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Robin Hood and the Forest Laws

Stephen Knight
The University of Melbourne

The routine opening for a Robin Hood film or novel shows a peasant being harassed for breaking the forest laws by the brutal, and usually Norman, authorities. Robin, noble in both social and behavioral senses, protects the peasant, and offends the authorities. So the hero takes to the forest with the faithful peasant for a life of manly companionship and liberal resistance, at least until King Richard returns and reinstates Robin for his loyalty to true values, social and royal, which are somehow congruent with his forest freedom.

The story makes us moderns feel those values are age-old. But this is not the case. The modern default opening is not part of the early tradition. Its source appears to be the very well-known and influential *Robin Hood and his Merry Men* by Henry Gilbert (1912). The apparent lack of interest in the forest laws theme in the early ballads might simply be taken as reality: Barbara A. Hanawalt sees a strong fit between the early Robin Hood poems and contemporary outlaw actuality. Her detailed analysis of what outlaws actually did against the law indicates that robbery and assault were normal and that breach of the forest laws was never an issue.[1]

The forest laws themselves are certainly medieval.[2] They were famously imposed by the Norman kings, they harassed ordinary people, stopping them using the forests for their animals and as a source for food and timber, and Sherwood was one of the most aggressively policed forests—but this did not cross into the early Robin Hood materials. Robin versus the forest laws is a fairly recent emphasis, with post-medieval causes and contexts that will be explored here. But this is not one of those cases where a feature suddenly enters the tradition, like Robin being a displaced lord, or, much later, a Saxon patriot. Killing the king's deer is in fact referred to at times in the early tradition, but it has no thematic emphasis or continuity as a motif: there are certain explicit conditions, around and after 1800, under which it becomes of compelling interest and is then narrativized as the reason for Robin's outlaw status because the forest laws are taken as symbolic of general authoritarian oppression.

The most marked feature of the forest in the early texts is a utopian feeling. At the opening of the earliest surviving ballad, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, it is early summer, and everything is lovely:

> In som*er* when þe shawes be sheyne
> And leves be large and long
> Hit is full mery i*n* feyre foreste
> To here þe foulys song

[1] Barbara A. Hanawalt, "Ballads and Bandits: Fourteenth-Century Outlaws and the Robin Hood Poems," in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt, Medieval Studies at Minnesota 4 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 154-75.

[2] See Raymond Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (Sutton: Phoenix Mill, 1991).

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> To se the dere draw to þe dale
> And leve the hilles hee
> And shadow he*m* i*n* þe leves grene
> vnd*ur* the grene wode tre (1-8)[3]

In a way this is realistic—outlaws normally only went to the forest in summer. But the summer magic is crucial—and though only touched in, it is structural. In his other, non-outlaw identity Robin Hood is the leader of celebrations of early summer in what are called the "play-games," found in the English south-west, and later in Scotland, he rides through the small town from the forest to lead a celebration and collect money—without menaces—for civic needs like roads or the church tower. Robin is linked to nature: he can be called a hero of natural law in every sense.

His enemies are unnatural practitioners of law both in the state—the sheriff; and in the equally powerful church—the abbot, the bishop and the monks. Typically the outlaws rob them while they are on the way through the forest, where they are dangerously entering Robin's domain. In the same way the major early stories show the sheriff being humiliated in the forest, even, after being particularly bad, being shot in the head by Little John as he tries to run away to the safety of Nottingham in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* (by 1640).

Most modern readings do not see any difference between these figures who controlled ordinary life in the towns and the agents of forest law, usually called foresters. The very influential F. J. Child, whose late nineteenth-century edition, with commentary on each ballad, was the only substantial work on the outlaw tradition until the modern period, says in his headnote to the *Gest of Robin Hood*, of c. 1500, that Robin "lives by the king's deer" and that "Bishops, sheriffs and game-keepers [were] the only enemies he ever had."[4]

But these three opponents are not equal in the early texts. In the *Gest* the feast the outlaws give the knight includes venison, with has presumably been poached before it was roasted, but this is not an important enough matter to be specified. When the king originally went off looking for Robin Hood in Plomton Park he found the antlered deer gone, but stealing the deer was not the reason he was looking for Robin: it was his habitual theft of money, from important people like the sheriff and the monks.

The *Gest* acknowledges some breach of the forest laws when an outlaw says "We lyue by oure kynges dere" (1489)[5] but in the other early texts this theme is almost completely absent. In *Robin Hood and the Monk* they eat "pastes of venyson' (324) but the text has no other reference, even of this very limited sort, to the forest laws.

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[3] *Robin Hood and the Monk* in Thomas H. Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson, ed., *Early Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Edition of the Texts, ca. 1425 to ca. 1600*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 428 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2013), 3-17. Further references to this and all other Robin Hood texts, after an initial note citation, will be given parenthetically.

[4] F. J. Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols. (New York: Dover, 1965), 3:42.

[5] Cited from the Wynkyn de Worde edition of *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*, in Ohlgren and Matheson, *Early Rymes*, 89-147.

As the tradition becomes both increasingly popular and also much better recorded in the seventeenth century, there are occasional almost casual references to deer. Michael Drayton's *Polyolbion,* the 1612 version, says in its Sherwood sequence:

> And of those Archers braue, there was not any one
> But he could kill a Deere his swiftest speed upon (339-40).[6]

The broadside ballads follow the same style. In *Robin Hood's Fishing* (c.1650) Robin is weary of "chasing of the fallow deer" (8). In *Robin Hood and Maid Marian* (1660 or later) John goes off "To kill the deer" (60) to celebrate the lover's union. In the conservative semi-epic ballad *A True Tale of Robin Hood* (1632) there is one mention of them eating "venyson fat and good" (162) in the forest, but nothing more on the topic: the poem is anxious only about Robin Hood's danger to the state. [7]

There does in the seventeenth century seem to be a growth in the awareness that Robin Hood was resisting the forest laws. Some of these references are merely to the activity of poaching itself: in the popular *Robin Hood and Little John* (c.1656) Robin says to John "I'll teach the use of the bow / To shoot at the fat fallow-deer," (108-109) but some go further and knowingly imagine a forest laws conflict. In *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men* ("Beggar" version, c.1656) the men are condemned to death for "slaying the king's fallow deer" (23), but Robin rescues them.[8]

