not the Lust of the Eye poison & pervert you!*" (1723, 23). Mather was less concerned, perhaps, about the pirates' lost souls than about the souls of his congregation, which was more than once reluctant "to fully endorse both the trial and execution" (Hanna 2015, 343). In sum,

> [t]he gallows was a symbol of order, and those who mounted it were there to legitimize the power of those who erected it. Public executions, then, were one of the most important colonial contact points between the elite and the non-elite, between the ministers and the magistrates on one side and "the Mob" on the other. Paradoxically, however, by trying to control "the Mob" through ritual and convention, the authorities actually created popular expectations that ran counter to their attempts at subordination. By presenting large numbers of people with spectacles that both titillated and inculcated, they empowered the people they were trying to control by indirectly promoting a popular demand for sensation. (Williams 1993a, 11)

The popular literature of crime, most notably the execution sermon, played an important role in this spectacle, reaching beyond the mere

attempt by Puritan ministers to draw a large audience by distributing their writings in cheap or even free pamphlet form (Cohen 1993, 4–5). Their frequent admonition to respect one's parents demanded respect for authority as such; the pamphlets, books, and broadsheets functioned as testimony and authentication. Yet this is only one side of the coin:

> The effect, like the use, of this literature was equivocal. The condemned man found himself transformed into a hero by the sheer extent of his widely advertised crimes, and sometimes the affirmation of his belated repentance. Against the law, against the rich, the powerful, the magistrates, the constabulary or the watch, against taxes and their collectors, he appeared to have waged a struggle with which one all too easily identified. The proclamation of these crimes blew up to epic proportions the tiny struggle … . [T]he criminal of the broadsheets, pamphlets, almanacs and adventure stories brought with him, beneath the apparent morality of the example not to be followed, a whole memory of struggles and confrontations … . (Foucault [1977] 1995, 67)

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: "neither as a spontaneous form of 'popular expression,' nor as a concerted programme of propaganda and moralization from above; it was a locus in which two investments of penal practice met—a sort of battleground around the crime, its punishment and its memory." Execution sermons connected the audience and the criminal in sympathy, and with the decline of ministerial influence, these theological narratives increasingly ceded control over their 'message' (Crosby 2010, 9). The fact that the anti-piratical sermon, which from the beginning incorporated sensational elements, progressively shed its religious frame in favor of this sensationalism is in itself not a unique characteristic of the Puritan discourse about piracy. Rather, the figure of the pirate used by Mather and the Puritans is symptomatic in that it marks the intrusion not only of secular values and the verisimilitudian "factualism" (Hebel 2004, 24) that resulted from English empiricist influence, but also of economic discourse as a cultural force into Puritan writing. Only when New England society drifted away from congregationalism and toward a democratization of belief and government, the public execution sermon gradually ceased to be a viable mode of public discourse (Minnick 1968, 89), although the genre itself continued to exist at least until end of the eighteenth century (Bosco 1978, 174–76). Its popularity

certainly decreased; but he counterpoints, tensions, and contradictions of the Puritan anti-piracy sermon had paved the way for the aesthetic rewriting of piracy in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the figure of the pirate was further turned into a heroic spectacle and a romantic version of rebellion at sea. Thus, there are more threads of continuity than discursive breaks between Puritan representations of piracy and its popular eighteenth- and nineteenth-century successors.

NOTES

1. The "West Indies" are defined by Krise for the period under scrutiny as "an amalgam of confused and conflicted knowledge and desire" (1999, 1), while "Caribbean" has been used as a more inclusive geographical term, referring not only to the islands of the Caribbean Atlantic but also to the surrounding coastal regions (as they present a cultural continuum with the islands and belong to the same maritime world).

2. Edwards (1994, 5) and Craciun (2013, 171) refer to Dampier as the founder of the tradition of modern exploration writing in English, disregarding his less famous predecessors in this claim.

3. For a brief overview of the history of buccaneering in the Darién region, see e.g. Muth (2011); for a brilliant critical anthropological study of the relations between European colonialisms and the Darién Kuna, see Taussig (1993).

4. "Marked by that 'crisis of European consciousness' of which Paul Hazard has spoken" (my translation).

5. On the American isthmus as a conflicted early modern scientific contact zone, see Mackenthun (2013).

6. For a discussion of piracy as either an Atlantic counter- or subculture, see Mackie (2009, 130–31).

7. The early modern genre of chorography has been discussed by Barbara Shapiro (1983) as a combination of scientific writing and social history, which, in Exquemelin, equals the interweaving of natural history and sensational pirate historiography (see also Frohock 2010b, 58–59). Edwards emphasizes the collective authorship of Dampier's and similar narratives (1994, 9).

8. The Black Legend refers to historical writing that demonizes and thus disqualifies the Spanish Empire in its colonial authority and legitimacy; the term was coined by Julián Juderías in his 1914 book *La leyenda negra y la verdad histórica*.

9. Motohashi's (1999) observations relate to his discussion of cannibalism, which he sees as the most extreme sign used in this discourse.

10. On continuities between the picaresque traveler and the pirate in the popular literature of the early eighteenth century, see Richetti ([1969] 1992, esp. 60–118) and Ralph Bauer's reading of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora's captivity narrative in the *Cultural Geography of Early American Literatures* (2003).

11. On parallels between pirate and creole resistance, see Pérotin-Dumon (1991, 204).

12. Cf. Bauer (2003, 3); piracy as a semantic marker of crisis is indirectly linked here with the piracy of knowledge and data before institutionalized copyright. For struggles regarding the authorization of translations in the case of Exquemelin's text, see Arnold (2007).

13. In this context, Ralph Bauer emphasizes the diverging histories of Europe and colonial America in the development of their literatures as "uneven and co-dependent literary evolutions" (2003, 11). Both Irving and Bauer position their work in an Atlantic framework.

14. For a gender-critical reading of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century piracy, see e.g. Mackie (2009, 114–48), Karremann (2011), or the controversial monograph *Rum, Sodomy and the Lash* (1999) by Hans Turley. On matelotage, see also Rennie (2013, 18).

15. For a detailed history of the buccaneers, see Latimer (2009). The subtitle *How Piracy Forged an Empire* points to the fact that Latimer reads the buccaneers as a central force in the making of the British Empire.

16. "Raubmenschen … die sich auf den erlegten Stier stürzten und ihm das noch lebenswarme Mark aus den Knochen sogen, die das Fleisch, ihre einzige Nahrung, zur Not auch roh verschlangen, die ihre menschlichen Opfer auf das grausamste folterten" in the German original; my translation.

17. Historical sources of such pirate articles have been recorded for the early eighteenth century; for reprints, see Antony (2007). Exquemelin explains Morgan's articles on p. 172.

18. Cf. David Armitage's criticism that "Linebaugh and Rediker do not inquire whether interracial alliances across the lines of status, craft, or freedom were exceptional when they did occur or whether they always did so in the context of opposition rather than acquiescence. Their portrait of the pirate-ship's 'multicultural, multiracial, multinational social order' (162) in the early eighteenth century cannot be reconciled with the picture that emerges from work on more typical and enduring maritime communities that has stressed the resilience of racial barriers and the exquisite hierarchies of status that persisted even far offshore" (2001, 484). Armitage takes issue with the easy opposition of hydrarchy from above and from below in this context, arguing that interracial solidarity was a product at least as much of cultural contact within the Royal Navy

and the Army as of the pirate ship (485). See also Bolster (1997, 69; 90–91).

19. For a discussion of the French version, see Ouellet (2004, 53–56).

20. On Exquemelin's complex biography, see Beeching (2000, 18–19) and Arnold (2007, 10).

21. Exquemelin refers to a number of nautical terms, plant names, dishes, drinks, and material objects adopted by the buccaneer communities from the indigenous populations and partly Anglicized, such as maby (a drink), chicha (a fermented alcoholic beverage), tobacco, aloe, banana, cashew nuts, oranges, cacao or chocolate, manioc, pineapples, potatoes, hammocks, canoes etc. Sociolinguist Eva de Lourdes Edwards has read the book as evidence that the "multi-language, bi-directional maritime linguistic voyage and exchange" took place within only two generations: there is so little explanation of Amerindian words in the *Buccaneers* because "European languages had already been creolized" (2007, 621). Cattle was in fact foreign to the Taínos "as boucan was to the Europeans" but "the foreign elements were intertwined in [sic] both sides of the Atlantic" (627). The sociolinguistic upheaval in the book, in de Lourdes Edwards' view, is emblematic of the psychological and biological "chaos" produced by "the clash of two halves of our planet" (629).

22. The choice of an edition for study is a difficult one. It depends on research interest whether the first edition in Dutch is preferable to the most influential and popular editions of the time, which were translated into English by way of the Spanish (!) version. I have consulted the Dutch 'original,' the 1679 Nuremberg edition in German, and various English versions (which turn the author's name into John Esquemeling), and decided to use the modern English translation based on the Dutch version (1969) in this chapter because my interest is less in translation than the broader view of the literature of piracy as articulating and negotiating the epistemological crisis spurred by colonial contact scenarios in the Americas. For a comparison of various editions and translations, see Ouellet (2004), de Lourdes Edwards (2007), and Arnold (2007), who demonstrates the ways in which "[e]ach national tradition has positioned Exquemelin's book within its own socio-historical perspective" (9).

23. See also Jason Payton's argument that traditional early American Studies have made little room for "oceanic subjects whose modes of belonging and patterns of movement do not fit neatly within nationalist paradigms" (2013, 337).

24. The secondary literature on Exquemelin generally ignores the fact that he remains a servant when he joins the buccaneers (e.g., Linebaugh and Rediker 2000, 158).

25. On the multiplicity of narrative points of view constructed in colonial histories and travel accounts, see Hartog (1988, ch. 6 and 7, esp. 258; 283–94).

26. This also has to do with Exquemelin's fate after returning to Europe and the history of the text; after the publication of the Spanish translation in Amsterdam, the grandee Don Gabriel Fernández y Villalobos had successfully intervened to expel both Exquemelin and the Spanish translator, also a medical doctor, from the Netherlands; "[a]gainst their will the two graduate surgeons were off again to 'America'" (Arnold 2007, 16).

27. See also Exquemelin's report of an indentured servant in the service of the buccaneers who runs away and gets lost in the woods: "He became used to eating raw flesh, and desired no other sort" ([1678] 1969, 56). When, after fourteen months in the wilderness, he comes across a group of hunters, "he looked utterly wild. In all that time he had not shaved, and he was completely naked apart from a strip of tree-bark which covered his loins, and he had a piece of raw flesh dangling at his side." Even after some time back with his group, he would not be able to digest cooked meat despite the fact that Exquemelin and his fellows "tried to keep raw flesh from him" (57). This episode reverberates with the dichotomy of "the raw and the cooked" (as the sign of civilization) famously explored by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966).

28. Ayres' account of Captain Sharp's piracies calls the Protestant adventure a "Maritime Pilgrimage" (1684, 114).

29. Latimer mentions that Crooke made an insert in the second edition and wrote a groveling pamphlet, while the second publisher, Malthus, resisted and spread even "more malicious propaganda to generate publicity for his edition" (2009, 256), but Frohock corrects this version of the Morgan dispute, demonstrating that amended editions preceded the libel lawsuit (2010a, 507).

30. Much of this dialogue also continues in new English editions and reprints of *The Buccaneers*, partly with added parts and prefaces, as Frohock summarizes: "William Crooke published a second edition … in 1684; a rival translation … was printed by Thomas Malthus in 1684; Philip Ayres, *The Voyages and Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp* (London, 1684), includes a defense of Morgan's voyage and an attack on Crooke's translation, to which Crooke responded in the introduction to Ringrose …" (2004, 72 n. 22).

31. William Paterson drew on Dampier and Wafer in forming a company to promote the Scottish Darién colony New Caledonia (1699); Wafer himself was questioned in Edinburgh under the promise of a commission for another expedition. Both Dampier and Wafer were called to the Lords

of Trade and Plantations in London, who "were deeply hostile to Scottish colonial initiatives" (Edwards 1994, 35).

32. The earlier text was published by Philip Ayres, together with four additional travel and adventure narratives in this publication. Ringrose's account is presented as an anonymous journal "writ by a Seaman," "the first that came to my [i.e., Ayres'] Hands" (1685, n.p./A3). On Ringrose's authorship, see Joyce (1934, xxviii).

33. Under William II, this law allowed pirates to be tried anywhere in His Majesty's reign and introduced extended death penalties also to accessory pirates; the earlier mandatory return to London for trial had severely complicated and limited the execution of anti-piracy laws. Vice-admiralty courts were established in the colonies, which would lose their charters if they did not co-operate, as e.g. New York's merchant community (protesting the actions of their new governor, the Earl of Bellomont; see Thomson 1994, 50–51).

34. Ringrose's scientific ambitions culminated in his *South Sea Waggoner* of about 1682, an atlas of charts and sailing directions, based on Spanish documents captured by Ringrose, which the buccaneers used for their navigation of the Pacific coasts of America in its English translation; more influential than the *Waggoner*, however, were the harbor plans in *The Dangerous Voyage*, which were reprinted several times until 1771 (Howse and Thrower 1992, 32).

35. See also James Arnold's discussion of the frontispiece of the first French edition, which represents the two versions of colonialism; in the upper half—the Protestant version—all references to violence are erased and America appears as a pastoral, harmonious landscape in which an 'Indian' queen is revered by Protestant figures. The lower half, in contrast, shows two scenes of slaying, one with a Spaniard killing an indigenous chief subscribed "Innocenter," the other of a buccaneer killing a Spaniard, subscribed "Pro Peccatis" (Lat. "for the sins," Arnold 2007, 13; 18–20).

36. Ringrose's second narrative even incorporates a Spaniard's voice, presenting, in direct speech, the report of a Spanish captain, a "worthy gentleman" (74) whom the buccaneers have taken prisoner. Notably, however, the speech opens with the Spaniard's affirmation of the providential Protestant victory in the preceding battle: "I am now your prisoner at [sic] War by the over-ruling providence of fortune" (73).

37. Ringrose includes a paragraph in which he suggests the King of Darién to be "the true Lord of Panama and all the Country thereabouts" and the "Indians" "the true and natural Lords of the Country" (1685, 37), whose reign needs to be restored against the Spanish usurpers.

38. This claim is based on the journal Ayres published, which is perhaps the most humorous and least polished and scientific text of the pentalogy; it does not mask the prime motivation of Sharp's expedition: "That which

often Spurs men on to the undertaking of the most difficult Adventures, is the sacred hunger of Gold; and 'twas Gold was the bait that tempted a Pack of merry Boys of us, ... being all Souldiers of Fortune ... to list our selves in the Service of one of the Rich West Indian Monarchs, the Emperour of Darien" (1684, 1–2). Throughout this text, it is the Darién Emperor who commands the troop (e.g., 74). Sharp himself, in contrast, implies that the only motivation of his expedition is the discovery of the South Seas (4); the other accounts place justice (against Spanish abuse) and patriotism as their prime motivation.

39. For detailed biographies of Dampier, cf. e.g. Bonner (1959) or Preston and Preston (2004).

40. On Dampier as a scientist, see also Shipman (1962).

41. The topic is touched upon by Edwards (1994, 31), albeit briefly in less than one paragraph. Mark Hanna's *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire* (2015) has discussed it in more detail.

42. Wafer's 'going native' is also mentioned by Dampier ("Mr. Wafer wore a Clout about him, and was painted like an *Indian*; and he was some time aboard before I knew him," 1699, 40).

43. On the topic of indigenous resistance through deception, tricksterism, and other tactics of creating unreliability, see e.g. Vizenor (1994, 88–89).

44. See also Exquemelin's refrain from authorial commentary after the relation of a Spaniard's story about an indigenous woman's intercourse with a lion-like animal ([1678] 1969, 111).

45. See also Silvio Torres-Saillant's *Intellectual History of the Caribbean*, in which he claims that creolization was fully engaged in Caribbean textualities as early as Francisco Balboa's *Espejo de paciencia* in 1608, countering Simon Gikandi and supporting Kamau Brathwaite's argument that the West Indies formed a "counter-renaissance" (2006, 149).

46. Execution sermons, a "splendid instrument for correcting the faults of [the] congregation" (Minnick 1968, 78), were directed to and sometimes preached at the request of condemned criminals briefly before they were hanged. On the genre, a substantial and serious contribution to the literature of colonial New England by highly educated ministers, see Minnick (1968), Crosby (2010, 5–8), or Bosco (whose essay especially focuses on the historical development of the execution sermon between 1674 and 1750; 1978). Bosco, following Perry Miller, regards the execution sermon as a form of jeremiad (1978, 162–63).

47. The title pages of three of these sermons do not bear Mather's name, but have been attributed to him by Mather bibliographer T. J. Holmes and by Charles Evans in his standard *American Bibliography*. For his 1717 sermon *Instructions to the Living, from the Condition of the Dead*, further certainty of authorship is established through Mather's *Diary*, which relates that the publication context of this recently held execution sermon would "render

the Condition of the Pirates, lately executed, profitable" (1957, 490; note the ambiguity of spiritual and economic profitability). *The Converted Sinner* is also mentioned as desired for publication in the *Diary* (729).

48. For various perceived crises such as King Philip's War in early New England and their representations in writing, see Slotkin (1978, 3–42) or McWilliams, who also mentions the Half Way Covenant as one instance of a crisis scenario (2004, 13). Williams argues that "[t]o be a New Englander, as these crises were historically understood, was to be in continuing, embattled protest against enemies both without and within" (14) and that thus overcoming crises served as central to New England identity formation.

49. Mather was much concerned with his own rule as the potential savior of condemned pirates. In *Warnings to the Living*, he alludes to the alleged mockery of Puritan ministers by pirates ("I am Credibly informed, That a principal Person among the Pirates now going to Day, upon the Gallows, was in one of his former Voyages, Flouting and Railing against a Minister in this place, who had never deserved it," 1704, 41), and in a diary entry of May 1724 confirms for himself his importance in the face of the fact that "One of the first Things which the Pyrates, who are now so much the *Terror of them that haunt the Sea*, impose on their poor Captives, is; *To Curse Dr M—*": "The Pyrates now strangely fallen into the Hands of Justice here, make me *the first Man*, whose Visits and Councils and Prayers they beg for. Some of them under Sentence of Death, chuse to hear from me, the last Sermon they hear in the World" (1957, 729).

50. Another case in point would be William Hubbard (1621–1704), one of the more skeptical and rational ministers of a generation before Mather, who uses the image of the seaman in *The Benefit of a Well-Ordered Conversation* (1684; Elliott 1975, 152).

51. On the seventeenth-century Puritan imagination of the sea, see also Stein (1972).

52. The transnational nature of the pirate crews is also apparent in Mather's *Instructions*, as the condemned are all of different origins: two pirates are Dutch, two are Dutch-American, one is Jamaican, another a Swede, and yet another one a French Catholic who only speaks French (thus Mather talks to him in French and upon request of the bookseller adds a translation; 1717, 32–34).

53. Mather's choice of James 5, 20 for the frontispiece of *The Converted Sinner* (1724) is suggestive in this respect: "He who Converteth the Sinner from the Error of his way, shall save a soul from Death."

54. As Babette Levy diagnoses, Mather not only believed he "was cognizant of all the social and political evils in the society in which he lived but he also was certain that he … was the one chosen to point out these evils and to correct them" (1979, 26).

55. Notably, Mather also published *The Sailours Companion and Counsellour. An Offer of Considerations for the Tribe of Zebulun; Awakening the Mariner to Think and Do Those Things That May Render His Voyage Prosperous* in 1709, emphasizing the distinction between property rights as the pillar of society and its piratical transgression. For a brief discussion of this book of advice regarding the Lockean 'pursuit of property,' cf. McElroy (1935, 334–35).

56. In a footnote by the editor of the first edition of Mather's *Diary* (1912), Worthington Chauncey Ford, it is noted that the pirate captain who was killed in this affair was John Philips and may have been of Mather's first wife's Charleston family (1957, 722 n.2).

57. I use Benedict Anderson's term to highlight the imaginary nature of this conception of Puritan society.

58. On Puritan society as a theocratic oligarchy, cf. the classic materialist critique of Puritanism by James Truslow Adams, *The Founding of New England* (1922).

59. As Minnick asserts, the use of anecdotes is highly unusual for Cotton Mather, "who considered it criminal to demand more confirmation than the Word" (1968, 83): "About this he spoke apologetically, implying that a convention against such material existed among the ministry and perhaps in audiences, too"; he justified his use of these tales by saying they were appropriate for the occasion (1704, 41).

60. The form of direct address in execution sermons was taken over from the election sermon (Minnick 1968, 81).

61. For a detailed study of New England in the context of the British Atlantic world, see Conforti (2006).

62. Mather's diary relates to the publication context of *The Converted Sinner* in a March 1725 entry: "On Psal. CXIX. 104. *Hating every false Way* (On the Spectacle, which we have, in what the *false Ways* of our Pyrates, have brought them to.)" (1957, 787–88).

63. Mather emphasizes in both his diary and in the 1717 *Instructions* that he has tried to appeal to the governor on behalf of at least one of the pirates who was "not only more penitent, but also more innocent than the rest" (Mater 1957, 483), trying to save him from the gallows (1717, 19). His sermons allow for the possibility that even among the pirates there might have been some "Elect," explaining why some of them escaped death.

64. On the function of the sermon as a means for conversion or a "net of salvation," as Mather puts it in *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (1726a, 104), cf. Perry Miller's discussion in *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* ([1939] 1961, 280–330).

65. Interestingly, Mather notes that the bookseller for whom he intended the work refused to print this sermon, but that other sellers desired it without his offering and printed no less than 1,200 copies. This might

hint at the sensationalist appeal and attractiveness of piracy as a subject for publications beyond Mather's usual printers.

66. Already in Mather's *Faithful Warnings* of 1704 he uses such a continuum rather than polarity to condemn privateering, which "so easily degenerates into the Piratical; and the Privateering Trade, is usually carried on with so Unchristian a Temper, and proves an inlet unto so much Debauchery, and Iniquity, and Confusion, I believe, I shall have Good men Concur with me, in wishing, That Privateering may no more be practiced, except there may appear more hopeful Circumstances to Encourage it" (1704, 37). Other practices Mather locates on this continuum are fraud, cheating, lying, and the "*Trade[s] of Sin*" (46): idolatry, fortune-telling, prostitution and procuration, gaming and the lotteries; also, he condemns debt, bribery, lawyers pleading "Ill" cases, rulers who sell public offices, corruption, greed, and avarice. He closes his warnings by pointing to the "*Riches of CHRIST*" and to "*Wisdom, the Merchandise whereof is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the Gain therof than* [unreadable word] *Gold*" (64).

67. Burnham's diagnosis also echoes Michael Kammen's seminal study of colonial America, *People of Paradox: An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civilization* (1975). Kammen's fault lines, in contrast to the global vantage points of Burnham and others, however, often remain within an Old World/New World dichotomy of authoritarianism versus individualism, hierarchy versus mobility, or order versus chaos. Yet he acknowledges that there were both Old World continuities and transformations in America that occurred simultaneously (1975, 208). That Kammen characterizes colonial America as a "contrapuntal civilization" (273) highlights these paradoxes, but also evokes, through the musical metaphor, a harmonious whole that studies such as Burnham's have largely dismantled (see also my discussion of contrapuntal reading in the introduction).

68. An embedded narrative by a pirate similarly warns the congregation and readership to "[t]ake care against Spending your time Idly on the Sabbath Day, in staying at Home, or Walking of any other Diversions," advising them to rather "[d]iligently Frequent your Proper Places of Divine Worship, Respect your Pastors and Teachers, … and pay the just Deference due to the Rulers, set over you by God" (1717, 33).

69. Mather's use of the vineyard in the same sermons that preach temperance as a response to the drinking habits of sailors and seafarers is itself somewhat ironical.

70. My title is taken from the second conversation between Mather and William Fly (1726b, 21).

71. The genderedness of these texts, portraying male criminals and addressing primarily the young men of Massachusetts, also marks a transition in

the sense that earlier adventure narratives focused on the female captivity narrative (e.g., Mary Rowlandson's, 1682).

72. For *The Vial Poured Out Upon the Sea* (1726b), Mather uses an inscription from the book of Job (24, 19) that is the source for this discourse: "*He is swift as the Waters; their Portion is cursed in the Eart; he beholdeth not the way of the Vineyards*" (n.p.).

73. Cohen's brief examination of bookseller's advertisements for execution sermons in the *Boston News-Letter* shows that in the case of Mather's *Instructions*, the ad even omitted mention of the sermon altogether, emphasizing instead the pirates' shipwreck (1993, 10). It is noteworthy that the *News-Letter* featured 31 piracy stories in 1718 alone (Hanna 2015, 374) and was thus another main site of the discursive construction of piracy in New England.

74. According to Manuel Schonhorn, editor of the Dover edition of the *General History*, Johnson (still thought to be a pseudonym of Daniel Defoe by Schonhorn) had no knowledge of either the Mather or Colman sermons, but used the trial protocols as the basis for his narrative.

75. The case of Captain John Quelch reports a similar behavior, as the publication of his and his crews' *Dying Speeches* demonstrates (see also Cohen 1993, 67).

76. In the second section of Mather's *Useful Remarks*, for instance, one pirate argues that he only joined the pirates with "the greatest Reluctancy, and Horror of Mind and Conscience"; "my Heart & Mind Never Join'd in those Horrid Robberies, Conflagrations & Cruelties Committed, so much as some have" (1723, 34).

77. Many accounts of piracy demonstrate that sailors who encountered pirates did not hesitate to join them, due to the better 'usage' they could expect among more egalitarian pirate crews.

78. See Bosco (1978, 159) and Cohen (1993, 16); the comparatively high rate of literacy in New England supported the wide circulation of these sermons. Daniel Cohen's study of New England crime literature between 1674 and 1860 presents one of the best overviews on these genres and their developments.

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Pirate Narratives and the Revolutionary Atlantic in the Early Republic and the Antebellum Period

3.1 Pirate Narratives and the Romance of the Revolution

The early American Republic and the first half of the nineteenth century were obsessed with what Henry Steele Commager ([1965] 1967) famously called the "search for a usable past" (in reference to literary critic Van Wyck Brooks's 1918 essay "On Creating a Usable Past") and the cultural construction of the "imagined community" (B. Anderson) of U.S.-American citizens to create and consolidate a national identity. In both literature and the wider field of cultural production, including festivities and a memorial culture, American history and its accompanying mythologies became useful resources for the creation of a national culture and literature which sought to distance itself from a British heritage. On the one hand, writers of literature reverted to the specific American theme of cultural contact with indigenous populations (whose extinction was euphemized as the downfall of the 'noble savage,' doomed by an allegedly superior civilization, most prominently in James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*); on the other, 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 Americans and to activate, rejuvenate, and actualize a shared memory. The entire post-revolutionary period, according to Daniel Williams, was marked by a celebration of

113

defiance and autonomy, specific qualities of subsequent U.S.-American outlaw masculinities:

> After the Revolution, after the country had itself defied authority, descriptions of deviant and defiant individuals became especially popular in American literature, and the criminal … became both hero and anti-hero, both epitome and parody of the American character. As a literary figure, the criminal moved from Puritan condemnation to post-Revolutionary celebration. … Self-determination, self-reliance and self initiative became socially celebrated ideals. Defiance of authority became pervasive, almost institutionalized. (Williams 1983, 6; 13)

"In a new nation in a New World," Williams continues, such outlaw figures "represented new possibilities for the individual. Living in a competitive society where money had replaced the traditional bonds among people, they quickly embraced the profit motive and accepted the vision of the self-made man" (17). In 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. David Reynolds calls such figures "likable criminal[s]," patriotic outlaws that had a special meaning in antebellum America, as the nation as a whole "was a justified pariah—a nation that had recently waged holy war against a foreign oppressor and that still felt the paradoxical spirit of optimism and militancy, progressivism and pugnaciousness. … There was … a … democratic impulse to make heroes of those who lashed out angrily against what was viewed as deepening social corruption" (1988, 180–81). Paradoxically, it was the transnational potential of the pirate as the (male or sometimes female) hero of a historical romance, a figure beyond national belonging, which made her/him suitable for appropriation by various patriotic discourses; thus in the context of the early Republic the heroic English pirate is taken up and Americanized into a figure of liberty. In this way, s/he functions as a postcolonial foundational figure for the national imaginary and mythology: an outlaw figure whose illegitimacy is discursively transformed by its romanticization into a context of a legitimate break of rule.

However, 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. The first half of the nineteenth

century was marked by a number of crisis scenarios besides the War of 1812 against Great Britain; in addition, the sectional Nullification Crises over federal tariffs, the wars against Native American peoples, and both the budding slavery debates, leading to the Missouri Crisis in 1821, and the so-called woman question, steadily increasing in intensity toward the mid-century, troubled the early Republic. All of these shared a context of intense debate about the U.S. legal system and the appropriate kind of law in the young United States, especially concerning the role of the English common law tradition. As Charles Hansford Adams points out, these debates were significant for "the American dilemma" (Perry Miller) between self and community (1990, 2–3): "In the deliberations over what sort of country the United States would be, the nature of 'legal law' was perceived as crucial" (3) as "the American mind … was marked by a search for legitimate 'parental' authorities" (10).[1] The use of piracy in antebellum fiction hence also functioned as a way to articulate discussions about the character of "natural law" and how U.S.-American law could emulate it.

In the following, I am arguing that such critical scenarios of the early nineteenth century were rearticulated through the narration of revolutionary piracy and its legitimation in discourses of freedom and oppression. In the early popular national literature, the revolutionary pirate was turned into a romantic figure, paradoxically modeled upon the Byronic pirate (see Lord Byron's tale in verse "The Corsair," 1814, and its "new vision of the pirate, not as a bloodthirsty criminal, but as superb embodiment of romantic freedom, self-assertion, and alienation" [Th. and M. Philbrick 1991, xx]), while Byron's poem marks another instance of transatlantic cultural crossings, given that Byron had been inspired by reports about the Florida pirate-smuggler and slaver Jean Lafitte (Rennie 2013, 128). In these narratives of the Revolution, the dissociation from Great Britain, which was again on the daily agenda with a new war and could not be taken for granted (e.g., when New England coastal towns sympathized with the official enemy), was accomplished by evoking the pirate: wresting her/him from British hands—after all, pirates like Sir Francis Drake had long become popular foundational figures in the British pantheon—and appropriating her/him as an ideal type of the patriotic outlaw, who risked (and at times sacrificed) his/her life for a just and victorious cause, as in Cooper's *The Red Rover* (this appropriation is shadowed concurrently in formal terms, as Cooper attempted to improve Sir Walter Scott's model of the historical romance). As my

readings of the two arguably most popular pirate tales of the first half of the nineteenth century—Cooper's *Rover* and Maturin Murray Ballou's novelette *Fanny Campbell: The Female Pirate Captain. A Tale of the Revolution* (1844/1845)—will show, historical romances in early American literature that thematized the legitimacy of the Revolution appropriated the romantic concept of piracy—albeit with twists and modulations—in order to debate antebellum issues of legitimacy, authority, and equality with regard to race, class, and gender.[2]

For James Fenimore Cooper, who was keenly interested in the postrevolutionary legal debates, the pirate anticipated the anti-legalism soon to be advocated by the transcendentalists and other U.S. intellectuals (a position that saw the law as undemocratic and was defeated with the acceptance and subsequent Americanization of the English legal heritage). Cooper's Red Rover personifies the conviction, brought forth in the Declaration of Independence "that, though the Revolution was ostensibly a rebellion against established order, it was necessitated and justified by insufferable violations of existing laws and rights and sanctified by the 'laws of Nature and of Nature's God'—laws inherent … in a cosmic moral order" (Beard 1976, 86). In the end, the revolutionary Rover is reintegrated into society; thus the narrative first celebrates the maritime outlaw and then tames him into a figure of the revolutionary past.

The national appropriation of a romantic pirate figure who could be integrated, eventually, into the community, also reverberated in the arena of narrating gender roles, which were in a phase of critical transformation throughout the nineteenth century. The recourse to the Revolution in popular literature called upon enlightenment models of revolutionary femininity and the subsequent "Republican mother," which in turn inspired an emergent 'first wave' of feminism. Yet while the patriotic woman of the nineteenth 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 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, which radically questioned the cardinal virtues of what historian Barbara Welter called "the cult of true womanhood": piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. As figures of ambivalence, however, literary pirates like the Red Rover

or Fanny Campbell disturbed rather than backed this neat transformation from revolutionary pirate to law-abiding citizen.

3.2 Crises of Authority and National Identity in James Fenimore Cooper's *Red Rover* (1827)

3.2.1 *Cooper's Maritime Nationalism*

James Fenimore Cooper's early work—including his trilogy of sea tales (*The Pilot*, 1824; *The Red Rover*, 1827; *The Water-Witch*, 1830)—was primarily concerned with the dramatization of the process of separation between Great Britain and her American colonies, and of "the slow awakening of an American national consciousness" (Philbrick 1961, 58). Cooper's sea tales, the first volumes of maritime fiction by an American author (Blum 2008, 71), stage this process on the Atlantic Ocean, reverberating with Henry Nash Smith's ([1950] 2009, 12) observation that a military and economic command of the seas was one of the two early conceptions of a U.S.-American Empire (the other being westward expansion, which became dominant in the course of the nineteenth century). The idea of the young United States as a leading seafaring nation which, ideally, "carr[ied] the idea and the practice of individual liberty everywhere in the world" (Green 1978, 167), brought forth a maritime nationalism still prevalent in discourses about the United States' national identity and future destiny in the 1820s; in the field of literature, a plethora of nautical narratives published in the first half of the nineteenth century testifies to the idea that the American frontier was yet primarily imagined as maritime, inspired as the sea tales were by naval victories of the Revolution, against the French and the Barbary States, and of the War of 1812, as well as by the rapid expansion of U.S.-American overseas trade (Philbrick 1961, vii & 1; Clohessy 2007; Bender 1990, 18). Cooper himself, in the second volume of *Notions of the Americans* (1828), held that "the tide of emigration, which has so long been flowing westward, must have its reflux ... . [T]he great outlet to the rest of the world, the path of adventure, and the only, at least the principal, theatre for military achievements open to the people of this country, is on the ocean" (83, 86).[3] Accordingly, Cooper "established the sea as a legitimate, indeed inevitable, landscape for literary historical fiction," as Hester Blum notes (2008, 74). In *The Red Rover*, Cooper's most

popular sea tale, the titular Rover likewise imagines America in terms of its coasts and seas: "'how many noble rivers pour their waters into the sea along this coast of which we have been speaking; how many wide and commodious havens abound there; or, how many sails whiten the ocean that are manned by men, who first drew breath on that spacious and peaceful soil'" (725).

Cooper scholarship largely agrees with the characterization of the "sea tales" as texts of maritime nationalism, following Thomas Philbrick's groundbreaking study *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction* (1961), an analysis of maritime nationalist literature from Freneau and Royall Tyler to Charles Lenox Sargent's *The Life of Alexander Smith* (1819), Washington Irving's sketch "The Voyage" (1819) and Cooper, in which he established the term "maritime nationalism" (Philbrick 1961, ch. 1). More recently, the concept of maritime nationalism has been re-evaluated in a transatlantic context: Iglesias, for instance, argues that "Cooper's sea novels provide a broader conception of American literary nationalism and authorship conceived in terms of the transatlantic world, grasping the cultural tensions between America and Britain still driven by the unresolved conflicts after 1812" (2006, n.p.). In a similar vein, Sir Walter Scott's influence has been critically reframed[4]: Kwame Anthony Appiah, drawing on George Dekker's seminal collection of essays *James Fenimore Cooper: The American Scott* (1967),[5] does not dispute that Cooper's style is informed by Scott's popular romances, which were "amongst the most widely read and admired works of fiction in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century" (1995, 281), but views Cooper's work as first and foremost paralleling Scott's in terms of its racist hierarchies and postcolonial nationalism (e.g., with regard to the construction of space, since Scott's romantic and masculinist notion of life on the Scottish borders was "easily transferred in imagination to the rigors of North American pioneer life"). Lawrence Buell suggests that Cooper's imperfect break from Scott "might be seen as a mark of the 'colonized mind'" (1992, 422), but also highlights his imperialism, as he "played the postcolonial to the extent that he deferred to Scott's plot forms, but he played the imperialist to the extent that his own narratives reflected and perpetuated the romance of American expansionism" (435). I will contend throughout this chapter that Cooper's postcolonial appropriation of Scott happened in ways specific to the American historical situation, also and especially with regard to the significance of the pirate figure.

