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From the Other of Capitalism to the Hero of Capitalism: The Image of Pirates in the Pirates of the Caribbean Film Series

Why was the newly emerged “other” of global capitalism, pirates, understood as the enemy which must be eliminated on one hand, but on the other, considered as a hero and enter the cultural industry successfully? How and why is this possible?

This essay attempts to analyze the image of pirates in the Pirates of the Caribbean film series to see how it perfectly corresponds to the middle class archetype: the Odysseus in the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The relationship turns the radical behavior of pirates and its promised liberating spirit upside down paradoxically, making its visual narrative a demonstration of capitalist ethics.

The analysis not only aims at reconfirming the simple view that ‘cultural industry is the complicity of capitalism’, but also opening a (possible) politicized reading of the image of pirates in order to reinspect an important aspect of contemporary capitalist system, the nature of the discourse on ‘freedom’.