"UNDER THE GRENE WODE TRE:" THE GREENWOOD'S PLACE IN PRESERVATIONISM

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To think of *nature* presently is to think of the flora, fauna, and the myriad elements that constitute the physical world. But, in truth, it is not that easy or straightforward. As Cicero said, "Naturam ipsam definire difficile est." Nature, indeed, is difficult to define. The same can be said of the medieval forest. Part of the difficulty stems from the vast range of definitions, both legal and practical, from the forest's place in medieval society and its place in the modern public's imagination, and from its reality and its literary presence. Such issues bring up questions about the assumptions and expectations surrounding the idea of the medieval forest regarding its appearance, its wildness factor, as well as human intrusion and occupation within its boundaries. Considering the commonly established divide between nature/culture, ecocritic Ursula K. Heise explains that, "[L]iterary critics are justifiably wary of drawing precise boundaries between such concepts as 'nature' and 'culture' that seem to exclude each other but turn out upon closer analysis to be entangled with each other in multiple ways, whether these entanglements be semantic, historical, or power political."[1] Modern society's fixation with nature as a wild space has not been viable for a very long time, as human presence has spread to almost every natural space; this, in turn, has also problematized the binary of nature/culture as these are too intertwined to possibly separate. The medieval forest, both the real and the literary one, is at the crux of this issue. Geographical woodland spaces are determined and outlined by human-made laws with either physical or non-physical boundaries. Forests are owned by some and inhabited by others. They are a life source for the lower classes and a taunting example to them of the class divide. They are serene, filled with beauty and life. They are violent, filled with blood and death. One of the most famous medieval forests in the public's imagination is that of Robin Hood's. While scholars recognize the existence of multiple geographical locations connected to the medieval outlaw's myth, as A.J. Pollard notes, "Robin Hood's forest, as everyone knows, was Sherwood Forest. But it was not just Sherwood. It was also the ill-defined district of Barnsdale further to the north in southern Yorkshire."[2] Nevertheless, the focus on Sherwood is very much alive and well in the present-day.

The official Sherwood Forest webpage—sponsored by the Nottinghamshire County Council, the Sherwood Forest Trust, and the Woodland Trust—opens with Robin Hood, literally. A man, poised in the center of the screen, points a bow and arrow at the viewer. He wears medievalesque garb and carries a quiver of arrows on his back. To his left, a man dressed like a friar stands ready to assist, as does a woman standing to his right, wearing a deep-green cloak. And of course, the forest is their backdrop. Visible on the webpage's menu above them one finds a clickable "About Robin Hood" link. The connection between the outlaw and the forest is irrevocably intertwined. In his article on the matter of the greenwood, Jason Hogue notes that "The Robin Hood story would not really *be* the Robin Hood story, as we know it, without its well-known forest setting: the merry greenwood of medieval England, where Robin and his outlaw band

[1] Ursula K. Heise, "Science and Ecocriticism," *The American Book Review* 18, no. 5 (1997): 4.
[2] A. J. Pollard, *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late-Medieval Stories in Historical Context* (London: Routledge, 2004), 57.

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dwell and thrive."[3] And this is precisely what the marketing team at Sherwood Forest knows. They are banking on people's interest in and knowledge of Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, attempting to draw in visitors via the connection. But it is also meant to help in preserving the natural space. There is plenty of information available on the site regarding the flora (particularly oak trees) and the fauna found in the forest, with details about how they are working at maintaining the natural space. The Sherwood Forest Trust lists the following as their story/mission:

> The natural environment on which we wish to focus takes the form of a new programme of activities, projects and community events that seek to conserve and preserve the historic habitats and culture of the wider Sherwood Forest area, but at the same time ensure greater public access to, enjoyment of and benefit from learning about the past and understanding how the present will impact on the future of this important heritage landscape.[4]

It appears that while the forest once protected Robin Hood, he is now returning the favor. People will be more invested in helping save a real geographical place associated with beloved characters and tales. It is "the visual rhetoric of the brightly green woodland" that Valerie B. Johnson writes of in her article on ecomedievalism, a term she has coined.[5] Johnson argues that ecomedievalism "can encourage recognition of fantasy and offer a means to understand how fantasy within fiction impacts *life outside a story*"[6] [emphasis added]. In the case of Sherwood Forest, fiction is impacting real life by attracting visitors, raising revenue that can in turn be used to protect the forest, and in educating future generations by teaching children about the importance of a green space, all while they run around dressed in medieval outlaw attire.

Precisely the link between socio-historical factors and literary representations is something Heise expounds on. She says that "[the] tension between realist and constructivist approaches crucially involves questions about how our perception of the environment is culturally shaped and how that perception is mediated through language and literature."[7] In this light, culture determines views on nature, and, in turn, literature's depictions of the environment play a key role in that conceptualization. Such a link echoes in ecocritic Greg Garrard's description of the environmental humanities' mission[8] as the "*historicization of ecology* and the *ecologization of history*," where history, ecology, and environment are affected by socio-cultural factors.[9] Ecocriticism involves not only looking at representations of nature in literature, but, as Rebecca Douglass states, it "is reading with attention to treatments of nature, land, and place informed by a desire to understand past and present connections between literature and human attitudes regarding the earth."[10] For Douglass, and for me, understanding the connections that authors have drawn between literature

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[3] Jason Hogue, **"**The Storied Matter of The Greenwood in the More-Than-Human World." *The Bulletin of the International Association for Robin Hood Studies* 4 (2022): 41. https://doi.org/10.33043/BIARHS.4.1.41-56.
[4] Sherwood Forest Trust, https://carboncopy.eco/initiatives/sherwood-forest-trust.
[5] Valerie B. Johnson, "Ecomedievalism: Applying Ecotheory to Medievalism and Neomedievalism." *Studies in Medievalism XXIV* (2015): 36.
[6] Ibid., 37.
[7] Ursula K. Heise, "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism," *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (2006): 511.
[8] Garrard defines environmental humanities as comprising ecocriticism, environmental history, environmental philosophy, and (quite possibly) ecotheology.
[9] Greg Garrard, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, ed. Greg Garrard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3. Emphasis original.
[10] Rebecca Douglass, "Ecocriticism and Medieval Literature," *Studies in Medievalism* X (1998): 138.

and human views on nature is critical for our understanding of pre-modern texts—a step that further informs our present day.

