

WELCOME THE OUTLAW: PIRATES, MAROONS, AND CARIBBEAN COUNTERCULTURES

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COMPLICITY AND CONTINUITY

Nostalgia might be one way that we feel the effects of historical complicity and continuity. Even as it laments an irrevocable past, nostalgia evokes and so revives the past, or a desirable version of that past, in the here and now. Figured as an object of desire, the past enshrined by nostalgia memorializes, in the shape of this figuration, complicities it seeks to contain or evade. The four Caribbean subcultures addressed here—pirates, Maroons, rude boys or yardies, and Rastafari—are heavily involved in the operations of nostalgia, perhaps because they are such vital embodiments of historical complicity and continuity. As this essay goes to press, yet another pirate movie, Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*, hits the summer theaters and yet another *Guardian* article (June 14, 2003) warns that "Yardie-violence Spreads across the UK."

In representations so ambivalent and repetitious as to signal a cultural fixation, volume after volume of criminal biography have fixed the pirates of the early modern Caribbean as objects of popular fascination, glamorization, and, I think, nostalgia since the late seventeenth century. Placing themselves in a tradition of frontier outlaws that starts with the early modern pirates and goes forward through the Wild West gunman and Depression-era mobster, Jamaican rude boys self-consciously accrue the outlaw glamor produced by three hundred years of popular culture. The popular glamor of the frontier outlaw is colored by a nostalgia for a kind of fully licensed machismo already becoming outdated by the turn of the eighteenth century and yet one that still, at the beginning of the twenty-first

century, remains active in fantasies of masculinity. In part, the dream for this particular brand of liberty has its origins in notions of absolute individual sovereignty that arose even as absolutism came under assault in the political sphere. A law unto himself, the outlaw asserts the ultimate aristocratic privilege of sovereign will.

It makes perfect sense that such hyperbolic, desperado forms of machismo are promoted within two groups, the pirates and the rude boys, that emerge from the dispossessed underclasses for whom social, economic, and political powers are most circumscribed. One thing worth noting is that, for those who have never had power, the taking of criminal liberties needs to be seen as a utopian as well as a nostalgic gesture; such gestures are more purely nostalgic, however, when embraced by those who have power, secured in part by the disavowal of such liberties.

The other two Caribbean subcultures examined here, the Maroons and the Rastafari, although also promoting strong ideals of masculine power and notions of independence, engage in what looks like a more explicitly sociopolitical form of nostalgia. Both the Maroons and the Rastafari enshrine an African political and spiritual past lost to slavery, but do so effectively only through a complicity with colonialism that might be understood to compromise the power and validity of this preservation. The “Africa” replicated in the New World Maroon communities survived only by means of the collusion of these communities with the colonial military machine. In ways that look very nostalgic indeed, the Rastafari reconfigure an inevitably New World and mythical Africa as both the locus of lost origins and the site of redemption and return. Yet, to reframe a point made later in this essay, the discrepancy between the Africa of the historians and ethnographers, on the one hand, and, on the other, the mythical and redemptive Africa of the Rastafari, reveals not simply a nostalgia for what never was but also a utopian site of resistance from which demands for justice keep on coming.

In April of 1978, before an audience of 20,000 people gathered for the reggae Peace Concert headlined by superstar Bob Marley, former Wailer Peter Tosh made an extended and dissenting speech. The concert had been organized to celebrate the truce between rival Kingston gang leaders Claudie Massop and Bucky Marshall and their political sponsors, Michael Manley of the Jamaican National Party (JNP) and

Edward Seaga of the Jamaican Labour party (JLP).¹ For years these national political leaders had capitalized on the rivalries, desperation, and tactical expertise of Kingston youth gangs by arming and employing them as security forces. The Peace Concert itself, as Tosh suspects, involved a questionable exploitation of the iconic powers of popular cultural demigods such as Marley and himself. For better and, as Tosh fears here, for worse, politics and popular culture are inseparable, and he resents the complicity extorted from him by corrupt politicians opportunistically huddling under the Rasta-reggae banner of One Love.

Distrusting the declaration of peace where economic and social justice had not yet been served, Tosh's speech turns to the inequities of Jamaican society; these lie at the roots of the violence ripping through the streets of West Kingston and, until they are eradicated, there can be no peace. From his call for equal rights and justice ("No Justice, No Peace"), Tosh goes on to connect the motivations and means of the rude boys of West Kingston to models presented by the glorified marauders celebrated in Caribbean history as discoverers and adventurers:

Right now, Mr. Manley, me wan talk to you personal cos me and you is friends, so you seh. . . . I no seh that my brother is a criminal. Cos when Columbus, Henry Morgan and Francis Drake come up, dey call dem pirate and put dem in a reading book and give us observation that we must look up and live the life of and the principle of pirates. So the youth dem know fe [to] fire dem guns like Henry Morgan same way. (Clarke, 112)²

Columbus, Drake, and Morgan, Tosh insists, took the Caribbean by violence. Historically, this violence has both constituted and enforced the exploitation and depredation of these territories and, across the Atlantic, of the West African nations from which the bulk of the West Indian enslaved labor was wrested. The Kingston youths, descendants of those slaves, looking to get some of the goods back for themselves, follow the models of success handed down to them. Peace, Tosh insists, is broken as the youths are recruited, ideologically and strategically by schools and political parties, to serve the outlaw forces that have held sway in the Caribbean since its European colonization.

The rude boys in twentieth-century Kingston act like pirates for the same reasons that young men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did: because it offers an available and potentially lucrative, if sometimes lethal, opportunity in a life with too few chances. They turn pirate because pirates eat better, are paid better, and pack more heat than legitimate workers.³ The rude boys, like the pirates, acquire prestige in at least two ways. First, because there is, among many, a sympathetic realization that the frustration and oppression suffered by the underclasses provokes an equally violent vengeance. Second, less admirably, because the cultural value of hyperbolic machismo, self-aggrandizing aggression, and ruthless predation is in no way diminished with their ostensible condemnation by “decent society.” Outlaws are welcomed not only by the sufferers seeking vengeance, but also by the privileged both relishing and disowning, with envious resentment, forms of power they revere, and often depend on, yet cannot openly condone.

Yet, this machismo and the often brutal misogyny that characterizes both rudie and Rastafari cultures, becomes a sore point for progressive cultural critics otherwise sympathetic to West Indian underclasses. Sometimes these are explained as an unfortunate legacy of colonialism. So Carolyn Cooper traces the hyperbolic machismo of the rudies to a reaction against the “diminished masculinity” available to West Indian black men within the strictures of postcolonial society and reads the persistence of the sexual double standard in Rastafari as an aggravated form of “the duplicitous gender ideology that pervades Jamaican society,” which is ultimately an inheritance from the “Judeo-Christian theology” of Victorian evangelical campaigns (10–11). It is precisely against the conservative and repressive dictates of both Jamaican middle-class and Rastafari societies that Cooper then reads the sexually liberatory potentials of the dancehall culture dominated by the rudie ethic of transgression and personal bravado:

Though the denigration of “slackness” seems to determine the concomitant denigration of female sexuality, this feminisation of slackness in the dancehall can also be read in a radically different way as an innocently transgressive celebration from sin and law. Liberated from the repressive respectability of a conservative gender ideology of female property and propriety, these women lay proper claim to the control of their own bodies. (10)

Yet, while women may enjoy expanded forms of personal and sexual expression in dancehall culture, these forms, though innocent of criminal violence, cannot be innocent of the contradictions attendant on that culture's relation to mainstream society. While, as Cooper argues so sympathetically, women have inhabited dancehall culture in defining ways, nonetheless feminine slackness is a counterpart to male machismo and shares both its potentials and limitations: both are forms of sexualized bravado, both depend heavily on stylized forms of self-definition and self-assertion that, as in Cooper's analysis of the phenomenon, are articulated largely in reaction against perceived limits of legitimacy. Most importantly, both are vulnerable to the kind of simultaneous exploitation and disavowal that characterize the reception of subcultural forms in dominant society. And because that society is sexist, when these forms are both feminine and overtly sexual, as they are in female dancehall culture, their vulnerability to both exploitation and denigration is more acute.

Whereas the rude boys have had, since the 1960s, scores of critics and apologists, most align the ethos of these gangs, often called "yardies," with more temporally and culturally immediate iconic outlaws: the organized crime gangsters and, even more, the Wild West gunfighters of North American legend and film.⁴ Wild West gunfighters, like early modern pirates, are the glamorous denizens of the frontier; the Caribbean was the first American frontier, the North American West the next. Inhabited by ethnic and economic outcasts, abandoned by business and industry, neglected by social welfare, demonized by the media, ravished by the wars among gangs and the police, certain late-twentieth-century urban areas—such as Tivoli Gardens and Trenchtown in West Kingston, Brixton and Hackney in London, South Central Los Angeles and the South Bronx in the United States—stand as present-day heirs to earlier frontier outlaw zones such as Port Royal and Dodge City.

