Enemies of Mankind: The Image of Pirates in 18th-Century England

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The Shifting Image of Pirates

Pirates have, over time, brought to mind many images, ranging from heroic to villainous. During the age of Queen Elizabeth and Sir Francis Drake, pirates were considered necessary for foreign policy and even respected, seen occasionally as "'heroic' gentlemen adventurers [or] the 'shrewd' mercantile venturer."[1] In the late 17th century, buccaneers were seen as occupying a legitimate role despite their extreme violence. Much of this was tied to the official commissions they held in the Caribbean as privateers.[2] However, as the Admiralty had less reason to support buccaneers in the 18th century, pirates lost much of their legitimacy and sympathy.

At this point in England, pirates began to trend towards being portrayed as "principled opposition." Written sources tended to express pirates' opposition as directed against authority and sometimes society as a whole.[3] This led some to label pirates as removed from society and even humanity, calling them 'enemies of mankind.' At first, the phrase would mostly appear in official sources such as laws and trials arranged by the Admiralty, which was the governing body over all maritime affairs. When first used in trials it was a fairly watered-down statement, but over time as the phrase 'enemies of mankind' appeared in both legal and public discourse, its significance became much more extreme.

By 1724, legal documents would begin using *hostis humani generis* – the Latin, legal phrase for enemies of mankind – framing pirates as savage beasts disconnected from humanity. At that time laws had also been passed that allowed those who captured pirates at sea to "without any Solemnity of Condemnation, hang [the pirates] up at the Main-Yard; if they are brought to the next Port, and the Judge rejects the Tryal, or the Captors cannot wait for the Judge, without Peril or Loss, Justice may be done upon them by the Captors."[4] As pirates lost the right for a trial, so too did their image lose its humanity.

With the rise of newspapers and coffee houses, the 17th and 18th centuries are described by Jürgen Habermas as the early years of the public sphere.[5] The public sphere is defined by Gerard Hauser as "a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment."[6] The public sphere contained not only those who wrote literature and shaped trials, but also those who discussed published material. The bourgeoisie coffee-house society of the 17th and 18th centuries is identified by Jürgen Habermas as the most likely to debate published material and have an effect on later opinion.[7]

The discussion of piracy is apparent in a variety of written sources published in the next century, including dictionaries, trials, histories, fictional literature, and dramas. Each source presented a specific image of piracy. These images were both influenced by the public sphere – as the author responded to past images of pirates – and influenced the public sphere, as people debated and reviewed the written source and came to a conclusion on how accurate or inaccurate the image was. Literature often shifted in order to match the consensus that came about within coffee houses, resulting in certain images which gained popularity in both written and oral discourse, and which were continually reinforced through debate and written material.

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[1] Claire Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010) 137.

[2] Jack Beeching, introduction to *The Buccaneers of America*, by Alexander Exquemelin, trans. Alexis Brown (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1969), 11.

[3] Erin Mackie, *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates: The Making of the Modern Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 121.

[4] Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates*, ed. Manuel Schonhorn (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1999), 377-8.

[5] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962), 39.

[6] Gerard A. Hauser, "Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricality of Public Opinion," *Communication Monographs* 65 (1998): 86.

[7] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 33.

Despite the variety of opinions in the 17th century, by the mid-18th century, a negative image of pirates as being without society or humanity had emerged. However, sympathy for pirates' economic plight as well as praise of their courage and success remained.

A Robber by Sea: Defining Piracy

In order to gain an understanding of the nuances of how pirates were portrayed within literature, the more straightforward definitions that appeared within dictionaries is a good place to gain an initial picture.

Taking a sample of six dictionaries from 1623 to 1797, a pirate was overwhelmingly defined as "A robber by sea."[8] *The New World of Words* provided a 'Law-Definition' of robbery, defining it as "a felonious taking away of another Man's Goods openly against his Will, putting him in Bodily Fear."[9] The term 'robber' suggests a negative connotation and a force that works against, if not society, at least individuals within society. While 'robbers' are not wholly divided from society and humanity – and pirates would ultimately be framed as more than robbers – a 'robber' is someone who can be prosecuted and punished by law for their behavior, suggesting a certain division from acceptable citizens.