Even when forest laws are acknowledged, the situation is not simple. In *Robin Hood and the Tanner* (1657), the deer are mentioned early on, as the outlaws "view the red deer, that range here and there" (3.3). Then the Tanner actually pretends to be "a keeper of the forest"—but this is only a pretext for a fight with Robin, not some legal activity. In *Robin Hood and the Tinker* (1657) the Tinker does agree to go bounty-hunting for Robin Hood, and he is told Robin is off "Killing of the kings deer" (27.4). But he too fights cheerfully with Robin and is incorporated into the forest community. In *Robin Hood and the Ranger* (c.1740), the ranger is a genuine forester, and Robin is off "to kill a fat buck" (3.1), but again after they fight they become allies. The forest laws motif in these is just a plot mechanism helping to develop the community-forming narrative of the "Robin Hood meets his match" ballads.[9]

There is one much stronger seventeenth-century Robin versus forester story, *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* (c.1650). Teenage Robin is going to an archery contest and meets fifteen foresters. One sneers at a boy with a bow: Robin bets him he can "hit a mark a hundred rod, / And I'le cause a hart to dye" (21-22)[10]—and does so.

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[6] Michael Drayton, "Song 26" in *Poly-Olbion,* in *The Works*, ed. J. W. Hebel, 6 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), 4:123.

[7] *Robin Hood's Fishing*, *Robin Hood and Maid Marian*, and *A True Tale of Robin Hood* in Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, ed., *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, 2nd ed. TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 581-91, 493-98, and 602-25.

[8] *Robin Hood and Little John* and *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men* in Knight and Ohlgren, 476-85, and 513-20.

[9] *Robin Hood and the Tanner*, *Robin Hood and the Tinker*, and *Robin Hood and the Ranger*, in Child, 137-40, 140-43, and 152, lines noted by stanza and line number.

[10] *Robin Hood and his Progress to Nottingham*, in Knight and Ohlgren, 507-12.

The forester refuses to pay and threatens Robin, so he runs off, turns, shoots the forester dead, and also kills his fourteen friends. Then for the first time he takes to the forest. This startling ballad was extremely popular, but it is not really a forest law story, just a bad foresters story. Essentially it is part of the international hero myth, explaining how the hero faced his first challenge—it is not in any real way an account of or challenge to the forest laws.

That very violent Robin perhaps meshes with the few early seventeenth century references that Christopher Hill found, and he argued that in them Robin was representing the parliamentary turn to violence of the period.[11] The connection certainly seems behind the decision to stage in Nottingham on King Charles II’s day of accession a very short play entitled *Robin Hood and his Crew of Souldiers*. The forest is overwhelmed with a shout of acclamation for the king, and though Little John demurs, saying “Every brave soule is born a King,” Robin without resistance or even action bows to the new kingly authority.[12] This is royal laws, not forest laws.

A different link had emerged between Robin and the forest in the sixteenth century when the hero was gentrified. Early Robin is a yeoman, and he lives vaguely here and now—a king Edward is mentioned in the *Gest*, but he is not given a number and so could be anywhere in the preceding two hundred years. The tightening ideology and state control of the Tudor period did not leave Robin untouched. The summer-celebrating play-games were often banned as likely to get out of orderly hand, and in a potent piece of appropriation Robin was reconceived as a lord fallen on hard times, exiled by a bad king. This is where King John steps into the tradition and the 1190s become the default Robin Hood date.

In 1598-99 Anthony Munday wrote two plays—*The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* and *The Death* of the same. Being in the forest is now his “downfall” not his natural utopian state. But he still likes it there, and there is nature-celebration poetry: Lord Robert describes their changed situation to Lady Matilda, known in the forest as Marian:

> For Arras hangings and rich Tapestrie,
> We have sweete natures best imbrothery.
> For thy steele glass, wherin thou wontst to looke,
> Thy christall eyes gaze in a christall brooke.
> At court, a flower or two did decke thy head:
> Now with whole garlands is it circled.
> For what in wealth we had, we have in flowers,
> And what we loose in halles, we find in bowers. (1374-81)[13]

This is gentry pastoral gardening, not an encounter with the forest, and Munday seems positively to distance Robin from improper hunting. There is “venson” in the forest

[11] Christopher Hill, *Liberty Against the Law: Some Seventeenth-Century Controversies* (London: Lane, 1996), 71-82.

[12] For discussion and text see Stephen Knight, “Robin Hood and the Royal Restoration,” *Critical Survey* 5 (1993): 298-312.

[13] Anthony Munday, *The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington*, in Knight and Ohlgren, 303-401.

(1518) but as Little John notes to the Friar (or rather, in the para-play, Sir John Eltham to Skelton) there has been “no hunting song, no coursing of the buck” (2213). Though Scathlock and Scarlock, the widow’s sons, are rescued from execution by the sheriff, there is no forest law reason for their intended fate – unlike in the later ballad version. When the King arrives there is no mention of breaking the forest laws, and then in the sequel play *The Death*, the King and Robin go hunting together.

Cultural gentrification to the exclusion of the forest law theme, or any real kind of resistance, is central to the fine but unfinished masque *The Sad Shepherd*, which Ben Jonson seems to have been working on late in life in the 1630s. His prologue insists this is an English version of classical pastoral, being about “mere English Flocks,” and when Robin welcomes visitors to Sherwood, including the sad shepherd himself, the gloomy lover who has stolen the title from him, he greets them in the unproblematic “Jolly Bower / Of Robin-hood and to the greene-wood Walkes.”[14]

With the two exceptional and contextual formations of violent ballads and gentrified pastoral, until the eighteenth century Robin’s forest is a Utopian base for a critique of social and legal mismanagement. This continues in the popular prose and verse pamphlets often named *The Life of Robin Hood*, and while there is some increment of forest laws references, there is no focus on challenging them as Robin’s role in life. In the 1678 prose *Noble Birth*, as part of “Robin Hood’s Delight” he fights against “keepers of the King’s game” and the author retells the potentially forest law-linked stories of *Robin Hood and the Tanner* and *Robin Hood and Three Young Men*. The *Whole Life* of 1712 does not advance on this, but Captain Alexander Smith’s prose account of 1714 tells the *Robin Hood’s Progress to Nottingham* story with a difference. The foresters disliked the ordinary people and “owed them a grudge, for always endeavouring to kill any of the King’s deer.”[15] This moves the story forward into Robin’s adult life, necessarily breaking forest laws with his men. But in other comparable texts the forest laws idea is not a straightforward challenge to authority. In the 1734 *Life* by Captain Johnson, Robin is not only the son of the Earl of Huntington, but his father was Head Ranger in the north of England, a motif which recurs in nineteenth-century Robin Hood novels. There is one ballad that does this sort of work: the *rifacimento* ballad *Robin Hood’s Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage* (1681-84). Robin’s father was a forester, but still, like his mother, of gentry stock and the hero, now part of the gentry at Gamwell Hall, can go hunting with John, his servant. Robin says “Bid my yeomen kill six brace of bucks,” and then they have to fight off some yeomen who want to take the bucks from him (159).[16] It is forest laws from the authoritarian side, now gentrification has taken control of Robin.

