Fight Like a Man or be Hang'd Like a Dog: Gender, Class, and Material Culture During the Golden Age of Piracy

by

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Class of 2013

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in History and in Archaeology

First and foremost, special thanks to Professor Sarah Croucher for her guidance in seeing this project through. I could not have finished it without her, or the encouragement of Professor Nathanael Greene. Additional thanks to Professor Matthew Garrett, Professor Jeffers Lennox, and Professor Laurie Nussdorfer for all of their help, both with sources and feedback.

I would also like to thank Hailey Hargraves, whose emotional support and willingness to learn so much more about female pirates than any American Studies major can care to know, kept me sane.

To my apartment, Fauver 214, thank you for listening to my endless thesis droning, for late night pep talks, and for being my family in all the best and worst meanings of the word. Max Brivic, for copy editing, Erica Chon, my fellow thesis writer, Valerie Eldridge, who kept me social, and Katty Kang, for all of the Weshop trips. Your insight and editing made this thesis, and me, better.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, who have supported me in this and every endeavor, even when they think it's crazy. They're usually right.

This thesis is dedicated to Robert Bradley, my grandfather, who encouraged all of his children and grandchildren to grow up to be pirates.

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Introduction and Historiography

In the Golden Age of Piracy, two of the most notorious pirates, criminals who stalked the high seas, were women. Anne Bonny was the daughter of a middling merchant, who ran away from an upper class marriage to elope with a sailor. She soon met Captain Calico Jack Rackam who "found Means of withdrawing her Affections from her Husband," and convinced her to join his crew as his mistress.[1] Mary Read was disguised as a boy from almost the moment of her birth, and used her new gender to her advantage. Mary worked first as a soldier, then a tavern owner, then a sailor, before finally turning pirate. Both women ended up in Rackam's crew and went down in story and history as brave and bold women who fought to the last, even when their crew deserted them. In 1720 they were captured and tried. Both plead for leniency because they claimed to be pregnant, but Mary died in prison, and Anne's ultimate fate is still a mystery.

This story of Anne Bonny and Mary Read is sensational at first glance. It has appealing elements: two eighteenth century women dressed as men become pirates and embark on adventures. For a modern audience, scholar and amateur alike, the story is a stirring one of freedom, of women throwing off the shackles of patriarchy to make their own way in the world. In over forty years of publications, little work has been done to look at either woman in

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[1] Charles Johnson, *A general and true history of the lives and actions of the most famous highwaymen, murderers, street-robbers, &c.: To which is added, a genuine account of the voyages and plunders of the most noted pirates. Interspersed with several remarkable tryals of the most notorious malefactors, at the Sessions-House in the Old Baily, London. Adorn'd with the effigies ... engraved on copper-plates.* (Birmingham: 1742), 172.

depth. Another major flaw in the literature has been that neither woman is considered independently of her counterpart. While their stories are intertwining, they had very different upbringings and experiences before meeting. Because of these differences, including socioeconomic class and the way each woman approached gender, Mary Read becoming a pirate did not mean the same thing in society as Anne Bonny becoming a pirate. Different forces were at play in their stories. My thesis looks at the differences between the women, but also explores how these women were understood in their own time, independently of how they are seen today. How did *their* society see them? In what ways were their actions actually transgressive, and in what ways were they "normal?" By looking at each woman separately, in her own context, more can be understood about the way people in the eighteenth century viewed gender and class.

I will do this by looking not just at what people write or say about the time period, but also by what they leave behind. The material record is a frequently untapped resource in historical studies that can illuminate aspects of life that may go unrecorded. Where there are differences in written and material records, there is room to see why a society might say one thing but do another. For example, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, English perceptions of life in the colonies were often very different from the material record of plantation and city life. It is in the spaces between perception and lived experience that archaeology can be used to understand "the role of material culture and everyday routines as resources that people use to both

stabilize and transform their identities."[2] In order to understand the physical and social worlds that Anne and Mary occupied, I will look at both the few documents about their lives, and the types of goods they could have used in fashioning their identities. Material goods are not just functional items; people use them for a purpose.[3] This type of historical archaeology has been defined as "in a unique position to combine 'material' and 'immaterial' concerns: folding together broader narratives (geographical or temporal) with rich and nuanced local stories, and exploring permeabilities between human and material worlds."[4] Anne and Mary's stories are just that: smaller glimpses at the way a life could be lived in the broader context of changing gender and class roles. Their world, both in records and in materials, is one of contradictions. Looking at representation in the both the written and material records thus will provide a richer portrait of the lives women led in the eighteenth century.

In the view of many contemporary popular histories, including *Badass: A Relentless Onslaught of the Toughest Warlords, Vikings, Samurai, Pirates,*

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[2] Barbara Voss, *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 12.

[3] Ibid., Voss argues that the "meanings of things are never fixed, and hence objects can be taken up for different purposes by different users; but the materiality of objects provides a durability and persistence quite different than the ephemeral qualities of speech, dance, or music—which are also stabilized through recourse to physical media (such as writing or recording)." 24. This is a useful way of understanding the ways material goods and written records are similar but have different analytical uses. While written records can be the physical manifestation of cultural norms, material goods show the ways people actually used items to navigate those social ideas. Chapters three and four will explore how the meaning of an object changes depending on who uses it and *why* they use it.

[4] Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, "Introduction: the place of historical archaeology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7.

Gunfighters, and Military Commanders to Ever Live, female pirates were bold, daring, and rare people who took up piracy to right the wrongs done against women. Such works portray Anne and Mary as role models and as women who were trailblazers for the women of today.[5] This thesis will examine how these women were understood by their contemporaries, rather than their current depiction as "badasses."

More scholarly works also tend to approach the issue of female piracy from this standpoint. Marcus Rediker takes a similar tact in his work, "Liberty Beneath the Jolly Roger: The Lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, Pirates." He posits that Anne and Mary were forerunners of the imagery used to portray the personification of Liberty that would eventually abound.[6] For him, the value of their story lies in their presaging coming ideas of feminism and freedom. He also argues that Anne and Mary, and indeed all rogue sailors, became pirates because it brought economic and social freedom. His work on female pirates was reprinted in Rediker's own book, *Villains of All Nations,* where he furthers his argument that the impetus for turning pirate was the freedom provided by this nascent form of capitalism. In the eight years between its appearance in Rediker's book and the first publication of the

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[5] Ben Thompson, *Badass: A Relentless Onslaught of the Toughest Warlords, Vikings, Samurai, Pirates, Gunfighters, and Military Commanders to Ever Live*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2009). Other examples of this type of popular history include Barabara Sjoholm's *The Pirate Queen: In Search of Grace O'Malley and Other Legendary Women of the Sea,* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2004), and Joan Druett's *She Captains: Heroines and Hellions of the Seas*, (New York: Touchstone, 2000).

[6] "Liberty Beneath the Jolly Roger: The Lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, Pirates," in *Bandits at Sea* as well as *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* eds. Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling and Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (United Kingdom: Verso, 2004).

chapter, no new significant scholarship about either Bonny or Read was put forth, and indeed this was the last serious scholarly treatment of the two female pirates.

Some historians have seen the women as "mythologized" and sexualized because they lived as men. While modern history sees them as "lusty wenches" and "sexual deviants," their portrayal in their own time is that of de-feminized women who show what "ought" to be through their own misbehavior.[7] One of the earlier historians who "fetishized" Bonny and Read, Rictor Norton, argues that the women were sexual deviants in his piece "Lesbian Pirates: Anne Bonny and Mary Read."[8] He interprets the women as bisexual characters, arguing that were they alive today they would identify as such. Drawing on popular histories rather than primary documents, Norton makes unsubstantiated claims that the women were "a couple and obviously loved each other."[9] He writes that "their story, like that of all pirates, has been treated as a peg upon which the bourgeois imagination can hang its thirst for mobility, ill-gotten gains and romantic independence," which is ironic considering Norton's historical approach seems to have allowed his own imagination to run fairly free.[10] However, his statement opens up a pertinent

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[7] Jesse Ransley, "Boats Are for Boys: Queering Maritime Archaeology." *World Archaeology* 37, No. 4 (2005) 623. Ransley looks at the reasons why women are left out of maritime narratives, and while she deals with Bonny and Read, ultimately her scholarship focuses on theory, not the history of the women.

[8] Ibid., and Rictor Norton, "Lesbian Pirates: Anne Bonny and Mary Read." *Gay History and Literature*. Accessed 19 November 2011. http://rictornorton.co.uk/pirates.htm

[9] Norton, "Lesbian Pirates."

[10] Ibid.

line of questioning for this thesis: how does Bonny and Read's story reflect what the audience wanted to read, rather than the "truth?"

Many scholars have read Bonny and Read as forerunners of feminism or liberty, but some argue against the idea that the women were revolutionary or important, ultimately focusing on the ways women interacted with pirates, either as lovers, business contacts, or victims. To look specifically at Bonny and Read as important actors in the pirating world would "inflate the importance of women's role in piracy and piratical activity."[11] I argue here, however, that looking at a small scale example of history, the lives of just two women, provides a manageable lens to put into conversation with history on a larger scale, and that these two women were an important part of the way piracy was portrayed.[12] There is more agency in the lives of women than just being lovers or victims. Rather than being at the mercy of the men in their lives, or the patriarchal system they lived in, they made choices that managed to work within the bounds of society while still pushing these boundaries. For instance, Anne Bonny refused the marriage her father arranged for her, despite its economic advantages. Further, these choices were typical events in the lives of many women of the time period, as exhibited in the next chapter. Because of this, both women are considered here to be representatives not of

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[11] John C. Appleby, "Women and Piracy in Ireland From Grainne O'Malley to Anne Bonny," in *Bandits at Sea*, ed. C.R. Pennell (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

[12] Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi and Anne C. Tedeschi, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," *Critical Inquiry* 20, No. 1 (1993), 10-35. A microhistory can be used to describe a small place, a short time, or in this case, two lives. While Braudel saw this as looking at things out of context, the argument that it provides a glimpse at a larger picture can be reconciled with Braudel's insistence on a "total history." Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, (New York, 1972); translated excerpts from the 2nd rev. edition, 1966.

the true characters of Anne Bonny or Mary Read, but as representatives of their time period in some capacity.

The ideas that shaped femininity and class for centuries were starting to be constructed in the early eighteenth century.[13] The emergence of the middling class was one of the largest developments in the way social values were changing.[14] As socioeconomic classes developed, it affected genders differently, as Mary and Anne show. The eighteenth century was a time of restriction for women but also of opportunity. Some women were able to work and live on their own, some had educational opportunities, and many did not. Whether or not a woman was middling and had these opportunities to learn, work, and live alone, she still had chances to manipulate the opportunities she did have to forge her own path. Looking at Bonny and Read in this context provides a better understanding as to why they were portrayed as alternately good and immoral women in *A General History* and the court records.

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[13]Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), is a look specifically at the emerging middle class in England. Margaret Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), is a broader look at the way gender developed across Europe, although its sections on England and its colonies are still useful for this thesis.
[14] Hunt, *The Middling Sort,* defines the middling class as used in both her work and the eighteenth century to connote "shopkeepers, manufacturers, better-off independent artisans, civil servants, professionals, lesser merchants, and the like. These people were beneath the gentry but above the level of the laboring classes." 15.

Sources and Theory

Certainly some of the lack of interest in the way gender interacted with piracy must stem from a lack of documentation. There are only a handful of primary sources that deal with the average pirate or their crew, and only two sources that provide any depth of information on either woman: *The Tryals of Anne Bonny and Mary Read* and *A General History of the Pirates*.[15] Part of the reason there are few documents pertaining to piracy is that criminals in general are less likely to leave behind written records, especially ones who are at sea and have little time to write, let alone have the means to do so.[16] Documents that do exist tend to pertain to more "elite" pirates like captains rather than seamen.[17] Further, both the *Tryals* and *A General History* are sources with murky backgrounds. Trial proceedings in the early eighteenth century were not the records that are kept today. Rather than verbatim transcriptions, they included summaries of what people said, with more emphasis on content than accuracy. Instead of being kept as a public record of justice, they were accounts published by third parties who frequently had ulterior motives to printing the accounts, including presenting themselves in a good light, or simply making money, rather than reporting for the sake of justice. Publishers did not print the tracts for the good of the public, but to turn a profit. Thus the types of cases that are published and survive tend to be

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[15] "The Tryals of Anne Bonny and Mary Read" The National Archives at Kew, Call number CO 137/10 Box 1 and Johnson, *A General History*.

[16] David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, (New York: Random House, 1995), xix.

[17] Manuel R. Schonhorn, "Defoe's pirates: A New Source," The Review of English Studies, 14, No. 56, (1963), 386-389.

more sensational in nature. However, this also means they represent the things that people found shocking, interesting, or important.[18]

A General History is a slightly more convoluted story. Purportedly written by Captain Charles Johnson, the book claims to be a true account of the lives of many pirates, and even includes parts where the author claims to have interviewed or conducted research on particular subjects. For years, people have speculated that the book was actually the work of Daniel Defoe, noted eighteenth century novelist and playwright. This was generally accepted, with the book even being catalogued under Defoe's name in many libraries. However, recently scholars have begun to question this claim.[19] For one, the book has proved to be fairly accurate in many cases, and does seem to draw on the same types of documents, such as court transcripts, that historians use today. Further, literary historians have compared Defoe's style of writing to Johnson's and found discrepancies. Defoe was a prolific author who wrote plays, pamphlets, and all manner of popular media, and frequently covered the topic of pirates.[20] While the true author of the text is still unknown, the document is a fascinating look at the way literature and history blend together. Even if his entire account was fictionalized, it would still tell a story about what his readers wanted in order to be entertained. Thus his story traces both economic and social crimes; it speaks to the tensions in gender and social roles that were still being negotiated in the eighteenth century.

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[18] An excellent discussion of the use of court trials is included in Tim Hitchcock's *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London*. (New York: Hambledon and London, 2004), 235-236.

[19] Schonhorn, "Defoe's pirates: A New Source," 386-389.

[20] Examples of his writing include *Robinson Crusoe* and *Captain Singleton*, some of the most well known pirate and nautical themed literature of its time and to this day5. Ibid.

As gender and social roles have overlapping and sometimes contradictory expectations, so too do history and literature.[21] *A General History* is an almost perfect embodiment of such an idea: a text written as part story, part history, and interpreted here as both history and story. For no matter how "truthful" the text may be, neither Anne nor Mary is truly to be found in Johnson's words. Rather, their story represents real women with a partially created past; their stories were constructed to say something to an eighteenth century audience. By looking at why the author made claims that he did, and putting it into a broader societal context, we can see how women and their actions were perceived, in their original context.

Looking at the material culture, specifically the remains of the *Whydah* shipwreck, the only verified pirate ship that has been recovered, is an attempt to see both the physical world of piracy but also to see "a total history."[22] While Braudel referred specifically to understanding how geography, space, and even the weather shape history, I think a total history should include how goods are used to create and shape lives as well. Objects are uniquely positioned to speak about daily life. They are used almost constantly, are not always thought about, and yet represent the physical ways people express their ideas about themselves.[23]

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[21] Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in idem, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1978), 81-100.

[22] Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World,* translated excerpts from the 2nd rev. edition, 1966.

[23] Mark Leone, *Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis,* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 24-28.

In order to see if women like Mary and Anne should be understood as transgressive, this thesis will look first at the general ways people lived. Chapter One will look at gender and class in eighteenth century England, paying attention to people's occupations, the construction of gender, and criminality. These categories will shed light on the opportunities and experiences Anne and Mary would have been exposed to in order to understand a sort of baseline experience for the time period. Chapter Two will look at the norms in piracy, so as to be able to determine how Mary and Anne fit in to a society that was connected to, but not the same as, the culture on land. Piracy opened up channels for some to make more money than they could elsewhere, and to experience more freedom than other lives afforded, but this chapter will investigate whether that was a universal experience. It will also look at how gender would affect these experiences. Chapter Three will look at how Mary Read straddled gender lines, first as a brave soldier who charged into battle without a care for her life, and then as a wife and middle class tavern owner, before once again taking on men's clothes and becoming a feared pirate. Yet for all the extraordinary events, Mary's life was one that followed, not transgressed, most norms. The focus of Mary's chapter will be on how clothes in particular were used to shape the narrative of her life, and potential ways she in turn could have used clothes for her own purposes. Finally, Chapter Four looks at how space and goods became increasingly important in middling people's lives, like Anne. Anne, unlike Mary, is portrayed as a more willful and destructive woman, yet, as we will see, even these "deviant" choices were expected and even normal behaviors. This will

hopefully result in a better understanding of how class and gender were experienced by certain people. While the acts of piracy may be extraordinary, the heart of the tale of Anne Bonny and Mary Read lies in their day to day living. It was there that they grappled with forming and presenting their identities.

Chapter One
Life in the Eighteenth Century

On the larger scale, stability was in short supply at the end of the 17th century in England. The monarchy had just been reinstated, wars affected the lives of both soldier and civilian, and the economy was rapidly changing.[24] As boundaries in everyday life started to be drawn, ideas about gender, class, the body and other facets of what make up society had to be reconsidered. Respectable behavior became associated with control and manners as the "middling class" started to develop. Likewise, the lower class started to be seen as a more concrete section of life that could be associated with discrete behaviors apart from the upper classes. Professions became more clearly separated, and the ideas that for decades defined masculinity and femininity solidified. These changes left many, including the emerging middle class, uneasy about what should be considered proper behavior. The tensions felt over the changing ideas of femininity and class shape the narratives in the portrayals of Anne and Mary.

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[24] Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990*, (London: Routledge, 1999) 53-57. Although Kent focuses on a broad view of power in Britain, her approach of looking at how gender and power intersect is unique. Although she cannot provide in depth understanding of eighteenth century power relations, her long term view makes the changes that occurred in power relationships over time more visible.

The Economy, Professionalization, and the Emergence of the Middling Class

In 1694, the Bank of England was created, much to the consternation of those who saw it as a harbinger of doom for the country.[25] Contrary to predictions of failure, the bank created the stage for an increasingly centralized government that would then be expanded to include all types of civilian bureaucratic positions. Its immediate effects were not so grand, but did have a major impact for some. The creation of the bank and subsequent economic changes allowed those who could muster some resources to earn their living through academic and financial work, rather than labor or artisanal work. The ability to "invest" in the bank was not open to many, but those who could had an opportunity to make money in a way not connected to the land or trade. Commerce, and the buying and selling of stocks, bonds, and annuities represented a novel way of making money work for the investor, rather than making the investor work for the money.[26] This was one of the ways in which "classes" started to differentiate themselves.[27] For the vast majority of people, investing or drawing credit from the bank was out of their economic league. Those who could were typically the elites, the landed aristocracy, or the lesser gentry. However, a small portion of people could

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[25] Ibid., 60-63.

[26] Hunt, *The Middling Sort,* 2-5, 22-29.

[27] Class as a term is simply the easiest way (Steven Wallech calls it a "hermeneutic device") to refer to how money, jobs, and other factors combined to create recognized categories of people within societal structure, even though there may not have been a sense of identifying as "middling" or any class. Steven Wallech "'Class Versus Rank': The Transformation of Eighteenth-Century English Social Terms and Theories of Production," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47, No. 3 (1986), 409-431. Access Date 21 January 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2709661.

count on their family for loans or investments, although this necessitated family members with connections who were also willing to utilize them on a relative's behalf. These people would emerge as the middling class.[28] They relied on jobs in towns like trading, book keeping, and transportation to make their living, including people like Anne Bonny's father, who worked as a lawyer and then a merchant. Although birth was still a major aspect of a person's financial and class circumstances, education became one of the key ways to distinguish oneself and advance in the world. A man with good handwriting skills might find himself able to advance despite his background, whereas a richer man without these abilities might find himself without a purpose in the family business.[29] Anne Bonny was raised for a while as a clerk in her father's law office in order to disguise her sex and to evade her father's legal wife. The ability and desire to put a child into such a career path shows Johnson's understanding of the emerging middle class. When Anne then went on to adventure and carouse rather than keep to middle class ideals of hard work and steadfastness, she was upholding negative views of inconstant women *and* unruly sons.[30] Adopting timely and hardworking policies was the mark of a dedicated and therefore respectable life. Keeping a neat ledger was not only a point of pride but a way of moving beyond circumstances of birth,

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[28] As mentioned in the introduction, Hunt, *The Middling Sort,* defines the middling class as used in both her work and the eighteenth century to connote "shopkeepers, manufacturers, better-off independent artisans, civil servants, professionals, lesser merchants, and the like. These people were beneath the gentry but above the level of the laboring classes." 15.

