

Pirate Portrayals in 18th and 19th Century British Literature: 1700-1900

Research Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation *with research distinction* in
English in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

Matthew Eveland

The Ohio State University

April 2015

Project Advisor: Professor Elizabeth Hewitt, Department of English

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, pirates proved to be a real threat on the high seas as they became self-proclaimed villains of all nations. By interrupting trade, colonialism, and social order, pirates came to symbolize political and economic individualism. Eighteenth century writers were inspired by the activities of these pirates and utilized them in their works in order to make economic and political arguments about the state of eighteenth century Europe. During the nineteenth century Romantic era, writers altered the traditional portrayal of literary pirate and began presenting the pirate as a romantic anti-hero.

In this paper, I will examine five eighteenth and nineteenth works that contain a pirate episode or a pirate figure in order to both trace the shifting image of the pirate and to demonstrate a connection between how writers utilize pirates to help convey their individual meanings. I begin my analysis with an examination of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and continue to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. I will analyze how each author portrays their pirates and why the pirate proves significant in the full context of their works. In the realm of literature, the pirate figure serves as the embodiment of individuality and although the image of the pirate has changed throughout the centuries, I will prove that the pirate has maintained its status as a symbol of social freedom.

Defoe's 1719 novel, *Robinson Crusoe* tells the story of a castaway that spends several years on a tropical island after a storm wrecks his ship. Scholars analyze this book in terms of its contribution to the development of the novel and literary criticism of this story tends to concentrate primarily on Crusoe's time spent on the island. However, the pirate attack that occurs early in the book also proves to be significant because it reflects Defoe's own views regarding real piracy and international commerce. Although Defoe's later books focus primarily on piracy, *Robinson Crusoe* serves as the defining embodiment of Defoe's opinions regarding

trade, slavery, religion, and government in the eighteenth century. By presenting pirates as a universal enemy of trade, Defoe comments on the value of international trade relations and intends to rally European governments against piracy.

Early in the novel, pirates attack Crusoe's ship and enslave Crusoe and his crew. Although Crusoe's men attempt to fight off the rogues, they are ultimately captured by the "Turkish Rover of Salée" and Crusoe becomes the pirate captain's slave.¹ The pirates take Crusoe to Salé where he remains a slave for two years until he manages to escape with a young Morisco boy named Xury. While this pirate episode is undeniably brief, Defoe's portrayal of the pirates and his depiction of the relationship between Crusoe and Xury demonstrate Defoe's personal dedication to the expansion and protection of international commerce.

The pirates in Defoe's novel are notably not of European decent, but rather derive from a pirate base in Morocco. Defoe bases these pirates on the Barbary corsairs, who "operated on a vast scale, and indeed it has been suggested that they represented perhaps the greatest intensity of pirate activity in history."² Like privateers, corsairs were under license to attack the merchant shipping of an enemy at a time of war. The historic Barbary corsairs were devoted entirely to the capture and enslavement of Christian merchant vessels and also proved to be a very real problem affecting British trade and expansion at the time of *Robinson Crusoe's* publication.³ According to University of Bedfordshire Professor of English Literature, W.R Owens, "Public campaigns to raise funds to ransom captives were often on a large scale-an indication of the widespread public concern about the issue."⁴ Additionally, published escaped slave accounts during this time became a principle source of information regarding the operations of the corsairs. Thus, Defoe's

¹ Defoe, Daniel and Michael Shinagel. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1975. 15.

² Owens, W.R. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." *English*, 62.236 (2013): 51-66. 53.

³ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 53.

⁴ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 54.

corsair attack and later escape reflect real life issues regarding piracy at the time.

Defoe writes his corsair episode in one large paragraph and his text contains little to no punctuation which mirrors the realistic speed of the pirate's attack. According to Owens, "The speed with which the pirate vessel over takes Crusoe's ship...is very much how readers would have expected to pirates to have operated," and in portraying this realistic speed, Defoe works to depict a realistic pirate attack.⁵ As the corsairs pursue Crusoe's ship, he says that the rogues' ship sailed "just athwart our Quarter, instead of athwart our Stern."⁶ The strategic movement of the corsairs demonstrates the methodical nature of the attack. Crusoe also describes the rovers attack as "cutting and hacking the Decks and Rigging," which would have disabled the ship allowing for easy commandeering and enslavement.⁷ Defoe means to illustrate that the corsairs' attack is a practiced, economic assault.

The corsairs focus primarily on disabling the ship and capturing Crusoe's men rather than killing or torturing them. Like the real Barbary pirates, the corsairs are interested strictly in enslavement of Crusoe's men. Notably, Crusoe does not go into detail regarding casualties or injuries resulting from the attack and merely laments, "we were obliged to yield, and were carry'd all Prisoners into Sallee, a Port belonging to the Moors."⁸ By portraying the corsairs as enemies of trade and focused on enslavement, rather than as brutal savages, Defoe deviates from early eighteenth century common interpretations of real Barbary pirates.

Defoe deliberately distinguishes between historical accuracy and sensationalism in his interpretation of the corsair attack. As previously stated, escaped slave narratives became popular sources of information regarding the corsairs, but these narratives often exaggerated the

⁵ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 57.

⁶ Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. 15.

⁷ Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. 15.

⁸ Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. 15.

brutality of the Muslim pirates. For example, Owens points out that Defoe's readers would have read or heard reports of how "prisoners would have been shackled with heavy chains, and taken through the streets to underground dungeons," where they experienced violence, hatred, and humiliation.⁹ Owens calls the escaped slave accounts the "most negative influence on British understanding of Islam and Muslims in the early modern period."¹⁰ However, Defoe identifies that his issue with the Barbary pirates does not derive from religion or nationality, but solely in trade.

In *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements*, Defoe says, "Trade knows no Parties, no Politic, no religious Interests," and highlights the notion that the Barbary corsairs are not enemies because of their religious beliefs, but because they are a threat to European merchants.¹¹ The degree to which Defoe values trade comes to the forefront in his portrayal of the relationship between Crusoe and Xury. While Defoe's corsair attack effectively identifies a real threat to international trade, his depiction of Crusoe and Xury highlights his own economic attitudes and perspectives on slave trade.

During Crusoe's captivity in Salé, Defoe introduces Xury who accompanies Crusoe in his escape. Although initially Crusoe appears uncertain about Xury, he opts to keep Xury after the boy swears loyalty to him. Crusoe grows fond of him and says, "The Boy answer'd me with so much Affection that made me love him ever after," identifying a personal, rather than business, relationship between the two.¹² However, eventually the two come across a Portuguese ship and Crusoe says, "He [the captain] offer'd me also 60 Pieces of Eight...for my Boy Xury, which I

⁹ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 57.

¹⁰ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 57.

¹¹ Defoe, Daniel. *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements (1725-26)*, in *Writings on Travel, Discovery and History by Daniel Defoe*. Eds. W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001-02. Ed. by P. N. Furbank. 114-16.