[14] Ben Jonson, *The Sad Shepherd*, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, ed., 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7:417-80, Act I, scene iv, lines 3-4.

[15] *The Noble Birth of Robin Hood* (London: Vere, 1678), unpaginated; Captain Alexander Smith, “Robin Hood,” in *A Complete History of the Lives and Robberies of the Most Notorious Highwaymen*, ed. Arthur L. Hayward (London: Routledge, 1926), 408-12 at 409.

[16] *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage*, in Knight and Ohlgren, 527-40.

Though the forest laws theme is evanescent and at most of limited instrumental weight in the early Robin Hood texts, there had been plenty of medieval awareness of the impact and brutality of the forest laws. For many people, Magna Carta had itself become associated with freedom to use forest and waste land: this idea in fact went back to the 1217 Charter of the Forest, which was confirmed in 1297 specifically as a companion to Magna Carta by King Edward I. It placed limits on the power of the crown to exploit forests for its profit and its pleasure in hunting, and permitted some use of forest and waste land by common people.

From the sixteenth century on this sense of exploitative control of natural resources—expressed strongly, at least with reference to the middle ages, by Pope in "Windsor Forest" (1713), merged with the resistance to the enclosure movement—but without any trace of Robin Hood. In the 1730s when the Hampshire "blacks," disguised peasants, were invading newly enclosed forest land they had a mythical leader, but as E. P. Thompson notes, although he was like Robin Hood in many ways his name was actually "King John"—presumably a reference to the Magna Carta link to the forest laws.[17] And then in 1765 when royalty enclosed Richmond Park in 1765, it was not Robin Hood who was associated with the resistance, but Merlin. No doubt because the Merlin's Cave Queen Caroline had built there in 1735 had just been destroyed as part of Capability Brown's maneuvers, which included the enclosure itself. Merlin was held to have predicted both this and the civil resistance, which included breaking into the park in daylight to walk about and use it.

This neutral position on Robin and the forest laws lasts a long time. The introduction to Joseph Ritson's very widely-read 1795 edition of the ballads, though firmly against the medieval church and aristocracy, merely says that "In these forests and with this company he for many years reigned to be an independant [*sic*] sovereign" and the "forests were, in short, his territory."[18] Recognizing the medieval origin of the forest, Ritson says "The deer with which the royal forests then abounded (every Norman tyrant being, like Nimrod, 'a mighty hunter before the Lord') would afford our hero and his companions an ample supply of food throughout the year" (vi-vii). But there is no mention of the outlaws breaching forest laws, and indeed they are finally called "our foresters" (vii).

However, Robin does before long firmly enter the area of forest law resistance, even come to dominate it, and in large part through the later part of the process of enclosure. The entry point is Thomas Love Peacock, but not his 1822 novel *Maid Marian*. Rather it is his *Calidore and Miscellanea*, a posthumous collection of 1891 edited by Richard Garnett, which published for the first time Peacock's late essay "The Last Day of Windsor Forest." Here he reminisces about living on the edge of the forest at Egham, and his theme is the enclosure of the forest by George IV. The act went through Parliament in July 1814, says Peacock, though it appears to have been in fact 1813. Local people were angry at being excluded from the forest and in

[17] E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), see Chapter 5, "King John," 142-46.

[18] Joseph Ritson, "The Life of Robin Hood," in *Robin Hood, A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs and Ballads Now Extant Relative to the Celebrated English Outlaw*, 2 vols. (London: Egerton and Johnson, 1795), 1:i-xiv at vi.

particular from being forbidden from "hunting, coursing, killing, destroying, or taking any Deer whatsoever within the same" (150). Some locals thought the act was badly drafted, and claimed they could still hunt in the park. The leader of this resistance was a farmer from Water Oakley. Peacock has forgotten his name, but not his pseudonym. It was Robin Hood. He "taking with him two of his men, whom he called Scarlet and Little John sallied forth daily into the forest to kill the King's deer, and returned home every evening loaded with spoil" (150). Peacock continues "One day I was walking towards the Dingle, when I met a man with a gun, who asked me if I had seen Robin Hood? He told me he was Scarlet. He was a pleasant-looking man, and seemed as merry as his original: like one in high enjoyment of sport" (151).

Peacock was a fiction-writer of course; maybe he invented the incident. But not the general story—it is described in Hughes's *History of Windsor Forest* and the essay by Rob Gossedge,[19] which put the enclosure and the resistance in the context of an extended struggle between the crown and the locals over access to the forest and its produce. As Gossedge has argued,[20] Peacock's account appears to have been the stimulus for his own *Maid Marian*, started not long after this in 1818, but not finished and published until 1822. It is not, Gossedge says "a novel about enclosures" (160), but it thematizes the issues, being "very much concerned with the disappearing forest society, its replacement by officials, and the lingering resistance of yeomen and labourers"' (160). Like Scott in *Ivanhoe*, Peacock insists on Robin's right to rule in the forest: Friar Tuck's long sermon on Right versus Might asks "What title had William of Normandy to England that Robin of Locksley has not to merry Sherwood" (163)—which clearly refers to William I's role as the creator of the forest laws.

There seems to have been growing contiguity between Robin Hood and the second phase of the enclosure movement. From the sixteenth century until the early-mid eighteenth century, in the first phase, enclosures were by local agreement—i.e. the lords persuaded or forced people to give up their traditional rights and very often to move. Some historians call it enclosure by consent, but there was plenty of dissent as recorded in E. P. Thompson's *Whigs and Hunters*—but not with Robin as a symbolic leader. It appears to have been the parliamentary enclosures which stimulated the new intensity of the forest law material in the Robin Hood tradition. The enclosure dissenters picked up on his meaning as a figure of the people resisting official brutality, but this process of dissent and Robin Hood involvement only became common in the second half of the eighteenth century and had uneven distribution across Britain. The acts mostly applied to areas in the north and west, the best lands having already been enclosed by the lords via consent, and there is little sign that Robin Hood was associated in any way strongly with the south, the South Midlands and East Anglia, the earlier, consent enclosure, areas. The parliamentary acts were mostly to do with forest and wild enclosures, those used for hunting, while

[19] G. M. Hughes, *The History of Windsor Forest* (London: Ballantyne, 1890), 83-5; see also 138-44 in 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, Medieval Identities: Socio-Cultural Spaces 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 135-64.