The term "preservationism" refers to the practice of preservation, which in turn refers to protection from destruction. These terms often pertain to the human practice of safeguarding the environment. Remarkably, in the case of Robin Hood's greenwood, the practice of preservation has been in flux generationally.[11] The medieval "grene wode" becomes a safe place in the ballads for humans who are outside societal laws. This might seem uncharacteristic when considering the more stereotypical depiction of forests in broader literature of the period as dark spaces outside the bounds of society. Later on, a representational shift engenders a greenwood that is a literary construct and thus nostalgically idealistic, eventually leading to contemporary efforts to preserve the forest landscape due to its literary heritage.

TERRA REGIS AND *DEORFRIÐ*: ROBIN HOOD'S HISTORICAL FOREST

The space of the forest is a complex landscape, both literally and metaphorically. It allows for the joining of the real and the symbolic regarding its place in society, a region's resources, and its place in the cultural consciousness of the community. As Corinne J. Saunders writes, "the historical reality of the medieval forest was itself an intricate web of physical, economic and legal elements."[12] It was William the Conqueror who first established Forest Law over the lands of the Saxon nobility, removing the lands from their possession.[13] Eventually, twenty-five percent of England was to be designated as a "royal forest,"[14] including Sherwood Forest, which appears as terra regis, "the king's land," in the entry for the year 1086 in the *Domesday Book*.[15] As Robert Pogue Harrison explains, "[o]nce a region had been 'afforested,' or declared a forest, it could not be cultivated, exploited, or encroached upon. It lay outside the public domain, reserved for the king's pleasure and recreation."[16] As such, the word "forest" does not simply mean "woodland." The word forest was initially a legal term referring to "a tract of land governed by special laws, ostensibly concerned with protecting deer, and [having] a special administration"—reminiscent of our modern-day National Parks.[17] Accordingly, as ecological historian Oliver Rackham explains, "[e]ach Forest normally contained a tract of uncultivated land in which the deer lived and to which the Forest name eventually came to be transferred. The remainder of the Forest consisted of

[11] The Robin Hood legend is associated both with Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire and with Barnsdale in South Yorkshire. The early ballads reference both locations, and scholars acknowledge the importance of both to the ongoing study of the literature.
[12] Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), 1.
[13] Charles R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 150.
[14] Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, ed., *A Geste of Robyn Hode*, Note 1429. http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/gest-of-robyn-hode.
[15] Robin Melrose, *Warriors and Wilderness in Medieval Britain: From Arthur and Beowulf to Sir Gawain and Robin Hood* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2017), 190.
[16] Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 69.
[17] Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: Its History, Vegetation and Uses in England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1980), 175.

ordinary farmland, private woodland, villages and towns."[18] While the forest was owned by the monarch, its stewardship was likely in the hands of someone named by the king, with the right of assart, the permission to collect wood for fuel or construction from the forest, residing with the same individual or a different one.[19]

Because the Anglo-Saxon kings had not practiced the custom of afforestation (the conversion of land into royal forests), as the Norman kings came to do, the change was not a popular one. Villagers were expelled from the land, churches were destroyed, and the new law set the punishment for poaching to the level of mutilation and death.[20] In the *Peterborough Chronicle*, the entry for 1087 gives voice to the likely general sentiment. In what has come to be known as the *Rime of King William*, a passage that is a homiletic eulogy for William the Conqueror, the chronicler lists a number of grievances against the king, including the following one pertaining to the land:

> He sætte mycel deorfrið,
> 7 he lægde laga þærwið
> þet swa hwa swa sloge heort oððe hinde,
> þet hine man sceolde blendian.
> He forbead þa heortas,
> swylce eac þa baras.
> Swa swiðe he lufode þa headeor
> swilce he wære heora fæder.
> Eac he sætte be þam haran
> þet hi mosten freo faran.
> His rice men hit mændon
> 7 þa earme men hit beceorodan;
> ac he [wæs] swa stið
> þet he ne rohte heora eallra nið.
> Ac hi moston mid ealle
> þes cynges wille folgian,
> gif hi woldon libban,
> oððe land habban,
> land oððe eahta,
> oððe wel his sehta. (ll. 12-31)
>
> [He established great game-preserves,
> and in addition he laid down laws,
> so that whoever slew hart or hind
> should be blinded.
> He forbade [hunting of] the hearts,
> (and) also the boars;

[18] Rackham, *Ancient Woodland*, 175.
[19] Gillian Rudd, *Greenery: Ecocritical Readings of Late Medieval English Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 49.
[20] Stefan Jurasinski, "The *Rime of King William* and its Analogues," *Neophilologus* 88 (2004): 131.

he loved the deer so very much,
as if he were their father;
also concerning the hares he established
that they might go free.
His noble men complained (about) it,
and the poor men murmured (about) it
but he was so severe
that he did not care about all of their enmity;
but they must all
obey the king's will
if they wished to live
or have land –
land or possessions
or indeed his friendship].[21]

The Old English term of interest in this passage is "deorfrið," which I have translated as "game-preserves." A "hapax legomenon," the term has been glossed in various ways, including "deer preserves,"[22] "deer forest,"[23] "beast-woodlands,"[24] and "deer protection."[25] The term stresses the safety afforded to animals, over people, within the bounds of the forest. In fact, the chronicler pointedly remarks that King William "loved the deer so very much, / as if he were their father." Seth Lerer explains that this passage "implies not so much a feeling for the creatures but a contempt for the subjects; that he loved the deer like a father implies that he did not love his people like a father."[26] Such a complaint "that post-Conquest kings were guilty of loving the animals too much are nearly commonplace in the twelfth century," as Stefan Jurasinski notes.[27] Scholars have found that the charge against kings of loving the forest animals was directly tied to the corporal or capital punishment received by the people.[28] William of Newburgh mentions in his eulogy of Henry I that the king did not differentiate between poachers and homicides.[29] The forests of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were meant for royals and for animals, but not for the commoners. Changes came slow.