Paradoxically, U.S.-American maritime nationalism constituted a continuation of England's national self-conception of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Cooper seems to have been fully aware of this (Green 1978, 168). It is manifest in Cooper's use of pirates in the sea tales as liminal and ambiguous figures of the past, who, on the one hand, recall British tradition and heritage—also *qua* literary renditions of Shakespeare, Defoe, Sir Walter Scott, or Lord Byron—and dramatize the American break-away from them on the other, by inventing a revolutionary pirate as a "justified pariah" (Reynolds 1988, 181) not unlike the United States.[6] The invocation of the Revolution in Cooper's earliest novels, in this context, has been read as an attempt to "establish the conditions of a legitimate national authority, in which the claims of law and self could be balanced" (Adams 1988, 166), as, indeed, a utopia of law. As I argue in my reading of *The Red Rover*, Cooper's ambivalent use of the pirate dramatizes the critical search for a legal and legitimate national identity in the early Republic, as the figure of the Rover precipitates a crisis of law and authority by invoking more general questions of legitimacy: the (political and cultural) legitimacy of the American Revolution and U.S. independence, and, on a much subtler level, that of slavery and gender inequality.

3.2.2   *The Invention of Tradition:* The Red Rover *as Realist Romance*

Cooper wrote *The Red Rover* during his time in Paris as an improvement of his first nautical romance *The Pilot*, which, in turn, was conceived as a critical response to Scott's much-praised *The Pirate* (1822). Cooper resented Scott's "lubberly treatment of the nautical scenes" (Walker 1963, vi) and was convinced that his own knowledge and experience of the sea (including a chase by pirates off the coast of Portugal) would ensure more verisimilar nautical tales. Like *The Pilot*, he dedicated *The Red Rover* to his long-time naval friend and sea-going companion, Commodore William Branford Shubrick of the U.S. Navy, who had become his "nautical proofreader" (Blum 2008, 88).[7] The 1827 preface elucidates Cooper's understanding of his literary ideal in nautical terms, claiming with a sense of irony that "[t]he true Augustan age of literature can never exist until works shall be as accurate, in their typography, as a 'log-book,' and as sententious, in their matter, as a 'watch-bill'" ([1828] 1991, 425). Both paratextual features—dedication and preface—work to

assert Cooper's authority of experience as a writer of sea fiction, infusing Scott's model of the historical romance with a sense of "nautical realism" (Blum 2008, 72).[8] In fact, Blum contends, Cooper's early work reflects an uneasy shift from romanticism to realism (the dominant mode of nautical fiction by the 1840s, as exemplified for example by Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years before the Mast*, 1840). In her reading, it still "misses the point of nautical realism" (72) compared to popular narratives written by common sailors at the time (whose use of first-person narration heavily influenced Cooper's later work), but the comparison is somewhat uneven, given that most sailors' accounts were not fictional.

Cooper's imperfect realism—especially his concern for precision and nautical detail, prime stylistic tools to render his historical inventions credible and convincing, to produce what Roland Barthes (1989) has termed "the effect of reality"[9]—seems at odds with his use of the stock ingredients of romance: kidnappings, masquerades and deception, melodramatic family reunions and a romance plot, superstition, mystery, and supernatural elements as well as a sense of allegory.[10] This poses a considerable predicament in the sea tales as well: "the fictional celebration of his doctrine of maritime nationalism demanded the exalted and ideal tone of romance; the known facts of American maritime history rendered such a tone absurd" (Philbrick 1961, 51). Egan suggests that the romance genre's general emphasis on strangeness rather than familiarity of experience and "the need to create a world rather than fit into one" (1995, 67) were in fact pivotal in the context of developing a U.S.-American literature as exceptional and new; at the same time, the political development of an American perspective also fostered a literary departure from established models of English narrative modes, developing a style of narration that Margaret Cohen has called "active description" (in contrast to omniscient narration; 2008, 75).

The only available solution for Cooper, it seems, was a recourse to the historical romance genre, inventing appropriate incidents and characters and embedding them in a general historical setting (Philbrick 1961, 51) while using a language that aimed at heightening said effect of reality; this solution echoes Winfried Fluck's characterization of the historical romance as a fundamentally hybrid genre that functioned as a "civilizing literary force" (in the Original "literarische Zivilisierungsinstanz," 1997, 107; my translation), combining the two genres of historiography and romance, one serious and instructive, the other sensational, popular, and low of status (also Campbell 2011, 20). Cooper's choice of the historical

romance, initiated and popularized by Sir Walter Scott, is significant in the context of the invention of an American literary tradition as well—though, as Frank and Mueller-Vollmer have observed, this was probably not really a question of choice, as Anglo-American writers who "wanted to develop distinctive literary traits" still had to "remain in close relation to the literature of Britain"; "[l]iterary Americanness was rather a question of how to place one's work in the cross-Atlantic reading culture so that it would make a difference" (2000, 182). After all, in the postcolonial context of the early Republic, *American* literature was not only written for U.S.-Americans, but also to establish a genuine *American* culture in an international, predominantly transatlantic arena in the context of a struggle for cultural recognition. The use of the historical romance for such national(ist) purposes perfectly suited this endeavor: as a widely popular "literary currency" (Cohen 2003, 481) across Europe and the Atlantic, it constituted an international phenomenon at the time (Frank and Mueller-Vollmer 2000, 177) that was nationalized by U.S.-American writers like Cooper, choosing distinctly American topics and subjects and using (albeit often awkwardly) vernacular American sociolects (apparently much praised by contemporary critics for being both humble and fiercely nationalistic; cf. Blum 2008, 78).[11]

Although by 1820 the historical romance had gained wide acceptance as a fictional form, "the viability of U.S.-American materials within that form remained a serious and debated question" (Dekker and Williams 1997, 2)—thus the criticality of the genre in the struggle for a transatlantic recognition of American culture. Reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic used Cooper's work as a vehicle for considering this issue: is *American* culture sufficiently rich to support a historical romance, what are the materials best suited to the genre, and how should these materials be wrought for greatest effect?[12] In the 1834 edition's preface, Cooper himself articulates this "problem," stating that "America is a country nearly without traditions, the few there are being commonly too familiar to be worked up in fiction" ([1828] 1991, 427) and thus voicing his "grievance … that America's maritime past cannot provide the glorious subject matter ready-made in the British Royal Navy's rich annals" (Blum 2008, 77). America seemed too common and matter-of-fact to Cooper. The only exception, Cooper states in the preface to the 1850 Putnam edition (a reissue that responded to readers' craze for nautical fiction in the 1840s), were America's famous pirates:

> [t]he history of this country has very little to aid the writer of fiction, whether the scene be laid on the land or on the water. With the exception of the well-known, though meager incidents connected with the career of Kidd, indeed, it would be very difficult to turn to a single nautical occurrence on this part of the continent, in the hope of conferring on a work of the imagination any portion of that peculiar charm which is derived from facts clouded a little by time. ([1828] 1991, 429)

In this context, the pirate can be read, like the 'Indian,' as a result of a '(post-)colonial complex' in which American culture was perceived as inferior and poor in topics of its own in comparison to Europe; hence the craze for Native 'Indian' figures and scenarios in early and antebellum America, or for (Americanized) pirates such as the Red Rover. Across the Atlantic, readers of the nineteenth century were infatuated with such tales of piracy, which, as a subject, had already become "entwined with the history and legend of the new nation" (Walker 1963, xv)—after all, its first naval war was fought against "Barbary Pirates" (1801–1805, see Sect. 3.1), and figures like Captain Kidd (who is already mentioned in *The Pilot*) and Jean Lafitte fed a fledgling U.S. folklore.[13] But even with Kidd as an inspiration for *The Red Rover* (as well as for *The Water-Witch* and *The Sea Lions*; see Bonner 1946, 21), Cooper admits the necessity of an "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992) in the following, saying that the narrative has no factual basis; he was trying to "giv[e] the country, in fiction, that which he felt it lacked in history" (Clohessy 2007, n.p.). This actually responded to the *Rover*'s success as invented tradition, as many of its early readers actually believed the story to be historical fact (Blum 2008, 91). According to Bonner, *The Red Rover* is singular because by the very invention of the protagonist Cooper "saw the meaning in American Colonial life of Captain Kidd and all alike him," catching "the early spirit of independence that disregarded English law, that in the Revolution was patriotic and good, but that before that time had been criminal" (1946, 27). Cooper's adventure romances, in both form and content, then, dramatized a critical moment in the endeavor to develop a distinctly U.S.-American literature that had to situate itself in the Atlantic literary arena: formally by inventing what I call a realist romance, and in terms of content, by turning to the American Revolution, the maritime frontier—and piracy.

3.2.3 *Legal Ambivalence and Independence*

The most influential and popular of Cooper's nautical romances in the nineteenth century, *The Red Rover* inspired important cultural protagonists on both sides of the Atlantic, like Goethe and Berlioz (who renamed one of his overtures *Le corsaire rouge* as a memorial to Cooper), Melville (who reviewed it while writing *Moby-Dick*) and Conrad (Walker 1963, xiv; Manning 1993, 450; Mackenthun 2004, 72), but was also widely popular in a plethora of simplified stage versions (e.g., Rennie 2013, 150); it gave its name to stage coaches, packet ships, and even a children's game (Th. and M. Philbrick 1991, xxix), and inspired mutineers—despite a somewhat confusing and obscure plot and a variety of aesthetic deficiencies. The story is set in 1759, during the phase of British conquest during the French and English Wars (1754–1763) in Newport, Rhode Island, which is depicted as a meeting place of various cultures: Puritan settlers, slave-traders, and Southern plantation owners on vacation, and the maritime multi-culture of the ships and the harbor; the important role of colonial Newport in both the slave trade and the history of piracy informed this image (Th. and M. Philbrick 1991, xviii). The action commences on a day of victory for the British troops against the French in the battle for Quebec, with a "spirit of Provincial admiration" (Cooper [1828] 1991, 438) for Britain pervading Newport. It revolves around the young seaman Harry Wilder, who, with his long-time seafaring companions Dick Fid and the African American Scipio Africanus (briefly called S'ip or Guinea), is on a mission to hunt down the famous pirate the Red Rover. He learns that a planter's daughter, Gertrude Grayson, and her governess Mrs. Wyllys, together with their African American (presumably enslaved) maid Cassandra, are to embark on the *Royal Caroline* on their journey back home to the Carolinas after a visit with her aunt, Mrs. De Lacey, sister of Colonel Grayson and widow of a deceased Admiral.[14] A mysterious ship, the *Dolphin*, lying a little off the harbor, is suspected to be the Rover's rather than an "ordinary" slaver, a rumor left undisputed by an equally mysterious lawyer (a "stranger in green" who later turns out to be the famous pirate himself), and so Wilder and his companions take a nightly expedition to inspect the *Dolphin*. They are met by the former "lawyer," the Red Rover (a.k.a. Captain Walter Heidegger), who shows them various letters of marque and the flags of many nations and reveals his identity as a pirate who uses the flags at his own will. He

offers Wilder to enlist as first mate, but Wilder objects, being afraid that he would not be free as part of the Rover's crew. While Dick and S'ip get drunk, Wilder is sent to study the ship's "code" (512) and eventually agrees to the position (apparently believing he can defeat the Rover more easily this way).

Wilder is now a double agent (though the reader learns much later of the fact that he is engaged in a royal pirate chase), and out of worry about the women tries to warn them of the *Royal Caroline*, a suspected future victim of the Rover. They debate his warnings, but decide to take the journey nevertheless. The Rover hears that the *Royal Caroline*'s Captain is disabled with a broken leg and orders Wilder, with his companions, to apply for his post, presumably to make the capture easier. Presenting a fictitious letter of recommendation, Wilder is hired. They set sail, pass the mysterious *Dolphin* and are hailed by her captain; after a chase they turn back to Newport, but are caught in a tempest that leads to their wreck. While the mutinous crew leaves in boats, their pursuer, the Rover, saves the women and Wilder, and they continue aboard the *Dolphin*. During a theatrical masquerade (called "Mischief") that is to turn into a violent fight, the Rover restores order aboard, reaffirming Wilder's authority in front of the crew. Soon the women detect that they are now with the famous pirate and demand their release.

But the Rover sails on toward the Caribbean, where he encounters the *Dart*, a Royal Cruiser he tries to evade. Against orders, Dick Fid reveals the position of the *Dolphin*; Heidegger reacts by disguising himself as a pirate chaser, assumes the name of Captain Howard, and visits Captain Bignall of the *Dart*, where he realizes that Wilder is in fact Henry Ark, in pursuit of the Red Rover and enlisted with the *Dart*. Back on board the *Dolphin*, Wilder/Ark and his companions are imprisoned as traitors. The pirate code would demand that they be turned over to the crew for punishment, but upon a plea by Mrs. Wyllys, who turns out to be Paul de Lacey's (Admiral and Mrs. de Lacey's deceased son's) widow—is set free. Together with the women, Dick and S'ip, they are released to the *Dart*. Wilder returns to the *Dolphin* to offer the Rover amnesty as a reward for saving his and the women's lives on the condition that he destroy the *Dolphin* and refrain from piracy. Heidegger rejects the offer and Bignall prepares for battle with the (less well-armed) *Dolphin*, but dies, along with S'ip, defeated by the Red Rover. By chance it now turns out that Wilder/Ark is Paul de Lacey's and Mrs. Wyllys' son, and her mother's plea saves his life when the *Dolphin*'s crew demands his death for treachery.

In the morning, Heidegger—mission accomplished—disbands his crew, hands over the *Dart* to Wilder, and releases the women to go with him. As the *Dart* takes off, the *Dolphin* goes up in flames in a mysterious explosion.

In the last chapter, set twenty years later in 1779, a sick old American naval officer lands in Newport harbor and is carried to the de Lacey's home, where Henry lives married to Gertrude and is father of a teenage son. The dying man turns out to be the Red Rover, carried by his former cabin boy Roderick, who now turns out to be his (cross-dressed) mistress (and thus can be read as the subjugated ancestress to Fanny Campbell; see Sect. 2.2). He is then recognized by Mrs. Wyllys (i.e., Mrs. de Lacey) as her long-lost brother and thus Henry's uncle. The Rover dies, unfurling an American flag from beneath his pillow and "laughing hysterically" as he shouts to Henry that "we have triumphed!" (868).

In the novel, Cooper's characterization of the pirate is ambivalent, divided between admiration for his independent spirit and condemnation of his lawlessness, and critics have struggled much with the function and plausibility of Heidegger's final vindication. On the one hand, the text follows Cooper's romanticized notion of piracy and privateering that he expressed in *Notions of the Americans*:

> The privateers of this hemisphere were always conspicuous in the colonial contests; and they were then, as they have always been since, of a character for order and chivalry that ought not to be too confidently expected from a class of adventurers who professedly take up arms for an object so little justifiable, and perhaps so ignoble, as gain. (1828, 62)

Notably, Cooper eliminates the profit motive from piracy in order not to make the Rover seem base and ignoble and to legitimize him as an avant-garde American gentleman "pirate" by suspending issues of class, superimposing, instead, a maritime chain of command and order. On another level, the text's emphasis on moral law in a nationalist context likewise belittles economic aspects of gain in the American Revolution vis-à-vis moral and meritocratic ones. Rather, the narrator of *The Red Rover* emphasizes (here through the eyes of Mrs. Wyllys) the pirate's "chivalrous generosity" ([1828] 1991, 750) and even grants him a sense of justice: "he bore the character of one, who, while he *declared himself the enemy of all*, knew how to *distinguish between the weak and the strong*, and who often found as much gratification in repairing the wrongs of the former,

as in humbling the pride of the latter" (my emphasis). While the quotation evokes the legal concept of the pirate as *hostis humani generis*, "the enemy of all," it unmasks it as legal fiction, as the Rover appropriates it in his self-description as a mere performative declaration (perhaps to instill fear in his opponents) and instead makes clear distinctions between "weak" and "strong," friend and foe.

In a scenario of power asymmetries like that of colonial dependence, the Rover seems heroic for his independence and autonomy. Disguised as Captain Howard, Heidegger expressly distinguishes the Rover (who, like Howard, turns out to be only one of his temporary identities) from "an ordinary freebooter—one coarse, rapacious, ignorant, and inexorable" (806–807) in his conversation with Bignall; indeed, he emphasizes that his crew is governed by ancient pirate laws and, even more significantly in the context of the history of the American colonies, a "covenant"; dissolving his crew, he states that "we have long been submissive to the same laws. … You cannot charge me with injustice. But the covenant is now ended. … The compact ceases, and our laws are ended" (859). Harking back to the language of the Declaration of Independence and the Nullification Crisis topical at the time Cooper was writing, the Rover's nullification invokes the founding legal documents of the United States, insinuating that his behavior is to be seen as a similar legal and legitimate act; as individual freedom "is an indispensable condition of true law, … the Rover's personal act of nullification provides … the *sine qua non* of constitutional government. Even a democracy of thieves is, Cooper asserts, preferable to a criminal despotism" (Adams 1990, 96).

In the Rover, pirate law is mutually agreed upon and temporary rather than authoritarian and infinite; instead of appearing as an entirely lawless figure, the pirate suggests that there are other ideas of law competing with "legal law"—at the time of the novel's action, *British* law. Thus the tale functions as an arena in which law, as a social and political institution, is tested in its various versions; "[a]s a metaphor through which to evaluate character, the law provided Cooper both a fixity of absolute standards, and an opportunity for debate among alternative ideas of just behavior" (McWilliams 2004, 15–16; also Schneck 2007). In this context, the Rover personifies the same law of nature, powerfully evoked through the language of the oceanic sublime (used predominantly in the tempest scenes), to which the founding fathers appealed in the Declaration of Independence (Mackenthun 2004, 77). As he is portrayed as a (temporary) figure of identification and admiration for both his foil Wilder and

the reader, Heidegger's anti-legal, vindictive position on piracy, authority, and legitimacy, as well as his deceptions and disguises, provoke a normative crisis of legal ground and moral order in the text, which is also staged as a crisis of comprehension and perception (foreshadowing Melville's "Benito Cereno"). As Michael Rogin observes, the Rover

> takes on identities at will; no lawyer or captain is safe from suspicion once the Rover has imitated their characters. As the Rover appropriates and discards legitimate roles, he dissolves them … . This split between authority's appearance and its genuine character undermines the constituted order. Disguise destroys one's confidence in a stable, morally legitimate world. ([1979] 1985, 5)

The contrivances and improbabilities of the plot formally echo this crisis of comprehension and narration and indicate the text's indecision and ambivalence, thus constituting more than just literary flaws; in this way, the book is also concerned with interpretation and the contrast between superstition and appearance on the one hand and knowledge on the other (Adams 1988, 157). Of course, the oceanic setting is perfect for evoking mists and hazes, tempests and blurred vision (Adams 1990, 84). Similarly, rumor, superstition, and disguise are core themes throughout the tale, as actual appearance/performance and expected identity are set against each other. Bignall remarks upon Henry Ark's revelation that the "Captain Howard" who visited his ship is actually the Rover: "'This is unaccountable! extraordinary to a miracle! His disguise was very complete … . I saw nothing, Sir, of his shaggy whiskers, heard nothing of his brutal voice, nor perceived any of those monstrous deformities which are universally acknowledged to distinguish the man'" (Cooper [1828] 1991, 822), to which Ark replies: "All of which are no more than the embellishments of vulgar rumor. I fear, Sir, that the boldest and most dangerous of all our vices, are often found under the most pleasing exteriors … . His body is not large, but it contains the spirit of a giant." Time and again, the Rover sarcastically refutes the notion that pirates are monsters in the devil's service: when Wilder first visits the *Dolphin*, he asks: "'Am I what report has made me? Look keenly at the monster, that nothing may escape you,' returned the Rover with a hollow laugh, in which scorn struggled to keep down the feelings of wounded pride. 'Where are the horns, and the cloven foot! Snuff the air: is it not tainted with sulphur?'" (511).[15]

Piracy, for the Rover, is neither monstrous nor devilish, but is instead the performance of American-ness *avant la lettre*, as he expresses in another conversation with Wilder: "'I am not fitted for the world, as it is found among your dependant Colonists'"; "'You have seen my flags, Mr Wilder, but there was one wanting among them all. Ay, and one, which had it existed, it would have been by pride, my glory to have upheld with my heart's best blood!'" (725, clearly referring to the star-spangled banner). He argues for his legitimacy because he cannot appeal to legality; *avant la lettre* hence also means "before the letters of law," before the existence of an independent American body of law in this context. Heidegger's turn to piracy is made explicit by his experience of inequality and oppression as an American in the same conversation:

> Were [the advantages of your country] known as they should be, by you and others like you, the flag I mentioned would soon be found in every sea, nor would the natives of our country have to succumb to the hirelings of a foreign Prince. … Had that flag been abroad, Mr Wilder, no man would have ever heard the name of the Red Rover. … I could be a subject of a King, but to be the subject of his subjects, Wilder, exceeds the bounds of my poor patience. I was educated, I might have almost said born in one of his vessels, and how often have I been made to feel, in bitterness, that an ocean separated my birth-place from the footstool of his throne! (725–26)

The reader learns that Heidegger became the Rover because he killed "'a native of the holy Isle'" who slandered America: "'the King rendered a faithful subject desperate, and he has had reason to repent it'" (726). Heidegger's piracy is "a substitute for revolutionary action" (Peck 1976, 597), because if America had been independent, he would never have become a pirate and fought his "private war of independence" (Philbrick 1961, 56); hence the practice of piracy is directly linked to the cause of independence (Clohessy 2007). According to Dekker, "the outlaw Rover" is in fact "the only character in sight who perceives that American commercial and civic well-being can be obtained only through independence" (1967, 116). The text insinuates a pervasive, justificatory rationale for Heidegger's piracy by representing the Rover as a proto-revolutionary in the struggle against British colonial oppression (which was certainly appealing to an early nineteenth-century American readership in need of a "usable past").

The use of the color red in the novel's title and the pirate's name is also significant in this context; Cooper, knowledgeable about the French Revolution and witnessing the oncoming of the labor movement in France that would lead to the July 1830 Revolution, used a color that signified liberty and personal freedom and had been employed by radical parties like the Jacobins, many of whom wore red Phrygian caps (also called liberty caps) modeled after those worn by freed slaves in ancient Rome.[16] The color of freedom (on the one hand), red also symbolized the blood of those who struggled for liberty and those killed by tyranny; it had also been prominently used in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pirate flags such as Edward "Blackbeard" Teach's, Edward Low's, John Phillips', or Christopher Moody's. Heidegger expresses his (premature) revolutionary sentiments repeatedly, thematizing the oppression of white creoles who are treated "as … of an inferior order" (Cooper [1828] 1991, 783) in a tyrannical colonial system: "Was your merit called Provincial; did they read America in all you did?" the Rover asks Wilder about his experiences aboard the "Royal cruiser." Even if the import of the Rover's revolutionary sentiments is never formulated, the text renders it clear that Heidegger's Byronic nobility is host to a prophetic sense of America's future national freedom (Manning 1993, 450). He is "the outlawed visionary who alone perceives the drift of history" (Philbrick 1961, 56), a "drift" that is seen, as the quote also shows, in the Rover's vision of the flag to "be found in every sea," as America's course toward empire, "thereby spelling out the fatal causality from which the U.S. derives its national identity" (Mackenthun 2004, 80).

It is the United States' legal identity as a postcolonial nation that is at stake in *The Red Rover*, in which a search for a stable code of political justice is set against core revolutionary values of liberty and political change, civil law against natural law (McWilliams 2004, 26). Cooper counterbalances a de facto anti-legal, libertarian portrayal of the Rover by characterizing him at the same time as an authoritarian ruler whose verdicts are rather arbitrary, whose rules are rigid and whose will is quite imperial, for example in the "Mischief" episode (see Adams 1988, 160) or when Wilder is to be hanged for treason and the Rover explains that this is what the "law which binds together this community" (Cooper [1828] 1991, 808) demands—only then to make an exception. Introduced as a barrister, an executor of existing law, the Rover is unmasked subsequently as a self-styled creator of law instead. Order and chivalry are countered by a dark romanticism reminiscent of Byron's *Corsair*, "the noble outcast,

the aloof and inscrutable superman, the passionate, guilt-ridden sufferer";
a "victim[ ] of thwarted ambition" (61–62), restless and serious in char-
acter. But, as Adams points out, Cooper (unlike Byron) eventually rejects
anarchic rebellion, turning the lawless, extra-juridical, "neutral ground"[17]
or *apeiron* (Lewis 1955, 99) of the ocean into a world of law (Adams
1990, 83) in the course of the narrative; eventually, the Rover is a "dark
parody of the Byronic hero" (86), a "man who claims a legal authority for
his actions, but is in fact ruled by his lawless impulses" (89) and therefore
is eventually tamed by the narrative.[18]

The choice of a pirate as a pre-revolutionary freedom fighter and the
text's ambivalence toward the Rover also expresses doubt about revolu-
tion as a politically legitimate act, especially concerning its violent and
socially rebellious aspects. Revolution, in Cooper's work, can be a form
of "moral piracy" (Peck 1976, 595), even if *The Red Rover* is perhaps
his "most unqualified celebration of the revolutionary spirit."[19] As the
text neither entirely rejects nor completely endorses the Rover as a U.S.-
American hero but rather constructs him as a personification of the
nation's constitutive legal crisis, it instead introduces Wilder, his foil and
double, as a foundational figure for a future United States. The Rover and
Wilder's lengthy conversations are crucial moments in which they ques-
tion each other's legitimacy and authority, and because of the Rover's
patriotic discourse, Wilder temporarily loses his sense of duty (and self)
as a pirate chaser—and becomes an outlaw himself when he sends away
the pilot of the *Royal Caroline* lacking any legal basis (and by this act
almost incites mutiny). Henry Ark, one of Cooper's "middle heroes"
(Peck 1976, 597), indeed becomes "W/wilder" in the course of the
narrative, but eventually overcomes this crisis of identity by turning into
an ambitious, meritorious, and professional young man, moving up on
the social ladder—thus the transformation into Ark, echoing Noah's Ark,
a solid, life-saving vessel (in contrast to the *Dolphin*, which is always in
some sort of disguise and in the end is destroyed). Once he has formed
such an "Ark," the last step is his elevation in terms of social class by
becoming (yet having always been) a de Lacey. From this perspective, the
novel is also Wilder's story of initiation; his "faith in law has matured
from mindless obedience to rules, into a commitment founded on a deep
knowledge that its alternative is unacceptable" (Adams 1990, 96; also Th.
and M. Philbrick 1991, xxxv). Virtue and talent triumph in this Jefferso-
nian vision of a "natural aristocracy of merit" (McWilliams 2004, 47), and

it is Wilder rather than the Red Rover who personifies the "heroic Ur-American" McWilliams describes (65); in the words of Charles Hansford Adams: "when we consider his mastery of the Rover in light of his eventual identity as a hero of the American cause, we see that his part in the moral drama of *Red Rover* is to lay the foundation for the Revolution by quelling anarchic impulses that might threaten its integrity" (1990, 92). Wilder, unlike the Rover, also succeeds in integrating law, perception, and identity into a comprehensible structure (Adams 1988, 159).

3.2.4   *Crises of Authority and the Absent Presence of Slavery*

The multiple crises of authority among all kinds of characters are significant in the context of envisioning a U.S.-American future on the basis of natural law: besides the Rover's and Wilder's authority, such competition takes place also between the women and the men, as well as among the women themselves (e.g., Mrs. de Lacey and Mrs. Wyllys debating their seafaring experiences) and the various crews. Adams interprets the articulation of such conflicts as the text's "effort to reconcile the claims of self with the prerogatives of the various structures of authority that condition individual freedom" (1990, 82), but these crises also echo and negotiate more general questions of legitimacy topical at the time Cooper was writing, triggered by anxieties about the state of the Union and potential forces of disruption through external and internal pressures (Manning 1993, 451).

The greatest of these anxieties certainly related to slavery in the new states and was itself framed by interpretative conflicts between natural and civil law. Readings from a Black Atlantic perspective have recently drawn attention to Cooper's literary response to slavery and the slave trade, which often constitute "absent presences" (Mackenthun *qua* Toni Morrison 2000, 537) in his texts. The themes of piracy and slavery also interrelate in another way considering the historical contexts of both 1759 and the 1820s: Mackenthun reads *The Red Rover* as enacting the post-colonial conflict between the United States and Britain regarding the legal battles over the abolition of the slave trade, which America halted in 1824 by refusing Britain's claim to a right of search of any American vessel for illegal slaving (2004, 79). The motif of disguise and the debates over the *Dolphin*'s status as either pirate or slaver, which takes up almost a quarter of the novel, is significant in her view:

> A fictional exploration of the common confusion about the legal distinction between slavers and pirates and about the jurisdiction to be applied, *The Red Rover* is an emplotment of Britain's desire for boarding suspected American ships. … In projecting back the contemporary conflict over the illegal slave trade to the period of America's revolutionary battle against Britain, the novel also casts the present violations of international law by reckless American entrepreneurs as morally legitimate. The present debate over the limits of America's *national* jurisdiction in outing an end to an internationally prohibited commerce is imaginatively enacted as a revolutionary struggle for America's *natural* right of national independence. (79)[20]

Mackenthun suggests that the confusion of pirates and slavers—mostly due to the *Dolphin*'s disguise as a slaver in the Newport harbor—and the book's emphasis of disguise and deception, especially by the arbitrary use of flags, indicate doubt about the role of the United States in the transatlantic slave trade. Other Black Atlantic readings focus on Cooper's (under-)representation of African Americans, which Boggs calls an act of "blanching" the Atlantic (2007, ch. 2); similarly, Appiah argues that in Cooper's racial scheme, in which the Native American is below the white man but above the black, blacks usually evoke disdain (similar to the Jew in Scott's *Ivanhoe*) and merely provide "point[s] of contrast that allow[] us to understand the sympathies between the members of the first two races" (white and Native American in Cooper, Anglo-Saxon and Norman in Scott, 1995, 281–82), while Wallace, in his examination of "The Black Sailor and *The Red Rover*," places Scipio at the center of the text, which he reads more positively as allowing "for at least some movement between [racial] categories" (1999, n.p.). Both the process of "blanching" and the disruption of racial characterization become evident in an understudied episode in which Scipio provokes a crisis of knowledge and authority by using a style of communication reminiscent of "signifyin" or "double talk" (Henry Louis Gates), again prefiguring "Benito Cereno." The Rover asks Scipio, who on the surface acts like a devoted slave and is represented by the usual racial stereotypes of the early nineteenth century, for his opinion regarding the distance of a ship that turns out to be the *Dart*. Scipio, who "had been chosen for his expertness to perform the task in question" (Cooper [1828] 1991, 765) is disproportionally submissive at first, "[p]lacing his cap on the deck, in a reverence far deeper even than that which the seaman usually manifests toward his superior"; his assessment is praised by the Rover: "'The tongue of your

negro, Mr Wilder, is as exact as a carpenter's rule. The fellow speaks of the size of a vessel that is hull-down, with an air as authoritative as a runner of the King's customs could pronounce on the same …'" (766). The Rover has interpellated Scipio into a subject position transgressing boundaries of race, which denied an African American any voice of authority, but Wilder dismisses S'ip's opinion: "'You will have consideration for the ignorance of the black; men of his unfortunate state are seldom skilful in answering interrogatories.'" The Rover is not convinced by Wilder, and Scipio's reaction is to roll his

> large dark eyes … from his new commander to his ancient master, while, for a moment, his faculties appeared to be lost in confusion. But the uncertainty continued only for a moment. He no sooner read the frown that was gathering darkly over the brow of the latter, than the air of confidence with which he had pronounced his former opinion vanished in a look of obstinacy … . (766)

Asked again by the Rover to confirm his opinion, Scipio realizes that he has triggered a struggle of authority between the Rover and Wilder in which he cannot win; his loyalties are divided between his racist "ancient master" and the outlaw-revolutionary Rover (who seems not to differentiate according to ethnic categories among his crew, which includes many European nationalities as well as Native Americans). Thus Scipio's subsequent answers resume, on the surface, a submissive slave's position ("He'm just as Masser wish 'em," 767). This incites the narrator to describe him as an "obstinate black," refusing reasonable communication. Fid intervenes, but even S'ip's long-term companion cannot quell his spirit of resistance:

> He turned his eyes, in great disgust on Scipio, to vindicate the credit of the association at the expense of some little contempt for the ignorance of his companion. "What the devil do you take [the ship] for, Guinea; a church?" "I t'ink he'm church, too," responded the acquiescent black. "Lord help the dark-skinn'd fool! Your honor knows that conscience is d—nably overlooked in Africa, and will not judge the nigger hardly for any little blunder he may make on account of religion. But the fellow is a thorough seaman, and should know a top-gallant sail from a weathercock. Now look you, S'ip, for the credit of your friends, if you have no great pride on your own behalf just tell his—" (768)

Scipio's sense of pride will not be quenched, and the Rover realizes this, stopping the discussion at this point. The fact that S'ip's calculations turn out to be correct, however, highlights his expertise and potential authority; the episode can perhaps be read as a subtle critique of Wilder's (and thus of a foundational U.S.) racism. Still, S'ip has to die eventually (defending Wilder in the battle against the *Dart*); in the death scene, Fid finally recognizes the injustice of race, begging "a pardon of a black man" (853) as "'it may be that I have rode you down a little too close myself, boy, when overheated with the conceit of skin'" and pleads the others to let S'ip speak: "When there is so little time given to a poor fellow to speak his mind in, it may be well to let him have a chance to do most of the talking. Something may come uppermost, which he would like to send to his friends in Africa" (852).

While black characters certainly profit from the quality of the oceanic setting in sea fiction, in the sense that their merits allow for "recognition that a lifetime of patient toil on land would not obtain for them" (House [1965] 1979, 143), skill and merit do not save S'ip from dying for his master. Revolutionary in many other respects, the tale hence propagates a mild form of resistance to slavery at best—both through the pirate (e.g., when he offers Scipio gold as payment for his services that S'ip refuses to take, 713) and Gertrude, who calls the slave trade "vile" (590).

Gardner convincingly argues that there is a correlation between Cooper's treatment of blacks and Native Americans in the context of the Missouri Crisis, arguing that his work tries to "erase race from national identity" by a logic "in which the myth of the Vanishing American brings about the vanishing of slavery, the state of Missouri, and the very fact of racial difference altogether" (quoted in Boggs 2007, 76). As "shadows of presences from which the text has fled" (Mackenthun 2000, 536), both Scipio and Cassandra are representative of the debated and precarious position of African Americans—enslaved and free—in Cooper's sea tales. Read against the grain and in the context of the Black Atlantic, *The Red Rover* is significant in the sense that its attempt to silence the crisis over race cannot be entirely successful. Africa, slavery, and the slave trade are present throughout the text, despite its relegation of these topics to the margin; the characters of Scipio (born in Africa and at one point called "Mr. Gold-coast," Cooper [1828] 1991, 453) and the enslaved Cassandra, even though highly conventional and full of stereotypes, are constant reminders of the presence of African Americans and the (continuing) experience of the Middle Passage that disturb, in the 1820s, the

legal identity of the United States as a civil society based on natural law. In addition, their discursive domestication—by means of both plot and the use of stereotypes—can also be read as the symbolic quenching of slave uprisings, which, at least since the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), were perceived as a constant threat to the socio-political order throughout the American Atlantic; it is in this context that the Caribbean as the setting of the final confrontation between the Rover and his chasers is significant.