[20] See Gossedge, especially 158-64.

the earlier allegedly consentual reclamation dealt mostly with the previously common village fields, where Robin Hood had no meaning.

But there is another major force at work—Romanticism. 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. Reynolds’ third sonnet is his best, after receiving Keats’ own ode in response to his first two sonnets. As a result of this early example of Creative Writing by distance, Reynolds, in “To E—,” addressing his fiancée, says of the outlaw myth:

> It tells a tale of forest days—of times
> That would have been most precious unto thee,—
> Days of undying pastoral liberty!
> Sweeter than music of old abbey chimes,—
> Sweet as the virtue of Shakespearean rhymes.—
> Days shadowy with the magic greenwood tree![21]

Reynolds’ cultural medievalism is liberal, but also basically idealistic. Keats was tougher, remembering not just the glamor of the forest, but deploring its modern degradation. If Robin now had again his “forest days”—Reynolds in his third sonnet will pick up the phrase—

> He would swear, for all his oaks,
> Fall’n beneath the dockyard strokes,
> Have rotted on the briny seas; (44-45)

And if Marian were here

> She would weep that her wild bees
> Sang not to her—strange that honey
> Can’t be got without hard money! (46-48)

This refers to a widely discussed modern feature of enclosure—the removal of tenants’ rights to enjoy natural produce upon their land without extra payment for it.

Robin the spirit of the forest meshed easily with the idea of resistance to the forest laws. Peacock’s *Maid Marian* is the major basic statement of the link. But it is assumed when in *Ivanhoe* (1819) Scott sees Robin as lord of the forest and says “the charter of the Forest was extorted from the unwilling hands of King John.”[22]

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[21] On the Keats-Reynolds exchange see John Barnard, “Keats’s ‘Robin Hood,’ John Hamilton Reynolds, and the ‘Old Poets,’” in *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*, ed. Stephen Knight (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), 123-40 at 134-35. All quotations from Keats’ poetry are drawn from Jack Stillinger, ed., *The Poems of John Keats* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

[22] Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (London, Penguin, 1972), 314.

The new impact of Robin as the spirit of the woods is clear in the change from the Thomas Bewick's title-page illustration in Ritson's 1795 first edition to the one that emerged in the second edition—but not at first. When this edition appeared in 1820 it retained Robin boldly fighting the tanner on the title-page but, intriguingly, in the 1823 reprint the trouble had been taken to replace this with a pensive Robin, seated by a tree, with bow, sword and shield inactive, while a deer runs through the forest behind him.[23]

Romantic Robin could also be anti-forest laws Robin. This new mix, forest lord and forest laws resister, now became the default Robin Hood. Leigh Hunt, who knew Keats well, seems likely to have been stimulated by Peacock, as well as Ritson and conceivably Scott, to write four Robin Hood ballads, first published in 1820 in *The Indicator* and then reprinted, with the subtitle "(for children)" emerging in a 1855 edition. The second, *Robin Hood's Flight*, which reworks the story of *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham*, has a strong forest laws theme. First Robin recognizes royal appropriation:

> And then bold Robin he thought of the King
> How he got all this forests and deer,
> And how he made the hungry swing
> If they killed but one in the year.[24]

Robin meets the starving Will: he shoots a deer to feed him; the Abbot and three foresters arrive to arrest him. Robin kills the Abbot and two foresters but the third one joins him and Will and they go off to the forest together. A neat condensation of motifs from three ballads—hostile foresters, a bad Abbot and Robin's adventures with two others in the forest—and combining Hunt's hostility to royalty and the church, this may well be the ultimate source for the "Robin rescues a deer-killing peasant" opening so popular via Henry Gilbert in the twentieth century as a reason for his outlawry.

In the Victorian popular Robin Hood novels, the forest laws theme is normal. There is plenty of resistant material in the first major one, *Royston Gower* (1838) by the Chartist Thomas Miller, who states in his introduction "the principal intention of this work is to show the tyranny of the Norman Forest Laws."[25] The Norman-Saxon divide is strong, though there are some admirable Normans whom Robin and his men help, but the ethnic opposition is strongly linked throughout to the forest laws theme. The Romantic idea of the forest is also strong—after rescuing Hereward the noble Saxon, the outlaws return to the forest in delight and Robin says "Let me be the

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[23] See Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 125 and 126 for the two illustrations.

[24] Leigh Hunt, *Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, gen. ed. Michael Eberle-Sinatra and Robert Morrison, 6 vols. Vol. 5, *Poetical Works, 1801-1821*, ed. John Strachan (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), 5: 291-4. See 5:292, lines 33-36.

[25] Thomas Miller *Royston Gower, or the Days of King John*, 3 vols. (London: Colburn, 1838), 1:xiv.

captive of green trees, and my prison-house walled in with the rustling foliage of summer,"[26]

Most of the outlaw novels are less serious, and usually vague about the forest laws, but retain the forest context in various ways. Pierce Egan's *Robin Hood and Little John* (the serial started in 1838, the novel appeared in 1840) has a final celebration scene drawn from *Ivanhoe* and early on a less traditional scene with the tree-linked ghost of the sister of Robin's foster-father—who is a forester, though a very friendly one. The often humorous Joachim Stocqueler in his 1849 *Maid Marian: the Forest Queen* has the brave heroine running the show while Robin is on crusade, and early on she is assaulted in the dark forest by a disguised Prince John, but her brave dog comes to her rescue. Things drift further in the 1869 *Robin Hood and the Adventures of Merrie Sherwood* published by George Emmett in The Young Englishman's library, where Robin has an entirely friendly encounter with a Wood Demon.