Tosh's speech points to the ways contemporary West Indian communities are heir to pressures rooted in the early modern formation of the English-speaking Caribbean and, in their struggles for socioeconomic empowerment, prone to responses that echo, often quite explicitly, that history, with its icons of outlaw resistance. These icons were constructed largely within late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial conditions and a return to their early modern history

helps us gain an understanding of their nature and function in late modernity. Tosh's remarks, then, frame two points this essay forwards: that early modern piracy has an analogue in late modern West Indian youth gangs and that those celebrated as heroic discoverers and founders were engaged on an ethical frontier where the boundary between the law and the outlaw was prone to slip and slide in step with the sorry parade of institutionalized predation and exploitation. The pirate operates as a cultural repository for resonant historical memories of New World origins. The conditions of violence and exploitation that created what we now call the Caribbean continue to this day, generating modes of legitimacy and assimilation on the one hand and of transgression and resistance on the other, whose distinction from one another is, and has been since the days of pirates, confused by the complicity between the law and the outlaw. These conditions are embodied in the culturally mythic persona of the pirate whose ethical and aesthetic ambiguity becomes an iconic model for such justice-confounding and opportunity-bedeviling complicity.

Like the pirates themselves, the trope of piracy has always been highly mobile, a marker of the very instabilities of those lines that define social and ethical standards. In the eighteenth century, piracy is a concept useful for the definition of the line between legitimate and illegitimate commercial practices. The period's preoccupation with piracy and pirate stories seems largely linked to the ways these are used to discursively rationalize and mobilize commercial imperialism. In his *Review* for October 16, 1707, Daniel Defoe ironically ticks off the types of piracy central to English commercial institutions:

It would make a sad Chasm on the Exchange of London, if all the Pyrates should be taken away from the Merchants there, whether we be understood to speak of your Litteral or Allegorical Pyrates; whether I should mean the Clandestine Trade Pyrates, who pyrate upon fair trade at home; the Custom-stealing Pyrates, who pyrate upon the Government; the Owling Pyrates, who rob the Manufactures; the privateering Pyrates, who rob by Law.

Here the trope of piracy turns to indict the iniquities domesticated by licensed commerce. Conversely, in *Captain Singleton* Defoe turns the trope of fruitful commerce to equivocate piratical accumulation.

There William, the Quaker-turned-pirate, proves that best practices for pirates are about the same as those for all prudent businessmen. He repeatedly convinces the crew to forego the indulgence of revenge and the pleasures of violence in the interests of pure profit: "I only ask," he says to Bob Singleton, "what is thy Business, and the Business of all the People thou hast with thee? Is it not to get Money?" (153). William's rationalization places piracy next door to legitimate commerce, just as the shady dealings on the Exchange place that institution within the frontiers of piracy. Defoe's speculations, narrative and expository, ironically and tellingly register the contiguities between piracy and honest commerce that prove so compelling to those concerned with the rationalization of capitalism in the early eighteenth century and to its critique in the late twentieth.

In both the early and the late modern periods, the complicity between law and outlaw has been generated by a political and socio-economic milieu where dominant power, in its desperate attempts to secure its grip, exploits outlaw forces, such as the pirates (as privateers) and the West Kingston gangs (as security forces), in ways often at odds with overt ideologies of law and order and with the result that these forces, enlisted initially to protect and enhance "legitimate" power, often come to pose grave threats to it.⁵ But when the threat against dominant power is felt, those outlaw forces are ruthlessly quelled and with impunity, for they are usually composed of underclasses whose claims to justice are weakened or obliterated by their low social and economic status. With his direct address to "Mr. Manley" and "Mr. Seaga," Tosh smoothly reminds his audience of the real players who support and arm the youth gangs in the territories they both defend and ravish.

Dreadlocked, his speech peppered with Rastatalk, and his thought informed with roots consciousness, Peter Tosh (aka Bush Doctor) embodies the Rastafarian Afrocentric tradition of sometimes heavily criminalized dissent and resistance distinct from, though socially and culturally mingled with, that of the gunfighters whose tactics he refuses but whose kinship he acknowledges. Rude boys and Rastas—these are the two most prominent contemporary West Indian subcultures and, since the 1960s, the guiding ethos and preoccupations of both groups have been forwarded, debated, and given global currency in popular music, from ska through rocksteady and reggae to dancehall.

Both the rudies and the Rastas express the consciousness of the “sufferers” battling poverty, political exploitation, and social ostracism in the shantytowns of West Kingston. And they do so in ways that carry on two traditions of outlaw cultures: rudies perpetuate the ethos of the armed desperado, with his glamorized violence, personal stature, territorialism, and bravado, and Rastas that of the separatist Maroon communities with their focus on spiritual righteousness, consciousness of African tradition, and resistance to cultural and political colonialism. In the early modern Caribbean the armed desperado took amphibious form as the buccaneer and the pirate. In ways reflected in the cultural positions of the rudies and Rastas in late modernity, the Maroons and the pirates, then, were the two most prominent early modern Caribbean subcultures and together constituted the two most serious threats to colonialism in the West Indies.

Geographical and historical contiguity suggest that it makes sense to look at Maroons and pirates together. The cultural contiguity of the Maroon and pirate is casually assumed in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century literature. So in Aphra Behn’s 1688 *Oroonoko*, the Royal Slave plans a revolt against white rule that involves both marronage and piracy:

He said they would travel towards the Sea, plant a New Colony, and defend it by their Valour; and then they could find a Ship, either driven by stress of Weather, or guided by Providence that way, they wou’d seize it, and make it a Prize, till it had transported them to their own Countries. (62)

This passage also articulates two features associated with marronage for the next four hundred years: the Afrocentric trajectory of its ideals and the notion of Maroons as the noble counterparts of the enslaved populace: Maroons are Royal Slaves whose heroic status is witnessed by their freedom.

In *Polly*, John Gay’s 1729 sequel to *Beggar’s Opera*, Macheath, anti-hero of the London underworld, runs off and goes for a pirate in the West Indies. He adopts the disguise of a black man, and goes by the name “Morano.” He becomes, then, a white urban criminal passing as a pirate passing as a runaway slave, or Maroon.⁶ Although Gay’s opera does not make much of Macheath’s assumed fictional status as Morano, a black man at large in the West Indies, it does note, in a

tellingly offhand way, the link between pirates and Maroons in the eighteenth-century cultural imagination. Taken together, these early modern examples of the proximity of piracy and marronage show as well how sociopolitical and criminal objectives intertwine in that area where freedom fighter exploits piracy and the highwayman's mask bears traces both of the sea marauder and the righteous African rebel.

Perhaps the strongest link in the chain that connects pirate and Maroon is that both constitute sustained and organized refusals of participation in the two central institutions of the colonial machine: plantation slavery and the vastly expanded merchant navy, both of which qualify as total institutions and as precursors to the industrial factory of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷ And while there are strong traditions of resistance within the merchant shipping force, on the one hand, and plantation slave society, on the other, both the pirates and the Maroons are exemplary in the militancy of their refusal and in the iconic, even mythical, status granted to them, both contemporaneously and retrospectively.

Pirates and Maroons are culturally mythic figures in the early modern Caribbean. By virtue of their status at once within and in opposition to the conditions of colonialism and its aftermath, they have become repositories for two, sometimes overlapping, ethics of resistance and survival whose currency in the contemporary African-diasporic world is apparent in youth gangs (the rude boys or yardies) and Rastafari communities. Living, in a sense, on the frontiers of the frontier, both pirates and Maroons hyperbolically embody instabilities—ethical, economic, political, sociocultural, linguistic, demographic—that typify the early modern Caribbean and the late modern urban frontier as well. As repositories of historical and cultural alternatives, both pirate and Maroon cultures have attracted considerable attention, especially since the 1970s, from historians, critics, and activists interested in histories of resistance and subversion.

Focusing on the maritime origins of globalization, Peter Linebaugh's and Marcus Rediker's *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* sets out the circum-Atlantic context of those strategies, alliances, and ethics that informed the anticolonial, anticapitalist, and antislave revolts that have shaped modernity. Concerned with recovering the origins and multiracial ideals of an early modern proletariat, their focus is on

a revisionary labor history. Highlighting the racial and ethnic complexities within the sea-faring communities, *Many-Headed Hydra* casts the pirates in a positive, progressive light, highlighting their inclusiveness, egalitarianism, and institutionalization of alternative social forms: “They had . . . self-consciously built an autonomous, democratic, egalitarian social order of their own, a subversive alternative to the prevailing ways of the merchant, naval, and privateering ship and a counterculture to the civilization of Atlantic capitalism with its expropriation and exploitation, terror and slavery” (173). But while their status as *subcultures* of modernity is evident, the status of these groups as *countercultures*, I contend, is more complex, though one often granted to both the pirates and the Maroons. Moreover, my interests here are precisely in those complexities that threaten to unfix such positive definitions of cultural status.