Cassandra's character, which is largely glanced over in previous readings of *The Red Rover*, is also inscribed with a sense of resistance and a plot-altering agency, though weaker than Scipio's. She is responsible for the rescue of her shipwrecked mistress and her associates by the Rover, waving a white flag as soon as she detects the ship. This act is described as rebelliously triumphant on the one hand, but devotional— solely concerned with her mistress's survival—on the other; a devotion engraved more deeply in Cassandra than Scipio. She has internalized the absent authority of her owner, General Grayson:

> Cassandra alone was rebellious. She made stout objections, against even a moment's delay, assuring the inattentive young seaman [i.e., Wilder], that should any evil come to her young Mistress by his obstinacy, *General Grayson would be angered*, and she left him to reflect on the results of a displeasure that to her simple mind teemed, with more danger than would attend the frown of a monarch. Provoked by his contumacious disregard of her remonstrances, the negress, *forgetting her respect*, in boldness on behalf of her, whom she not only loved but had been taught to reverence, seized the boat hook. … Then indeed, she lowered the signal, before the dark look of Wilder. Short as was the triumph of the negress it was crowned with success. (680, my emphases)

Cassandra's disobedience, which leads to their rescue, is not against her lawful mistress or owner (hence Cassandra survives unlike Scipio), but against the only man aboard, Wilder, who is afraid the ship might be inimical. Gertrude, in contrast, has "no fears of a generous enemy," convinced that "[e]ven a pirate would give shelter and welcome to females in our distress" (679)—an opinion based on a romantic notion of piracy that proves correct only because the Rover is a gentleman pirate. The crisis over authority in a scene of shipwreck thus concerns not only a crisis in racial categorization—after all, an enslaved African American woman's "simple mind" leads to the group's rescue—but also gender relations, in this and many other scenes in which female characters question male

authority (especially if they have sea experience of their own like Wyllys). Women, their experiences and their emotions hence represent another danger like that posed by racial difference to Cooper's vision of order and social cohesion, which can be seen as the reason why his tales often replace the heterosexual romance with a sentimentalized version of friendship between men (Fluck 1997, 117). The uneasy presence of outspoken women at sea, in *The Red Rover*, disturbs the novel's conception of American masculinity whose authority is based on competence, merit, and competition rather than privileges of birth (which is typical of the discourse of adventure, 113–16).

The cracks of *The Red Rover*'s meritocratic vision, its de-hierarchizing appeal, can be found in the presence, however obscured, of those who are denied participation; from this point of view, the Rover's unlawful resistance against oppression would have to be continued far beyond American independence. *The Red Rover*'s ending is conservative, containing the book's revolutionary potential and reaffirming rank and hierarchy; as Mackenthun observes, it "plots, and 'romances,' the national emergence of the United States as a reunification of a family" by staging "a dynastic (not to say incestuous) marriage between a New Englander and the daughter of a Southern plantation owner … coupled with the domestication of the pirate" (2004, 73); it "defuses the threat inherent in the Rover's political shapeshifting and suggests that pirates like the Rover, who prefer an existence in lawlessness to the toleration of unjust colonial bondage, vanish together with the end of the colonial period" (75). But as Michael Rogin ([1979] 1985) points out, *The Red Rover*'s subversive potential seems to have surpassed its conservative agenda in the minds of many nineteenth-century readers, such as mutineer Philip Spencer, son of the Secretary of War, who was executed in the famous *U.S.S. Somers* mutiny of 1842; Spencer had claimed that Cooper's Rover inspired his "career" (Mackenthun 2004, 72). Notably, Cooper was one of the few of the American elite to defend Spencer (while Melville's cousin was second in command on this very ship). This development was criticized by contemporaneous American commentators, who complained that outlaws were becoming American heroes, as in the journal *Port Folio*:

> An individual who is represented as the terror of the seas—as the reckless violator of law and right, should not be invested with the finest qualities of the man and of the gentleman. We think them not only incompatible, but tending to sanction murder and robbery. Lord Byron and the

German writers have sufficiently disgusted us with that description of heroes. (quoted in Dekker and Williams 1997, 12)[21]

The complaint is misdirected, however, since Cooper's text explores both the positive and negative potentiality of the pirate: *The Red Rover* leaves us with a question rather than a statement, asking whether and under what circumstances piracy can be a form of outlaw patriotism, but also how the crisis of authority and legitimacy, articulated through the pirate, can be overcome. In this way, Peter Schneck's conclusion in his discussion of legal evidence in Cooper's *Pioneers* also holds true for *The Red Rover*: that the text, in a paradoxical way, "both critiques and legitimises law and legal authority" and that "it may be read both as a critique of political justice, and a celebration of legal institutions and the authority of law" (2007, 58). Piracy in the *Rover* functions as a trope through which to discuss right and wrong, legality and legitimacy, and to debate ways in which U.S.-American law could emulate natural law—not only in the post-revolutionary context of independence, but also (even if in spite of itself) with regard to slavery. The tale's solution restores an intact social and legal order, with all unruly characters domesticated. By relegating the question of slavery and natural law to the margins, it fails to integrate blacks and women as subjects into that order (Anderson 1951, 23)—a failure that would keep the nation in a critical state for much of the rest of the nineteenth century.

3.3   Cross-Dressing and Piracy in Lt. Murray's *Fanny Campbell* (1844)

3.3.1   "Values and Virtues in Crisis"

I have argued in the preceding chapter that the pirate's identity is drawn as unstable and performative rather than either clearly heroic or evil in *The Red Rover*, echoing the novel's ambivalent positioning regarding the legitimacy of piracy; as Thomas and Marianne Philbrick have put it: "In the Rover himself and his premature declaration of independence, we trace the fine line that separates the pirate from the patriot, a distinction that sometimes seems less a matter of motive than of timing" (1991, xxxv). Despite its ambivalences, *The Red Rover*'s popularity established the romantic pirate of Revolutionary times as a heroic outlaw figure, productive of a collective national identity for the young Republic. Being

perhaps the earliest and certainly the most popular instance of a plethora of nineteenth-century narratives that romance piracy, Cooper established a pattern that projected piracy back to the age of the American Revolution and retold historical events in ways that naturalized the development of the United States as that of a 'piratical,' illegitimate nation-in-the-making into an expanding nation of grandeur and legitimate political significance. These stories reaffirm the act of emancipation as a response to the crisis of political legitimacy of colonial rule in the 1770s while simultaneously negotiating contemporaneous scenarios of crisis in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender relations, but also of class and citizenship. In his study of popular cultural memory of the American Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century, Karsten Fitz describes the decades from the 1830s to the 1850s as "the extreme case of the nation and its values and virtues in crisis" (2010, 262):

> The 1830s to 1850s represent a unique period in American cultural history, a period which put the American founding principles—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and individual property—to an extreme test that threatened to destroy a nation that was culturally, geographically, and politically still in the making. While a collective cultural identity was being constructed, it was also a period of radical ruptures in U.S. society in which cultural memory is extensively created with multiple agendas … [N]o doubt, the increasingly conflicting political and cultural developments in the antebellum U.S.—continuing slavery in the South, culminating sectional strife, newly emerging antagonisms with regard to women's suffrage, as well as increasing immigration and urban conflict—represented just such elements of national crisis. (11; 262)

Images—and narratives, one could add—about the Revolution in the antebellum United States functioned to "impose coherence and meaning on an American collective national experience," mirroring the conflicts of their time (63).[22] Fitz identifies the "David vs. Goliath-motif" (77) as the central narrative in this context, which emphasized the defeat of a much more powerful Britain as due to the patriotic spirit and perseverance of the American population. Lieutenant Murray's (i.e., Maturin Murray Ballou's) popular novelette *Fanny Campbell* (1844)[23] takes up this motif, romancing the Revolutionary crisis while at the same time negotiating the prevalent conflicts of the antebellum period through the figure of a cross-dressing female pirate fighting at the onset of the Revolutionary War.

3.3.2   *Popular Novelettes and Piratical Adventure*

In the 1830s and 1840s, the romantic pirate enters mass-market literature and is popularized among newly emergent readerships: a rising middle class of men and women as well as immigrants. Maturin Murray Ballou (1820–1895) of Boston, the son of a Harvard University preacher and author and publisher of popular literature, is best known as the editor of the widely successful illustrated magazine *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*, which he cofounded with Frederick Gleason in 1851 and took over in 1854 (hence its renaming as *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*) and first editor of the *Boston Daily Globe*. Following the model of the *London Pictorial News*, *Gleason's/Ballou's Companion*, like many other publications of the day, demonstrate the extent to which American publishing was still transatlantically oriented, emulating the fashions and trends prevailing in Great Britain. Yet Ballou's intent was to found a distinctly American medium, printing only American authors (Belasco 2007, 264). His own writing (under his pen name Lieutenant/Lt. Murray), which he published since the mid-1840s with his coeditor Frederick Gleason's press or in the series *The Weekly Novelette*, usually consisted of travel narratives or adventure tales, which often took place in the American past. Besides *Fanny Campbell*, first published with the subtitle *The Female Pirate Captain. A Tale of the Revolution*, he also wrote pirate narratives such as *The Naval Officer; or, The Pirate's Cave! A Tale of the Last War*, *Red Rupert, the American Bucanier: A Tale of the Spanish Indies* (both announced as sequels to *Fanny*; 1845), *The Scarlet Flag; or, The Caribbean Rover: A Story of the Early Buccaneers* (Novelette 90) or *The Pirate Smugglers; or, The Last Cruise of the Viper* (Novelette 137). Murray was Gleason's most successful author; *Fanny Campbell*, the first and most successful of these novelettes, sold more than 80,000 copies within a few weeks and ran into numerous, mostly illustrated editions available across the United States, including a few southern cities, well into the 1870s (Streeby 2002, 88; Anderson 2011, 97).[24] It seems that *Fanny*'s success was responsible for Ballou and Gleason's founding of what would become the largest publishing plant in the United States.

Novelettes, as a genre of popular literature in the United States, were a new phenomenon of these decades, when technological developments in the printing trade made cheaper productions possible and new marketing techniques made them successful.[25] The literacy rate had

risen disproportionately compared to the income of the U.S.-American population, for many of whom bounded books were much too expensive—facts that, taken together, guaranteed great market prospects for cheap reading material (Neuburg 1983, 82). By the 1840s, innovations in printing technology, publishing, and book distribution had led to the marketing of inexpensive, mass-produced popular histories that subsequently exerted a profound influence on historical literacy and learning in the United States, as Gregory Pfitzer demonstrates in his study *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840–1920* (2008).[26] Publishers of popular works hoped to benefit from economies of scale by selling large numbers of inexpensive popular histories at small profit; they hired authors to write effectively for wide audiences in order to make the past accessible to readers who otherwise could not afford to buy books. Beginning as a small cottage industry, popular histories sold in the hundreds of thousands by the 1890s (Pfitzer 2008, 7). They negotiated the prevalent issues of the age by actively constructing a popular collective memory of formative historical events such as the Revolution on the one hand, and by their educative intent and didactic impulse sought to form a cohesive American subject on the other. Yet they needed to be entertaining as well; bridging Puritan morals and the taste for adventure, tales of popular history, including oral histories (folk tales, legends, and similar forms), were actively promoted by publishers like Gleason. Both *Fanny Campbell*'s historical setting and the plot perfectly fulfilled Gleason's criteria for publication:

> We wish for such contributions as shall be strictly moral in their tone, highly interesting in their plot, replete throughout with incident, well filled with exciting yet truthful description, and, in short, highly readable and entertaining. Domestic stories, so-called, are not exactly of the class that we desire; but tales—of the sea and land—of the stirring times of the revolution—or of dates still farther back—are more in accordance with our wishes. (quoted in Streeby 2002, 89)

Streeby asks how a publisher like Gleason, primarily interested in selling his mass products, could distance himself so explicitly from the highly popular sentimental literature (predominantly written by women) and asserts that this programmatic statement was by no means a total refusal of the sentimental mode as such; in reality, the sensational and the sentimental, adventure and romance, went hand in hand in Gleason's

publications. This also holds true for *Fanny Campbell*, an adventure story that shares many qualities with sentimental literature, such as the focus on the romantic love-story and the discourse of emotion[27]; because of its female protagonist, it primarily spoke to female readers, who would otherwise not necessarily favor popular histories over sentimental love-stories.[28] Thus I do not agree with David Reynolds's much too schematic typology of antebellum popular literature, which views *Fanny* as "Dark Adventure," featuring "only occasional philosophical commentary, usually dark" (1988, 183) and characters such as "pirates, corsairs, freebooters, swaggering ship's captains, mythic monsters, and so forth" (188)—as opposed to "Moral Adventure" (both instances of "Romantic Adventure fiction," 183), "Conventional" (i.e., "pious domestic fiction," 182), and "Subversive" fiction (which was "deliberately subversive in both the *stylistic* and the *political* sense," 183). Indeed, *Fanny* combines characteristics of all of these: moral commentary, even didacticism; a conventional domestic ending; and at least potentially subversive historico-political interpretation, if perhaps not a subversive style. Importantly, it also marks an instance of a print culture that "functioned as the foremost medium for circulating stories of filibustering expeditions and advocating for national expansionism" (Woertendyke 2013, 215).

3.3.3   Fanny: A Tale of the Revolution?

Fanny Campbell features the story of a young woman in the old, Puritan fishing hamlet of High Rock near Lynn, not too far from Boston,[29] representing a counter-model to "true womanhood," as the narrator underscores the "adventure-feminist capabilities of his heroine" (Reynolds 1988, 347): a captain's tomboyish daughter and "noble looking girl" (Murray 1844, 12), she not only knows much about navigation: she "was none of your modern belles, delicate and ready to faint at the first sight of a reptile; no, Fanny could row a boat, shoot a panther, ride the wildest horse in the province, or do almost any brave and useful act," but could also "write poetry" and is "looked up to in all matters of information and scholarship" because of her "excellent education." Nineteenth-century norms of femininity are dismantled in critical comments on dress codes and beauty as dangerous for women's health; notably, the following description of one of the villagers, sixty-year-old widow Herbert, applauds older generations of women:

> The refinements of civilization had never marred her health or vigorous constitution, for she had never resorted to those means of shortening life practiced in these more advanced periods of refinement. No cramping and painful corsets had ever disfigured her fine natural form, nor had her feet ever been squeezed into a compass far too small for their size, in order to render them of delicate proportions. No, no, the good old practices of the Bay Province seventy and eighty years ago, were productive of hale and hearty old age … . (24–25)

This, so the narrator, also has to do with the rough life in the village: "The dangers that often times surrounded the homes of the females, gave rise to a stern and manly disposition even in those of the gentler sex who formed a part of the community, and altogether it was made up of stern and dauntless spirits" (11). From the beginning, the text differentiates between "refined civilization"'s ideals of femininity, connoted as negative, and "natural" feminine forms, associated with the "healthy spirit" of the lower classes—to and for which it aims to speak—and with the eighteenth century; "the good old practices of Bay Province seventy and eighty years ago" (24).

The preface makes the reader expect a "very romantic" (7) tale, "but no more so than many others, the incidents of which occurred during the stirring times of the Revolution, and which have since received the sanction of history." From the beginning, the Revolution is cast in a romantic mold, distanced from the contemporaneous readers' present by describing it as a "sanctioned" chapter in American history that is retold in the novelette in order to solidify this national narrative among new audiences: "No American can, or rather should, be unacquainted with the principal events" (74) of the Revolution. Chapters frequently start with an overview of Revolutionary events like the battle of Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill (both 39), or the Boston Blockade (ch. 8), but also include oral history accounts and tales about legendary figures of the Revolution like Moll Pitcher (ch. 1, 8, and 11) or John Paul Jones (ch. 9). History is thus presented as both 'from above' and 'from below'— the official, history-book narrative is combined with non- or semi-literary forms of historical discourse.

Fanny is driven by "noble sentiments," both in rescuing her lover and in defending her country (Wheelwright [1995] 1996, 195). As the plot takes off, Fanny has to say goodbye to her love interest William, who has decided to make his fortune in the West Indies, which the narrator

calls "the great American Archipelago" (Murray 1844, 17), in order to be able to marry Fanny; he now worries that she could be seduced by the loyalist naval officer Major Burnet in his absence. The following chapters alternate between William's and Fanny's stories: William's ship is captured by Caribbean pirates; he and two fellow sailors join the crew so as not to be killed, but plan to escape; the pirate crew is taken hostage by the Spaniards near Cuba, where William escapes, but is taken prisoner and suffers from ill treatment in Havana. Two years have passed when the patriotic Fanny learns about these developments from one of William's fellows (who has managed to break jail) and decides to free her lover; this she sees as her chance to see the world like William (12). She dresses as a seaman, calls herself "Mr. Channing" and is hired by the British privateer *Constance*, about to venture off into the Caribbean.

Soon the crew, described as almost exclusively "Americans," mutinies against the tyrannical captain who plans to press them into the King's Navy for monetary reward. Fanny/Channing sees it as her/his patriotic duty to protect her fellow American citizens from the fangs of Great Britain:

> The North American colonies were then at war with the mother country, the brig was a British brig, and Channing was an American. His heart beat warmly for the cause of his country, he looked about him, there were twenty men, all save one, his fellow countrymen, about to be betrayed into the hands of their enemies. His mind was determined, and he said within himself, this shall not be! (31–32)

Thus s/he takes the captain hostage during the mutiny, "determined that the good brig Constance should change hands, and from a British, become an American craft. It was a bold undertaking; the two greatest sins that a sailor is taught to dread, mutiny and piracy, were staring him full in the face" (32). Fully conscious of the illegality of her plans, Fanny/Channing nevertheless is shown as pursuing them as necessary and legitimate acts in the fight against colonial oppression and national as well as personal impressment—pointing to debates about the legality of enslavement at the time *Fanny* was written and thus arguably, albeit implicitly, promoting 'illegal' acts of resistance. Her crew supports her, but in a forecastle debate about their legal status also argue against being categorized as pirates. One sailor contends that they are engaged in an "honest war" against Britain rather than in acts of plundering that do not

differentiate between friendly and inimical nations: "'Ain't the Colonies honestly at war with the English? And have we been cruising against any other nation but them?'" (60). At an earlier point, the narrator states his agenda even more clearly, announcing that "we shall see that Channing was fully justified in the capture" (34) of her first prize. Indeed, the novelette's use of the term "pirate" when it in fact continuously disavows this criminal label is crucial for a contrapuntal reading sensitive toward the fact that this confusion is indicative of the categorical crises it negotiates.

The crew is enthused with its new captain, who is described to combine masculine and feminine virtues: "although his orders were given in a prompt and decided tone, and implicit obedience was exacted, yet was his voice musical and kind, and his orders were almost anticipated by the promptitude of the willing crew, who soon came to love him for the generous consideration he evinced for their good and that of the vessel" (27). Liberty and freedom of choice are emphasized time and again as moral virtues worth fighting for, for example when Fanny/Channing offers her fellow sailors the free choice of whether they want to stay aboard or disembark; after all, according to British law, they are mutineers on a piratical expedition, facing the death penalty if captured.

Before reaching Cuba, they seize a British ship in their first battle. Again, this act of piracy and capture is justified by the narrator's retrospective commentary on the Revolutionary events and "the hardships and vicissitudes of a people struggling for freedom, and of the almost incredible sufferings cheerfully endured by all in furtherance of the great and holy cause in which they had embarked" (40); the "holy cause" (71) transcends the law and turns piracy into a legitimate strategy in the battle against colonial oppression. In line with the foundational Puritan myth of America as a "City upon a Hill" (John Winthrop), the American project is presented as sanctioned by God, who, like the pirate, is also beyond human law. Interestingly, the capture is presented as without historical precedence in an imperial discourse that popularized the idea of filibustering in the Caribbean in the service of manifest destiny (Woertendyke 2013, 215). Fanny, patriotic rather than piratical, is credited with making maritime inroads for the United Colonies:

> the proud flag of St. George was lowered to the pine tree of the American colonies. This was one of the earliest, if not the very first capture upon the high seas, so far from our own country, by the humble but victorious flag of the colonies. It was then a child, it is now grown to the full stature

of a man, and floats proudly in every sea, and undaunted, side by side, with equal honor and equally respected with that of the mother country. Who could have foretold its future glory and power? Those who fought under that flag, little dreamed of it, but Heaven was with the right, and they were victorious. The pride of the parent country was to receive a fall, its arrogance was to be signally reproved and this was to be done by her dependent colonies of North America. It *was done*! ... The pine tree flag had never before floated in the seas of the West Indies and captain Channing's hand was the first to give it to the breeze, and fight under its folds, in those seas of perpetual summer. (36)

The text's repeated emphasis on the hissing of the American flag is reminiscent of the performative act of territorial appropriation through symbolic gestures (planting flags, signing treaties) in the European legal/colonial tradition, bestowing a legal title to land as if that title were available to conquer, while in fact creating such legality through the very act (Derrida 1986). Also, the Black Legend is affirmed by portraying the Spanish colonizers as rough and lazy (Murray 1844, 35) and the Cuban Governor General as an "old tyrant" (21); in addition, Fanny/Channing's motivation for her Caribbean expedition exceeds love, including fame and fortune as well. Thus Murray's pirates are constructed not as absolute outlaws, but as figures on the brink of legality, signifying legitimate antecedents to nineteenth-century expansionists. In line with this evocation of the colonial tradition, another 'first' is mentioned here: Columbus, one of the most important mythological figures in the first half of the nineteenth century in the construction of a genuine American past (Paul 2014, 50–58), is being called upon as a figure of identification in the Cuba episode: "You are carried back in your imagination to the time in which the weary watching barque of Columbus was first cheered by the soul thrilling cry of, 'Land ho!' And when the gallant adventurer and discoverer rested in peace before the sunny isle of Cuba!" (Murray 1844, 21). The island itself is represented as yet another tropical paradise of eternal summer:

The mild and beautiful climate of Cuba seems more like the elysian fields of poetic birth, than the air that forms the islands of the ocean. Beautiful indeed is the genial influence of the mild zephyrs that breathe over these pacific seas. ... The tall, majestic palm, and other tropical trees; the genial softness and beauty of the foliage and verdure; the rich glowing sky and

> fervid sun, all serve to remind you that you are in a land of perpetual summer. (43)

This extension of the U.S.-American sphere of action, the description of the island in terms of a colonial hermeneutics, as well as the evocation of Columbus and the representation of the Spaniards as tyrannical colonizers, oppressing Cuba similar to the British in North America, partakes in the fledgling discourse of American imperialism, bringing it to a mass audience. The heroine personifies an avant-garde American imperialist: Anderson calls her a "soft conquerer" (2011, 105), and Woertendyke views her in the context of a "hemispheric regionalism" (2013, 212) that constructs Cuba as "naturally" belonging to the "North American Republic" (214), though Fanny is mainly shown as a relentless agent for the cause of American Independence (paralleling her advertising of women's independence to enter masculine spheres of action).[30]

In Cuba, the crew frees William, who soon recognizes Fanny, but does not uncover her disguise. Fanny/Channing, however, does not behave as a captain to a crew-member (William is her first mate, in fact), but as the female part was expected to in a nineteenth-century romantic relationship: she seeks William's permission for her actions and even then subjects her authority to William's (Wheelwright [1995] 1996, 195), thus restoring gender hierarchy. In the following, the *Constance*, hissing the pine tree flag, seizes another British vessel and one of their prisoners tries to incite a mutiny. The crew sentences him to death, but Fanny/Channing decides to convince him of the American cause instead, which she manages to do by employing both the enlightenment value of reason, connoted as masculine, and the feminine virtue of kindness: "A stubborn spirit was conquered by kindness and reason, the only weapons that one responsible being should use with another. The Englishman's spirit had undergone a complete change; … and from the hour of his liberation, was an ardent supporter of the cause of the American people" (Murray 1844, 57). Fanny/Channing is represented as masterful in controlling her own emotions as well as in governing others', and her reason and judgment are unfailing throughout the novelette (De Grave 1995, 250). Both Fanny and her alter ego Channing are constructed as embodying a third, though provisional, gender, imagined as an amalgamation of the most important feminine and masculine attributes.

In the bay of Cape Cod the reader witnesses a final battle with a British ship, led by Major Burnet, who is victorious and asks Fanny to marry

him after he discloses her disguise. Fanny refuses, which leads Burnet to attempt rape, but she manages to escape and returns home, where she finally marries William. For the duration of the American War of Independence, they continue their maritime plundering of the enemies of American independence together. Peace returns to what is now the United States; at this point, the narrator comments upon the subsequent rise of the United States well into the nineteenth century in the biologist-organicist language of natural (male human) development, insinuating (imperial) growth as an organic process. The process of emancipation from the British, "stymieing the US's 'natural growth'" (Anderson 2011, 103), is likewise cast as "natural":

> the bond was severed, the child sprang at one to the estate of manhood and to all its responsibilities and cares; but it was under the divine guardianship of the spirit of peace and the especial guidance of Freedom herself; with such patrons she was sure to prosper, and how she has prospered, let the present state of the Union bear testimony. ... From a tender plant as it were, we have grown to a large and powerful oak, whose branches are spread far and near, and under whose shadowing protection millions may shelter. (Murray 1844, 81)

The oak spreads its branches far and near: from the Revolutionary period, a history of national growth and expansion is projected in this quote, ending in the imperial present of the 1840s; a decade also of mass immigration, as the "shadowing protection" under which "millions may shelter" hints at. Indeed, immigration and expansion are linked together here as two sides of the same coin of expansion, true to the history of U.S. settler colonialism and frontier expansion.

Similarly, Fanny Campbell's final transformation from pirate captain and Republican heroine into a domestic woman and mother testifies to the narrative's shift to the (mid-)nineteenth century and its restrictive gender discourses. Fanny longs for the sea, but instead of continuing her maritime life she undertakes a farewell cruise with William in a fully furnished and widely admired "pleasure yacht" (82), *The Vision*, equipped with upholstery, cushions, and draperies, "in as good taste as in her parlors at home."

The transgressive mobility of the female pirate is transformed into that of the imperial tourist, and accordingly, the voyage first takes them back to the Caribbean Sea, "drawing forth fresh interest and an increased desire

for exploration" (81) and then to the classical tourist destinations of the 1840s: the Mediterranean and Italy as well as the Channel Islands off England. A visit to a fisherman's family seals Fanny's transmogrification, as she confesses to William: "I should be happier now, had I never have mingled in the strife of the world, if I could have lived retired with thee, from all its contentions, and only have known by experience of thy love and kindness" (89); even William's cheering words ("you have done the part of a hero, and have nothing at all to regret. I declare, I envy you") do not help: "Fanny missed the calm and peaceful joys of a quiet and retired life" (92). The narrative voice comments that the excursion to the fisherman's hut is supposed to draw an image of peace and happiness with a moral aim, and in line with this, the conclusion mentions that Fanny became a mother of two sons, who both embarked on a career in the American Navy, and that she now inhabited an estate, given to the couple as remuneration for their merits in the War of Independence, in Salem (notorious for the disciplining of femininity since the Puritan witch-hunts of the 1690s).

Last but not least, the narrator does not shy away from revealing the intentions behind the tale presented: "We have endeavoured in Fanny Campbell to portray a heroine who should not be like every other the fancy has created; we have strove to make her such a one as should elicit the reader's interest, and have yet endeavoured in the picture not to overstep the modest bounds of nature" (99). *The Vision* refers also, then, to foresight in terms of the development of normative American femininity in the nineteenth century, as the narrator, with Fanny, turns to "the sweets of domestic happiness" (79), refers to her as "wife" frequently in the remaining narrative, and emphasizes her Christian piety (89). However, the narrative's didactic intent with regard to the "normalization" of rebel femininities is undermined by the larger-than-life characterization of Fanny and the popularity of female cross-dressing since the eighteenth century in Atlantic popular culture. In this sense, the sign of piracy betrays a discourse of nostalgia disturbing any smooth transition from a cross-dressing pirate captain to "angel of the house."

3.3.4   *Female Pirates and Cross-Dressing Women Warriors*

In *Fanny Campbell*, the sea is primarily a site of play and potentiality (Woertendyke 2013, 223) with regard not only to heroic piracy, but equally to gender performance. Female pirates and cross-dressing sailors

had a long and deeply rooted tradition around the Atlantic world for centuries, both as historical figures and as larger-than-life characterizations in ballads—the so-called "female warrior ballad" (Dugaw 1996; Wheelwright 1994, 8)—and a number of other (semi-)literary forms catering to a "semi-literate working class" (Rediker 1996, 11). 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—in Britain, most famously in John Gay's satirical ballad opera *Polly* (1729), the widely successful sequel to *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) featuring a cross-dressing heroine who joins a group of pirates in the West Indies in search of her husband,[31] and in the United States in the *Female Marine* trilogy (1815–1818), the fictional story of a young cross-dressing woman serving on the U.S. frigate *Constitution* in the War of 1812, which ran through nineteen editions within just four years (Cordingly [2001] 2007, 52–53; Cohen 1997). The fascination with Bonny and Read, especially among female readers, rested upon Johnson's and others' representations of them as taking "part in a utopian experiment beyond the reach of the traditional powers of family, state, and capital, one that was carried out by working men and at least a few women. They added another dimension altogether to the subversive appeal of piracy by seizing what was regarded as male liberty" (Rediker 1996, 15). Similarly, in a chapter of his classical study *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950) entitled "The Dime Novel Heroine," Henry Nash Smith mentions *Fanny Campbell* as evidence for the transformation of the genteel heroine to fit a harsh American environment by means of cross-dressing in the nineteenth century ([1950] 2009, 112). Writing in the context of an American exceptionalist narrative, however, he turns a blind eye to the transatlantic dimension of this development (see also Anderson 2011, 95).

Both Anne Bonny and Mary Read's stories, as made popular in Johnson, reverberate in *Fanny Campbell*. Read's life, *qua* Johnson, by the time of her trial, "had changed dramatically; she was heavily pregnant, deeply in love and her desire for a quiet life appears more believable … [. A]n exceptional woman, glorifying masculine values, finally returns to her appropriately self-sacrificial maternal role" (Wheelwright [1995] 1996, 184); Bonny was American-born (although of Irish immigrant stock rather than New England Puritan heritage) and, like Fanny, went to Cuba to be with her lover, pirate Captain Jack Rackham, aka Calico Jack (188; Cordingly [2001] 2007, 79–87; Defoe/Johnson [1724] 1999,

153–65). As Johnson's renderings inspired a plethora of popular (often ephemeral) literary and oral forms, the "idea that women could be sea-rovers was enshrined in popular ballads and dramas of the eighteenth century which celebrated the feats of cross-dressed women (even if some did come to terrible ends)" (Stanley 1995, 42; Dugaw 1996). *Fanny* can be placed in this tradition of the "female warrior" genre that had emerged from a late medieval world in transition to the modern (Dugaw 2010, 274), following its conventions closely: it borrows its episodic structure and roguish protagonist from the picaresque, features romance elements (especially the heterosexual love story) and standard tropes such as "the heroine's independent spirit; her masked pursuit of a husband or lover; … proofs of her service and valour" (292), as well as a play with same-sex desire. This can best be seen in the dialogue between the lovers upon William's departure: Fanny states that she "env[ies him] the experience … of the world" (Murray 1844, 12), which William finds strange; she thus asks him if he loves her any less for her manly aspirations, to which William replies: "No, no, my dear girl, I only love thee the more, while I am still more surprised at thy brave and noble spirit, at thy judgment and thought that characterises one of thy sex and tender years. By my soul thou shouldst have been a man, Fanny."

While Dugaw (2010) argues that such outlaw "heroines"—regardless of their limitations as models of liberation—had given way to more docile models of femininity by the early nineteenth century, Rediker insists that figures like Bonny and Read continued to inspire young women to try alternative paths of life, citing also the work of Julie Wheelwright, who demonstrates that the historical and fictional figures of the female soldier and sailor were important to nineteenth-century feminists in that they disproved the prevailing assumptions regarding women's incapacities, physical and mental. Indeed, cross-dressing heroines continued to be common in popular fiction in the second half of the century (Anderson 2011, 95; Smith [1950] 2009, ch. X). Both Dugaw and Rediker have a point with regard to *Fanny*, whose conservative remodeling of a transgressive figure answers the prevalent "woman question" by relegating subversive images of femininity to their 'proper place' of home and hearth but at the same time rekindled the memory of former popular heroines less domestically inclined, as by that time "[b]alladeers 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 [1995] 1996, 194).

One of the few examples of a documented contemporaneous female reader's response to *Fanny Campbell* is that of the Canadian Sarah Emma Edmonds, who, disguised as a man, escaped from her father's home in New Brunswick, Canada, in 1854 and participated in the Civil War as part of the Second Michigan Volunteers under the pseudonym of Frank Thompson (E. Young 1999, 144–45; Wheelwright [1995] 1996, 196). In Edmond's autobiographical narrative *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* (1865), she relates that reading *Fanny Campbell* represented the turning point of her life after her mother gave her the book at age thirteen; the scene in which Fanny cuts her hair and puts on the male sailor's garb, "stepp[ing] into the freedom and glorious independence of masculinity" (quoted in E. Young 1999, 155), inspired her as a girl to swear that one day she would do the same, although she scorned Fanny's motive of rescuing her fiancé (De Pauw 2000, 153; Cohen 1997, 9). Not only as a patriotic narrative of piracy, but also as part of the "female warrior genre" that was very popular in the 1840s, *Fanny*'s domestic ending does not seem as memorable as the protagonist's adventures in the male sphere of action to female readers such as Edmonds. Following Holly Kent, "female readers … had the power to make the (essentially conservative) pirate novels into radical texts, ignoring the heroines' inevitable submersion in the home, and finding inspiration in their performance of roles not meant for women, in a world reserved for men" (2008, 57). Historical cross-dressing warrior women "co-existed with their representational counterparts" (Dugaw 2010, 276; also Wheelwright 1994, 8), traversing one more categorical boundary by blurring the factual and the fictive[32]: models for Fanny can be found in those cross-dressing women who had fought as soldiers in the Revolutionary War, such as "the Universal Female Patriot" (Fitz 2010, 241) Molly Pitcher or Deborah Sampson, a soldier in the War (Karl 2011, 33). It is no coincidence that the popular Molly Pitcher figure also appears in *Fanny*: known from popular poetry and melodrama at the time and modeled after Moll Dimond Pitcher, the fortune-teller of Lynn "whose special province was the sea" (Thompson and Schaumann 1989, 15), she was famed among sailors and ship owners from near and far and thus initially called Captain Molly (before she was tamed into a more genteel figure; Raphael 2004, 34, 40).

Cross-dressing, as Jo Stanley has explored, played a significant role in the representation of female sailors and pirates. She argues that this

tradition is mostly "an expression of the [usually male author's] narcissistic assumption that men are the prototype and women the adaptation, the piratess, the mini-version of 'proper' male pirates" (1995, 45), even though she admits that historically, cross-dressing usually had pragmatic reasons for women—travelling safely, avoiding molestation, and a less restricted mobility (44)—and women pirates in particular, whose adoption of the "informal pirate uniform … would have been essential to their authority" (46). In the same vein, she contends that the female leg, emphasized by wearing trousers, is part of a fetishistic image of women, implying "an animal sexual availability, especially outrageous and exciting in the Victorian period when even piano legs had to be swathed for fear they would incite lustful thoughts." Cross-dressing female characters, Stanley suggests, are sexualized objects of male desire, the narrative taming their transgressiveness: "Women 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). Captain Johnson, long before the cheap romance novelette appeared, ensured "that the [cross-dressing] women [pirates] are portrayed as equally feminine by fleshing out stories of their romantic encounters" (Wheelwright [1995] 1996, 183).

A similar restoration of balance is at work in *Fanny Campbell*. Echoing Marjorie Garber's theory of cross-dressing (see below), the narrative compensates for the protagonist's outlaw femininity by rendering her cross-dressing a temporary response to personal and political crisis—the imprisonment of Fanny's romantic interest William and the War of Independence; it is first and foremost an act of patriotism. The radicalness of the text's repeated questioning of gender norms is countered by frequent descriptions of her feminine features (such as her musical voice and her "full and heaving breast," 15), but also intermedially by the colored frontispiece adorning the novelette (Fig. 2.1), as it counterbalances implications of immorality—her legs are clad in tight-fitting pants—not only by choosing the color white, with its conventional connotations of innocence, virginity, and purity (the latter being one of the cardinal virtues of the nineteenth-century "true woman"), but also by her stately posture, her uniform, and the holding of the jolly roger flag, presenting her like an official: the narrator indeed describes her "blue sailor's pants, and a short Pea Jacket [the jacket traditionally worn by sailors of European and American navies] descending about half way to the knee" on her armed body, so that she looks like "a king's officer in disguise" (26). The jacket in

the image is notably lengthened into a close-fitting, waisted coat girthed to almost resemble a dress, reaching nearly to her knees. Her neat head-dress, make-up, the feathered red hat and the stainless white blouse also water down the act of cross-dressing. And while her trousers (reminiscent of the sansculottes marking the working class in the French Revolution) symbolize movement, in line with "… many popular nineteenth-and twentieth-century images [which] show their [i.e., female pirates'] legs … active—fighting, walking, lunging, standing threateningly" (Stanley 1995, 46), Fanny's feet in the image are tiny, again attenuating the radical potential of the cross-dressed heroine as opposed to the narrative description of her feet (Fig. 3.1).