Many of the definitions seemed to attempt to vilify that which had previously been acceptable. *The New World of Words,* published in 1706, added to its definition of pirate, "In former times the Word was taken in a good sense," suggesting that in 1706 it was no longer used in such a sense.[10] Within dictionaries, buccaneers – who were widely accepted in the 17th century as legitimate defenders – were tied very heavily to pirates. Four of the dictionaries used 'pirate' within the definition of buccaneer and the other two gave no definition of buccaneer at all. According to these dictionaries, no form of piracy was acceptable. The *Dictionarium Britannicum* included additional gory detail in its definition, further condemning buccaneers and by extension pirates: "[they] used to cut the prisoners taken in war in pieces, and lay them on hurdles of *Brazil* wood erected on sticks, with fire underneath, and when so broiled or roasted to eat them."[11]

These samples suggest that even in the early 17th century a more negative view of piracy was emerging among the literate class, a view that would only increase as the buccaneers lost much of their legitimacy in the 18th century.

Villain or Folk Hero: Henry Avery

Leading up to the 18th century, written sources outside the legal sphere still supported pirates. Such print would influence what limited support remained for pirates later. In 1694, Theophilus Lewis published *A Copy of Verses, Composed by Captain Henry Every*, which argued that Avery was an English citizen and human. The ballad was published a few weeks after Avery's mutiny and it would eventually be a prominent factor in Avery's status within the public sphere as a folk hero.[12] The account was not only a tale of wealth and glory, but also of great patriotism. A good deal of the patriotic fervor seemed to be Avery's attempt to convince King George – and by extension the Admiralty – that his actions were justified and he should not be punished.[13] His argument was expressed in terms that also suggested Avery, a pirate, should be allowed to be a part of English society.

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[8] Henry Cockeram, *The English dictionarie of 1623* (New York: Huntington Press, 1930), 144. The other five dictionaries are Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum, or, A more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant*. London: T. Cox, 1730; Blount, Thomas, *Glossogrphia anglicana nova*. London: D. Brown, 1707; Johnson, Samuel, *A dictionary of the English language.* London: A. Millar, 1766; Phillips, Edwards, *The new world of words: or, Universal English dictionary*. London: J. Phillips, 1706; Sheridan, Thomas, *A complete dictionary of the English language, both with regard to sound and meaning*. London: Charles Dilly, 1797.

[9] Phillips, Edwards. *The new world of words: or, Universal English Dictionary* (London: J. Phillips, 1706).

[10] Ibid.

[11] Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum, or, A more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant* (London: T. Cox, 1730).

[12] Douglas R. Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere: The Henry Every Trials and the Battle for Meaning in the Seventeenth-Century Print Culture," *The Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 4 (2009): 894-5.

[13] This is most prominent in the ballad's closing verse, "Now this is the Course I intend for to steer;/My false-hearted Nation, to you I declare,/I have done thee no wrong, thou must me forgive,/The Sword shall maintain me as long as I live."

In addition to proclaiming his support of King George, Avery belittled other nations, further suggesting Avery was of no nation but England, as well as appealing to patriotic English citizens. Avery's support of King George was plainly stated: "I Honour St. George, and his Colours." He then flattered King George and continued to push his patriotism by claiming England's navy was more just than any other nation's: "He that strikes to St. George the better shall fare." He followed this by declaring himself a vigilant protector of England. His actions, rather than harming England – as mutinying and seizing a ship might be interpreted – were examples of him protecting England, "But he that refuses, shall sudenly spy/Strange Colours abroad of my Fancy to fly." What actions of war Avery did take were against other nations. The French, Spanish, and Portuguese are called "Heathen," and Avery was described as making "a War with them until that he dies."[14] In the ballad, Avery was attempting to fully integrate himself not only into human society, but English society, arguing he was a loyal citizen working in England's best interests.