Medieval forests, simply put, were not simple. They also were not necessarily wooded. Because "forest" was a legal term, it could apply to woodland, moorland, heathland, or fenland, equally.[30] For its part, the actual medieval Sherwood was a wooded forest, consisting of very tall

[21] The translation from Old English is my own. The original text is taken from Cecily Clark, ed., *The Peterborough Chronicle 1070-1154* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970): 13-14.
[22] Seth Lerer, "Old English and its Afterlife," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17.
[23] Clark, Peterborough Chronicle, 76n17.
[24] Michael Swanton, trans. and ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 221.
[25] Jurasinski notes that the Bosworth-Toller dictionary chose to preserve the legal associations with the term *frið* (peace) with "deer protection" ("The *Rime of King William*," 135).
[26] Lerer, "Old English and its Afterlife," 17.
[27] Jurasinski, "The *Rime of King William*,"138.
[28] Jurasinski, "The *Rime of King William*," 139.
[29] Jurasinski, "The *Rime of King William*," 139.
[30] Oliver Rackham, "Forest and Upland," in *A Social History of England 900-1200*, ed. Julia Crick and Elisabeth Van Houts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 50.

trees (particularly oaks), and heathland, its appearance consistently fitting with what a present-day reader might imagine to be a "medieval forest."[31] As a designated royal forest, the historical Sherwood would have been affected by the bureaucracy of afforested lands. Barnsdale was in a different position. Joseph Taylor wonders about its inclusion in the *Gest*, when he notes that "historically, [Barnsdale] was never a royal forest, and that the Sheriff of Nottingham had no business trying to enforce law there."[32] Forest administration expanded through the reign of King John, but after 1216 kings loosened their grip due to the antipathy rigorous forest administration created with their subjects.[33] Medieval forest law ceased to equal cruel and unusual punishments—instead, forest courts became sources of revenue, allowing the monarch to collect fines from trespassing subjects.[34] People were routinely fined for cutting down trees (fined more for using a saw rather than an axe, as saws were considered harmful to trees), and for grazing their own animals. In the *Statute of Winchester* of 1275, Edward I ordered that those convicted of wrongdoing in the forest would pay "heavy damages according to the nature of the offense and [could get] three years imprisonment."[35] Even poaching in the forest, which had once been a crime that could warrant an execution, was lessened to fines and possible imprisonment.[36] For example, after the Precentor of St. Paul's was convicted of numerous "trespasses against venison" in 1277, his poaching was castigated by a short jail term and a fine.[37] If the accused, however, could not pay the fine and took flight, the decree was to "let him be outlawed."[38] Ironically, for committing crimes in the forest, many outlaws ran to the forest. With "forest law" focused on fines to draw revenue for the crown, the medieval forest was largely lawless and populated by many of those outside the law.[39]

INTO THE *GRENE WODE:* ROBIN HOOD'S LITERARY FOREST

The literary forest is one that can take many shapes. Dark, ominous, and unwelcoming, the forest could easily be seen as a threat. Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter describe the forest as a "place of mystery, a place of testing, and always potentially evil," labeling it finally an "alien wilderness."[40] Leslie Coote emphasizes its dangerous unpredictability due to the "shifting, game-like nature of the greenwood and its inhabitants."[41] These views on wilderness align with those of

[31] Rackham, "Forest and Upland," 51.
[32] Joseph Taylor, *Writing the North of England in the Middle Ages: Regionalism and Nationalism in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 129.
[33] Oliver Rackham, *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (London: J. M. Dent, 1976), 154.
[34] Oliver Rackham, "The Medieval Countryside of England: Botany and Archeology," in *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe*, ed. John Howe and Michael Wolfe (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 22.
[35] Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 403.
[36] Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 254-5.
[37] Rackham, *Trees and Woodland*, 154-5.
[38] Rothwell, English Historical Documents, 403.
[39] Jean R. Birrell, "The Medieval English Forest," *Journal of Forest History* 24, no. 2 (1980), 85.
[40] Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 52-3.
[41] Leslie Coote, "Journeys to the Edge: Self-Identity, Salvation, and Outlaw(ed) Space," in *Robin Hood in Greenwood Stood: Alterity and Context in the English Outlaw Tradition*, ed. Stephen Knight (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 60.

Garrard, who defines wilderness as "nature in a state uncontaminated by civilisation," and includes within it the space of the forest.[42] Garrard traces the threatening presence of the wilderness back to ca. 2100 B. C. E., and notes its continuously shifting quality. He explains that,

> the very earliest documents of Western Eurasian civilization, such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, depict wilderness as a threat, and by the time the Judaic scriptures were written it is viewed with ambivalence at best. After the ejection from Eden, the wilderness is the place of exile. Yet, just as Abraham led his people into the wilderness to found a nation, Moses led the people of Israel through it to return home, finding it a more hospitable place than the civilised but enslaving Egypt. The wilderness is associated with Satan: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1) … The Judaeo-Christian conception of wilderness, then, combines connotations of trial and danger with freedom, redemption and purity, meanings that, in varying degrees, it still has.[43]

The forest's shifting nature, of which Garrard speaks, is found plentifully in Arthurian romance as well as outlaw tales set in the greenwood. Precisely the notion of "trial and danger" in the wilderness is an ever-fixed characteristic of courtly romances, particularly those in which the hero journeys long distances.