The visual representation of Fanny thus references iconic images of cross-dressing female warriors such as *The Female Marine* in this ambivalence toward cross-dressing, female empowerment, and mobility (Cohen 1997, 27). The ambivalence of the cross-dressing female pirate, created intermedially by diverging narrative and pictorial signs, is also **reverberant in** critical interpretations of this figure: both Stanley and Wheelwright assert that female pirates were fictional(ized) figures of transgression and empowerment for their female readers, but at the same time read cross-dressing stories as rather tame and limited in their subversive potential: on the one hand, "female swashbucklers of popular literature provided an alternative image of women and inspired others to challenge the rigid definitions of sexual difference" (Wheelwright 1994, 13–14), but on the other "[c]ross-dressing for women often remained a process of 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).[33]

Indeed, this ambiguity is at the very heart of representations of female pirates and other cross-dressing outlaw femininities at that time, echoing the fact that definitions of class and gender were in transition; Dugaw notes that "the cross-dressing female warrior … flourished when ideas about human sexuality and what we call gender were shifting" (2010, 288).[34] Tales about cross-dressing symbolically reproduce such a crisis in the gender category; the urge to "normalize what the women have done by giving reasons for their behavior is a reaction to that crisis" (De Grave 1995, 118). Whether subversive or affirmative of prevailing gender norms, *Fanny*, through its portrayal of female involvement in the Revolutionary War, voices the mid-nineteenth-century contradiction between

Fig. 3.1 The title page of Fanny Campbell, The Female Pirate Captain (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

women's confinement to domesticity and their increasing public presence (Fitz 2010, 221), reviving models of femininity from before the "back-lash" (as the transition from Republican Motherhood to the "cult of true womanhood" is often referred to). Representations of active women in the public sphere

> … have to be read alongside those which reconfirmed the beliefs of the cult of domesticity and, of course, alongside such documents as the Declaration of Sentiments. These images of active female involvement and patriotism contributed to create a new and more public domain for women. The ways in which they were … commemorated were cornerstones in the process of redefining the female sphere—and thus gender concepts as such … . (Fitz 2010, 264)

3.3.5 *"Crises Elsewhere": Class, Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Race*

The central place that cross-dressing and travesty took in narratives about female pirates and other women warriors of the Revolution indicates, following literary critic Marjorie Garber, the crisis not only of gender roles and categorizations in any society, but of binary categories per se, visible in the usual confusions and mix-ups in stories of cross-dressers who "disrupt[] and call[] attention to cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances" ([1992] 2012, 16). Garber views cross-dressing as an "interruption" (13) in binary thinking,[35] a "putting in question" of binary oppositions that claim to be absolute. She insists that the cross-dresser introduces a "third" rather than affirming either the male or the female pole. This "third" introduces a crisis, Garber asserts, but is not itself a category or a "term" (11) but rather "a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility." In this way, the presence of cross-dressing may also indicate a category crisis elsewhere: "Category crises [i.e., "a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable," 16] can and do mark displacements from the axis of class as well as from race onto the axis of gender" (17). She concludes that cross-dressing is not a cause, but a sign of crisis—and not "just another category crisis, but—much more disqui-etingly—a crisis of 'category' itself" (32; also 16–17; Cohen 1997, 28; De Grave 1995, 119).

In the case of *Fanny Campbell*, these scenarios of crisis "elsewhere" refer to a number of contexts in which comfortable socio-cultural binaries were disintegrating at mid-century. One was the changing class structure

of American society and the concomitant desire of a rising middle class to find its symbolic place in U.S.-American society beyond genteel culture and high literature—to have heroes and heroines of their own, offering a potential for identification; from the 1840s, Karsten Fitz asserts, ordinary women engaged in the Revolution came to the fore in popular culture (2010, 263). The narrator emphasizes his democratic agenda with regard to class: "We have designed to show that among the lower classes of society there is more of the germ of true intellect and courage, nobleness of purpose, and strength of will than may be found among the pampered and wealthy children of fortune" (Murray 1844, 100). In addition, the prominent inclusion of lower-class cultural forms—especially tall tales, yarns, and mysterious stories in the vernacular—in sections in which the plot comes to a pause affirms their importance; he refers to *Fanny* as "our ill-spun yarn" (99) and in one of the implied author's meta-commentaries toward the end of the novelette even disavows individual authorship, highlighting collective processes of story-telling. He claims that he is merely a listener and transcriber: "several of the yarns that are given here, are absolutely genuine ones, and mere transcripts as the writer has listened to them at sea; and also to refute in some degree the assertion which is so confidently and frequently made that these sketches are all humbugs, or originate entirely in the writer's fancy" (92). In a meta-commentary, he asks for the reader's moral judgment (despite his temptation to judge for them):

> There is a moral that we are tempted to put down here, simple perhaps, but a great one nevertheless, yet fearing the censure of the general reader, who sometimes decries in no measured terms these moral digressions, we leave the inference to which we have only alluded, for the good judgment and discernment of the reader, but let us venture to urge its consideration. (57)

This flattering of the lower strata of society is of course also due to the addressees and intended readership of cheap popular novelettes, who shared Fanny's humble origins and experience of socioeconomic ascent (and through them were familiarized with both official American history and, through the protagonist's eventual conversion, to ideals of respectable, bourgeois femininity). The story hence "represented a particular working-class heroism … in a period when definitions of class and gender had come more sharply into focus" (Wheelwright [1995] 1996,

197). Yet this "heroism" is limited to "freemen," one has to add; at one point, the narrator puts the text's formal principle of including vernacular language and 'low' oral forms plainly: "Let the twenty millions of freemen who now people the land speak" (81).

The crisis indicated by the cross-dressing heroine relates even more prominently to citizenship and the nation itself, accompanying the concerns of territorial expansion and waves of new immigrants in the 1840s. In her monograph *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*, Shelly Streeby discusses the significance of the so-called "story-paper literature" for cultural history, which represented a printing "empire" (2002, 83) and heralded a new era in American popular culture. In the specific contents of such publications at mid-century, the time of the U.S. invasion of Mexico and the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), Streeby diagnoses the waning of a postcolonial and the emergence of an increasingly imperialist politics and society in the United States. In this regard, *Fanny Campbell* seems to represent a transitional narrative: while its historical setting and plot focus on the (post-)colonial aspects of the battle for U.S.-American independence in the 1770s, its spatial setting and colonial hermeneutics, as discussed above, hint at the fledgling imperial interest of the time in territories south of the nation's border. The novelette thus combines the predominant craze for (mass-marketed) popular history (Pfitzer 2008), with the prevalent "structures of feeling" (Raymond Williams) of the time, which extended the U.S.-American sphere of agency (not least under Cooper's influence) not only along the western frontier, but also across the southern and maritime borders of the nation. Paradoxically, then, Fanny's Revolutionary piracies might be said to foreshadow future "piracies" of the American Empire in the Caribbean, not least by invoking the moral superiority of the nation (54). It affirms a foundational U.S. exceptionalism allegedly sanctioned by God and legitimizes American imperial interests. In her reading of *Fanny*, Katherine Anderson, focusing on the use of history in the novelette, concludes that it

> allowed readers to envision a proto-national past in service of contemporary expansionist, or imperialist, ideology … imaginatively mapping the Revolutionary moment—in which a barely viable entity fends for its right to nationhood against powerful old-world empires—on the mid-century present—in which the US was competing with those empires to secure its hemispheric status … . (97)

Anderson argues that the cross-dressed female pirate symbolized a nation that would never be able to "reach maturity (conceived of as manhood)" and that the novelette "evacuates historical discourse, failing to account for change in terms of human agency" by its very act of mapping the late eighteenth century onto the nineteenth. This argument may overstate the case—Fanny surrenders her position as captain (of the nation, in her logic) to William just in time to guarantee male leadership once the young nation is born, despite his "passive transition" (107) to that state; the amalgamation of past and present (which arguably happens in all historical fiction) does not necessarily deny the past, but might also hint at the interrelatedness, rather than chronological succession, of past and present histories. Yet Anderson's reading is right in emphasizing that the text reflects the expansionist ideology rampant since James Polk's presidency (1845–1849) and the Mexican-American War (101), especially by eventually imagining the ocean as a domestic space: "Fanny and William's wandering domestic space, mapping American feeling in places not (yet) American, constitutes something of an imperial gesture" (112) and eradicates the foreign element of the contact zone (113; Anderson calls this, as well as the form of the portable pamphlet novel crossing U.S. borders, "itinerant domesticity"). Hence the categorical crisis enacted in Fanny/Channing's piratical proto-imperialism pertains to the moment of undecidability in which the nation is imagined, paradoxically, as both colonized and colonizer, as past and future come together in the text.

The imperial transformations of antebellum America coincided not only with a critical state of the meaning of U.S. citizenship in the mid-nineteenth century (regarding the population of new territories, Native Americans—who appear in *Fanny*, as in Cooper, as remnants from the past and folk-tale figures only—and immigrants), but also with the increasingly radical debates about slavery in these decades. As it became obvious that the most dangerous scenario of crisis for the future of the Union was the debate over slavery and the status of each newly admitted state as slave-holding or free, ethnic and racial categorizations were being critically renegotiated everywhere in American cultural articulations, including popular literature. *Fanny Campbell* ties these debates together, significantly choosing Irish sailors as bonding figures: though marked by ethnic difference, they are brothers-in-arms who are assumed to have experienced a similar colonial abuse by Great Britain as their American brethren. The Irish are the only group exhorted explicitly to join the pirates along with the Americans after their capture of the British

ship: "we only want our own countrymen, unless indeed it may be one of yours, who are most surely with us in heart at least" (40); an Irishman joins them consequentially. Yet the Irish characters are also portrayed as stereotypical simpletons, uneducated and entertaining through their accent and naiveté, but honest, faithful, submissive, and patriotic (e.g., the character Terrence Mooney, a member of Channing's crew; 40, 46). Not only was such prejudice against the Irish Catholics, the main group of immigrants since the 1830s, flourishing at the time (De Grave 1995, 139); the portrayal also echoes the intricate discursive relationship of Irish immigrants and blacks—especially African American slaves—Noel Ignatiev seminally explored in *How the Irish Became White* (1995), the story of how Irish immigrants developed from racially oppressed to oppressive. If Irish immigrants were not black in the 1840s, they were also not quite white in contemporaneous racializations, that is, excluded from white (WASP) privilege (Halley et al. 2011, 72–74).

This ambivalence of ethnic/racial categorization is subtly reflected in the novelette, in which not a single African American character appears. Following Toni Morrison's argumentation in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), *Fanny* can be read as substituting prevalent discourses about African American enslavement in the 1840s with a number of adjacent discourses, simultaneously denying and affirming the presence of blacks and of racial tension in a nation idealized as the natural habitat of liberty: discourses about the Irish and their ethnic/racial and national status as formerly oppressed, (nonwhite or not-quite-white) colonial subjects and future (white) Americans; about the practice of impressment, which is critiqued as "a foul deed" ("It is a foul deed to impress a man into any duty, and foul must be the service that requires the exercise of such deeds," 26); about the oppression of the American colonies by the British Crown and their "struggle for freedom" (40); and, finally, about the discourse of cross-dressing in the sense of blackface, as Fanny is also shown to be navigating along the color line (Garber [1992] 2012 calls this "Cross-dressing the Color Line" in the subtitle to chapter eleven). Her hair is described as "very dark auburn" and "naturally curled" if "left to itself" (15), mixing Irish and African features, and her skin color as very pale in the beginning (26) but increasingly becoming, after her transmutation into Channing, a "darker hue" (47; this, of course, is consistent with the effects of a sailor's exposure to the sun), "as dusky as a Negro" (48), though William denies that he would ever have "suspected" her to be

"colored." Fanny/Channing reports s/he is considered "rather dark for an American" (45) and then admits: "It is a stain put on for a more perfect disguise" (46). Fanny/Channing, in this way, transgresses both gendered and racial borders as a pirate captain on a mission equally romantic and patriotic.

Despite its limited appeal to "freemen" only, *Fanny Campbell*, by repeatedly calling upon the opposition between oppression and freedom, projects this opposition back to Revolutionary times and thus contrapuntally establishes an analogy of discourses that links the Revolutionary cause of colonial emancipation with nineteenth-century demands for freedom—for and by both women and African Americans.[36] This is also evident in Sarah Edmonds' account of her reaction to the novelette, retrospectively combining the concerns of both the women's and the abolitionist movements: "All the latent energy of my nature was aroused … each exploit of the heroine thrilled me to my fingertips… I was emancipated! and could never again be a *slave*" (quoted in Kent 2008, 57).[37]

3.3.6 *Fanny, the Patriot*

In sum, *Fanny Campbell* suggests a linear history of American freedom that renders the fight against oppression a patriotic duty justifying, even demanding, the overstepping of legal boundaries. Not only the transgression of these, but also of boundaries between masculinity and femininity are legitimized as a "noble" and necessary response to crisis, echoing Marjorie Garber's observation in the context of her discussion of Anne Bonny and Mary Read that "the borderline life of a pirate, sailing on the windy side of the law, marks a crossover occupation that suits [Bonny's and Read's] gender histories—or at least the desire to narrativize them" ([1992] 2012, 181). The pirate, as a borderline figure, can be read as doubling the cross-dresser's ambivalent epistemological status; indeed, pirates are narrative constructs sharing with the cross-dresser the provocation of epistemological insecurity (Murray 1844, 16)—it is no coincidence that "dressing up" was noticed as pirate behavior since the seventeenth century (Garber [1992] 2012, 180–81; also Karremann 2011).

The narrative of the cross-dressing pirate in *Fanny Campbell* dramatizes the crisis of legitimacy and the nation's ambivalence in coming to terms with its past (Anderson 2011, 99)—and its future, one could add. It is not just a text about a general notion of piracy, but functions only in

the context of the myth and romance of American history that the novelette affirms (see also Woertendyke 2013, 217). Indeed, it is then not a narrative that heroizes piracy per se, but rather limits its legitimizing discourse to "this pirate of a rebel" (68): a revolutionary, patriotic crossdressing pirate in the service of the American nation. Katherine Anderson, noting that Fanny acts "during the transition of legal authority from one government to another" (2011, 105), draws attention to the fact that legal authority in *Fanny* is in limbo; the provisional status of the pirate, who "can be simultaneously hailed as a national hero and distanced from the nation as a juridical entity" (106) echoes the provisionality of Channing/Fanny's masquerade. In the book, this double provisionality paradoxically assures Fanny's—and, allegorically, the nation's—liberty:

> Some fears were entertained by Fanny and her family, touching upon the captures she had made, inasmuch as strictly speaking she had laid herself liable to the charge of piracy! And Fanny, in the eyes of the law, was actually a Female Pirate Captain! But there were none to prosecute such a charge, and if there had been, Captain Channing could no where be found. (Murray 1844, 79)

In the text, the mythology of American freedom not only obscures, but also attempts to solve a crisis of legitimacy, personified by a cross-dressing pirate, by (re-)integrating her into her fictional society and its normative gender structure as well as the national narrative. The crisis of U.S. legality indicated by the use of the term "pirate" is resolved by a discourse of American patriotism; in the end, piracy is consequentially externalized: "The ocean is the place for excitement ... . You have the storm to contend with, and happy are you if you master it in room of becoming its victim. You have tides and currents to watch, winds …, and not unfrequently some daring rover to repel" (82). The process of incorporating the pirate into a U.S.-American national narrative thus happens on two distinct temporal levels in *Fanny Campbell*: first, in the context of the American Revolution, which, by the 1840s, had already been patriotically legitimized in American culture; and second, at the time of writing the novelette in preparation of an American Empire that needed to make use of such patriotic feelings about "pirates" in the ongoing process of legitimizing territorial expansion: "the narrative, its characters, plot, and motifs are poised to move across water, releasing space-time connection with U.S. national history" and "a sense of simultaneity, as American

revolutionary zeal is sutured to Cuban piracy, Spanish imperialism, and U.S. maritime space" (Woertendyke 2013, 220).

However, as I have argued in this chapter, the eventual pacification of the text's unruly aspects, even radicalness in some of its commentaries, is disturbed by its counterpoints: first, U.S.-American piracy is relegated to the past, but the imperial gestures indicate its present function as a sign of empire; second, the cross-dressing heroine is brought back to domesticity, but, as Edmonds' reading response plausibly suggests, is less memorable to female readers than her escape from home and hearth; third, the lower-middle class, including recent immigrants such as the Irish, finds its symbolic place in the national drama, through the propagation of vernacular and folk cultural forms in this mass-market product, and is integrated into the myth of the American dream by portraying Fanny's eventual social ascent—but while the Irish are "becoming white," the crisis over slavery, which the text attempts to (but cannot) ignore, continues to haunt both the narrative and the nation. Consequentially, the sign of the pirate reappears in the context of the crisis over slavery and the Civil War.

NOTES

1. This had to do with the fact that the U.S. itself, Adams continues, was "from the first a creature of law. Its birth was a legal act; the Declaration dissolved an old contract, and the Constitution created a new one" (1990, 5).

2. Identity in the antebellum context is conceived as a "condition involving the relations of the self with external structures of authority, rather than the sort of self-integration more modern ears may her in the word" (Adams 1990, 18). The periodization of 'Antebellum America' is debated by historians; I am adopting a broad view for my study, taking the Missouri crisis as anticipating sectional conflict that would eventually lead to the Civil War (Bowman 2010, 1).

3. Green adds that Tocqueville took the same position in 1835 when he remarked that Americans were born to rule the seas "as the Romans had been to rule the world" (1978, 168). It is remarkable that this aspect of the American historical imagination has been much less explored than the western frontier paradigm.

4. Comparative studies of Scott and Cooper reach back to the nineteenth century, when the nickname "the American Scott" was already in use (and vehemently refused by Cooper); the earliest study of influence (e.g.,

by George William Walker 1963) merely condemn Cooper as an inferior Scott or collect lists of differences (usually attributed to the different American environment and the experience of conquest) between the two.

5. I consulted the U.S. edition of Dekker's study, published in the same year, which is subtitled "The Novelist" instead of "The American Scott."

6. For a critical discussion of early American literature as a postcolonial phenomenon, see Buell (1992) and Davidson (2004, 13–24). While it can be useful, following Gesa Mackenthun, to take a postcolonial perspective on early American literature, it is of course dangerous to forget that the United States has always been both postcolonial and colonizing, "heir to the policy of British imperialism" (2004, 6).

7. Shubrick (1790–1874) served in the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War and retired early in the Civil War.

8. Contemporary readings in this context are concerned with Cooper's representation of the common sailor and the world of labor aboard ship: on the one hand, Cooper has been praised for inventing a genuinely American nautical realism that could not be found among his British predecessors such as Smollett and Defoe and for creating the sea novel (Walker 1963, v; House [1965] 1979, 129; Iglesias 2006); on the other, critics regard his fictional tars as exotic (rather than 'authentic') creations contemporaneous seamen allegedly found ridiculous, especially in terms of language (Anderson 1951; Berger 2009; Blum 2008, 72; for a more positive evaluation see Cohen 2008; Walker 1963, 8). Blum's study is especially worth mentioning here, as she demonstrates how Cooper ignores a plethora of factual narratives by sailors, strategically misrepresenting the genre of sea writing.

9. Barthes establishes this concept in "The Reality Effect" (1968), arguing that texts produce effects of reality: in the absence of any signified the textual signifiers standing in for 'reality' must rely on the concept of realism. He also shows that the effect of reality is a key problem in history, as historical writing, proclaiming an unproblematic realism, merely present this textual device in action ("The Discourse of History"). See Barthes (1989).

10. In a different vein, Reynolds interprets Cooper's romanticism and "[s]tylistic stiffness" in the 1820s as a "rhetorical defense against explosive forces within American popular culture" (1988, 186). In contrast, Heinz Ickstadt argued that Cooper "explicitly links the importance of literature to its popularity" (1985, 16) and used popular taste for instructive purposes.

11. On the role of Cooper's work in the transatlantic literary field of the nineteenth century and its active engagement with the relationship between America and Europe, especially Great Britain, see Buchenau (2002,

esp. 68–70), Frank and Mueller-Vollmer (2000, ch. 6), and Boggs (2007, 61–89).

12. For more detail on Cooper and the American romance, see Dekker (1993).

13. See also Joseph Holt Ingraham's popular Byronic romances *Lafitte: The Pirate of the Gulf* (1836) and *Captain Kyd* (1839).

14. The name echoes the maiden name of Cooper's wife, Susan Augusta De Lancey, whose grandfather James De Lancey was a Royal governor of the colony (1753–1755) and his sons prominent loyalists during the War of Independence (while Cooper's forefathers fought on the opposite side).

15. Similarly, in a conversation with Gertrude about life at sea, Heidegger uses, according to the narrator, "irony … concealed by playfulness," stating that "'… even I, confirmed and obstinate sea-monster as I am, have no reason to complain of your distaste for our element'" (Cooper [1828] 1991, 687).

16. During the height of the 'Reign of Terror,' the so-called 'furies of the guillotine' also wore red caps when they gathered around the guillotine to celebrate each execution. The guillotines themselves were painted red or made of red wood, and a statue of a woman titled liberty, painted red, was placed in the square in front of the guillotine. On the analogy of the French and the American Revolutions in this context, see Adams (1990, 88).

17. See McWilliams (2004, 1), echoing the subtitle of *The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground*; the metaphor is highly problematic, especially if it is extended to the land, as it disregards the presence of Native Americans and other non-Anglo-Saxons, along with their legal and political systems, before the Revolution.

18. Neither Philbrick, who views *The Red Rover* as emblematic of Cooper's early renditions of maritime life in its "extreme romanticism" (1961, ix), nor Madison's exploration of Cooper's use of the Byronic pirate in *The Wing-And-Wing* (1996) take into account that the Byronic notion of the pirate was thus Americanized.

19. Cooper's readers have struggled much with assessing his representation of the U.S.-American revolution. While Peck (1976) emphasizes Cooper's ambivalence, Robert Clark draws a more negative picture; he explains that after 1776, radicalism threatened the nation's interests: "A society based on the universal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and convinced of the right of its own citizens to possess what they have amassed, did not wish to remember that its Independence was achieved by subordinating its cherished principles to the higher ethical and pragmatic concerns of a violent revolutionary war" (1985, 202).

20. It might not be a coincidence, in Mackenthun's reading, that the *Dolphin* is masked as a British cruiser called *Antelope* during the final battle, citing

the name of a slave ship apprehended by a U.S. cruiser in 1820 over whose human cargo a number of court trials were fought, ending in the 1822 Supreme Court verdict that the slave trade does not violate the law of nations (2004, 81–83). Mackenthun shows how Cooper's text, against all intentions, bears the traces of continuity between America's colonial past and its national future, e.g., also in the reversal of branding the skins of Africans with their owners' identities when it is revealed that Scipio tattooed "Ark of Lynnhaven" on Fid's arm after they rescued Wilder as a little boy from a wreck of a ship of that name: "Scipio Africa … ensures with his *écriture sauvage* that colonial power relations will remain valid in the times to come" (83).

21. Similarly, Grenville Mellen objected to the Rover's portrayal in the *North American Review*: "There is too much poetry about him. It is not, in all respects, the natural character of a man who has so long led a life of peril and depravity, and spent the better part of his days in the reckless swing of desperation. There is, perhaps, too much of the genteel villain, and too little of the Ishmaelite, in his composition" ([1828] 1997, 147).

22. Some critics also see the divisive potential of this appropriation. In his monograph about memory and the American Revolution, Alfred Young (1999), for example, shows how various radical groups such as the emerging working-class movement and abolitionists started to claim the Revolutionary narrative in the mid-1830s for their purposes.

23. According to Wheelwright and many others, *Fanny* was first published in 1844 as *The Female Pirate: A Tale of the Revolution of 1776* and later as *Fanny Campbell, or, The Female Pirate Captain* ([1995] 1996, 194). Page numbers in the following refer to the American Antiquarian Society's earliest edition (1844); spelling errors have been corrected for better readability.

24. The covers mention sellers in Boston, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Detroit, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Louisville.

25. Reynolds (1988) calls this form a pamphlet novel rather than a novelette; Anderson uses both terms, as well as dime novel, interchangeably. I use novelette not only because Gleason's publishing house used it but also because the diminutive emphasizes the much smaller size and scale of these publications compared to the novels of the time. Dime novels proper first emerged with Beadle's Dime Novels as late as 1860.

26. Pfitzer (2008) analyzes the subscription sales techniques of book agents as well as the publisher's aggressive prepublication advertising campaigns, including the pictorial embellishments they employed as marketing devices (see also Reynolds 1988, 182).

27. The short prefatory poem must be understood in this context as a question concerning the novelette's generic textual economy: "When modesty's the rage, and love of change, / And things are doated on

because they're / Strange / How shall he fare whose unaspiring hack / Jogs on the broadway and the beaten track, Leps o'er no moral fence, nor dares to prance / In the wild region of untried romance?" (Murray 1844, n.p.) The text answers the question by combining convention and sensation, as the narrator states through the voice of Captain Burnet: "Fanny, your story is a romance; no fairy tale could exceed it in extravagance, and yet it's all true" (76).

28. See also Anderson (2011, 110); she additionally mentions the travel narrative as another genre informing *Fanny* despite her diagnosis that the contact zone as the central fictional space is eradicated by the text's imperial politics.

29. Anderson (2011, 99) emphasizes the close similarity of *Fanny*'s opening passage—the description of the geographical setting—and that of Scott's *The Pirate* (1822), a fact that highlights the continuing transatlantic character of pirate narratives, despite their nationalist politics, and introduces intellectual 'piracy' as another level of critique.

30. With regard to U.S. expansionism and the significance of female 'pirates,' cf. also the novelette *The Female Land Pirate*, also published by Gleason.

31. See, e.g., Rennie (2013, 84). *Polly* also references the eighteenth-century ballad of Polly Oliver, a female sailor (Wheelwright 1994, 15).

32. This blurring of boundaries is also a source of confusion for some critics, who seem mistaken to view Fanny as an historical character (e.g., De Pauw 2000, most recently Woertendyke 2013, 219–20); see Anderson (2011, 98 n. 6). To some extent, the story certainly does present a fictionalization of historical figures (e.g., Moll Pitcher) and events.

33. Elizabeth Leonard is less ambivalent in her judgment of Fanny as a model feminist, but can only be so because she, too, asserts a male standard, concluding that Fanny was "a worthy hero on all fronts" (1999, 250).

34. By the turn to the twentieth century, suffragists were taking an interest in cross-dressing literary women in order to argue for women's potential to fight in both military and political contexts (Wheelwright [1995] 1996, 197; 1994, 13). The protagonist's return to being Fanny, in addition, evoked her namesake, radical woman's rights activist and first female traveling lecturer Frances Wright (1795–1852), whose followers were slandered as "Fanny Wrightists" for decades (Karl 2011, 34).

35. In her discussion of *Peter Pan*, Garber quotes literary critic Jacques Lezra in this context, who, in a 1989 article on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, asserts that the figure of the pirate is "the figure of interruption" ([1992] 2012, 181).

36. This is also evident in a scene in which she liberates one of her English captives, who is described in ways that evoke contemporaneous descriptions of African Americans: "broad and full across the chest, with heavy yet well formed limbs. His hair was short, black as jet, and curled closely to his

head … resembling a lion at bay, his huge, muscular form expanded with rage at the feeling of his bonds" (Murray 1844, 54). She lifts his death sentence, instead winning him over to support the colonies by reasoning with him.

37. Elizabeth Young interprets this invocation of metaphorical enslavement at a time when Edmonds was a girl, and therefore long before the Civil War, as proof that "[t]he American Civil War enters into this account as belated analogy, rather than patriotic catalyst, for her own 'emancipation'" (1999). Alice Fahs similarly sees *Fanny* as providing ways of imagining women's active participation in military-naval action on the eve of the Civil War (2001, 230).

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Cultural Constructions of Piracy During the Crisis Over Slavery

4.1 Entanglements: Piracy and Slavery

4.1.1 From Exploration to Exploitation

As early as 1700, Samuel Sewall, the renowned Boston judge and diarist, connected "the two most dominant moral questions of that moment: the rapid rise of the slave trade and the support of global piracy" in many American colonies (Hanna 2015, 292). In the course of the eighteenth century, three textual moments prepared the grounds for a major semantic shift in the trope of piracy in the Atlantic context, turning its primary connotations from exploration and adventure to slavery and exploitation. First, Daniel Defoe's popular 1720 pirate novel *Captain Singleton* depicted pirates who liberated slave-ships, implying that the real criminals were slave-traders rather than pirates while simultaneously emphasizing that pirates themselves often profited from the triangular trade. This picaresque novel follows its narrator-protagonist, who goes to sea at the age of twelve, makes a fortune, crosses Africa on foot, loses his money, and makes another gain as a pirate before he is ultimately reformed. Adventure story and travel narrative, it explores society from the point of view of its maritime outcasts with one exception: an African slave's perspective. The critique of slavery is a major issue in *Singleton*, yet is eventually contained by the economic system in which the pirates operate. The following episode is exemplary in the way the novel's discourse cannot but contain its critique. In it, Captain Singleton and his

173

ship encounter a "Multitude of black Sailors" that "terrify'd our Men" ([1720] 1969, 156); Bob's friend William the Quaker, the most radical outlaw figure of the book, to whose humanist and proto-enlightenment ideas much room is attributed, sets Singleton's racist prejudices straight:

> I [Singleton] was struck with Horror at the Sight, for immediately I concluded, as was partly the Case, that these black Devils had got loose, had murthered all the white Men, and thrown them into the Sea; and I had no sooner told my Mind to the Men, but the Thought of it so enraged them, that I had much ado to keep my Men from cutting them all in Pieces. But William, with many Perswasions prevailed upon them, by telling of them, that it was nothing but what, if they were in the Negroes Condition, they would do, if they could; and that the Negroes had really the highest Injustice done them, to be sold for Slaves without their Consent; and that the Law of Nature dictated it to them; that they ought not to kill them, and that it would be wilful Murder to do it. ([1720] 1969, 156–57)

Convinced by William, the pirates take care of the slave ship and William cures some of the wounded Negroes and saves them from torture and rape. William embodies a didactic voice of reason in the book, and Singleton's development is greatly influenced by his teachings. Because of this narrative constellation, it is all the more telling that shortly after the slaves are well again, the pirates sell them to Caribbean planters: "having taken this Ship, our next Difficulty was, what to do with the Negroes" (163–64). Singleton reflects on the situation of the market for slaves, knowing their inimical relations with the Portuguese prevents the selling of the Africans into Brazil, and, with the notable help of William, devises a plan to sell them to the Spaniards. The only motive given is that the pirates "should be no Way able to subsist them for so long a Voyage" (164). Due to their economic dependence on colonial mercantilism, we witness the shift of the narrative from abolitionist discourse to its complicity in the slave trade: there is no reflection on the sale itself, no self-criticism, no distance to or regret for the pirates' participation in human trafficking.

The second moment refers to the early drafts of the American Declaration of Independence (the version in John Adams' handwriting as well as Jefferson's), which labeled the British slave trade piratical. When Jefferson included a passage attacking slavery in his rough draft, it initiated the most intense debate among the delegates gathered at Philadelphia in early 1776. In what Jefferson called his "original rough draft" (Boyd 1999, 2), he embellishes an earlier version that reproached the crown

for "prompting our negroes to rise in arms among us; those very negroes whom by an inhuman use of his negative he hath 'from time to time' refused us permission to exclude by law" (Jefferson 1776, n.p.) into a lengthy passage that he is the last in his list of grievances, so that the crescendo of indictments of the king shouts from the page.[1] The British King, it read,

> has waged cruel War against human Nature itself, violating its most sacred Rights of Life and Liberty in the Persons of a distant People who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into Slavery in another Hemisphere, or to incur miserable Death, in their Transportation thither. *This piratical Warfare*, the opprobrium of infidel Powers, is the Warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. He has prostituted his Negative for Suppressing every legislative Attempt to prohibit or to restrain an execrable Commerce, determined to keep open a Market where Men should be bought and sold, and that this assemblage of Horrors might want no Fact of distinguished Die. (my emphasis)

As Malini Johar Schueller notes, Jefferson, in this passage, "dramatizes liberty all the more effectively in the context of piratical slavery, so that the empire for liberty is simultaneously the empire of virtue" (1998, 48). A few months earlier, John Adams, in a cautionary letter concerning American independence, had voiced his opinion in similar fashion, arguing that a series of British "Acts" had already dissolved the connections between America and Great Britain: the "prohibitory Act, or piratical Act, or plundering Act, or Act of Independency" (quoted in Armitage 2007, 34). Indeed, in August 1775, George III had declared the American colonists "rebels" no longer under the protection of the Crown (Armitage 2007, 33). Yet while Americans were rebels in the eyes of Great Britain, they were "not yet legitimate belligerents in the view of the rest of the world" (34): thus, the use of "piratical" by Jefferson highlights the goal of the Declaration of Independence: to delegitimize British sovereignty in America and establish legitimacy, appealing to the law of nations that defined piracy as beyond any legal norms and defeated the term "rebel" in its criminalizing implications by far. In the very moment of the political declaration of independence, in which the crisis of colonial legitimacy and representation would be performatively resolved—had the draft been accepted like this—, piracy was used to justify, in the claim that the British monarch was a pirate, that America acquired the natural right to break her bonds with this criminal. Armitage explains:

> However implausible it may have been to lay personal responsibility for the slave trade on the shoulders of George III, the comparison between "the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain" and "*infidel* Powers" like those of Morocco and Algiers who engaged in "piratical warfare" against Europeans, outside the norms of the law of nations, recalled the charge in the *Summary View* that the king had "preferr[ed] the immediate advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American states, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice, by refusing to countenance the abolition of the slave trade." (2007, 34)

Notably, this final charge was the only point in the list of grievances presented that was entirely deleted in the final version. It was replaced with a more ambiguous passage about King George's incitement of "domestic insurrections among us." Decades later, Jefferson blamed the removal of the passage on delegates from South Carolina and Georgia on the one hand and Northern delegates who represented merchants actively involved in the transatlantic slave trade on the other (58). Given the fact that Great Britain would abolish slavery roughly thirty years before the United States—and that Jefferson himself was a slave-owner—this is indeed an historical irony.

Commentators, most probably without even knowing Jefferson's draft formulation, in turn reversed the charge of piracy; Lind's *Answer to the Declaration of Independence*, for instance, refuted the U.S. claim to legitimacy in terms of their political agency, holding them to be nothing but rebels, themselves comparable to pirates: were the colonists acknowledged to be independent citizens of a foreign state, a pirate like Captain Kidd could likewise protect himself against prosecution by declaring himself independent. "Instead of the guilty pirate," Lind warned, "he would have become the *independent* prince; and taken among the '*maritime*' powers—'*that separate and equal station, to which*'—he too might have discovered—'*the laws of nature and of nature's God entitled him*'" (quoted in Armitage 2007, 76). The label of piracy, in sum, floated in the air at the times of the revolutionary crisis and became the most radical signifier of illegitimacy for both Loyalists and Independents. The Declaration draft had linked it to slavery, yet that linkage never made it into the official version that became known to the world.