In the two Henry Avery trials of 1696, the Board of Trade and the Admiralty, specifically their advocate Dr. Newton, were working against the popular appeal of Avery as a folk hero, and attempting to influence the public sphere to accept the trope of pirates as dangerous traitors, separate from English society and to a certain extent from human society.[15] A good deal of the anti-piracy rhetoric seems intent on persuading the jury to convict Avery, the conviction being necessary in order to satisfy the enraged Mughal, whose ships had been looted, but it also served the additional purpose of defaming pirates.[16][17] Douglas Burgess argues that in the Avery trails, the Board of Trade and Admiralty were attempting to deny the claim the Great Mughal had made, that England was a "nation of pirates," or, more specifically, that it sponsored pirates. Burgess also makes the claim that the authorities were intent on expressing that their official stance on pirates was that they were *hostis humani generis*.[18] However, this phrase never appears in the trial and his claim seems to have little support. While the idea of 'enemies of mankind' was somewhat present in both trials, it was less prominent than the idea of pirates as enemies of England, which likely sprung from the necessity to convince the English jury of Avery's guilt. There was also no use of any phrase akin to 'enemies of mankind' in the first trial.

The trial mostly focused on framing Avery as a traitor to England, with even the damage suffered by other countries twisted to articulate how this was harmful to the English. This framing expressed the idea that England was not sponsoring pirates because it would be detrimental to England itself. Newton began by addressing Avery and his crew's attacks on England specifically – which was generally untrue as Avery took very little action against English vessels beyond the initial mutiny – and other countries generally: "they first practised these Crimes upon their own Country-men, the English, and then continued them on to Strangers and Foreigners."[19][20] Newton did speak at length on how the ship stolen in the mutiny had been wrongly used and taken away from its valuable post as a trading merchant ship, but he provides no other examples.[21] Newton further identified Avery's actions against other countries as traitorous to England because it could lead to severe consequences, "to involve the Nations concerned, in War and Blood, to the Destruction of the Innocent *English* in those Countries, the total Loss of the *Indian* Trade, and thereby, the impoverishment of this Kingdom."[22]

Newton used this threat to push the image of pirates as more than simple thieves, defining piracy as far more than "a robber by sea," but "so much exceeds Theft or Robbery at Land; as the Interest and Concerns of Kingdoms and Nations, are above those of private Families, or particular Persons: For suffer

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[14] *A Copy of Verses, Composed by Captain Henry Every, Lately Gone to Sea to seek his Fortune* (London: Theophilus Lewis, 1694). Web. 10 Apr. 2014.

[15] Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere," 888.

[16] For examples see Sir Charles Hedge's speech, *The Tryals of Joseph Dawson, Edward Forseith etc. for several piracies and robberies by them committed in the company of Every the grand pirate* (London: John Everingham, 1696), 5-9.

[17] Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere," 894.

[18] Ibid., 894.

[19] Ibid., 896.

[20] *The Tryals of Joseph Dawson*, 4.

[21] Ibid., 4.

[22] Ibid., 4.

Pirates, and the Commerce of the World must cease." [23] Despite the image the Admiralty was trying to create, the jury was not convinced and acquitted the pirates, suggesting that pirates were still respected or even loved in the English public sphere.[24]

In the second trial, where the pirates were tried for mutiny, the emphasis shifted towards pirates as lesser thieves.[25] This further dampened the idea of pirates as enemies of mankind, though it continued to push the idea of pirates as enemies of England.[26] During the trial, Sir Charles Hedges, a judge of the Admiralty's court, would contradict the definition Newton previously gave of piracy and instead define piracy as "only a Sea term for Robbery," returning to the more neutral, if still negative, definition given in dictionaries.[27][28] Although Hedges would also call pirates "Enemies of Merchants and Mankind," the phrase did not imply pirates were nearly as removed from humanity as would later be implied by the phrase *hostis humani generis*.[29] Not only was the focus of the trial already on pirates as lesser thieves, but the phrase is far vaguer than *hostis humani generis*. *Hostis humani generis* had previously been given a more specific definition that emphasized the idea of enemies of all mankind and every nation and "the highest echelon of international criminals" – allowing other countries to attack pirates without fear of punishment.[30] Sir Hedges's phrasing was additionally muddled because of its emphasis on merchants. However, the pirates were condemned and the push by legal sources to blacken pirates within the public sphere was on its way.