¹² Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. 20.

was loath to take.”¹³ Despite his hesitations, Crusoe sells Xury into slavery demonstrating that although he values Xury as a companion, he sees Xury’s economic value as more significant. Owens points out that the sale of Xury is a “prime example of Crusoe’s devaluation of human relationships to their commodity values.”¹⁴ Crusoe does express remorse for selling Xury later in the novel when he says, “we both wanted Help...I had done wrong in my parting with my Boy *Xury*,” but this regret derives from the realization that Xury was a more valuable laborer than the money Crusoe received for him.¹⁵ Additionally, Xury’s lack of objection naturalizes this exchange. Crusoe’s role as a slave trader corresponds to Defoe’s investment in the African Company, and thus, Defoe demonstrates a support of slave trade. Also, as Owens notes, the episode of selling Xury provides insight into both Crusoe’s attitude towards human relationships as well as Defoe’s central economic principles.¹⁶

Commercial and trade development proved to be the strongest and most constant themes in Defoe’s writing, reflecting his clear enthusiasm about international business practices. Defoe lived through a period of tremendous economic growth in England both in terms of domestic and international trade. He saw a drastic increase in colonial expansion as territories in North America and the West Indies were brought under British rule. Defoe’s passion about commercial developments led to his argument that “the pursuit of trade, progress and improvement is no less than a religious duty on mankind.”¹⁷ For example, in a review of British economics, Defoe writes “he is my Friend in Trade, who I can trade with, *that is*, can get by; but he that would get from me, is my Mortal Enemy in Trade.”¹⁸ By portraying the corsairs early in

¹³ Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. 26.

¹⁴ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 60.

¹⁵ Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. 27.

¹⁶ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 61.

¹⁷ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 62.

¹⁸ Defoe, Daniel. *A Review of the State of the British Nation*. 1710. Ed. John McVeagh. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003. 266.

his novel, Defoe establishes a criticism of privateering and piracy. However, during the Xury episode, Defoe demonstrates a support for slave trading as Crusoe reduces Xury down to his economic value. Although the actions of the corsairs “fuelled in him an implacable hatred of all kinds of piracy or privateering,” Defoe saw economic value in African slave trading and the two episodes in his novel demonstrate this dichotomy.¹⁹

Piracy was legally sanctioned during times of war with governing bodies providing letters of marque that allowed privateers to attack enemy ships.²⁰ However, privateers often went beyond their authorized missions and attacked ships at will. This powerful combination of mercenary politics and mercantilism essentially created state licensed pirates that drastically interrupted international trade.²¹ In Defoe’s view, wars should not concern or involve merchants and trade. In his *Review*, he asks, “Why might not War be begun and carried on without ruining Trade, without interrupting the general Commerce of Nations.”²² He feared that increased privateering only contributed to the rise and continuation of piracy. However, while privateering presented a threat to international trade, the “activities of pirates or corsairs such as the Salle Rovers represented an even more dangerous threat to trade, and Defoe was vehement that they should be suppressed.”²³

Defoe makes similar calls for united action against pirates in his other works and even offers a military strategy that would virtually abolish piracy. In *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements*, he explains that European powers should work to push the inhabitants of pirate coastal ports inward and take over African coastal territories for themselves.

¹⁹ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 62.

²⁰ Turley, Hans. *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash: Piracy, Sexuality, and Masculine Identity*. New York: New York University Press, 1999. 205.

²¹ Parker, Martin. “Pirates, merchants and anarchists: Representations of international business.” *Management & Organizational History* 4.2 (2009): 167-185. 170.

²² Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 63.

²³ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 63.

Again, Defoe makes a point to emphasize that his proposal is not based on racial or religious grounds and writes, “Commerce is a certain Communication of Nations occasion’d by the necessities, and for the good of Mankind; the Enemies of Trade are Enemies to all Men;”²⁴ He argues that a force of fifty or sixty thousand men could easily conquer the coastal ports and cities of North Africa, thereby forcing the inhabitants inland. He goes on to say that those inhabitants would be replaced by European settlers and forced to give up piracy. Instead, these theoretical former pirates would rely on “honest Labour and Application,” and promote lawful international trade.²⁵

However, not all European powers agreed with Defoe’s view. Many European powers felt that as long as the corsairs also posed a threat to other nations, allowing the corsairs to continue their operations could only be to their advantage. Additionally, many European nations, such as France, financed the activities of Christian corsairs to attack, capture, and enslave Muslims.²⁶ According to pirate expert, Angus Konstam, “in Europe, Barbary corsairs were often depicted as cruel and fanatical Muslims who waged an undeclared war against their religious enemies.”²⁷ The Christian corsairs produced no such image. It would have been hypocritical for European powers to condemn the Barbary corsairs because the “corsairs were licensed to attack Christians,” just as Christian corsairs were licensed to attack Muslims.²⁸ Additionally, the slave labor that came from the enslavement of Muslims was valuable enough for European nations to not make any great strides toward total corsair annihilation. In times of war, European powers, such as France and England, had their own self-interests in mind and

²⁴ Defoe. *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements*. 114-16.

²⁵ Defoe. *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements*. 118-20.

²⁶ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 66.

²⁷ Konstam, Angus. *Pirates: The Complete History from 1300 BC to the Present Day*. Guilford: Lyons Press, 2008. 78.

²⁸ Owens. “Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates.” 66.

thus, Defoe's call for the creation of a pan-European military force to completely suppress the corsairs never came to fruition.

As previously stated, Defoe firmly believed that war could be separate from trade and that a trade network could be sustained during European war. For example, during the "War of the Spanish Succession, both sides used privateers to attack, plunder, and destroy merchant ships of the enemy," essentially weaponizing trade.²⁹ Defoe thought that wars should be confined to "Princes and their armies" without concerning merchants.³⁰ He believed people could achieve their economic goals without engaging in political conflict. He also demonstrates this philosophy in his defense of a proposed treaty of commerce with France when he writes, "the Power, or Tyranny, or call it what we please, of the French King, can be no Reason why we should not Trade with him."³¹ Similarly Defoe trusted that trade conflicts should not disturb matters of political and religious alliances. In his *Review* he writes, "The Dutch are our Neighbours...they join with us in defending the Protestant Interest...they are our good Allies against the French...But Trade knows no Friends."³² The Dutch proved to be a major trade competitor with the English in the eighteenth century and the conflicting trade interests between the two nations led Defoe to economically condemn the Dutch.

In his utilization of pirates in his novel, Defoe intends to present piracy as a threat to international trade while also offering subtle support for international slave trading. Although Defoe was unsuccessful in his advocating to abolish piracy, his usage of pirates in order to make a political and economic statement about the state of eighteenth century Europe and trade relations heavily influenced the works of late writers. Although piracy was not the main focus of

²⁹ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 62.

³⁰ Owens. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." 62.

³¹ Andersen, Hans. "The Paradox of Trade and Morality in Defoe." *Modern Philology* 39.1 (1941): 23-46. 37.

³² Andersen. "The Paradox of Trade and Morality in Defoe." 36.

his book, Defoe's portrayal of pirates as enemies of trade, and essentially social order, allowed for later writers to use the pirate as a symbol of radical economic individualism.

Evidence of Defoe's influence on early European novelists can be seen in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* as both writers use pirates in their novels to make arguments about contemporary geo-politics. Like Defoe, Swift includes a pirate attack in the third part of his 1726 satirical adventure novel and also similar to Defoe, Swift utilizes his pirate attack to make an economic criticism about the Dutch. In this section, Gulliver and his men set out on a voyage but are pursued and ultimately captured by Japanese pirates and their Dutch adviser. Like Defoe's corsairs, Swift's Japanese pirates derive from historic pirates as "the coastal waters of Japan were plagued by pirates," and rather than discuss slave trading and the colonialization of Africa, Swift utilizes pirates as a means to publicly criticize the politics and economics of the Dutch in the Far East.³³ By juxtaposing a Dutchman to the Japanese pirates, Swift politically condemns the Dutch while also offering a critical analysis of the privileged economic relationship that the Dutch had with the Japanese in the early eighteenth century.