4.1.2   *Barbary Pirate Narratives and U.S. Slavery*

Notably, Jefferson's distinctions between the United States and Britain in the Declaration of Independence draft draws on the cultural difference constructed between Christian and heathen, associating the British King with the "infidel powers" of North Africa and their corsairing economies (Schueller 1998, 48). The comparison between George III and the so-called Barbary corsair states of Morocco and Algiers hints at the third critical moment of literary associations of slavery and piracy: the genre of the Barbary captivity narrative, flourishing during the first foreign policy crisis with which the young Republic was confronted. The crisis became of national importance in 1794, when Algerian corsairs extended their actions to the Atlantic (Gilje 2004, 151), and culminated in the wars with "Barbary pirates" (1801–1805 and 1815), which also came to be the young nation's first armed conflict after independence from Great Britain.[2] When the colonies became independent, their eighty to one hundred Mediterranean trading ships were no longer protected by British tribute treaties with the Barbary states, resulting in a hundred Americans captured and enslaved by Algerian corsairs up to 1794 alone.[3] Although by 1800 the United States had secured treaties with Morocco, Tripoli, and Tunis, the demand for ransom and tribute money increased steadily and eventually led to the First Barbary War (or Tripolitan War) in 1801, with a recently institutionalized American Navy eventually defeating the Ottoman powers of North Africa and reaching a fair treaty under Thomas Jefferson. Similar reasons were responsible for the Second Barbary War (or Algerine/Algerian War) in 1815, when the dey of Algiers took the War of 1812 as an occasion to renege on his treaty obligations (Leiner 2006). Again, the United States was successful, a victory that eventually led to the end of what was deemed North African corsairing and the Mediterranean tribute system.[4]

The Barbary crisis hence constituted the "founding period" in which "the blueprint for the American empire was drafted" (Mackenthun 2006, 4), with Jefferson's "crusader-like self-stylization" of the United States as an "empire for liberty" guiding this vision after the Louisiana Purchase (1803). When the American flag was raised on the walls of Derna, east of Tripoli, this moment of occupation was ritually reenacted on the U.S. stage to celebrate American liberty (5; Schueller 1998, 58). Texts dealing with the Barbary crisis "singled out the most despicable pirate behavior and compared it with the loftiest American ideals" (Lambert 2005, 106).

"Barbarians" preferred piracy over legitimate trade, in this view, because they "simply operated outside the cultural norms of civilized society" (106). Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, supporting "pirates" and providing them with a safe haven, were seen as illegitimate, "piratical states" (Tyler [1797] 2002, 185), contrary to the British view that the corsairs were privateers backed by legitimate states (despite their semi-legal status, English print culture notably called them pirates rather than privateers; Hanna 2015, 204). American views condemned them as despotic "savages of the Seas" and as regimes inimical to democracy (Lewis 1990), calling Islam the main reason for the population's submissiveness (107) as it was deemed a religion of subjugation rather than (Christian) liberty (115).[5]

The North African perspective was of course quite different, insisting that this "piracy" needed to be judged in the larger historical context: "Americans and Europeans viewed the Spanish Reconquest as a legitimate reclamation of territory and sovereignty; the Moors … pointed out that a longer view … reveals that the real pirates and kidnappers were Europeans" (109) as Spain's expulsion of the Moors included the confiscation of Muslim property on the Iberian peninsula, a major reason for their corsairing out of economic motives (Baepler 2004, 106). What was conceived as a waterway toll the Americans were unwilling to pay was interpreted by them as illegitimate tribute according to a *mare liberum* and free trade logics. A view less prejudiced by Orientalist stereotypes (which are prevalent in many popular historiographies of the conflict until today) hence suggests that the corsairs functioned "[m]uch less as a militant force in a Holy War than as entrepreneurs in a growing Mediterranean economy" (107).[6]

For Americans, however, piracy was also a cultural issue as pirates were cast as Barbarians, the term used in the Roman Empire for marauding Germanics and later attributed to North African Muslims, conjuring images of heathen outlaws that stood in stark contrast to enlightened republicanism (Baepler 2004, 110). At the same time, U.S.-American officials criticized European powers for paying these "pirates" for trade licenses; one diplomat describes "the dark cloud of shame which covers the great powers of Europe in their tame submission to the piracies of those unprincipled barbarians" (quoted in Tinniswood 2010, 280)—until the young Republic itself had to enter negotiations with them. For some, like Consul General Richard O'Brien (who had been an Algerian prisoner for ten years himself), "the people that is stiled pirates in

Barbary" were "no worse than British and French depredations" (quoted in Allison 1995, 155). A Philadelphia convention of a public pressure group, trying to persuade Congress to intervene in North Africa in 1794, even published a declaration that copied the rhetoric of grievances against Britain of the Declaration of Independence: "She has insidiously let loose the barbarians of Africa, to plunder and enslave the citizens of the United States. She has arrogantly attempted to prescribe boundaries to the American commerce: She has basely authorized piratical depredations to be committed … on the ships and citizens of the United States" (quoted in Rojas 2003, 181–82). As most Americans also believed in British complicity with the corsairs,

> [r]esisting the pirates meant asserting American sovereignty and America's right to nationhood. As the enslavement of European-Americans in Barbary became a crisis of international proportions, American writers recognized that their country's embarrassing position vis-à-vis Barbary undermined American rhetoric about the indolence enjoyed by the new nation. (Margulis and Poremski 2000, ix)

Outrage about paying tribute to "piratical" governments informed contemporary discussions of the problem as "[t]o pay tribute or buy peace seemed beneath the dignity of the new nation" (Rojas 2003, 170).

As Lambert notes, the U.S. view of the Barbary states changed over time: in the late eighteenth century, officials at least "shifted their perspective from regarding the pirates as fierce, fearless predators who had defied European powers for centuries, to regarding them as undisciplined, insolent, and vulnerable defenders of a bankrupt way of life" (2005, 111). At the same time, the use of the label "pirate" instead of corsair (the latter's legal status being similar to the privateer) increased during the crisis years, marking another change in American constructions of these men, "from men that had to be treated honorably to men that could be violently terminated" (Sutton 2009, n.p.) through military action (Jefferson at one point calls them "the piratical pestilence," quoted in Sutton 2009, n.p.). Evoking portrayals of Caribbean pirates, reports by captives were a cornerstone in this development as they cast the pirates as "childlike, capricious, and cruel" (Sutton 2009, n.p.) and the Barbary despots as weak, effeminate, and idle (Lambert 2005, 112), thereby displacing discourses about British (and European aristocratic) degeneracy onto Muslim Africans; these gendered tropes were taken up in Barbary captivity

narratives. Rojas reports that the Barbary captivity tale was indeed "vital to the development of U.S. diplomatic practice and foreign policy" (2003, 159) as they redeemed "[f]eelings of humiliation, shame, impotence, and injured honor that pervaded the diplomatic correspondence well into the nineteenth century" (170) and legitimized military action. In his plea for naval intervention, Thomas Jefferson, for instance, also claimed that honor demanded such action (182)—countering John Adams' position that favored negotiation and a diplomatic solution.

Though another transatlantic, formally hybrid genre popular in England and Spain since their own conflicts with Barbary corsairs in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries,[7] the captivity narrative fueled the development of a national U.S.-American literature in the Early Republic as it often articulated the experience of capture and enslavement by Muslim 'pirates' in terms of a dualistic (post-)Revolutionary rhetoric of freedom and slavery. By doing so it participated in the period's efforts at constructing an American national character through literary texts that took up these issues, thus negotiating the future character of the United States as slave-holding or free (Davidson 2004; Brezina 2005). Through these narratives, Americans tried to make sense of American identity by exploring differences between the U.S. and Barbary "pirates" (Sutton 2009, n.p.). In addition, "[i]n dehumanizing the exotic and terrifying Other, the writers of the Barbary pirate slave narratives convinced the American public of the young nation's need to assert itself and triumph over a barbarous Republic's interactions with its own native populations." By harking back to the Indian captivity narrative and its tropes of Othering (especially those of savagery, paganism, and effeminacy), the genre's intertextual references Americanized it and distinguished it from its British counterparts.[8] This Americanization, however, in fact continued a circular transatlantic literary exchange, with early modern European descriptions of pirate captivity in general and Barbary captivity in particular being taken up in early American Indian captivity narratives. The genre flourished in Europe at the same time that American colonization began, hence it is no surprise that European images of the Indian were reminiscent of those of infidel Moors. As Billy Stratton recently observed,[9]

> the development of a system of transatlantic literary exchange … resulted in
> a cartographical shift of the colonial gaze, from the dungeons and galleys of

Constantinople, North Africa, and the Mediterranean to the dark, inhospitable forests of the northeastern woodlands. Given the prominence of the captivity theme in literary discourse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it should come as no surprise that the earliest descriptions of Native American people ... bear many similarities to descriptions of the Moors and Ottoman Turks found in preceding texts. (2013, 34–35)[10]

The delegitimizing rhetoric of Othering foreign agents by calling them pirates—in this case, an 'Oriental' Muslim Other associated primarily with the enslavement of Christians—was prominently articulated in this immensely popular genre. It mostly used an Orientalist discourse of monstrosity, inhumanity, and ungodliness in its construction of the Barbary pirate: "the American establishment perceived the Muslim as an enemy of the state, and its propagandists saw him as a subspecies whose idolatry rendered him incapable of any human compassion" (Montgomery 1994, 617). In the early Republic, the genre harked back to the seventeenth century, drawing on the Puritan image of the pirate as a licentious and devilish figure (Baepler 1995, 111)[11] and on the earlier Barbary captivity narratives, British as well as American, set before the English-Algerian treaty of 1682 (115; e.g., the *Narrative of Joshua Gee of Boston, Mass., While he was captive in Algeria of the Barbary pirates* of 1680, the first American instance of the genre; see also Captain John Smith's report of Barbary capture, quoted in Baepler 1999, 7).

None of these texts could ignore that the United States itself was a slave power. Redirecting the interrelation of piracy and slavery from North Africa back across the Atlantic to North America, fictional and nonfictional narratives as well as plays and songs about North African captivity and enslavement—Susanna Rowson's *Slaves in Algiers or, A Struggle for Freedom* (1794) and Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive* (first published anonymously in 1797 and "plagiarized" from several popular Algerian captivity narratives, Davidson 2004, 300) the best known among them—effected the questioning of the legitimacy of slavery and unfreedom in terms of both race and gender in the United States, preparing the grounds for abolitionist discourses.[12] In addition, Muslim slavery was often portrayed as much more humane, with conversion to Islam, for instance, resulting in instantaneous emancipation. Tyler's fictional narrative of Dr. Updike Underhill participated in the "then-current national preoccupation with the outrages perpetrated on Americans by Barbary pirates to expose worse outrages perpetrated by

Americans on Africans" in a subversive plot that presents Algiers as a "distorted mirror version of America" ([1797] 2002, 300–301). Already in colonial times, Algiers, due to its image as piratical, had become an American moniker for absolutism, tyranny, roguery, white slavery, homosexual behavior, and cruelty (Hanna 2015, 205).

Rowson's play, primarily inspired by the debates around the Navy Act of 1794 over the strategy "to deal with the enslavement of the American seamen" and the decision "to reject the payment of ransom and to authorize the construction of ships in preparation for a possible war with Algeria" (Montgomery 1994, 618) articulated the struggle for liberty primarily in gendered terms but left the opposition between piratical North Africa and the United States 'Nation of Liberty' intact, pleading, however, that the United States do more to liberate its 'pirated' subjects, as Mr. Fennel's prologue exemplifies:

> What then behoves it, they who help'd to gain,
> A nation's freedom, feel the galling chain?
> They, who a more than ten year's war withstood,
> And stamp'd their country's honor with their blood?
> Or, shall the noble Eagle see her brood,
> Beneath the pirate kit's fell claw subdue'd? ([1794] 2000, 7)[13]

As Robert Allison notes, the use of hyperbole in employing the word slavery itself can be viewed as more than just emphasizing abuse and the need for liberation; it highlights that the worst horror of slavery was the absence of liberty and freedom to move (1995, 112), but also effaces the difference between slavery in America and North Africa, where slaves "were not born into captivity or stolen from their homeland" (Baepler 1995, 108) and could, by conversion or ransom, become free (Sutton 2009, n.p.).

Two lesser known texts—the 1797 poem "The American in Algiers, or the Patriot of Seventy-Six in Captivity" and James Ellison's play *The American Captive, or Siege of Tripoli* (1811)—are worth mentioning in the context of my study. "The American in Algiers" tells both a story of a Bunker Hill veteran forced to go to sea out of economic necessity and enslaved by Algerian corsairs in the first canto, focusing the reader's attention to "that piratic coast where slavery reigns / And freedom's champions wear despotic chains" (quoted in Allison 1995, 90), and voiced a critique of America's continuation of slavery in the

second: "[t]he first canto chastises Americans for neglecting the men who had won their liberty [in their misery as Barbary captives]; the second condemns Americans for neglecting the very freedom these men had fought to secure" (91; the poem echoes Mathew Carey's comparison of Barbary with "all America south of Pennsylvania" as "hell," quoted in Allison 1995, 92). Ellison's "patriotic pageant" (Montgomery 1994, 623) about a power change in Algiers and the Algerine encounter with America as a yet undefined nation asks: "What constitutes legitimate power? and what is an American?" (Allison 1995, 201) by questioning the lawfulness of slavery and tyrannical regimes, comparing Algerian and Southern despotism more explicitly than for example Rowson's play. Both texts, along with New England newspapers denigrating Southern demagogues who preached equality while practicing "piratical barbarity" (quoted in Allison 1995, 99), anticipate the equation of Southern slavery and piracy on the Union envelopes of the Civil War (see Sect. 4.4).

All of these literary works exemplify how Muslim pirates, fictional or not, showed American Christians the sinfulness of slavery in a land of freedom (Allison 1995, 97):

> Clearly, images of the Barbary pirates enslaving young American sailors affronts all that was hard won in the War for Independence. But when [they] … draw an analogy between the barbarity of the foreign pirates and the cruelty of slaveholders at home, they suggest … that the greatest enemy to America's institutions is not the enemy without but the more subtle enemy within. (Montgomery 1994, 630)

Hence also the interrelationship of the Barbary captivity narrative and the U.S. slave narrative that Paul Baepler explores in detail in his work with special reference to the only existing African American captivity narrative by a black American, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Sailor, who was wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa* of 1816 (1999, 20). Images of barbarity and civility in the former indeed came to question blackness and whiteness in the United States in the continued use of the Barbary narrative as a heterotopian mirror for self-exploration. Literary discourses as well as public intellectuals like Benjamin Franklin referenced the Barbary crisis to attack proslavery arguments in the United States.[14] While Jefferson masked the parallel between North African and U.S. slavery, Franklin emphasized it in the last essay he published ("On the Slave Trade," 1836). Writing as Historicus, he ridicules Georgia

congressman James Jackson's 1790 speech on slavery, which he read in the *Federal Gazette* by mock-praising it, saying it reminded him of a similar oration held by the dey of Algiers in 1687. Franklin turned Jackson's speech, which defended African slavery in America, into a defense of Christian slavery in North Africa (105; Leiner 2006, 19), drawing on climatic, economic, and class-related arguments such as that if Algiers gave up slavery and piracy, it would destroy its own economy just because people petitioned against slavery (Montgomery 1994, 615; Baepler 1999, 8).

Following Paul Baepler,[15] however, it should be noted that tales of Anglo captivity in North Africa were used by both sides of the slavery debate to support their arguments, proslavery positions echoing a racial discourse that cast the African in general as barbarous and subhuman, thus justifying a regime of racial oppression. The use of the slippery signifier of piracy again supported what Baepler calls the "semiotic plasticity" that marks the genre (1999, 31). Also, slavery, not piracy, was at the center of Barbary captivity narratives and related texts on the crisis, as piracy functioned mainly as a framing device regarding both the texts' overall rhetoric and its place in the plot. While these literary works are set on the ocean only briefly, detailing the actual capture of American ships by Muslim 'pirates' (most of them were in fact European *renegadoes*),[16] the signifier of piracy framed their debates about legitimacy, slavery, and freedom both abroad and at home, and the condemnation of North Africans as pirates was indeed "fundamental to all historical and cultural analyses" (Lambert 2005, 106). Piracy and trade, according to Frank Lambert, was a main dyad used by artists, journalists, historians, playwrights, poets, and other writers "in painting the Barbarians in dark and Americans in bright hues" (105):

> To American audiences, the enemy was a band of lawless pirates who took what they wished from passing ships in ruthless attacks. Americans needed little prompting to understand these sinister characters because they knew about similar villains closer to home, … fierce Caribbean buccaneers who showed no regard for human and property rights. By contrast, American saw themselves as champions of free trade … No person or nation, from a pirate to the British Empire, had the right to interfere with the free exchange of goods. (105–106)

The genre of the Barbary captivity narrative connected Revolutionary and Early American to Black Atlantic pirate narratives. The ship, though not the main setting of the Barbary tales, was associated in them with both physical and cultural mobilities as "[t]he rapid exchange of pirate tales and pirated imperial subjects [such as American tars impressed by the English or taken hostage by the corsairs] from ship to ship … introduced provocative narratives of crime, ownership, and material value in a maritime system … tyrannically managed and inflexibly hierarchical" (Blum 2003, 138).[17] In the nineteenth-century context of the Black Atlantic, for which the Barbary captivity narrative laid the ground, ships became increasingly important as a heterotopian setting for the critique of slavery. The pirate ship, in that discourse, was conceived as a sovereign entity, opposing existing territorial states with a mobile space guided by laws different from those of the slave-holding United States. One of the most fascinating images of the pirate ship as heterotopia can be found in M.M. Philip's Black Atlantic novel *Emmanuel Appadocca* ([1854] 1997), which I analyze in the next chapter.

4.2 Slavery and Piracy in the First Anglo-Caribbean Novel: M.M. Philip's *Emmanuel Appadocca* ([1854] 1997)

4.2.1 The Ship and Black Atlantic Literature

In the early modern Atlantic world, a large share of Atlantic seafaring took place in the service of the circum-Atlantic slave trade, serving European empire-building in the Americas. Because of their central position in the slave trade in particular, ships also became a popular literary topos for writers critiquing slavery. Ships have been cast as important sites of struggle and as symbols of escape in the context of a fledgling Black Atlantic consciousness, from Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* (1789) and Richard Hildreth's *The Slave: or Memoir of Archy Moore* (1836; enlarged edition published as *White Slave*, 1852) to nineteenth-century Atlantic abolitionist literature such as Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) or Martin Delany's *Blake* (1859–1862). In these texts, the ship serves as a paradoxical symbol of both terror and freedom through which the foundational violence of the triangular trade is critiqued with regard to the enslavement and the forced relocation of Africans as well as to the unequal labor relations in the seafaring

trades. Black and white abolitionists across the Atlantic world were imagining a different social order revolving around issues of resistance, liberty, (human) property, and (il)legality; hence it is not surprising that the nineteenth century would take up the motif of piracy in order to question the legitimacy of slavery in literary and other writings. In general, ships have been emblematic, ambivalent literary symbols for abolitionist and Black Atlantic literature due to the crucial transatlantic experience of the Middle Passage and their function as contact zones between different cultures, masters and slaves; the literary use of the pirate ship teases out these characteristics by creating a heterotopic, dialectical, and dynamic site of rebellion on the one hand and by emphasizing this site's tenuousness, fragility, and ultimate implication in that order on the other.

In the Black Atlantic context, the ocean, like the ship, similarly functions as an ambivalent, heterotopic site, "a trope marking the unruly space between the past memory of Africa and the present reality of slavery in terms of active resistance" (Pedersen 1994, 48). In literature, both the ship and the sea represent zones of cultural contact of a "motley crew" of subjects (also Klein and Mackenthun 2004; Birkle and Waller 2009); both are spaces characterized by fluidity and mobility, but they are also paradoxical spaces marked by both oppression and liberation. In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), Paul Gilroy reads representations of ships and the sea in a double-edged manner as both a vehicle of exploitation and resistance. "[T]he image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean" (4) is evoked by Gilroy to highlight transnational movement within the sphere of the black diaspora. Ships, for Gilroy, not only recall the Middle Passage, but also subsequent travels of Afrodiasporic individuals and activists such as Delany or Douglass. Furthermore, the moving ship, as a symbol, represents "the moving to and fro between nations, crossing borders" and denote "micro-systems of linguistic and political hybridity" (12) due to their constant state of being in-between (nations, continents, cultures, etc.) at sea. Along with these forms of personal movement associated with the symbol of the ship, Gilroy foregrounds "the circulation of ideas … as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts" as highly important means of Afrodiasporic cultural and political exchange within the black Atlantic world (4). James Procter summarizes that "[c]irculation, movement, passage and journeying are Gilroy's preferred metaphors here, allowing him to move beyond what he takes to be the narrow, sclerotic confines of the nation" (2007, 152). Gilroy

indeed calls attention to the ideas of movement and mobility, which are key components of transnational cultural exchange, as opposed to stasis and the supposedly secure harbor of the nation-state. In his seminal study, he analyzes a number of literary works written by Afrodiasporic authors such as W. E. B. DuBois or Richard Wright. Yet, as Gesa Mackenthun (2004) has shown, the Black Atlantic paradigm can also provide new perspectives on maritime fiction by writers like James Fenimore Cooper or Herman Melville.

One subset of nineteenth-century maritime fiction of the Black Atlantic are narratives that fictionalize the pirate ship as a transnational and multi-ethnic contact zone. These texts exemplarily present the pirate ship as a space in which various discourses of legitimacy and illegitimacy meet. Piracy and slavery are discursively intertwined in order to question the dominant conceptions of law, might, and right. Such texts articulate the pirate ship as a site that allows for social critique, dialogue, and the destabilization of binary constructions of racial difference, one of the prime qualities Mary Louise Pratt attributes to cultural contact zones. Inspired by early modern accounts of piracy and popular short narratives about black pirates, Michel Maxwell Philip's 1854 *Emmanuel Appadocca; or, Blighted Life: A Tale of the Boucaneers*, sometimes claimed to be "the first Anglo-Caribbean novel" (Cudjoe 1997b, xiii–xiv), as well as Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855/1856, see Sect. 3.3) characterize the pirate ship yet again as a mobile site of fluidity and uncertainty, of crisis and deception.

4.2.2   The First Anglo-Caribbean Novel

During the slavery crisis of the mid-nineteenth century, piracy signified the criticality of legitimacy in the context of Black Atlantic literature. Black Atlantic narratives responded to the crisis and voiced a critique of the triangular trade by turning the trope of the pirate as a figure of excessive consumption on its head. Using black pirates as figures of resistance to an exploitative system of enslavement and to the spectacle of colonial commodities, Maxwell Philip's novel *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854) emphasizes the nexus of insatiable material desire and its conditions of production: slavery. In addition, Black Atlantic narratives of piracy also turn upside down the traditional definition of the pirate as renouncing all ties and laws of nature (e.g., by Hugo Grotius; see Greene 2008, 95): by appropriating claims to natural law as incompatible with a slave-based

system, the pirate, paradoxically, becomes the outlaw defendant of laws of nature as opposed to legal law. By using the figure of the pirate in this way, the consumption of commodities produced by slave labor itself was delegitimized as these narratives evoked a conjuncture of piracy and slavery that had been introduced in the eighteenth century and was to be continued throughout the nineteenth, up to the Civil War.

Philip, a Trinidadian jurist of mixed descent, whom C. L. R. James hailed as "the most brilliant native of his time and within memory," "[p]erhaps the greatest of all creoles" ([1931] 1978, 255; 269), published *Emmanuel Appadocca* as a protest against slavery in the United States, lamenting the cruelty of "the slave holders of America" against "their slave-children" (Philip [1854] 1997, 6), by which the author particularly refers to the 'illegitimate' offspring of white masters and black enslaved mothers.[18] The book presents "Philip and his character [as] … vindicators who, like Frederick Douglass and C.L.R. James, would outread and outdignify the white oppressor" (Smith 1999, 171). Philip wrote and published the book while he was reading for the bar and working as a correspondent for a Trinidadian newspaper in London; the text, influenced by Sir Walter Scott's and James Fenimore Cooper's sea romances, is a transatlantic narrative that transcends national borders through its critique of race relations, connecting Great Britain, the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa on both the fictional and the metafictional levels. Part swashbuckling adventure, part philosophy, *Emmanuel Appadocca* mixes social critique and emancipatory claims on behalf of Philip's fellow creoles. In this chapter, I place Philip's understudied novel within the context of Paul Gilroy's concept of the Black Atlantic and, in a second step, critically discuss it as an instance of heterotopia, a space in which dominant conceptions of law and justice are questioned and refigured.

What makes Philip's novel such an important narrative intervention is the fact that it was the first to voice a subaltern subject position by placing at its center a creole protagonist of mixed descent who references the racial trope of the 'tragic mulatto,' while at the same time introducing a heroic non-white pirate and intellectual whose perspective is emphatically presented to the reader. In this way, the text negotiates the transatlantic phenomena of piracy and slavery through the perspective of a Black Atlantic consciousness by imagining the pirate ship as an imaginary site of resistance and dialogue.[19] *Emmanuel Appadocca* is not the first book to bespeak a Black Atlantic consciousness in tackling slavery and its consequences through the trope of piracy, nor would it be

the last. But, while Philip is not the first to critique slavery through the figure of the pirate, his novel may well be the earliest contribution by an African American to this literary tradition; its radical innovation was its sympathetic portrayal of a 'colored' pirate. In addition, "it was the first Anglo-Caribbean novel to [examine the subject of miscegenation] from the point of view of a colonized person" (Cudjoe 2003, 123).

Emmanuel Appadocca is autobiographically inspired; while Philip's parentage is not entirely clear, it is known that he was an illegitimate child, offspring of a white planter and a colored woman in Trinidad. In recognition of his intellectual capacities, he was sent to a Jesuit school in Scotland, where he received a classical education, learned many foreign languages, and entered a solicitor's office upon his return home (James [1931] 1978, 254–55). In 1851, he went to England to read for the bar; around this time, he wrote to his father asking for monetary help, a plea refused or at least neglected (255). Although Philip—a man famous for both intellectual wit and artistic temperament (263)—later became an esteemed member of Trinidadian society, a powerful orator, and an important legislator and commissioner, *Appadocca* proves, as C. L. R. James argued, "the powerful effect with which the misfortune of his birth weighed upon his mind" (255).

The text is a result of the Black Atlantic and its racial relations which fundamentally shaped Philip's biography: he crossed the ocean a number of times and actually wrote the novel in London as a response to the slavery crisis in the United States that followed the Fugitive Slave laws of 1850.[20] The novel, "located within the literary, cultural, and socioeconomic context of the Atlantic world system" (Cain 1997, xv), is a "triangulated text" (xvi) that discusses slavery and piracy from a transnational, ex-centric perspective. Though it was apparently a popular book in its own times—Philip made enough money with it so as to finance months of traveling through Europe—the text had been largely forgotten until the 1997 publication of the University of Massachusetts Press edition (prepared by Selwyn Cudjoe). The generic affiliation with slave narratives is especially evident in the book's endorsement, written by Philip's supervisor and "Her Majesty's representative" (Philip [1854] 1997, 10) to counter contemporary racist claims against black authorship, which presents not only Philip's authorial skills but also his integrity as a Trinidadian citizen. In this context, William Cain states that the novel "is not only about a character of imposing strength of will, but also is … intended as an act of will against the claims that persons of African descent are

incapable of authorship" (1997, xlii). Told in the third person, it weaves together "the ideology of organized piracy" (Cudjoe 1997b, xiii) as parallel to the pirating of African slaves by whites and turns this ideology on its head when the colored creole hero becomes a pirate himself.

4.2.3   Slavery, Piracy, Legitimacy

In *Emmanuel Appadocca*, piracy is presented as a result of disenfranchisement on the one hand and as a source of empowerment and strength in the struggle against inequality and injustice—particularly against slavery and its consequences—on the other. In the novel, the pirate ship enacts a different sort of "imagined community" (Anderson [1983] 2006) than that of a nation-state, which excluded various groups of people due to its racist and classist colonial structures. *Appadocca* is Philip's only novel and articulates the injustice suffered by American children of mixed descent, whose white fathers abandon them, as well as by their mothers, using the topic of filial revenge, the trope of piracy, and the discourse of natural law.[21] The novel can thus be read as a "meditation of how an enslaved person ought to behave under the crushing weight of slavery" (Cudjoe 1997b, xiii).

The plot concerns the desertion of the protagonist's mixed-race mother (she is most likely of black and Spanish descent)[22] by his father, the wealthy British sugar planter James Willmington, and the son's attempt to restore his then deceased mother's honor. The story begins when Appadocca's pirate ship, significantly named *The Black Schooner*, captures Willmington's British merchant ship on which the creole pirate discovers his father. Following his plan of revenge, Appadocca punishes Willmington for leaving his mother and his illegitimate offspring by casting him out upon the sea, tied to a barrel. He unexpectedly survives and has Appadocca imprisoned on a British Navy's man-of-war, anchored close to the Danish colony of St. Thomas. Aboard ship, he encounters Charles, the son of the ship's admiral and an old friend and former fellow student in Paris. Appadocca tells Charles the story of how had to leave Paris after his mother's death: without money to sustain himself, he had to return to the Caribbean instead of finishing his education, where he then formed his pirate crew with the Caribbean buccaneers in order to take revenge on his father. Appadocca, showing his almost superhuman physical prowess, escapes from the Navy ship by swimming to the Venezuelan coast, where he rejoins the pirates and yet again takes his father prisoner.

In a terrible hurricane, Willmington sinks with her, going "down into the Caribbean Sea like slaves on the middle passage trade he has profited from" (James 2002, 51), while the creole pirate-protagonist commits suicide by jumping off board, convinced that his mission is fulfilled. The trope of the tragic mulatto is rehearsed here as a "tragic tale of loss that Atlantic slavery endlessly repeated" (Cain 1997, 5), although Appadocca's death is narrated as a self-determined reunion with the ocean rather than as a suicide out of despair; hence, his end functions as a foil to Willmington's involuntary drowning: Appadocca bids farewell to his crew members Jack Jimmy and Lorenzo and "[w]ith a spring … jumped from the rock and threw himself headlong into the thundering waves below" (Philip [1854] 1997, 244).

One of the central discourses in *Emmanuel Appadocca* is that of legitimacy, of rights and lawfulness, of both slavery and piracy, focusing on the natural right to resistance, which is here translated into violent, even self-destructive vengeance. The most crucial scenes for the novel's inversive Black Atlantic commentary on slavery and piracy are the protagonist's conversations with his friend Charles. Notably, they take place on the Navy ship on which he is imprisoned: coming from the pirate schooner, a site of countercultural agency for Appadocca and his crew, he transfers its heterotopian and dialogic qualities onto this imperial vessel, trying to infuse it with a spirit of resistance that fundamentally questions the legal definition of piracy (which defines him as a criminal). About midway into the book, Appadocca gives a powerful speech in which he argues that colonialism itself is a piratical system:

> If I am guilty of piracy, you, too—the whole of mankind is guilty of the very same sort of crime. … [T]he whole of the civilized world turns, exists, and grows enormous on the licensed system of robbing and thieving, which you seem to criminate so much … The people which a convenient position … first consolidated, developed, and enriched, … sends forth its numerous and powerful ships to scour the seas, to penetrate into hitherto unknown regions, where discovering new and rich countries, they, in the name of civilization, first open an intercourse with the peaceful and contented inhabitants, next contrive to provoke a quarrel, which always terminates in a war that leaves them the conquerors and possessors of the land. … [T]he straggling and weakest portions of a certain race, whose power of bodily and mental endurance, renders them the likely objects to answer this end, are chosen. The coasts of the country on which nature

has placed them, are immediately lined with ships of acquisitive voyagers, who kidnap and tear them away … . (112–14)

In this astute analysis, slavery appears as a direct consequence of the colonial venture encompassing the entire "civilized world," and "powerful ships"—the narrator refers to the slavers here—are this world's empire builders. Appadocca's vessel of revenge, in contrast, is a highly mobile site of deviation and crisis, an embodiment of an inverted colonial order in which, in this case, the colored subject is the captain rather than the cargo, and formerly impressed sailors find relief in a community of almost-equals.

Yet *Emmanuel Appadocca*'s pirate ship is by no means devoid of racial or class hierarchies. Her captain is a Byronic hero, a stoic scholar-philosopher and highly articulate "Quadroon," as contemporary racial terminology would have had it (Mackenthun 2004, 143). His light complexion is emphasized time and again to set him apart from the few blacks that are identified as such in the book, most notably the coon figure of Jack Jimmy, who is frequently compared to a monkey (Philip [1854] 1997, 38, 82) and whose physiognomy is repeatedly designed as the grounds for his typologically fixed role of a figure of comic relief (as he is abused by the crew for their amusement, for instance; 29–30).

The alleged violence of the Caribbean pirates—more specifically, the French "boucaniers" of the novel—is of special significance in the context of the text's discursive appropriation of piracy as a means of heterotopic resistance.[23] As William Cain points out, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of 1852, a book Philip doubtlessly knew when he crafted Appadocca, had made the diabolic Simon Legree an apprentice among these pirates (1997, xxxv), and Appadocca takes up and refashions this motif of piracy as a response to the Fugitive Slave Act. Moving from the Caribbean background toward the ocean in its setting, Philip's novel inverts the significance of this Atlantic motif through the association of piracy with a rough, quasi-democratic, revengeful Robin Hood principle (Cudjoe 2003, 125; Lewis [1983] 2004, 81), "waging war against the exploiting classes" (Mackenthun 2004, 140) by redistributing the wealth of the colonies. Piracy, for Philip, signifies a just rebellion, a private, legitimate war against colonial exploiters and economic inequality—he repeatedly invokes their solidarity as misfortunate outcasts, indeed as the "wretched of the earth," as Frantz Fanon would later call them (see also Mackenthun 2004, 146). To the colored pirate, the pirating of goods is considered just as legitimate, perhaps even more legitimate, than the pirating of human beings:

> Because organized piracy presumed its own values, bespoke a particular kind of autonomy on the part of the pirates, validated a sense of courage in the pirates' undertakings, and cultivated a righteous indifference toward official society, Philip found it a fitting vehicle to carry forward the slave's sentiments about his condition. Because organized piracy inverted the notions of justice sanctioned with the civil state—that is, the purported respect for private property (which includes slaves)—it offered Philip an apt metaphor to advance an alternative system of values that differed from that of the slave-owning class. In other words, while the slave-owning class robbed Africans of their lives …, the pirates robbed the slave-owning class of its illusions about their system and themselves and sought to destroy them at any cost. (Cudjoe 1997a, 257)

This aptness of organized piracy as a metaphorical vehicle to advance humanitarian values forbidding the enslavement of human beings leads Philip to the anachronistic representation of the buccaneers as Appadocca's allies and the "machinery" of the text, as the preface states (Philip [1854] 1997, 6). Philip might have known Exquemelin's *Zee-Roovers* (1678), which underwent various reprints and was widely available in the Americas and in Europe; as "buccaneers" became a generic term for pirates, Philip might not have made any distinction here; but his choice of the word *boucaniers* in the subtitle draws a parallel conflict between a colonial empire and its subalterns: first with regard to the predominantly poor settlers driven to piracy and to native peoples on the verge of genocide in the seventeenth century, and second, regarding disenfranchised African Americans in the nineteenth.

It is therefore remarkable that Philip blends various historical contexts in his representation of the *boucaniers*: the novel tells us that they are quasi-aristocratic exiles disgusted with the 1789 French Revolution (rather than banished Huguenots and escaped servants in the 1600s), while their society is paradoxically described in analogy with Exquemelin's 1678 account: "The French revolution had torn up whole families together, from the soil on which they had been rooted for generations, and had driven them to distant countries for protection and subsistence. They had carried with them, to their new homes, a strong hatred for their then democratic country, in particular, and for the whole world in general" (Philip [1854] 1997, 109), the pirate captain recounts, thus contradicting his description of life aboard the pirate ship, which is made up by subjects of various nationalities (most notably French, Spanish, and English). We meet them as Gregoire, José, or Jack, to name but a

few, and their manners are all but aristocratic. That Appadocca describes "those boucans" as his "fellow students of the French University … belonging to the old aristocracy" (110) is a significant anachronism. Still, for Philip, "boucanier" is better apt than "pirate" in the title because revenge is the driving force of the plot as it specifically refers to an historical phenomenon in the Caribbean the narrative thus evokes, since the foundational motives for the original buccaneer associations were defense and revenge against the Spaniards. In contrast, fictional pirates, by the 1850s, would have triggered less serious connotations in Philip's readers as they were usually associated with cheap novelettes (such as Lt. Murray's) and the popular stage, associations Philip certainly wanted to avoid with respect to the gravity of his subject matter.