The significance of the distinction between sub- and counterculture lies in the greater sociopolitical autonomy and coherence associated with countercultures and so in the application and, finally I think, confounding of standards of legitimacy, both sociological and legal-political. Because subcultures are often distinguished by a greater integration with the “parent culture” in which they exist, and often lack an explicit articulation of lofty social and political aims, their significance may seem compromised. Their actions, even when viewed sympathetically, may seem prepolitical and so in need of rationalized organization and direction in order to qualify as meaningful in any fully political-historical sense.

So in the current situation where Jamaican gang violence remains in the foreground along with attempts within Jamaican communities to culturally disarm it by retaining the rude boys’ militancy and raw power but using them to fuel more consciously cultural and socially responsible messages. Such attempts can be heard in the work of DJs such as Terry Ganzie, whose cut “Welcome the Outlaw” provides a kernel of inspiration and the title for this essay, who combine the rude boy gangster style with a commitment to sociocultural critique. In his recent study of dancehall culture, anthropologist Norman C. Stolzoff has dubbed such artists “Rude-boy Rastas” whose lyrics “are intensely political in that they decry the corruption of politicians, the senselessness of violence, the exploitation of the poor, the misrepresentation of the truth” (166). Yet while Stolzoff grants the immediate

political jab of such DJs, he hesitates to grant them real ideological coherence; the lyrics, while political, are not “explicitly ideological” (166). This is a quality he reserves for the “Cultural Rastas” such as Tony Rebel and the reformed Rastafarian Buju Banton, “known for their moral integrity, celebration of things African, and revolutionary politics” (164). So the intimacy, and the divide, between rudies and Rastas, between contingency and coherence, between reaction and revolution, remains in force, with an ongoing hesitancy to attribute ideological force to the former even where political relevance is undeniable.

Most pirate societies are more accurately compared to contemporary outlaw subcultures, such as the rudies or yardies, than to contemporary countercultures, such as the Rastafari. Yet, as the formation of outlaw subcultures shows, the distinction between criminal and sociopolitical actions, between transgressive reactive complicity and truly political subversion, can be difficult to define. So in an evaluation of urban Jamaican subcultures, urban anthropologist Faye V. Harrison emphasizes the need to read such cultures politically, for, even though rarely organized as part of “a coherent and long-term political program,” they nonetheless are “shaped by variant struggles against exploitation and oppression” and may “antedate, accompany, or catalyze more coherent patterns of mobilization” (274). Conversely, as alternatives to dominant societies, with their emphasis on separate institutions, countercultures, such as those of the Maroons and the Rastafari, flirt with standards of separatist purity and authenticity that are hard to maintain. And while such claims to ethnic and ideological purity may bolster a certain brand of legitimacy, they may also bind these cultures in limiting contradictions.

So while I share Linebaugh’s and Rediker’s concern with the contributions to progressive ideologies recoverable from histories of the underclasses, by examining here the analogues among two iconographic early Atlantic subcultures (the pirates and the Maroons) and two contemporary African-Caribbean subcultures (the rudies and the Rastafari) I strive to emphasize how such contributions are complicated by the complicity between the law and the outlaw, between alternative and dominant societies, between subversive and repressive orders that seems a characteristic feature of the genesis and development of these groups. For this complicity is what threatens the value of the sociocultural achievements of these groups, especially as

estimated by progressive standards. Yet this complicity is a feature of their cultural-historical tenacity and significance; its elision obscures not only the “historical record” but also the discursive operations that produce colonial imperialism, slavery, and global capitalism. That is, piracy is disavowed by legitimate power only at the risk of a hypocrisy that denies that power’s indebtedness to it and is embraced by radical intellectuals only at the risk of overlooking how piracy mirrors as much as it subverts the very economic and social institutions it opposes. Likewise, marronage operates as a name for resistance and alterity in the African diaspora but only by dint of a historical complicity with slavery and colonialism that complicates the claims of unity and purity marronage sets against the disabling hybridity those institutions imposed.

None of the groups examined here, then, achieve a pure and absolute autonomy from the dominant institution in opposition to which it constitutes its own identity. Yet, this failure of “pure” oppositionality, ideological or practical-strategic, does not invalidate the socio-cultural power of these groups; rather, if anything, it constitutes one feature central to their continuing currency in a postcolonial world where lines between law and outlaw, black and white, inside and outside, disappear almost as quickly as they are, often opportunistically, calculated and imposed.

In what follows, I look at connections between the Maroons and, first, the seventeenth-century buccaneers and, next, the second wave of post-1714 pirates. As I proceed, I trace the material and historical contiguities, as actual contact and as analogous social formations, between the two groups in the early modern period. As it pertains to these connections, I present the relevance of these groups to historical and cultural-ideological work motivated by a set of critiques—of capitalism, of colonialism and postcolonialism, of modernity. These critiques are forwarded not only in textual form by academics but also within the traditions of popular African-diasporic culture. The modern pirate is a figure of cultural myth generated, in large part, in a New World Caribbean matrix he shares with the Maroon, and both figures serve as repositories of cultural memory and alternative historical possibility in a variety of traditions: popular, commercial, and academic; Euro-American and African-diasporic. Because of the global currency achieved by their highly institutionalized and articulated

form of Afrocentric ideology, the countercultural status of the Rastafari, those contemporary heirs of the Maroons, receives particular attention. By attending to the contemporary West Indian heirs of the early modern pirates and the Maroons I hope to facilitate a better understanding of how culture works in the historical relations between early and late modernity. One principle guiding this examination is that the histories of African-diasporic and Euro-American subversion need to be read together even as they are experienced together historically and culturally.

DESPERADOS: BUCCANEERS AND MAROONS ON THE CARIBBEAN FRONTIER

In his entry for May 19, 1750, Thomas Thistlewood, recently arrived from England in Jamaica to become an overseer, remarks on a meeting he had with the famous Maroon leader Colonel Cudjoe:

Between 8 and 9 miles from Dean's Valley, met Colonel Cudjoe, one of his wives, one of his sons, a Lieutenant and other attendants. He shook me by the hand, and begged a dram of us, which we gave him. He had on a feathered hat, sword by his side, gun upon his shoulder, &c. Bare-foot and barelegged, somewhat a majestic look. He brought to my memory the picture of Robinson Crusoe. (Hall 14)

Cudjoe and Crusoe link through a variety of associations: the mirroring echo of the names themselves—Crusoe/Cudjoe; the visual resemblance that Thistlewood's sketch emphasizes. Going, perhaps by preference, "barefoot and barelegged," but sustaining his "majestic look," Cudjoe possesses, as does Crusoe, a distinctly "hybrid" Caribbean identity, fractured from origins in signs and circumstance that speak of both the Old and New Worlds. Both stranded in the Caribbean bush, Crusoe in his goatskins, Cudjoe in his scanty tattered finery, both men present an appearance that speaks of life on the frontier productive of an identity outside of the limits of conventional civilization, yet irreducible to simple savagery, noble or barbaric. With infinite labor, Crusoe stitches together his suits of skins and so maintains, in a fashion peculiar to his Caribbean island, standards of

European decency. With great dignity, Cudjoe plucks the plumes of European martial prestige and uses them in the crown he wears as the leader of free Africans.

Perhaps most fundamentally, Cudjoe and Crusoe are associated as the black Maroon leader and the white marooned man; the link is etymological. The practice of leaving people stranded on uninhabited islands, a favorite discipline of pirates, was named after those African people, the Maroons, stranded by the European slave trade on the Caribbean frontiers.⁸ Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, though stranded by providence rather than pirates, serves as the archetypal image of the marooned man in Anglo-American culture.⁹ Crusoe is marooned when he is shipwrecked on a voyage from Bahia to Africa, undertaken to obtain a black market cargo of slaves; Cudjoe evades his fate as a slave by becoming a Maroon. Both the marooned Crusoe and the Maroon Cudjoe are products of the slave trade which stranded black and white together on New World frontiers in conditions of mutual hostility and dependency, violent subjugation and militant revolt, opportunistic alliance and exploitative legitimization.

From the first, European attempts to supply a Caribbean labor force from peoples taken from West Africa met with resistance, from the passive to the militant. Great numbers perished in the passage; others expired under the deathly labor discipline on the plantations. Still others ran off into the bush and formed communities whose size varied from small bands of several dozen to fortified towns of thousands, such as Palmares in northeastern Brazil, a conglomeration of villages with a combined population estimated at some thirty thousand. This African "nation" was finally reduced by Portuguese colonial forces after six expeditions in the 1680s and a siege of more than two years in the 1690s (Kent; Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 78).

When not obliterated, Maroon communities persisted through successful military resistance, as is the case with the Haitian Maroons instrumental in the revolution, or through formal negotiations of treaties with the colonial government, as is the case, for example, with the Jamaican Maroons.¹⁰ Maroon communities, then, developed in the New World, especially in the Caribbean and the coastal areas of South and Central America, from the beginning of the slave trade and continue to exist, most notably in Surinam, but also in Jamaica.

Predictably, then, Maroons came into contact with the early buccaneers and privateers/pirates with whom they sometimes formed alliances and shared similar means of livelihood.