But Victorian forest Robin could be more focused on ideals and forest laws. Alfred Tennyson's *The Foresters* (1891) seems to be heading for an encounter with the forest laws theme when Robin, as a partial explanation of his sudden outlawing says "I have sheltered some that broke the forest laws."[27] The king does also say before pardoning Robin that he has "broken all our Norman forest-laws / And scruplest not to flaunt it to our face" (780). But nothing is made of this in the narrative: Tennyson swerves from anti-forest laws Robin to Romantic Robin, and Marian has a fine late speech, mostly idealistic medievalism but retaining some sense of liberal ideas:

> … I think these oaks at dawn and even,
> Or in the balmy breathings of the night
> Will whisper evermore of Robin Hood. (782)

Then she assesses their achievement:

> We leave but happy memories to the forest.
> We dealt in the wild justice of the woods.
> All those poor serfs whom we have served will bless us,
> All those pale mouths which we have fed will praise us—
> All widows we have holpen pray for us ... (782)

Modern Robin is for the most part an improbable but consolatory mix of qualities—in some way noble, he is also a friend of the poor and so charity replaces radical action. He is also a representative of the Saxons, but only really against the wicked French barons – an idea which emerges in Scott right after the Napoleonic war. But the idea that his outlaw band resisted oppressive and exploitative laws is available and can at times have a firm presence, as in Henry Gilbert's influential 1912 novel, or the

[26] Ibid., 3:191.

[27] Alfred Tennyson, *The Foresters*, in *Poems and Plays*, Oxford Standard Authors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 748-82 at 756.

unusual 1934 *Bows Against the Barons* by Geoffrey Trease. Here a boy is caught killing a deer and Robin acts to rescue him from jail with what the chapter title calls "The Comrades of the Forest"—the wording is deliberate, and finally Robin announces "It was hammers and sickles did it today, not the bows and bills of Sherwood."[28] That sense of resistance to oppressive law in general, not only that of the forest, has recurred—a notable example is Theresa Tomlinson's trilogy *The Forestwife* (2003), historicist feminism aimed at teenagers, where a vigorous young woman, assisted by a handsome but less than intelligent Robin, basically becomes involved in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

Film and television have unsurprisingly been less radical. "Sherwood Forest" has been in the title of quite a number of films, but most of those are from 1946 to 1960, and it seems likely that they were trying to elude in title the dominant impact of the 1938 Warners classic. There Robin is a dashing action hero but the film is also rich in natural-forest references—the tree that comes to life with camouflaged outlaws is hard to forget—and there is also some element of radicalism, starting with the forest laws opening as Robin rescues a peasant, which replaces the grand joust and court beginning of the 1922 Fairbanks film. The politics are mostly general, with Robin, as he says, the voice "of all free men," but they can be sharper: the Normans are clearly played like Brownshirt thugs, and Warners were very aware their Berlin agent had been beaten to death in 1935 for being Jewish.

A comparable politics was to be found in the long-lasting and immensely popular British TV series beginning in 1955. Richard Greene, playing the part as what might be called Squadron Leader Robin Hood, is back from the war, facing the historical crimes of the officials of England—much like a new Labour MP from the 1945 elected government. If the series had a leftist edge including forest laws, there was a source. Hannah Bernstein, the American producer, herself a political refugee from New York, knew where to get good writing cheap—much of the early part of the series was written by Americans black-listed outlaws under McCarthyism, including Ring Lardner, Jr., and Ian McLellan Hunter.

The forest as both idyllic home and also refuge for those resisting oppression was strongly realized in the 1980s television series *Robin of Sherwood*, with a very glamorous Robin and Marian, but also a recurrently political script, in part forest laws, in part just anti-Thatcher. That did so well in the USA that two films were made in 1991, neither of them with much forest laws interest or radical edge, though the recent television series starring Jonas Armstrong combines a return from overseas war theme—pretty clearly post-Iraq—with a fairly mild theme about oppressive laws, including those of the forest. The most recent film, starring Russell Crowe in 2010, returns to the nineteenth-century theme of a medieval prolepsis of modern democracy, as it involves Robin in pre-Magna Carta activities that mesh with resistance to forest laws.

The way the figure of Robin Hood developed after 1800 seems to be a classic of dialectical medievalism: through forest celebration it yearns for the natural beauties of pre-urban, pre-capitalist times; but through the forest laws concept it also stands for an equally modern sense of personal freedom and escape from the unpleasant

[28] Geoffrey Trease, *Bows Against the Barons* (London: Lawrence, 1934), 61.

interventions of authority. Well-armed, with a loyal band, in the summer forest, close to the oppressive town, Robin Hood moved relatively recently into resisting the forest laws, one of the many indications how he and his myth keep on evolving in the service of our considerations and our consolations.

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A CRITICAL EDITION OF *LITTLE JOHN'S ANSWER TO ROBIN HOOD AND THE DUKE OF LANCASTER* (1727)[1]

Stephen Basdeo
Richmond University (Leeds RIASA)

In 1733 the Tory statesman Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, wrote in *The Craftsman* that:

> When the people find themselves generally aggrieved, they are apt to manifest their resentment in satirical ballads, allegories, by-sayings, and ironical points of low wit. They sometimes go farther, and break out into hieroglyphical expressions of their anger against the person, whom they conceive to be the projector of any injury done, or intended to be done them.[2]

Bolingbroke was correct in his observation. The eighteenth century was a golden age for satire. From the Augustan satire of Joseph Addison (1676-1719) and Richard Steele (1676-1729), to the frequently grotesque prints of the latter half of the period,[3] it seemed that no one and nothing in public life was exempt from being critiqued. In the early part of the century, a common target of these satirical attacks was politicians, in particular the Whig Prime Minister, Robert Walpole (1676-1745). It is Walpole, Bolingbroke, and other members of the political establishment who are targeted in the ballad *Little John's Answer to Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster* (1727) that is discussed here.

Despite R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor's assertion that "the day has long since past when the student of English popular literature could hope for the discovery of a genuinely new Robin Hood ballad,"[4] *Little John's Answer* was only brought to the attention of Robin Hood scholars in 2015. I located the ballad in the Special Collections Archive of the University of Leeds[5] after having read a footnote in the work of an early twentieth-century scholar, Milton Percival. In his anthology *Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole* (1916), he includes the ballad *Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster* (1727). He was aware of *Little John's Answer*, although it is unclear whether he actually saw it, and simply commented in his footnote that it was "a Grub Street version of [*Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster*]." [7] [8] It is my pleasure, therefore, to present readers with an edited version

[1] Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Alexander L. Kaufman and Valerie B. Johnson for their support in preparing this article, as well as the anonymous reviewer whose helpful comments strengthened this paper.

[2] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *The Craftsman*, 10 Feb. 1733, cited in Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27.

[3] See Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007).

[4] R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor, ed., *Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Introduction to the English Outlaw*, 3rd ed. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), xiv.