4.2.4   *"A Literature of Revenge"*

The leitmotif of revenge as the multiracial pirate's prime motivation also refers to a different aspect of the Atlantic contact zone, namely the meeting and mixing of different cultural traditions and hence also of different understandings of legality and right. In this context, Appadocca's interpretation of the *lex talionis*, the right to revenge, is, in Cudjoe's words, that "this theological law is an integral part of ancient Africa's philosophical and theological system … even though Europeans came to associate it with Hebraic Law. He [Appadocca] suggests that this African theological borrowing was applied incorrectly within the Judeo-Christian system" (Cudjoe 2003, 126). Ancient cosmic laws provide him with philosophical legitimation for his actions because he is unable to find justice under colonial law; his only confidence is that God's justice is solely attainable through the human execution of cosmic and "natural," positivistic laws (Mackenthun 2004, 145). Voicing his marginal perspective with the help of natural rights philosophy, Appadocca deems this approach as a necessary ethical bulwark against the immoral capitalist materialism characteristic of the Atlantic triangle: "commerce makes steam engines and money—it assists not the philosophical progress of the mind," he says (Philip [1854] 1997, 116). Thus, *Emmanuel Appadocca* partakes in what Derek Walcott called the Caribbean predilection for a "literature of recrimination and despair, a literature of revenge written by the descendants of slaves or a literature of remorse written by the descendants of masters" (quoted in Smith 1999, 166).

The question of descent, particularly of the "descendant of the master" (Smith 1999, 166), is of special importance for the questioning of dominant discourses of legitimacy in *Appadocca*; while Philip refines his protagonist with an aquiline nose, light complexion, and intellectual abilities and thus seems to deny the African component in favor of the native and Spanish element (present in Appadocca's looks and name), an "Africanist presence" (Morrison 1992) pervades the narrative in a number of respects and hence emphasizes the importance of the Atlantic as a contact zone. Faith Smith argues that this presence in *Appadocca* caused "particular kinds of anxieties" (1999, 175) in nineteenth-century Trinidadian literature, disturbing nationalist discourses. Yet the novel is less concerned with the striving for a national (black) literature of revenge—after all, Trinidad, at this time, "was a place where racial oppression was less entrenched than in other colonies" (176)—but rather voices a transnational, diasporic appeal to justice by a creole child of mixed heritage on behalf of all 'illegitimate' children and their mothers, imprisoned by the racist and class structures of the Atlantic world.

In the context of this chapter, what is most significant is the fact that Captain Appadocca combines ancient African knowledge, especially Egyptian astronomy and cosmology, and his western schooling not only in his legal rhetoric but also in the very act of navigation. His nautical skills, based on his astronomical and mathematical abilities, are described as superior knowledge throughout the book. "In its disguise of astronomy (representing ancient civilization), then, the theme of Africa is central to a novel which almost completely bypasses the topic of race" (Mackenthun 2004, 144).[24] The qualities of the *Black Schooner* are particularly significant here. Aboard deck we find "[t]he strange vessel"'s color inverted: "The long level deck was scoured as white as snow; not a speck, not a nail-head, not the minutest particle of anything could be discovered upon it. … [T]he tapering masts were as clean and as smooth as ivory … . An awning, as white as the deck which it sheltered" (Philip [1854] 1997, 20); also, everything is marked by the pirate emblem of a human skull "placed on the crossing of two dead men's bones." Metonymically, the ship stands for both its captain and crew, then: it is/they are black and white both, it is/they are a product of Europe, Africa, and America, it is/they are illegitimate, always already marked by society's death sentence and thus need to remind themselves of the imminence of death and the temporality of life. Life aboard is described as guided by these principles: there is much feasting and merrymaking when there is time, for instance during the

"pleasure days" Appadocca allows; but as soon as the ship and the crew is endangered, firm discipline and obedience reign the ship. Thus, following Lennox, carnivalesque periods are granted as a safety valve (*qua* Bakhtin) to ensure discipline, though they also represent a discourse of critique "to promote an anticolonialist agenda" (2017, 2).

Compared to the Navy ships in the book, the pirate ship is depicted as far superior in its technological equipment, efficiency, speed, and navigation; in fact, it seems to be infused with almost supernatural power reminiscent of Jules Verne's *Nautilus* (which Verne envisioned fifteen years after Philip designed the *Black Schooner*). The vessel is introduced as

> a low, black, balahoo schooner, whose model … was most beautiful. She was built as sharply as a sword, with her bows terminating in the shape of a … lance, while her stern slanted off in the most graceful proportions. But the most remarkable part in her build, was her immense and almost disproportionate length, which, combined with her perfectly straight lines, low hull, and the slenderness of her make, gave her the appearance of a large serpent. … Her position also, and the manner in which she seemed moored … was strange and peculiar. She was not swinging to the wind or current, but she rode under a bow and stern anchor, which kept her head directly towards the Dragon's Mouth, while the rippling waves … broke playfully on her side. (Philip [1854] 1997, 18)

The schooner is in harmony with the ocean's natural forces (and thus the positivist basis of natural law doctrine), eventually directing these natural forces as if on her Captain's behalf to bring Willmington to his end when she sinks in a hurricane. In symbolic union with the protagonist, the ship uses the forces of nature (wind and waves) more efficiently than her enemies, as Appadocca draws on his knowledge of the natural sciences (astronomy, mathematics, optics, and even electronics) to surpass his powerful combatants. The ship employs a system of optical deception by using mirrors and natural light to keep her enemies within sight:

> From the tall masts of the schooner, there were reared to an immense height into the air long poles of steel that were joined and joined again to each other …; at the top of these were adjusted large globe-shaped metallic mirrors, that were filled with a thick white liquid, which was continuously agitated by a small electric engine, which received its power from a battery on deck. These mirrors, when the sun was at a certain height, were made,

by a trigonometrical principle, to receive impressions of objects that were beyond the scope of the human eye, and by conveying those impressions to other mirrors, that were fixed in a thousand different ways, to the several parts of the vessel, gave the power to an individual on deck to see every movement of any vessel which would otherwise be invisible, while his own remained unseen. (193)

Optical inversion makes the pirate ship superior in strength "by the force of the same genius Appadocca was enabled to excel, to be unapproachable and irresistible" (193). The ship is portrayed as a Foucauldian hetero-tope of compensation: peaceful social relations aboard, with Appadocca reigning like a benevolent patriarch over his piratical crew:

The firmness of mind which enabled him to curb the natures of even pirates, and to establish a discipline on board the Black Schooner that made his men simultaneously act as if they were but the individual members of only one single body moved but by one spirit, might ... have procured for him the reputation of a wise and great leader; the powers of invention, which supplied even the deficiencies of human nature, and permitted him to make almost every element his servant, could again have handed down his name to posterity as that of a profound philosopher ... . It is not Emmanuel Appadocca alone that has been thus doomed to bury a high intellect in obscurity, or been impelled by circumstances to expend its force in guilt ... . (193–94)

Philip's description is reminiscent of the Hobbesian ideal state, the collective body of the Leviathan that is moved by a single spirit. It points to the waste of human (creole or mixed descent) genius and intelligence through an unjust system of colonial oppression and racism that bans the 'illegitimate' subject from official society directly (through laws of disenfranchisement, such as in the United States of the time) or indirectly (through uneven economic distribution and opportunities, as in Appadocca's case).

As a transatlantic cultural broker, Appadocca brings into dialogue western and African philosophical traditions rather than uncritically adopting dominant western perspectives guiding legal and scholarly discourses. Much could be said about the romantic subplots and the role of gender in *Emmanuel Appadocca*; much more analysis would be needed to spell out its protagonist's philosophy and reasoning. My main point in

this chapter, however, is that the pirate ship is emblematic in its heterotopian embodiment of the ideal state, a harmonious social body that is possible and secured only through the captain's hybrid knowledge and the transnational, trans-ethnic solidarity of the "wretched outcasts" (93) of the Atlantic contact zone.

Yet, this heterotopia is at the same time implicated in dominant racist and gender discourses; Jack Jimmy, the black "sorceress" Celeste, equally stereotyped, as well as the absence of women from the ship (if not from the narrative) is significant in this respect.[25] Focusing on the book's carnivalesque elements, Lennox argues that the racist and classist construction of the figure of Jack Jimmy proves that Philip "problematically uses carnival to advance the interests of the brown elite at the expense of the black working class" (2017, 13) at the same time as these elements are used in a discourse of a Black Atlantic countercultural resistance. In addition, the ship's alternative, more perfect social order is short-lived and thus does not offer a permanent structure on which a more equal and just Atlantic world could be based. In the literature of piracy and slavery, this imperial *and* resistant site is not designed as a clear-cut entity with fixed borders, but rather as a fluid, permeable contact zone, a site of conflict and struggle emanating from the antithetic experiences of the Atlantic triangle. In this context, it is significant that Appadocca and his buccaneers do not envision any territorial existence by their own values and "sought no other shelter than that which was afforded us by the high and wide seas" (160), knowing the conditionality of heterotopic space.[26] The pirate ship and the sea emerge as counter-sites that, because of their very distance to "the law of the land," are privileged both in the development of social critique and the negotiation of cultural difference:

> Appadocca's assertion of a postnational, indeed 'oceanic,' identity, coupled with the fact that he and his pirates never reside on land … characterizes *Emmanuel Appadocca* as a multicultural, polyphonic, 'Atlantic' book … . Philip inscribes the Atlantic Ocean as a site of 'natural' resistance against all forms of oppression, exploitation, and paternal disavowal …, a multicultural contact zone which witnessed the most intense experiences of horror while holding the no less intensely felt promise of human equality and freedom which was unattainable on land. (Mackenthun 2004, 145–46)

That the pirate's mobile, temporary home has to remain beyond the Caribbean shores is both evidence of an emergent counter-modernity

informed by the Black Atlantic and the tragedy of Philip's text. In the nineteenth century, the heterotope of the pirate ship thus helped Black Atlantic literature like Philip's to give voice to subaltern subject positions and allowed for a discursive questioning of the dominant order, even though the design of a 'more perfect' place from the perspective of the oppressed remains unstable.

4.3 Piracy and Crises of Perception and Narration in Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855/1856)[27]

4.3.1 Text and Contexts

I have argued in the preceding chapter that during the slavery crisis of the mid-nineteenth century, piracy signified the criticality of legitimacy in the context of Black Atlantic narratives like *Emmanuel Appadocca*. Turning to a tale that has also been associated with the Black Atlantic (e.g., Mackenthun 2004, 113–40), I am reading Herman Melville's novella "Benito Cereno" (published as a tripartite serial installment in the popular *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* in 1855 and republished, slightly revised, as part of *The Piazza Tales*, in 1856) in this chapter in terms of its deconstruction of piracy as a potential Black Atlantic discourse of resistance. Like Philip's novel, "Benito Cereno" presents the ship as a site of instability, and the novella's conclusions are similarly governed by negativity. Commenting on the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, "Benito Cereno," as critics have suggested, allows no vision of liberation for either slave or master—not even for the U.S.-American protagonist, Amasa Delano, a Northerner who turns out to be complicit with the institution of slavery.

Though "Benito Cereno" has long been canonized and is valued for its complexity and aesthetics across many subfields of American Studies, from gender and queer to race criticism and New Americanist approaches, it is important to recall in the context of this study that Melville relies on a number of popular contemporaneous genres, "an array of formula plots designed to divert our attention." A "compendium of popular fiction" (Haegert 1993, 33), the novella takes up sensational elements from melodrama (masked relationships, disguised identities, dangerous encounters, last-minute escapes; 26), the sentimental novel, Gothic fiction, the detective story,[28] and adventure narratives (23). This has led earlier critics,

from Melville's own period to F. O. Matthiessen, to charge "Benito Cereno" with a superficiality and melodramatic excess that foreclosed racial sensitivity (Haegert 1993, 23–24). The novella's theatricality has been read by earlier Americanists as responsible for his insensitivity toward slavery rather than as constitutive for its epistemological disassemblement of the white and black, master-slave relationship.[29] My reading follows more recent deconstructive interpretations, arguing that it is racial insensitivity as much as epistemological insecurity that governs Melville's language and that the tale presents a critique of popular sensational forms that leave no room for "moral ambiguity and ideological complexity" (Haegert 1993, 34; Zagarell 1992, 131 on Delano's sensationalist rhetoric).

The story, set in 1799, follows Captain Delano and his crew on the *Bachelor's Delight* as it encounters a battered-looking ship, the *San Dominick*. Boarding the ship, Delano is greeted by white sailors and black slaves who are begging for supplies. Always inquisitive, Delano wonders about the mysterious atmosphere and notes the concealed ship's figurehead, revealing only the inscription: "Follow your leader." Delano encounters the Spanish captain, Don Benito Cereno, constantly attended by his personal slave Babo, who does not part from his master's side even when Delano requests privacy with the Captain. Cereno claims that the ship has undergone much hardship, including terrible storms and the death of the slaves' master, Don Alexandro Aranda, who is said to have died of a fever. Delano becomes increasingly suspicious as he notes Cereno's dizziness and anxiety, the crew's strange movements and whisperings, and the unusual interaction of white and black aboard, subsequently vacillating "between dark suspicion and paternalistic disdain of the Spaniard" (Sundquist 1986, 109). After his crew drops off a few supplies from the *Bachelor's Delight*, Delano prepares to leave when suddenly Cereno jumps overboard, pursued by Babo, dagger in hand. The canvas falls off the ship's figurehead, revealing Aranda's skeleton replacing a Columbus figure. A battle initiated by the slaves erupts and turns against Delano's crew, who stop Babo from killing Cereno and eventually capture the *San Dominick*'s black insurgents.

In a second part, often collapsed into the first,[30] an omniscient narrator follows the crew of the *Bachelor's Delight*, without Delano, in pursuit of and eventually capturing the *San Dominick*. The tale then recounts, by means of a legal deposition (which entails Benito Cereno's perspective, Karcher 1980, 129), what happened on the *San Dominick*: that the

black slaves mutinied and killed Aranda while keeping the crew, including Cereno, alive, since they needed them to sail to a free "Negro country" (ultimately referring to Africa). The captain directed the ship, in no shape for another transatlantic journey, toward the coast, hoping for rescue (while claiming to seek additional supplies). When the *Bachelor's Delight* came into view, the slaves hid Aranda's body and told the sailors to be quiet on threat of death. The ship's scenery, with Cereno as Captain and Babo as personal slave, turns out to have been a mere masquerade, staged by Babo. In the third section, an omniscient narrator comments on the deposition and finally, a final section follows Cereno and Delano to Lima and includes a report about the trial and execution of Babo as well as Cereno's own death little later. In closing, Delano ponders about how Cereno, in a role reversal as Babo's slave, followed by the death of one and then the other, indeed seemed to "[f]ollow [his] leader" (Melville [1855–1856] 2002, 102).[31]

   With regard to the tale's historical context, Harold Scudder discovered, in 1928, that Amasa Delano was in fact an historical captain whose *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres* Melville took as the basis for his tale. Delano recounts how his ship *Perseverance* encountered the Spanish *Tryal*, a ship whose slaves had overthrown the Spanish sailors; Melville rewrote Chapter XVIII of the *Narrative* and included a portion of one of the legal documents appended there, omitting some passages but also making additions (Scudder 1928, 502) for the deposition. In addition, he changed the year from 1805 to the "crisis year of 1799" (Levine 1989, 213), the year of Toussaint L'Ouverture's triumph in the Revolution of Santo Domingo (Haiti) and of fears of slave uprisings and "black empires" throughout the Americas triggered by this event (Sundquist 1986, 95–96; Levine 1989, 168–70).[32] The year of "Benito Cereno"'s publication also marks the heyday of the slavery crisis—embodied politically by the Fugitive Slave Act and its "silencing effects" (Goldberg 2009, 7) on sympathizers of abolition and by the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), and culturally by Harriet Beecher Stowe's best seller *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852; Tawil 2006, 204). The half-decade, from 1850 to 1855, coincides with F. O. Matthiessen's periodization of what he famously termed the "American Renaissance," an "extraordinarily concentrated moment of expression" (1941, vii) that concurs with this peak moment in the slavery crisis. "Benito Cereno" comments on this climactic moment of the crisis (Sundquist 1986, 94). To a certain extent, it also reenacts the *Amistad* case, in the context of

which John Quincy Adams invoked the Declaration of Independence to justify slave revolt at sea in terms of the natural right to liberty and revolution and to dissociate them from piracy (Rogin [1979] 1985, 211).[33] Territorial, positive law, abolitionists argued, especially did not translate to non-territorial waters. In the case of the *Amistad*, Justice Story asserted that as much as the slaves might have committed dreadful acts, "they cannot be deemed pirates and robbers in the sense of the law of nations" (quoted in Rogin [1979] 1985, 212); for him, any slave ship was a pirate since the moment the slave trade became illegal in international law. The *Amistad* case strengthened and further inspired discourses that saw the topics of piracy and slavery in need of disentanglement or reversal— the slavers rather than mutinous slaves needed to be unmasked, from the abolitionist perspective, as the real pirates. These widely reported legal arguments were articulated and commented upon in "Benito Cereno" as well as on the popular stage, for example in the widely successful nautical melodrama *The Black Schooner or the Pirate Slaver Armistead* or *The Long, Low Black Schooner*, as it was more commonly called, opening in the Bowery Theatre of New York three days after the *Amistad* Africans arrived at the New Haven prison in 1839 ("an entire new and deeply interesting Nautical Melo-Drama, in 2 acts, written expressly for this Theatre, by a popular author," so the playbill quoted in Rediker [2012, 114], most probably Jonas B. Phillips, the Theatre's house playwright).[34]

With regard to the role of the ship in "Benito Cereno," the *San Dominick* confronts three historical positions (Karcher 1980, 136): Old World (Columbus' figurehead, notably replaced by the blacks with the skeleton of Aranda; Benedict de las Casas, responsible for the introduction of African slavery as a workforce in the New World as well as the Spanish Inquisition, echoed in the name Benito and the evocation of Black Friars (Melville 36); Benito Cereno himself, physically weak, impotent, and mentally unstable, not coincidentally also evoking the abolitionist image of "the haunted Southerner," Karcher 1980, 136)[35]; African (Babo and his fellow enslaved mutineers, subjects that have undergone the process of dehumanization and commodification and are in a state of historical transition, entering the American hemisphere), and New World (Delano's, conflating it with Anglo-America). In this, "Melville's tale … anticipates … an explosive resolution of the conflict between American democracy, Old World despotism, and [black] New World revolution" (Sundquist 1986, 106) and disturbs contemporary assumptions about law and legitimacy based on a stable order of signification:

> If the figurehead of "Christoph Colon" represented the discovery and conquest of the New World … and … the faith in the destiny and direction and above all the Right of European projects, the replacement does not simply oppose that message with a skull and crossbones in the matter of the mere outlaw or pirate but fundamentally deposes the order of signification it represents. (Robinson 2014, 144)

A traditional allegory for "America as a federated 'ship of state'" (Levine 1989, 191) and, in the context of the 1850s' crisis over the future of the United States, for the Union as such, the *San Dominick* displaces this national(ist) allegory with the emergence of modern transatlantic cultural mixture; in this, the tale co-constructs a Black Atlantic counterculture (Reichardt 2001, 128, following Gilroy). In contrast to the ideal Unionist antebellum sea narrative, in which the ship was ordered hierarchically and structured by familial relations "containing a kindly paternal captain and a willingly submissive childlike crew" (Levine 1989, 167) in "perfect sea order" (Richard Henry Dana, quoted in Levine 1989, 176), the ships in "Benito Cereno" are in bad shape: either economically unsuccessful and pressured by expectations of material gain (the *Bachelor's Delight*) or in a state of disarray (the *San Dominick*), confronted by mutiny, piracy, and revolt.[36] "[D]econstruct[ing] the fables of utopian discourse" (Mackenthun 2004, 120), the text creates the *San Dominick* as perhaps *the* prime example of heterotopian spatial imaginings within the interpretive framework of my study, presenting a radical disruption and reversal of conventional order, most notably in the use of split signifiers in the famous shaving scene.[37] In what follows, I explore how "Benito Cereno" enacts epistemological crisis through such and similar literary techniques as well as through the tale's continuous evocation of piracy.

4.3.2 The Gray Atlantic: Narrating Epistemological Crisis

Maggie Montesinos Sale notes that the structure of "Benito Cereno"

> purposefully suspends sure knowledge of the *San Dominick*'s history, thereby generating an unsure sense of reality, symbolized by the mist shrouding the *San Dominick* or the unbelievably complex Gordian knot … In this way, [it] produces anxiety within its readers, not only about the outcome of the story, but about the reliability of the characters, and ultimately, about their/our own perceptions. (1997, 154)

Melville's primary techniques to achieve this effect rests with the form of the collage of different textual materials and discourses as well as narrative perspectives, foreshadowing modernist literature. The first of the four parts into which "Benito Cereno" is structured introduces an auctorial narrative perspective, which, however, soon narrows down to Delano's as he becomes the main focalizer of what has been called one of the earliest examples of a figural third-person text.[38] Yet the fact that signals of auctorial narrative intervention persist results in a pervasive tension between Delano's figural perspective and the auctorial narrative voice, producing moral confusion and interpretative irritations in the reader (Schnackertz 1993, 168): it is often unclear who is speaking, whose voice and judgment are being witnessed; in this way, Melville breaks the text's contract with his readers, tossing them off their epistemological grounds of reasoning. The narrative frame thus constantly distances the reader from Delano's ideas (Kavanagh 1986, 357), which, in addition to his character as a whole, are revealed to be highly naive. He reverts each suspicion of evil to comfortable explanations; hence Delano's strategies of familiarization stand in stark opposition to the narrator's strategies of defamiliarization (Reichardt 2001, 127), which, together with an imagery that often contradicts his racial ideas (Mackenthun 2004, 118), further adds to the tension evoked. Taken together, all of these textual features result in an extreme case of an unreliable narrative situation.

The device of a "deluded" and "uncomprehending" protagonist and focalizer "who entirely misses the significance of what he witnesses, situates the principal interest of the tale" (Kamuf 1997, 184) and a narrator displaying much skepticism toward the protagonists' perceptive abilities clearly characterizes the narrative as supremely concerned with epistemology and processes of knowledge-formation: its focus is "not on the *products* of knowledge, or answers, but on the *process* of knowledge, on the way the mind reaches its conclusions" (Roundy 1978, 345). Consequently, questions of (racial) ideology and (mis-)perception, of identity and performance/appearance, of the value of different textual discourses (especially literary and legal), and of power/knowledge and (mis-)communication are at the fore of "Benito Cereno"'s epistemological examinations. Delano's epistemological limitations also translate to the reader, who encounters the plot through this radically limited point of view, mostly in free indirect discourse that renders protagonist and narrator virtually indistinguishable and "makes of the unsuspecting reader

an accomplice" (Kamuf 1997, 184). Through this narrative stratagem, the reader is lured into the American captain's racist preconceptions, with the *San Dominick* by appearance denying all certainty in terms of knowing and telling. As many critics have noted, Delano's inability to understand what is going on around him is predicated on the prevalent racial ideology of a "natural order" that he is subtly exposed to articulate in the course of the narrative (Sale 1997, 159): though a Northerner, Delano is complicit in the slave trade for example when he offers to buy Babo, but also when he thinks about selling the slaves for his and his crew's own fortune (Karcher 1980, 128–59). Furthermore, he is culturally blinded by an Atlantic world which by definition is "hostile to any fixed notions of national or racial identity" (Blum 2006, 122). Delano, stating that he faces the Spaniard's "black-letter text" (53),

> is unable to credit what he reads in clear black letters: the black authorship of the very plot he is acting out, his role written for him in advance by the slave whom he takes to be a savage illiterate. He read black on white, but he still chooses to see white on black, white over black, and credits the latter since it alone fits the larger cultural text. Delano's credulity is tested by these contradictions, but it always rebounds by virtue of the faith he has in the "natural" order of white over black. (Kamuf 1997, 185)

Neither the historical nor the fictional Delano ever question the legitimacy of slavery and the "natural order" it was based on (Stuckey 2009, 54), highlighting the "incapacity, even among abolitionists, to perceive the full humanity of Africans, including their capacity for self-defense" due to a pervasive "benevolent racism" (Mackenthun 2004, 115–16) which is erased upon being attacked by the slaves. Delano responds to the shock of the attack with a violence that protects him from trauma (Rogin [1979] 1985, 218) and leaves him, unlike Benito Cereno and unlike the reader (who at that point does not trust Delano's perception anymore), unaffected by his experience of the uncanny (Freud). It is Delano, then, rather than the Africans, who is illiterate in this scenario, and with him the reader, as the narrator "seeks to draw the (white) reader into the very illusion presented by Delano" based in both respects on the "general white stupidity about race relations" (Kamuf 1997, 188). Indeed, it turns out that Babo had Cereno sign a contract in which the captain promised to return the Africans to Senegal; unlike many of the Spanish sailors, Babo

can write. Furthermore, the effect of Delano's narrative status as focalizer combined with his misperceptions places the focus on the problem of reading and literary communication (Tawil 2006, 197).

Even the second part, the legal deposition included in the text, provides closure only at first glance. The implied author-narrator, before "go[ing] into eclipse" (Kamuf 1997, 184), prefaces the deposition with a plethora of disclaimers regarding its limited potential to reveal the truth of the matter:

> The following extracts, *translated* from *one* of the official Spanish documents, will, it is hoped, shed light on the preceding narrative … . The document *selected, from among many others, for partial translation*, contains the deposition of Benito Cereno … . Some disclosures therein were, at the time, *held dubious* for both learned and natural reasons. The tribunal inclined to the opinion that the deponent, *not undisturbed in his mind* by recent events, raved of some *things which could never have happened*. But subsequent depositions of the surviving sailors, bearing out the revelations of their captain in several of the *strangest* particulars, gave credence to the rest. So that the tribunal, in its final decision, rested its capital sentences upon statements which, had they lacked confirmation, it would have deemed it but duty to reject.

These cautionary remarks emphasize the subsequent text's fragmentation: its selection by an implied author the reader has learned to distrust at this point, its partiality and translation, and, last but not least, Don Benito's mental state as the main witness, all of which severely inhibit its potential of closure and, on another level, reveal the epistemological limitations not just of literary, but also of legal and legislative discourse and procedure, relying upon the same tropes and rhetoric (Sale 1997, 152).[39] The text's judicial uncertainty (Thomas 1987) suggests that its silences and ambiguities "do not offer gaps to be filled by a source text so much as reflect the gaps that institutional sources themselves proliferated" and hence represents "justice's perversion as an archive of silence, empty of the content it is expected to hold" (Goldberg 2009, 7) as Babo, "[a]s a matter of law," is prohibited from testifying in his own defense—again, both in the literary and the legal texts of "Benito Cereno." In Susan Weiner's words, the novella thus also explores how the law, as well as a legal reasoning that "posits a realm of knowledge that is objective, clear, and readily accessible," "fails to find legal solutions to critical crises" regarding the truth in the *San Dominick* case (1992, 117; 115).

From Babo's perspective, this silence signifies "a final gesture of mutinous resistance" within the text, "not only against his colonial masters, but even against an imperialist author who would appropriate him further" (Haegert 1993, 37); a mutinous act that is also piratical, I would add, resisting metaphorical expropriation and incorporation into literary structures of meaning-making. The radical denial of closure can also be viewed as self-reflexive in this context as a final break from all the popular formulas "Benito Cereno" invokes (34): commenting on the "authoritarian impulse of all narrative" in this way, the novella "also dramatizes the subversive and illicit movement of meanings not included in its teleological grip" (36).

The deposition cannot solve the narrative's mysteries since it is further appended by a flashback, presenting the final conversation between Delano and Cereno ("as if there were some reluctance to leave the final word to the state-appointed court of judgment, even as it has to concede that the law will rule in any case," Kamuf 1997, 184). (Un)Don(e) Benito, in a state of what today might be called Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, has the final word, resulting in the most-quoted passage of the tale; after Benito's utterance, the narrator can merely comment upon the silence that follows, before he, too, gives up and leaves the reader without closure. Taken together, this organization of the tale presents what Peggy Kamuf calls a model of the literary text as a "self-canceling structure of repetition" (198), as the readers' expectations concerning the truth are repeatedly nursed but never met.

In terms of narratology, "Benito Cereno" leaves the question whether the third-person narration is entirely extra- or intradiegetic undecided, this indecision "wavering between confidence and suspicion, faith and mistrust" (Kamuf 1997, 194). The indeterminacy that characterizes the tale indeed follows the text beyond its plot, as an instance of "Narrative Mutiny" (Haegert 1993, 21),[40] and is fundamental for the tale's suggestion that not only does the forced entry of Africans into western history result in a plurality of perspectives, but also in a pluralizing of history itself (Reichardt 2001, 140, 148–52). The polyphony of narrative and figural voices and the text's use of double entendres (Tawil 2006, 202) creates a "double-voiced trickster narrative" (Mackenthun 2004, 117) playing with cognitive dissonance and complemented by the prevalent suspicion of piracy.

The tale's imagery adds another dimension to "Benito Cereno"'s literary enactment of epistemological crisis. The color imagery centers

on the color gray, mentioned four times already in the description of the atmosphere in the opening paragraph: "Everything was mute and calm; everything gray … . The sky seemed a gray surtout. Flights of troubled gray fowl, kith and kin with flights of troubled gray vapors among which they were mixed, skimmed low and fitfully over the waters … . Shadows present, foreshadowing deeper shadows to come." The events are rendered in terms of ambivalence as grayness "envelops the appearance of the mysterious *San Dominick*" (Mackenthun 2004, 117; Nnolim 1974, 57). The importance of the color gray and of shadow imagery— "the Negro … an absence that casts a shadowy presence" (Levine 1989, 222)—marks the tale as "the shadow play … of America's own balked Revolution and its ensuing domestic turmoil" (Sundquist 1986, 104); in a similar vein, Michael Rogin remarks that "[t]he shadow cast by the Negro over Don Benito is not just the specter of revolt; it is also the stage play of shadows detached from their bodies which has drained the life and color out of his human ties" ([1979] 1985, 215), mistrusting patriarchal domestic relations that constitute the slave's identity.[41] The central epistemological metaphor is of course the "Gordian knot" Delano observes in the hand of an old sailor:

> Delano stood in silence surveying the knot; his mind, by a not uncongenial transition, passing from its own entanglements to those of the hemp. For intricacy such a knot he had never seen in an American ship, or indeed any other. The old man looked like an Egyptian priest, making gordian knots for the temple of Ammon. The knot seemed a combination of double-bowline knot, treble-crown-knot, back-handed-well-knot, knot-in-and-out-knot, and jamming-knot.

Delano is asked by this sailor—another ambivalent figure associated in identity both with the Spanish crew and with the Africans (in his resemblance of an "Egyptian priest")—to "[u]ndo it, cut it, quick" (63), but Delano—"knot in hand, and knot in head"—is unable to break it. Ultimately, the mutineering slaves themselves, organizing the state of exception (Reichardt 2001, 139, *qua* Giorgio Agamben) aboard the *San Dominick*, throw the knot overboard. In light of this central metaphor, Melville's tale presents a "crisis-ridden work that winds around on the strands of America's Gordian knot and asks of even its most enlightened readers to participate with Delano, however unwillingly, in the anxious

and blinding desire for 'perfect sea order' that could sanction so insidious an institution as slavery" (139).

"Benito Cereno" offers an epistemological model that demonstrates the precariousness of signification (Reichardt calls this postmodern *avant la lettre*, 2001, 127; see also Mackenthun 2004, 117), placing the reader between Delano and Cereno, "plagued by the limitation of our eye and the facts we can see, but also by the uncertainty of our imagination and the meanings it suggests" (Roundy 1978, 347). The text leaves its readers in a precarious epistemological state, a world of masquerade and shifting appearances even beyond its ending.

Mackenthun argues that the tale eventually "remains locked in a state of ideological stasis" and offers neither a "fiction of empowerment" nor imagines ways out of the conundrums of Atlantic slavery (unlike texts by black writers like Fredrick Douglass in the United States or Philip in the Caribbean); neither does it present "a vision of the reformability of the Euro-American racist mind" (2004, 24). In his new historicist reading, Levine similarly concludes that "Benito Cereno" demonstrates Melville's implication "in the containment strategies of his [racist] culture" (1989, 215). While a reading against the grain, emphasizing the tale's polyphony, certainly "places Melville at an ironic and critical distance from such strategies" and creates biting ironic reversals regarding slavery, piracy, and mutiny, Levine cautions that this "irony does not necessarily liberate the writer from the taint of implication" (1989, 215). Still, in its radical perspectivism and plurichronic temporal texture, "Benito Cereno"

> not only exceeds other texts of the nineteenth century ... in that it textually deconstructs the assumption of homogeneity regarding Western, here specifically American, history and civilization, and thus contributes to the recognition of the plurality of experiences and interpretations of a history defined by the colonization of America, the triangular trade, and the ... emergence of an "Atlantic," culturally hybrid space, but ... also implicitly unmasks the conceptual costs of perspectivist ... thought. Melville's ... epistemological skepticism cannot be understood without his analysis of difference of civilization and race; his political critique, in turn, cannot be explained without the epistemological reflection. (Reichardt 2001, 124–25)[42]

Moreover, the text's enactment of epistemological crisis, narrative uncertainty, and polyphony anticipates both postcolonial claims that the

colonized cannot be represented as long as the power of representation rests with the colonizer (Mackenthun 2004, 125) and strategies of colonial mimicry (Homi Bhabha) enacted in Babo's heterotopian and "carnivalesque imitation of social relations" (116). In the following section, my reading of suspicion as the crucial device for the narrative's questioning of epistemological certainty—and hence its articulation of epistemological crisis in a Black Atlantic context—follows Haegert's claim that what is

> fundamental to the work's subversive movement is a deep-seated suspicion of the dynamics of narrative itself. In this sense *Benito Cereno* is a work which challenges not only the authority of sea captains and judges, but even its own authority to speak for an enslaved other who has been denied any definitive voice in the world of the text. (1993, 32)

4.3.3   *Suspicion, Repression, and the Kaleidoscope of Piracy*

As I have argued along with many other critics before me, the novella reflects the slavery crisis as fundamentally a crisis of knowing and telling, voicing ontological and epistemological insecurity. It does so, however, not only by its narrative construction, but also by showing that masters and slaves as well as pirates are arbitrary, reversible cultural concepts. The narrative invokes piracy as a suspicion without referent—a floating signifier. Its lack of determination regarding significants of piracy renders it a potent suspicion that cannot be confirmed ontologically.

Sterling Stuckey and Joshua Leslie (1988) were perhaps the first to focus on Melville's highly significant ways of evoking piracy in "Benito Cereno," complementing the novella and its historical source with archival documents from the Archive Nacionale of Santiago de Chile (they entitle the file, as well as their essay, "Aftermath: Captain Delano's Claim Against Benito Cereno").[43] Unlike Melville's, Delano's narrative explicitly includes the accusations of piracy against him in court, presenting them as a vile stratagem by the ungrateful Spaniards; these documents further elucidate this accusation and Melville's rewritings. Delano, for Stuckey and Leslie (along with most other contemporary critics), embodies a spirit of imperialism that, in search of wealth, reduces "moral scruples" to a mere "petty annoyance" (1988, 269): they cite the deposition of Delano's crew member Peter Samson, stating that the crew "did not know whether, having wasted the voyage, the captain would practice piracy in order to meet the expenses of the expedition"

and claiming that Melville's reversal of the charge, placing it upon the Spaniard, is "harsh," "almost shocking," "Delano's suspicions regarding Benito Cereno bordering on paranoia." In the original documents, it is Benito Cereno who calls Delano a piratical "monster"; Melville obliterates the charge and instead has Delano call Benito a murderer (271). Thus, "[b]asing the theme of piracy in the novella on the Peter Samson charge to which Delano refers but does not include among the depositions in *Voyages*, Melville extends the conflict between the historical Delano and Benito Cereno into the very heart of the novella"; Delano himself suppressed some of the documents available in the Archivo in recording the revolt and its aftermath (273).