[29] Ibid., 49-53, 56-58.

[30]Johnson, *A General History*, 170-171. Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 49-53. More discussion of the role of women follows in the rest of the chapter.

which was still the main measure of a man.[31] For some men, education and skill were a chance to trade the economic situation they were born into for a more lucrative social position. Likewise, a rich man who could not keep up with the new ideals of spending time efficiently and working hard might find himself at the disadvantage of a previously poor man.

The aim of this difficult endeavor has been explained as "emulation," a desire by the poor to act like the rich, sometimes manifested as wanting to eventually move to the countryside and join the top of the elite as a member of the landed rich.[32] Indeed, Bonny's father is also portrayed as having eventually made his fortune as a merchant and using the money to purchase a plantation in Carolina.[33] This ideal, however, was not necessarily lived up to in reality. Few who made their fortunes through work actually retired to the country, even when they could afford to. Further, a plantation in Carolina may have been analogous to English gentry in terminology, but in practice was a rougher lifestyle.[34] It seems that despite cultural values, many found leaving city life or work that one started difficult, keeping most middling men firmly entrenched in their vocations. [35]

Piracy threatened ideas of hard working dedication that were not yet entrenched in society. Why would a man rise early and work late, learn

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[31] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 56-62.

[32] Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: consumer protest, gender, and British slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 24-31.

[33] Johnson, *A General History,* 171. This is discussed in greater length in Chapter Four, especially with regards to the disparity between the idea of an English plantation and a colonial one.

[34] This is explored in the Chapter Three section "Colonial Plantations: Life in America."

[35] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 3-6.

complicated systems of accounting and bookkeeping, all in an effort to gain quality clothes, quality goods, and a good home, when he could take to the seas and gain it much more easily? Although it is a glamorized occupation, piracy was first and foremost an economic crime.[36] Its lure was not just a false perception of freedom while "on the account," but in the way it could be translated into a better station in life.[37] Mary Read's transformation from servant to soldier to pirate was, as we will see, a progression from poverty to relative comfort that was both admired by those who would emulate her and feared by those whose social order she threatened.

People who turned to piracy were frequently part of the poor class, those who lived off the street or had transient jobs, although these distinctions were by no means concrete or exact. In the countryside, artisans, and perhaps some successful merchants could be counted as middle class, but most laborers were still unable to make much of a living. A merchant might have more money than disgraced nobility. Servants typically did not make enough money to be considered middling, yet with their room and board they still came out above the poor with whom they were frequently identified.[38] What was perhaps the true differentiation between classes was that the poor were the ones who were most likely to risk their bodies for advancement. Whereas

[36]Lawrence E. Babits, Joshua B. Howard, and Matthew Brenckle, "Pirate Imagery," in *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy*. Eds. Russel K. Skowrenek and Charles R. Ewen (University Press of Florida, 2006), 27-281 and "An Act for the more effectual Suppression of PIRACY," 1721, *British Piracy in the Golden Age,* 59-66. Chapter Two deals with the ways piracy affected and were understood in society more closely.

[37] William Kidd, discussed in the next chapter, is an excellent example of the ways people with relatively poor backgrounds could become elite members of society, although in Kidd's case his stay in the upper class was only for a short time.

[38] Ibid., 15.

the middling sort could try to rely on schooling or skills, few of the poor could gain access to either "skills" or education.[39] Instead, the poor tended to take jobs that were easily adaptable but held serious risks. Young men would carry lanterns to light the way home in dark and dangerous city streets, risking injury and robbery, or sometimes committing it.[40] As seen in Mary Read's case, they might take to the sea, or become soldiers to try to escape poverty. Women also sold their bodies often for sex or as wet nurses.[41] They entered poor workhouses and took on physical labor in return for low pay and a place to sleep. Those that could not rely on their labor often resorted to begging. Even in this profession, however, the body was a tool. Disabled beggars garnered more sympathy, and so those who were not visibly disabled would fake paralysis or limb loss to increase their wages.[42]

A hierarchy thus developed where wealth from estates was the highest social status, followed by commerce and trade, and ending with labor. The divide between those who worked with their bodies and those who worked with their minds helped put a more recognizable difference between the emerging classes. While economically a clerk might make the same as a maid, or a merchant the same as an aristocrat, the way they made their money became the defining feature of class. If someone could manage to get the right

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[39] Work traditionally associated with women, such as sewing, needlework, piecework, and laundry were certainly skills that could be used for employment, but they were not necessarily understood as formal job aspects. This is discussed more fully in the section "Working Women."

[40] Hitchcock, *Down and Out in London*, 57-59.

[41] Ibid., 87-96 and Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 139-144.

[42] Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 139-144. The use of the body in gender and social/class roles is discussed in the section "Gender, the Body, and Social Roles."

type of job they *might* be able to move just a little farther ahead in society. People who followed this structure of education and skills to gain a better class position, people like Mary Read, were common and accepted, even if Mary's path was a variation on this theme. Her piratical actions were committed in pursuit of economic advancement. Anne Bonny, however, eschewed her education and the attempts of her father to move her into a higher echelon, opting instead for a life of piracy. In Johnson's portrayal, Anne is an affront to eighteenth century values.

<u>Working Women</u>

Mary's recourse to dressing as a man is an example of how women could cope with the ways gender impeded social mobility. Middling men had more education, more opportunities, and more of a societal expectation to advance their station in life. Women were encouraged to have some of these attributes, but not to the point where their knowledge would threaten their marriagability or their husband's ego.[43] It was also thought that educating a woman would give her not only the ability to run households, families, and influence men, but would also redirect their natural tendency to distraction towards morality and the family. The belief ran that "Those who are instructed and busied in serious employments, have, in general, but moderate curiosity," whereas "young women, without instruction or application, have

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[43] Hunt, *The Middling Sort,* 88. Francois de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénélon*, Treatise on the Education of Daughters*, trans. Rev. T. F. Dibdin, 1687. Quoted in *Women in the Eighteenth Century: constructions in femininity,* ed. Vivian Jones (New York: Routledge, 1990), 102. First translated into English in 1707, this translation 1805.

always a roving imagination."[44] Education was thus a way of curbing women's imaginative nature, but carried with it the threat they would become too rational, and thus be "rendered ridiculous."[45]

As such, women were taught skills like bookkeeping, while rarely actually working as clerks. Instead they were confined to "women's work." [46] This informal sector had less status than the work men did; women who worked outside the home were either poor or anomalies.[47] Middling women were in a more liminal state; their work was often co-opted by the family. They were expected to put their skills at the hands of their fathers, brothers, and husbands rather than for self advancement.[48] As such their labor was seen not as formal "skills" but as the property of their families. Because the skills they learned, such as reading, writing, and accounting, were also performed by men, or as with sewing, a universal skill set, they were further devalued.[49] Women could not rely on their education or training in quite the same way men did. Instead, women had to find different ways to advance. Ironically, this was sometimes easier for poor women to achieve. Middling

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[44] Mothe- Fénélon, "Treatise,"103-104.

[45] Ibid., 102.

[46] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 58, 84-86.

[47] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 94-99. Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe,* 169.

[48] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 223, 283-230. Fletcher is a particularly useful source because while he draws on Thomas Lacquer's arguments about the body in the eighteenth century, he supplements Lacquer's work, which is based on elite medical texts, with his own work on personal and literary sources. These sources, including letters, novels, trial transcripts and court documents, are similar to *A General History of the Pirates* and the other primary sources dealing with Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and provide a helpful comparison.

[49] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 84-89, and Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain*, 73, as well as Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination,* 244-245.

women were frequently confined to what were considered genteel occupations, such as haberdashery work.[50]

Poor women, although usually possessing similar sewing skills, generally could not access the types of education middling women did. As such, they had fewer options to earn a living, although they were not without choices. Working in an upper class household instead of working as a charwoman was one way they could purvey the set of skills they already possessed into a more "respectable" life.[51] Using education as a channel into middling professions was generally closed to poor women, yet they had these other means to alleviate poverty. Middling women, while arguably having a better living situation in terms of material goods and social standing, generally found it harder to increase their status through their own work. In fact, considering the distinctions between middling and lower class were by no means set in stone, it was much more likely that a middling woman would slide into poverty than it was that she could ascend to the upper class.

Given these options, it is perhaps not surprising that Mary Read opted to work as a man. She could not hire herself out as a wet nurse, the job that was probably most financially rewarding, as she was young and unmarried. Although wet nursing was a good economic opportunity, it usually came at the cost of the woman's own children, for there was not enough nutrition for the poor to support the mother and create enough milk for her own children and

[50] Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain*, 70-71 as well as Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 90-92.
[51] Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 61-65. A charwoman essentially went from home to home and begged for a chance to work.

her wealthier counterparts' who paid for her services.[52] Other occupational options for Mary included but were no limited to begging, prostitution, informal service, dairying (an impractical profession for a city dweller) and a multitude of various street jobs that were feasible for a poor, probably illiterate young girl.[53] Neither is it surprising that Anne Bonny, who Johnson writes as a much less sympathetic character, is depicted as a woman who purposefully makes choices that lower her class status.

Gender, the Body, and Social Roles

Presenting as a man or woman to the world could, as discussed above, have a radical impact on the types of jobs, opportunities, and ways of life open to a person. Men and women were not equal in the world, and this hierarchy was ingrained as natural and absolute.[54] Like the inherent belief that men were better equipped to work, learn, and be moral, bodily differences were conceived of as a vertical hierarchy wherein the body was physically virtually identical for both men and women, yet placed men in at the top of the heirarchy. Women's genitals were understood medically to be simply variations of men's, although inferior ones. Bodily differences were understood, and two sexes identified, but beyond a simple dichotomy of genitals, humors and heat also played a part; men were hot and dry and superior, women cold and wet, the negatives of men.[55]

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[52] Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 140-142.
[53] Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 88.
[54] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, And Subordination,* 30-41, but especially 34-38.
[55] Ibid.

Gender itself was understood not strictly as the appearance of the humors or the sex of the body but of the way a person performed their gender role.[56] Strength, mentally and physically, were masculine and therefore powerful traits at the top of the gender hierarchy that helped facilitate social mobility. Those who could embody these traits were on the masculine side of society.[57] Women occupied a more tenuous position in society. On one hand, they were clearly inferior, complementing but never surpassing masculine traits. They "wanteth our [men's] *Reason* for your [women's] *Conduct*, and our *Strength* for your *Protection*."[58] Women were the negative imprint of men. Childrearing and keeping house were traits women were tasked with but also considered to be essentially worthless, although certainly without it society could not have continued. In order to support men's claims of superiority, women had to be seen as needing men in order to overcome their own ineffectual "nature."

Despite their supposed natural deference to men, women's sexuality was seen as a threatening force. On the one hand, women, in conduct should

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[56] Tim Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England," *History Workshop Journal,* No. 41 (1996), 72-90.

[57] Katherine Crawford, "Privilege, Possibility, and Perversion: Rethinking the Study of Early Modern Sexuality," *The Journal of Modern History*, 78, No. 2 (2006), 412-433, but especially 417. Crawford argues that men's positions were outwardly depicted as universal, but that there were actually a range of acceptable roles for men, but this very lack of a single purpose lead to tension. Because men did not feel secure in their own roles, they worked at codifying women's roles instead.

[58] George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, *The Lady's New Year's Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter,* 1688, quoted in *Women in the Eighteenth Century, ed.* Vivian Jones, 18. Written in 1688, it was republished fourteen times and remained one of the foremost letters of advice until 1774.

be chaste and obedient, but it was assumed that this was "artificial" chastity, based only on an interest in keeping their honor.[59] In reality,

> "As soon as women have entertain'd any Degree of Love, they make it their Whole study to raise and maintain an equal Degree of Passion in Men… The Pain they suffer in smothering their Desires, is fully recompenc'd by that secret Pleasure which a Lover's Eagerness gives them…"

Women were expected to be wildly sexual, willing to go to any length to satiate their desires, but they were also expected to keep this strictly controlled.[60] To do otherwise was to be marked out as a whore. Women who committed adultery or fornication proved that they were "feminine" but simultaneously had shown that they were at the bottom of both the gender and social hierarchies. Anne Bonny almost perfectly embodies this. She eschewed marriage to a man of higher social status to elope with a sailor, and then compounded her actions by leaving her lawful husband for Captain Rackam.[61] It was not her cross-dressing or piratical activities that marked her out as a "bad" woman, but that she was not chaste and did not ascribe to the mandate of marriage and running a household. To further compound her actions, she has a child out of wedlock with Rackam, committing the worst "crime" a wife can: bearing another man's child.[62] All of this information comes from Captain Johnson's *A General History of the Pirates*, however. The court records mention nothing of these social crimes. Whether any of it is true is

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[59] 'Colonel Harry Mordaunt' [Bernard Mandeville], *A Modest Defense of Public Stews: or, an Essay upon Whoring,* quoted in *Women in the Eighteenth Century, ed.* Vivian Jones, 65.
[60] Ibid., 64-68 and *Fletcher, Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 256-280, but especially 263.
[61] Johnson*, A General History*, 171-172.
[62] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 104-109.

impossible to know, but it points to what eighteenth century readers would immediately recognize as the bad woman, but also would accept. They expected some women to act the way Anne Bonny did; that a weak woman would take lovers and betray her husband was taken for granted. Lived experiences varied from the cultural ideals of man as the strong head of household and woman as the weak, obedient servant. Anne could be the villain while Mary, who despite her professions married and remained chaste, could be read as a real woman. Femininity was a complicated and delicate balance between showing worth through chastity, household managerial skills, and necessary work while still remaining "feminine" and not threatening masculine roles. Behavior, more so than sex, was the best way to communicate gender to the world.

In the few court cases where women are discovered dressing as men in the early modern period, punishments seem to indicate confusion over how to prosecute what the women did.[63] Frequently, they were exceptional men who held respectable jobs and kept households according to contemporary dictates. For example, Charlotte Charke intermittently posed as a man to facilitate a career as a doctor's assistant and then to run her own dispensary. She only stopped when her family found out.[64] After her brief period of success, however, Charke was trapped between two worlds, unable to fit in as

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[63] These cases are few and far between, and not all take place in the 18th century. In general, cross-dressing seems to have been rare but not considered unusual or deviant just by virtue of wearing different clothes. Perhaps if they had been "bad" at being men, and had thus violated cultural rather than body norms, they could have faced more vitriol. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 85-87 and David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies,* 35, No. 4 (1996), 438-465.
[64] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 96-99.

either male or female. On the other hand, when "Dr Charles Hamilton" was revealed by his wife to actually be Mary Hamilton, the courts were confused as to how to act, and eventually settled on a fairly lenient public whipping and a few months incarceration.[65] Sometimes courts would order cross dressing women back into women's clothes and back into women's professions, but they were just as likely to be allowed to go on living as they had.[66] Although they may have violated the gender roles most commonly associated with their sex, these women chose to dress and act as men and were met with relatively merciful punishments, as long as they stayed within the dictates of their chosen gender. Dr. Charles Hamilton could not continue as a doctor and a woman, just as Mary Read could not continue in service as a soldier once she was discovered. The body was not the definition of gender, actions were. Despite what medicine, society, or the courts told them, real people acted out their gender identities each day in real ways. While there may have been ideals, the people of the eighteenth century did not all walk around thinking and conceptualizing of their gender, rather, through these implicit assumptions about gender that they may not have even questioned they lived their own lives. What Mary and Anne's stories tell is that there was tension between what was expected of both genders and how they were really acted out.

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[65] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 85.

[66] Ibid., 83-85, Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 94-99, and Karen McCarthy Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 75-80.

Gender and Consumption

If men were the stalwart protectors of their families, throwing themselves against the world to show their uprightness and worthiness, their wives were the internal threat that were constantly poised to bring down the familial structure from within with their spending. A good wife, middling, poor, or elite, was economical with her money, spending just enough to keep the family going, and not given over to purchasing extraneous luxuries.[67] A spendthrift woman was most likely wanton and an adulterer, spending a man's hard earned money to buy fripperies to impress her lovers.[68] Shopping became an extension of society, wherein women were symbolically seduced by both the goods and the typically male seller.[69] Spending was significant towards the construction of masculinity as well. The ability to provide for a wife and family both necessities and consumer goods was an extension of a man's ability to keep his family under his rule and to keep his wife sexually controlled.[70] However, showing interest in the goods themselves was a feminine trait, despite the fact that men also bought and collected goods.[71] Men who spent hours keeping up with the latest fashions, who were intimately involved in the making of their clothes, and put too much effort into their outward appearance were "effeminate," and not real men.[72] This

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[67] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 35, 68.

[68] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 226.

[69] Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 87.

[70] Ibid.,35-36.

[71] Ibid., 57-58.

[72] Samuel Pepys, from just a few decades earlier, was very involved with the commission, design, and creation of his clothes (quoted in Vincent, *Dressing the Elite,* 89-100). While men

idea of the emasculated man being linked to consumption spoke to the fears of the newly emerging social class system and gender hierarchy. With so many new people gaining access to money and goods that they wouldn't have had before, there needed to be a societal system of checks to ensure that wealth and goods were being used in the "right" way. Men and women who spent too much time and money on clothes or luxuries, who were too ostentatious in their new wealth were dismissed as gauche.

The line between showing off new wealth and overly conspicuous consumption had to be carefully reconciled with being too flamboyant and marking oneself as not of the truly middling or upper class. This was important because upper class also connoted morals and uprightness.[73] Women, especially in the middling classes, were in charge of purchasing tablewares, food, cloth, and of working with a tailor or sewing clothes for their entire families. They were intimately engaged in both the purchase and production of the things they used in everyday life. Purchasing ceramics of certain makes, patterns, and styles could all be a way of creating and reflecting a middle class identity. And while women were tasked this, the use of goods in archaeological studies has typically been associated with the male

certainly still cared about their clothes, the new ideal was to wear beautiful clothes but appear not to care. In fact, in Brown's *Good Wives*, she outlines the steps men would take to avoid losing their clothes, going so far as to sell their wives' dresses before their own accoutrements. 293-294. Philip Carter, "Men about town: representations of foppery and masculinity in early eighteenth century urban society," in *Gender in Eighteenth Century England*, eds. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1997), 31-57.

[73] Lauren J. Cook, Rebecca Yamin and John P. McCarthy, "Shopping as Meaningful Action: Toward a Redefinition of Consumption in Historical Archaeology" *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 30, 4 (1996), 60. Although this article addresses shopping as it changed over the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, the first few sections are devoted specifically to North American colonial and English consumption.

"breadwinner" of the household, rather than with the purchaser's taste.[74] For example, a site with extensive amounts of expensive tablewares are quantified in part by their cost and then used to determine the economic status of the family. This approach can ignore both that women were frequently making these decisions independently of the "breadwinner," and further that most if not all women worked for either wages alongside their husband or used their labor to facilitate his earning.[75] The expectation that goods strictly reflect class is therefore useful but not a clear cut interpretation.

The poor were not excluded from buying goods to use in creating an identity. Although they may not have been able to afford the same quality luxuries, the poor frequently purchased goods beyond the bare necessity to survive. This was met with disapproval and admonishments to stick with simple goods. They were also supposed to ignore the pleasures that the upper classes were thought to get from their goods. Instead, lower class women enjoying goods or coveting them was seen as threatening behavior, especially to the upper class women who were frequently their employers as well.[76] Spending was indexical of moralism, class and respectability.[77] This makes Anne and Mary particularly threatening characters, especially after they turned pirate. Mary worked her way into middle class stability and respectability, eventually running a tavern and presumably, based on

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[74]Cook, Rebecca Yamin and John P. McCarthy, Shopping," 51-52 and Sara Pennell, "Consumption and Consumerism in Early Modern England," *The Historical Journal*, 42, No. 2 (1999), 554.

[75] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 84-86.