[5] *Little John's Answer to Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster. A Ballad. To the Tune of The Abbot of Canterbury* (London: T. White, Chancery Lane, 1727), 4pp. Leeds, Brotherton Library BC Lt q/WAL/L.

[7] Grub Street was in the vicinity of Moorfields in London and was known as the residence of a number of publishers of penny pamphlets and satires but, according to Pat Rogers, the street soon acquired a reputation for

of *Little John's Answer to Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster*. In this edition, the spelling, italicisation, and capitalisation of the original have been retained, with the exception of the long *s* letterform. Brief footnotes have also been added to the ballad explaining and offering suggestions as to the meaning of some of the allusions within the text.

Little is known of the author of this ballad due to the fact that whoever wrote it chose to remain anonymous, a practice that was adopted by many satirists during the eighteenth century. Perhaps some brief biographical information can be suggested for the man who printed it instead. The ballad was printed by T. White of Chancery Lane in London. There is a Thomas White listed as an apprentice to the printer James Hayward in 1718 some years before the ballad's publication, according to *The British Book Trade Index*.[9] Given that this appears to be the only man with the initial of T. and the surname of White in the records of the publishing trade, it is not unreasonable to suppose that this is the same man who later printed *Little John's Answer*. A printer named T. White—perhaps the same—was also active in 1736 as there is another publication bearing this imprint appearing in that year.[10] Apprenticeship during the eighteenth century usually began when a person was around 12 or 13 years of age,[11] and generally lasted until a person was 24 years old.[12] The absence of a printer named T. White from Henry L. Plomer's *A Dictionary of all the Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland between 1688 and 1725* (1922), indicates that, if indeed all of these people named T. White are the same person, he must have ended his apprenticeship and set up his own printing establishment after 1725.[13] Thus a tentative biographical outline for the printer T. White can be traced. He would probably have been born between 1701 and 1703. He was then apprenticed to Hayward in 1718, and finished his apprenticeship between 1725 and 1727. By 1727 he had set up on his own publishing house, and was still active until at least 1736. These admittedly scant biographical details rest, of course, on the supposition that all of these people with the surname White are the same person, and therefore the foregoing details must be taken as suggestive rather than as a statement of historical truth.

The ballad itself is a clear product of the eighteenth century when the lives of criminals were frequently appropriated by satirists and playwrights and equated with political figures. The character of Peachum is used in *The Beggar's Opera* (1727), for instance, to

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producing "low" literature, so that the actual Grub Street in time gave rise to a metaphor denoting the essentially ephemeral production of the literary hack. See Pat Rogers, *Hacks and Dunces: Pope, Swift, and Grub Street*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1980), 18-19.

[8] Milton B. Percival, *Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 183.

[9] Mike Parry, "Thomas White," *British Book Trade Index* http://www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/Detailswithsource.htm?TraderID=94262 accessed October 13, 2015.

[10] *A catalogue and particular description of the human anatomy in wax-work, and several other preparations to be seen at the Royal-Exchange* (London: T. White, 1736).

[11] Tim Hitchcock, Sharon Howard, and Robert Shoemaker, "Apprenticeship Indentures and Disciplinary Cases (IA)," in *London Lives, 1690-1800*, www.londonlives.org, accessed October 14, 2015.

[12] Joan Lane, *Apprenticeship in England, 1600-1914* (London: University College London Press, 1996), 7.

[13] Henry R. Plomer et al., *A Dictionary of all the Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland between 1688 and 1725* (Oxford: Printed for the Bibliographical Society, 1922), 308-10.

satirise Walpole (1676-1745). Peachum is a thief taker[14] who places his profession on a par with contemporary politicians by saying, "'tis but fitting we should protect and encourage cheats, since we live by 'em.'"[15] References to criminals whose names were derivatives of Robert abound in Gay's play, such as, "Robin of Bagshot, alias […] Bob Booty."[16] Walpole was colloquially named Robin in satirical pamphlets such as *Robin's Reign, or Seven's the Main* (1731),[17] and *Robin and Will* (1731).[18] Furthermore, out of the alley-ways and courts of the area around Grub Street, where many hack writers lived and worked, numerous pamphlets poured forth attacking the "Robinocracy."[19] The novelist Henry Fielding (1707-1754) frequently referred to "Roberdsmen" in his writings, a term which carried allusions both to Robin Hood's gang and Walpole and his men.[20] Fielding's novel *Jonathan Wild* (1743)—an embellished biography of the eponymous thief taker—has been interpreted by critics as a satire upon Walpole.[21] As we can see, Walpole was equated with criminals on various occasions,[22] which is the case in *Little John's Answer* where he is represented by Robin Hood. Despite the efforts of satirists to expose him as corrupt, however, Walpole held a firm grip on power during his tenure as Prime Minister, which lasted between 1721 and 1742.

The ballad reads as though it is a sequel to the legend of Robin Hood. The year is 1202 and Robin has received a royal pardon and has become the king's "keeper." It is implied that he has become one of the most corrupt of the king's servants, and so the Duke of Lancaster travels to meet with the king and expose Robin's corruption. When the Duke meets the king, he pours forth a number of accusations against Robin. King John, however, is

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[14] Before the establishment of a professional police force in 1829, law enforcement was carried out in an often haphazard manner by watchmen, parish constables, and thief takers. The latter were individuals who were hired by the victims of a crime to recover their stolen goods. The post was open to corruption and the most famous thief taker was Jonathan Wild (1683-1725). See Lucy Moore, *The Thieves' Opera* (London: Penguin, 1997).

[15] John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera. As it is Acted at the Theatre Royal in Lincolns-Inn-Fields* (London: John Watts, 1727), 1.

[16] Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*, 3.

[17] *Robin's Reign; or, Seven's the Main* (London: Sold by the Printsellers of London and Westminster, 1731), London, British Museum BM Satires 1868,0808.3541, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1572165&partId=1

[18] *Robin and Will; or, The Millers of Arlington. A New Ballad*. (London: Printed for W. Webb, near the Royal-Exchange; and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1733), 7pp. Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads Bod4943, http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/4943.

[19] Paul Langford, *The Eighteenth Century: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22.

[20] J. A. Downie, *A Political Biography of Henry Fielding* (London: Routledge, 2009), 92.