Yet, despite the Admiralty's disparagement of Avery specifically and pirates in general over the next several decades, Avery would remain a popular folk hero. A legend grew up around his raiding of the Great Mughal's ships and was published in several accounts in the 18th century, which, while not portraying Avery as particularly English, still depicted him as human. The popular legend was that, when raiding the *Ganj-i-Sawai*, Avery captured a princess, often portrayed as the Great Mughal's daughter, whom he would later marry. After becoming fabulously wealthy off the loot, he set up a small kingdom on an island and named himself king. This account would appear in 1709 in Captain Adrian van Broek's *The Life and Adventures of Captain John Avery* and again, with some changes, in Charles Johnson's play *The Successful Pyrate* in 1730. [31][32]

Avery's piratical actions against the great Mughal would be further justified in 1720 in Daniel Defoe's *The King of the Pirates*, which portrayed him as a reasonable fellow who was not particularly violent. The book was presented as the true account of Avery's life, with Avery as the narrator. It was less fanciful – Avery did not marry the Great Mughal's daughter and he had a settlement only on Madagascar rather than a kingdom – yet in the book Avery was still defending his reputation: "I have heard that it has been reported in *England* that I ravish'd this Lady [the Mughal's daughter], and then used her most barbarously; but they wrong me, for I never offer'd any Thing of that Kind to her." [33] Rather, he treated her courteously, to the extent that he later received a letter from the princess offering a pardon.[34]

He also insisted that initially he was still loyal to England, "tho' we had been a Kind of Pyrates, known and declar'd Enemies to the *Spaniards*, yet it was to them only, and to no other; for we never offer'd to rob any of our other *European* Nations, either *Dutch* or *French*, much less *English*." [35] Only when his crew became stranded, in their attempt to escape do they fall into the hands of pirates and find themselves in "the Service of the Devil indeed, and, like him, were at War with Mankind."[36]

[23] *The Tryals of Joseph Dawson*, 4.
[24] Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere," 901.
[25] Ibid., 902.
[26] Ibid., 901.
[27] Sideny Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Stephen Leslie, vol. 25 (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1888), 362.
[28] *The Tryals of Joseph Dawson,* 6.
[29] Ibid., 8.
[30] Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere," 894.
[31] Ibid., 910.
[32] Charles Johnson, *The Successful Pyrate* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1713).
[33] Daniel Defoe, *The King of the Pirates* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1720).
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

Although piracy itself was not justified, in the book, Avery was a very human figure who was courteous, loyal, and driven to his circumstances by desperation rather than an innate cruelty. Avery did not attempt to reintegrate himself back into English society as a full citizen, but at the same time he was not a savage figure and thus remained a part of humanity. He was trying to reintegrate himself to the extent that his English readers would see him as a respectable and loyal human.

Although the narratives published about Avery suggested that the Admiralty did not convince the English public that he was an outsider and a traitor – and publishing the Avery trials was no more successful in convincing the public – another opportunity would present itself in the William Kidd trials.[37]

Common Enemy of Mankind: William Kidd

Dr. Newton was present at the Kidd trials in 1701 as well, arguing again that England was not a 'nation of pirates' and more forcefully that pirates were the enemies of mankind. England's possible role as a 'nation of pirates' seems to be less of a concern, and it would be logical for the issue to be less pressing than during the Avery trials when the Great Mughal's accusations were fresh. This shift in argument was likely also influenced by the public sphere's negative reaction to the original image the Admiralty presented. In order to change the public sphere's view, the Admiralty would need to come up with a slightly different argument – one that emphasized pirates' truly traitorous and even bestial nature.

The majority of Newton's argument disproving English support of pirates was tied to the economic detriment of piracy. He several times stated that the loot taken by pirates was "lawful Money of England."[38] Later he would tie economy to national honor, "the *English* Nation, (our Common Country) whose Interest and Welfare so much depend on the Encrease and Security of Trade."[39] He pushed against the idea of William Kidd becoming a folk hero, as Henry Avery was and continued to be, by calling Kidd's fame "to the Disgrace and the Prejudice of the *English* Nation."[40] He later referenced Avery directly, reiterating the shame the pirates had brought to Europe and England specifically, "the Scandal and Reproach of the *European* Nations, and the Christian Name, (I wish I could not say, that the *Kidd's* and *Avery's* had not made it more particularly so of the *English*)."[41] Newton's argument continued to be that pirates, and Kidd specifically, had removed themselves from English society and were enemies of England.