[76] Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 26-31.

[77] Ibid., 68, and Cook Rebecca Yamin and John P. McCarthy, "Shopping," 55-56.

Johnson's characterization, did so in an economically sound way. On the other hand, Anne made a deliberate turn away from the legitimate way of social ascendency and material wealth, marriage, in favor of piracy. This choice would have presumably assured access to elite, not just middle class goods, and put Anne in a sharp contrast to Mary's moralistic portrayal. Despite this portrayal, the courts described the women as "very profligate," linking their extravagance to their criminality.[78]

Although consumption was important, the respectable, middle class values that were then ascribed to the objects and acts of purchasing were not inherent in the objects themselves. These meanings were given to them by the people who bought them and the meaning they ascribed to their goods was deeply personal. While men and women may not have consciously thought that purchasing a teapot would make them respectable, the underlying consciousness was there. People actively created the material culture and used it to further their own conceptions of gender or class. The meanings were not a priori in the objects themselves. While the meanings are deeply personal and vary on an individual basis, broad understandings of how domestic goods and spending were valued can be drawn by looking at multiple similar sites. The key to any interpretation is the inherent understanding that people made these decisions; the goods did not "consume themselves."[79]

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[78] "The Tryals of Anne Bonny and Mary Read" The National Archives at Kew, Call number CO 137/10 Box 1. For an accessible copy see British Piracy in the Golden Age: History and Interpretation, 1660-1730, ed. Joel H. Baer (London: Pickering and Chatto Publishers Limited, 2007), 28.

[79] Cook, Rebecca Yamin and John P. McCarthy, "Shopping," 53.

Class, Gender, and Criminals

Anne Bonny and Mary Read, although tried in Jamaica, were English citizens and tried by an English, although colonial, court.[80] Their experience in court was in no way predetermined. Anne, as a middling woman, was unlikely to have ended up in court as a criminal had she stuck to a more traditional path. However, as an Irish woman, Anne would have been considered more wild and wanton than an English one, an angle Johnson fully exploits.[81] Mary, as a poor man, stood more of a chance of running afoul of the law, but she also occupied a middling position at one time, and until her turn

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[80] The collection of trial proceedings from the Old Bailey is an unparalleled resource that gives information about many, although not all, of the major cases that went through the legal system. The proceedings are not, for the time period between 1715-1721, legal recordings of the events of the courtroom testimonies. They do not represent the verbatim accounts given, nor do they focus on every case. They were published for public consumption and entertainment, but their incompleteness does not discredit the information they provide about age, gender, crimes committed, and defenses successfully or unsuccessfully utilized by the criminals. They can be accessed at http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Crimes.jsp

In tandem with the Proceedings are the Ordinary of Newgate's accounts, which were also written and produced for public readership. These documents recount the Biblical passages the ordinary read to the condemned prisoners, as well as his attempts to get them to confess. The accounts end with biographies of the criminals, and sometimes their last words. In conjunction with the proceedings, it is possible to see a profile of criminality emerge. Over and over, theft, robbery, and murder committed by young, poor, working people are recounted. I chose to look at criminal behavior in the years 1715-1721 because they are the rough dates of when Bonny and Read were active criminals. Although 1715 is a little earlier than when they started pirating in 1718, the general time period is close enough to give a good sense of the types of crimes their contemporaries were committing. Because the women were not yet criminals, and were presumably part of "normal" society at this point, the documents also provide a sense of what the criminal world looked like to outsiders as well. Although my use of them is in no way a statistical or mathematical analysis, which is beyond the scope of this paper, I have used them in conjunction with sources like *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern Europe,* which do have statistical approaches to the study of crime and gender.

[81] Andrea Knox, "Female Criminality and Subversion in Early Modern Ireland," in *Crime, Gender, and Sexuality in Criminal Prosecutions*, ed. Louis A. Knafla (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 19-32, argues that Irish criminals were seen as more deliberately transgressive and antagonistic than English ones. Peter Linebaugh, *The London hanged: crime and civil society in the eighteenth century,* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1992), finds that Irish criminals more likely to hang than any other non-English people. 92.

to piracy had been a law abiding person. Their experience in the English court system was fairly typical for women, especially in their punishments.

Women of the lower class were frequently demonized in an effort to have more distinction between middling classes and the true poor. The poor were considered to be lazy and undeserving, a new concept in a society that had only recently begun to value hard work for personal advancement.[82] As a result, they were regarded as sexually promiscuous, thieves, and criminals.[83] Women who worked in almost any capacity were regarded by some men as sexually available no matter the circumstances, considering any poor woman to be a prostitute for the right price. This made these women especially prone to sexual violence.[84] This was just one of the ways public perceptions of the poor put women at risk.

The thieving housemaid was another trope that negatively affected poor women. As discussed above, one of the most common ways for a woman to advance from street life was to gain employment in an upper class household. However, these jobs were not guaranteed positions, and women had to be careful to avoid a bad recommendation from one employer to another, or risk going back to less permanent work.[85] Chastity and good morals were a prerequisite for employment, and to lose one was to lose the other. This was an especially delicate situation when the patriarch of the family made advances on the maids, or simply when the wife wanted to rid

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[82] Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 14.
[83] Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain*, 70-73, 90.
[84] Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 75-78, 92-96.
[85] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination,* 214-218.

her house of a disliked servant. A simple accusation of stealing some silver or clothes, as happened to Anne Bonny's mother, who was a maid, was enough justification to put the help out on the streets with nowhere to turn.[86] Because poor women were already seen as untrustworthy, the charge was more than likely to be believed.

Of course, not every accusation of theft or poor morals was false. Plenty of women were convicted at the Old Bailey of crimes ranging from theft of household goods, perhaps in an attempt to gain status through materiality as upper class woman frequently did, all the way to murder.[87] The crimes that women in general were most likely to be accused of included prostitution, theft, and child abuse or death. Perhaps most strikingly, women were often called to the courts with these accusations made by other women.[88] Rumor and public denouncing by fellow women were often the start of criminal proceedings for crimes like adultery.[89] The "scold" was a popular stereotype of a woman who cursed, gossiped, berated her husband, and accused her neighbors of the same. She was masculine in a very unflattering way.[90] This image is recognizable in the court's depiction of Bonny and Read, in which

[86] Ibid., Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects,* 26, and *A General History*, 168-169.
[87] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 99-112.
[88] Ibid., and Antony Simpson, "Blackmail as a Crime of Sexual Indiscretion in Eighteenth Century England," in *Crime, Gender, and Sexuality in Criminal Prosecutions*, ed. Louis A. Knafla, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 61-86.
[89] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination,* 260-264.
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one of the deponents is said to have described them as "cursing and swearing much, and very ready and willing to do any Thing on board."[91]

Besides scolding, women with bastards were at particular risk of being accused of the vile crime of smothering a newborn. In part, this explains why Mary's mother went to extremes to provide for her, and perhaps why Anne abandoned the child she had with Rackam. A baby who was "stillborn" was an understood tragedy, but a baby who lived a few days, especially if its birth had been concealed, was automatically assumed to be murdered.[92] The thought process was that, faced with the prospect of raising a bastard with no money, the sexually promiscuous woman smothered or drowned her baby to avoid hardship. Women who were found guilty of infanticide almost always faced hanging.[93] While this no doubt happened, it was certainly not true that every case of infant death was murder, even if it was treated this way. As a result, some women killed their offspring right away in order to claim it was stillborn, rather than risk a fragile life slipping away in the night, condemning the mother as a murderer.[94] The sad fact was that many children died before families could form emotional attachments to them, and often giving them up was a good alternative to watching a child starve and risk being accused of murder.[95] While for modern audiences Anne's abandonment of her child in

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[91] "The Tryals of Anne Bonny and Mary Read" The National Archives at Kew, Call number CO 137/10 Box 1. For an accessible copy see British Piracy in the Golden Age: History and Interpretation, 1660-1730, ed. Joel H. Baer (London: Pickering and Chatto Publishers Limited, 2007), 28.

[92] Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe,* 105-110.

[93] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order,* 135.

[94] Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe,* 105-110.

[95] Ibid., 102-118.

Cuba may be shocking and hard to reconcile with the image of a lusty and brave pirate, in her time it was one of the few options available to her. Portraying Anne as giving up her child makes for a redeemable story. Anne commits economic and social crimes, but not murder.

This is not to say that women never murdered or committed violent acts. While they were much more likely to accused of moral crimes or theft, women committed vicious acts as well. They participated in their fair share of violence, including the case of Elizabeth Hardis who attacked and robbed a man on the highway.[96] She was convicted and sentenced to death. Yet in one of the few ways the hierarchical structure of society actually helped women, they were less likely to be accused of violence, especially marital violence, because accusing them of this crime would effectively undermine the system. Anne Bonny was portrayed as a violent woman, who once "when a young man would have lain with her against her will, beat him so, that he lay ill of it a considerable Time."[97] This is admirable; Anne was protecting her virtue against a male attacker. However, it still puts her in a place of power over men, and is used to foreshadow Anne's eventual downfall into piracy. On the other hand, Johnson declares stories that Anne, in a "passion," attacked a servant with a knife, to be "groundless."[98] In order to show as much contrast between polite, landed society and piracy, Johnson has to avoid having Anne commit violence in the domestic sphere. In the case of Anne's attack on her

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[96]"Elizabeth Hardis, Violent Theft, 5th December 1711," http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t17111205-39-off189&div=t17111205-39&terms=women#highlight. Access date 12 February 2013.

[97] Johnson, *A General History,* 172.

[98] Ibid., 171-172.

rapist, violence allows Johnson a way of showing Anne's fierceness while portraying it as chaste behavior. Few men would have admitted to such an attack. In general, men were loath to publicly out themselves as unable to control their wives or female relatives, and so women were likely to escape public prosecution.[99] The unfortunate side effect was that men might be persuaded to take punishment into their own hands rather than resort to the courts. Beating wives was a socially undesirable and yet ultimately acceptable component in society, although generally a man who had to resort to his hands was not well looked upon.[100]

Men were much less vulnerable to the accusation of parental crimes. "The family" as an institution was ruled by the father but the fault and care of the mother.[101] Men were, however, also accused of many of the same more mundane crimes as women were. Theft from employers was a frequent charge, as well as ambush robberies, although women were generally less likely to be involved in those. Men stole clothes and household goods in similar quantities to women, although were more likely than women to steal horses and livestock.[102] Middling men were incarcerated most often for debt, which was particularly shameful. Families were exhorted to keep their relatives out of jail, but in a period where many were trying to make their way in the world, and a quite few had only a slippery foothold in society,

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[99] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 192-204; Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order,* 81; Brown, Good Wives, 336.

[100] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 192-204.

[101] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order*, 10-13; 33-37. Men were, however, involved in crimes as heads of households, sometimes as representatives of the family, and sometimes accusing other men of committing crimes against their households.

[102] Ibid., 160-163 and Linebaugh, *The London Hanged,* 80-83, 103.

sometimes it was easier to write off an insolvent relative than help them out.[103]

One more small advantage that women had over men was in the punishment for their lesser crimes. Women usually received acquittals or smaller punishments, such as fines. More serious crimes might result in deportation or exile.[104] Women were less likely to be accused of murder or brought up on charges, although if they were, their execution rate was twice as high as men's.[105] This may be in part because a woman killing was seen as especially disgusting, coupled with the fact that branding was not a fit punishment for women.[106] This meant that even if they were convicted for the lesser crime of manslaughter, the only available punishment was death.[107] Those women who were sentenced to hang, such as Mary and Anne, had one last ditch resort, the ability to "plead their bellies," that is, claim they were pregnant.[108] A pregnant woman could not be hanged, and in Anne and Mary's case, after an examination they were both found to be with child and received a reprieve. In almost all cases, women who took this defense were ultimately declared to be truly pregnant and set free. Men were not so lucky; once condemned, they were executed, although not without being administered to

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[103] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 22-29.

[104] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order*, 135.

[105] Ibid., and Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 102.

[106] Walker *Crime, Gender, and Social Order*, 136, 158.

[107] Ibid., 136-138.

[108] Johnson, *A General History*, 164-165, 173. Examples of cases where women claimed to be pregnant and were pardoned include "Ordinary's Account, 11th May 1715," http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=OA17150511&div=OA17150511&terms=women#highhighl; and "The Ordinary of Newgate His Account of the Behaviors, Confessions, and Last Speeches of the Malefactors that were Executed at Tyburn on Tuesday the 27th of May, 1718," John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

by the Ordinary to repent of their sins before they died. Once all was right with their souls they were "turned off," the colloquialism for hanging. In this way, landed criminal and pirate were alike.

Conclusion

During the early modern period, England, and its colonies, were in flux. New economic opportunities had society grappling with how to define class and gender with new parameters. Women became seen as an uncontrollable force that had to be kept in check, while men were the ones to keep them settled. Those who could not conform to new standards often found themselves at a loss, which sometimes manifested itself in crime. The formations of new ideas, however, resulted in tensions over who was respectable, who deserved, and how these ideals could be controlled. Women like Anne Bonny and Mary Read represented these tensions both in Johnson's work and the court's account of their trials.

Chapter Two

Captain William Kidd: Your typical Pirate?

Piracy in the Golden Age was a convoluted system of privateering, politics, mutiny, and death.[109] The various aspects of piratical life are particularly prevalent in the life of William Kidd. Looking at his story provides a lens to understand the norms of piratical life, and how we can then understand Anne and Mary in context. When William Kidd started his life in Scotland in the mid-17th century, few would have predicted he would end it fifty years later, swinging in the public gallows. This was mostly because as someone from a lower class, few would have thought of him at all.[110] His ignominious end came after a startling rise through English high society and travels to all parts of the world.

Captain Kidd does not become a recognizable, named figure in history until 1689, when he first earned the title of "captain."[111] Part of a crew made up of both English and French sailors, Kidd and the others who considered themselves English, or at least not French, mutinied under the harsh conditions of the captain and made off with the ship they were working on. Perhaps because of his experience as a sailor, Kidd was made captain of the freshly stolen ship, which was renamed the *Blessed William* when the crew reached the port of Nevis.

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[109] Travers, *Pirates,* 7 defines the Golden Age as lasting from 1680-1720, and refers specifically to western Europe and its 5,000 pirates.

[110] Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*. (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986), 29.

[111] Ibid, 30.

This shift in status from crew member to captain would have long lasting consequences on Kidd's fortune. *Blessed William* was put under the command of the Royal Navy, and as captain, Kidd was given almost 100 men to crew his legally sanctioned privateer expedition. The system of privateering was a neat trick for many governments in the 17th and 18th century whereby ships were allowed to commandeer and take as prizes the boats of other nations.[112] This allowed the country to enhance their navy without having to supply the ships or the men. The sailors were furthermore hired on condition of prizes. They only had to be paid their share of what was captured; if the mission was unsuccessful, so were the crew members. Unfortunately, the expedition ended badly. The crew wanted the chance to loot and to spend their time boarding other ships, but Kidd's overly formal style of fighting prevented them from doing so. In February of 1690, while docked in Nevis, Kidd went ashore, only to come back and find both ship and sailors long gone.[113]

While this was a blow to his career, Kidd had the support of many high ranking officials. He was given more ships to command and was able to regain much of his wealth. He greatly improved his standing when he married Sarah Bradley Cox Oort, a woman with a great inheritance. Indicative of Kidd's opportunistic eye was that Sarah's second husband, John Oort, died two days

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[112] Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 20-37.
[113] Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 180.

before Sarah and William filed *their* marriage certificate, in 1691.[114] They purchased a home in New York City and began married life.

Domestic bliss, it seems, was not enough to keep Kidd on land. Four years later Kidd embarked on a "pirate hunting" expedition in the Red Sea that took advantage of carefully worded grants from the king. These allowed him to keep and split with his financers any prize he took, without splitting it with the crown.[115] He secured financing in 1695 and set sail in 1696. However, the mission was unsuccessful in the beginning, heading first to Spain and then the Cape of Good Hope. Eventually Kidd returned to New York to pick up more men. By 1697 he still had not taken a ship, although after unsuccessfully engaging with larger ships, he was finally able to grab a few small prizes. Apparently concerned with his ability to take on larger prizes, perhaps from a lack of confidence or merely from prudence, Kidd refused to attack a Dutch merchant vessel, almost resulting in a mutiny. In the argument between captain and men, Kidd struck a sailor and killed him.[116]

Mutiny quelled, Kidd was finally able to make some progress in his mission. In 1698 he managed his most infamous prize: The *Quedagh Merchant*. Kidd claimed the ship was flying under French colors, and was therefore justified in taking it as a prize with his legal charter. Under the purview of his official order this would become a contested legal issue. In 1699 Kidd was declared a pirate, although he was at sea when this occurred.[117]

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[114] Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 36.

[115] Ibid, 50-52.

[116] Archibald Hurd, *The Reign of the Pirates* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), 50.

[117] Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag*, 187.

Political winds were shifting in the wrong direction for Kidd and his crew, and his Whig supporters in high places were ousted by newly empowered Tories. Without this protection, rather than the leaders of a campaign against pirates, they were now declared pirates themselves. Their original ship was no longer sea worthy, and so the crew bought the *Antonio* and sailed for North America, where Kidd's investor and supposed friend Lord Bellomont resided. Bellomont, governor of New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, tried to convince Kidd that he could probably procure a pardon if he would come into his custody. Kidd argued that the acts of piracy he was being condemned for in popular reports were actually from members of his crew who had defected, and that he himself was innocent of all crimes.[118] Piracy, after all, was strictly robbery at sea, not just any crime committed off land. He had, in his view, only continued his previously authorized privateering. Despite his suspicion, Captain Kidd and his men went "home."

In New York, Kidd was convinced to go to Boston where Bellomont was residing. Despite every assurance, he was taken in as a pirate rather than granted the pardon he was seeking. In a farcical display his goods were distributed between Gardiner, one of Bellomont's lackeys, Bellomont himself in the guise of gifts for his wife, and then eventually the British crown.[119] At trial in England almost a full year later, Kidd claimed he could not plead guilty or innocent because his proof, the documents of the ships he took that said

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[118] National Archives at Kew, call number CO 5/860 folio 167.

[119] Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 175-180. National Archives at Kew, call number CO 5/860 folio 193.

they were French, had gone missing.[120] This defense was rejected and Kidd was tried immediately, found guilty, and eventually hanged. Even his execution was an insult to the man who had risen so far and fallen so low; his rope broke when he was "turned off." Rather than seeing this as a sign of God's clemency, as was sometimes done, 56 year old Captain Kidd was hanged a second time, this time successfully. His body was hung in an iron cage above the harbor as a grim warning to other pirates about the fate that awaited them.[121]

William Kidd's story is one of the most well known in piratical history. He is the essence of a pirate: a rogue who met a bloody end. But how typical of an experience did Kidd have? And how does his story illuminate what it meant to be a pirate during the Golden Age?

Transformation: From Sailor to Privateer to Pirate

William Kidd's reasons for becoming a sailor are unknown. Little to nothing of his early life is known because as a common colonial subject, it was not considered important. Many men of his social standing became sailors, often because it was a living that was available to them. The Royal Navy was a tough but legitimate way to make a living, and during wartime there was

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[120] "The Arraignment, Tryal, and Condemnation of Captain William Kidd for Murther and Piracy." Printed for J. Nutt, near Stationers-Hall, 1701. Eighteenth Century Collections Online.
http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?type=search&tabID=T001&queryId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28BN%2CNone%2C7%29T146324%24&sort=Author&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&version=1.0&userGroupName=31841&prodId=ECCO.
Accessed 06 October 2012.
[121] Travers, *Pirates,* 48-49.

plenty of opportunity.[122] However, as allegiances shifted and ended, often times the job did too. Those who could find work on merchant ships would try to do so, or on the other side would become privateers trying to catch merchants. Either occupation put a sailor at risk of running into pirates, and often the allure of piracy could convince them to "go on the account." The turn to piracy was practical (why argue with a man stealing your ship and threatening to kill you when you could get a job out of the deal?) but it was also attractive in many cases. Sailing on a pirate ship was a life they knew how to lead but without the harsh conditions of the navy. In fact, some estimate that 98% of all pirates had backgrounds in navies.[123] Furthermore, archaeological evidence shows little to no difference in the material culture of a naval ship and a piratical one.[124] The lines between these three distinctions: sailor in the navy, privateer, and pirate, where blurry at best to many, with people slipping and back and forth between categories occasionally, perhaps even unknowingly. Mary Read, then, followed a very typical path into piracy. She started as a sailor in the navy before becoming a pirate. Even her brief sally into middling life as a tavern owner did not preclude her from returning to the sea when she faced a financial crisis, much the way Kidd did.