The forest of courtly romance was often populated by wild and dangerous beasts, along with other inhospitable elements. In the fourteenth-century romance *Ywain and Gawain,* Ywain encounters such creatures on his journey:

> 'A faire forest sone I fand.
> Me thought mi hap thare fel ful hard,
> For thare was mani a wilde lebard,
> Lions, beres, bath bul and bare,
> That rewfully gan rope and rare.'[44]
>
> [A fair forest soon I found.
> I thought my luck fell hard,
> For there was many a wild leopard,
> Lions, bears, both bulls and boars,
> That sorrowfully cry out and roar.][45]

The dangerous forest does not welcome a weary traveler. Ywain is successful in avoiding them, and proceeds on his way. His encounter echoes that of Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, where the hero traverses through an inhospitable frozen landscape in the Wilderness of Wirral on his way to find the Green Knight. During the self-imposed exile to fulfill his promise, he, too, encounters many dangerous creatures, from "wormes" (dragons) to "wolues" (wolves),

[42] Garrard, "Introduction," 66.
[43] Garrard, "Introduction," 68.
[44] *Ywain and Gawain*, ed. A. B. Friedman and N. T. Harrington (London: Oxford University Press, 1964; repr., 1981), 254.
[45] The translation is my own.

and from "wodwos" (wild men) to "bullez" (bulls), "berez" (bears), and "borez" (boars).[46] However, it is the harshness of the environment around him that most troubles Gawain's journey. Even more so than the dangers of the beasts and wild men, it is the weather around him that leads to his heightened suffering: "For werre wrathed hym not so much þat wunter nas wors" [for wars vexed him not so much as winter, which was worse].[47] The cold, unforgiving and brutal, is crueler for Gawain than any war.

From a dark, unwelcoming land that urges travelers to proceed quickly, to a bright landscape of "freedom, redemption and purity" that houses and protects people and animals, the English forest is a safe-haven in the fifteenth-century Robin Hood ballads.[48] While Gillian Rudd notes that the forest in "actuality and in the imagination, [is] a place of exile or refuge," Maurice Keen differentiates between types of forests depending on the literary tradition.[49] Keen clarifies that, "For Arthur and his knights the forest marked the boundary of an unknown world where the laws did not run and where wicked men and strange spirits found a refuge. But Robin Hood was an outlaw, a man whom society had placed outside the law's protection: for him it was an asylum from the tyranny of evil lords and a corrupt law."[50] Although it is the same literary space, knights and outlaws do not meet each other in the forest because it embodies something different for each set of characters, and their stories are intricately woven into the fabric of the forest as threat or safety, but never both. The outlaw's forest is the place in perpetual summer from which Robin steps out when needing to challenge the authorities, and to which he returns when requiring protection. It is where "notions of wilderness and escape from human civilisation" blend together,[51] and where, as Stephen Knight points out, "The deer find shelter […] like the men who themselves are likely to be preyed on [by the law]."[52] However, Robin's forest is in fact more protective of the men than it is of the deer. Forest law theoretically, not practically, protects deer from poachers, but the forest actively protects men from the law. The deer might still be poached, but the men can hide away, undiscovered because the authorities refuse to go in to the forest to search them out.

The differing levels of protection afforded to the deer and the outlaws is best seen in *Robin Hood and the Monk*. After Robin has been captured in the city, his men, back in the forest, are dismayed at the news. Little John encourages them and sets out to rescue Robin, but before he departs he instructs them to,

> Loke þ*a*t ye kepe wel owre tristil tre
> Vnd*u*r þe levys smale
> And spare non of this venyson
> þ*a*t gose in thys vale. (Folio 131r. ll. 143-4, Folio 131 v. ll 145-6)

[46] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), ll. 720-22. All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.
[47] *SGGK*, l. 726.
[48] Garrard, "Introduction," 68.
[49] Rudd, *Greenery*, 49.
[50] Maurice Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.
[51] Rudd, *Greenery*, 49.
[52] Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 17.

[Look that you keep well our trysting tree
Under the small leaves,
And spare none of this venison
That goes in this valley.]

He wants them to remain near the trysting tree, possibly in an attempt to keep them clustered in a safe area, but it is of particular note that he asks them to slay all the deer they see. At the end of the tale, the venison becomes part of the celebration of Robin's return, when they "ȝete pastes of venyson / þ*a*t gode was w*ith* ale" [eat meat pies of venison / that are good with ale. Folio 135r. ll.324-5]. While, according to documentary evidence found in eyre rolls, poaching offences would peak seasonally around festive holidays—which would be analogous to the festivities of Robin's return—it could also be due to Little John's vengeful anger.[53] Fifteenth century records show that "[t]he targeting of seigneurial parks might be symbolic and attributable to wider discontent felt locally," as peasants poached deer in higher numbers (for example, in 1441, 100 out of 125 deer were poached from Okeover park in Staffordshire), attacked rabbit warrens, and stole from manorial dovecotes.[54] As Oliver Creighton notes, "[f]ar from being merely a subsistence strategy, poaching could also function as a display of male gender identity. It could extend to quite conscious displays of impudence and deliberate challenges to authority."[55] In this instance, Little John is more than ready to challenge authority as he proceeds to kill a monk and his page boy, bamboozle the king, kill the jailer, and free Robin from jail. In so doing, the deer become symbols of control, vehicles of revenge, and a means of celebration. At the end of the ballad, when Little John reminds Robin of his help, he does not speak of his actions (rescuing Robin from prison) but instead underscores the physical space they occupy. He says,

I haue done þe agode turne seid litull John
ffor sothe as I yow say
I haue brouȝt þe vnd*u*r grene wode lyne
ffare wel and haue gode day (Folio 134v, ll. 306-7, Folio 135r, ll. 308-9) [56]

[I have done thee a good deed, said Little John,
For truly, as I say to you,
I have brought thee under the greenwood boundary.
Fare well and have a good day.]

Little John has returned Robin to the greenwood, and such an action deserves more praise than the rescue itself because it entails Robin's safety. Being freed and left in the city, for example, would not be much of an improvement because Robin would still be susceptible to capture. But the greenwood guarantees his safety for as long as Robin stays within its boundaries. Robin acknowledges Little John's actions when he offers to promote Little John: "I make þe maist*er* seid

[53] Oliver H. Creighton, *Designs Upon the Land: Elite Landscapes of the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), 160.
[54] Creighton, *Designs Upon the Land*, 161.
[55] Creighton, *Designs Upon the Land*, 161.
[56] Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the Robin Hood ballads are from the edition of Thomas H. Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson, ed., *Early Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Edition of the Texts ca. 1425 to ca. 1600* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2013).