Newton went on to further deprive pirates of their humanity by presenting an argument for pirates as violent, nationless thieves. Newton did not use the term *hostis humani generis*, but he did use a phrase that edged closer to it: "the Common Enemy of Mankind."[42] The phrase referred specifically to Kidd, whom he called "the Arch-Pirate," but the term still bled onto the other pirates present. Newton's initial argument emphasized the idea of pirates as thieves, several times using the word "Feloniously" and such phrases as could easily apply to a thief, "set upon, board, break, and enter a certain Merchant-Ship."[43]

When he began to elaborate, he described pirates as true horrors and violent men. He gave an initial taste of this in his opening statement, explaining that the captured sailors were put "in corporal fear of their Lives" and later sensationalized the issue further with tales of torture, describing pirates "torturing cruelly their Persons [the captured Moors and Christians]…burning their Houses, and killing after a barbarous manner the Natives on the shore; equally cruel, dreaded and hated both on the Land and at Sea."[44] The emphasis on pirates as thieves on land seems to be an attempt to bring the problem closer to the English jury, who likely had never been out to sea.

Finally, Newton rejected pirates' ties to any nation or society, stating, "*Moors* and *Christians* are all alike to Pirates, they distinguish not Nations or Religions."[45] Newton and the Admiralty were successful in their attempts to manipulate the public sphere, and thus Kidd, along with four others, was executed.

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[37] Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere," 905-9.
[38] *The Arraignment, Tryal, and Condemnation of Captain William Kidd, for the Murther and Pyracy* (London: J. Nutt. 1701), 14.
[39] Ibid., 17.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 14.
[44] Ibid., 14, 17.
[45] Ibid., 17.

The Admiralty and crown were on their way to creating the narrative of pirates as *hostis humani generis*, completely devoid of humanity and separate from any human society. Their battle was aided after the War of the Spanish Succession ended in 1714 and pirates more freely attacked English vessels, at which point popular sympathy for pirates waned – although it did not vanish – and the phrase 'enemies of mankind' gained popularity with the public as well.[46]

A Hell of our Own: The Savage Portrayal of Pirates

        Such it was that the portrayal of pirates as traitorous beasts began to appear in literature outside of the Admiralty in works such as Captain Charles Johnson's *A General History of Pyrates*. Although Johnson admired pirates' bravery and cleverness, he gave an overall negative view of pirates, portraying them as savage and occasionally downright devilish. Johnson was aware that many sailors turned to piracy when in desperate situations and he encouraged sailors not to take up such wicked lives but rather use *A General History* as "a Direction" to "what Lengths they may venture to go, without violating the Laws of Nations."[47] He also suggested the creation of "a National Fishery, which would be the best Means in the World to prevent Pyracy," because it would offer sailors employment.[48] His opening advice suggested that pirates were perceived as enough of a problem that literature needed to step forward and give suggestions on how the problem might be remedied. It further suggested that piracy was seen within the public sphere as something to be avoided rather than an acceptable practice as it had been in the past.

        Within his history, Johnson often portrays pirates as particularly cruel and violent. Blackbeard, who sailed during the 1710s, was an especially sensational case, bent on mindless violence, revenge, and terror. The only exception came when Johnson wrote that Blackbeard was a very courageous man, having "uncommon Boldness and personal Courage."[49] Yet in most other instances Blackbeard was a beast. He shot his own men for no other reason than "if he did not now and then kill one of them, they would forget who he was" and created "*a Hell of [our] own*" with his men just to see "*how long we can bear it*."[50] The terrible nature of Blackbeard was extended further to his crew and pirates in general, "In the Commonwealth of Pyrates, he who goes the greatest Length of Wickedness, is looked upon with a kind of Envy."[51] The terror of Blackbeard came not only from his appearance – "his Eyes naturally looking fiercer and wild, made him altogether such a Figure that Imagination cannot form an Idea of a Fury, from Hell, to look more frightful," – but also from his disregard of authority.[52]   Blackbeard blatantly attacked and captured ships within sight of Charles Town, which "struck a great Terror to the whole Providence of *Carolina*."[53] When he was later attacked by Lieutenant Maynard, he "hail'd him [Lieutenant Maynard] in this rude Manner: *Damn you for Villains, who are you?*"[54] Blackbeard seemed a wholly villainous figure whose devilish deeds leeched him of humanity and whose disregard of authority separated him from any nation.