The fluidity of seafaring identifications was further compounded by the British legal system. The Navy itself frequently contributed to the blurred lines between roles by revoking letters of marque and pressing men. Letters of marque are the charters that separate legal privateering from illegal piracy,

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[122] Cordingly, *Black Flag*, 91-96.
[123] Ibid,, 10.
[124] Babits, Joshua B. Howard, and Matthew Brenckle ,"Pirate Imagery," 271.

and were directed against warring nations.[125] In William Kidd's time, this most frequently meant fighting with France, especially for English citizens.[126] However, war was intermittent, and what was acceptable within the confines of two nations at war and those at peace were very different. While at sea, information was infrequent, outdated, or inaccessible for long lengths of time.[127] Kidd's experience of landing in a port only to be informed of his status as a pirate was not unusual.

Pressing sailors was a common, though horrible, method of swelling the ranks of the naval forces, especially during times of war. Men who were thought to have a background in sea work were essentially kidnapped off the streets and forced into service. This could mean leaving families and lives behind, never to return.[128] That these men, when boarded by pirates from their nation or privateers of another, would often choose to leave impressments is not surprising.

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[125] *Collins English Dictionary*, s.v. "letter of marque or letters of marque," accessed October 24, 2012. http://www.credoreference.com/entry/hcengdict/letter_of_marque_or_letters_of_marque
[126] Ritchie, *Captain Kidd,* 29 .
[127] Ibid., 11.
[128] *Britain and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History*, s.v. "Impressment," accessed October 24, 2012, http://www.credoreference.com/entry/abcbramrle/impressment. A good examination of the practice of impressement is also found in Nicholas Rogers's chapter "Impressment and the law in eighteenth century Britain," in Law, Crime, and Society 1660-1830. 71-94.

The Crew: Age and Ethnicity

As mentioned above, most if not all of Kidd's men would have been sailors with backgrounds in the navy. The "navy" refers not just to the British Royal Navy, however. Pirates could not be traced to a single country, and in fact the diversity of most ships has been seized upon as an indicator of the liberty and freedom of the sea. Sailors from almost all Western European countries could be found roaming the oceans during the Golden Age. In Kidd's original crew, onboard the *Blessed William*, members were of French and English origin, despite the shaky nature of relations between the two countries. With no one country producing the majority of sailors or pirates, the chances of a multiethnic crew were almost certain.[129] Despite language barriers, different backgrounds, and the different political aims of their home countries, the work was the same. The fact that ships needed the same work done no matter who steered the wheel united workers and allowed a space for everyone to get their job done.[130]

Members of ships tended to be younger. Kidd became a captain at around 35 years old, probably because it meant he had more experience than the typical sailor who was only 27.[131] Despite their relatively young age, many of these people had seen more of the world than their landlocked counterparts ever would. Both Anne Bonny and Mary Read fit this bill. They had both travelled the world extensively before meeting up with Rackam's crew. Their

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[129] Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag*, 15-17.

[130] Ibid., 91-96.

[131] Ibid., 14.

precise ages were unknown, but Mary may have been more similar to Kidd and been slightly older than the average pirate.[132] The exposure sailors in general had to other cultures, including going to the colonies of their respective home nation, may have allowed them a more tolerant attitude than landed members of society.

This is not to say that pirate ships were spaces devoid of conflict that related to nation of origin. Fights were common and long held attitudes by individual sailors could not have disappeared overnight.[133] Rackam's crew included members of many different nations, and part of why Mary was taken on board was because she was English.[134] Birthplace was not ignored. Africans in particular were put at a disadvantage. Although in some crews half of the men were free or formerly enslaved Africans, there was a major distrust of "negroes" that sometimes resulted in black men being categorized as lesser seamen. They also had to fear being sold as slaves despite being freemen. Whereas other men slipped between ships with relative ease and could become a part of another crew if they themselves were boarded by pirates, black men had to be wary of new captains. Despite this, African men were essential to the running of most ships, and while slavery was a fear, a few may have been able to become officers.[135] As is explored more deeply in Chapter Three, the fact that men who might normally be devoid of opportunities were able to advance on the pirate ship has been used to classify piracy as an

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[132] Rediker, "Anne Bonny and Mary Read," 23, 237.
[133] Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 15-16.
[134] Johnson, *A General History,* 161.
[135] Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag*, 15.

egalitarian system. While there could be better conditions on pirate ships, they were never truly equal spaces.

<div align="center">Class</div>

As previously mentioned, sailing was difficult and laborious. The men who chose to go to sea often had few other options. On top of the work, sailing with a navy meant very little pay, and while piracy was frequently more lucrative, the "no prey no pay" policy meant gambling on future wages.[136] For Kidd to leave his established home in order to take to the seas shows an ambition but also a fear. There is a possibility that living in New York exposed Kidd to many new pirates and it made him long for the sea.[137] He fronted his own money for the mission, and could have lost all of it. However, as someone with humble beginnings, the chance for more security may have been enough of a lure to overcome the potential risks. The early-18th century was a time where men and women were starting to risk it all to make their fortunes. However risky the endeavor was economically, Kidd was dependant on his political backers, and as he would fatally find out, political situations can also shift dangerously quickly. He knew firsthand how someone could move up the social ladder, and worked to avoid falling back down. In the end, despite being of a higher class than most if not all of his crew members, Kidd was drawn to piracy for some of the same reasons: the chance for success and maybe

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[136] Ibid., 97.
[137] Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 40.

adventure. These were some of the reasons Mary Read may have taken to the sea as well. As a young man, at least in society's eyes, the best way to make her way in the world was through work with her body. Piracy offered the sea work she already knew coupled with better chances than straight seafaring to improve her economic situation. Considering her reputation for courage and bravery, it is likely that Johnson intended her, like Kidd, to be the type of person who enjoyed the thrill. Anne Bonny, on the other hand, was a middling class woman. In Johnson's mind, and the minds of his readers, Anne had no reason to abandon her life in the colonies. Her defection to the Caribbean was not a step towards more money or a better life, it was seen, despite the realities of her situation, as a step down.[138] As such, Anne is the transgressive one, even though she is technically performing the same acts as Mary.

Gender and Hierarchy

The "no prey no pay" policy is a good example of why hierarchy was important in a ship. If the sailors could not trust their captain to make decisions that were fiscally beneficial for them, then the mission would fail. A captain who was not brave enough to take prey and get pay was one who was essentially worthless, a lesson Kidd learned all too well. The crew depended on each other; they would succeed or fail as one.

Because their fates were inexorably linked, a pecking order developed, despite the popular modern conception of the ship as an egalitarian space.

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[138] The differences between how life in the colonies was perceived and the ways it was actually lived are examined in Chapter Four.

The captain had obvious benefits, including a greater share of prizes and better lodging.[139] Unlike English society on land, where men who could work using their education were prized over working men and women, on the ship the men who could work were valued. The captain was therefore usually a man of extreme courage and proven mettle. Unlike on land, however, masculine traits were not "threatened" by the presence of women. Men might wear the fine cloth and accessories they plundered without accusations of foppery; at sea the action was manly, a show of dominance by using the goods they had stolen in an unusual way. Outlandish dressing could be interpreted as a jab at the people they had robbed.[140] Worth was based on merit, not on birth, as it was in landed society. The ships were not lawless, and some even had very elaborate codes of conduct, but they did offer a space where societal rules could be played with.[141] Mary still had to live up to the masculine expectations of the crew, but she could do so in a more egalitarian and economically beneficial way than she could as a soldier. In the military, she had found it difficult to advance due to her poverty, despite her bravery. Anne, for her part, is depicted as having taken full advantage of being away from the prying eyes of society that had followed her in her old life. Her attempts to consort with other pirates, most notably a disguised Mary, make Anne the perfect counterweight to the chaste, brave, and virtuous Mary. They

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[139] Travers, *Pirates*, 15.

[140] Carter, "Men about town," 31-57; the interpretation of clothes as an act of rebellion is based on the meaning of clothes as outlined in chapter 3, Barry Clifford's ideas, which are examined in Chapter Four, as well as the general lawless nature of piratical activity, which for some did mean a repudiation of societal mores.

[141] Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag,* 91-96.

represented two sides of the expectations of women in the eighteenth century, and yet both get away with behaviors they might not in other situations. It would be a mistake to think of the pirate ship as a utopia of gender and class equality, but it was less rigid than society on land.

<div align="center">Death</div>

Hanging was not an unusual fate for a pirate. Estimates show that about one in every ten pirates was hanged for their crime.[142] Very few were acquitted, a byproduct of the transient nature of letters of marquee and difficulties in distinguishing between cases of forced piracy and voluntary participation. Many naturally claimed to have been forced in the hopes of evading the noose, but this tactic pitted sailor against sailor in searching for blame, with the outcome of death for all. Indeed, Mary's justification for her piratical activities was that she had gone "into it only on Compulsion."[143] Piracy, though chiefly an economic crime that did not necessarily result in death or injury to its victims, carried the penalty of death. By contrast, male murderers in England faced only a 20% chance of execution.[144] Considering that 1 in 10 of *all* pirates, not just convicted ones, were hanged, the punishment for piracy was especially harsh. It seems that the way piracy undermined political control and social mandates added an extra layer of fear that warranted its strict punishment, and strict it was. The entirety of Rackam's crew, including some rather unfortunate turtle sellers who were on

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[142] Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag*, 225-229.
[143] Johnson, *A General History,* 164-165.
[144] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order*, 135.

the ship at the wrong time, were convicted and sentenced to death. Mary and Anne were granted a reprieve because they claimed to be pregnant, a fairly common recourse for female criminals.[145] Although Anne's fate is unknown, Mary could not truly escape, and she died in prison. Murder on land was therefore seemingly more acceptable than piracy.

Despite her fate, Mary Read seemed to understand and even relish that piracy was likely to end horribly, famously stating that "as to hanging, she thought it no great hardship, for, were it not for that every cowardly Fellow would turn pyrate, and so infest the seas, the Men of Courage must starve."[146] Here "men of courage" are more deserving of the economic advancement brought by piracy than the cowardly everyman. Further, it seems that a real man would not fear death. Johnson's words make clear the perception that the threat of death kept the market clear of men who could not hold up to the standards required by the sea. This was not unlike the fears women had that, because almost every woman learned to sew, their skills were being devalued.[147] Mary is quoted as going on to say that "if it was put to the choice of the Pyrates, they would not have the punishment less than Death," for it would deprive the pirates from being able to provide for their own families. This interpretation gives the pirates less of a blood thirsty, pillaging for the sake of pillaging slant and instead puts them in a familiar context: men as head of household. While middling men in England and in the colonies may not have had to risk death to provide for their relatives, they would have

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[145] As discussed in the previous chapter.

[146] Johnson, *A General History*, 165.

[147] As discussed in Chapter One.

understood and maybe sympathized with the men who did. The price these men were willing to pay for the ability to feed their kin or to simply have a better, more exciting life was much higher than other types of people and even criminals. While pirates may have escaped some of the more depressing aspects of hierarchy in society, death was the great equalizer.

Conclusions

Piracy was, for all of its reputation of adventure and lawlessness, not a clear-cut deviation from legitimate forms of sailing, such as in navies or as privateers. While they posed political problems for countries that were constantly fluctuating between war and peace, for the actual pirates sailing life provided an odd form of stability. The actual definition of their work was not as important to day-to-day life as hard work, camaraderie, and the ability to earn money were. In this way, piracy mirrored life on land. As with society on land, gendered expectations existed, and yet it was economics that drove the harsh punishment of piracy. Through theft, pirates gained items they normally could not have accessed, and threatened the established system of middling and upper classes creating their identities through goods. Thus Mary and Anne's economic and class status, more so than their gender, sets them apart.

Chapter Three

The Clothes Make The Man: The Story of Mary Read

This chapter looks at the clothes that poor women, middle class women, working men, and military personnel wore. Mary occupied each of these categories at some point in her life, and took up the corresponding clothes when she changed roles. Although none of her clothing remains, there are detailed reports of her dress in both the trial record and *A General History of the Pirates*. Of course, these accounts have specific, self serving motives to depict her clothing in certain ways, which will also be explored. Johnson's focus on dress is used to portray Mary's shifting class and gender identities, whereas court depictions of her clothes paint her as a deviant. Focusing on the literal, physical clothes rather than just the description of dress is important because, as seen most explicitly in Chapter Four, there were frequently deviations between what Johnson or the courts described and what the material record actually shows.

One of the more striking and commented on aspects of the tale of Mary Read is her cross dressing in the clothes of a man. It seems on its face to be another example of her sensational behavior. I argue, however, that her use of clothing was actually within the bounds of both piratical and polite society, and that she was able to push these bounds by manipulating what was at her disposal in order to fulfill her needs.[148] Mary in this sense fits in along with

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[148] "Polite society" is used here, along with "normal" or other similar phrases, interchangeably to delineate the difference between English society on land in general, versus those who lived

other eighteenth century men and women, who used clothing to depict a public persona that visually situated them within certain gender and class roles. The way clothing is worn, whether it conforms to standards or not, says something about the wearer. It is the "social skin" that can subtly or explicitly tell those who know how to interpret it details about that person.[149] Mary used clothes to navigate between two genders, underscoring that male and female worlds were not separate spheres, but rather interacting, fluid designations.[150] Judith Butler asserts that "we derive [identity] knowledge from the clothes that the person wears, or how the clothes are worn. This is naturalized knowledge even though it is based on a series of cultural inferences, even if some of them are highly erroneous."[151] Thus clothes can be used to fashion an identity within or against cultural norms that people accept, sometimes even without question. A specific gender can be presented and accepted, regardless of biological sex.

Class can be constructed in a way similar to gender. For example, Mary Granville Pendarves Delaney, an upper class English woman, wrote to a friend in 1724 about a recent birthday party held for a mutual acquaintance, saying

> "There was a great many fine clothes on the birthday. Lady Sunderland was very fine and very genteel. Her clothes were the

outside it, whether at sea or by virtue of an "outsider status." It is neither meant to privilege one way of life over another, nor to insinuate that *all* people lived by societal standards. Lawrence E. Klein, "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal*, 45, No. 4 (2002), 873-877.

[149] Diana DiPaolo Loren, *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America. (*Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010) 8.

[150] Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in *The American Historical Review*, 91, No. 5. (1986), 1056-1057.

[151] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), xxii.

finest pale blue and pink, very richly flowered in a running pattern of silver frosted and tissue with a little white, a new Brussels head, and Lady Oxford's jewels. Bess had on a pale lemon-coloured lutestring and look'd like a witch, at least her sister's good looks were no advantage to her. I was at Lady Carteret's toilette, whose clothes were pretty, pale straw lutestring and flowered with silver, and new Brussels head. Lady Lansdowne did not go, but Lord Weymouth and Mademoiselle Lansdowne went, their clothes was very handsome. She danced at Court with great applause." [152]

This is the entirety of the letter. Despite its brevity, Delaney seems to have felt that a letter solely devoted to the clothing of the event was an important document to convey to her friend. The clothes of her peers signaled to Delaney the gentility of the owner, and in the case of Lady Sunderland, the newness of her clothes is a credit to her as a woman. Clothes were a centerpiece of daily life, worth remarking on. While Mary would never attend such a party, the letter is an example of the way people at the time were interpreting clothes. It gives insight as to why Johnson may have placed such emphasis on Mary's clothes. In his narrative clothes form a turning point in the various class changes she undergoes.

An example of the types of dresses these women could have worn is the Mantua (Figure 3.1) dress on display at the Museum of London, made for the Mayor of London's daughter in 1753.

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[152] Mary Granville Pendarves Delaney, "Letter from Mary Granville Pendarves Delany to Anne Granville Dewes, May 30, 1724," in *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany, vol. 1*. Ed. Sarah Chauncey Woolsey, (Boston: Roberts Bros., 1879), 465.

Figure 3.1 Mantua Dress
Photo Credit Museum of London

A woman who wore this dress to an elaborate ball would tell those watching, and as Delaney's letter shows, people were remarking on clothing, that she (or her family) was rich. It said that they could afford the luxury of unnecessary expenses, but it also said that she was a woman who wished to represent herself in a certain way.[153] She wanted to be understood, perhaps, as the right type of woman, a "very genteel" woman, the kind who knew what society expected and how to behave accordingly. Spending money on the dress showed that she privileged her fashion over other types of discretionary

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[153] Anne Fanshawe Dress, Museum of London Collections Online, Access Date 12 January 2013. www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Collections-Research/Collections-online/object.aspx?objectID=object-85096. Although the dress is slightly later, as discussed above, few examples of very early dress remain, and the dress is nonetheless a good example of what the highly elite wore throughout the eighteenth century.

spending. The fabric and style were rich and imported, another sure sign of wealth, although as Delaney points out, beautiful clothes could not cover up an ugly personality.

The ways women used clothes is a key point in Mary Read's story, for although she frequently is disguised as a man, the use of clothing is associated with her femininity. Women navigated the fine line between using clothes to convey femininity, class, and yet good morals as well. For example, in another letter, Lady Montague, another elite English woman, writes to her friend in 1709 that her boredom has driven her to following fashion. Yet she chides those who "fall in love with furniture, clothes, and equipage, of this number, and I look upon them as no less in the wrong than when they were five years old, and doated on shells, pebbles, and hobby-horses."[154] Here, overt dressing, or showing too much pride in clothing, was childish and socially undesirable. Consumption was openly discussed by elites and had defined rules. Knowing what items and dress meant was a mark of truly belonging to the upper class. With the same set of clothing, the meaning could still change based on context. While the way the clothing was significant and changed from person to person and wear to wear, this is not to say that the ways Read specifically used clothes are lost to us. Based on the general ways people dressed, we can infer the basics of how women would have dressed at each stage in their lives, as well as how they manipulated dress in their favor and within the bounds of societal rules.

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[154] Lady Mary Pierrepont Wortley Montague, "Letter from Lady Mary Pierrepont Wortley Montagu to Anne Wortley Montagu, August 08, 1709," in *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, vol. 1.* Ed. Lord Wharncliffe, (London: Richard Bentley, 1837), 424.

There are remaining clothing collections that will serve as examples for the types of things people would have worn. This includes the collection of men and women's clothing at Colonial Williamsburg, a site in Virginia that has clothes which are representative of those Anne Bonny particularly would have been exposed to, as she lived in colonial America in the Carolinas. However, because the colonies were meant to be a reflection of England, and because its clothing was often imported directly from England, it can also provide insight into the types of clothes English women wore.[155] Furthermore, within the colonies, maintaining an English identity was often achieved through clothing. The clothing and accessory articles are good examples of upper class wear in the eighteenth century, although a few more common pieces are there. Unfortunately, many times the lives of people like Bonny and Read do not leave traces in the material record. [156]

While full sets of clothing are incredibly rare, pieces, and especially accessories, or "small finds," frequently do survive. These aprons, purses, ribbons, and buttons are much more prevalent than clothing counterparts, but are sometimes thought of as less compelling. However, even these small

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[155] Loren, *Colonial America*, 26.

[156] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 189-193. Clothing was worn until it could no longer serve its purpose, and then reused in other ways.[156] Elite clothing is more likely to survive, as it was not as brutally used during its lifetime and is more likely to have been preserved for a specific purpose, such as gowns made for special occasions. This is most evident in the clothing collected by the Museum of London, which houses clothing from eighteenth-century England. Although these clothes were certainly more elaborate than anything Bonny or Read ever wore, they are beautiful examples of what the epoch of fashion was considered to be at that time. As elite clothes frequently differed only in material, their shape and detail are still useful representations of typical early modern dress.

finds represent a channel for self expression.[157] The small finds from the wreck of the *Whydah*, are particularly pertinent: a ribbon, some coins. Clearly dress was not just important on land, as the pirates took these objects and reimagined them in ways to suit their needs on deck. As a pirate, as a woman, and as a soldier, Mary would have had different ways in each walk of life of modifying clothes and adornments in much the same way.