At the beginning of the pirate episode, Swift writes, "we were chased by two pirates, who soon overtook us; for my sloop was so deep laden, that she sailed very slow."³⁴ The pirates rapidly capture the sloop, restrain Gulliver and his men, and begin plundering the ship. Like Defoe's corsairs, Swift's pirates do not kill Gulliver and his men, but rather focus on looting their ship. However, notably Swift's pirates do not enslave Gulliver or his men which reflects that Swift was less interested in slave trading than Defoe. After the ship is plundered, the two pirate captains split Gulliver's men among their ships and eventually send Gulliver adrift in a canoe. The significance of this attack derives from Swift's portrayal of the Japanese pirates and

³³ Konstam. *Pirates: The Complete History from 1300 BC to the Present Day*. 289.

³⁴ Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. 1726. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003. 158.

his depiction of the angry Dutchman that is sailing with them.

During the pirate episode, Gulliver notices a Dutchman among the Japanese pirates and “begged him...that he would move the captains to take some pity” on Gulliver and his men.³⁵ Gulliver specifically appeals to the Dutchman’s religion and assumes that since they are both Christians and Protestants, the Dutchman will help them. Instead, the Dutchman becomes enraged and demands that Gulliver be drowned. Gulliver then appeals to the Japanese captain, who assures Gulliver that he and his men will not be killed. The Japanese captain’s mercy prompts Gulliver to admit, “I was sorry to find more mercy in a heathen, than in a brother Christian.”³⁶ Throughout this episode, Swift makes a strong point to contrast the Dutchman and the Japanese pirates in order to publicly criticize the Dutch.

Examination into Swift’s political and religious life reveals his personal reasons for writing the Dutchman in such a negative light and the Japanese as merciful. Early in his career, Swift viewed the Dutch as having a high standard of social and political morality. He was a supporter of the Revolution as well as King William and he associated with Sir William Temple who “praised the Dutch for their success in combining order with liberty.”³⁷ In his essay on Swift and the Dutch, Caltech English literature professor, J. Kent Clark writes that Temple attempted “to cement alliances between the Dutch and the English in opposition to the expanding power of France,” and was a personal friend to King William.³⁸ Swift’s association with Temple contributed to Swift’s early positive attitude toward the Dutch. Additionally, Clark notes that Dutch religious toleration proved to be a contributing factor in their successful political order as

³⁵ Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*. 158.

³⁶ Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*. 159.

³⁷ Clark, J. Kent. “Swift and the Dutch.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 17.4 (1954): 345-356. 346.

³⁸ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 346.

it “laid the foundation for their greatness in trade and commerce.”³⁹ Swift agreed with Temple’s attitude and trusted that England’s success could also be found in religious toleration and limited government. He also favored an “alliance with the Dutch abroad,” in order to stand against “French absolutism and tyranny.”⁴⁰

However, eventually Swift’s attitude regarding religious toleration became less liberal. As a churchman-politician, Swift believed that “sound government ultimately depends upon a strong national church” and that religious uniformity was essential for political stability in England.⁴¹ Clark points out that after the Whigs came to power, they made two political mistakes that forever turned Swift to the Tory cause. He says, “They [the Whigs] failed to employ Swift, and they threatened to remove the sacramental test in Ireland.”⁴² Initially aimed at keeping Catholics out of public office, the sacramental test required individuals who held municipal, civil, or military office to take communion in the Church of England. This threat aroused Swift’s fear for the security of the Church and caused him to take up “a lifelong fight against their [English dissenters’] claims and pretensions.”⁴³ Clark notes that although Swift was willing to defend religious toleration, “he was bitterly opposed to religious freedom in the sense of political equality among religious groups and freedom of religious propaganda.”⁴⁴ Swift’s belief that the dominance of a strong national church was crucial to political stability in England caused him to shift away from his friendly views of the Dutch.

In her essay on Swift and the Dutch East India Merchants, Professor Anne Gardiner offers the notion that Swift’s extreme dislike of the Dutch derives from war literature of 1672.

³⁹ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 347.

⁴⁰ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 347.

⁴¹ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 348.

⁴² Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 350.

⁴³ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 350.

⁴⁴ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 351.

Although the height of Japanese piracy occurred in the South Seas before Swift wrote his novel, his portrayal of the Japanese pirates allows him to criticize the Dutch from an economic angle. Since the sixteenth century, European merchants considered Japan to be an important economic power. However, according to Gardiner, a “massacre of the English merchants by the Dutch merchants in 1623” gave the Dutch a secured monopoly of trade in nutmeg, mace, cinnamon, and cloves.⁴⁵ This Dutch cruelty to fellow Protestants for the sake of trade instigated heavy anti-Dutch literature in 1672-1673. Additionally, in order to maintain their exclusive trade monopoly with Japan, the Dutch merchants declared apostasy from Christianity. Apostasy describes the abandonment or renunciation of a religious belief, and in the context of the Dutch in Japan, this involved “trampling on the crucifix, burning their Bibles, and neglecting Christian worship.”⁴⁶ Thus, the Dutch attack on Protestants for profit and apostasy for trade advantages in the Far East clearly contributed to Swift’s negative portrayal of the Dutch in his novel.

After cutting ties with the Whigs, Swift began putting his mind and his writing talents to harsh criticism of the Dutch. He argued that the Dutch commercial economy was inferior to that of England and that their apparent internal tranquility was in reality a “political monstrosity.”⁴⁷ He deemed the Dutch government “the worst constituted Government in the World to last” and one of the chief sources of political infection in England.⁴⁸ Additionally, the Tory belief that England should form a separate peace with France in the War of Spanish Succession led Swift to attack England’s allies.⁴⁹ He viewed the Dutch as the most powerful opponents to Tory policy and thus, Swift’s hatred of the Dutch came from economic, religious, and political realms. As

⁴⁵ Gardiner, Anne Barbeau. “Swift on the Dutch East India Merchants: The Context of 1672-73.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 54.3 (1991): 234-252. 236.

⁴⁶ Markley, Robert. “Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past.” *Modern Language Quarterly* 65.3, (2004): 457-79,469.

⁴⁷ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 351.

⁴⁸ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 352.

⁴⁹ Clark. “Swift and the Dutch.” 352.

Clark points out, the Dutch pirate in Swift's novel embodies "the malign spirit of the Dutch nation... a symbol of triumphant evil in a world irretrievably gone wrong."⁵⁰ Not only does Swift deliberately write the Dutch pirate as irrational and barbaric, but also utilizes the Japanese pirates to help create this image.

In an essay about Gulliver's encounters with the Japanese, University of Illinois Professor of English, Robert Markley writes, "Swift sets book 3 of Gulliver's Travels in the context of England's failures to dent the Dutch monopoly of trade in either Japan or Southeast Asia."⁵¹ As previously stated, after the sixteenth century, Japan cut off almost all contact with European powers. However, this only contributed to Japan's status as an important economic power and led European merchants to seek Asian trade markets. Japan's isolationist policy allowed it to increase in economic power because unlike Europe, Japan was not "wracked by warfare" and "enjoyed peace and prosperity for a century."⁵² Additionally, the Japanese were industrious, enriched by mutual commerce among themselves, and had a population that dwarfed that of any country in Europe.

According to Markley, "Japan was both a promised land from which the English were banished and a reminder of the limits of England's commercial power."⁵³ The Dutch managed to secure a successful trade monopoly in Japan only by eliminating English merchants in the Far East and by repeatedly demonstrating their "'submissive readiness' to grovel before Japanese demands."⁵⁴ In putting a Dutchman among the Japanese pirates in his pirate episode, Swift means to criticize the privileged economic relationship between the Dutch and Japanese while also condemning the Dutch for their willingness to reject Christianity in order to maintain this

⁵⁰ Clark. "Swift and the Dutch." 356.

⁵¹ Markley. "Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past." 461.

⁵² Markley. "Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past." 462.

⁵³ Markley. "Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past." 463.

