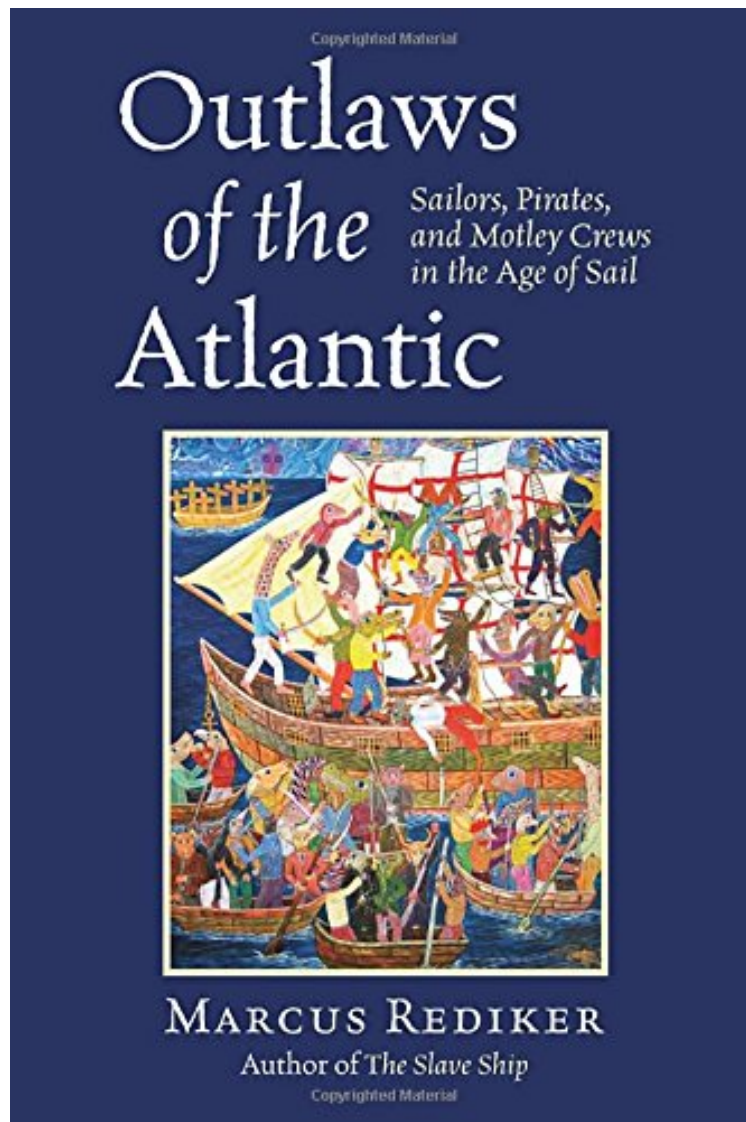


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Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail

Marcus Rediker

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background history of this book detailing how merchant sailors, for more than 3 hundred years, organized, inspired and maintained democratic structures both within and outside the laws at the time. Piracy, always a "motley" invention in response to the times, continues to fascinate us, even now. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It was awesome and something I would have never read if I ...By aksI read this book for a class. It was awesome and something I would have never read if I didnt have to for school, but I sure am glad i "had" to read it. I can't wait to read more by Rediker!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting readBy Christina RyanGreat read. Very interesting and informative from a historian who is well known and respected in the field

This maritime history "from below" exposes the history-making power of common sailors, slaves, pirates, and other outlaws at sea in the era of the tall ship. In *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, award-winning historian Marcus Rediker turns maritime history upside down. He explores the dramatic world of maritime adventure, not from the perspective of admirals, merchants, and nation-states but from the viewpoint of commoners—sailors, slaves, indentured servants, pirates, and other outlaws from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. Bringing together their seafaring experiences for the first time, *Outlaws of the Atlantic* is an unexpected and compelling peoples history of the age of sail. With his signature bottom-up approach and insight, Rediker reveals how the motley—that is, multiethnic crews—were a driving force behind the American Revolution; that pirates, enslaved Africans, and other outlaws worked together to subvert capitalism; and that, in the era of the tall ship, outlaws challenged authority from below deck. By bringing these marginal seafaring characters into the limelight, Rediker shows how maritime actors have shaped history that many have long regarded as national and landed. And by casting these rebels by sea as cosmopolitan workers of the world, he reminds us that to understand the rise of capitalism, globalization, and the formation of race and class, we must look to the sea. From the Hardcover edition.