Early Life of Mary Read

In Charles Johnson's portrayal, Mary Read started manipulating the way she presented herself to the world literally from the moment of her birth. Finding herself "with an Accident," Mary's mother, a poor woman whose husband never returned from the sea, needed a way to explain her pregnancy. She moved, with her legitimate son, to the country, in order to maintain her "good Reputation among her Neighbours."[158] Public perception, as seen in Chapter One, was a major concern for many women. When her son died, Mary's mother saw an opportunity to pass Mary off as the deceased child. This would save her the shame of having an illegitimate child and allow her to ask for money for the child's upkeep from her mother in law. Johnson explains Mary's mother's rationale that although "the changing a Girl into a Boy, seem'd a difficult piece of work...she ventured to dress it up as a Boy." The use of the pronoun "it" when describing Mary suggests that even though gender is already recognized in the infant, it is not fixed. Further, this gender

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[157] Loren, *Colonial America,* 16-20.
[158] Johnson, *A General History*, 157.

is constructed through clothing. Since children were frequently dressed in gender nonspecific clothing, this would not have been a hard disguise to perpetuate, especially for a child too young to perhaps understand the gravity of her situation.[159]

When Mary "grew some Sense," however, her mother "thought proper to let her into the Secret of her Birth, to induce her to conceal her sex."[160] Here is evidence, as discussed in Chapter One, of the difference between sex and gender that eighteenth century England recognized.[161] Gender was also something that was learned, not inherent, as she had to be instructed as to how to keep her mother's secret.[162] While Mary's biological sex was female, in order to maintain the ruse, and collect the allowance, she needed to *be* a boy. This was of greater importance when she was too old to continue dressing in the gender neutral way of children. In many ways, the adoption of gender clothes was the first step into adulthood, and all the associated expectations that come with it.[163] As soon as she was able to wear gender specific clothing, Mary dressed, acted, and presented man. Although she initially did not pick this designation, she also did not abjure it later on. Rather, by manipulating clothes and they way she presented her body to the public, Mary was able to move between not just genders but class, moving up from a poor soldier, to a

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[159] "Lifecycles," *Historic Threads*, Access Date 12 January 2013, http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_learn.cfm#lifecycle and Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 59-61.

[160] Johnson, *A General History*, 158.

[161] As discussed in Chapter One, although specific information about the process of engendering the body can be found in Fletcher, "Before the Gendered Body," in *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 1-99.

[162] As discussed in the Introduction.

[163] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 59-61.

middling tavern owner, and finally becoming a cutthroat pirate. In her attempt to better her life she represents a good woman, one who is chaste and feminine, and a brave and adventurous man, the best characteristics of both genders.

Life in Household Service

Once Mary was old enough, her mother had her placed in a home, not as a maid or female servant, but as a footman. Coming out as a woman had serious drawbacks. For one, the mother's decade long ruse would be discovered, and there was potential backlash from the family of the mother in law who had been supporting them. For another, the types of jobs open to women at the time were not as economically successful as those available to men.[164] A male servant was generally more respected and had more longevity within a household; female servants usually left the house after getting married, or remained single to keep their employment. As a young girl, Mary could not take advantage of many of the vocations older women could, as outlined in the first chapter. Joining the household service of a better off family was a way to provide long term job security that must have made the choice to remain hidden as a boy easier to make. It was not only an economically sound decision; it also provided stability and some status.

Service jobs were a viable living for all types, although it increasingly employed more women than men. Male servants, however, were frequently

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[164] Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 55, 169, 208. Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 90, and Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 49-70.

held in higher regard. Clothing helped reinforce this division.[165] Men were dressed in a more formal way than women, with specific uniforms for the men over general work-wear for women.[166] As an employee of the household, Mary could expect to receive room and board, and a part of her wages would have included clean clothes at least once a week. No employer worth their salt would deny their employees clean linen. In fact, even abusive ones would sometimes still provide clean laundry.[167] In service, clothing acted as income and as a symbol of who a person worked for, which in turn identified the wearer herself.[168] Livery, the clothing given to servants to mark them out as working for a certain house, could be a badge of honor. If the piratical life Mary would go on to lead was an economic and social arena for liberation, where clothes were an expression of personality, in service her clothes reflected the opposite.

The uniform of her new position meant that Mary was unlikely to be detected. It has been argued that uniforms in general encourage a kind of visual code. As with the military uniforms that she was soon to don, the uniform can have an equalizing effect, wherein one needs only to see a part of

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[165] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 98-99.

[166] "Livery," *Historic Threads*, Access Date 12 January 2013
http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_learn.cfm#everyday.
Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 99-100. While outerwear was infrequently, if ever, washed, linens were. That the clothes closest to the body needed to be clean spoke to health and class standards. To have dirty linens meant that the wearer was not only unclean but unhealthy, and this state was something to be ashamed of.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Montagu, "Letter from Lady Mary Pierrepont Wortley Montagu to Elizabeth Hervey, Countess of Bristol, 1717?" in *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, vol. 2,* ed. Lord Wharncliffe, (London: Richard Bentley, 1837), 425.

the whole to understand its meaning.[169] As a footman, the insignia of the household meant that the viewer would immediately have associated the wearer with the employer, and understood their position as subordinate to their employer but above a simple street worker. In addition to the disguise provided by poverty, the uniform of a footman concealed Mary's true sex. She was able to work for some time undetected, using clothes to portray herself as a man.

Mary Read's Life in the Military

Up until this point in her life, most of Mary's gender decisions had been made in part by her mother. However, Mary decided to leave the service her mother had chosen for her and set off on her own as a sailor on a ship, specifically a Man of War. Men at sea had an almost universal particular uniform: "short blue jackets, over a checked shirt, and ...long canvas trousers."[170] This loose clothing contrasted with the structured, stylized look of men on land. It may have also helped cover any curves that would give away that Mary was not biologically male. Sailing was also the type of job where size, looks, and birth did not matter, as long as the task was performed well.[171] By wearing a man's clothing, and performing a man's job, Mary was, for all intents and purposes, a man.

But Mary, ironically, decided to quit the sailing life, and became a cadet in the Foot Regiment in England's service in Flanders. From there, finding

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[169] Jennifer Craik, *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, (New York: Berg, 2005), 3-7, 22.
[170] Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag*, 11.
[171] As described in the introduction.

she could not advance, she joined the Regiment of Horse, the cavalry.[172] It was in the cavalry that Mary displayed her most defining characteristic: her "great deal of Bravery."[173] Yet without the ability to redefine her gender, she would never have had the opportunity to express her bravery in a socially acceptable way were it not for her clothing and gender change. Her clothes while in the cavalry would have most likely been provided for her so that she could match her regiment. Different factions of each army would frequently adopt a unique uniform or set of accessories to distinguish them on the battlefield. Sometimes this was as simple as a special color, but could be as elaborate as a coat of arms. The general basis of the uniform, however, was mass produced red cloth overcoats that were cut in a shape similar to women's gowns.[174] Underneath was a matching red waistcoat, and on the bottom were red breeches which reached to the knees. To cover the rest of the leg, white stockings were worn from the knee to the foot. Basic shoes or boots were worn. To enhance this basic outfit, status was shown through buttons, higher quality cloth for those who could afford it, and shoe buckles.[175] Mary would

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[172] Johnson, *A General History*, 158-161.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ruth Bleckwenn, "Prologue," in *Battledress*, ed. I.T. Shick (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1979) 8-12, and Hans Bleckwenn, "European Wars of Eighteenth Century Absolutism 1700-63," in *Battledress*, ed. I.T. Shick (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1979) 14-44. Mass produced is a relative term, and one used by historical convention to mean simply the cheaper and more easily made types of cloth versus the finer wools and silks of the upper class, and does not mean to imply mass, industrial means of production. Beth Alberty and Anne Schirmeister, "Recent Acquisitions," Metropolitan Museum of Art, (1985/1986), 46-48.

[175] Ibid. A complete English 18th century military uniform is currently held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute. The uniform belonged to an upper class soldier, yet is indicative of the overall look of the infantry. It has large, golden buttons and is made of a much nicer red cloth than a regular, mass produced uniform would be.

not have been able to afford the high quality accessories, but she would have worn the general shape and accoutrements of the uniform, and presented herself in this way as a man.

Clothing alone was not enough to complete the transformation from woman to man. Acting the part through bravery was necessary too. While Mary first left home at age 13, an act that took courage, in the foot regiment, bravery was thought to be a prerequisite for advancement. A man was judged on his merit in battle. Despite her actions, Mary could not find a chance to advance, because although courage was valued, in actuality positions were bought, sold, and traded. Instead, she moved to the cavalry, where her courage could gain her advancement. She became well known for charging into battle beyond all common sense, so that her troopers "fancy'd her mad," all in an effort to be closer to her romantic interest and to prove herself.[176] Her actions coupled with her clothing were enough to make her not just present herself to the world as a man, but to become one. She was accepted as a man, and therefore her actions made her, if anything, even more masculine, a stand out man among men. Once she was discovered to be a woman she was not ostracized because she amended both her clothes and behavior. As long as she was willing and able to work within the bounds of her chosen gender, Mary attracted little attention within her group.[177]

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[176] Johnson, *A General History*, 159.

[177] Historically, as long as cross dressing people were willing to commit to one gender, or acted according to prescribed roles once they were discovered, they were accepted back into the community. Examples of this include Thomas Hall in 1620 in Virginia (Brown, *Good Wives*, 75-80), Mary Hamilton in England in 1746, who married another woman (Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 84-85) and Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 98.

In fact, it was the bravery, the "madness" that brought Mary attention, all of which came about because she fell in love. As a result, not only did she charge into battle to be nearer to him, but "her Arms and Accoutrements which were always kept in the best Order, were quite neglected."[178] On the one hand, Mary's masculine actions were necessary so that she could be closer to the object of her affection. On the other hand, Mary's clothes, which she used to be a man, now hindered her current desire to be seen as a woman, and she manifested this through sloppiness. This was a deliberate action; up to this point Johnson characterized her as a brave and good soldier, not the type to be derelict in her duties. However, "Mars and Venus could not be served at the same Time."[179] Mary could not be both man and woman, and being in love would force her to choose between the two. In fact, she later endeavored to have her love *accidently* discover her sex. Johnson here draws on the way women were perceived as using clothing to attract men. Women were thought to be obsessed with dresses and frippery, yet Mary as a soldier and apparent man would not have the opportunity to attract a lover in this way.[180] Instead, she uses what she has on hand to fulfill the gender role she wanted to embody at the moment.

Once she came out to her love interest as a female, he decided to take her up as mistress who could follow him from place to place, unlike the women, typically prostitutes, who came around camp and were gone when the

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[178] Johnson, *A General History*, 159.
[179] Ibid.
[180] As discussed in Chapter One.

soldiers moved on.[181] He was surprised to find that Mary did not find this to be an acceptable arrangement. She did not wish to remain in the military as a concubine, but the "utmost Wish of her Heart," was to become his wife.[182] Her clothes were the means to access the military, they helped her perform her role within it, and to find her love, but they also hindered her. She could alternate between the gender roles for men and women, but could not occupy both spaces at once. Because of her decision, Mary and Fleming's regiment took up their cause and purchased Mary "Woman's Apparel," so the two could wed.[183] "The Adventure of their Love and Marriage had gained them so much Favour, that they easily obtained their Discharge, and they immediately set up an Eating-House... where they soon run into a good trade." For all her brave acts, it was coming out as a woman that finally brought Mary "Happiness."[184] Not only was Mary able to change her gender role, she was able to be successful. Her switch to the middling life of a wife and tavern owner was as economically advantageous as her life as a soldier, if not more so. There were no repercussions for her sudden reveal, but rather acceptance and even a little awe. Gender was flexible and not fixed.

<center>Life as a Wife</center>

By deciding to take up women's clothing again, Mary conformed to societal expectations, and yet still was making an active choice. At this point in her life, Mary was able to slide between masculine and feminine roles.

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[181] Johnson, *A General History*, 159.
[182] Ibid., 159-160.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.

While she wore a man's clothing, she in effect *was* a man. She acted the part as well, seen in her brave pursuits of her enemies. he was not considered to be revolutionary because she was accepted as a man. To truly have defied convention, and to truly have shocked those around her, she would have had to have dressed as a woman and been a soldier, or dressed as a man and been a wife. But because she performed gender normative roles while disguised as the "proper" gender, she actually participated in and conformed to normal society. She was not truly transgressive, because she followed societal mandates. She was brave and courageous as a man, and dressed the part. Although her time as a tavern owner was brief, any time Mary acted as a woman she was chaste and true, and wore women's apparel.

Leaving the military did not mean that Mary stopped working. Instead, she and her husband set up a tavern called the *Three Horse-Shoes*.[185] They did this with some help from their old company, and having such a profession pushed them into a new class. For perhaps the first time, they had steady employment and housing on their own. As a part of the middling class, not quite rich, but not beggars either, Mary's female clothes would probably have tended towards more common, everyday dresses. As the one who would have to make and wash all of her own clothes, she probably would have stuck to plainer dresses with aprons, and perhaps had some accessories to enhance them for more formal affairs.[186]

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[185] Johnson, *A General History*, 160.

[186] Everyday and Work Clothing," *Historic Threads*, Access Date 12 January 2013, http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_learn.cfm#everyday

Women's clothing had, with the ascension of Charles I, become less of the structured and stylized shapes of the preceding decades, and instead relied on the weight of the fabric to create draped, heavy looks.[187] The first and most intimate layer, for all classes, was the linen. This fabric was the closest to the body, and was usually invisible to all but the wearer. In cases where it was being washed, it was still considered to be a private item, and people went to lengths to try to keep this part of grooming secret.[188] The next layer for women was sometimes a petticoat, and then the dress or gown itself. A stomacher could be attached to the bodice of the dress, and gave shape to the ensemble while providing a canvas for customization.[189] This look was less formal than in former years, and took up less space than the larger silhouettes of earlier skirts. Additionally, this was the first century in Europe where a woman's bare forearm was considered and acceptable sight.[190] The final touch for an informal dress was an apron, which would protect the most vulnerable areas of the garment. In a more formal setting, the apron would be left off. Formal gowns were mostly delineated by fabric; the cut was generally the same. Pastel colors, embroidery, and quality of the cloth made the difference between clothes for everyday and those for special occasions.[191]

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[187] Iris Brooke, *A History of English Costume,* (Great Britain: Theatre Arts Books, 1972) 92-97.

[188] Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 99-102.

[189] "Everyday and Work Clothing," *Historic Threads*, Access Date 12 January 2013, http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_learn.cfm#everyday, and Brooke, *A History of English Costume*, 96-97.

[190] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 39.

[191] "Formal Wear," *Historic Threads*, Access Date 12 January 2013, http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_learn.cfm#formal.

Mary, as a tavern owner, would have worn dresses that could be easily modified, as was typical of the time.[192] Most dresses were made of cheaper, durable fabrics that could withstand alterations and heavy use. An apron could be added to protect the gown, and the linen underskirt could prolong the life of a dress. White linen ruffs could extend the sleeve or neckline, add formality, and through their color show that they had not been dirtied by work. The beauty of a versatile dress was it could be modified for different occasions and changing fashions.[193] Apparel and the middle class lifestyle went hand in hand. It is impossible to know what choices Mary made with her clothes during this time in her life, but the possibilities are striking. Considering her choices up to this point had been in keeping, albeit with a twist, of the idea of childhood, service in a house, and then moving out through marriage were fairly traditional, is probable that she tried to conform to middling ideas of respectability. Because, like her, more people were moving out of the socioeconomic class they were born into, ideas of what constituted "upper class" became regimented more through consumption.[194] Wearing the right types of cloth, using the right tailor, buying the right china were all ways for women to show their capabilities and right to occupy the middle class.

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[192] "Gown," *Historic Threads*. Colonial Williamsburg Acc. Number 2000-133. Access Date 12 January 2013,
http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_explore.cfm#index=50 &filter=allgenders,fshn,alldates.
[193] "Accessories," *Historic Threads*, Access Date 12 January 2013
http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_learn.cfm#accessories.
[194] Loren, *Colonial America*, 24-29.

The switch to women's clothing, for the first time in Mary's life, may not have been as large a jump as one might assume. Although clothes between male and female genders began to differ from each other greatly in the early years of the eighteenth century, there were still some similarities. The doublets and waistcoats that men wore were very similar to women's bodices and stomachers, and included the same type of boning to maintain structure.[195] Men and women both used accessories to dress up an outfit, and men's coats and cloaks had some of the same silhouettes as women's gowns. [196] It was not the fabric and shapes themselves that changed so wildly between the genders, but rather what their corresponding roles meant. Women expressed class and status through their attention to their clothes, while men did the same by appearing to neglect the fancies of women.[197] Both genders used similar clothes to depict class and gender, but different aspects of each: luxury for women, steadfastness for men. The fairly similar structure of both men and women's clothes seems to reflect that despite a hardening gender hierarchy, the division between male and female was not completely separate, but interlinked. This suggests that Mary's movement between male and female was not completely unexpected or unusual.

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[195] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 172-176.
[196] Brooke, *A History of English Costumes*, 92-93.
[197] Discussed in more detail in the next section.

A Sailing Life

Despite their happy start, Mary's husband died soon after their marriage, "forcing" Mary to again to take up her "Man's Apparel" and become a man in the foot regiment. Again she found that she could not advance, especially since England was no longer at war thanks to the Peace of Ryswick. So she "took a Resolution to seek her Fortune elsewhere," and boarded a ship as a sailor.[198] Here money, not liberty or adventure, is her main motivation. Her ship was overrun by English pirates, but Mary was taken into the fold as a fellow country man. As seen in Chapter Two, her country of origin did play a part in how she was treated on board, despite arguments that the pirate ship was an egalitarian space. The pirates, on hearing that Woodes Rogers, a former Privateer and the governor of Jamaica, was granting pardons, went back to the Island of Providence to claim their clemency. When Rogers created letters of marquee for privateers to attack the Spanish, Mary took advantage and, "being resolved to make her Fortune one way or other," eventually defected to Captain Jack Rackam's crew.[199] Again, Johnson emphasizes Mary's economic, not adventurous, motives. It was here that she met with Anne Bonny, who was on ship as Rackam's mistress, although she too was disguised as a man.

Throughout this part of her life, Mary remained a man. As before, she did this through dressing the part of the man and taking up behaviors deemed by society to be masculine. However, this time around, her position as an

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[198] Johnson, *A General History,* 160.
[199] Ibid., 161.

outlaw afforded her more opportunity to push the boundaries of her dress and still have it be acceptable behavior.

The pirating world, materially speaking, was very similar to the legitimate sailing world. Part of this was just that the same work had to be done to make a ship move, no matter whether its residents were above legal or moral ground.[200] As discussed in Captain William Kidd's case, the line between privateer, sailor, and pirate was flexible at best. Clothing was at a premium, and few would have traded in their clothes for a new rig just because of a slight change in profession. Fewer still would have thought it necessary. Despite the image of the flamboyant pirates of Robert Louis Stevenson's creations, most pirates looked like regular sailors. However, while day to day wear would have remained the same as a normal sailor's clothes, many pirates could not resist an extra pinch of flair. Rackam's moniker "Calico" came from his love of fine clothing, and Mary herself was described as "very profligate" in all things.[201] This effect was created through accessories like ribbons or expensive cloths added to their existing framework. The use of materials to add style to an outfit was not done purely for visual effect but to make a statement.

Clothes were a political statement for a group of men who had eschewed a normal sailing life for that of a pirate. People worried about the way clothes so completely defined a person's public identity, as clothes could be stolen or in some way provide the means for deception. Considering ary

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[200] This will be discussed in Chapter Four.
[201] Traver, *Pirates,* 16, and The Tryals of Anne Bonny and Mary Read" The National Archives at Kew, Call number CO 137/10 Box 1.