Robyn Hode / Off alle my men and me" [I make thee master, said Robin Hood / Of all my men and me. Folio 135r, ll. 312-13]. While Robin Hood might be one of the most famous forest-dwellers, he is not the only one to find security within the woodland. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Saturn hides in a deep forest when eluding Jove, an instance that Harrison employs to explain that "the law of the civilisation define[s] itself from the outset over and against the forest."[57] To this, Rudd adds that, in setting itself up in such an oppositional way, civilization "makes the forests into a place of refuge, creating a paradox whereby one may be safer in the dangerous forest than in the ordered city."[58] It becomes the perfect place for those eschewed by society to find solace.

The opening lines in most of the Robin Hood ballads are focused heavily on nature. These openings, meant to set the scene and entice the audience to continue reading or listening on, present an idealized verdant world. As Lorraine K. Stock explains in her examination of Robin Hood among other medieval folkloric figures of nature, these openings "continue to emphasize the outlaw's close identification with the natural world and the wilderness."[59] One such nature-oriented opening can be found in *Robin Hood and the Monk*:

> In som*er*, when þe shawes be sheyn
> And leves be large and long
> Hit is full mery i*n* feyre foreste
> To here þe foulys song
> To se þe dere draw to þe dale
> And leve the hilles hee
> And shadow he*m* in þe leves grene
> vnd*u*r the grene wode tre (Folio 128v, ll. 1-8)
>
> [In summer when the foliage is bright
> and leaves are large and long,
> it is cheerful in the faire forest,
> to hear the birds' song,
> to see the dear come to the dale
> and leave the high hills,
> and shadow themselves in the green leaves,
> under the greenwood tree.]

In this instance, the forest is described as *feyre*, which can refer to something that is "pleasing to the sight" as well as something "light, bright, or shining."[60] It is not only a beautiful place, but also one associated with the light rather than the dark, and in diametrical contradiction to the literary forest described by Pearsall and Salter. Robin Hood and his men do not hide in the darkness but instead live in the light, furthering the image of a bright, welcoming forest instead of a dark and ominous one. Furthermore, even when there is a degree of darkness it is a positive one. The deer

[57] Harrison, *Forests*, 2.
[58] Rudd, *Greenery*, 65.
[59] Lorraine K. Stock, "Lords of the Wildwood: The Wild Man, the Green Man, and Robin Hood," in *Robin Hood in Popular Culture*, ed. Thomas Hahn (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 242.
[60] *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. *fair* (adj.) def 1a and 2a, respectively.

who leave the high hills do so to seek the cool shadow of "þe leves grene" under the trees, further establishing a calm and serene setting.

Robin's close identification with nature is again apparent in the opening lines of *Robin Hood and the Potter*, in which the description of nature leads directly to the figure of the outlaw in the forest. Along with the "leves," the "bloschoms on every bowe," and the "berdys," one finds Robin's presence:

> In schomer, when the leves spryng
> The bloschems on eu*er*y bowe
> So merey doyt the berdys syng
> yn wodys merey now
> herkens god yemen
> Comley Cortossey & god
> On of the best þ*a*t yeu*er* bar*e* bowe
> hes name was roben hode (Folio 14v, ll.1-8)
>
> [In summer, when the leaves spring,
> the blossoms on every bough,
> so cheerful do the birds sing,
> in the completely joyful woods.
> Listen, good yeomen,
> comely, courteous, and good,
> one of the best that ever bore bow,
> His name was Robin Hood.]

It is as if he belongs there, and nowhere else. There is a "sense of unity between the [outlaw] and [his] natural setting."[61] He is as content in this place as are the birds who sing merrily. The scene contrasts with that of Gawain's journey through the Wilderness of Wirral, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, while providing insight into the character's emotional and physical state. As Gawain travels in the depth of winter, he is surrounded by "mony bryddez vnblyþe vpon bare twyges, / Þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde" [many sorrowful birds upon bare twigs that cried piteously for pain of the cold. ll. 746-47]. These joyless, freezing birds echo Gawain's misery and physical pain, just as the merry birds of Sherwood echo Robin's comfort and joy.

In *Robin Hood and the Monk* the link between the outlaw and nature continues. When Robin returns to Sherwood he is "As liȝt as lef on lynde" [as light as a leaf on a linden tree. l. 301]. The word *liȝt* can refer to the bright or vivid color of leaves, or to relief from burdens or a heavy weight.[62] Upon his return to the forest, Robin, associated with light again, is as bright and vivid as a leaf or he is relieved from his burdens, as a leaf that dances in the breeze on a tree branch. The analogy further emphasizes his place in the forest. He is not like Ywain who is trying to avoid the wild beasts, or like Gawain who is weary and cold in his journey. Robin belongs in the woods. His link to the forest seems to even affect others around him, as seen in *Robin Hood and the Potter*.

[61] Knight, *Mythic Biography*, 17.
[62] *MED*, s.v. *light,* (adj.1). def. 3, and (adj.2) def. 3, respectively.

When Robin, disguised as the potter, enters the forest in the company of the Sheriff of Nottingham, the sheriff's internal state mimic's Robin's:

> The screffes hart was neuer so leythe
> the ffeyr*e* fforeyst to se
> And when he cam yn to the fforeyst
> yonder the leffes grene
> berdys ther*e* sange on bowhes prest
> het was gret goy to se
> her*e* het ys merey tobeseyde Roben (Folio 18r, ll.243-9)
>
> [The sheriff's heart was never so relieved
> to see the faire forest.
> And when he came in to the forest,
> under the green leaves,
> birds sang eagerly there on boughs.
> It was a great joy to see.
> Here it is merry to be, said Robin.]