Maroons lived in settled communities and so were familiar with the territory and its Amerindian inhabitants (where there were any left). They were often hostile to the Spanish and so open to alliance with English sea rovers, most famously with Francis Drake, whose international highway robbery in Panama was engineered in the early 1570s with the sustained assistance of a Maroon named Diego and his men (Masefield, 22–95; Wright; Price, 14). Although officially commissioned by the English crown to conduct his depredations against the Spanish, Drake's was, as one recent historian puts it, a sensibility passionately "ambitious and piratical." His raid on the mule train carrying Spanish silver and gold across Panama brought him fifteen tons of silver ingots and about £100,000 in gold coin (Cordingly, 28–29). The Maroons, in turn, received the moral satisfaction of having foiled the Spanish, the opportunity to join Drake's company, and "gifts and favors of the sorts most pleasing to them, such as knives, iron, coloured ribbons and cloth" (Masefield 79–80, 95).

Drake's sacking of St. Domingo on the island of Hispaniola in 1586 weakened the Spanish hold there and left it open for successive raids of privateers, who then settled on the west and northwest coasts of the island, forming the first bands of what developed, in the next century, into a loose confederation of hunters and raiders called buccaneers. These buccaneers were mostly French and English men who gained a livelihood from hunting the wild pigs and cattle left by the Spanish. When, after 1655, the Spanish attacked their holdings in Tortuga, and they took to the seas seeking vengeance and a livelihood, the buccaneers formed the core of the first of two major waves of pirates. The second wave comes after the War of the Spanish succession in 1714 and was based in Providence Island, Bahamas (now Nassau).¹¹

The buccaneers are named after their process of curing meat; the process and the name for both it and the product—*boucan*—were taken from the Amerindians. This way of curing meat, and the practice of selling it to ships put in for supplies, is something the buccaneers shared with early Maroon communities and proto-Maroon communities in Jamaica, where the process and its product are known by the

Quechua-derived term, “jerk.”¹² According to standard twentieth-century etymology, the word *maroon* comes from the Spanish word *cimaroon*, which first referred to the cattle gone wild in the hills of Hispaniola (the very cattle the buccaneers hunted). It then came to refer, respectively, to the Amerindians who, resisting Spanish enslavement, themselves took to the hills, and, as early as 1530, to runaway African slaves (Price, 1–2). However, eighteenth-century etymologies assume a closer link between the Maroons and the wild boar they hunted and cured. “*Maroon*,” explains Bryan Edwards, following Edward Long, “signifies among the Spanish Americans . . . *Hog-hunters*. . . . *Marrano* is the Spanish word for a young pig” (1:523). This inflection of the etymology—*Maroon* from *marrano*, the pigs they hunt, rather than from *cimaroon*, the cattle who are wild like them—stresses a contiguity between the Maroons and the buccaneers in the eponymous association of both with the hunting and curing of wild game.

The seventeenth-century buccaneers, settled in Tortuga, off the northwest coast of Hispaniola, attracted to their ranks a typically Caribbean melange of desperate characters—“runaway slaves, deserters, escaped criminals, and religious refugees,” especially Protestant seamen fleeing Richelieu’s and then Louis XIV’s France (Cordingly, 39; Woodbury, 29–30). In 1654, they joined ranks with the English fleet sent out by Cromwell under Penn and Venables against St. Domingo. After failing miserably in that expedition, still determined to wrest an English foothold in the Caribbean away from the Spanish, Penn and Venables turned to Jamaica, which they took in 1655 and where some of these Tortuga buccaneers then settled. Henry Morgan, most famous of the British West Indian buccaneers, attended Penn and Venables on their expedition and, soon after the taking of Jamaica, became the captain of the “brethren of the coast,” as the loose federation of buccaneers came to be called. Under Morgan, the buccaneers found a new land base in the infamous Port Royal.

The culture and exploits of this society of buccaneers in Morgan’s time is sensationally told in Alexander Esquemelin’s *Bucaniers of America*. A Dutchman shipped to Tortuga in 1666 under indenture with the French West Indian Company, Esquemelin’s story is typical of that of many desperados who joined with pirate gangs as a means of escaping the inhuman forms of labor endemic to the Caribbean.¹³ When the company recalled its men from Tortuga, all the servants,

including Esquemelin, were sold. His new master, a “most cruel Tyrant,” was the Lieutenant General of the buccaneers. Brutalized, Esquemelin becomes ill and useless and is sold again, this time to a more humane man, a surgeon who, after a year’s service, allowed Esquemelin to buy his freedom for 100 pieces of eight (Esquemelin, 1:20–22).

Esquemelin lived during a period in Caribbean history when, as Sidney Mintz puts it, “slavery and other forms of labor coercion were hardly distinguishable” (*Caribbean Transformations*, 49). Esquemelin deplores the condition of the many men kidnapped in Europe as “servants” and sold as slaves. These bonded men, he asserts, are used worse than African slaves, for their masters, with only three years to get their money’s worth, often extracted that value at the price of the worker’s life. Pressed beyond the limits of human endurance, they literally take leave of their senses: “These miserable kidnap’d people, are frequently subject unto a certain disease, which in those parts, is called *Coma*; being a total privation of all their senses. And this distemper is judged to proceed from their hard usage” (Esquemelin, 1:74). Experienced as a coma in the days when Haiti was called Hispaniola, this state of death-in-life induced by the “reduction of human into thing for the ends of capital” is now called zombification (Dayan, 33). The zombie, like the comatose indentured servant, is a being whose identity and will are slaughtered in service to the exactions of unfree labor.

In order to escape this fate, Esquemelin buys his freedom and joins the buccaneers. He had few options; it was difficult, often nearly impossible, for free workers to compete in a market built on slave and bonded labor. His story is typical. Just as Africans ran off to found or join Maroon communities to escape the horrors of plantation slavery, so thousands of men responded to the constraints of an economy fueled by unfree labor by joining the outlaw ranks of the buccaneers.¹⁴ While not confined by such absolute limits on their freedom and autonomy as were enslaved Africans, white indentured servants and even many nominally free men in the early modern Caribbean suffered severe restraints imposed by one or more factors: their bonded status, their class and educational background, their religious, national, and/or political affiliations, their criminal identity, and the very nature of the economies being established in the Caribbean.

Though often deplored for their unruliness, the buccaneers were more often than not welcomed, if sometimes surreptitiously, by the governors of Jamaica because they confined themselves to Spanish prey, they provided Caribbean-based military protection, and they spent a lot of money.¹⁵ Indeed, in an action that reflects, if antithetically, the military connection between the Panamanian Maroons and Drake's forces, the buccaneers were used early on by the English military in Jamaica to hunt down hostile Maroon bands (Dallas, 1:xxxviii). Certainly, however, the kind of "security" provided by such autonomous, violent, roving, and predatory groups was the most precarious. While the buccaneers may have provided Jamaica with some protection against hostile Maroons, the Spanish, and then the French, their presence on the island contributed to the general climate of social instability of the period (Patterson, "Slavery," 290).

But while the buccaneers stand out vividly as emblems of the kind of chaotic, licentious, antisociety many, from Edward Ward in the 1690s to Orlando Patterson in the 1970s, have seen as typical of Jamaica, the threat to law and order they presented paled next to the threat to white colonial rule posed by the Maroons from 1655 to 1738. Not until a new generation of post-1714 pirates declares its war of predation, not against the Spanish or French but against the whole world, will England be moved to any sort of broad-based, policy-backed action against maritime outlaws. As they attempted to turn a profit in Jamaica, the colonists were concerned not so much with the buccaneers profiting off Spanish spoils, but with the bands of Maroons whose very presence was an outrage to colonial domination and who provided motivation and strategic support for the "one long series of revolts" that took place during the first eighty years of English occupation (Patterson, "Slavery," 289).

Grossly outnumbered by, and completely dependent on, a population of hostile, often recalcitrant, African labor, the colonial grip on Jamaica was white-knuckled and savage. Rather than provide living conditions, planters replaced their ever-perishing stock of slaves with continual new imports. Life was cheap; death from overwork, disease, malnutrition, and physical torture was epidemic; births were rare; continual revolt and continual reprisals and endless violence was the outcome. The history of slave resistance in Jamaica has been impressively documented; the central role of the Maroons in this resistance

is set out by Orlando Patterson (*Sociology*, 260–83).¹⁶ The story of the Jamaican Maroons presents a rich and curious mix of defiance and accommodation. Various bands of Maroons responded differently to the English occupation. One band allied with the English and, in 1663, was granted full civil rights, but as its leader, Lubola, began to hunt down recalcitrant blacks for the colonial military, other Maroons grew resentful and assassinated him. A group under Juan de Serras orchestrated continual resistance to the occupation and, when prices were put on their heads, retreated into the uninhabited northeast. Newly imported slaves began to rebel and form their own or join pre-existing Maroon bands.