Read was able to disguise herself undetected for a large part of her life, this fear may have been justifiable. Things are what they seem, and so a pauper wearing a rich man's clothes became a de facto rich man. This fear was so visceral that in years past, sumptuary laws had been passed to regulate who could wear certain colors, fabrics, and styles, as well as when and where they could be worn.[202] Since clothes could not always be as trusted to accurately reflect status, other methods, both in fashion and in the home, became used as a marker for class.[203] Men and women's clothes, which to this point had both been very elaborate, were very slowly starting to become dimorphic.[204] While forms were still similar, the meanings changed. Men's clothes became associated with practicality and function, while women's clothing became more elaborate in contrast. Although both men and women used rich fabrics and adornments, women became associated with frippery and consumption.[205] Through their clothes they expressed that their husbands earned enough to keep them in baubles, and men's clothes reflected a clear counterbalance to this. By adopting the feminine trappings of clothing, while remaining brave, masculine men, the pirates challenged the association of consumption with women. An added level of confrontation was that the pirates had *stolen* their fancy clothes. Not only were they defying polite society's standards, they were doing it with landed people's own goods.

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[202] Loren, *Colonial America*, 24-30, Craik, *Uniforms*, 15.
[203] Ibid., as well as David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 35, No. 4 (1996), 442.
[204] Brooke, *A History of English Costume*, 92-94.
[205] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 167.

These stolen goods, such as rich cloth and ribbons, were items that most pirates would never have been able to purchase honestly. And because at sea, each man was responsible for mending or creating his own clothes, the style really was emblematic of the creator. For some, their clothes were a way of intimidating adversaries, as their nice dress spoke to successful plunders.[206] This tactic usually worked, as most ships were taken without being boarded. The sight of a pirate ship, black flag flying and a flamboyant captain shouting curses was usually more than enough for people to surrender.[207] Visual cues were very important. It did not matter if the ship actually contained only a few bedraggled pirates who were weak from weeks at sea with no new food. What mattered was that they appeared to be gruesome, fearsome things, and so they were.

Piratical clothing was also sometimes used as a political statement. Wearing rich, elite clothing was not just a matter of convenience or luxury for all pirates. Some, like Sam Bellamy, the captain of the *Whydah*, used it to make a direct statement about society. On the seas, he was the ruler, calling himself a "free Prince," and that meant that elite clothes he had access to were his by right of conquest and of "class".[208]   It is difficult to say if using clothes

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[206] Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 11.

[207] Ibid., 165.

[208] Christopher E. Hamilton, "The Pirate Ship Whydah," in *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy*. Eds. Russel K. Skowrenek and Charles R. Ewen. (University Press of Florida, 2006) 147-150 and Donovan Webster, "Pirates of the Whydah," National Geographic, 1999. http://www.nationalgeographic.com/whydah/story.html. Access date 7 March 2013. Bellamy's speeches, which are seized upon by Barry Clifford, the excavator of the Whydah, as evidence of the ideals pirates held, whereas most scholars agree that the speeches in A General History were written by Johnson and reflect ideas people had about pirates, not the ideas of the pirates themselves. Travers, *Pirates*, 9.

as a symbol of egalitarian beliefs was a common practice, but it is another example of how even in the pirate community, clothes could be used to communicate beliefs. Mary often used her clothes while on land to show how well she was conforming to society, such as wearing women's clothes while working at the tavern, or wearing the uniform of a soldier. While her case was unusual in that she was cross dressing, Mary's clothes were in keeping with societal standards, while these pirates used it to show a more radical break.

Piracy was a society that was known for accepting many outsiders, and it is easy to lump Mary in as someone who had to leave polite society in order to find a place to be herself. But in actuality, Mary lived for years comfortably in male and female roles, all within the bounds of normalized society, proving that gender in the eighteenth century was a set of ideals and practices, not just biological sex. In fact, while on board, Mary continued to adhere to these types of societal standards. She did not join the crew as a woman, but as a man, and she stayed hidden that way for as long as possible. Johnson says that

> "[Mary] did not want Bravery, nor indeed was she less remarkable for her Modesty, according to her Notions of Virtue: her sex was not so much suspected by any person on Board till *Anne Bonny,* who was not altogether reserved in her Chastity."[209]

In Johnson's narrative, Mary's secret was only let out at first because Anne Bonny took a "particular Liking" to her. Anne revealed her own sex in the hopes of starting an affair with Mary, furthering Anne's portrayal as wanton

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[209] Johnson, *A General History*, 162.

and unfaithful. At this point, Anne was still disguised as a man to the crew. To assuage the captain's jealousy over the women's bond, Rackam was brought in on Mary's secret, although both women continued to act as men on board.[210]

Additionally, the quotation speaks to Johnson's characterization of Mary as a woman with middle class values who is poor by circumstance, whereas he characterizes Anne as the middling woman who is wicked at heart and throws it away for a dashing rogue. Having Mary live openly as a woman would have contradicted this image, and indeed Johnson refutes it. Portraying Anne and Mary as oppositional forces who still participate in womanly activities within the space of the pirate ship normalizes them while juxtaposing their position with the average reader's. They are strange and familiar at once.

Despite their differences, Bonny and Read are said to have had an "Intimacy."[211] Women drew on friendships and family connections in a way that seems to be much more central than friendships between men, who had other resources. Women were more likely than men to bequeath friends gifts, especially clothing in their wills.[212] While their husbands enjoyed the ability to travel unaccompanied, women were confined to visiting each other, which nonetheless helped strong bonds form. In times of gaiety they would dress together and plan events; in times of need, women would assist the birthing

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[210] At some point soon after, although exactly when is unknown, the women did away with the ruse and dressed as women and men depending on the circumstance. This point is explored in more detail later.

[211] Johnson, *A General History*, 162.

[212] Maxine Berg, "Women's Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of Social History*, 30, No. 2 (1996), 417-428.

process or take in friends when they needed to escape an abusive spouse.[213] They gossiped, and, as women are wont to do, helped each other lie.[214] These were not all the types of activities women of Mary's class would have participated in, but they were the relationships a middling audience would understand.

The court records, however, tell a very different story, wherein Mary and Anne lived openly as women. The two are John Besnick and Peter Cornelian, both French men who were pressed by Rackam, testified in court that Bonny and Read "when they saw any Vessel, gave Chase, or Attacked, they wore Men's Cloaths; and at other Times, they wore Women's Cloaths; That they did not seem to be kept, or detain'd by Force, but of their own Free-Will and Consent."[215] When the women were doing typically male activities, they dressed, acted, and were treated as men, and as the witnesses made clear, did so of their own volition. A woman whose boat the crew had plundered, Dorothy Thomas, further testified that when her "canoa" was raided, the women were wearing:

> "Men's jackets and long Trouzers and Handkerchiefs tied around their Heads; and that each of them had a Machet and Pistol in their Hands, and cursed and swore at the Men... That the reason of her knowing and believing them to be women then was, by the largeness of their Breasts."[216]

And yet, this characterization directly contradicts Johnson's portrayal of the two women as conspirators in keeping their sex secret, using it to

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[213] Brown, *Good Wives*, 274-277, 303.

[214] Ibid., 281, 306-318.

[215] "The Tryals of Anne Bonny and Mary Read" The National Archives at Kew, Call number CO 137/10 Box 1. An accessible version is available in *British Piracy in the Golden Age,* 27-28.

[216] Ibid.

enhance the bond the women felt. In Johnson's story, Mary and Anne operate much as two women on land would have. The court records, however, have no such desire to portray the women as normal. Although Anne and Mary would escape the noose, they were both originally sentenced to hang for their crimes. This was a routine punishment for pirates and for women criminals in general. However, female pirates had never been prosecuted before. In order to justify this extreme measure, the trial records would have been crafted to show the extent of the pirates' perfidy.[217] By describing the accused as slovenly and openly living as women, they increase the distance between the respectable reader and the women. They become typical criminals in spite of their rather extraordinary circumstances. The figure of the swearing, dirty, and wanton female criminal was more helpful in this aim than the picture of female friendships. Neither description is right or wrong, true or false, but rather two different interpretations of the way women could approach life.

Mary and Anne's clothing was a crucial facet of their portrayal in popular sources. It was probably very similar to the sailing and every day men's wear discussed above. The court records assert that they wore men's clothes but still made it obvious they were women.[218] Their dress nominally marked them as men, and thus allowed them to participate in the crew's activities, but by letting their femininity show, it proved the court's point that they were especially aberrant.

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[217] Linebaugh, *London Hanged*, 74-118, but especially 89-91.
[218] Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 82-83.

Likewise, the handkerchiefs they were described as wearing could serve many purposes. Functionally, Mary and Anne may have needed a way of keeping their hair out of the way of a fight.[219] Looking at why the court portrayed them this way however, they may have been following the popular portrayal of pirates as an intimidation tactic, as at the time they were advocating murdering Dorothy, lest she come back later to testify against them, a prescient move on their part.[220] They may have been used as a sailor's version of a gentleman's hat, a way of distinguishing themselves as the upper crust of their crew. Only the top members of the party were involved in boarding or raiding other vessels, and it was considered an honor to be in the group.[221] Whether their adornment was for flash, practicality, or intimidation, the effect certainly left an impression. A final reason to have the women cover their hair was that typically women were not seen with their hair down. To appear in public with loose hair was a sign of disgrace and criminality.[222] Although loose hair would have made a stronger point about the deviance of the women, having them covered actually reinforces their odd position between masculine and feminine worlds. The handkerchiefs were male items, worn for reasons that could fit into a standard male narrative of practicality or intimidation, and yet once again underscore that these are *women* doing these deeds, making them that much more abhorrent.

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[219] Male pirates were also recorded as wearing handkerchiefs around their head, but in general covering the hair was not as important for men as for women. Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 100.

[220] Webster, "Pirates of the Whydah," *National Geographic*.

[221] Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 165.

[222] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 100.

Figure 3.2 Gun Recovered from the Whydah
Photo Credit ThinkQuest

The final touch to their outfits was the heavy weaponry both women carried, something both sources agreed on. Again, there are functional and social interpretations for these items. The weapons, of course, served a purpose in battle. It would be rather difficult to convince another ship to give up all its goods to an unarmed band of sailors. They were deadly, and both women knew how to use them. But they were a symbol of much more than that. Guns are items of death. Wearing one is a message to all who see it that Anne and Mary were women, but that they were lethal as well, the worst type of criminals. Many guns used shape and material to further this message. A few such examples were recovered from the wreck of the *Whydah* (see Fig. 3.2). One gun was gilded and engraved with silver, an ornate design that went

beyond just making the gun work.[223] Another had the face of an animal, perhaps and otter, carved into the handle.[224] These designs do nothing to make the gun more deadly, but do help create the image of a bloodthirsty, ferocious pirate. As discussed above, many pirates enjoyed the access to goods they normally could not have owned, and so the extra flair may have appealed to that. It may also have been a signal of truly enjoying their work. In both sources, Mary had a reputation for enthusiastically pursuing any part of piratical life she could, and considering she was also known for the size and quantity of weapons she carried; it is not unlikely that someone like her would have owned these more flashy pieces. They were expensive, far beyond what an honest worker might be able to afford on land.[225] The weapons themselves were not the only part of the impact, but the way they were carried. At the discovery of the *Whydah*, some very expensive but mysterious ribbons were found. The team eventually interpreted the ribbons as a way of rigging the guns and knives pirates held to their bodies.[226] In that way, they were accessible, visible, and the hands were still free to wield something else. The marriage of the function of the makeshift holster with the beauty and expense of the ribbon and guns forms an image that makes a lasting impact, whether seen in person or read about in popular publications.

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[223] "Pirate Treasure Hunters," *National Geographic* TV Special.

[224] Whydah Galley Museum Exhibition and Hamilton, "The Pirate Ship *Whydah*," in *X Marks the Spot,* 147-150.

[225] Hamilton, "The Pirate Ship *Whydah*," in *X Marks the Spot,* 147-149.

[226] Ibid., and "Pirate Treasure Hunters," *National Geographic* TV Special. Considering the ribbon was wrapped around the guns and tightly wound, the interpretation seems sound.

Conclusions

Captain Jack Rackam's crew, for all of the hype surrounding their activities, were not pirates for very long. In 1720, just a few short years after setting out, their ship was captured and the pirates brought to justice in Jamaica. While the court records describe the bitter fate of the members, including Anne and Mary's convictions, and Rackam's hanging and subsequent time in the gibbet, Johnson gives a more satisfying, although probably invented, end for the women. Anne and Mary, still dressed as men in his narrative, see the approaching ship of Woodes Rogers and decide to fight their way out, while their crew simply gives up. Mary, sick to see such cowardice, and true to Johnson's vision of her, yelled at her fellow crew members to "come up and fight like men," and when they failed to do so, "fired her Arms down the Hold against them, killing one and wounding others."[227] As outlined in Chapter Two, this was ineffective, and the crew was over taken. Tried for piracy, both Anne and Mary were found guilty but then asked for clemency, as both claimed to be pregnant. A reprieve was granted, but Mary died in prison.

It was a sad, although not unexpected, end to a truly unique life. Mary began her journey in poor circumstances, and her mother disguised her as a boy to bring the family out of destitution. From that point on, Mary was able to choose her gender to suit her needs, whether it was economic advancement or love. Her use of clothes helped her achieve this, as did her commitment to

[227] Johnson, *A General History*, 161-162.

maintaining the social roles that were attached to each gender. From her life as a soldier, to her time as a wife, and finally to her turn as a pirate, Mary committed fully to each gender she occupied, making even her unique circumstances normal and familiar to those who heard her story. Throughout her life she navigated successfully through both male and female genders and identities, and whether her literary tradition portrays her as brave and bold yet chaste, or murderous and wanton, she is nonetheless an example of the choices and opportunities women made in the early-eighteenth century.

Chapter Four

Anne Bonny: Class, Morals, and Goods

In the early eighteenth century, members of the middle class began to define themselves through their material possessions. As class began to emerge, people relied on material goods to assert their identity. The work men and women did, the manners and customs they followed, were ultimately manifested in the goods they bought and the places they lived.[228] This is why when Johnson describes Anne Bonny's life he focuses not as much on how clothes marked changes in her world, but on how space and materials did. I argue that this is because while Mary represents upward, if ultimately unsuccessful socioeconomic change, Anne represents downward social trajectory through rapidly deteriorating living conditions. His use of the axiom "bastards have the best of luck," is ironic in conjunction with the story he weaves about Anne.[229] Notably he applies this only to Anne, although both she and Mary are illegitimate. Although she is given the economic opportunities of the middling class she rejects them, and is therefore a less sympathetic woman than Mary.[230]

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[228] Julia King, "Household archaeology, identities, and biographies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, eds. Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 310.

[229] Johnson, *A General History*, 166.

[230] Hans Turley's *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash,* argues that as piracy is an economic crime, its transgressive nature is a product of economic and social behaviors. Further, Maximillian E. Novak has argued that the "implicit" theme of all the stories in *A General History of the Pirates* is the tension between perceptions of upper and lower class crime.
"'Appearances of Truth': The Literature of Crime as a Narrative System (1660-1841)," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 11, (1981), 36-38. The precise makeup of consumers of murder

The Beginning: Anne's Story and Background

Anne's story actually begins in Ireland, with the circumstances of her parents' relationship. The reader is introduced to the story with the opening scene: a sick woman who, "in order to recover her Health, was advised to remove for Change of Air," and moved a few miles from town. The woman is married to Anne Bonny's father, although as we will see, she is *not* Anne's mother. No information about the wife is provided to the reader, not her age, class, or even her name. However, within the first paragraph, space has become an important character in Anne's story. First there is the conception that the cities are dirty, and that the country side is both cleaner and healthier, a luxury for those who can escape crowded urban areas.[231] It is the distance from her family, however, that sets the events of the story in motion.[232] Had the wife stayed home with the husband, perhaps he would not have found time to carry on an affair with their maidservant. The maid, who would go on to become Anne's mother, is conducting her own affair with a tanner, one of the professions that corresponded to new forms of slightly elevated work. While still poor, a tanner and a housemaid are two fairly equal

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and crime related media is unknown, but the texts can still be viewed as a tentative reflection of the views of the middling authors and their generally middling audiences. Malcolm Gaskill, "Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England," *Social History*, 23, No. 1 (1998), 6-8.

[231] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 56-62. Gerald MacLean, Donna Landry, and Joseph P. Ward, "Introduction: the country and the city revisited, c. 1550-1850," in The Country and the City Revisited, eds. Gerald MacLean, Donna Landry, and Joseph P. Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-20.

[232] The family was frequently defined more by space ("those who share the same house") rather than through strict kin relatedness. Naomi Tadmor, "The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England," *Past & Present*, 151 (1996), 111-140.

positions that put both people above the utmost poverty. Despite being more economically sound than other workers, the maid's lover is a thief, who steals three silver spoons. The fears the middling class had over the lower class workers who they let into their homes and entrusted with their goods are made apparent; any homeowner would be able to relate to the uneasy sensation that a trusted servant might turn at any moment, betraying familial trust.[233] Further compounding the betrayal are the items actually stolen, silver spoons. Perhaps emblematic of privilege and the new wealth that people were dealing with, silver was both a coveted item and a functional one.[234] If the wife had guests over to dinner they could see the spoons, use the spoons, and know that the family was able to afford not only the goods themselves but the labor to keep it clean. Silver was accessible and yet recognizably "better" than many other commonly available goods.[235] Johnson's choice to use silver as the stolen article was therefore laden with meaning, and spoke to the fears that

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[233] Ibid., and Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 63-65 (for examples of cases) as well as J. M. Beattie, "The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of Social History*, 8, No. 4 (1975), 84, for crime statistics and the repercussions servants faced from angry employers.

[234] Berg, "Women's Consumption," 426, and Ann Smart Martin, "The Role of Pewter as Missing Artifact: Consumer Attitudes toward Tablewares in Late 18th Century Virginia," *Historical Archaeology*, 23, No. 2 (1989), 18.

[235] David Colin Crass, Bruce R. Penner, and Tammy R. Forehand, "Gentility and Material Culture on the Carolina Frontier," *Historical Archaeology*, 33, No. 3, (1999), 14-31. The early-18th century is also when the phrase "born with a silver spoon in his mouth" becomes popular, although I do not want to read too much into that connection. *American Heritage® Dictionary of Idioms, The*, s.v. "born with a silver spoon," accessed March 09, 2013, http://www.credoreference.com/entry/hmidiom/born_with_a_silver_spoon.

goods purchased to show social status, and so recently acquired, could slip away so easily, just like a position in the emerging middle class.[236]

The maid soon discovers her lover's treachery and threatens him with the constable. The tanner, in a panic, hides the spoons in the maid's bed, hoping she will find them and consider it a "jest." Unfortunately, the mistress of the house, having recovered her health, arrives home and discovers the spoons first. Convinced that this is evidence of an affair, she connives to have the maid sleep somewhere else while she takes the maid's bed. Here we have another example of space structuring part of the narrative; merely by inhabiting the maid's bedroom, the wife is able to convince her errant husband that she *is* the maid. The space is transformative, much like clothing.[237] In this case, the middling class woman becomes lower class with a simple change of bedrooms. The relative ease of this transformation is underscored by the fact that the husband calls her "Mary," presumably the maid's name, but never notices that anything is amiss with his paramour. In fact, this is presented as upsetting to the wife but not entirely unusual, saying that the one thing that "spoiled the Diversion on the Wife's Side, which was, the Reflection that it was not design'd for her; however she was very passive

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[236] As discussed in Chapter One, the middling class was very new, and much of its status and meaning was communicated through goods, as will be seen in this chapter and the next. That such items were easily stolen and misused threatened the stability of their emerging class.

[237] Clothing was depicted as being able to fundamentally alter aspects of identity such as gender and class, as explored in the previous chapter. The process was also reversible. As larger spaces were considered transformative, such as a city dweller versus a country peasant, or a city worker versus a country land owner, as outlined in Chapter One, I believe this transformative quality is displayed here in a minute scale. Having just returned from a country retreat, a very middle class activity and space, the wife takes up residence not in her own bedroom but the bedroom of her servant. Like changing clothes, changing rooms has the ability to briefly change the wife to the maid.

and bore it like a Christian."[238] Walking a line between humor and hurt, the

Her husband was expected to take on lovers, especially of the lower class. The

wife's job, as a good middle class woman, was simply to accept it. However, by

taking on this lower class persona, the wife has sex with her husband,

something women were thought to constantly crave.[239]

The perception of women as sexually insatiable is played with here.