⁵⁴ Markley. "Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past." 468.

advantageous relationship.

Markley says that Swift recognized “the advantages of contrasting their [the Japanese’s] “heathen” virtues to the hypocrisy of the Dutch, England’s long time commercial rival in the Far East.”⁵⁵ Swift does not delve into the details of Japanese culture in this episode, but rather uses the Japanese pirates strictly to highlight the cruelty of the Dutch pirate. While the Japanese pirate captain appears merciful and provides Gulliver with four days’ worth of provisions before sending him adrift in a canoe, the Dutch pirate yells and threatens Gulliver.⁵⁶ The Dutchman seems powerless among the Japanese pirates and must comply with their decision to not kill Gulliver, which mirrors the real economic relationship between the Japanese and Dutch. While this pirate episode clearly depicts the Dutch in a negative light, later in the novel, Gulliver has another encounter with the Japanese that also reflects Swift’s dissatisfaction with the Dutch.

Long after Gulliver’s encounter with the pirates, he travels to Japan and appears before the Japanese emperor. He must assume the guise of a Dutchman because “the Dutch were the only *Europeans* permitted to enter into that Kingdom.”⁵⁷ As previously noted, the Japanese held an exclusive economic relationship with the Dutch partly because of the Dutch apostasy of Christianity. Although he pretends to be Dutch, Gulliver avoids apostasy and requests that he not have to trample upon a crucifix because he has no intention of trading with the Japanese. The Emperor appears surprised and Gulliver says, “He began to doubt whether I was a real Hollander or no; but rather suspected I must be a Christian.”⁵⁸ Swift clearly criticizes the Dutch here because the Emperor implies that the Dutch, though nominally Christian, tend to act otherwise. According to Gardiner, here “Swift imagines Dutch merchants who do not merely

⁵⁵ Markley. “Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past.” 469.

⁵⁶ Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*. 158.

⁵⁷ Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*. 205.

⁵⁸ Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*. 218.

endure crucifix-trampling as a necessary evil for the sake of trade, but rather embrace it with a perverse enthusiasm.”⁵⁹ Gulliver assumes the role of a Dutchman but his Christian actions distinguish himself from the Dutch East India Merchants. Swift implies “the Dutch no longer perceive themselves as Christians but as submissive subjects,” thereby attacking both the compliance of the Dutch and their privileged trade relationship with the Japanese.⁶⁰

Gulliver’s Japanese encounters in the book provide Swift the opportunity to publicly criticize Dutch politics and economics. For Swift, “Japan offers an ideal satirical foil for his anti-Dutch agitprop,” and his utilization of pirates in his book allow him to scapegoat the Dutch as an evil corrupt nation.⁶¹ Although piracy was not the main focus of Swift’s novel, like Defoe, Swift utilizes pirates in order to make a critical analysis of economic and political relationships regarding European nations, and more specifically, the Dutch East India Company. Again, the pirate symbolizes radical economic individualism in Swift’s novel. The continued use of piracy as a means to criticize government, politics and economics continues into nineteenth century literature as well. However, as the nineteenth century progresses, the pirate shifts from an economic and political symbol, to a representation of societal individualism and political freedom.

Both Defoe and Swift published their works around the time of the Golden Age of Piracy. This window of roughly twenty five years between 1700 and 1725 saw the rise of some of history’s most infamous pirates and inspired numerous fictional works dedicated to piratical adventures. Writers of the nineteenth century continued to employ pirates as a means of making political and economic criticisms, but also tended to focus their fictional narratives on the

⁵⁹ Gardiner. “Swift on the Dutch East India Merchants: The Context of 1672-73.” 246.

⁶⁰ Balanchandra Rajan, and Elizabeth Sauer. *Imperialisms: Historical and Literary Investigations, 1500-1900*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 67.

⁶¹ Markley. “Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past.” 479.

development of their individual pirate characters. Although writers such as Defoe wrote from the perspective of pirates in earlier works, the nineteenth century saw a shift in how pirate characters were portrayed in literature. Lord Byron's 1814 story, *The Corsair* serves as a perfect example of this transition as Byron focuses his story on his pirate character, Conrad, and does so in a way that allows Byron to make a political statement about British aristocracy and colonialism, while also developing an emotionally complex literary figure.

The Corsair sold ten thousand copies on its first day of publication, and quickly became one of the most popular works of the nineteenth century.⁶² The tale follows the pirate leader, Conrad, after he leaves his wife and attempts to attack and rob the sultan Seyd. Unlike previous pirate works, Byron writes his story in verse and separates his poetry into three Cantos. More specifically, Byron writes in, what he calls, "good old and now neglected" heroic couplets.⁶³ Throughout his poem, Byron maintains this formal poetic structure but ironically utilizes it to attack conventional literary form. Thus, not only does Byron employ pirates in order to advocate political autonomy, but he also assaults "authority and political order," by paradoxically writing about pirates in a structuralized poetic form.⁶⁴

Byron begins by offering a lively expression highlighting the pirates' freedom and writes "O'er the glad waters of the dark-/blue sea, /Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free."⁶⁵ During this first section, Byron uses words such as "free," "wide," and "soar," to evoke a sense of political liberty. However, the fact that these words are "bound within end-stopped rhymes," contradicts this sense of freedom and exemplifies the relation between politics and poetry.⁶⁶

Although Byron was a radical Whig and liberal in politics, Princeton University Professor of

⁶² Franklin, Caroline. *Byron*. New York: Routledge, 2007. 10.

⁶³ Byron, George Gordon. Introduction to *The Corsair*. 1814. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2010. 4.

⁶⁴ Wolfson, Susan. "Couplets, Self, and 'The Corsair.'" *Studies in Romanticism* 27.4 (1988): 491-513. 491.

⁶⁵ Byron, George Gordon. *The Corsair*. 1814. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2010. 1.1-2.

⁶⁶ Wolfson. "Couplets, Self, and 'The Corsair.'" 493.

English, Susan Wolfson notes that the heroic couplet “was associated with the Tory upper class and the social decorum so promoted: balance order, harmony, and the discipline of inherited practices.”⁶⁷ The heroic couplet was recognized as high style by English readers and writing unheroic couplets was a sign of political and moral looseness. In utilizing a formal poetic structure to tell the story of a rebellious pirate, Byron establishes a paradox of political liberty set against constraint and conservatism.

In her book on Byron, literary critic Caroline Franklin writes, “*The Corsair* may be seen as a poetic expression of the poet’s intense desire for political liberty to be extended at home and abroad.”⁶⁸ Although he was a member of the aristocracy, Byron was a revolutionary and called for the overthrow of oppressive political regimes and the ending of British colonialism. In his dedication letter to his publisher, Thomas Moore, Byron writes about “The wrongs of your own country,” and makes a bold parallel between Oriental tyranny and British colonialism.⁶⁹ Byron recognized that revolution was necessary in Britain and thus, wrote the protagonists of his works as “aristocrats leading rebellious factions against their rulers.”⁷⁰ For example, his characterization of the pirate Conrad as an enigmatic leader demonstrates a clear expression of political freedom in his poem.

Byron characterizes Conrad as a strong, powerful, yet mysterious leader. During verse X, Byron insinuates that Conrad’s threatening outward appearance hides some manner of internal emotional turmoil in Conrad and writes, “Within -- within -- ‘twas there the spirit wrought!/ Love shews all changes -- Hate, Ambition, Guile.”⁷¹ Byron notes that love is Conrad’s only redeeming quality, which he exhibits in his relationship with his wife. Byron’s

⁶⁷ Wolfson. “Couplets, Self, and ‘The Corsair.’” 495.

⁶⁸ Franklin. *Byron*. 56.