To some extent, Melville's tale certainly concurs with that suppression, omitting accusations of piracy against Delano (see ch. 18 of his *Narrative*). Yet it is important here to distinguish between Delano's and the auctorial narrative perspective: in the parts that are told from Delano's unreliable and limited point of view, it is no surprise that he disassociates himself from any such suspicion: from the self-righteous, chauvinistic U.S.-American imperial trader's view, pirates are always the Other. A contrapuntal reading, however, reveals that even these parts are subtly casting Delano as piratical.

For one, Delano uses the same motivational rhetoric as the buccaneers and Caribbean pirates of the seventeenth century, a rhetoric of plunder that does not distinguish between gold, silver, and human "cargo": "The more to encourage the sailors, they were told that the Spanish captain considered his ship good as lost; that she and her cargo, including some gold and silver, were worth more than a thousand doubloons. Take her, and no small part should be theirs." As Mackenthun states, Delano's attack on the *San Dominick* "reveals him as a figure that spans the period from the history of seventeenth-century buccaneers to the more subtle piracies of the 1850s" (2004, 123), representing him "less as an honorable merchantman than a privateer and pirate" (115, also Nnolim 1974, 17) whose chief mate, it is stated explicitly, also had been a "privateer's-man, and, as his enemies whispered, a pirate" (Melville 87: a fact not mentioned by Melville's source; see Emery 1992, 102). This presents one instance in which the text has the fictional Delano externalize the accusation of piracy faced by the historical Delano, who indeed worked as a privateer during the U.S.-American Revolution.

Melville's tale further associates Delano with piracy by renaming the historical Amasa Delano's ship *Perseverance* into the *Bachelor's*

Delight, referencing William Dampier's pirate ship, a Danish slaver Dampier renamed. In 1683, he and his crew went to Guinea, became involved in the slave trade, and took a number of enslaved African women whom they subsequently raped and abused on the ship (Lane 2007, n.p.; Franklin 1992, 237; a fact Dampier conceals in his *Narrative*, see Sect. 2.1). In addition, Delano's boat is called *The Rover*, and though Delano references the vessel frequently when he seeks out a stable sign, reassured by its familiarity and metaphorically comparing her, like "the Negro" a little later, to a Newfoundland dog (64; Kamuf 1997, 193), its linguistic signification carries with it instability and fluidity. The dog metaphor evokes the English sea-dogs of the sixteenth century, and a rover demarcates mobility and inconstancy, the shiftiness of the sea and of ships themselves roving between various owners—slave-traders, merchantmen, pirates (Nnolim 1974, 18). By associating the enterprising U.S.-American captain with piracy, then, the text also implies that Manifest Destiny, epitomized on America's maritime frontier by the historical Delano and his filibustering peers (who attempted to expand the U.S. political sphere toward Cuba, Haiti, Central America, and the Pacific), is merely "the rhetorical camouflage for a largely 'piratical' enterprise" (Emery 1992, 103), invalidating the distinction between American expansionism and European colonialism.[44] The characterization of Spaniards and Africans as potential pirates serves as another camouflaging strategy, a reversal by use of an ideological category to stereotype others (Zagarell 1992, 141) which externalizes illegitimacy and illegality, projecting it from the United States onto such Others:

> Just as Delano projects onto Cereno piratical schemes that he himself will blithely—and with the best intentions—actually perpetrate, so the United States in the mid-nineteenth century was projecting onto the decaying Spanish empire images that would legitimize its own piratical—but of course well-intentioned—expansionism. (Franklin 1992, 238)

In this context, Brook Thomas's characterization of "Benito Cereno" as "Melville's Narrative of Repression" (1987, 93) points to these mechanisms of disassociation as well as to Babo as embodying the return of the repressed in the novella in both a political and Freudian sense (112), showing that Delano's pursuit of profit implicates him in illegitimate as well as legitimate activities (also Zagarell 1992, 140).

The roving signifier of piracy renders the term an "unreliable trope[ ]" (Kamuf 1997, 193) throughout the tale. Hence Melville does not obliterate piracy as a potential status regarding the American captain but rather recasts it as a "kaleidoscopic question about who was the real pirate" (Mackenthun 2004, 113, quoting Jones; also Franklin 1992, 237; Beebee 2006, 128). When Delano is suspicious about, but refrains from interpreting, the amount of various national flags he discovers in a locker ("exposing various colored bunting, some rolled up, others half unrolled, still others tumbled," Melville 70), the reader familiar with earlier Caribbean pirate narratives which reported that buccaneers used flags of convenience, must read this discovery as a rewriting of Benito Cereno's trading in slaves as piracy.

The flags, cast together in disorderly manner, also function as a transnational metaphor for the messiness of the slave trade, acted out under all of these flags, and hence associating all of these European (and later American) nations with piracy. In Eric Sundquist's words, "Benito Cereno" highlights that "slavery was hemispheric and that its fullest literary representation as well as its fullest political critique required a view that embraced several cultures, several nations" (1986, 136). In this context, Babo's misuse of the Spanish flag as a shaving towel in the tale's most famous scene can be read as another reversal: the tale suggests that this misuse is much less criminal or "piratical," for that matter, than the slave trade committed under all of these "bright colors." Babo and his peers are similar to pirates in that the black slave is by law positioned outside the community of humankind, of "civilized," lawful nations, as the silent, barbarous, savage Other: "nothing done to them can be a violation of law" and "they therefore have no 'natural' right to self-defense" (Sale 1997, 161; it is noteworthy that the tale includes a stereotype of African behavior as barbaric and brutal not to be found in the historical Delano's source text).

Delano's earlier suspicion that the *San Dominick* "be of a piratical character"—he "nervously wonders why a ship sailing in a lawless part of the world should choose not to show its color" (Levine 1989, 200)—also displays the way his perception is shaped by a "benevolent racism," as he sees Spaniards as shady characters but Africans as "too stupid" to be the masterminds of a piratical scheme (Mackenthun 2004, 116), taking to them "not philanthropically, but genially, just as other men to Newfoundland dogs."[45] Thus Delano, blinded by the imperial conflict between the Spanish and Anglo Empires in the New World, at first suspects Cereno

rather than the Africans to be potentially piratical, crying out in a double alliteration that "this plotting pirate means murder!" (84). Likewise, he is blinded by his self-righteousness and alleged innocence as a "Jack of the Beach" (64), musing: "I to be murdered here at the ends of the earth, on board a haunted pirate-ship by a horrible Spaniard? Too nonsensical to think of! Who would murder Amasa Delano?" (64); the "pirate ship" is a characterization that is in fact much more accurate with regard to Delano's ship (Franklin 1992, 237).

It is the black mutineers' use of a fine-tuned arrangement of deceptive behavior, the only available weapon to slaves, that subsequently associates them with the deceptive techniques of Caribbean and other historical pirates (e.g., in their theatrical mis/use of flags). In one of a number of suspicious moments, the narrator, through Delano, compares them to "the Malay pirates" for whom "it was no unusual thing to lure ships after them into their treacherous harbors, or entice boarders from a declared enemy at sea, by the spectacle of thinly manned or vacant decks, beneath which prowled a hundred spears with yellow arms ready to upthrust them through the mats"; that the comparison relates to Malay rather than Caribbean pirates references the historical Delano's New Guinea chapter, in which he recounts whites wanting to enter an area of New Guinea occupied by Malays, whose past experiences with white men (who had a history of abusing Malay women, for instance), makes them hostile toward such a landing (Stuckey 2009, 55). While the historical Delano argues with the Malays, the fictional Delano immediately suppresses his suspicions and sense of danger: "Not that Captain Delano had entirely credited such things. He had heard of them—and now, as stories, they recurred." Only upon being openly attacked at the climax of the action does the discourse of piracy return as he perceives the slaves, "now with the scales dropped from his eyes … with mask torn away, flourishing hatchets, and knives, in ferocious piratical revolt" (85); his surprise at this turn of events indicates that he was "duped, perhaps more by his own perceptions than by the rebels' acting" (Sale 1997, 158). The novella's unveiling of black violence can also be read as exposing legitimacy as culturally constructed, as it

> exposes the bankruptcy of Delano's romantic idealizations while at the same time—and this is the novella's most unsettling irony—"legitimizing" his, the captain-like reader's, and, eventually, the Spanish authorities' recourse to a containing institutionalism. In *Benito Cereno* Melville relates

the 'peculiar institution' of slavery to the familial institution of the ship as part of a brilliant historical perception of the relationship between the legitimizing of racial and ethnic stereotypes and the legitimizing of institutions of social control … . (Levine 1989, 216)

Levine adds that the presentation of the revolutionary slave conspiracy as a mutiny is essential to "Benito Cereno"'s portrayal of the legitimation process, but it is also Melville's use of the disruptive, shadowy presence of piracy as a metaphor of epistemological dimensions throughout the tale that consistently points to questions of legitimacy and legality.

As Haegert notes, in the process of repeatedly suppressing suspicion about the power relations aboard the *San Dominick*, Delano "unfailingly asserts a cultural and racial hegemony which masks itself as a kind of natural law, even a theology of sorts" (1993, 34) as Delano time and again reverts to a blind belief in "the ever-watchful Providence," deemed to be on the side of its U.S.-American agents. In near-amnesia, he even forgets his worries about destruction when thinking of another visit below deck. His self-conception of innocence and legitimacy is constructed as an appropriation of Spanish colonial legacies, even if in an act of piracy (Schnackertz 1993, 179). This Puritan sense of mission, articulated also by presenting Delano as a figure whose "conscience is clean" is likewise exposed by Melville as an unjustified fiction, facing Yankee complicity with Old World orders (embodied by Cereno) and the institution of slavery (Schnackertz 1993, 177).

Delano's association with piracy suggests that U.S.-American victory and leadership (especially regarding global trade)—the tale's de facto results—originate in illegitimate piracy. This seems to be another age of revolution—hence Melville's alteration of the year this happened. By insinuating a parallel with sailing under an American flag that was not internationally recognized as legitimate during the Revolutionary War, the resurgent slaves, sailing under no colors, might become legitimate, even leading actors in the future of the hemisphere. This is reminiscent of H. Bruce Franklin's argument that the contradictions of the U.S. Revolution—that slavery continued beyond liberation from England—are acted out aboard the *San Dominick* (1992, 234).

The process of suppressing suspicion by way of familiarization and/or externalization exempts the suspicious character (whose point of view is dominant) from attracting suspicion himself. Delano fears that the slaves have turned pirate while in fact, as the text quietly suggests, his predatory

intentions are themselves piratical (Blum 2006, 122) and his governance over the crew can be characterized as piratical leadership—again, not in terms of ontology but of performance, as he offers them equal shares of the prospective bounty of the *San Dominick* to motivate them for the battle.

In its construction of "transracial savagery" (Levine 1989, 220), then, "Benito Cereno" nihilistically suggests that both whites and blacks are potential pirates and slaves, and symbols of authority like flags and weapons easily appropriated. Legitimacy, authority, piracy, and slavery are all terms that the novella exposes as defined by conventional power relations rather than by nature. The result of the novella's radical dramatization of shifting appearances is thus truly an "epistemological nightmare" (Roundy 1978, 350) that fundamentally questions narrative authority and claims about legitimacy and truth.[46]

4.3.4   From the Black Atlantic to the Bleak Atlantic

Few critics have made anything of the fact that "Benito Cereno," grounded in the transatlantic slave trade, is in fact set on the Pacific Rim, thus anticipating the shift of actual piracy cases to the Pacific scenario toward the end of the nineteenth century (again concomitant with the shift of empire-building, this time U.S.-American, toward the Pacific). That the revolting slaves are compared to Malay rather than Caribbean pirates has not been discussed as significant in its anticipation of the violent imperial scenarios that would come to characterize United States–Pacific relations in that period. As Hester Blum notes, this of course does not mean that Melville's narrative is not still, thematically, Atlantic (2006, 120), the transatlantic slave trade "quietly govern[ing] the story." "Benito Cereno" is indeed *both* an Atlantic *and* a Pacific text (the latter being, after all, Melville's preferred scenario for his maritime tales), arguing that the institution of slavery and its specters knows no geographical borders. As Blum continues, the precariousness of national and individual sovereignty in the Atlantic world always already haunts the Pacific (122). Indeed, the Atlantic, through "Benito Cereno" and similar maritime texts of the antebellum period, becomes (also) metaphorical (Mackenthun 2004, ch. 5) as these narratives construct a globalized continuum of slavery and piracy. "Benito Cereno," directed at a cis-Atlantic market (Buell 1992, 116), presents an "explicitly transnational fictional perspective … for the negotiation of conflict lines, historical

controversies and predicaments of U.S. society and culture" (Heide 2008, 37), its "hemispheric dimensions mak[ing] the novella a Pan-American literary endeavor" (43).

In this context, it is also noteworthy that piracy is introduced as a European phenomenon earlier in the *Piazza Tales*: with "The Bell-Tower," examining the degradedness of slave society of sixteenth-century Venice, "Benito Cereno" forms a diptych structure in Melville's critique of slavery (Karcher 1980, 143). Submitted to *Putnam*'s a few weeks after "Benito Cereno" but published before it in the magazine (157), it spans the topic of slavery back around the globe to its origins in European maritime states. Linked by Shakespeare's *Othello* and its rebellious African in Venice, the diptych presents a comment on the globalization of slavery (and piracy, for that matter, as the history of Venice is itself deeply entangled with piratical practices).[47]

The international context "Benito Cereno" draws on and the centrality of the figure of the pirate with regard to international law has attracted attention also by critics in that field. Most notably, the National Socialist Carl Schmitt, who also theorized piracy in a problematic land-versus-sea dichotomy (see Schmitt 1937, 1942), commented on the tale as a geopolitical allegory presenting the end of the *jus publicum Europaeum*, emphasizing the theme of piracy while entirely disregarding slavery (Robinson 2014, 140). Schmitt identified with Cereno, saying that he experienced the end of European political law in the face of economic globalization "like Benito Cereno experienced the journey of the pirate ship"—a hostage ("erfahre sein Ende so, wie Benito Cereno die Fahrt des Piratenschiffs erfuhr," 1950, 75, my transl.; Beebee 2006, 115, 120). With this metaphor, Beebee explains, Schmitt "alludes to the role of sea power in the dissolution of a historical legal order" (127) as he saw the age of piracy in the New World as a crucial phase in world history, with increasing sea power propelling the universalizing of law (128). He viewed piracy as both the foundation of the British Empire and of capitalism, yet blots out—represses—slavery altogether, sublimating it into piracy (129).

Schmitt's woe with regard to the end of European hegemony rather than the institution of slavery is one version of what I call the Bleak Atlantic that Melville's novella, a Gothic tale of haunting and enchantment pervaded by the imagery of death and ghosts and a deep sense of gloom, creates (Mackenthun 2004, 122). Reaching the Pacific, the Black Atlantic as a counterculture of resistance against Western, hegemonic

notions of culture, has indeed turned into a bleak version of the Black Atlantic, and many critics have noted—and condemned—that "Benito Cereno" leaves no space for utopian possibility or "remedial action" (Levine 1989, 224), "no … hope about the fruitful merging of cultures" (Sundquist 1986, 107). Unlike in *Emmanuel Appadocca*, emancipation and free selves are exposed as always already tainted by a history of institutionalized slavery that even the U.S.-American captain cannot escape (James 1953, 133–34). In "Benito Cereno," any notion of a New World utopia is rendered null and void, as "past, present, and future seemed one" (Franklin 1992). The novella brings together "the convulsive history of the entire region and epoch—from the Columbian discovery of the Americas, through the democratic revolutions in the United States, Haiti, and Latin America, to the contemporary crisis over the expansion of the 'Slave Power' in the United States" (Sundquist 1986, 94); beyond this, it yokes together Europe, Africa, the Atlantic, the Americas, and the Pacific Rim as all tainted by the institution of slavery.[48]

In this light, U.S.-American perceptions of itself as exceptional in, and pushing forward, world history, appear as self-complacent as they continued to repress the shadow of "the negro" while simultaneously emulating the hegemonic ambitions of European powers, hence entering the vicious circle of history (Schnackertz 1993, 179). This repressed shadow would return all the more vehemently with the Civil War, arguably the most fundamental crisis in terms of the union of the U.S. Republic; again, especially in the early war years, the figure of the pirate was articulated in conjunction with the debate over the legitimacy of both Southern Secession and slavery. On decorated envelopes, caricaturists envisaged and ridiculed Southern "pirates," marking a shift away in the representation of piracy from literature to visual culture, a development that would continue into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

4.4   The Figure of the Pirate at the Onset of the Civil War

4.4.1   *The (Il)Legitimacy of Secession*

The years leading up to, during, and following the Civil War were "years of intense anxiety, as many categories in the United States were in flux" as a result of the shattering of the slave system (De Grave 1995, 120)

and of the influx of immigrants. Countless historians have talked about sectional conflict between North and South in terms of crisis: "Sectional Crisis" (Graebner 1977; Rosenberg 1971) or a *Crisis of Republicanism* (Ambrosius 1990), a "Crisis of Disunion" (Johannsen 1963) or *Crisis of the Union* (Knoles 1965), a "Constitutional Crisis" (Bestor 1964), a "Crisis of Congress" (DiNunzio 1972), even a *Crisis of Fear* (Channing 1970) or a "Crisis in Law and Order" (Paludan 1972). Among many others, Bowman, titling his study of the Civil War *At the Precipice: Americans North and South during the Secession Crisis* (2010), characterizes sectional conflict as indeed a precipice, an existential point of political life or death, for the United States and her Constitution, exploring contemporaneous Southern alongside Northern arguments for the legitimacy of their respective actions—declarations of Secession and war, respectively. Both sides, Bowman demonstrates, saw their course as legitimate in the sense of adhering to the principles of the founding documents of the United States. As early as 1856, Southern politicians claimed that the election of a Republican president, openly opposed to slavery, would provide a just cause for Secession, given that such a choice would mean a president unable to represent slave-holding states and economies (Bowman 2010, 2); in the North, both Presidents Buchanan and Lincoln denied the constitutionality of Secession (though Buchanan, unlike Lincoln, held that the Constitution gave him no power to force a seceded state back into the United States; 7). When the South violently refused to hand over Fort Sumter to the Confederacy in 1861, Lincoln ruled that this rebellion against U.S. authority was unconstitutional and exceeded juridical power, forcing the Union to declare war. Both North and South, Bowman continues, saw themselves as American patriots, however, preserving what they thought to be genuinely American institutions and values as custodians of the legacy of the American Revolution: "they thought to appropriate for themselves the contested legacy of true Americanism" (11) and glorified both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution (13, 18, 29; also McClintock 2008, 8).[49] For the South,

> [the] right of state secession and the liberty to form an independent Confederate States of America could be based on Confederates' interpretation of the old U.S. Constitution and the Union as created by sovereign states in 1787–88. The right to leave the Union could also be derived from the inherent liberty and freedom of ... republican citizens to rebel against

> some political authority they viewed as threatening despotism, tyranny, and metaphorical enslavement and therefore by definition oblivious to the inalienable natural rights described in the Declaration of Independence. (Bowman 2010, 14)

Thus, Jefferson Davis could identify "oppressive northern free states" with the tyranny of England in the 1770s (29). Even when he was still a senator, Davis "maintained that the states had the power to secede from the Union whenever—in the judgment of a state—the need to protect the rights of its citizens necessitated withdrawal" (Boyd 2010, 28), and hence most Southerners believed that the North was responsible for the war following "the Confederacy's legitimate act of secession" (29).

Northern discourse at the beginning of the 1860s, by contrast, portrayed the enslavement of blacks in the South as an evil and felt firmly that a slave state had neither cause nor "constitutional warrant to sever its ties to the United States simply because a man of antislavery principles had won the presidency"; indeed, "[t]he efforts of the South's leadership to create … a separate nation constituted criminal acts of treason and piracy" (Boyd 2010, 23):

> All men loyal to the glorious legacy and vision of the Founding Fathers should join hands against arrogant and treasonous rebels who seemed hell-bent on crippling and dishonoring history's greatest example of republican self-government. Secessionist slaveocrats were willing to sacrifice the noble experiment in liberty embodied in the United States of America simply because they wished to perpetuate a distinct, distasteful, and anachronistic regional interest, black chattel slavery. (17)

This view led to Northern demonizations of the South and its alleged alliance with the devil, and explains "why such intense antipathy was directed toward the South's political leadership" (Boyd 2010, 23), especially Jefferson Davis, from the very outset of the War. However, it is noteworthy in the context of this chapter that strong racial prejudice existed both among northern Unionists and southern Confederates; apart from a few radical abolitionists, most Americans did not envision African Americans, whether free or slave, as entitled to liberty or equality before the law and in social matters (Bowman 2010, 12, 20).

4.4.2   The "Piracy" Cases of 1860/1861

The Secession crisis as such can be dated from December 1860 to April 1861 (Stampp 1945; Fahs 2001, 44). On December 20, South Carolina declared that it would leave the Union: the consequences of Secession were unclear and its constitutionality and legitimacy hotly debated in public, from the newspaper to the courtroom. The Confederate attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, led to Lincoln's declaration of war, and in June, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee seceded.

Jefferson Davis called for privateers, issuing letters of marque to Southern ship captains as a response to Lincoln's declaration of war on April 17, 1861, for lack of a C.S.A. navy: "Faced with a federal blockage—which Southerners considered illegal—and an impending shortage of imported foodstuffs and war materials, Davis felt he was obliged and had the right to authorize such raids" (Boyd 2010, 48). While Northern abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison had themselves called for Secession from the slave-holding South, the Southern Secession movement was now met with bewilderment: "Given the centrality of the principle of law and order it stood to reason that no matter how one felt about the legitimacy of Southern grievances or the need for Northern concessions, secession—especially when accompanied by the seizure of federal property—represented a shocking violation of the law … . The notion that secession was a legitimate right was 'absurd' not just to Republicans but to most Northerners" (McClintock 2008, 144). Although the United States had not signed the 1856 Treaty of Paris, which prohibited privateering in international law, the Northern response to Davis's call used the rhetoric of piracy in order to delegitimize Confederate privateering, which had "incensed Northern citizens and Union officials alike, who insisted that since the Confederacy was not a sovereign nation, the actions of Confederate sea captains constituted piracy" (Boyd 2010, 48) and were criminal: Lincoln's "Proclamation 81—Declaring a Blockade of Ports in Rebellious States" of April 19 spoke of "pretended letters of marque" and "disorderly proceedings" used against "good citizens of the country lawfully engaged in commerce on the high seas and in waters of the United States" (Lincoln 1861, n.p.); in order to protect "the lives and property of quiet and orderly citizens," Lincoln issued the blockade of Southern seaports and declared "that if any person, under the *pretended authority* of the said States or under any other pretense, shall molest a

vessel of the United States or the persons or cargo on board of her, such person will be held amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy" (my emphasis). Insisting that the seceded states had no right to political authority and that any performance of authority (such as the issue of letters of marque) could thus only be "pretended," Southern privateering was redefined as piracy despite U.S. acceptance of privateering as such. Newspapers jumped on the bandwagon, running headlines such as "President of the Cotton Confederacy Stimulating Piracy" (*Liberator*, April 26, 1861) or "Encouragement for Pirates" (*New York Times*, May 11, 1861).

However, Congress did not bestow formal legitimacy on a naval blockade of Confederate ports until July 13, and hence Lincoln's unilateral imposition faced legal challenges. The question was whether ships that had violated the blockade prior to the Congressional endorsement were captured lawfully; it was finally settled by the Supreme Court in the 1863 Prize Cases, which concurred that both the blockade and the seizures were defensible only if a state of war existed. The judges did not agree on the question of the president's authority to take war measures without a congressional declaration, but finally approved Lincoln's declaration retroactively by a 5–4 majority (Bowman 2010, 284; Weitz 2005, 5).

The issue that had to be considered in all subsequent trials for piracy was whether the conflict could be considered, in legal terms, as war, revolution based on natural rights, or merely internal rebellion. In late 1861, three landmark cases, in which Confederate sailors of the *Petrel*, the *C.S.S. Savannah*, and the *Jeff Davis* caught raiding Union vessels were tried for the capital crime of piracy, put this question to the test and also revealed conflicting Union positions as they saw contradictory outcomes: while the *Petrel* and the *Savannah* crews were not condemned because of a deadlocked jury, the Davis privateers were hanged. As Mark Weitz reveals in his elucidating monograph *The Confederacy on Trial: The Piracy and Sequestration Cases of 1861* (2005), these were instrumental in debating and ultimately shaping the Confederacy's identity and legitimacy. Closely examining trial and newspaper reports, Weitz shows that their defense argued that they were not pirates at all but privateers acting on behalf of a sovereign nation. Thus, they were entitled to protection under international law as prisoners of war (and hence could not be executed)—a notion the prosecution combatted vehemently:

> To acknowledge Confederate seamen as privateers might legitimize the letters of marques issued by Jefferson Davis, under whose authority they sailed and made war. To do so would validate the acts of the Confederate legislative and executive branches. It not only would elevate these men to the status of combatants but also might well define the Confederacy as a nation, if not de jure, at least de facto, and in the process pave the way for foreign recognition. (7)

Addressing the difficulty of discerning whether a conflict is a rebellion or a war between nations as long as it remains undecided, Weitz not only argues that the Confederacy struggled to balance civil rights and state sovereignty with the need to wage war, but also that the Union walked a fine line between officially sanctioning the Confederacy and utilizing war powers normally directed at enemy nations. In any case, Davis's call for privateers was a shot across the bows: not only did some of those that followed it attack ships indiscriminately of national colors; most C.S.A. privateers were also caught and tried for piracy in U.S. courts.[50] In addition, Lincoln's declaration of piracy also referenced a popular cultural topos that newspapers, writers, composers, and lithographers were happy to take up in support of the Union.

4.4.3   Piracy on Union Envelopes

Critics such as Alice Fahs, Cameron Nickels, or Shirley Samuels demonstrate that the Civil War was also a war of images and imaginations. Civil War print culture, both through word and image, created "fictive affective bonds" (Fahs 2001, 9), bonds which precondition collective identification and an imaginary of differences between North and South. Image designers and printers "created an iconography … that both reflected and shaped the cultural and political meanings of the war for the people" in a "dynamic process" (Nickels 2010, xi). In this sense, illustrated envelopes, or "covers," as they are also known,[51] constituted a popular cultural attempt at securing the allegiance of civilians on the symbolic battlefield of paper—hence Nickels speaks of a "Paper War" (1) that was essential to Americans' reactions to the actual war.[52]

The specific medium of illustrated postal envelopes, one of the many new genres in nineteenth-century visual culture, was employed since the 1840s, when political parties had used decorated envelopes in their rallies, trying to appropriate traditional U.S.-American symbols such as the eagle,

Columbia, or George Washington for their own ends; also, business stationery started to make use of the blank space of envelopes for advertising purposes, and reform movements such as teetotalers or abolitionists realized the power of images in order to trigger and direct particular emotional responses (Berry 2005, 12–13). With the start of the Civil War, stationery companies and lithographers tried to "link themselves to, and profit from, patriotism" (13). In addition, at least in the major cities of the North, the war had furthered the modernization of inexpensive print as a mass medium, and advances in lithography and printing had produced many forms of print that were now cheaper—and more patriotic—than ever: broadsides, song sheets (also called 'penny ballads'), trading cards, and pictorial envelopes (Nickels 2010, 3). Drawing on these developments, lithography thrived during the Civil War. The early 1860s saw an explosion of richly illustrated envelopes, unparalleled in "scale, scope, and sophistication" in the history of American printing, as Stephen Berry states (2005, 13), and were pivotal for later developments in stationery such as the postcard. The craze for pictorial envelopes made them collectibles early on (Fahs 2001, 43), but they were of course also used, by civilians and soldiers alike. The massive amount of correspondence between armies and home front resulted in their wide dissemination, even "ubiquitous presence" (Gallagher 2011, 58). Pictures on envelopes, according to Josephine Cobb, could also be produced more rapidly than other kinds of pictorial illustrations: they required less skill and less expensive equipment, with metal stock cuts being borrowed or purchased from type foundries and printed on small hand presses such as the Adams Cottage Press, which promised to make "Every Man His Own Printer" (Cobb 1963/1965, 234). Not all envelopes, however, carried imprints; in the case of political caricature, the designs were meant to remain anonymous. At other times, the lack of imprint could imply a pirated version of existing designs (236).

Decorated covers were especially popular in the early days of war, when patriotic fervor was at its peak. About three hundred printer-publishers (such as the Gibson Brothers, Henry Polkinhorn, or Samuel Siebert in D.C.) produced thousands of different designs, sold by booksellers and shops across the nation, North and South. Lincoln's blockade, however, leading to shortages in paper, ink, and stoneware for lithography (among others), was a large factor responsible for the Confederate defeat in what Berry has called the "Lithographers' War" (2005, 12;

also Cobb 1963/1965, 234 n. 4). Compared to the Union's, Confederate patriotic covers were hence much less numerous, most of them having been issued in 1861 and 1862. They focused on Confederate national icons such as the flag and the President (Boyd 2010, 27), but as a counter-discourse to Northern patriotism, they, like the North, also tried to recur to existing national icons to claim legitimacy for Secession. Thus the South was met with "'symbolic' challenges" (13) in trying to create a distinct iconography of their own: the palm tree was not as strong as the Massachusetts pine, and the "Don't Tread on Me"-snake bore unfortunate biblical connotations (13–14); images of Jefferson Davis were safest in this respect, joining—and to a degree displacing, at the outset of the war—those of George Washington throughout the South, as the Confederate leader became, along with the Confederate flag, the key symbol of the new 'nation' and its government (Boyd 2010, 52).

Northern printers had the advantage of being able to use countless established symbols for the Union such as flags and allegorical figures like Columbia and the American eagle, the Union shield, and famous U.S. leaders. In addition, they satirized Southern symbols and delegitimized Secession symbolically by infantilizing and ridiculing the C.S.A. Combining image and text to "remind citizens about the value of a war for Union" (Gallagher 2011, 57)—for a democratic Republic, for the Constitution, for the founding generation—they often made the extra-legality of Secession a main theme. The symbols used were stock ingredients to represent the Union, the Constitution, and the rule of law in order to deny the South the legitimacy of a sovereign state, while connections to the devil marked representations of the South. "This linkage with the Devil also explains … the certainty with which Northern printers could condemn Jefferson Davis with no presumption of innocence or right to due process of law" as Northerners "presumed that their cause was a divinely inspired campaign to carry out the will of God by exterminating the minion of the Devil, Jefferson Davis" (Boyd 2010, 25). Thus

> [t]he Union patriotic envelopes illustrate key aspects of the crisis from the point of view of the North. They show how secession posed a material challenge to the existence of the nation, how printers in the North developed various depictions and symbols to rally citizens in support of their view of the war, and … fostered the demonizing of President Jefferson Davis and the South. (27)

Many of these pervasive symbols explicitly reference piracy: pirate flags and the iconography of pirate figures (see below), together with the afore-mentioned association with the devil, were key in the demonizing of Davis and the South. At other times, it was the mention of the term alone that sufficed to make the claim of Southern illegitimacy, for example in Fig. 4.1, both calling for the death of Southern "pirates" "to secure our Ports."

These are rare examples in which the accusation of piracy is envisioned in a serious tone rather than in the mode of caricature. Notably, they are also exceptional in using female figures in this context: Fig. 4.1 portrays a couple defending the Union, with the male figure (appearing with a Lincoln-esque beard) on the lookout for pirates and carrying the flag almost as if it were a weapon of defense, while the female figure, in a much more passive position leaning on the man's legs for protection, seems to guard the maritime wealth of the Union. In Fig. 4.1, an allegorical female Neptune-like figure resembling a swarthy Britannia, also sitting, takes the role of the man in Fig. 4.1: on the lookout for the enemy pirates (the caption suggests she is guarding a port), her gaze seems fierce and concentrated, ready to use her trident in defense.

Fig. 4.1 Two prints on Union envelopes asking for the death of Southern "Pirates" (Figures courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society)

An example of a primarily verbal evocation of piracy on Union envelopes is the modified Confederate eight-star flag, bearing the names of the South's president and vice president but adding "The Pirate Flag" to the blue, "thereby implying that any vessel that flew the Confederate flag was committing piracy" (Boyd 2010, 48; see Fig. 4.2) and that the Confederate flag was in truth a disguise for the skull and crossbones; in his interpretation in the only existing monograph on patriotic envelopes of the Civil War, Steven Boyd states that "Davis's marque was not that of a sovereign nation at war with the United States but that of the Jolly Roger," an accusation that "resonated with people of the North" (48) who saw Davis's letters of marque as illegal. The real Secession flag, according to most Northerners, would show the skull and crossbones. The use of flags on decorative envelopes was all the more important because they were symbols of honor, pride, and legitimacy; the parody used a popular sign of illegitimacy in order to propagate the Northern cause, which explains the pervasiveness of the Jolly Roger on Union covers, as in Fig. 4.5 (see below), inscribed simply with Davis's initials and the words "J. D. His Marque" often added to remind people that
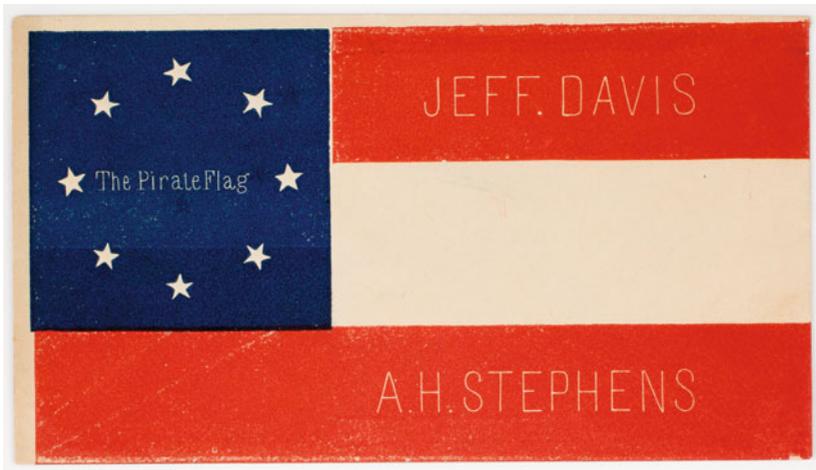
Fig. 4.2 Union envelope covered in its entirely by "The Pirate Flag," representing eight seceded states through eight stars and referencing President "Jeff. Davis" and Vice President A. (Alexander) H. (Hamilton) Stephens (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

Davis's authority to issue letters of marque was as illegitimate as that of a pirate. In Fig. 4.3, "J.D."'s "marque" is symbolically defeated by the "Marks" of "A[braham] L[incoln]," referring to the holes shot into the Jolly Roger flag and flag pole.

A different example (Fig. 4.4) also directly references issuing of "Letters of Marque and Reprisal" by the Confederate government in 1861 and ridicules Davis's letters of marque by spelling out six letters of "mark": "PIRATE."

Here, Davis confronts his own menacing "pirate" shadow (the "Letters of Mark" seems to be a popular misspelling of the "Letters of Marque"). On Union envelopes, Davis is usually subject to caricature, "most often being hanged, mocked, or otherwise reviled" and so "turned up frequently as the prime traitor to undo the Union"; one image of this sort shows him on the gallows, the caption reading "Jeff. Davis, 'President' of Traitors, Robbers, and Pirates; the Nero of the 19th century" (Gallagher 2011, 57). The mangling of Davis's image—the personification of the Southern Confederacy—into that of a pirate, juxtaposed with Lincoln's sacralized counterfeit, personalized the impending war (Boyd

Fig. 4.3 Bearing a tattered skull-and-crossbone flag pointing to the doom of the seceded states, this envelope adds "A. L. His Marks" to draw a color contrast between the 'dark' forces of the South and Abraham Lincoln's stainlessness (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

Fig. 4.4 A caricature decorating a Union envelope on the left hand corner, portraying Jefferson Davis as barely keeping at bay the pirates he created (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

2010, ch. 3). The disparagement of Davis and the Confederacy proved persistent, but, ironically, they also helped make Davis better-known in the North than before the War (64–65). Examples of caricatures include Davis as a mangled "shanghae" (a Chinese fowl) chicken on a March toward Washington (Fig. 4.5), which, however, is guarded by a proud and strong "Union Game Cock." If read sequentially, they even suggest that the Union rooster, whose body and star-spangled banner are much larger, the latter shining colorfully due to three-dimensional visual effects, has succeeded: "J.D." and his amateur black flag recede, ridiculed by the question "Jeff, when will you get here?" uttered by "W.S." (perhaps referring to General William Sherman, whose early battles, ironically, were not successful).