        Another such pirate was Edward Low, a villainous man in his own right. Johnson describes Low as having an inclination towards piracy all along, "Nature seem'd to have designed him for a Pyrate from his Childhood, for very early he began the Trade of plundering."[55] Low was poor and uneducated and took to gambling, robbery, cheating, and violence early on, so there was little surprise when he became a pirate.[56] Low initiated the mutiny against his captain and shot a man in the head.[57] The phrase "War against all the World" was also reserved by Johnson solely to describe Low's and one other pirate's campaigns.[58] Johnson gave many accounts from the 1710s of Low and his crew's violence, including torturing the crew of the

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[46] Burgess, "Piracy in the Public Sphere," 909.
[47] Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 3.
[48] Ibid., 4.
[49] Ibid., 71.
[50] Ibid., 84-5.
[51] Ibid., 85.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 74.
[54] Ibid., 80.
[55] Ibid., 318.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 319.
[58] Ibid.

Wright galley: "the Pyrates cut and mangled them in a barbarous Manner…they triced up [two Portuguese passengers] at each Arm of the Fore-Yard, but let them down again before they were quite dead."[59] At another time, after a prize escaped him, Low "ordered the Captain's Lips to be cut off, which he broil'd before his Face, and afterwards murdered him and all the Crew."[60] Such cases of violence were not specific to Low and among the other accounts of pirates, violence abounded.[61] Low ultimately ended badly, as a coward, fleeing when his ship was attacked.[62] Low was one such example of an irredeemable pirate who was removed from society and humanity and deserved no sympathy for his descent into piracy. Despite what leeway Johnson gave to some pirates when they were particularly brave or clever, he overall depicted pirates as violent barbarians, a far more negative portrayal than had been given even at the beginning of the 18th century.

Traitor, but not Beast: Captain Singleton

By 1720, when Daniel Defoe's book *Captain Singleton* was published, the concept of pirates as 'enemies of mankind' was widely recognized, although Defoe does not go so far as to describe pirates as removed from humanity as Johnson often does.[63] In some respects the narrative used the idea of enemies of mankind, though it never employed the exact phrase. The text established Singleton as a complete outsider from English society. When Singleton first returned to England, he only stayed as long as his wealth allowed. In addition, Hans Turley argues that Singleton left England because he "discovers that he has no place in England."[64] Singleton also later became friends with another man, William Walters, because William was an outsider.[65] The two men eventually returned to England, though Singleton had declared his disloyalty to England, "I care not if I never see it more."[66] But in England they disguised themselves as foreigners and allowed no one but William's sister to know they were English, exiling themselves from their home country even as they lived in it.[67]

Despite his nationless status, few examples of Singleton as a vicious beast or even violent man are given, though he claims to be violent. Singleton claimed that when he was young and living on a ship, he had nothing to do but "learn every thing that is wicked…Thieving, Lying, Swearing, Forswearing."[68] Yet, at the same time, he joined those that were "not so bad as the rest," and had "the most contemptible Thoughts of the rest."[69] When he and several others were later cast from the ship onto an island, he described himself as, "perfectly loose and dissolute in my Behaviour, bold and wicked while I was under Government, and now perfectly unfit to be trusted with Liberty; for I was ripe for any Villainy."[70] However, no examples of this were given and it was Singleton who gave the best suggestion for getting off the island – which was the beginnings of his great propensity for being a charismatic and rational leader.[71] Singleton's loyalty and friendship with William made his character all the more human and likable. Ultimately, Singleton, with William's encouragement, repented and agreed to use his ill-gotten wealth for helping those in distress.[72] Though he remained an outcast from England, he was a loyal and charismatic human who did not live up to any violent reputation.

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[59] Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 324.

[60] Ibid., 326.