[21] This view has persisted since 1858 with Keightley's essay "On the Life and Writing of Henry Fielding." More recently, however, Downie has nuanced this view, pointing out that some scholars argue that while the original edition of *Jonathan Wild* makes allusions to the "Great Man" (Walpole), late editions which Fielding amended are principally a satire on false greatness. Downie's also points to the fact that Walpole subscribed to ten sets of Fielding's Miscellanies, and near the end of his life, Fielding described Wild as "one of the best of men and ministers." See Downie, *A Political Biography of Henry Fielding*, 126-27.

[22] Ibid.

perfectly acquainted as to the nature of Robin's character, and the way that he manages state affairs. He dismisses the duke's concerns, admitting that retaining Robin as his keeper is merely a matter of selecting the best out of a number of bad candidates for the position. The question is not whether Robin Hood is a corrupt minister of state, but who would replace him and be less corrupt. In fact, the King is dismayed with the Duke for bringing the matter of Robin's alleged corruption to his attention, and John asks the Duke of Lancaster if he would undertake the office of keeper, to which the Duke simply remains silent.

In *Little John's Answer*, King John stands in for King George I, and Robin Hood is Walpole. The Duke of Lancaster represents Nicholas Lechmere (1675-1727).[23] Lechmere was a Whig politician and a lawyer, who is described as having been stubborn, haughty, and opinionated, often engaging in frequent clashes with Walpole in the Commons.[24] The narrative of the ballad refers to events which occurred between the King, Walpole, Lechmere, and Bolingbroke in 1727. Before discussing the events of 1727, however, it is necessary to provide some background information. Bolingbroke had been forced to flee from England to France in 1715, an event which was gleefully reported in another ballad entitled *Advice to Dr. Harry Gambol* (c.1715?).[26] "Harry Gambol" was a contemporary sobriquet given to Bolingbroke (1678-1751).[27] The Whigs had won the general election in the previous year, and upon taking office they accused many Tory members of the previous administration of corruption, and began to have some of them impeached. Bolingbroke was one of their targets.[28] During his exile in France, Bolingbroke made the mistake of accepting an Earldom from the Pretender, James Stuart (1688-1766), and agreed to serve as the exiled James' Secretary of State.[29] After the disastrous Jacobite Rising in 1715, however, James blamed Bolingbroke for its failure, and consequently Bolingbroke secretly made contact with the British Ambassador in Paris to betray the Jacobite cause in return for a royal pardon.[30] He was eventually allowed to return to England and was pardoned on 25 May 1723, though he was still subject to some penalties, such as a prohibition from taking up his seat in the House of Lords.[31]

In April 1721 Walpole became Prime Minister and firmly established his power in the Commons by making himself indispensable to George I. He kept a close eye on all levels of

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[23] Nicholas Lechmere was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and, hence, "the Duke of Lancaster" in the ballad; Dobson and Taylor, *Rymes of Robyn Hood*, 192.

[24] A. A. Hanham, "Lechmere, Nicholas, Baron Lechmere (1675-1727)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004),http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16262, accessed April 4, 2015.

[26] *Advice to Dr. Harry Gambol, upon the pulling down of his stage, given by his abused patient* (London: Printed for A. B---tr, one who has had expensive Experience of the Doctor's Barbarous Practice, c.1715?), Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads Bod16306.

[27] Tone Sundt Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets: The Use of Literature as Pro-government Propaganda, 1721-1742* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 207.

[28] H. T. Dickinson, "St John, Henry, styled first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24496. Accessed April 8, 2015.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

government, frequently attending sittings, and critically judging the mood of the MPs to allow for tactical retreats on certain policy issues when required.[32] He also extended his power by expanding his system of patronage, carefully presiding over government appointments in the hope of forming a cohort of men that he could depend upon. By 1727 there were 150 of his men in the Commons.[33] Despite the allegations of corruption levelled at him by his opponents, especially in regard to his handling of the economic crash known as the South Sea Bubble in 1720, he was a shrewd political operator. By 1727, when *Little John's Answer* was published, one early and admittedly very admiring biographer of Walpole stated that he now "stood in the highest estimation of king and nation."[34]

In 1727 Bolingbroke approached the Duchess of Kendal (1667-1743)—the King's mistress—to effect the full restitution of his rights and privileges. The Duchess was dismissed outright by the King, and it seemed that Bolingbroke would not achieve the restitution he desired. An unlikely ally in this matter was Walpole, who said he would intercede on Bolingbroke's behalf:

> At a proper interval, Walpole besought the king to grant an audience to Bolingbroke; and urged the propriety, by observing, that if this request was rejected, much clamour would be raised against him for keeping the king to himself, and for permitting none to approach his person who might tell unwelcome truths.[35]

The king relented and Bolingbroke was granted an audience and admitted into the King's apartment at Walpole's behest. Meantime, Lechmere had learned news of the intended meeting between Bolingbroke and the King, and strongly disapproved. He disliked Walpole, and, thinking that Walpole was arranging the meeting to invite Bolingbroke to serve in the government, took it upon himself to approach the King and "expose" this apparent plot between Walpole and Bolingbroke. Lechmere travelled to see the king upon a flimsy pretence of asking him to sign some documents, hence the words in the ballad: "A very fine story he had to relate, / He had something in Hand, and more in his Pate."[36] Upon enquiring to see the King, Lechmere was told that he must wait, for the King was with Bolingbroke in his apartment, and that Walpole was also waiting in the adjoining apartment to see the King afterwards. Bolingbroke finished his interview at that moment and exited the King's apartment. Then the following scene occurred:

> Lechmere instantly rushed into the closet, and without making any apology, or entering upon his own business, burst out into the most violent invectives against Walpole, whom he reviled as not contented with doing mischief himself, but as having introduced one [Bolingbroke] who was, if possible worse than himself, to be his assistant.[37]

Lechmere had completely misunderstood the situation, and the King decided to have a joke at his expense: "the King, delighted with this mistake, calmly asked him, if he would undertake

[32] Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England, 1689-1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 409.

[33] Ibid.

[34] William Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford* (1798; repr. London: Longman, 1816), 250.

[35] Coxe, *Memoirs*, 252-53.

[36] *Little John's Answer*, 3.