The colonial establishment struggled with this problem of revolt during its entire tenure. Before the treaty negotiated with the Maroon leader Cudjoe in 1738, the situation looked especially dire. The English occupation faced the threat of death to white settlers and the depletion of its labor force, but also a threat to its very hold on the island, for runaway slaves stayed, joining what eventually became two autonomous and armed Maroon communities. These should be seen as internal, yet independent African (Caribbean) nations; it is as independent nations within Jamaica that the military government had to treat the Maroons in order to manage their threat to its sovereignty.

The treaties made with Cudjoe's Leeward and then with Quao's Windward Maroons ensured Maroon autonomy but only at the price of their complicity with the colonial government whom, from thenceforth, they served as police and militia.¹⁷ From this point, the Maroons occupy a more ambiguous relationship both to the white colonials and to the population of enslaved Africans, with whom they maintained close contact. Sometimes, the Maroons acted in concert with the colonists to quell revolt, as in Tacky's rebellion of 1760; at other times they were suspected as instigators of revolt. At least two things seem clear: the Maroons were never completely trusted by the colonials; the Maroons formulated and followed their own policies in the interests of their own nations. In doing so, they straddled the divide between law and outlaw, at least as it was defined from a colonialist perspective.

In their relation to the slave population, there is a record of resentment but also of inspiration and emulation.¹⁸ Even as the Maroons gained a livelihood as bounty hunters and engaged with the

colonial militia in crushing Tacky's revolt, they continued to provide the rebel slaves with models and motives for rebellion. Thistlewood notes in his entry for August 1, 1760: "the rebels give out they will kill all the Negroes they can, and as soon as dry weather comes fire all the plantations they can, till they force the whites to give them free like Cudjoe's Negroes" (Hall, 110). As Patterson suggests, "all sustained slave revolts must acquire a Maroon dimension since the only way in which a slave population can compensate for the inevitably superior military might of their masters is to resort to guerrilla warfare with all its implications of flight, strategic retreat to secret hideouts, and ambush" ("Slavery," 317). In relation to the power hierarchy structuring the master/slave duality, then, the Maroons occupy a role, as bounty hunters, as symbols of African freedom, that simultaneously reinforces and threatens colonial tenure. As long as the Maroons present visible, socially viable evidence of freedoms denied to other Africans, this threat cannot be completely controlled by the colonial treaties that recognize the two Maroon nations in an effort not to condone African liberty, but to appropriate it in ways that inhibit its extension. Conversely, Maroon complicity with colonial rule threatens the equilibrium of their status as exemplars of African freedom.

The Maroon capitulation to terms that protected colonial interests might itself be viewed as a kind of strategic retreat, one that in turn guaranteed their autonomy and so their heroic status as exceptions to a history of slavery. What has counted for every generation of freedom fighters from the eighteenth century to the present is the Maroons' independence from plantation slavery and colonial assimilation; their complicity *with* the colonial establishment is not overlooked so much as understood as a price extorted from them. Nanny, leader of the leeward Maroons, and Cudjoe, of the windward, head a pantheon of Jamaican national heroes that also includes Sam Sharpe, Marcus Garvey, and Bob Marley. To this day, Maroon ancestry confers a prestigious, "noble" status; so the Maroon ancestry of contemporary reggae star Buju Banton is often noted as a factor in his phenomenal success and recent conversion to Rastafarianism (Regis).

In contemporary Caribbean discourse, marronage has become a name for all sorts of preservative "retreats to secret hideouts" undertaken by African-diasporic people as they try to sustain lives apart from the pressures of exploitation and domination. The progressive

memory of an Africa where past meets future in a time looped outside of bondage creates retreats and sites of resistance that may be cultural, spiritual, and symbolic. Developing an Akan-dominated culture alongside, but fairly distinct from, that of the slaves, the whites, and the free people of color, the Maroons are respected by contemporary progressive thinkers for their preservation not only of freedom, but of traditional forms of language, dance and music, folklore, agriculture, social organization, and spirituality.

Marronage includes all those ways in which what is seen as African survives the corrupting degradation of colonial and post-colonial domination by the Babylon of economic, ecological, and social exploitation.¹⁹ No longer confined to the Maroon communities proper, marronage refers to the persistence of Afro-creole elements in society at large, “in the Africanization of Christianity . . . in Garveyism . . . in the Rastafari movement . . . the Black Power movement of the 60s, and in the continuing African forms of marketing habits, family patterns, speech (dialect), magic-medicine (*obeah*) and religious practices: *po/kumina*, *vodun*, *shango*, etc.” (Brathwaite 1974, 31). The Maroons become repositories for the notion that freedom is a black thing.

WORLDS APART: THE SHIP AND THE PLANTATION

Although not as central to political and cultural activism, piracy has become significant in academic discourses of resistance and liberation in ways somewhat analogous to those forms that the notion of marronage takes in African-diasporic thought. Like the intellectuals working with the idea of marronage, contemporary Anglo-American historians of pirates do their thinking in progressive traditions concerned with liberation politics. The case for radical piracy is usually made along three lines: piracy as a refusal of the labor discipline employed by the merchant navy, pirate societies as structurally democratic and egalitarian, and piracy as a haven for outlaw personal identities.²⁰ Most recently Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker have included pirates in their archaeology of the “hidden history of the Revolutionary Atlantic,” demonstrating the transatlantic circulation

among piratical rationales and strategies and those foundational to the establishment of organized labor resistance and political revolt (143–73).

The notion of piracy as an outlaw version of the refusal of labor forms peculiar to England's merchant navy links piracy strongly to marronage and its own refusal of the labor on offer in that other total institution: the plantation.²¹ Connections between these pirates and Maroons are constituted by the analogous cultural status of each, both in relation to their legitimate cousins, the merchant navy and the plantation, and by the contiguous relations of all four societies—legal ship and outlaw pirate, plantation slave and independent Maroon—to England and notions of civilized English society. Both the sailor and the slave occupy an outsider status that may fuse easily with the outlaw status of the pirate and Maroon. The alterity, so ideologically useful in the cultural discursive constitution of piracy and marronage, needs to be seen in connection with the position of difference, often understood as deficiency and deviancy, occupied by all ship and all slave societies in the eighteenth century. As outsiders, both ship and slave societies develop sociocultural features peculiar to themselves and ones that, in both cases, can be partially understood under the rubric of creolized cultural formation.

Not only the plantation factories, with first their indentured and then enslaved populations, but also the maritime forces that transported the products of the plantations, and supplied and protected them, depended on labor recruitment and labor discipline notorious for their brutality. Impressment, the legal kidnapping practiced by the Royal Navy, was common, and discipline on board was notoriously severe. In *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, Tobias Smollett, drawing on his own memories, paints a hellish picture of maritime service in the West Indies. From the press gang that imprisons him on board to the shipwreck that casts him ashore, Roderick's stint at sea is a chronicle of savagery. Like that of many young men, his service is coerced, and, as Linebaugh notes, "fully incarcerated" (67): "after an obstinate engagement [with the press gang], in which I received a large wound on the head, and another on my left cheek, I was disarmed, taken prisoner and carried on board a pressing tender" (Smollett, 139). The harshness of the sailor's life, whether in the merchant or military navy, and its proximity to that of the criminal prisoner, is witnessed in Samuel Johnson's widely quoted opinion:

“No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned” (Boswell, 246–47).

As Marcus Rediker argues, within the merchant navy, life for the sailor became increasingly brutal as the eighteenth century wore on. With the expansion and increased importance of colonial trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the earlier shipboard practice of profit sharing was replaced by wage labor, and discipline grew more desperately severe (209, 247). Eighteenth-century ships were floating factories served by the (often resistant) wage labor of seamen whose “experience pointed in many ways toward the Industrial revolution” (8). Pirates reject their status as wage laborers in favor of a more egalitarian, “pre-capitalist,” allocation of profit through the shares system and of a more democratic structure of ship government (263–64). The articles documented in the account “Of Captain Bartholomew Roberts” assume the share system and stipulate the egalitarianism and collectivism on which Rediker bases his arguments:

Every Man has a Vote in Affairs of Moment; Has equal Title to the fresh provisions, or strong Liquors, at any Time Seized . . .

Every Man to be called fairly in Turn, by List, on board of Prizes, because, (over and above their proper Share) they were on these Occasions allowed a Shift of Cloaths . . .

No Man to talk of breaking up their Way of Living, till each had shared a 10001. If in order to this, any Man should lose a limb . . . he was to have 800 Dollars, out of the publick Stock, and for lesser Hurts, proportionably. (*General History* 211–12)

Defying almost all the social institutions of their day, pirates form, then, the most radical sect of a group of seamen whose labor militancy, as Rediker demonstrates, was finely honed in these floating factories. Accordingly, pirate societies have been heralded by recent historians as bastions of earlier, more egalitarian forms of profit distribution and social relations that industrial capitalism was in the process of displacing.