[61] Joel Baer provides several additional examples for both Low and others in his article "The Complicated Plot of Piracy: Aspects of English Criminal Law and The Image of the Pirate in Defoe": "Lolonois the Cruel, for example, was supposed to have torn out and eaten the heart of a captive who refused to lead him to his treasure. Edward Low's crew delighted in such jest-book pranks as burning a captured ship while its cook, 'who, they said, being a greazy Fellow, would fry well in the Fire,' was bound to the main mast" (17).

[62] Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 329.

[63] Hans Turley, "Piracy, Identity, and Desire in *Captain Singleton*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31 no. 2 (1997/1998): 202.

[64] Ibid., 201.

[65] Ibid., 204.

[66] Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton* (London: J. Brotherton, 1720), 317.

[67] Ibid., 343.

[68] Ibid., 8.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 15.

[71] Ibid., 32.

[72] Ibid., 319-20, 328.

Piracy itself was generally seen as evil in *Captain Singleton*, however Turley argues a certain "grudging respect" was awarded it by the author, especially in terms of its similarities to legitimate traders.[73] Once William arrived, he asked Singleton, "what is thy Business, and the business of all the People thou hast with thee? Is it not to get Money?…And wouldst thou, says he, rather have Money without Fighting, or Fighting without Money?" before suggesting a way in which to gain more plunder with less violence.[74] Both Mackie and Turley argue that once William stripped away the "libertine aspects" of pirates, they were no different from traders and businessmen.[75][76][77] The similarity between the two suggested not only that pirates were clever and successful businessmen, but in this instance, because Singleton did not appear to be wholly villainous, that the public should not be too quick to judge pirates.

Alexander the Great was more successful, that's all: Reintegration through Satire

Although a good deal of 18th century literature accepted the trope of pirates as enemies of mankind, pirates nonetheless found their way back into English society. Satirists such as Daniel Defoe and John Gay used them to critique politicians, businessmen, and even citizens, suggesting pirates were no more villainous than other, more legally integrated citizens.

The belief that pirates were quite similar to more legitimate citizens was expressed in a quote by the Roman philosopher Cicero which was very popular in the 18th century: "When the king [Alexander] asked him [the pirate] what he was thinking of, that he should molest the sea, he said with defiant independence: 'The same as you when you molest the world! Since I do this with a little ship I am called a pirate. You do it with a great fleet and are called an emperor.'"[78][79] The quote was popular enough that John Gay was able to fleetingly reference it in his opera *Polly* in 1729 as a pirate was led to his execution and expect the audience to understand it, "*Alexander the great* was more successful, that's all."[80]

Gay very blatantly satirized politicians in *Polly*, though his satire compared them to pirates who were far less redeemable than Singleton and William. Before the arrival of the pirates, a colonist and upper class figure named Ducat appeared on stage and gloated of his wealth, "I have a fine library of books that I never read; I have a fine stable of horses that I never ride; I build, I buy plate, jewels, pictures, or any thing that is valuable and curious, as your great men do."[81] Even before he was compared to the pirates, Ducat appeared ridiculous and greedy. Calhoun Winton argues that Gay was linking Ducat with the Whig Prime Minister Robert Walpole, who had also been satirized in *The Beggar's Opera*, of which *Polly* is the sequel. Ducat's fabulous wealth was in reference to criticism by the press, concerning Walpole's "display of rich vulgarity."[82] Later in the opera when the pirates attack, the colonists, and specifically Ducat, are cowards; they search for excuses not to fight and are proclaimed "too rich to have Courage."[83]

The pirates that then enter the scene were a lying, "self-indulgent, avaricious gang of thieves," however they were no worse than the colonists.[84] It was only the colonists' wealth that made their actions more justifiable – as argued in Cicero's quote.[85] The pirates – and by extension the colonists – were seen as all the more despicable in the pirate captain's dialogue – marked as Morano here – with the Indian chief, Pohetohee:

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[73] Turley, "Piracy, Identity, and Desire in *Captain Singleton*," 202, 199.

[74] Defoe, *Captain Singleton*, 200.

[75] Turley, "Piracy, Identity, and Desire in *Captain Singleton*," 204.

[76] Mackie, *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates*, 126.