⁶⁹ Byron. Introduction to *The Corsair*. 3.

⁷⁰ Franklin. *Byron*. 56.

⁷¹ Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.10.3-4.

mention of love here also foreshadows Conrad's later romantic relationship with Gulnare. However, Conrad refuses to exhibit any sort of emotional weakness and keeps his lips curled and his hands clenched in order to maintain his stern appearance. He appears attentive and commanding, yet notably self-critical when he thinks about his "execrated years."⁷² By providing insight into Conrad's internal feelings, Byron urges the reader to both fear as well as empathize with Conrad. Conrad embodies the freedom and danger associated with piracy, yet appears trapped within his own role as the pirate chief.

Verse XI provides further insight into Conrad's behavior as Byron offers details about Conrad's past. Byron reveals that Conrad was not a hardened pirate by nature, but was "Warp'd by the world in Disappointment's school," signifying that something in Conrad's past turned him against humanity.⁷³ Conrad hates men but feels no remorse for what he does because he feels he is getting vengeance on those that wronged him in the past. He understands himself to be a villain and recognizes that people fear him. In the final lines of this verse Byron utilizes an image of a venomous snake to describe Conrad's violent nature. Conrad appears void of fear and when he attacks, he "leaves no living foe."⁷⁴ In this verse, Byron shifts away from the empathetic character of the previous verse and instead depicts Conrad as a killer pirate, hardened by a dark past.

However, Byron once again identifies tenderness in Conrad regarding love during the following verse. Byron writes, "One softer feeling would not yet depart;/Oft could he sneer at others as beguiled," signifying that although Conrad has become a violent pirate, his passionate, loving devotion to his wife keeps him tethered to humanity.⁷⁵ The dichotomy of Byron's violent

⁷² Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.10.20.

⁷³ Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.11.5.

⁷⁴ Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.11.30.

⁷⁵ Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.12.2-3.

actions as a pirate and his loving devotion to his wife identify him as a literary Byronic hero.

British historian and Whig politician, Thomas Babington Macaulay comprehensively defines the Byronic Hero as “a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart...yet capable of deep and strong affection,” which perfectly reflects Conrad’s character.⁷⁶ By utilizing a pirate as his Byronic hero, Byron affectively glorifies the idea of political liberty in his poem. As previously stated, the strict heroic couplet form of Byron’s poem contradicted the poem’s ideas of freedom, but in the final lines of this verse, Byron utilizes Conrad to break free from the ruling rhyme scheme.

In the final lines of verse XII, Byron reiterates that Conrad is a villain and writes, “Which only proved, all other virtues gone, / Not guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!”⁷⁷ This final couplet promotes a release from the conventional form as Byron takes advantage of the imperfect rhyme of “gone” and “one.” The imperfect rhyme deviates from the established rhyme pattern of the heroic couplet form. Additionally, Wolfson argues that this couplet elaborates the idea of power that Byron describes in the previous line of the verse, thereby signifying a relationship between power and the individual.⁷⁸ This relationship between power and “one” can also be seen earlier in the poem when “Byron justifies the political structure of pirate society.”⁷⁹ In verse VIII, Byron writes, “Such hath it been --shall be -- beneath the sun:/ The many still must labour for the one!” which compliments the aristocratic idea of the privileged few profiting from the labor of many.⁸⁰ Although this rhyme does not work to break away from the established rhyme form, it does draw attention to a power balance in the pirates’ social system. As Wolfson

⁷⁶ Tigges, Wim. “A Glorious Thing.” *Configuring Romanticism*. Eds. Theo D’haen, Peter Liebrechts, and Wim Tigges. New York: Rodopi, 2003. 153-172. 155.

⁷⁷ Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.12.27-28.

⁷⁸ Wolfson. “Couplets, Self, and ‘The Corsair.’” 502.

⁷⁹ Wolfson. “Couplets, Self, and ‘The Corsair.’” 502.

⁸⁰ Byron. *The Corsair*. 1.8.19-20.

points out, “the Corsair’s supposedly outlaw society subscribes to the same structures of power that define entrenched aristocracy,” and this allows Byron to criticize real life power imbalances in Britain.⁸¹ Thus, Byron utilizes Conrad in order to make a political criticism about the aristocracy in Britain and to advocate for both political autonomy and essentially revolution. Additionally, his characterization of the pirate as a Byronic hero became a popular trend in several other nineteenth century pirate works.

Sir Walter Scott responds to Byron’s poem with his own 1821 pirate novel, *The Pirate*. Both Byron and Scott wrote during the Romantic era which emphasized emotion as a source of aesthetic experience in art and literature. As such, Scott also develops his main pirate character, Captain Cleveland, into an emotionally complex Byronic hero similar to Byron’s Conrad. Unlike previous writers of pirate fiction, Scott does not necessarily utilize his pirate character to make a specific political or economic statement, but rather focuses his attention on his representation of the nostalgic past to create a work of historical literature. Scott is accredited with pioneering the creation of the historical novel in the nineteenth century and his Romantic era pirate novel attests to this claim.

Scott’s novel takes place in the southern tip of Shetland around 1700 and follows the story of Mordaunt Mertoun, the Troil family, and their encounters with the pirate, Captain Cleveland. After Mertoun rescues Cleveland from drowning, Cleveland integrates into the island’s society and eventually courts Mertoun’s love, Minna Troil. When Minna confesses her love to Cleveland, he reveals his identity as a pirate captain which serves as the novel’s central conflict. Although the Golden Age of Piracy occurred a century prior to Scott’s novel’s publication, his narrative calls back to the pirate stories of that era as Scott clearly was influenced by the pirate narratives of Defoe.

⁸¹ Wolfson. “Couplets, Self, and ‘The Corsair.’” 503.

American biographer John Robert Moore confirms that Scott was an energetic reader of Defoe's work because Scott attempted to collect Defoe's narratives into a single volume in 1809-1810.⁸² Moore points out, "More than any other individual it was Scott who raised Defoe from obscurity in literary history to his modern position as a master of prose fiction."⁸³ Thus, one can easily assume that Defoe's narratives had some manner of influence on Scott's own writing. In fact, Moore notes that "One of Scott's favorite books was *Robinson Crusoe*," and the shipwrecking of Crusoe no doubt inspired the shipwreck of Scott's Captain Cleveland.⁸⁴ However, while Defoe combines history, fiction, politics, and economics into a singular literary tract, Scott focuses his attention primarily on the relationship between history and fiction. As a result, Scott's novel reflects narrative elements of Defoe's work, but combines it with the Romantic era nostalgia characteristic of nineteenth century literature.

Scott's source material for *The Pirate* derives from both an oral communication with a woman Scott met in the Shetland Islands and also likely Captain Charles Johnson's account of Captain John Gow in his book, *A General History of the Pyrates*. In the introduction of his book, Scott says, "I learned the history of Gow from an old sibyl."⁸⁵ Scott heard a story about how a young woman pledged her love to Gow only to learn that he was a pirate. Although the woman's story involved superstitions and religious ceremonies, Scott does not include them in his novel, but rather preserves the "conflict inherent between his heroine's expectations and his hero's identity as a pirate."⁸⁶ Additionally, as previously stated Scott read Captain Johnson's *A General History of the Pyrates* and borrowed material from the pirate accounts in the creation of

⁸² Moore, John Robert. "Defoe and Scott." *PMLA*, 56.3, (1941): 710-735. 711.

⁸³ Moore. "Defoe and Scott." 712.

⁸⁴ Moore. "Defoe and Scott." 714.

⁸⁵ Scott, Walter. Introduction to *The Pirate*. 1821. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. 9.