But while pirates refused the economic and social conditions of the merchant navy, they were, in the main, trained in that institution, and their cultural situation is significantly similar to that of any ship society. Just as the Maroons share many features of the Afro-creole

slave society that they refused, yet with which they were in constant, if sometimes oppositional, contact, so the pirates' demographic identity, language, way of life, and, to some degree, ethos, is contiguous with that of the general body of seamen. Both Maroons and pirates represent, in militant and extreme forms, features of resistance and alterity that mark early modern slave societies and ship societies more generally. In what follows, I point to a few large sociocultural features that plantation slave and ship societies, and so, as well, Maroon and pirate societies, share.

Both the ship and the West Indian plantation were economically central but culturally alien to England. Pirate and Maroon societies were no less central, sometimes as armed threat, other times as armed allies, to English domination, even while they were even more completely outlandish. The world of the ship, like that of the West Indian plantation, was a "world apart," foreign and often incomprehensible to outsiders.²² When challenged by a dinner companion with the observation, "We find people fond of being sailors," Dr. Johnson confesses his complete bewilderment: "I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination" (Boswell, 927). Describing the sailor communities of Wapping and Rotherhithe, John Fielding feels that he is "in another country," so "peculiar" are the sailors' "manner of living, speaking, acting, dressing, and behaving": "The seamen here are a generation differing from all the world" (xv).²³ Acclimation to life in this other country, like acclimation to life on the plantation (for blacks and whites alike), required a period of seasoning, during which the initiate became accustomed to a new language; new, and typically severe, forms of labor discipline; a new, usually inadequate and distasteful diet; and new sets of social and labor relations—all peculiar to the floating world.

Plantation and ship societies altered all who entered them, white plantation dweller as well as black slave, ship's captain as well as common sailor, but the brutality of discipline and the violence of sociocultural alienation fell most heavily on the laboring masses: the slaves and the sailors. While the ship's mobility contrasts with stationary life on the plantation, once on board, the sailor, like the African slave, lived in a state of "virtual incarceration," isolated from all that had been familiar (Rediker, 159). Both workers, sailor and slave, had to be "socialized anew." This process worked to strip the sailor

“of previous attachments to local and regional cultures and ways of speaking,” just as did slave seasoning (Rediker, 162). The hard lessons of labor on board, as on the plantation, were taught with the whip. The violence of the slave driver is matched with that of the sea captain: both attempted to extract absolute discipline in a situation whose very isolation removed this discipline from conventional checks and limits. Authority was personal and absolute in both situations; the justice and severity of discipline wavered erratically with the temper of the captain or the overseer. Justifications for brutality in both cases came in assertions of the intractable nature of the sailor or slave and, often, of their status as lesser humans whose natural insensibility rendered them immune to all but the grossest discipline:

Many seamen are of that lazy idle temper, that, let them alone and they never care for doing anything they should do, and when they do anything it is with a grumbling unwilling mind, so that they must be drove to it.²⁴

With the logic of ethnocentrism, Henry Fielding makes difference hierarchical; the sailors, he marvels, “seem to glory in the language and behavior of savages” and to violate “the common bonds of humanity” (153–54; quoted in Linebaugh, 135). So in response to Boswell’s assertion that “sailors are happy,” Johnson asserts: “They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat—with the grossest sensuality” (Boswell, 927). Taken captive by the notorious Captain Low’s pirate crew, Captain George Roberts describes their deportment: “In this Manner they pass’d the Time away, drinking and carousing merrily, both before and after Dinner, which they eat in a very disorderly Manner, more like a Kennel of Hounds, than like Men” (*Four Years Voyages*, 60). As members of a culturally distinct, and despised, underclass, sailors acquire an aura of bestial alterity that, again, parallels that often attributed to African slaves. Edward Long, influential lobbyist for the planters’ interests, speaks at length of the African natural character, “brutish, ignorant, idle, crafty . . . lazy, thievish,” and the African natural body, insensate and only responsive to the “grossest” corporeal impressions, such as, one assumes, those bestowed on them by the whips of the overseer (2:354, 383). Degraded by their subjection to savage forms of life and labor, both

the black slave and the white sailor are represented as different and worse than other humans. In both cases, notions of historically acquired cultural difference (understood as deficiency) serve to justify forms of labor discipline peculiar to the institutions of early modern colonialism, and slide in and out of notions of innate ontological status: ethnic ideas coast into racist ones, and class identity verges on caste status.

Linebaugh speculates on the possibility that Henry Fielding's allusion to "savages" is specifically to the African peoples with whom sailors had extensive contact—contact of a variety including, but not limited to, that of the master to his slave (135).²⁵ Such association would be a factor not only for those sailors working in the Guinea trade, but more generally in a business where blacks comprised, by some estimates, as much as a quarter of the labor force by the end of the eighteenth century (Gilroy, 13).²⁶ That language is a site of the sailors' "savagery" may in itself imply that Fielding alludes to a specific sort of difference, one at once African and maritime. As Paul Gilroy emphasizes, the modern Atlantic constitutes a distinct zone of contact and cultural formation. The ship, that "living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion," is the chief means of communication in this zone and, for Gilroy, the central trope of this cultural site (4, 12–17). And, as the linguist J. L. Dillard (1975) has shown, the British ship had its own language, one it shared with the coastal regions of England, Africa, the Caribbean, and North America.

The extensive association among sailors and the African peoples they transported, worked with, and were in casual contact with, brought with it specific "exotic" or "savage" forms of transatlantic language. Cultural and linguistic contact took place in and between such cosmopolitan polyglot harbors as London, Bridgeton, Kingston, Charleston, New Orleans, Boston, Philadelphia, and coastal African factory settlements such as Bonny, Whydah, Cabinda, and Goree. A present-day cultural historian describes the linguistic situation in early eighteenth-century Jamaica as one "not of diglossia, triglossia, or even heteroglossia but of panglossia, a state of 'generalized multilingualism,'" from which Creole emerges as the primary, if despised, language of the island (Burton, 16). Communication in the pan-Atlantic world did not take place in standard English (or any European language), but rather in pidgins and Creoles concocted out of

European and African languages. J. L. Dillard has documented how “the Maritime Pidgin English, transmitted to West Africans in the slave trade and heavily influenced by West African languages, became the English Creole of the plantations from Nova Scotia to Surinam” (*All-American English* 42, 3–76; *Black English* 73–185).²⁷ Sailors, slaves, and those populations of whites who owned and were raised by slaves (from whom they learned this language that set them off, to no advantage, from the English) all spoke this maritime English.²⁸ Sailors, naturally, were among the largest groups of speakers.

Pirates’ language is distinguishable from that of the generality of sailors mostly by its blasphemy and its self-naming practices that, like the skeletons and hourglasses on the Jolly Rogers, stressed the irreverent, oppositional, radically autonomous, do-or-die ethic that controlled pirate identity. Such an ethic is apparent in the names pirates gave their ships: “*Batchelor’s Delight, Liberty, Night Rambler, Queen Anne’s Revenge, Cour Valant, Scowerer, Flying Dragon, Most Holy Trinity, Happy Delivery, Bravo, Black Joke, and Blessing.*”²⁹ The linguistic relationship between the Jamaican Maroons and the plantation slaves is more complex. The first Maroons were probably bilingual speakers of Spanish and either a dominant African language (such as Twi-Asante) or a variety of African languages. Barbara Kopytoff suggests that “a common African language may have provided the first means of communication between Spanish and English Maroons” (292). Or perhaps they were trilingual. Layering the mix, Barbara Lalla and Jean D’Costa emphasize the contact between the Spanish African population and the Arawaks who originally occupied the island and so the role the Maroons play as “a link both with their own African traditions and the language [Taino] and customs of the peoples [the Arawaks] with whom they had mixed” (12). By the eighteenth century, evidence from white commentators shows that the Maroons spoke the English Creole of the island, but may have also retained strong Spanish and African elements in what could have been a distinct Creole of their own.³⁰ Additionally, into the twentieth century, alongside various forms of English (from Creole to standard), the Maroons maintained an Akan language, Twi-Asante (Coromantee), though finally only in the most ritualized contexts (Alleyne, 120–31).³¹ And while it seems proper to emphasize the distinct “cultural and linguistic heritage” of the Maroons, it is also clear from their

ongoing contacts with whites and blacks, that, alongside this distinct heritage, they shared the island's Creole (Lalla and D'Costa 14).³²

JAH IS IN THE INTERSTICES

The linguistic position of the Maroons is indicative of their cultural position in relation to Jamaican society more generally, one that, like that of the twentieth-century Rastafari, is "interstitial" rather than fully "marginal," to adopt the terms employed by Richard Burton in his recent analysis of Caribbean cultural politics and performance (132). For Burton, the degree to which Rastafari cultural forms are generated from within the dominant culture they oppose forecloses their hold on the locus of pure marginality whence, in his view, true resistance must originate. Following a dubiously derived and applied distinction between, on the one hand, resistance emanating from a place of pure alterity and, on the other, opposition generated from within the culture it counters, Burton straitjackets his reading of cultural formations with binary categories that prohibit the very movements between law and outlaw, inside and outside, complicity and resistance that the history of cultural formation in the Caribbean witnesses (6–9).³³ Contrary to Burton, I argue that this position complicates, but does not invalidate, the nature of the opposition and resistance both the Maroons and the Rastafari present to that society. Indeed, rather than viewing this lack of pure marginality as an enervation of sociocultural force, as does Burton, it may be viewed as a feature of currency and power, if one purchased at the price of impurity and apparent contradiction. The contradiction is an easy one, a product of the way the Maroons, and now the Rastafari, are valued and value themselves as inheritors and preservers of distinct, one is tempted to say "pure," African cultural forms. In their rejection of the "Babylon" of western European sociocultural and political life, in their focus on African inheritance, and in their bid for cultural distinction, and one is correct to say for cultural "purity," the Rastafari self-consciously engage in the fostering of distinct, ideologically charged, forms of language, cuisine, dress, and living habits styled in relation to notions of African roots and authenticity.