Davis also takes on other animal forms, for example that of a spider with the head of Jefferson Davis, marked by the skull and crossbones (Fig. 4.6) and luring ever more flies (i.e., States) into his "Secession Web."

The flies are labeled with state initials including those of Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, and Virginia; flies labeled Maryland and Missouri are approaching the spider's web, which, notably, is attached to a Union flag. The suggestion is that "neither Missouri nor

The Union Game Cock and
Secession Shanghae.

P. Murphy's Son, Print. 65 Fulton & 372 Pratt Sts. N. Y.

J. D's March on Washington.
Jeff, when will you get here?   [Says W. S.]

Fig. 4.5 Union envelopes with satirical cartoons, probably published as a series and hence anticipating the comic strip. These two tell a narrative in which a proud "Union Game Cock" confronts a piratical "Secession Shanghae" on his "March on Washington," ridiculing "Jeff"'s inadequacy to "get here" (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)
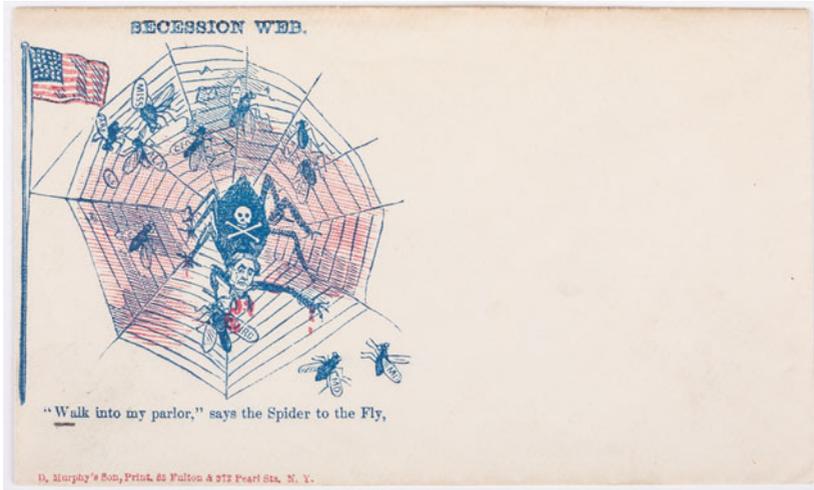
Fig. 4.6 Satirical cartoon decorating a Union envelope with a "Secession Web" and a piratical spider, asking the flies (representative of single states) to "[w]alk into my parlor" and thus to certain death (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

Maryland will sacrifice the liberty secured by the Union to join the secession trap set by the pirate Davis" (Boyd 2010, 64), but also that Davis and the project of Southern Secession is as threatening to the Union as a spider on a pole. In this context, Shirley Samuels notices the abundance of pejoratively used human-animal mutations in a study of Civil War iconography, interpreting it not simply as a strategy of ridicule but also as expressing anxieties about racial and national identification provoked by the Secession crisis, anxieties which became displaced onto matters of gender and human-animal distinctions:

> these dislodged identities take the most anxious fears and desires of nationalism and produce through them truncated accounts of how identity can or cannot adhere to the public space opened by national conflict … if male can become female, white can become black, and human become animal—awkward parallels suggested by the crude caricatures of wartime America—then what nation is left for the citizen to inhabit? (29–30)

Similarly crude caricatures of Davis include designs for his "Coat of Arms," changed into a coat of "Alms" (in reference to the perceived material inferiority of the South that unsuccessfully tried to secure financial assistance from France and Great Britain for warfare), designs that centrally display the skull and crossbones, which is encircled by the seductive yet treacherous rattlesnake of Secession: added is a bottle of moonshine whiskey, evoking stereotypes of Southern alcoholism (including Davis's own escapades) and associating them with drunken pirates, and the motto "Oh! Let Me Alone!" at the top of the shield.

After Lincoln's condemnation of Southern piracy, the Confederate privateering 'navy' became another object of ridicule, as "Union covers portrayed bedraggled and booting pirates adrift in leaky vessels with tattered flags" (Berry 2005, 14). In Fig. 4.7, a Confederate captain (presumably devised as an embodiment of Davis) and six Confederate sailors float in a bowl flying a Jolly Roger, on an eager watch-out for the enemy. The image suggests both Southern naval-military inferiority and the naïve belief that the C.S.A. could win a sea-battle against the Union. It also marks Southern naval-military strategies as piratical: instead of an official navy, "Jeff's" is a "Knave-y" made up by "wise men of Gotham" (referencing Washington Irving's 1807 *Salmagundi Papers*, which were
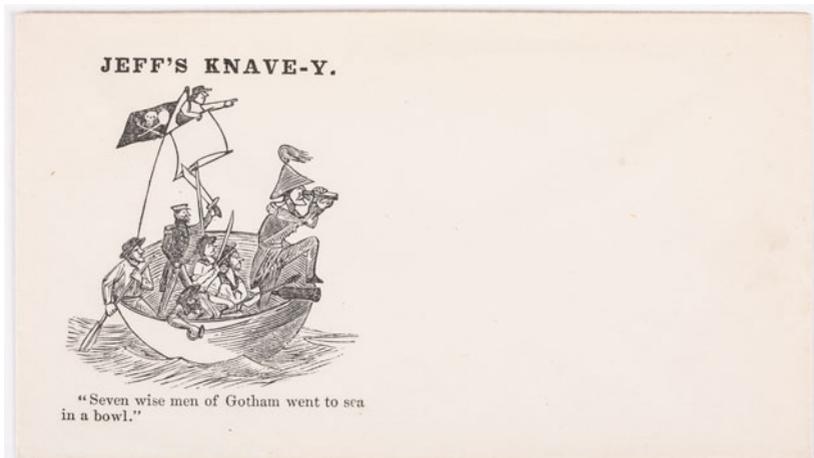
Fig. 4.7   Union envelope decorated with a caricature of the Southern "Knave-y" (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

based on the *Merrie Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham*, a 1460 collection of legendary stories of foolish, rather than wise, villagers of Gotham, Nottinghamshire).

In contrast, another cover (designed by John G. Wells [1821–1880]) shows the U.S. Navy is envisioned as an enormous "American Eagle coming down on the C. S. A. pirates," thus its caption, with a huge eagle claw coming down from the sky above several Confederate ships from which people are leaping into the water to escape. Northern superiority and legitimacy are likewise at issue in similar example, printed by D. Murphy's Son of New York, in which an armed Union sailor watches a man in pirate boots (marked with skull and crossbones) as he falls through a hole in a ship's deck during battle, with the caption reading "Union Jack sending one of Jeff Davis' pirates to 'Davy Jones locker'—Serves 'em right."

Another example, also printed by Murphy, is less general and directly alludes to political events: in Fig. 4.8, Queen Victoria ("Victoria Rex," a grammatical mistake as it should be "Regina," embodying England with her Union Jack shield) sits on a lion who almost seems to laugh at a striding rooster below, exhorting the Queen with a Confederate flag

Fig. 4.8 The international dimension of the conflict and the C.S.A.'s plea for recognition by England is referenced in this decoration envelope (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

and skull-and-crossbone figurine on top of the flagpole: "Now won't you recognise us!" But, the caption tells us, the Queen "thinks better of it and won't recognize traitors or harbo(u)r their pirate-eers." Linguistically diluting the term "privateers" into "pira-teers" and referencing the fact that Great Britain refused Southern pleas for recognition, the caricature delegitimizes Southern self-descriptions while, at the same time, pictorially suggesting that Britain sided with the Union in the war against the Confederacy.

Yet another subset of caricature patriotic Union envelopes ridicules Southern capabilities of naval-military action not through the use of animals but by strategies of infantilization, such as in Fig. 4.9, titled "A 'Horse Marine' of the C.S.A.," in which a plump figure of childlike proportions, wearing a naval hat adorned with skull and crossbones, sits atop a wooden children's horse (whose tail is replaced by a C.S.A. flag) with a spyglass in his hand. By the mid-nineteenth century, pirates began to turn into prominent stock characters in children's literature on both sides of the Atlantic, as adventure literature for boys was the craze of the time. This caricature also has to be seen in context with numerous others in which Jefferson Davis's attempt at establishing the Confederate States
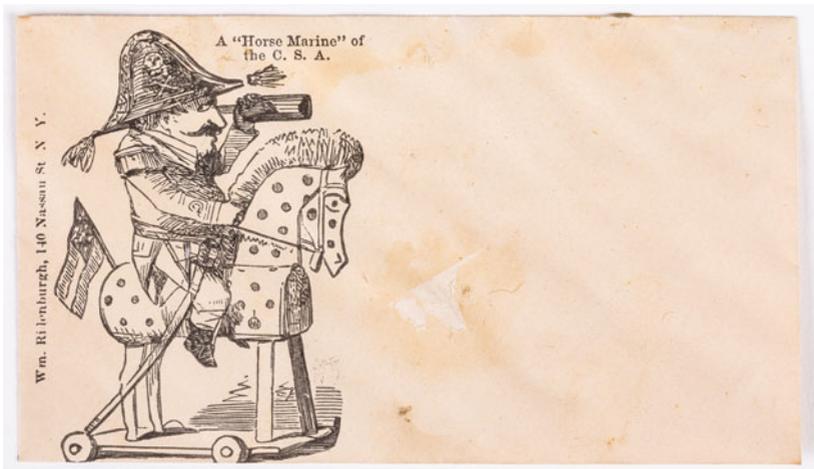
Fig. 4.9 Ridiculing Southern naval capabilities: a "Horse Marine" of the Confederate States adorning a Union envelope (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

of America was mocked as the delusive fantasy of an immature, quixotic boy who had read too many adventure novels rather than as a political project one could take seriously. As the war progressed and thousands of soldiers, Northern and Southern, left their lives in the battlefields, this infantilizing strategy was abandoned; it would have been cynical indeed to continue this mockery in the face of death.

Deriding Confederate naval warfare, Union envelopes also popularized specific cases of Southern defeat on the seas in order to strengthen a feeling of Northern superiority that was in no real danger vis-à-vis the dilettantism of Davis's privateers. One cover, for instance, caricatures Captain Baker of the *C.S.S. Savannah*, again using childlike proportions (a large head and small body). The caption is another ridicule: "Capt. Baker of the pirate 'Savannah,' is astounded to find that the vessel he is trying to overhaul is the man-of-war brig Perry."

4.4.4   The Iconography of Slavery and Piracy

The Civil War use of the trope of piracy, at least to some extent, also takes up the Black Atlantic critique of slavery as piracy. The conjuncture was used in popular anti-Southern discourses during the war as envelopes depicted Jefferson Davis and the seceded South as pirates, robbing Union ships, exploiting African-American slaves, and betraying the United States by means of a Secession thus delegitimized. The Southern Secessionist 'pirate' was not just a figure who plundered Union ships; by their occasional representation of the peculiar institution, Northern patriotic envelopes also evoked the association of enslavement as the 'pirating' of human beings. Thus, the iconography of the decorated envelopes took up the semantic association of piracy and slavery introduced in late eighteenth-century enlightenment discourses and continued in Black Atlantic writing. Union envelopes sometimes "utilized images of African Americans to satirize the citizens and soldiers of the South, their goals and social order, and their claims of slave contentedness … to encourage Union soldiers and civilians to persevere in the battle against a debased, morally bankrupt, and soon-to-be defeated South" (Boyd 2010, 71).

Examples like Fig. 4.10—two oval images enclosed within a rope, the top one showing a proud Davis in military uniform and the bottom one having him dig potatoes in the hot (but smiling, perhaps mockingly) sun, barely clothed and sweating, with a fully clad freedman holding a cat-o'-nine-tails,—draw on the South's biggest fear, that of a reversal

Fig. 4.10 "Jeff the Dictator as He Is" and "Jeff the Dig-Tater-er As He Should Be." Decorated Union envelope interrelating slavery and piracy (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

of power structures between black and white, and of black domination of former 'piratical' slave-holders. Transforming the Southern "dictator as he is" into a "Dig-tater-er as he should be," this envelope satirically projects a reversal of status "not envisioned by even the most radical of Republicans during the war" (Boyd 2010, 75) and hence denies Southern assertions of the "contented and happy slave" (Fahs 2001, 151). In addition, this example can be read as somewhat of a regionalized expression of black revenge on the Southern 'piracy' of humans—rather than an endorsement of African American mastery across the Union. Also, few of these were postally used, which suggests, in Boyd's view, that Northerners, too, were reluctant to publicly embrace an antislavery message in 1861 (2010, 77) but enjoyed any kind of satire of the South. Depictions of slaves, Boyd asserts, were in the majority regarding (in any case rare) prewar visual representations of African Americans, both North and South (68). Before the war, popular visual culture often showed slaves at ease in Dixie and almost always bordered on dehumanizing caricatures of human beings—with stereotyped physical characteristics, dress, and dialect; more often, they had no face, no visual representation at all

(69). While Union envelopes changed the latter, it is no surprise that many nevertheless perpetuated stereotypes of passive African Americans with accentuated characteristics (71; also Berry 2005, 16; Gallagher 2011, 57)—though there were exceptions: Fig. 4.11 suggests the abolition of slavery as the goal of the war; in other instances, enslaved blacks' active role in their liberation as well as their contributions to the war effort are highlighted, assertiveness replacing subordination. As Fahs contends, illustrated envelopes explored the emerging story of black freedom during the war, joining the contemporaneous fascination with black action in popular literature (2001, 13). Northern envelopes

> embraced changes in African Americans' status during the war—although usually only if they seemed to benefit the condition of Northern whites … . Redefining former slaves as 'contrabands,' then portraying them as minstrels, was in part a strategy of containment. It reassured white Northerners that even in freedom African Americans remained no more than property and that familiar images from minstrelsy retained their currency in wartime as a mode of imagining blacks. Such linguistic and visual strategies

Fig. 4.11 Decorated Union envelope; "TRAITOR JEFF" Davis, pirate flag in hand, is abducted by Uncle Sam's Eagle, putting a family of plantation slaves in commotion. Notably, it is the female slave who comments on "Mas'a Jeff's" "bad fix" (Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society)

in effect forestalled thinking of African Americans as free human beings. (151–53)

Simply labeling these caricatures unflattering, as *The Catalog of Union Civil War Patriotic Covers* does (Weiss), hence misses that they were intended as satirical criticism of the South rather than as caricatures of blacks, and generalizes all covers with black images into one category, as Boyd has criticized (2010, 73). Certainly, African American emancipation might not have been a major subject for these covers (Gallagher 2011, 57),[53] some of which even expressed Democratic unhappiness with emancipation or drew on images of minstrelsy. As in the examples above, however, we can also read Northern patriotic covers as anticipating and to some extent helping prepare the ground for Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1864, creating a visual alliance between the North and the Southern slave by displaying and mocking their common enemy. Envelopes depicting escaped slaves and designating them as contraband, for instance, "represented a challenge to slaveholders' authority that many Northerners clearly relished" (Fahs 2001, 151). Boyd concludes that envelopes with images of African Americans and an antislavery theme "constitute the first veiled suggestions that the 'War for the Union' might also become a war for the destruction of slavery" (2010, 76), though he admits that the preceding example is perhaps an exception, as most envelopes portraying blacks might have been perceived as "satirical hyperbole" and exaggeration rather than political critique (Berry 2005). He reminds us that before the war, "[s]laves depicted in the popular press and culture, North or South, accepted their dependence on a gentle, beneficial white society. Only a few abolitionist representations challenged this idyllic notion with portrayals of slaves brutalized by slavery and crying out for assistance"—a status quo that slowly began to change only with the onset of the Civil War. The end of the War, notably, also marked a break in the semantic conjunction between slavery and piracy; in the last decades of the nineteenth century, pirate narratives and visuals were re-romanticized and heroized in their turn to a very different readership: children. Many decades later, in the twentieth century and especially with the pirate's Disneyfication, were caricatures of pirates taken up—in less serious contexts—yet again.

NOTES

1. Julian Boyd remarks that of the sixteen charges in the so-called Composition Draft, this gets the most embellishment by the time it appears in the document Jefferson called his "original rough draft" (1999, 2).
2. The Barbary crisis has also been labeled repeatedly as the United States' first hostage crises or the "Tripolitan crisis" (Baepler 1999, 9).
3. The tributary system that led to the practice of taking captives for ransom had originated during the Crusades and evolved in a Mediterranean economic and political system in the twelfth century (Rojas 2003, 164).
4. This summary overview of the U.S.-Barbary conflict draws on Tinniswood (2010, 280–95).
5. Lambert reports that it was "particularly galling to Americans that European powers legitimized the piratical states and paid them tribute when they could have easily destroyed them" (2005, 108); Portugal's truce with Algiers in 1793, for example, was seen as responsible for extending the range of Algiers and its pirates to American commerce across the Atlantic. He also notes that religious difference eventually lost out over economic difference in the U.S.-American construction of the Barbary 'pirate' (118).
6. Interestingly, American newspaper editor and author of a popular history of Algiers, Mathew Carey, concurred with this judgment in an anti-Spanish rant (quoted in Lambert 2005, 111), but of course did not associate U.S.-American behavior in the international sphere with that of the Spanish conquerors.
7. See also the first part of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. On the Barbary captivity narrative in Early Modern England, see Vitkus (2001); on the Barbary chapter in Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Voltaire's *Candide*, see Baepler (1999, 44–45; 2004, 228); on the genre's European and American development, see Sutton (2009).
8. On seventeenth-century relations between European powers and the Barbary states, see Tinniswood (2010).
9. For a collection of pirate captivity narratives, see Stephens (1996).
10. On similar constructions of Arabs and Native Americans in Barbary narratives of Early America, see also Lambert (2005, 105), Berman (2007, 5–6), and Sutton (2009, n.p.).
11. In a sermon to commemorate the redemption of several Barbary captives in 1703, Cotton Mather had already called the North African corsairs "Hellish Pirates"; in a pastoral letter, he called them "Monsters of Africa" (quoted in Baepler 2004, 219; also 1999, 13). On Mather's stance toward Barbary, see also Hanna (2015, 205–206).
12. On the genderedness of the distinction between male-authored, 'authentic' Barbary narratives and women's fictional tales as well as of the genre's

rhetoric of freedom, see Baepler (1999, 11–12, 16). On the popular "Algerian plays," see Montgomery (1994).

13. The canto echoes John Foss's report in his captivity narrative of a Christmas song the hostages of his ship sang: "Columbia! While the Sons of fame / Thy freedom through the world proclaim / And hell-born tyrants dread the name / That wills all nations free; Remote, on Barb'ry's pirate coast, By foes enslav'd, a miscreant host, / No more the rights of man we boast; / Adieu, blest Liberty!" (quoted in Gilje 2004, 153).

14. As Rojas reports, Benjamin Franklin, in 1773, had connected the economic success of American piracies in the Caribbean and along the Atlantic coast, fearing these would lead to "a new Barbary rising in America" and that in the future, "American corsairs" rather than Ottoman ones would plague the world (quoted in Rojas 2003, 165). On the Barbary crisis and the discourse of captivity in the U.S.-American public sphere, see Peskin (2009).

15. See especially his extensive introduction to *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (1999, 29) and the essay "The Barbary Captivity Narrative in American Culture" (2004).

16. Berman summarizes that Barbary pirates were mostly soldiers of fortune rather than citizens of North African states, the majority (Baepler draws on sources saying two thirds, 1995, 101) European *renegados*, many of them former captives who had converted to Islam and hence operate their raiding missions freely from North African ports (Berman 2007, 23 n.2). Captivity and cultural exchange in American literature are the main subjects of Michelle Burnham's important study *Captivity and Sentiment* (2000), but she does not discuss Barbary captivity.

17. On impressment in the literature of the Revolutionary period, see Gilje (2004, 157–59).

18. For biographical accounts of Philip's life, see the various publications by Selwyn Cudjoe as well as one of C. L. R. James's earliest writings, a biographical essay on Philip published in *The Beacon* in 1931. In this essay, James points to "some future occasion" ([1931] 1978, 255) on which he would discuss Philip's novel, but the occasion apparently never arrived (Nielsen 1997, 4).

19. Jeffrey Bolster briefly examines the historical relation between African Americans and piracy in the first chapter of *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (1997). For a critique of Bolster through an economic reading of black mariners' narratives such as Equiano's, see Kazanjian (2003, 35–84).

20. For a detailed account of the book's historical context as it relates to slavery, see Cain (1997, xxiv–xxxiv). On the political crisis following the Fugitive Slave Act, see Holt (1978) and Varon (2008, ch. 6).

21. According to Cudjoe, Philip had encountered the motif of revenge in Euripides's play *Hecuba*, which is cited in the novel's epigram (2003, 124; also Cain 1997, xxxviii). Cynthia James places Philip's novel in the context of the "maroon paradigm," referring to the runaway slaves of African origin in the Americas (2002, 50–53). This critical paradigm, according to Caribbean cultural theorists such as Kamau Brathwaite, revolves around tropes of abandonment, flight, and resistance, as well as around questions of ancestry and filiation. James emphasizes Appadocca's restlessness, homelessness, and multiculturalism.

22. As Gesa Mackenthun argues, the fact that his mother is of part-Spanish descent means that Appadocca assumes two subaltern (or at least marginal) positions at once (2004, 110). The trace of his Spanish heritage is visible in the protagonist's name, probably inherited from his mother, which combines Jesus's first name and that of the legendary Spanish Vice Admiral Don Sebastian Ruiz de Apodaca, who had surrendered Trinidad to the British in 1797 (see Cudjoe in Philip [1854] 1997, 3).

23. Another significant appropriation concerns the protagonist's use of the "cultural property of the white, Western world, making it equally his as a resource for the composition of literature that both will and will not be part of the classic tradition," as Cain (1997, xxxix) comments on the text's frequent use of quotes from the classical canon of Western literature.

24. On the trope of Ethiopian splendor and Egyptian civilization in nineteenth-century culture, see Mackenthun (2004, 144) as well as Cudjoe (2003, 126 n. 16 & 17 and 129–30).

25. There are in fact two romantic subplots, one concerning the former captive Agnes, who eventually is united with Appadocca's Spanish mate Lorenzo (who turns out to be the respectable St. James Carmonte); the second romantic liaison concerns Feliciana, daughter of a Venezuelan *Ilanero*, who falls in love with Appadocca when he is rescued from the coast and tries to make him renounce his plan of revenge and piracy altogether.

26. The yearning for a more stable home surfaces near the end of the book, when, in a letter to his friend Charles shortly before Appadocca's death, the protagonist reports that he plans to "lead the men who have followed me so bravely … to some remote spot on the fertile and vast continent that lies on our right, and build them a city in which they may live happily, quietly, and far removed from the world, whose sympathy they cannot hope, and care not, to possess" (Philip [1854] 1997, 236); also before his death, he arranges that "half [of his treasure] shall be devoted to a college for abandoned children" (243).

27. The title is invariably cited by critics as a short story, using quotation marks around it, or as a short novel, italicizing it. I am using the short

story citation because my reading emphasizes the text's formal experiments and significant open-end characteristic of the short story (also Levine 1989, 224).

28. For a reading of "Benito Cereno" as a detective story, see Haegert (1993, 27–30).

29. See also Burkholder's dated but still helpful summary research review (1992).

30. I am following Sale's diagnosis of a four-part narrative structure (1997, 153) here as it seems more precise than traditional views assuming only three (sometimes even two) parts.

31. Levine's interpretation of the slogan, in my view, hits the mark best: under its proper figurehead of Columbus, it "resonates not only as a grim prophecy on republican America's inability to transcend imperial Spain's historical crimes, but also as a grimly ironic reminder of Babo's willingness to assume a Spanish-like captaincy" (1989, 221).

32. Mackenthun reads Babo himself as a hybrid reincarnation of L'Ouverture, "a composite figure of the historical characters Singue, leader of the *Amistad* revolt, and Toussaint L'Ouverture … mixed with traces of African trickster figures" (2004, 125).

33. Carolyn Karcher explains how the trope of piracy connects "Benito Cereno" and the *Amistad* case: "Charges of piracy were central to the trial. The press had repeatedly described the *Amistad* as a pirate ship when it was sighted …, but the Africans' defense team … successfully argued that it was not piracy for persons to rise up against those who illegally held them captive" (1990, 2465; also Thomas 1987, 108).

34. The play was based "on the late extraordinary 'Piracy! Mutiny! & Murder!' aboard the *Amistad* and the sensational reports of 'black pirates' that had appeared in the press before their capture" and "demonstrated how quickly the news of the rebellion spread, and with what cultural resonance." Its title was derived from a *New York Sun* article about the *Amistad* rebellion "which in turn had drawn on the recent descriptions of a pirate ship … marauding in the Gulf of Mexico" (Rediker 2012, 114).

35. On the parallel construction of the U.S. South and the Catholic Spanish Empire in "Benito Cereno," see Levine (1989, 202).

36. Melville anticipates his "revolutionary mutiny against the ship's hierarchical order" in *Moby-Dick*, completing "the disintegration of the sinking ship to initiate Steelkilt's career as a roving pirate" (Levine 1989, 193).

37. According to Reichardt, the scene presents two levels of signification at once, depending on the observer: "Das Zeichen zeigt gleichsam für weiße bzw. schwarze Teilnehmer in unterschiedliche Richtungen. Die Semantik ist von der Pragmatik abhängig; man könnte deshalb … von einem 'gespaltenen Signifikanten' sprechen" (2001, 136).

38. See Reichardt (2001, 129), who diagnoses the narration with a personal perspectivation (following F. K. Stanzel's narratological model).
39. Levine (1989, 225–26) remarks in this context that the critique of western rationality and legal language in the novella teaches a lesson to be learned from the crisis of the 1850s, i.e., that knowledge alone will not necessarily lead to a better understanding of white-black and imperial relations. On interpretations of "Benito Cereno" from a law-and-literature perspective, see also DeLombard (2009), Thomas (1987, 93–112), and Weiner (1992).
40. Haegert's term is useful for my reading, though I am hesitant to concur with his diagnosis that "the indeterminacy that characterizes *Benito Cereno* derives less from some inherently unstable property of language than from the author's own uneasiness in portraying an oppressed and voiceless other" (1993, 22). Since authority and authorship are deconstructed by the novella, as Haegert himself concludes (32), such an author-centered statement remains unconvincing—this is not to say, however, that the text does not suggest Melville's awareness of linguistic instability.
41. That Melville collapsed Babo and Muri, Babo's son, who, on the *Tryal*, played the part of Benito's body servant, serves to highlight in this context that he "was interested not in a slave-father's power of his son, but in a slave-son's power over his father-master" ([1855–1856] 2002, 215).
42. "nicht nur darin weiter als andere Texte des 19. Jahrhunderts ..., daß er die Homogenitätsbehauptung einer westlichen, hier spezifisch amerikanischen Geschichte und Zivilisation binnentextuell dekonstruiert und so zur Einsicht in die Vielheit der Erfahrungen und Deutungen einer durch die Kolonisierung Amerikas, den Dreieckshandel und die ... Entstehung eines 'atlantischen' kulturhybriden Raumes bestimmten Geschichte beiträgt, sondern ... auch implizit die konzeptuellen Kosten eines perspektivischen ... Denkens vorführt. Melvilles ... epistemologische Skepsis läßt sich nicht ohne seine zivilisations– und rassendifferenzkritische Analyse verstehen; seine politische Kritik läßt sich wiederum nicht ohne die epistemologische Reflexion erklären" (in the German original; my translation).
43. Franklin (1992, 237) reveals that the historical Delano was in fact a privateer and emphasizes that he was regarded as a pirate by his enemies.
44. On filibustering and U.S. expansion in the period's literature, see Breinig (2008).
45. Though he can only speak through the multivalent language of the body (Zagarell 1992, 136), Babo's final image in the last paragraph is that of "an almost disembodied brain" (Karcher 1980, 130): "The body was burned to ashes; but for many days, the head, that hive of subtlety, fixed on a pole in the Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites" (102); critics largely agree that this is perhaps the tale's most significant critique of racism.

46. On the conundrums of authority and authorship in "Benito Cereno," see Zagarell (1992, 136–41).
47. Karcher views "The Bell-Tower" as the more radical of the two tales, confronting the reader "directly with a slave society's naked contempt for human values" (1980, 147).
48. Mackenthun characterizes this as a "temporality of the uncanny," based on a Freudian understanding as "the frightening return of old and long familiar knowledges," and a Benjaminian view of history as "a present 'shot through' with glimpses of past events" (2004, 122)—a view opposed to Delano's call to forget the past.
49. See also Bowman: "many Confederates invoked the natural right of revolution against tyranny and despotism that they saw articulated in the Declaration of Independence. Most of their opponents … interpreted the Declaration as a manifesto for republican liberty against despotic slavery, which constituted a decidedly anti-American institution embodying tyranny. And they saw the Constitution, properly interpreted, as having created a substantial degree of state's rights but not state sovereignty within a prosperous, powerful, and perpetual Union. This judgment led them to view secession as a form of unreasonable and insufferable treason against the authority of the finest constitutional republic and most successful democratic experiment in the annals of history" (2010, 18).
50. See e.g., the trial of William Smith, which debated the status of Secession and its legitimacy as intensely as the definition of piracy.
51. Cobb notes that "covers" refers only to those envelopes that were actually used and thus carried a stamp or postal mark (1963/1965, 236). Other scholars use the terms interchangeably, however.
52. Due to the lack of traditional literary production, Daniel Aaron famously called the War an "Unwritten War" in 1973. Fahs counters this by focusing on the plethora of popular literature, flourishing in the 1860s; articulating attitudes toward gender and race, this body of writing "helped to shape new modes of imagining individuals' relationships to the nation" (2001, 2), including new relations between blacks and whites.
53. Gallagher (2011) cites the lack of slavery and emancipation themes on patriotic covers as evidence in support of his main thesis that the Civil War was more a War for Union than for the abolition of slavery.

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Coda

Countering potent but rather schematic discourses of pirate romance, this study of Anglophone Atlantic and North American pirate narratives from the colonial era to the Civil War has reread the pirate as a figure that negotiates ideas of legitimacy and historical scenarios of crisis. What I hope to have shown is how the fluid and flexible trope of piracy has been variably used as a means of Othering and of identification in order to do so in various contexts of cultural crisis. The pirate has been brought to the fore as a culturally mobile signifier that has been adapted in a number of historical situations as a term implying the criticality of legitimacy, both from what might be called a 'top-down' perspective of Othering and a 'bottom-up' approach of appropriation. The pirate's maritime environment as well as his—and to a quantitatively much smaller extent her—geographical, social, and cultural mobility have been cornerstones of the figure's conceptualization, in literature and beyond. These elements, as well as racial, class, and gendered categories of difference, were employed in narratives to debate the concept of piracy and underlying questions about the legitimacy of maritime violence—violence connected to early modern colonialism, the slave trade, and revolutionary scenarios. By performing contrapuntal readings, I have tried to complicate theorizations and interpretations of piracy as either hegemonic or resistant, highlighting how 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.

Within American studies, I hope to have been able to contribute to the maritime and transoceanic turn in the field. Thanks to the substantial work of many brilliant colleagues in these areas that I have been able to draw on, but also because of the currency of today's oceans as a site of environmental and humanitarian crisis, American Studies no longer remains landlocked and interested only in literatures, cultures, and histories within its national borders. Following transnational, trans-Atlantic, trans-Pacific, and archipelagic perspectives developed recently, I have selected a culturally mobile figure as the main focus of my study. The pirate is coastal figure of ontological and epistemological uncertainty that has been translated across oceans and has inspired a plethora of narratives about legitimacy and 'might and right.' Thinking further the connection between such figures and narratives on the one hand and the work of legitimization that becomes necessary in times of cultural crisis on the other, this book eventually also represents an attempt to highlight the fundamental importance of the semantic and symbolic articulation of collective anxieties in narrative and visual forms.

While I certainly have not been able to delve into the depths of detail with regard to the crisis scenarios that contextualize and were simultaneously coproduced by the narratives I have analyzed, due to the diachronic scope of my study, I hope that this scope will contribute to and help foster scholarly dialogue across these periods. By tapping into both well- and little-explored textual archives, I have tried to show how a side-by-side reading of what is often still too compartmentalized into 'the popular' and 'the highbrow' can lead to a fuller understanding of literary and cultural history as well as theoretical conceptions of the pirate. Much more work, especially regarding those archives that have not been taken seriously as an object of study for too long, awaits our scholarly attention. Examining M.M. Ballou's (Lt. Murray's) dozens of novelettes in a larger, hemispheric study on how they brokered American identity; a comprehensive study on the pirate in American drama or poetry; or critical readings

from a law-and-literature perspective of trial protocols—another under-studied archive: such projects represent just a few possibilities for the type of critical work my book hopes to encourage and facilitate.

This critical work could of course also continue chronologically, for of course, popular visual and verbal discourses of piracy did not cease with the Civil War. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, pirate narratives became increasingly translated into forms compatible with the emergent genre of children's literature; they were widely disseminated in journalism (Hume 2002) and remained a best-selling subgenre in dime novels and pulp fiction (Baepler, 1999, 49; 2004). Due to the polyphonic nature of the pirate narrative, which has combined hegemonic and subversive voices ever since the Puritan anti-piracy sermons (published together with pirate "confessions") and the roving, uncontainable sign of piracy, the pirate has remained popular up to her/his contemporary cross-medial versions, from television series to computer games, studies of which are just beginning to emerge (see e.g., Pfister).

This study was conceived and written at a moment in history in which crisis scenarios have been diagnosed everywhere: in democratic politics, ecology and human-nonhuman planetary relations, or with regard to endangered black lives across the globe. Unsurprisingly, piracy as a trope has again gained political and cultural currency, continuing the rhetoric of Othering and de-legitimation on the one hand and critical appropriation on the other that I have diagnosed in my readings of narratives from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. As a case in point, the post-9/11 U.S. war on terror was established in a continuum of semantic markers used in the Barbary Wars (Wheelan 2003; for a critique see Sutton 2009), propelling us to ask to what extent "the contemporary portrayal of the Muslim terrorist is predicated on the Barbary pirate" (Baepler 2004, 240; also Schillings 2017). Similarly, the 'piratical' activities of attacking multinational ships, taking hostage, and pressing for ransom at the Horn of Africa, emerging as a consequence of a vacuum of governance in the context of the 'failed state' of Somalia, hark back to Barbary and Orientalist discourses, "unified in American popular culture only by vague notions of Islamic Otherness" (Sutton 2009, n.p.; also Murphy 2010).

Concomitant with the occurrence of the digital age, media discourses emphasize a categorical semantic crisis over the definition of intellectual property in both cultural and legal terms in a digital era. In movie theaters

and on DVDs, viewers are warned that "Piracy Is Theft," a slogan created by the movie industry to protect its business. At the same time, activist groups continue to appropriate the signifier of piracy verbally and visually as a metaphorical figure of identification. Doing so, they respond to various contemporary crisis scenarios regarding intellectual property, data privacy, or the political system of representative democracy, from the Swedish torrent platform The Pirate Bay, operating until 2014, to various Pirate Parties, who, along with many public intellectuals and political commentators (e.g., Crouch 2004) have diagnosed a crisis of representative democracy. Eco-activist groups like the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) adopt the figure of the pirate in response to an environmental crisis that is perceived as insufficiently addressed by official politics and economics. Though there have been various court cases against their allegedly 'piratical' actions in the 2010s, the SSCS emphasizes the illegality of maritime activities that destroy maritime biospheres (somewhat ironically suggesting a fight against thieves engaged in biopiracy; see Dawdy and Bonni 2012) and its mission of safeguarding the oceans. Taken together, the contemporary currency of piracy in political and cultural discourses shows that piracy and crisis continue their semantic interrelatedness in the twenty-first century both as legal category and metaphor, while the simultaneous celebration of piracy in popular culture, exemplified by Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* cycle of films, by recent TV series like *Black Sails*, and by a plethora of computer games, are keeping the sign of the pirate in constant circulation. By examining discourses of piracy as a response to various crisis scenarios, my study finally also hopes to facilitate our critical understanding of contemporary usages of the label and the powerful questions about legitimacy that piracy will continue to raise.

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Index