Typically, the forest is not a safe space for the sheriff, or for other non-outlaw men who might otherwise traverse the green wood. Passing through the forest would typically guarantee an encounter with Robin's men and the likelihood of danger. The only people guaranteed their safety are women, since Robin, "ffor the loffe of owr*e* ladey, / All wemen werschep he" [for the love of our Lady / He worships all women. Folio 14v, ll. 11-12]. The sheriff, as a lawman, would be in peril, from his perspective, and yet he feels "gret goy" to be there in the company of Robin, whom he believes to be a simple seller of household goods.

The safety and protection the forest affords to Robin has transformed it into his home. In the process, this particular woodland has ceased to be *a* forest and has become *the* forest in Robin Hood lore, as well as in the reader's imagination. It has been transformed from *space* to *place*, where place is "space to which meaning has been ascribed."[63] As ecocritic Lawrence Buell notes, place has set boundaries while space is abstract.[64] Buell further adds that "[t]he sense of being environed or emplaced begins to yield to a more self-consciously dialectical relation between being and habitat," to the point that "environmental imagination registers, judges, and seeks to affect this process whereby the significance of environmentality is defined by the self-conscious sense of an inevitable but certain and shifting relation between being and physical context."[65] Robin and his men have not always been in the forest, but the longer they stay in the forest, the longer the forest is tied to them. The comforts of court also cannot compete with Robin's connection to the woods. In Wynkyn de Worde's edition of *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*, after the king pardons him and Robin lives at court for fifteen months, he laments his new environs: "Yf I dwele lenger with the kynge / Sorowe wyll me sloo" [If I dwell longer with the king / Sorrow will slay me. Page E6v ll.

[63] Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), xii.
[64] Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 63.
[65] Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, 62.

1733-4]. Robin has grown so attached to the forest place that he will die of a broken heart due to his relocation to the court. Robin begs the king to allow him the completion of a pilgrimage to the chapel in Barnsdale that he built for Mary Magdalene, saying

> "Me longeth sore to bernysdale
> I may not be therfro
> Bare fote and wolwarde I haue hyght
> Thyder for to go" (Page E7r 1747-50).
>
> ["I sorely long to go to Barnsdale
> I may not be away from there
> barefoot and with wool against my skin I have pledged
> to go there."]

Robin's penance on his journey back to Barnsdale, barefoot while wearing wool next to his skin, can speak on the one hand of his reverence to Mary Magdalene, but it can also bring to mind his devotion to the forest, and the forest's place in his heart. As Buell states, place elicits a strong "individual affect or bond" from its inhabitants.[66] The king acquiesces to Robin's request. Upon his arrival, we are told that,

> Whan he came to grene wode
> In a mery mornynge
> There he herde the notes small
> Of byrdes mery syngynge
> It is ferre gone sayd Robyn
> That I was last here (Page E7r, ll. 1759-64).
>
> [When he came to the greenwood
> on a merry morning,
> there he heard the delicate notes
> of birds happily singing.
> It is far too long, said Robin,
> that I was last here.]

After slaying a deer, 140 of his men, who had remained in the forest, come out to greet him when they hear his horn's call and, on bended knee, proclaim him, still, the "mayster" "under this grene wode tre" (Page E7v, ll. 1777-8).

Robin is now back in his own green court, where, one could say, he stands in for a nobleman or a king. In his book on the representation of England's North in medieval literature, Joseph Taylor argues for Robin's exalted position. He notes that, "Robin Hood does not resemble a base outlaw so much as he signifies a great northern magnate."[67] Upon his return to the greenwood and his return to a leadership role, Robin remains in the forest for twenty-two years, and "For all drede of Edwarde our kynge / A gayne wolde he not goo" [For all the fear of King Edward / Again he would not go. Page E7v, ll. 1781-82]. The king becomes powerless before the

[66] Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, 63.
[67] Taylor, *Writing the North of England*, 115.

refuge of the forest. Even though the forest is the king's land, terra regis, he has no authority over it. As Taylor explains, recognizing the power Robin has over the land, "reveals a distinct regionalism in the [*Gest*], positioned against government and monarchical centralization and romanticizing a period wherein the northern magnate both served his king by protecting the borders of the realm and served the interests of his family and region."[68] Those who inhabit the forest are under its protection, and that of Robin's, and can remain within in perpetual safety and security. Interestingly, as A.J. Pollard explains, "The English forest had never been what forest was imagined to be, and in the fifteenth century, when the stories of Robin Hood were recorded, it was in the process of further contraction and change."[69] But for readers, the myth overpowers the factual.

Honor to the Woods unshorn: Robin Hood's Romanticized Forest

By the eighteenth century the medieval greenwood was again a literary focus. However, the inspiration was a different one: Loss. In his poem "Robin Hood: To a Friend," John Keats focuses on the outlaw figure's natural space while responding to related poetic correspondence from John Hamilton Reynolds. Keats wrote,

> No, the bugle sounds no more,
> And the twanging bow no more;
> Silent is the ivory shrill
> Past the heath and up the hill."[70]

Keats laments the loss of the idealized greenwood, one that once was full of oak trees and honeybees. The evils of a capitalist society have done away with the forest. The oak trees are now in the dockyards destined for shipbuilding, we are told, and the honey is no longer free. "Robin's forest is a Utopian base for a critique of social and legal mismanagement," Stephen Knight states in his article on forest laws.[71] For Keats, the focus of his critique is on what is gone forever through social and economic change. He has seemingly written an elegy in the style of the Old English masters, nostalgically mourning what once was.[72]

In his published lecture on Keats and Reynolds' poetic correspondence on Robin Hood, John Barnard credits Joseph Ritson's book, *Robin Hood: A Collection of all the Ancient Poems,*

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[68] Taylor, *Writing the North of England*, 115.
[69] Pollard, *Imagining Robin Hood*, 62.
[70] John Keats, "Robin Hood: To a Friend." *Poetry Foundation*, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44483/robin-hood.
[71] Stephen Knight, "Robin Hood and the Forest Laws." *The Bulletin of the International Association for Robin Hood Studies* 1 (2017): 5, https://doi.org/10.33043/BIARHS.1.1.1-14.
[72] Keats' poem very much echoes the style of the Old English elegy, particularly "The Wanderer," and the *ubi sunt* motif, with Keats' heavy use of anaphora, as seen in the following lines:
"Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw."
However, Old English poetry would have been unknown to Keats. "The Wanderer," for example, was not identified as a poem until 1842—prior to that it was believed to be part of a work titled "Juliana." The reason I note the similarity is because Old English poetry was also heavily fixated on scenes in nature, and, like Keats' poem, on the particularities of the idealized past versus the hardships of the present.