But Rastafari societies, like those of the Maroons, are *Afro-creole*

cultural formations, although certainly ones that distinguish themselves—as more purely African—from other Afro-creole societies. Accordingly, Rastatalk is a subdialect of the English Creole of Jamaica. Rastatalk, then, certainly does, as Burton claims, simultaneously invoke and subvert the language of Babylon, creating distinctions inseparable from the objects it disowns. But to call this relationship “parasitic,” and so to assert, as he does, that “because their diet, dress, hairstyles, language and ultimately their faith are in no way ‘African’ but are all oppositional products of the very ‘shitstem’ they hate, every protestation or would-be expression of Africanness is of necessity self-deconstructive and merely proves and reinforces their actual non-Africanness” abandons the very logic of creolization that the critic invokes in his dismissal (135–36).

Any evaluation of the Rastafari confronts the distinctly modern (both early and late) paradox that structures New World cultural formations, necessarily hybrid and creolized, centered on a notion of Africa as their site of unity and pure origin. The meaning of this paradox is not the self-negating logic of those cultures but, perhaps primarily, the assertion of a creolized consciousness that, painfully alive to the involuntary and exploitative context in which Caribbean cultural hybridity has taken place, seeks a different site for cultural regeneration, one defined in different terms, those of unity, purity, and autonomy. This place is called Africa. In cultural symbolic terms, what modern “Africa” consists of is in part a product of what Afro-creole cultures have made it. On the one hand, it is simply counterfactual to deny the persistence of African-based cultural forms in the New World. On the other, it is mistaken to view the circuits of cultural formation as unidirectional: African cultures play a part in those of the New World; in return, cultures of the New World have formulated notions of the Old World in ways that are distinctly creole.³⁴ Since one of the most widespread and, in the context of slavery, most precious of African-derived notions has always been the promise of a return to Guinea, to Africa, the very site and nature of this place “Africa” has been open, for four hundred years, to New World production. Africa is one foundational site of the transfigurative utopian conceptions that, as Gilroy puts it, construct “both an imaginary anti-modern past and a postmodern yet-to-come” (37).

To admit that, in their creolized production and invocations of

Africa, the Rastafari confront “an aporia inseparable from the fact of being Afro-creole, not African” should not, as it seems to with Burton, discount the value and efficiency of their culture (136). Such an invocation of Africa is common to Afro-creole cultures; for an Afro-creolist to discount it as a violation of the purity of his paradigm of hybridity seems absurd indeed. Burton wants a hybridity as pure as the Africa he rejects. And here we are in the tiresomely predictable deconstructive vortex that so often surrounds issues of authenticity and essentialism, whether they have as their content ethnicity or gender or meaning itself.

Whereas a certain class of cultural critic devoted to the letter, if not the spirit, of hybridity could invalidate the Maroons, as well as the Rastafari, for their impure, “interstitial,” relation to the society they oppose, the cultural-political use of both groups in Jamaica has more often been a matter of inclusion, sometimes exploitative, than dismissive exclusion. The cultural symbols of the Maroons became fused with the middle-class and university-based Black Power movement, led by Walter Rodney, and given voice in a daily newspaper called *Abeng*, after the famous Maroon horn (Campbell, 20, 132–33; Waters, 95–98). They were also coopted, via their connection with the Rastafari and reggae music, by the JNP in their campaigns of the seventies and eighties (Waters, 115–289). While the clarity of eighteenth-century Maroon resistance may seem somewhat clouded by their complicity with slave-labor discipline, the authenticity of these twentieth-century Afrocentric symbols of resistance may seem somewhat compromised by their exploitation by a dominantly bourgeois political party in its efforts to gain the allegiance of underclass sufferers. The difference between these two modes of “compromise” is that the first served the interests of survival and autonomy for a people whose existence was otherwise threatened with enslavement, while the latter served primarily the interests of those whose position of political power and social privilege is maintained through the use of subordinate peoples.

Insofar as the rich and largely independently developed cultural forms of these peoples are exploited by dominant power groups who do not give back in return the kinds of economic and social justice sought by the underclass, this, in the Jamaican context, largely political appropriation of Afro-creole culture and Afrocentric symbols and slogans by the Jamaican ruling elite represents its own kind of theft,

even piracy. With well-justified skepticism, Peter Tosh, as we have seen, signals his ambivalence about appearing on stage with, and in some sense, for the benefit of Seaga and Manley: “I man never love come in it” (Clarke, 111).

The culturally and ethically “compromised” position of both the pirates and the Maroons needs to be acknowledged not in order to discredit the sociocultural efficacy of these groups, but in order to appreciate how their situation speaks to contradictions critical to processes of cultural formation in the English-speaking Caribbean. Parasitic on the very merchant navy that they refused, pirates expose, even as they mimic, the aggressive self-assertion and ruthless greed of early modern global capitalism.³⁵ Acting as bounty hunters and police for the colonial military machine they had forced to recognize their own autonomy, the Maroons engender, even as they jeopardize, a notion of African freedom in the New World, which cannot be fully contained within the limits of its enabling conditions.

Combating, in relatively peaceful and ideologically articulate ways, the effects of a cultural hybridity that threatens the remembrance of the very historical processes that define the matrix of its generation, the Rastafari lay claim to an alternative site of roots purity where conceptions of time, knowledge, history, utopia, and salvation are developed as fundamental and resilient New World inheritances from African cultures. While ideologically centered in that utopian place called Africa, the significance, dissemination, and efficacy of these concepts is inseparable from their wider diasporic development. That such cultural riches are interstitial rather than fully marginal to society is a gift, not a liability.

Serving as security forces for a political machine they threaten to dismantle, contemporary West Indian gangs appropriate traditions of violent domination in ways that articulate the intimacy between African-diasporic and European cultural memory in the Caribbean and that seek to undo the inequities that are recalled in the very terms of their redress. The trade-off these gangs negotiate with political parties—their armed “protection” in return for territorial control—recalls the tactics of not only the early modern pirates, but also the Maroons. Bound to political parties in death-sealed pacts that violate political process to such a degree that their actions seem drained of all but criminal motives and meanings, these subcultural criminal

gangs challenge intellectuals trying to articulate the relations between politics and criminality, social protest and antisocial behavior, transgression and subversion, personal assertion and social amelioration. The articulation of these relations has proved extremely fruitful for both early modern and contemporary critical studies, for it has necessitated the examination of some of the more powerful ideological investments, whether they be in law and order or in radical politics.

Notes

Thanks to Guinn Batten, Laura Brown, Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, and Robert Markley for their generous and invaluable readings of drafts of this essay.

1. See Clarke, 110–12 and Waters, 231–35. For the evolution of the connection between the JNP and JLP and the youth gangs in West Kingston, see Gunst and Gray.

2. An extensive, perhaps complete, transcript of the speech can be found in *Jah Ugliman* (Tosh). Here, I have followed the more standardized spelling in Clarke's citation, a much more widely available, if less complete, source (112).

3. As the early eighteenth-century pirate Captain Bartholomew Roberts explains: "In an honest Service . . . there is thin Commons, low Wages, and hard Labour," whereas piracy offers "Plenty and Satiety, Pleasure and Ease, Liberty and Power" (Johnson, 244). The attribution of this collection of pirate lives to Daniel Defoe has been challenged by P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens (100–21).

4. See the classic film starring Jimmy Cliff, *The Harder They Come* (1973), which tells the story of Ivan Martin, the archetypal and original rude boy, and the even more socio-culturally detailed novel based on the film, Michael Thelwell's *The Harder They Come: A Novel* (1988), (especially 141–49 and 197–203). For the historical Ivan Martin and his cultural status as "the first media-created superstar" in Jamaican history, see Aylmer. For a narrative depiction of Jamaican posses in London in the 1990s, see Victor Headley's trilogy *Yardie*, *Excess*, and *Yush!* The Wild West trope continues to color West Indian youth subculture, both in the thematics of its music (for example, Terry Ganzie's early nineties dancehall hit, "Welcome the Outlaw"), but also in the popular iconography and dominant media's representation of West Indian—"Yardie"—criminal elements: so an article on gang violence that appeared in the Manchester *Guardian* for June 2, 1993 is headlined, "London Drug Killings 'Like Gunfights at the OK Corral.'" An investigative article on glamorous gun-slinging drug dealers by Duncan Campbell and Joseph Harker quotes a London merchant: "They [the youth emulating these outlaws] don't mind that these people are wrecking young lives through drugs and violence, they see them like modern-day Wild West cowboys," (*Guardian*, October 22, 1993).