With a keen eye for interesting characters, historian Rediker (*The Amistad Rebellion*) delivers a brisk narrative. Publishers Weekly A top-notch examination of how indentured servants, privateers, pirates and slaves affected and even directed human history in the age of sail. . . . An outstanding view of the seaman as a preeminent worker of the world. Kirkus s [Rediker's] argument that the American Revolution and the antislavery movement were rooted in and energized by the popular image of the pirate. . . is provocative and original. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette A colorful, intensely academic maritime history focused on the lower classes. Shelf Awareness [A] lifelong interest in figures at the edges of society informs *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, Mr. Rediker's below-decks history of the North Atlantic from the late 17th century to the American Revolution. Wall Street Journal From the Hardcover edition. About the Author Marcus Rediker is Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History at the University of Pittsburgh and the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the George Washington Book Prize (2008), the Organization of American Historians Merle Cuti Award (1998 and 2008), and the Sol Stetin Labor History Award (2013). His books include *The Many-Headed Hydra* (Beacon Press, 2000; with Peter Linebaugh), *Villains of All Nations* (Beacon Press, 2004), *The Slave Ship* (Viking, 2007), and *The Amistad Rebellion* (Viking, 2012). From the Hardcover edition. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. From the Prologue The European deep-sea sailing ship and the seamen who made it go transformed the world. On the *Santa Maria*, on which Columbus crossed the Atlantic, on the *Victoria*, on which Magellan circled the globe, and on the ever-growing fleets of merchant and naval vessels that linked the seven seas, their continents, and their peoples, the motley crews who worked aboard the most sophisticated machines of their day made history. By moving commodities such as silver, spices, and sugar over long distances they built the world market and the international economy. By carrying traders, settlers, and empire builders to Africa, Asia, and the Americas, they changed the global political order. Deep-sea sailors thus made possible a profound transformation: the rise of colonialism, capitalism, and our own vexed modernity. Yet sailors have never gotten their due in the history books. Bertolt Brecht asked, Who built the seven gates of Thebes? He answered, The books are filled with the names of kings, but then he wondered, Was it kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone? Explorers like Columbus and Magellan, and admirals like Horatio Nelson, have long dominated our view of the history of the sea, but that at last has begun to change. Histories of great men and national glory by sea have, over the past generation, been challenged by chronicles of common sailors and their many struggles. Maritime history has grown to include indentured servants and enslaved Africans, whose transatlantic lives were mediated by a gruesome yet formative Middle Passage across the sea. The rise of social history since the 1970s has of course transformed our view of many historical subjects, but few have witnessed as dramatic a reorientation as maritime history. Within the more recent rise of transnational and world history the sailor has begun to move from the margin to his customary position in national history to a more central position as one whose labors not only connected, but made possible, a new world. It is increasingly obvious that crucial historical processes unfolded at sea and that seafaring people were history makers of the first importance. This collection of my work over the past thirty years focuses on both transformations, bringing together the Atlantic and global histories of seafaring and slavery, the rise of capitalism and the many challenges to it from below—often literally, from below decks. In writing maritime history from below, I have encountered not only the elitism of the old maritime history but an obstacle more subtle and less understood: the

uninspected assumption that only the landed spaces on the earth's surface are real. Perhaps it is not quite right to call this assumption a matter of thought; it is more an instinct, a mental reflex, and perhaps all the more powerful and pervasive for being unconsidered. One suspects that it is a matter of mentality, a deep structure of Western thought that has an ancient history. Yet it must also be noted that this way of looking at the world I call it terracentric was surely strengthened by the rise of the modern nation-state in the late eighteenth century, after which power and sovereignty would be linked to specific ethnic, civic, and national definitions of the people and their land, their soil. At the same time the Romantic generation simultaneously evacuated the sea of real ships and sailors dirty bilge water and people at work, writes literary scholar Margaret Cohen substituting a sea wild and sublime, populated with imaginary figures, fit for aesthetic contemplation. The other side of terracentrism is the unspoken proposition that the seas of the world are unreal spaces, voids between the real places, which are landed and national. This logic the bias of landed society is evident in the work of thinkers as radically different as novelist Joseph Conrad and philosopher Michel Foucault. Conrad, who spent considerable time at sea, called the oceangoing ship a fragment detached from the earth. The statement suggests that the ship is disconnected not only from the land, but somehow from the planet, existing in a realm apart. Foucault called the ship a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself, and at the same given over to the infinity of the sea. The ocean, in this formulation, is not only a place apart, it is no place the original meaning of utopia. In both cases there is a refusal to consider the ocean as a real, material place of human work and habitation, a place where identities have been formed, where history has been made. The West Indian poet Derek Walcott exposed and attacked Western terracentric bias in his poem *The Sea Is History*, which reflects on the experience of the peoples of the African diaspora: Where are your monuments, your battles, your martyrs? Where is your tribal memory? Sirs, in that gray vault. The Sea. The sea has locked them up. The sea is History. Walcott challenges us to overcome a deeply inculcated, often unconscious terracentrism, which would have us believe that the oceans are empty places, without history. It is our job to unlock the gray vault and make it give up its deep, hidden secrets. This book tries to unlock these secrets by examining the Atlantic Ocean as a historical space within which the formation of empires and rise of capitalism depended on a specific maritime technology: the Northern European deep-sea sailing ship. During the age of sail, roughly 1500 to 1850, this was the world's most sophisticated and important machine. The novelist Barry Unsworth called it an engine of wood and canvas and hemp. This global instrument of European power made possible extraordinary things plunder, conquest, and finally a political and economic dominance that has lasted to this day.