⁸⁶ Cuddy, Elizabeth. "Salvaging Wreckers: Sir Walter Scott, The Pirate, and Morality at Sea." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 53.4 (2013): 793-807. 799.

his own pirates. For example, according to Moore, “Jack Bunce, most interesting of Scott’s pirates, can be traced to three distinct originals in the *History*.”⁸⁷ In *The Pirate*, Bunce abducts the two Troil sisters, which perfectly mirrors an account in Captain Johnson’s *History*, in which Captain Gow’s boatswain kidnaps two young women. While Scott’s antihero, Cleveland does not represent a perfect replica to the historical Gow, there is no doubt that Scott used Gow for inspiration which signifies Scott’s novel as a work of historic fiction. According to Long Island University Assistant Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture, Deborah Lutz, “Nostalgic longing appears as a central motif of Romantic era” writing and thus, Scott’s pirate portrayal exhibits a nostalgic longing and appreciation for the past.⁸⁸

In an essay on romantic pirates, Wim Tigges writes, “After more serious and realistic treatment by Daniel Defoe and Tobias Smollett, the romantic version of the pirate chief makes his appearance in *The Pirate*.”⁸⁹⁹⁰ As previously stated, pirates represented radical individualism in terms of economy and politics, but in Scott’s novel, the pirate becomes the embodiment of personal freedom and antiheroic romance. But why did Scott decide to follow Byron in shifting the pirate as an image economic and political individualism to a romantic antihero? According to Moore, Scott delighted in explaining his preference for writing bandits as heroes and even wrote a letter explaining his affinity for buccaneers.⁹¹ Clearly Scott had more of an attraction to the vision of the pirate as a swashbuckling rogue rather than as an exotic criminal. Undeniably, Captain Cleveland retrospectively represents the literary romantic Byronic Hero.

Cleveland’s identity as a pirate, but also as a passionate lover to Minna supports the

⁸⁷ Moore. “Defoe and Scott.” 730.

⁸⁸ Lutz, Deborah. “The Pirate Poet in the Nineteenth Century: Trollope and Byron.” *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swindlers*. Ed. Grace Moore. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011. 23-39. 28.

⁸⁹ “Romantic” here means marked by the imaginative or emotional appeal of what is heroic, adventurous, remote, mysterious, or idealized.

⁹⁰ Tigges. “A Glorious Thing.” 154.

⁹¹ Moore. “Defoe and Scott.” 725.

notion that, like Byron's Conrad, he should be considered a Byronic Hero. When Scott first introduces Cleveland, Cleveland does not express gratitude toward Mordaunt for rescuing him, but rather exhibits "bitterness of the avarice."⁹² Cleveland mourns what he has lost in his shipwreck, views himself as a victim, and "reduces Mordaunt's selfless act to a service by offering compensation."⁹³ Thus, Cleveland embodies the moody, yet proud aspects of the Byronic Hero. Additionally, the reader is unaware of Cleveland's past, further adding to his mysterious nature.

After Cleveland visits the island's ranking landowner, Undaller Magnus Troil, he falls for Troil's daughter Minna, who views Cleveland as "a Sea-king, or what else modern times may give that draws near to that lofty character."⁹⁴ Scott insinuates that Minna finds Cleveland extraordinary, and calls him her lover. Scott makes a point to present Cleveland as exotic as well as mysterious. Even Cleveland's appearance proves rather extravagant as Scott writes, "Cleveland himself was gallantly attired in a blue coat, lined with crimson silk, and laced with gold very richly," which is reminiscent of the aristocratic corsair in Byron's poem.⁹⁵ Cleveland's mysterious nature infatuates the innocent Minna who soon pledges her love to the pirate.

During his time with the Troils, Cleveland also turns the two sisters against the novel's protagonist, Mordaunt. In manipulating the sisters, Cleveland becomes a foil to Mordaunt, but Cleveland's treatment of Minna implies that he feels deep affection for her. Even after Cleveland confesses that he is a pirate, Minna still feels an attachment to him, but reveals she cannot continue to love him as a hero. Thus, Cleveland is forced to redeem himself at the end of the novel and seek forgiveness from Minna. The relationship between Cleveland and Minna

⁹² Scott, Walter. *The Pirate*. 1821. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. 62.

⁹³ Cuddy. "Salvaging Wreckers: Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, and Morality at Sea." 801.

⁹⁴ Scott. *The Pirate*. 140.

⁹⁵ Scott. *The Pirate*. 244.

almost reduces *The Pirate* to solely a love story. Moore agrees that *The Pirate* is saturated by love and affection as he believes “the handsome Cleveland serenading Minna in the late moonlight...belongs to the sentimentalized nineteenth century portrayal of buccaneering.”⁹⁶ Cleveland’s love for Minna, and willingness to leave pirating behind in order to seek redemption and forgiveness signifies that Scott’s novel is an aesthetic product of the Romantic era and not a political or economic statement.

Scott’s novel testifies to the nineteenth century’s profound concern with the historical past because it combines elements of both realism and romance. In his previous novels, Scott demonstrates an appreciation for the nostalgic past and this trend continues in *The Pirate*. Scott utilizes his pirate character as a symbol of individualism, but he also blends realism with the romance of the Byronic hero in the creation of Cleveland. In his essay on Scott, University of Oregon Professor Chad May writes, that the discrepancy between “realism, as a fictional world in which the actions of the characters are limited by social, cultural, and historical probabilities, and romance...guides a reader's perception of historical accuracy.”⁹⁷ By interweaving fact with fiction, Scott and Byron thereby transformed the pirate from a villain to antihero. In making this shift, they also altered the symbolic nature of the pirate from a radical economic and political individual to a free and aesthetically appealing figure.

The Pirate signifies an important trend regarding the portrayal of pirates in literature that continues throughout the nineteenth century and even into contemporary works of pirate fiction. As the actual activities and threat of piracy fell further into the past, pirate voyages continued to be romanticized even after the Romance era in literature. However, this did not diminish pirates’ popularity in literature, but rather led to significantly more books regarding pirates. The pirate

⁹⁶ Moore. “Defoe and Scott.” 732.

⁹⁷ May, Chad T. “‘The Horrors of My Tale’: Trauma, the Historical Imagination, and Sir Walter Scott.” *Pacific Coast Philology* 40.1 (2005): 98-116. 107.

no longer represented the economic and political individualist attitude of the past, but rather became entirely an admirably antiheroic figure. Konstam writes, “Romantic fiction writers and poets rediscovered piracy as a source for dramatic plots and exotic locations,” and the sheer number of pirate narratives and plays produced during the late nineteenth century reflects piracy’s continuing popularity.⁹⁸ No novel proves more representative of the romanticized pirate or more responsible for popular contemporary conventions regarding pirates as Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*.

Stevenson’s 1883 book takes place in the mid-eighteenth century on the west English coast and follows the story of young Jim Hawkins and his adventure on the high seas. Hawkins serves as the novel’s first person narrator and the story itself essentially becomes his bildungsroman. After Hawkins acquires a map leading to buried treasure, he joins Captain Smollett’s crew as a cabin boy and embarks on a voyage to locate the treasure. Unbeknownst to Hawkins and Smollett, the ship’s crew is teeming with mutinous pirates led by the ship’s cook, Long John Silver. Throughout his novel, Stevenson reflects the influence of previous pirate writers such as Defoe and Scott while also creating a new interpretation of the pirate figure in literature.