Songs and Ballads, *now extant, relative to that celebrated English Outlaw* (1795), with bringing Robin Hood as folk-hero back to people's attention.[73] As a folk-hero, Robin and the space he occupies is more likely to stand against the forces of capitalistic encroachment. The greenwood "is a mythical, literary space, where the processes of nature are allowed to continue undisturbed in every way," notes Sarah Harlan-Haughhey.[74] But as Keats highlights in his poem, the greenwood has in fact been disturbed and not allowed to continue. He thus critiques the socio-political effects on the forest in a seemingly proto-environmental way, lamenting the loss of the nature-centric aspect of the past. Barnard acknowledges the political sense of Keats' poem and finds Reynold's poem to be much more sentimental.[75] In Reynold's "To a Friend, on Robin Hood," images of Robin, Marian, and the "archer men in green" appear like ghostly visions of the past, the long-dead beloved friends who spring up in our memory and materialize momentarily.[76]

The influence of the Romantic poets on people's views of nature as well as the past—particularly the medieval past—has been heavy. The ideals and values that these poets adhered to take shape in their writing, and communicate to their readers, then and now, what to value and what to lament. Despite the loss of the idealized greenwood, both Keats and Reynolds encourage the reader to step into the forest. "Go there, with Summer, and with evening—go," Reynolds advises, while Keats suggests that day or night are equally good times to explore the woods:

> On the fairest time of June
> You may go, with sun or moon,
> Or the seven stars to light you,
> Or the polar ray to right you.[77]

Nature, for the Romantics, was awe-inspiring, both because of its beauty and its inherent threat, and worth exploring. Stephen Knight writes that, "Robin comes to represent a medievalized sense of the value of nature in a time of urbanization and growing capitalism. The first sign of Robin as a spirit of the forest is when Keats and his friend Reynolds exchanged poems about the outlaw."[78]

Robin, as a spirit of the forest, a folk-hero, and one prepared to "fight the power," makes a physical appearance in the summer of 1814, in the form of a yeoman farmer from Berkshire, who takes it upon himself to hunt all the deer possible once the Windsor Forest Inclosure Act went into effect, meaning that "it would no longer be an offence punishable under the forest laws to hunt deer unless the animals were kept within an enclosed park."[79] Zachariah Boult styled himself as Robin Hood, and haunted the forest, with a band of men. "Together, they made a vigorous endeavour to kill the king's deer, while organizing other carnivalesque events which troubled the Crown and its officials to the extent that they deployed two regiments of soldiers to restore order

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[73] John Barnard, "Keats's 'Robin Hood,' John Hamilton Reynolds, and the 'Old Poets.'" *Proceedings of the British Academy* 75 (1989): 182.
[74] Sarah Harlan-Haughey, *The Ecology of the English Outlaw in Medieval Literature: From Fen to Greenwood* (London: Routledge, 2016), 181.
[75] Barnard, "Keats's 'Robin Hood'," 185.
[76] John Hamilton Reynolds, "To a Friend, On Robin Hood." The Robin Hood Project: A Robbins Library Digital Project, https://d.lib.rochester.edu/robin-hood/text/reynolds-to-a-friend.
[77] Reynolds, "To a Friend, On Robin Hood," and Keats, "Robin Hood: To a Friend."
[78] Knight, *Forest Laws*, 8.
[79] Rob Gossedge, "Thomas Love Peacock, Robin Hood, and the Enclosure of Windsor Forest," in *Robin Hood in Greenwood Stood: Alterity and Context in the English Outlaw Tradition*, ed. Stephen Knight (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 152.

to the forest," Rob Gossedge explains.[80] Charles Knight, reported on the adventures of this Robin Hood in his newspaper at the time, helping spread Boult's popularity with the public and garner their admiration for someone who "hunted the animals on what was deemed a fair basis, unlike the aristocratic and royal huntsmen."[81] Boult and his men were living off the land, reaping its benefits—something Keats would have been proud to see. In fact, Boult, while dressed as Robin Hood, is even reported to have hosted a feast in the woods (near the border between Cranbourne Chase and Winkfield Plain) for a group of surprised forest commissioners, giving them the opportunity to enjoy some time in nature on what was described as a lovely and picturesque day.[82]

The stories of Robin Hood and the literary works of the Romantic poets seem to encourage readers to spend time outdoors. The ever-perfect weather in the greenwood is one allure, as can be witnessing nightingales singing, or fields of daffodils swaying in the breeze. Recently, science has confirmed what literature has suggested all along. A study of 20,000 participants conducted through the University of Exeter and published in June 2020, "found that people who spent two hours a week in green spaces—local parks or other natural environments, either all at once or spaced over several visits—were substantially more likely to report good health and psychological well-being than those who don't."[83] Another study from 2021 successfully showed that exposure to nature led to "improved cognitive function, brain activity, blood pressure, mental health, physical activity, and sleep."[84] Ecopsychology, an interdisciplinary field that focuses on the relationship between humans and nature and how this affects human psychology, is growing beyond the laboratory and into the home.[85] Richard Louv, the author and child advocate who coined the term Nature Deficit Disorder, has written extensively on the negative effects technology can have on children, and how disconnecting and going into nature can counter those effects. He argues that "Nature is not only nice to have, but it's a have-to-have for physical health and cognitive functioning."[86] One is left to wonder if some of Louv's books might be found in the giftshop in Sherwood Forest.