[77] The one page broadside printed in 1702, *Dialogue Between the Ghost of Captain Kidd and the Napper in the Strand,* similarly argues that nappers, or shopkeepers, are no different from pirates. The napper initially resists Kidd's suggestion that they are "Old Acquaintance[s]," insisting he is "a Substantial Shopkeeper in the *Strand,*" however the napper ultimately admits that "'Tis true Brother *Kidd,* that I live in the *Strand,*/Where low Water mark is nearer at hand./You are Pyrate at Sea, and I Pyrate at Land."

[78] Joel H. Baer, "The Complicated Plot of Piracy: Aspects of English Criminal Law and The Image of the Pirate in Defoe," *The Eighteenth Century* 23, no. 1 (1982): 20.

[79] Cicero, *De Re Publica* as quoted in Baer 19-20.

[80] John Gay, *Polly: an Opera* (London: T. Thomas, 1729), 55.

[81] Ibid., 2.

[82] Calhoun Winton, *John Gay and the London Theatre* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 138.

[83] Gay, *Polly: an Opera*, 17.

[84] Winton, *John Gay and the London Theatre*, 139.

[85] Ibid.

> *Pohetohee*. Would your *European* laws have suffer'd crimes like these to have gone unpunish'd!
> *Morano*. Were all I am worth safely land, I have wherewithal to make almost any crime sit easy upon me…
> *Poh*. Would not your honest industry have been sufficient to have supported you?
> *Mor*. Honest industry! I have heard talk of it indeed among the common people, but all great genius's are above it…
> *Poh*. Is not wisdom esteem'd among you?
> *Mor*. Yes, Sir: But only as a step to riches and power; a step that raises ourselves, and trips up our neighbours.[86]

Gay was also aware of the idea of pirates as enemies of mankind and used the expression briefly in the play.[87]

Pirates and politicians were characterized as cowardly, lying, dishonorable men who leeched off of others rather than work in 'honest industry.' Though this seemed to have the intention of removing politicians from society rather than integrating pirates into it – and it seems unlikely Gay was advocating the integration of pirates into society – the comparison ultimately suggested that pirates were not as removed from humanity as was proposed by such phrases as 'enemies of mankind.'

Such savagery was tied not only to politicians, but Winton argues, to common British citizens.[88] Ducat was identified as a "Subject of *Britain*" and the majority of the pirates were as well.[89] Ducat was also encourage to "live up to our [the British] customs," as was popular "among all ranks of People" who "push themselves into the polite world by squandering more than they are worth."[90] Later, when the pirate captain's lover tries to convince him to return to England, she explains that he "will be rich enough to be respected by [his] neighbours," regardless of his qualities or past behavior.[91] Greed appeared to be a characteristic shared by pirates, politicians, and many British citizens. Although it was unlikely Gay was suggesting British citizens should be removed from society, it was alerting them to their failings, and suggested citizens were not so different from the pirates they abhorred.

Conclusion

The vilification of pirates began with legal sources, such as trials and laws, in the late 17th century. By the mid-18th century, many other written sources had caught onto the idea and also began to reject pirates' affiliation with authority figures and society. Yet this consensus was only achieved through the repeated presentation in multiple forms of what specifically made pirates villainous. The public was initially far less receptive, as seen in *A Copy of Verses*. Over time, though, it appears that the public sphere picked up on the idea of pirates as violent, drunken thieves and encouraged both legal and public written sources to further the idea. Pirates progressed from simple thieves to barbarians to common enemies of mankind.

A variety of opinions about piracy continued to exist and sympathy towards them remained, but the emergence of the public sphere enabled a popular consensus on the image of pirates to be created. The public sphere allowed dominant views to arise more easily and effectively as coffee house society debated printed literature, ultimately resulting in a consensus that pirates were villains. Although the popularity of the phrase 'enemies of mankind' did not guarantee that everyone accepted pirates were both traitors and barbarians, such a mentality was widespread and ultimately pirates were condemned by society.

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86 Gay, *Polly: an Opera*, 55.
87 Ibid., 11.
88 Winton, *John Gay and the London Theatre*, 140.
89 Ibid., 1.
90 Gay, *Polly: an Opera*, 1.
91 Ibid., 31.

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