Although she is depicted as simply getting through the experience, the wife is

also thought to have enjoyed the "diversion," as women would never pass up

the opportunity to engage in sex.[240] This foreshadows Anne's own numerous

affairs and sexual liaisons. Anne is associated with immoral women, whereas

Mary is, perhaps by virtue of having spent so much time as a man, a good and

upstanding person.

The differences between acceptable behavior for men and women

become apparent when the husband, who is the true adulterer, forces his wife

to bear the brunt of the social stigma that results from the whole situation.

The wife is impregnated during the night of mistaken identity, but because the

husband believes he was with the maid, his wife's pregnancy is a shock. He

takes this opportunity to "justify," his actions towards his wife, and accuses

her of a long term affair. This allows him to separate from his wife. The maid

is conveniently pregnant at the same time, with Anne. The separation is made

complete by his taking up a new household, once again physically putting

space between himself and his wife, and publicly severing their communal

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[238] Johnson, *A General History*, 169.
[239] Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth Century England," in *History Workshop Journal*, 41, (1996), 78, and Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 57-59, 72-76.
[240] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 211.

space. He decides to keep Anne at home with him but, knowing that the whole community knows he has had a bastard daughter, decides to "have the child put into Breeches, as a Boy…to be raised up as his Clerk."[241] As discussed in Chapter Three, breeching a boy was seen as a definitive moment in elite households when gender and its associated opportunities, such as the squarely middling profession of law clerk, was announced to the community. At this moment, Anne, although a child, is following a typical path, if not for her hidden sex. Community standards are shown to have a major influence in shaping middling life. The guise is created to avoid a scandal, as reputation and publicly conforming to social dictates is an important part of their lives.[242] When it is discovered that Anne is indeed his child, and a girl, it sparks a major controversy that results in his wife ending the allowance she sent her husband.

Although the husband was within his rights to separate, and although his wife was the one who in theory should be demonized as the lustful sinner, Johnson and the people of Cork seem more sympathetic to the wife. This is a moment where we can see how prescribed gender roles did not necessarily result in lived experiences. The husband is technically allowed to leave, but his taking up a household with the maid, rather than staying with his wife, is met with strong disapproval. The community reacts by shunning his law practice, to the point where it threatens his livelihood.[243] His moral failing forces him out of the domestic life he has set up, and causes him to move his

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[241] Ibid, 170-171.
[242] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 126-153.
[243] Johnson, *A General History*, 171.

life, child, and lover to the colonies, where unconventional, non-nuclear families were more acceptable.[244] This is the first instance in Anne's story when sexual misconduct results in a move down the social scale. As an Irish colonial subject, traveling to America may not have been such a radical social change, but for the English people reading the story, the move would have been seen as a serious demotion from a place that the English were actively trying to control to the "disorder," of the colonies.[245] The nameless nature of the characters involved makes the story seem like a more universal experience. This could, in theory, happen to anyone.

In Carolina, Anne's father finally truly secures the trappings of a middling and perhaps even upper class life. He is able, by abandoning the law and focusing on trade, to move to a plantation. Retiring to a plantation was a lifestyle that middling men in the eighteenth century were supposed to desire, and yet few of those able to do so actually did.[246] For her father to take this step is to show a commitment to social mobility. He might have understood how crucial popular opinion was, considering how it had affected his life thus far. This move towards a more genteel life also allows Anne to start exhibiting character and, especially in this domestic setting, feminine qualities.

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[244] James G. Gibb and Julia A. King, "Gender, Activity Areas, and Homelots in the 17th-Century Chesapeake Region," *Historical Archaeology*, 25, No. 4, (1991),111.

[245] Brown, *Good Wives*, 6, and Shannon Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008), 25-27. Of course, English people were not the only ones who read *A General History of the Pirates*, which was successful in many countries. However, since this thesis explores how an English audience might have understood the story in their own culture, it seems appropriate to include an English reaction as well as the potential "Irish" one of Anne's father.

[246] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 56-62, and MacLean, Donna Landry, and Joseph P. Ward, "The City and the Country," 17-19.

However, as explored below, plantation life in the colonies did not go hand in hand with refinement as it did in England.

It is in the colonies that Anne finally starts to become an active player in her own story. Whereas Mary is depicted from a young age as having worked and fought, Anne is featured in only around one page of the section purportedly devoted to her. The story of the affair and subsequent fall from graces was deemed more important and entertaining. Additionally, it speaks to the way different classes expected to spend their youths. Mary was working and fighting from a young age because she needed to, while for Anne, training to be a clerk in Ireland was not remarked on. It is possible this was because Anne's training was aborted once her true gender was presented. While women of her class were encouraged to have skills similar to clerking, few actually made a living through them.[247] She may also not have been mentioned because it simply did nothing to move the narrative along. Up to this point in the story, the drama between the lower class maid and the family is more important than Anne herself, because it sets up the framework for her later downfall.

Since the reader knows that Anne will end up as a pirate, her life in Carolina is depicted as an uneventful experience that makes her impending fate seem an even more dramatic departure from what she could have done. All that is known of her time on the plantation is that she "kept his [her father's] house" after her mother died, and was seemingly an unremarkable

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[247] Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 58, 84-86.

young woman.[248] The one anecdote from her youth is that she beat a would-be rapist so badly that he was in bed for an extended length of time. By defending herself against her assailant, Anne is protecting her chastity and fulfilling her female role as a good woman.[249] However, her violence hints at the contradiction women were caught in. Technically Anne's actions were masculine: "fierce and courageous," physical, violent. [250] Yet by doing so she upheld her feminine reputation. There was tension between what society expected her to do, remain chaste, and how it expected her to accomplish this.[251] This foreshadowed Anne's descent into piracy, as her "Temper" was more suited for the violence of men.

Anne runs fully afoul of her role when she leaves the protection of her father and his home. She "spoil'd all, for without his Consent, she marries a young Fellow, who belong'd to the Sea, and was not worth a Groat; which provoked her Father to such a Degree, that he turn'd her out of Doors…"[252] By marrying a poor sailor, Anne thwarted her father's authority and the source of his familial power. Karen Brown argues that courtship in the colonies was an uneasy period in the life of a family, because traditional patriarchal roles were in flux.[253] While parents could and did influence their daughter's decisions in marriage, the daughter's opinion was deciding factor in many cases. Fathers whose daughters married inappropriately were socially humiliated, all the more so if it was done against his will, thus proving his ineffectiveness as head

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[248] Johnson, *A General History*, 171.
[249] Fletcher, "The Weaker Vessel," in *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 60-82.
[250] Johnson, *A General History*, 171.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Johnson, *A General History*, 172.
[253] Brown, *Good Wives*, 247-251.

of household. One Virginia father, William Byrd, wrote to his daughter that if she married without his consent, he would

> "avoid the sight of you as of a creature detested. Figure then to yourself my dear child how wretched you will be with a provokt father, and a disappointed husband. To whome then will you fly in your distress, when all the world will upbraid you with having acted an ideot?"[254]

Such a scene may very well have occurred between countless fathers and daughters at odds over potential suitors. Anne's case was far from extraordinary, but her refusal to marry her father's choice ultimately paints her as wickedly disobedient, and her father as an unsuccessful patriarch. For this he is punished; his failure to control the women in his life also meant that he was left without a family.

Penniless, the newlyweds are forced out of the expanse of the father's plantation and to the Caribbean Island of Providence, another British colony. Here, their marriage falls apart, as Anne meets Calico Jack Rackam. He convinces her to join him, wearing men's clothes, on his ship. Anne becomes pregnant and is left in Cuba to have the child, who may have died or simply been abandoned, as she sets sail again without it and is never mentioned again. This, more than her piracy, is what dooms her. When she eventually is caught, the men who try her do not want to convict a woman, recently of their ilk, of piracy.

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[254] William Byrd, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (Richmond: 1941), 343, as quoted in Brown, *Good Wives*, 345-346.

"Her Father was known to a great many Gentleman Planters of Jamaica...some of them, who had been in Carolina, remember'd to have seen her in his House; wherefore they were inclined to shew her Favour, but the Action of leaving her Husband was an ugly Circumstance against her."[255]

In the private sphere of the home, she was safe and chaste, a good middling daughter. In the public sphere of men's work, she becomes an adulterer and a criminal.[256] This is contrasted with Mary, whose travels are generally portrayed as positive events. Mary occupying a masculine world is somehow seen as less threatening, perhaps because, like "normal" people, she uses her masculine role to advance her place in society. Anne's actions slide her back into the lower class, and so she is the one depicted as promiscuous and deviant. She gave up a world of middling respectability, and as she loses the goods and the space that are the essence of that life, she also loses her virtue.

In order to get a better sense of the types of eighteenth century goods and spaces that middling class people were using, this chapter examines a few sites similar to the ones people like Anne inhabited: a colonial plantation, a pirate city, and a ship. Where possible, I look at multiple sites, for a few reasons. Each site can have multiple interpretations, and only the people who lived there can give an idea of the meaning behind their purchases and land layouts. Looking at more than one household opens up multiple interpretations for similar items, and where there are significant differences, there is room to look at why. Since Anne is in many ways a real person with a

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[255] Ibid, 173.

[256] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Submission*, 226. Almost all women worked at home or in family businesses in "unofficial" capacities, but publicly working was rarer, as explained in Chapter One.

fictional character, understanding her actual approach to material goods is out of the question. However, looking at the types of sites people like her inhabited provides an understanding of how "typical" eighteenth century people may have manipulated and used living spaces and possessions. Since these are the same type of people to whom *A General History of the Pirates* was addressed, and this book is very much a reflection of their lives, looking at their goods will hopefully illuminate a broader sense of gender, colonialism, and class in the eighteenth century.

<div align="center">Colonial Plantations: Life in America</div>

Once in the American colonies, Anne's father abandoned his law practice in order to become a merchant. It was a fairly ironic occupation choice, considering his daughter would make her living plundering the ships of merchants like him. His career move proved to be incredibly lucrative, and enabled him to move to a plantation. While in England this would have been a socially desirable move, from city worker to land owner, in the colonies plantations offered few of the amenities of the English countryside. Life in the colonies was often rough. Many people lived in crude houses, especially earthfast homes that required little money to build or upkeep.[257] Those that build longer lasting structures tended to build in ways that were familiar to them. Despite the distance, English identity was strong in the colonies, and homes often reflected this connection. People brought with them ideas of how

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[257] James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1996), 147-150

houses should look. This vernacular tradition, which depended not on written plans but on what houses were supposed to look like, reflected a rural view that gradually changed to reflect more elite aesthetics.[258]

The image of the house to outsiders gave information about the English identity and wealth of the owners, if not the entire household.[259] For instance, Charles Calvert, Lord Baltimore, built a home at a site in Mattapany, Maryland, which was roughly contemporary to Anne's father's place. The architecture of the buildings shows that this particular late-17th century plantation was built to project an image of the family's wealth and power. By building in brick, as well as creating a wooden barricade around the home, the owners showed that they had wealth, but were not afraid to protect it from an attack.[260] Architecture was a way of portraying a certain image to the public, a kind of visual language. It was also the major way to differentiate between classes in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.[261] While, as we will see, most people used the same goods, homes were able to show differences in status. Besides just building in brick, plantations often had segregated areas for servants, or sometimes slaves, as a major way of communicating status.[262]

While people may have been separated spatially because of status, there was no such distinction for gender. Most areas in both wealthy and poorer plantations show very little evidence of spaces for specific gendered activities such as food production or household production. Rather than a

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[258] Ibid., 58-59.
[259] Ibid. and Charles Orser, "On Plantations and Patterns," *Historical Archaeology,* 23, No. 2 (1989) 28-40 for information on inequalities within households.
[260] King, "Household archaeology," 293-295.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Gibb and Julia A. King, "Gender, Activity Areas, and Homelots," 109-110, 127.

feminine kitchen or masculine workspace, most homes show that men and women worked in tandem, with little difference in the work they performed.[263] That space was not strictly separated by gender mirrors the way gender was fluid in other sectors of life, such as in dress as seen in the previous chapter. In space, class was more important than gender, suggesting as we have seen in both Anne and Mary's stories, that if a person could perform a role their gender was not as important as it may have seemed.

Most plantation owners, Anne's father included, would not have had so grand a dwelling as at Mattapany. Yet interestingly, the actual goods of richer sites, such as St. John's plantation in the Chesapeake region, when compared to a poorer contemporary site, such as its neighbor, Patuxent Point, show little variation between the two.[264]   Goods, like pipes and tablewares, were generally the same quality and frequency in upper class and middling homes.[265] While consumption still occurred, options were limited not just by what was being exported to the colonies but by what could be accessed by those living farther from the cities.[266] Although advice books recommended women "occupie such domestique imployement and housewifery as in England," the simple matter was that in many cases people could not and did not want to accumulate goods the way they might have in their home country.[267] In fact, the standard of living for middling plantation owners in

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[263] Ibid., 112-115, 128. This was shown by the uniformity of middens throughout most sites.
[264] Ibid., 121-124.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Deetz, *In Small Things*, 83.
[267] "Leah and Rachel, or, The Two Fruitful Sisters, Virginia and Maryland," Reprint of 1656 edition. *In Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684*, ed. Clayton Colman Hall, 277-304.

the colonies was frequently below that of even the poor in England.[268]   No matter the social perceptions of plantation life, it was no doubt rough.

The relative lack of artifacts speaks to the sparseness of this lifestyle, although many artifacts were of poor quality and simply could not survive this long. For example, pottery and ceramics tend to remain, because they were breakable and might be thrown away, or because they were valued and might be kept.[269] Commonly used items like trenchers and wooden plates were rarely discarded, and do not fare well in soil. Pewter is rarely present because, although ubiquitous in almost all households, it was almost impossible to destroy, and even if it was misshapen, could be fixed or sold for the value of the metal.[270] These items would have been used by almost everyone in the colonies, regardless of economic status. For Anne, this means that although her dwelling may have changed, from the original place in Carolina to her father's plantation, little about the things she had available to her would have actually been out of the ordinary. Her pewter plate was the same on the plantation as it was in Port Royal, and in fact material conditions could only get better.[271] This is a different picture than the one Johnson paints, where when Anne's morals depreciate so do her surroundings, from respectable home all the way to prison. Rather, it seems that the variations between stations in life may not have been as large as the middling and upper classes

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(Maryland: Heritage Books), quoted in Gibb and Julia A. King, "Gender, Activity Areas, and Homelots," 112.

[268] Gibb and Julia A. King, "Gender, Activity Areas, and Homelots," 112.

[269] Sara Pennell, "For a crack or flaw despis'd: Thinking about Ceramic Durability and the 'Everyday' in late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century England," in *Everyday Objects* eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 27-30.

[270] Ibid., and Martin, The Role of Pewter," 28.

[271] Although not, as we will see, on the pirate ship.

would have like it to seem. Whatever her depiction, Anne's actions did not change her status as much as either Johnson would have people believe. She did not leave a middling plantation for a life of debauched crime, nor did her class status have much sway over day to day living conditions.

<p align="center">Port Royal</p>

Anne and her husband are said to have moved to the Island of Providence in order to find work. As a sailor who spent time working around Jamaica, the odds of Rackam's crew having spent time in Port Royal, which was a notorious pirate haven, are high.[272] In fact, Rackam's body was hung in Kingston Harbor, on which Port Royal is located, as a warning to all other pirates.[273] It is important to look at Port Royal, the second most populous in the colonies, to understand what the material record can reveal about life in this time period.[274] It is one of the few Jamaican sites with any long term excavations, although the work is still uneven. These sites show that despite Johnson's narrative of Anne's life, which portrays her as moving away from relative wealth to a life of poor debauchery, her material conditions may not have changed all that much. Although the move to such a wicked city seems like it would lead to deteriorating a status and lifestyle, the archaeology of the

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[272] Donny L. Hamilton, "Port Royal Jamaica: Archaeological Past and Future," in *Underwater and Maritime Archeology in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Eds. Margaret E. Leshikar-Denton and Pilar Luna Erreguerena (Left Coast Press, 2008) 259.Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any archaeological reports from this site, or from St. Jago de la vega, now called Spanish Town, where the crew was put to trial. Rather than discount the periods Anne spent on land during her time as a pirate, the city of Port Royal, Jamaica will hopefully prove to be an acceptable counterpart.

[273]Donny L. Hamilton, "Pirates and Merchants, Port Royal, Jamaica," in *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy*. Eds. Russel K. Skowrenek and Charles R. Ewen. (University Press of Florida, 2006) 26.

[274]Hamilton, "Port Royal Jamaica: Archaeological Past and Future," 260.

site reveals that conditions were often better than plantation life. Anne's life of crime actually had more luxury than her middling life.

Port Royal is also an ideal situation because, although some of the excavations have been less than methodical, there are actually two different types of contexts that can be looked at. The first is the part of the city that is not directly in the harbor. This area remains mostly intact, although mostly unexcavated, and provides a longer look at the city, discussed in the next section. The other is the old harbor, which was destroyed in a catastrophic storm in 1692 that swallowed up to half of the city's property. These buildings have been preserved under the water, and represent, rather than a site over time, a single, frozen moment. The water helps preserve many of the artifacts that might otherwise have disintegrated or been reused and thus not shown up in the material record, such as pewter. Although the city's first destruction occurred slightly before the climactic events of the story of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, it was rebuilt and still operating in their time period. But what can Port Royal tell about the lives of an ordinary sailor, soon to be pirate? Was it truly so far removed from the respectable life Anne had left behind?

Figure 4.1 Excavated Areas of Port Royal
Photo Credit Port Royal Project

In the underwater part of the town, five buildings have been excavated, representing multiple types of architecture (see Fig. 4.1). Building 1 has six rooms, and was probably used as part shop, part home. In just this building there may have been a tavern, a pipe shop, a cobbler's, and wood turner's business.[275] Like with the plantation, and later on the pirate ship, we see how the public work sphere and the private domestic were usually fluidly related, and the home was often the epicenter of economic activity.[276] The building itself was made of brick and showed phases of construction, evidence both of owners reshaping the space to fit their own needs, and relative wealth. In fact, brick is one of the primary building materials found at the site, an overall

[275] Donny L. Hamilton, "The Port Royal Project: Archaeological Excavations," http://nautarch.tamu.edu/portroyal/archhist.htm, Nautical Archaeology Program, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. Access Date 30 January 2013.
[276] Hamilton, "Pirates and Merchants," 15.

indicator of wealth which is slightly surprising. As seen on the plantation, building in brick was a sign of prosperity. Although it had a reputation as a godless city, Port Royal was actually a very successful colonial town.[277] While the city had its share of pirates, privateers, and general rogues, its relative wealth may have contributed to the perception of the area as particularly hedonistic.

Figure 4.2 Reconstruction of Buildings at Port Royal Before the Storm of 1692
Photo Credit Port Royal Project

Right next door to this successful business venture are Buildings 2 and 3, made for temporary use, built from materials like plaster and sand (see fig. 4.2). The occupants of Building 1 were fairly wealthy and held the types of jobs that were typical middling class, and yet there was a visceral reminder that many who tried to make their fortunes in the colonies, whether through legal means, piracy, sailing, or business ventures, were unsuccessful. Unlike England, where in theory the rich lived in the country and the rest lived in the

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[277] Hamilton, "Past and Future," 260.

cities, within cities all economic classes intermingled.[278] Glenn Darrington has argued that the use of wood and other less permanent building materials shows not simply poverty but less of a commitment to the city itself.[279] Use of brick showed a desire to build a permanent home while also was an act of conspicuous consumption, letting neighbors know visually your success.[280] In both Anne and Mary's stories we see how much travelling some people were doing; it may be that those who built in plaster were unwilling, rather than unable, to spend resources on a city they could easily leave.[281] This reemphasizes the transient nature of the city for some, in opposition to the more settled landed gentry in England.