CONCLUSION: THE GREENWOOD IN TODAY'S GREEN WORLD

As readers, listeners, and viewers, humans have the tendency to become attached to places through the power of imagination. Buell explains that "[t]he places that haunt one's dreams and to some

[80] Gossedge, "Thomas Love Peacock," 137.
[81] Gossedge, "Thomas Love Peacock," 153.
[82] Gossedge, "Thomas Love Peacock,"154.
[83] Jim Robbins, "How Immersion in Nature Benefits Your Health." *Yale Environment 360* (Yale School of the Environment), Jan. 9, 2020, https://e360.yale.edu/features/ecopsychology-how-immersion-in-nature-benefits-your-health.
[84] Marcia P. Jimenez, et al. "Associations Between Nature Exposure and Health: A Review of the Evidence." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 9 (2021): https://doi.org/10.3390%2Fijerph18094790.
[85] Andy Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life* (New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 2012), 3.
[86] Robbins, referring to Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2005), provides recommendations for people of all ages and communities on how to incorporate nature further into daily life.

extent define one's character can range from versions of actual places to the utterly fictitious."[87] Whether this literary location is based on a real geographical place, or is completely imaginary, the effects on readers, or "imaginers," as Buell terms them, is the same. Having not visited a place in person, or maybe being unable to ever go, "hardly lessens the intensity of such stories or imagined places to induce longing and loyalty, and in some cases even to influence national behavior and the course of world affairs. It's entirely possible to care more about places you've never been—the Africa or Israel/Palestine of your imagination—than the ones you know first hand."[88] Robin Hood's greenwood is such a place. It has become an iconic location representing the medieval forest in countless minds.

In 2007, forest rangers in Sherwood, along with the Forestry Commission, called attention to the fact that the ancient oaks within the forest were perishing at a much higher rate. Quickly, a rescue plan was implemented with a bid of £50 million to plant 250,000 oaks in 350 acres.[89] However, Sherwood's problems have not been resolved yet. In 2017, INEOS, a multinational petrochemical company, began preparing to conduct seismic surveys near Sherwood to find shale gas. The public outcry was deafening. A number of governing bodies quickly responded against the possibility of fracking near the ancient oaks, including the Nottinghamshire County Council, the National Trust, and the Forestry Commission, along with the international environmental organization Friends of the Earth, which has collected 72,174 signatures in its petition against INEOS. In a promotional video sponsored by Friends of the Earth, actor and director Mark Rylance spoke of the dangers of allowing fracking in Sherwood. He said, "This is the latest threat to our increasingly industrialised countryside. I feel we have to make a special effort to protect a place like Sherwood Forest. If they could consider fracking in Sherwood Forest, after all, where won't they consider fracking?"[90] Rylance's words faithfully capture the significance of this forest to the sense of cultural nationalism, and hearken to the "myths of nationness in American and British history that appeal to defining iconic images of national territory."[91] In 2019, fracking in the United Kingdom was suspended due to concerns it could trigger earthquakes, but in 2022 rumblings began in Parliament about lifting the ban.

While the public's imagination might be focused on preserving Sherwood Forest, it does not mean that others cannot use the same techniques. In 2014, a wind farm conglomerate, Origin Energy, set its sights on Barnsdale Forest. The installation of two 400ft. wind turbines required felling part of the forest. Nearby resident Ron Firth, a self-described "history enthusiast," went on a mission to find historical connections between Barnsdale and Robin Hood, bringing these to the public's attention. The head of the energy company, Steve Carney, acknowledged that "historically it may have been Robin's old stomping ground," but added that the trees cut down would be more recent growth.[92] Nevertheless, the public's outcry was enough to get the Woodland Trust involved and delay the project for a few years. In that time, an unlikely hero appeared: a nineteenth century

[87] Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism*, 73.
[88] Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism*, 73.
[89] Maev Kennedy, "Robin Hood's Greenwood under Threat as Ancient Trees Die Off," *The Guardian* (U.S. Edition), Oct. 15, 2007.
[90] "Mark Rylance Attacks 'Plan to Frack in Sherwood Forest,'" *BBC News*, June 4, 2018.
[91] Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism*, 81.
[92] Jane Matthews, "Campaigner Invokes Robin Hood Legend in Bid to Save Forest From £6m Wind Farm." *Daily Express*, Oct. 14, 2014, https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/525210/Robin-Hood-Barnsdale-Forest-wind-farm.

fourstorey windmill. At two miles away, the wind turbines were found to potentially affect the area around the protected windmill. Origin Energy had to move on to a different location, but not before Carey stated that they were simply trying to help the residents with lower energy bills. He said, "We were trying to give money back to the community in the spirit of Robin."[93] But the community much preferred to preserve their forest than to get a discount.

Understanding the green world in literature of the past can, in turn, help us understand our response to the current world in which we live. In the Robin Hood ballads of the fifteenth century, the forest is transformed from the dark and dangerous land of Middle English romance, to the refuge of the outlaw—meant to preserve the wellbeing of those ousted by society, whether in Barnsdale or Sherwood. Through the centuries, however, for many the *space* of the forest becomes the *place* of Sherwood. As Johnson notes, "Modern audiences overwhelmingly identify Robin Hood with Sherwood. Thus, *every* forest can become Sherwood, and Sherwood, conversely, becomes every forest, since attention to the details of the greenwood is extremely rare in any Robin Hood story, medieval or neomedieval."[94] There is meaning attached to both the geographical and literary location. And, while in the ballads the forest preserved the people, now the people must help preserve the forest. Motivated by the emotional attachment to an imaginary location, people from England and around the world will try to save a place they still see as a refuge.

[93] Mark Branagan, "Windfarm Plans to Destroy Legendary Robin Hood Forest Are Thwarted by Windmill." *Daily Express*, Mar. 24, 2016, https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/655785/Windfarm-plans-destroy-legendary-Robin-Hood-forest-thwarted-windmill.
[94] Johnson, "Ecomedievalism," 36.

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