Like Scott and Byron, Stevenson looked to capitalize on the popularity of piracy during the nineteenth century and while his main pirate character, Silver, does not perfectly fit the role of a Byronic Hero, he definitely can be considered a romantic antihero.⁹⁹ Stevenson does not utilize pirates to make an economic or political criticism, but he does portray the pirate as a symbol of individualism and freedom. Stevenson’s novel serves as the culmination of pirate works until this point and his pirate portrayals mirror the individual freedom that previous

⁹⁸ Konstam. *Pirates: The Complete History from 1300 BC to the Present Day*. 311.

⁹⁹ As previously stated, “Romantic” means marked by the imaginative or emotional appeal of what is heroic, adventurous, remote, mysterious, or idealized.

writers depict in their own pirate characters.

Although the resemblances between Defoe and Stevenson's writing are undeniable, Stevenson desires to separate himself from Defoe's influence. Stevenson irritably said, "...Here is a quaint thing. I have read *Robinson, Colonel Jack*... And there my knowledge of Defoe ends."¹⁰⁰ While Stevenson himself denies the parallels between the two, there can be no doubt that "Stevenson's indebtedness to Defoe was lifelong and varied."¹⁰¹ For example, the resemblance between Defoe's *Crusoe* and *Treasure Island*'s castaway, Ben Gunn proves uncanny. While Moore offers the notion that Gunn's character derives more from the historical Andrew Selkirk and not primarily *Crusoe*, he does note "of course, all three are amazingly alike."¹⁰² When Stevenson first introduces his half-crazed English castaway, Hawkins says, "He [Gunn] was clothed with tatters of old ship's canvas and old sea cloth;"¹⁰³ Although *Crusoe* had been shipwrecked and Gunn was marooned, both characters are castaways and exhibit the same ragged appearance. Additionally, both *Crusoe* and Gunn attribute their misfortune to providence as Gunn tells Hawkins, "It were Providence that put me here."¹⁰⁴ Thus, Stevenson's characterization of Gunn supports the argument regarding Defoe's influence on Stevenson.

Additionally, in order to maintain a sense of realism in his novel, Stevenson utilizes historical names and accounts from Captain Johnson's *A General History of the Pyrates*. For example, Moore notes that Long John Silver likely originated from Captain Johnson's account of "Long Ben' Aver, most famous of pirates."¹⁰⁵ Other Stevenson characters such as Flint and Pew also have counterparts in Captain Johnson's book. Early in his novel, Stevenson refers to

¹⁰⁰ Moore, John Robert. "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates." *ELH* 10.1 (1943): 35-60. 36.

¹⁰¹ Moore. "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates." 35.

¹⁰² Moore. "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates." 38.

¹⁰³ Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. 1883. London: Octopus Books Limited, 1978. 88.

¹⁰⁴ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 89.

¹⁰⁵ Moore. "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates." 52.

the pirate Captain Flint as “the bloodthirstiest buccaneer that sailed. Blackbeard was a child to Flint.”¹⁰⁶ In mentioning the historical Blackbeard in regards to his character Flint, Stevenson blends pirate history with pirate fiction. In his essay on Stevenson and *Treasure Island*, Alex Thompson notes, “Stevenson sees a combination of the ‘realistic and ideal’ as the fundamental principle of successful representative art,” and thus, Stevenson works to reconcile pirate realism and romance.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the works Defoe and Johnson, Stevenson’s writing notably pays tribute to the romantic style of Scott’s *The Pirate*.

Stevenson and Scott had more of a historical connection than just in the realm of literature as Stevenson’s grandfather actually sailed with Scott on the voyage that eventually inspired Scott’s novel.¹⁰⁸ Although Stevenson condemns *The Pirate* and notes that Scott “had a root of romance in such places,”¹⁰⁹ his own writing was clearly influenced by the narrative. While both novels are clearly focused on pirates as the main subject, the primary resemblance between the two stems from their romantic qualities. Stevenson openly admits “there is a little of Scott’s *Pirate* in it [*Treasure Island*], as how should there not?”¹¹⁰ The clearest example of Scott’s romantic influence on Stevenson comes from their respective characterizations of their novels’ main pirates.

As previously stated, Stevenson’s Silver does not embody the same aspects of a Byronic Hero as Scott’s Captain Cleveland, but there can be no doubt that Stevenson calls back to Scott’s use of romance in the characterization of his mysterious pirate. When Hawkins first encounters Silver, he says, “His left leg was cut off close by the hip, and under the left shoulder he carried a

¹⁰⁶ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 41.

¹⁰⁷ Thomson, Alex. “‘Dooty is Dooty:’” Pirates and Sea-Lawyers in *Treasure Island*.” *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swindlers* Ed. Grace Moore. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011. 211-222. 215.

¹⁰⁸ Moore. “Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates.” 58.

¹⁰⁹ Moore. “Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates.” 58.

¹¹⁰ Moore. “Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates.” 58.

crutch, which he managed with wonderful dexterity... he seemed in the most cheerful spirits.”¹¹¹

Although the reader may already guess as to Silver’s identity as a pirate, Hawkins’s initial impression of the sea cook illustrates Silver as a friend rather than a threat. Hawkins’s fascination with Silver’s dexterity and description of Silver as cheerful implies that he views Silver in a positive light. He watches in awe and describes Silver’s movements as wonderful. Hawkins’s fascination of Silver mirrors Minna’s infatuation with Cleveland in *The Pirate*. Both Hawkins and Minna view the pirate characters as mysterious, yet intriguing. As the narrative progresses, Silver becomes somewhat of a surrogate father figure to Hawkins and the two become interdependent on one another. However, after the two reach Treasure Island, Hawkins witnesses the dual nature of Silver’s personality as he brutally kills one of the ship’s honest crewmen.

Hawkins says, “Silver, agile as a monkey, even without leg or crutch, was on top of him next moment, and had twice buried his knife up to the hilt in that defenceless body,” clearly revealing the vicious, aggressive side of Silver’s personality.¹¹² Additionally, throughout the second half of the novel, Silver proves himself to be a charismatic commander as the pirates initially follow his lead without question. He claims himself to be the only man that Flint ever feared and his deceptive nature allows him to manipulate both the pirates as well as the honest crewmen. However, Silver does reveal a genuine fondness for Hawkins after he refuses to let the other pirates kill him. While Silver has a clear willingness to switch sides depending on what benefits him most, he does tell Hawkins, “But I see you was the right sort. I says to myself: You stand by Hawkins, John, and Hawkins’ll stand by you.”¹¹³ While one may argue that Silver merely says this in order to manipulate Hawkins into helping him, Silver does not act cruelly

¹¹¹ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 51.

¹¹² Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 85.

¹¹³ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 159.

towards the boy for the remainder of the novel and Silver's calm demeanor suggests an honest affection for Hawkins.

Hawkins appears both perplexed and awed by the psychological complexity of Silver. Although he refers to Silver as a "monster" when he kills the crewman, Hawkins demonstrates a loyalty to Silver after Silver protects him from the pirates.¹¹⁴ As Silver slowly falls out of favor with the pirates, the loyalty between Silver and Hawkins grows stronger. After the pirates find the treasure cache empty, Hawkins notes "His [Silver's] looks were now quite friendly; and I was so revolted at these constant changes, that I could not forbear whispering: 'So you've changed sides again.'"¹¹⁵ Additionally, Silver maintains his cool, collected demeanor even when the five remaining pirate mutineers turn on him. Here, Hawkins speaks with an impressed tone and describes Silver as "brave," signifying his admiration for the pirate.¹¹⁶ Silver's character combines elements of self-destructiveness and individualism, and his ability to both keep his calm in the face of overwhelming odds as well as heartlessly kill in cold blood when necessary proves that he is easily one of Stevenson's most emotionally complex characters. Thus, while Silver does not exhibit the passionate love or brooding nature characteristic of a traditional Byronic Hero, he does mirror the dual identities of Scott's Captain Cleveland and thereby should be considered a romantic antihero.