5. As Robert Ritchie asserts in his biography of Captain Kidd, whose career careened from pirate to privateer to pirate-taker and back again, ending in his execution: “By the end of the seventeenth century several types of piracy were discernible: officially sanctioned piracy, commercial piracy, and marauding. They were not mutually exclusive, and the career of any given pirate might encompass all three” (10).

6. At first I thought that “Morano” was simply a misspelling of *moreno*, a brown man, or Negro. But the problematic “a” where Spanish gives an “e” makes the name resonate as well with this word for hog, *marrano*, the etymological root often assumed for Maroon in the eighteenth century. See discussion later in this essay.

7. The characterization of the merchant navy and the sugar plantation as protoindustrial institutions is fairly common. Two of the best discussions of this are in Rediker and Mintz (*Sweetness and Power*, 53–61).

8. “The word became incorporated in the West Indian vernacular until it came to be the verb for piratical punishment, the deliberate abandonment of an expendable person upon a desert island” (Woodbury, 128).

9. David Cordingly also makes this point (137–39).

10. Richard Price points out the similarities among treaties made between the colonial governments of Spain, Portugal, and England and the Maroon communities in the territories they were trying to hold (3).

11. These two waves of piracy are documented in, respectively, Alexander Esquemelin [Exquemelin], *Bucaniers of America* (1684) and Captain Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates*. For twentieth-century narratives of the buccaneers, see Masefield, 106–217; Cordingly, 26–55; Woodbury, 27–69; and Gosse, 141–75. The second wave of pirates was generated when sailors serving in the Royal Navy were no longer needed and privateers serving the English military against the French were released from their commissions. According to Linebaugh and Rediker, these pirates were quelled because of the threat they posed to the slave trade (169–72).

12. For the early connections among Jamaican Maroons, Amerindians, and buccaneers, evident in their practices of curing meat, see Carey (66–76).

13. See Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*: “for most of the islands during most of their post-Columbian history, labor had to be impressed, coerced, dragged, and driven to work—and most of the time, to simplify the problems of discipline, labor was enslaved” (45).

14. Conversely, indenture could be meted out as punishment to those convicted of piracy, as it was on April 26, 1721 to Thomas How and his cohorts who were indentured with the Royal African Company for seven years. See Woodbury, 39–41.

15. Morgan himself became one of the biggest landholders in Jamaica, where he served as Lieutenant Governor; late in his life he was knighted for his services to England. See Cordingly, 42–55.

16. See also Craton; for the Maroons, see Dallas, Carey, Kopytoff, and Campbell.

17. It is typical of the treaties other Caribbean Maroons made with colonial governments. See Price, 3–4.

18. “The Maroons, in manners and mode of speaking, are the same with the negroes; however there is no good will between them” (*Marly, or A Planter’s Life in Jamaica*, 87–88).

19. My understanding of the notion of contemporary cultural marronage was enriched by a talk the Haitian author Edwidge Danticat gave at a conference on Maroons held at Miami Dade Community College on September 26, 1997.

20. The first two lines of argument are made by Rediker. Peter Linebaugh discusses the sailor as an early proletariat (123–38). Building on Rediker’s arguments, Christopher Hill emphasizes the democratic nature of pirate society (114–22), and Eric Hobsbawm’s portrait of the “social bandit” bears a close resemblance to the pirate. John Richetti reads the pirate tales, part fiction, part journalism and court documentary, in Johnson’s *General History of the Pyrates* as an articulation of “the revolutionary implications of crime, the blasphemous logical extension of the secular habit of mind” and explores the dramatization of “the utopian possibilities of piracy” in Captain Misson’s tale (60–118). With a breezy skepticism, Lawrence Osborne has dismissed all such cultural-historical investigations of piracy, asserting that ships are not societies and that any liberatory aspects of piracy are utopian fantasies projected by an intellectual left looking desperately for historical validation. B. R. Burg constructs a case for the sodomitical nature of pirate society that Cordingly evaluates as unsubstantiated (100–103). Recently, Hans Turley has argued for a comparison between the criminally sexual, sodomitical subject and the more variously and ambiguously transgressive piratical subject, emphasizing, for example, the homoerotic bond between Defoe’s Captain Singleton and his cohort, Quaker William (*Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash* and “Piracy, Identity, and Desire in *Captain Singleton*”). For an account of female pirates see Stanley.

21. In *Many-Headed Hydra*, published after this essay was drafted, Linebaugh and Rediker make the same point: “Indeed, pirate ships themselves might be considered multiracial maroon communities, in which rebels used the high seas as others used the mountains and the jungles” (167). They make the point in passing and do not offer a sustained analogy.

22. Rediker makes this point about ship societies (161). All the parallels with slave societies are my own. For the conditions of West Indian slavery, see, for example, Patterson (*Sociology*), Brathwaite (*Creole Society*), and Dunn.

23. I was alerted to this text by Linebaugh’s citation (135).

24. Edward Barlow, a late seventeenth-century sailor, quoted in Rediker (213).

25. No global characterization of the nature of the relations between white seamen (pirates or sailors) and African peoples can stand; the relations were various and local. Black and white sailors worked side by side; white sailors were instrumental in the transportation of slaves; Africans joined pirate crews; pirates owned, stole, and sold African slaves. Maroons also owned slaves, though nominally forbidden to do so. In John Gay’s *Polly*, a number of the slaves run off from

a local plantation and join Morano/Macheath's pirate crew (2.8). What can be said is that sailors generally had more contact with Africans and African-Americans than did others. See Bolster; and for blacks in the Royal Navy, see Rodger, 159–61. For blacks as pirates, see Linebaugh and Rediker, 164–67.

26. See Potkay's and Burr's Introduction, where they discuss the circum-Atlantic lives and identities of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, and Olaudah Equiano: "As protean as their professional identities were, their 'national' characters were still more fluid, for in their repeated sailings across the Atlantic they led lives that were neither simply African nor American, West Indian nor British, but in succession all of these, and ultimately all of these at once" (2).

27. In work published after this essay was drafted, Linebaugh and Rediker also notice this (152–53).

28. This is amply observed by visitors to the island. Lady Nugent records examples of Creole spoken by white women of high social standing: "The Creole language is not confined to the negroes. Many of the ladies . . . speak a sort of broken English" (98). See also, for example, Leslie: "for a Boy, till the Age of Seven or Eight diverts himself with the Negroes, acquires their broken way of talking, their Manner of Behavior" (27); and Moreton, who records, for their comic value, a number of instances of white Creoles, especially women, speaking such "broken English" (105, 116, 117).

29. Names listed in Stanley (163). However, rather than reading names such as *Most Holy Trinity* and *Blessing* as evidence of pirate's devotion to "noble principles," as does Stanley, I would suggest that this is just another instance of the blasphemy for which pirates were notorious.

30. So R. C. Dallas asserts that the "Maroons, in general, speak, like most of the other negroes in the island, a peculiar dialect of English, corrupted with African words; and certainly understand our language" (1:92), whereas Bryan Edwards refers to the mixture of Spanish, English, and African languages in Maroon speech.

31. See Katherine Dunham's account of her stay with the Maroons; she waits, almost in vain, for some evidence of the traditional Coromantee language, dance, and song preserved in Obi and Myal rituals (especially 128–37 and 145–48). Dunham visited the Maroon town of Accompong as a graduate student in anthropology during the 1930s, when, according to her account, the Colonel of the Maroons, in a mistaken bid for cultural parity, was suppressing those features of Maroon culture, especially in music, dance, and religion, associated with African "barbarity." Alternately, one might surmise that these traditions were being purposively withheld from the eyes of a foreigner.

32. Nor would the presence of African language among the Maroons, in itself, distinguish them linguistically from plantation societies, where enslaved Africans continued to use their native tongues alongside the Creole they had to learn.

33. "In other words, I see cultural opposition in the Caribbean as double-edged to the extent that an (Afro-)Creole culture cannot, by dint of its very creoleness,

get entirely outside the dominant system in order to *resist* it (in de Certeau's sense of the word) and so tends unconsciously to reproduce its underlying structures even as it consciously challenges its visible dominance" (8).

34. Gilroy discusses the maintenance of the term "tradition" (at the heart of which we often find Africa) in similar terms: "This would involve keeping the term [tradition] as a way to speak about the apparently magical processes of connectedness that arise as much from the transformation of Africa by diaspora cultures as from the affiliation of diaspora cultures to Africa and the traces of Africa that those diaspora cultures enclose" (199).

35. Thanks to my colleague Guinn Batten for our discussion of this point.

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