Perhaps the most interesting underwater site is Building 4/5, which is both the best preserved and contains the largest amount of material remains. Like Building 1, it was some combination of tavern and home, economic and domestic in one. It may have held up to three distinct occupants or purposes. Unfortunately, the results of the excavation are reported without much attention to exact context, a problem that has plagued Port Royal.[282] Although in a domestic setting it is more useful to know more about the specific occupants in order to understand why they might have purchased or used

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[278] Of course, the perception of the elite living only in the country was not true (Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 3-6), the prevailing belief was that they did. Even within England, the destitute and the rich interacted and lived in close quarters.

[279] Glenn Paul Darrington, "Analysis and Reconstruction of Impermanent Structures of the 17th and 18th Centuries," Master of the Arts Dissertation, Texas A&M University,1994. http://nautarch.tamu.edu/pdf-files/Darrington-MA1994.pdf. Access Date 15 February 2013. 87.

[280] Hamilton, Pirates and Merchants, 16-17.

[281] Darrington, "Impermanent Structures," 97-90.

[282] Hamilton, "Archaeological Past, Present, and Future," 261-266 explores how few excavations have been conducted, and those that did occur usually produced no final written report. Additional, Noel Hume's Piece used below is an example of the informal although still useful types of investigations done at the site.

specific items, we can nonetheless get a sense of the goods used by colonists here. Of the items recovered from the site the ones that are most useful to look at are the ceramics and pewter. This is because they show up at every site studied, and because ceramics are often used to understand class.[283] One of the most numerous artifact types recovered was tin glazed earthenware, also known as delftware. Its presence speaks to maintaining an English sensibility while in the colonies, as its creation was meant to emulate the Chinese porcelain, which was a very expensive elite item. As with other goods that elites consumed, such as dresses in the last chapter, this porcelain was used to facilitate the portrayal of class and taste. The pieces recovered from the site were certainly not simple recreations, although they feature Chinese designs.[284] While created to emulate porcelain, they manage to be unique and elite in their own right, the type of luxury the wealthy businessmen and their wives would want to use to show both their knowledge of what was fashionable in London and their ability to access something similar.[285] However, there was also delftware in basic patterns, which was still a quality item but less desired. This abounded, pointing out once again the relative wealth of the city and possibly the wish to maintain visual and material ties with England. Anne could expect to encounter and make use of these material ties as well.

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[283] Bell, "Emulation," 255. Although the link between class and ceramics becomes clearer at the end of the eighteenth and especially in the nineteenth century, the Port Royal excavation team interpret the specific ceramics of the cite to be a form of the emerging connection between the two. Madeleine J Donachie and Julie Shumaker, "Tin-Glazed Earthenware from Port Royal, Jamaica," http://nautarch.tamu.edu/portroyal/tinglaze/index.htm, Access date 30 January 2013.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Kowalski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 52-69.

These types of questions are not entirely avoided by the expedition either. Although the focus was more centered on salvage and understanding Port Royal in a broader sense, the classification and number analysis that eventually came out are still able to show the tension between class, how it is perceived, and how it is enacted. Slipware, a form of pottery created with lead glaze over earthenware, is the "truly English," form of tableware, and yet only a "handful" of it was found in Port Royal, an English colony.[286] While the analysis conducted by Hamilton's team focused on the function and number of the vessels, more interpretation can be inferred. For example, the function of some of the cups has been classified as for specifically drinking coffee and hot chocolate. This function is not certain, but the suggestion that coffee and chocolate, two fairly new drinks associated with the upper class, were in use shows more of a cosmopolitan mindset.[287] Port Royal was a colony, and it kept many English traditions, despite ideas of pirates' lives being completely apart from regular people. Interestingly, the vessels were found in lower class households, although both the slipware and the drinks were considered to be middle class.[288] Anne, in this colonial position, could have accessed items and foods that even those in England did not have. This is the worst fear of the middling class come to fruition, as someone who was undeserving of the goods they worked so hard for had more access than they. The strict boundary

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[286]Madeleine Donachie, "Slipware at Port Royal, Jamaica," http://nautarch.tamu.edu/PROJECTS/PR-project/slipware/slip-home.html. Port Royal Project, Nautical Archaeology Program, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. March 14, 2001..Access Date 15 February 2013.
[287] Brian Cowan, "What Was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England" *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (2001) 127-157.
[288]Donachie,   "Slipware,"   http://nautarch.tamu.edu/portroyal/slipware/slip-assemblage.html.

between moral, middling and wicked, poor is shown to be not as rigid as thought. In a city that was both pirate and middling, material goods seemed to have crossed boundaries as much as people did.

Not everyone sees Port Royal as an extension of English ideals of respectability and refinement, however. Working with glass remains in the second context, the buried harbor, Noel Hume writes that "there is no evidence that at Port Royal in 1690, wealth and good taste went hand in hand."[289] He makes this claim based on the fact that although a few elite pieces of glass were found in salvage attempts, they don't measure up to similar types of glass on the continent. He then goes on to argue, however, that further excavations will "exchange [Port Royal's] reputation as a treasure hunter's paradise for a more appropriate place at the fountainhead of archaeological research into the history of English domestic life and possessions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."[290] However, the lack of English "taste" perhaps points out that the colonists were purposefully not attempting to recreate a completely English sensibility. As seen above, people in Port Royal could access many items that were elite, above and beyond what was available elsewhere. If the glass that remains does not reflect "proper" English values, it may not be that Port Royal can be a direct mirror of English life, but rather shows that the colonies were new spaces where new values and identities were rising.

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[289] Noël Hume "A Collection of Glass from Port Royal, Jamaica with Some Observations on the Site, Its History and Archaeology," *Historical Archaeology*, 2 (1968) 32-33. Hume wrote from a different, more "scientific" theoretical New Archaeological approach but remains nonetheless some of the only work done on Port Royal.
[290] Ibid.

Cities like this must have seemed both a lure and a threat to middling classes in England. On the one hand it promised wealth without the rigors of the newly adopted work ethic of the rising classes. For some this would be seen as an opportunity, and an adventure. For others, this way of life, offering reward for risk but not real work, would have seemed a dangerous, even immoral, path. Rumors of the "wickedest city," could only heighten these tensions. The archaeological record both illuminates and repudiates these conceptions. Anne most likely would have had a fairly similar lifestyle in a city like Port Royal as she did in Ireland and Carolina. The goods found were similar and even of better quality than what was found in the American colonies, suggesting that even if the perception was that pirates had either wildly wealthy or incredibly poor lifestyles, in general, they had many of the same experiences.

On Board the Pirate Ship: The Whydah

The *Whydah Gally* was a former slave ship that was commandeered by Sam Bellamy, another one of the famous characters from *A General History of the Pirates*. Much like Anne and Mary, Bellamy's characterization is more of an exaggerated portrait of the types of issues an eighteenth century person would have grappled with than an exact depiction of the pirate himself. Bellamy was said to have been an egalitarian ruler, who freed the slaves on the ship and offered them positions as pirates as well, and who saw himself as a "free prince" of the sea. His speeches and Johnson aside, the ship was very

real, and met a horrible end in 1717, off the coast of Cape Cod.[291] It was a destructive wreck that left only a few survivors, while the ship itself, along with its impressive cargo were lost. In the 1980s, however, Barry Clifford was able to locate the wreck, and taking advantage of a finder's law, was able to assume control of the project.[292] Since then the artifacts recovered have included cannons, guns, gold pieces, jewelry, and a plethora of belt buckles and assorted smaller items.[293] The wealth on the ship is astounding compared to the type of vessel Rackam's crew sailed, and in that regard the amount of treasure must be understood as not precisely representative of the experience a smaller and poorer crew would have experienced. That being said, as the only officially recognized pirate ship that has been excavated and verified, the

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[291] "Home," Whydah.com. Access Date 18 February 2013.

[292] This move has garnered extensive debate and controversy over the ethics of "treasure hunting" archaeology, as has the decision to partner with National Geographic. Clifford has been accused of having ulterior financial motives in searching for the ship, and labeled a treasure hunter and not an academic. There were calls to banish publications of his work by members of the Society for Historical Archaeology, arguing that he was a bad example to others who would be lured by false promises of riches, and that he made premature calls to sell the goods he uncovered. The arguments against him were presented in Ricardo J. Elia's paper
"The Ethics of Collaboration: Archaeologists and the Whydah Project" in *Historical Archaeology,*26, No. 4(1992) 105-117 "The Ethics of Collaboration on the Whydah" However, the Society for Historical Archaeology did not ban Clifford's finding, and indeed the president resigned to work on the project himself. While it may be true that, as Elia states, what is legal is not necessarily ethical, I believe that the final decision not to ban Clifford and Hamilton's work should be followed. Having visited the Whydah Museum, that is funded in part by National Geographic, to see for myself, their fears seem understandable but ultimately unsubstantiated. Clifford has not sold any of the artifacts from the *Whydah*, and while the museum's focus on retaining visitor's and creative control over the artifacts may be stifling, it is not prohibitive. The goods are still accessible and the somewhat over-simplified presentation in the museum can still be interrogated further.

[293] Hamilton, "The Pirate Ship Whydah,"137-150. Hamilton's chapter synthesizes the information from the full report of archaeological testing, "Artifact Inventory," from the Boston Public Library.

site is still useful in understanding how piratical goods would have differed from those on land, and if they related to performances of class on board.[294]

Although Clifford, and his successor Richard Hamilton, see the ship as an egalitarian space where men were judged solely on the work they produce, this position is called into question by the high percentage of silver buckles that were found concentrated in the stern of the ship, the area associated with the captain and those in charge of making navigational and leadership decisions. This could be an area of storage, with the "treasure" (prize money) kept separate to ensure equal division, but it could also show a portion of the ship that was dedicated to the captain and piratical equivalent of officers. If the space was segregated, it could show that the pirate ship was not necessarily a space where class could always be subverted.[295] An additional shipwreck, the *Fiery Dragon*, which was abandoned in 1721, shows that elite Chinese porcelain, which was almost certainly booty, was also concentrated in one area of the ship, also near the stern.[296] The presence of two cases is not proof, but it suggests that there was more social stratification in piracy than popular notions of liberty and equality would support. As on land, class existed at sea. For example, although pirates dressed in fancy clothing when they raided other ships, as outlined in Chapter Three, even this activity was

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[294] Although touted as the only "real" pirate ship, it is actually the only pirate ship from the Golden Age of Piracy that has been found. There are other ships from different time periods and cultures that can safely be called "pirate."

[295] Hamilton, "The Pirate Ship Whydah," 147.

[296] John de Bry, Christopher Codent's *Fiery Dragon*," in *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy*. Eds. Russel K. Skowrenek and Charles R. Ewen. (University Press of Florida, 2006), 121. These authors refer to the porcelain specifically as booty, but do not go farther to see it as evidence of hierarchy on the ship. Considering the Fiery Dragon was excavated partially by Clifford's team, this is not surprising, as it would go against Clifford's argument that the ship was egalitarian and a complete meritocracy.

restricted to the top members of the crew. Clifford's claims cannot be entirely dismissed, however, merit and courage certainly played a part in "class" on board the ship, as Mary showed. Like on land in the middling class, work was an important part of upward mobility.

This was not the only way that the material record shows considerable continuity between land and sea society. Pewter, although common in everyday life in the colonies and the pirate ship, is something of an enigma in the material record, a "missing artifact." It was nearly unbreakable, lasted for long periods of time, and in the event that it was no longer useful, had a high resale value.[297] The pewter that did not get resold and melted into a new form frequently does not survive. In the shipwreck of the *Whydah*, however, we can see them for the same reasons- practicality meant that they were more in use. Yet the pirates did not just have the pewter for function, they also personalized the wares. In one example, a pewter plate from the *Whydah* shows initials that have been carved into the plate, presumably to show ownership.

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[297] Martin, "The Role of Pewter," 18.

Figure 4.3 Pewter Markings
Photo Credit "Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the Whydah" Exhibit, Houston Museum of
Natural Science, Houston, Texas 2010

Another has a symbol (see Fig. 4.3) carved into it that Hamilton has interpreted as a Masonic symbol.[298] The tavern at Port Royal shows evidence of people carving their initials into pewter objects, but they all have either both initials (example: AB) or a custom of showing that a couple owned the object (example: A^{c}B would be a husband and wife with a surname starting with C).[299] On this plate, the carving does not follow either tradition. While the mark is at the moment only theorized to be Masonic, the actual symbol's meaning is not necessary to see that these plates were used in a form of self expression. Each plate was, based on the initials, associated with a particular pirate, and in an environment where very little was "personal," plates may have been a small opportunity to say something about oneself. Pewter plates

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[298] Hamilton, "Pirate Ship," 157-158.
[299] Donny L. Hamilton, The Port Royal Project: Historic Research,
http://nautarch.tamu.edu/portroyal/research.htm Nautical Archaeology Program, Texas
A&M University, College Station, Texas, 2000. Access Date 16 February 2013.

may have been a constant in a person like Anne's life. While on land, at sea, in America or in the Caribbean, these goods were ubiquitous, durable, and customizable. Thanks to the preservation of the water, they are visible in a middling context and a criminal one. That these items are so constant, so universal, suggests that the differences between classes was perhaps not as pronounced as people liked to believe. Whether people conformed to middling values or not, they were assured of fairly similar material loves. It would seem however, that the same item could be used in multiple ways. While in a home the initials carved into a plate showed ownership, at sea it showed personality.[300] At home pottery supplemented pewter to show wealth; ideals of respectability; and taste, whereas at sea pottery was impractical and of more use as an item of trade than as a tool.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

Anne Bonny's life, as portrayed by Johnson, is one of rapidly decreasing social status, as defined by goods and space. She moved from a merchant's home to a Carolina plantation, with few material changes. From there she moved to a pirate's town, and presumably temporary lodgings, before ending up in the cramped confines of a ship. And yet some things, despite this depiction, remain constant. Pewter plates were in wide use, but their meaning changed in each phase of Anne's life: first to recall the gentility of upper class life, then as a utilitarian piece, then as, perhaps, a measure of

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[300] Leone argues, drawing on Marxist theory, that "possessive individualism" is evidence of a developing capitalist system that places the owner outside of a relationship to the state, an argument that is useful in light of the way pirates are often associated with subverting the legal economic system and creating their own way of life. Although Mary and Anne should not be read as radically breaking with normal society, this points to the more liberal character of the pirate ship. Leone, *Archaeology of Liberty*, 34-40.

expression. Ceramics and pottery were a part of daily life, although she may not have owned them. Johnson's story speaks to fears the middling class had, including that the wrong type could attain the same status they did, or that women were leaving marriages and descending into crime. However, the archaeological record seems to report that there was quite a bit of continuity in Anne's life. Of course, this too was a fear- that those who transgressed ideas of what was respectable would not be punished. This is ultimately born out, as Anne escapes prison and punishment.

Conclusion: History, Archaeology, Literature

From the outset, there was nothing out of the ordinary about Mary Read. Although she was illegitimate, this was commonplace, if not necessarily a desired position. Her mother's attempt to gain support for the family by disguising Mary as a boy had long lasting ramifications. Mary learned to manipulate her clothing and her behavior in order to present to the world as a man. In her career in the foot regiments and the cavalry, she proved herself to be brave and trustworthy, not just a member of the corps but an exceptional combatant. Like many other men of her background, she found it difficult to advance on the sole basis of her work; money was still a major factor in the opportunities she had. Frustrated with her lack of promotion, Mary moved regiments, where she then met and fell in love with her future husband.

Here Mary came to one of many crossroads in her story. She was a chaste, virtuous woman, despite presenting to the world as a man. She could not be a woman in the army, but neither could she be a soldier married to another man. So, as she had done before, Mary allowed her clothes to reveal her sex to her fellow soldier. She began wearing women's clothes and took up a woman's profession, keeping a tavern, good middling work.

The untimely death of Mary's husband caused her to once again disguise herself as a man. This time, with pure economic motives, she determined to make her fortune. Unable to find employ as a soldier she took to the navy, where she quickly turned pirate in an attempt to gain more money. When she was finally caught she refused to repent, as she had lived

her life according to the codes to which each sex adhered. She achieved this through both her dress and her conduct.

This is the story that Captain Johnson tells. It is one of economic ascendancy, of good morals in an odd situation, a story of a hero and a heroine in one. Her story appeals to a middle class sensibility, representing both male and female good behavior: hard work, chastity, bravery, fidelity. It is not the story the court transcripts tell. The courts have no need to flesh out Mary's background, no need to portray her sympathetically. Unlike today's court records, the trials of the eighteenth century were produced to be sold, not to be accurate reflections of proceedings. As such, they exaggerated and summarized, made the criminality of all actions shine through above any other motivation. In the court's handling, both Mary and Anne become wanton women who straddle the gender division, wearing both a modest hair covering and loose men's clothing, cursing and swearing, and fitting into neither gender role. The tensions between the two portrayals mimics the tensions felt in general in the eighteenth century. Women were simultaneously pure and dedicated, immoral and destined to betray men. We see this when Mary's chaste lifestyle and monogamous marriage is contrasted with Anne's multiple affairs. The fear that anyone, even the undeserving, could ascend the social ladder troubled the middle class. However, evidence here from dress and material goods that shows these distinctions were by no means codified yet. Men and women's clothing were not fully distinct, and neither were the jobs they performed. Life on the plantation could be worse

than life at sea. Despite attempts to place men over women, and middling over poor, the distinctions were fluid.

Anne Bonny's story also addresses these tensions. Born illegitimately, she also spent her childhood in breeches, the picture of a middling son. But the move to a plantation in Carolina marked the beginning of a descent into immorality. Unlike Mary, Anne did not slip between genders with ease, and was never able to commit fully to either. Her fierce temper and repudiation of the good marriage her father arranged for her led her to run away with a poor sailor. By rejecting the middle class, feminine life, and all its assorted trappings, Anne became a wicked woman. She left her husband and became a pirate, dressing as a man in the process. Yet unlike Mary, she did this because she was following her lover, not in an attempt to make her fortune. Although portrayed as the transgressive foil to Mary's unorthodox but ultimately acceptable man, Anne was actually as "normal" as Mary. Even her supposedly immoral acts, such as leaving her husband and abandoning her child, simply allowed her to fulfill the stereotype of the wild woman.

Despite all these changes, Anne's material world would not have changed much. In fact, her goods may have gotten better the worse her morals became. Johnson's narrative of her life portrays a moral story, a loose woman who meets a tragic end, but it does not necessarily reflect the actual conditions someone like Anne would have encountered. Her story reveals the fears that dissolute people could no longer be marked out just by class or goods. If people like Johnson feared people like Anne, Johnson's parting quotation would have surely brought these concerns into focus. Anne, given a

chance to say goodbye to Rackam before he was executed, refused him any comfort, saying "*that she was sorry to see him there, but if he had fought like a Man, he need not be hang'd like a Dog.*"[301] Rackam is feminized, out manned by his lover. This was the final mark against Anne, making her out as a hard woman who would betray her love, one who did not flinch to see her lover hanged. Yet despite their cross-dressing and their actions, both Mary and Anne were ultimately the two sides of what it meant to be an eighteenth century woman: chaste, virtuous, and brave, or cold, wild, and wicked.

History, archaeology, and literature work together not just to fill in the gaps left by one record, but to better understand the multifaceted nature of eighteenth century life. The literary depiction of Anne and Mary provides a story that is part history and part a view into middling values. The archaeological remains of various sites show that, despite Johnson's narrative, Anne and Mary's lives might not have changed as much as he argued they did. Although Mary was able to work her way out of the poorest classes, in her time spent as both a man and a woman, she was an upright moral character. Her class did not affect her proper behavior. Anne moved down the social ladder, and yet found her surroundings relatively stable and familiar, no matter where she went. Finally, the court records, which portray Anne and Mary in a much more sinister light, also reveal the fears over changing economic and gender roles. In a world where women could be pirates, and poor people can have better goods than elites, it was necessary reassert that these actions were wicked. Yet in the end, for all of the extraordinary

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[301] Johnson, *A General History*, 173.

circumstances, Mary and Anne were normal women. Mary took advantage of fluid gender roles to work her way to a higher socioeconomic class, and Anne utilized her position as wanton woman to gain access to more elite items and a more adventurous experience. Surely nothing could be more typical in the eighteenth century than the desire for better goods, better opportunities, and a better life.

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