Stevenson "insisted that materialistic realism, without a sense of romance, was insufficient" and viewed romanticism as a necessary component of literary art.¹¹⁷ He said romances "may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the

¹¹⁴ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 85.

¹¹⁵ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 183.

¹¹⁶ Stevenson. *Treasure Island*. 185.

¹¹⁷ Moore. "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates." 42.

nameless longings of the reader.”¹¹⁸ *Treasure Island* succeeds in creating an aesthetic world that both calls back to historical pirate traditions while also inventing new standards for the portrayal of pirates in future literature. Stevenson focused not necessarily on believability in his narrative, but rather on his character development and the novel’s exotic, exciting plot. As Tigges notes, “very much like Byron, Stevenson concentrates on scenic writing, on characterization and on style rather than on narrative speed and crude action.”¹¹⁹ He modifies realism to create an exciting Romantic era-esque narrative and utilizes pirates as a conduit between realist and romance writing. University of Edinburgh Senior Lecturer of Scottish Literature, Alex Thomson writes, “The romance is not anti-realist, and it is entirely consistent for Stevenson to be praised for both his romance and his realism.”¹²⁰ Through his pirate portrayal, Stevenson highlights individualism in terms of its nineteenth century romantic appeal while also creating an aesthetically pleasing work of popular fiction.

Like the writers of previous pirate fiction, Stevenson utilizes his pirates as a means to promote individualism, but does so in a more picturesque way than his predecessors. Rather than present piracy as a real world threat, Stevenson creates a fantasy world where pirates are both admired and feared. Moore points out that “To Defoe, piracy...was a bitter experience of life, which cost him money in marine insurance and contributed to his bankruptcy.”¹²¹ Unlike Defoe, Stevenson did not have such a personal connection with piracy, but this did not diminish his book’s popularity. Indeed, most if not all pirate literature and popular pirate fiction following Stevenson’s book refers back to the pirate conventions that Stevenson sets in his novel. Moore points out, “A ‘seadog’ is almost unknown in actual writings on piracy; no pirate was ever called

¹¹⁸ Stevenson, Robert Louis. “A Gossip on Romance.” 1882. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* South Seas Ed. New York: Scribner’s, 1925. XIII. 136.

¹¹⁹ Tigges. “A Glorious Thing.” 158.

¹²⁰ Thomson. “‘Dooty is Dooty’” Pirates and Sea-Lawyers in *Treasure Island*.” 221.

¹²¹ Moore. “Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates.” 59.

Black Dog; and “The Black Spot”...was quite unknown among workaday pirates.”¹²² These romanticized additions to pirate lore have endured into contemporary popular notions of pirates. In reinventing, or perhaps pioneering a new image of the pirate, Stevenson provides “a sanitized, rose-tinted view of the pirate world, in which pirates were romantic heroes and rebels against authority rather than simply a bunch of unwashed cutthroats.”¹²³ Thus, to twentieth century pirate novelists, *Treasure Island* became what Johnson’s *A General History of the Pyrates* was to early pirate writers.

Writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries utilize pirate figures in their works as symbols of individualism. While earlier writers such as Defoe and Swift use pirates in order to make political and economic statements, Romantic era writers such as Byron and Scott portrayed their pirates as Byronic Heroes in order to advocate individualism. In their usage of pirates, Defoe comments on international commerce and African slave trading in relation to piracy while Swift criticizes the Dutch East India Company’s privileged trading relationship with the Japanese. Byron advocates for political autonomy in Britain and Scott sees the pirate as a means to connect the Romantic era to the nostalgic past. Finally, Stevenson combines both elements of realism and romanticism in order to reimagine the pirate figure as a swashbuckling romantic adventurer.

While each writer clearly employs pirates in a different way, there can be no doubt that each writer saw success in their predecessors’ pirate portrayals. Additionally, the pirate figure survives into contemporary literature, films, etc. and thus, deserves proper critical examination in the realm of eighteenth and nineteenth century literature. Pirates prove to be an important aspect of eighteenth and nineteenth century literature due to their not only because they were a popular

¹²² Moore. “Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates.” 51.

¹²³ Konstam. *Pirates: The Complete History from 1300 BC to the Present Day*. 312.

subject, but because their stories brought together arguments of trade, crime, colonialization, romanticism, and ultimately, freedom of the individual.

Works Cited

- Andersen, Hans. "The Paradox of Trade and Morality in Defoe." *Modern Philology* 39.1 (1941): 23-46. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Byron, George Gordon. Introduction. *The Corsair*. 1814. By Byron. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2010. 3-4. Print.
- Byron, George Gordon. *The Corsair*. 1814. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2010. Print
- Clark, J. Kent. "Swift and the Dutch." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 17.4 (1954): 345-356. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Cuddy, Elizabeth. "Salvaging Wreckers: Sir Walter Scott, The Pirate, and Morality at Sea." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 53.4 (2013): 793-807. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Defoe, Daniel. *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements (1725-26)*, in *Writings on Travel, Discovery and History by Daniel Defoe*, Eds. W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001-02. 114-16. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Defoe, Daniel and Michael Shinagel. *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources of Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1975. Print.
- Defoe, Daniel. *A Review of the State of the British Nation, 1710*. Ed. John McVeagh. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003. 266. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Franklin, Caroline. *Byron*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Gardiner, Anne Barbeau. "Swift on the Dutch East India Merchants: The Context of 1672-73 War Literature." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 54.3 (1991): 234-252. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.

- Konstam, Angus. *Pirates: The Complete History from 1300 BC to the Present Day*. Guilford: Lyons Press, 2008. Print.
- Lutz, Harris. "The Pirate Poet in the Nineteenth Century: Trollope and Byron," *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swindlers*. Ed. Grace Moore. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011. 23-39, Print.
- Markley, Robert. "Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past." *Modern Language Quarterly* 65.3 (2004): 457-79. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- May, Chad T. "'The Horrors of My Tale': Trauma, the Historical Imagination, and Sir Walter Scott." *Pacific Coast Philology* 40.1 (2005): 98-116. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Moore, John Robert. "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates," *ELH* 10.1 (1943): 35-60. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Owens, W.R. "Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Barbary Pirates." *English* 62.236 (2013): 51-66. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Parker, Martin. "Pirates, merchants and anarchists: Representations of international business." *Management & Organizational History* 4.2 (2009): 167-185. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.
- Rajan, Balachandra, and Elizabeth Sauer. *Imperialisms: Historical and Literary Investigations, 1500-1900*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Print.
- Scott, Walter. Introduction. *The Pirate*. 1821. By Scott. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. 8-10. Print.
- Scott, Walter. *The Pirate*. 1821. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. Print.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. "A Gossip on Romance," 1882. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*. South Seas Ed. New York: Scribner's, 1925. XIII. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. 1883. London: Octopus Books Limited, 1978. Print.

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. 1726. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003. Print.

Tigges, Wim. "A Glorious Thing." *Configuring Romanticism*. Eds. Theo D'haen, Peter Liebrechts, and Wim Tigges. New York: Rodopi, 2003. 153-172, Print.

Thompson, Alex. "'Dooty is Dooty:'" Pirates and Sea-Lawyers in *Treasure Island*." *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swindlers*, Ed. Grace Moore. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011. 211-222, Print.

Turley, Hans. *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash: Piracy, Sexuality, and Masculine Identity*. New York: New York University Press, 1999. Print.

Wolfson, Susan. "Couplets, Self, and "'The Corsair.'" *Studies in Romanticism* 27.4 (1988): 491-513. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 April 2015.