[37] Coxe, *Memoirs*, 253.

the office of Prime Minister, Lechmere made no reply, but continued pouring forth his invectives, without having offered any of [his] papers to sign."[38] Afterwards Walpole, upon seeing the King thus amused, enquired as to the reason why, to which the King simply responded, "Bagatelles! Bagatelles!"[39]

It might be assumed that this event between George I, Walpole, Bolingbroke, and Lechmere, and the ballad that relates this event, is no more deserving of a place in history than a humorous footnote. This ballad, however, is valuable to both Robin Hood scholars and eighteenth-century researchers. There was a multitude of political satires produced during Walpole's tenure as Prime Minister. But whilst elite opposition to Walpole's regime—from the writings of Alexander Pope,[40] Jonathan Swift,[41] John Gay,[42] and Henry Fielding[43]—is a topic which has been discussed at length,[44] popular participation in the political discourse of the day is a subject which has not yet been explored at any length.[45] These popular contributions to the contemporary political debate often took the form of ballads such as *Little John's Answer*, or "satirical ballads, allegories, and by-sayings."[46] Thus *Little John's Answer* is part of the extra-parliamentary contribution to eighteenth-century politics, satirising those at the heart of the political establishment.

It is only King John who emerges with a relatively untarnished reputation in the ballad. Robin is depicted as embezzling and corrupt; Lancaster is silly and impetuous; Gambol is no better, being "a sinner."[47] Whilst Walpole is certainly criticised in the ballad, it is insufficient to dismiss this satire *solely* as a critique of Walpole. The author appears to be commenting upon corruption that is at the heart of the eighteenth-century political establishment. As mentioned earlier, the author acknowledges that were the King to replace Walpole, other ministers such as Lechmere would also be corrupt. This ballad, then, appears to be part of a widespread press-driven critique of authority which spread beyond elite writers and made it into the popular culture of the day.[48] The blame for national, social, and moral

[38] Coxe, *Memoirs*, 254.

[39] Ibid.

[40] See Howard Erskine-Hill, "Pope and the Poetry of Opposition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 134-49.

[41] See Dustin Griffin, *Swift and Pope: Satirists in Dialogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and David Oakleaf, *A Political Biography of Jonathan Swift* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008).

[42] See John Richardson, "John Gay, The Beggar's Opera, and Forms of Resistance," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 24, no. 3 (2000): 19-30.

[43] See Thomas R. Cleary, *Henry Fielding: Political Writer* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984) and Downie, *A Political Biography of Henry Fielding*.

[44] For a general overview of eighteenth-century satire, see Howard D. Weinbrot, *Eighteenth-Century Satire: Essays on Text and Context from Dryden to Peter Pindar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), and the older yet still informative work is Bertrand A. Goldgar, *Walpole and the Wits* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976).

[45] Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, 5.

[46] Bolingbroke, *The Craftsman.*

[47] "Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster," 400.

[48] Other examples of anti-Walpole ballads exist such as: *The congress of excise-asses. Or Sir B---ue S---ng's overthrow: a new ballad* (London: Printed for Mr. Nichols, and sold at the pamphlet shops, 1733), 8pp. Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads Bod6078; *The knight and the prelate: a new ballad* (London: Printed for P.

ills was laid at the feet of members of the political establishment by anonymous writers who contributed to the extra-parliamentary political discourse.[49] This critique of authority was driven by the press in the emergent public sphere, in which social spaces such as the coffeehouse, along with the publication of printed matter, created a "marketplace" where ideas and gossip could be discussed and debated outside of the confines of the royal court.[50] The ballad's attack on both Whig and Tory politicians serves to remind eighteenth-century scholars that opposition to the eighteenth-century political establishment need not always be divided along party lines.[51]

The format of the ballad suggests that it was designed for readers, rather than part of an oral or popular tradition. It takes the form of a folio size four page pamphlet. Combined with its reference to "gentle readers"[52] and its political content, the events detailed in the ballad were more than likely intended to be read and debated within social spaces such as the coffeehouse.[53] A further indication that this ballad is aimed at a sophisticated and politically informed audience is that fact that, at four pence, it was more expensive than an average broadside ballad which typically sold for a penny or less; even a half-penny ballad was "beyond the purse of poorer people."[54]

For Robin Hood scholars, the ballad confirms that Robin Hood's status as a hero, in the conventional sense of the word, was by no means assured during the eighteenth century. A "robbing" and allegedly corrupt Prime Minister, colloquially named Robin, was easily equated with the highwayman of medieval legend. One anonymous writer in 1737 drew an explicit comparison between Robin Hood and those in "civil employments." The author further suggests that, had Robin Hood taken inspiration from men such as Walpole, or those in "civil employments," no one would have ever heard of his crimes, statesmen are rob people and escape unimpeached:

> Had [Robin Hood] turn'd his head to politics, had he been placed in the finances, or promoted to the station of Paymaster, Receiver General, Treasurer […] and robb'd the Exchequer, as Falstaff says, with unwash'd hands; had he plunder'd the publick, in a civil employment, till he had been almost the only rich man in the kingdom, we may conclude from many passages of history that there would have been no signs of him at this day.[55]

Holder, near St. James's, 1734) Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads Bod23066; *Bambridge and H---g---ns's petition to a certain great knight* (London: Prinded [sic] for J. Thompson, near the Std, c.1730?) Bod16296. Examples of ballads censuring Bolingbroke include *A hue and cry after the Lord B---k or Young Perkin glad to see his friends* (London: London; Printed in the year 1715) Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads Bod6404.

[49] Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, 26.

[50] See Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 2002).

[51] Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, 14.

[52] *Little John's Answer, to Robin-Hood and the Duke of Lancaster. A Ballad, To the Tune of The Abbot of Canterbury* (London: T. White, 1727), 3.

[53] See Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, and more recently Brian William Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[54] Leslie Shepherd, *The History of Street Literature* (Newton Abbot: David Charles, 1973), 25.

[55] "Bravery: The Characteristic of an Englishman," *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, No. 8, June 1738, 300.

The references to various government positions such as Paymaster, Receiver General, and Treasurer are reminiscent of the words of Peachum the Thief Taker's song in *The Beggar's Opera* in which the thieves and whores of 'low life' are equal in morals to those of more elevated status:

> Through all the Employments of Life
> Each Neighbour abuses his Brother;
> Whore and Rogue they call Husband and Wife:
> All Professions be-rogue one another:
> The Priest calls the Lawyer a Cheat,
> The Lawyer be-knaves the Divine:
> And the Statesman, because he's so great,
> Thinks his Trade as honest as mine.[56]

As a sequel to the legend, *Little John's Answer* appears to anticipate William M. Thackeray's *Ivanhoe* sequel, *Rebecca and Rowena* (1850), in which "the Earl of Huntingdon was a very different character from Robin Hood the Forester," who has become a fat and very mean, hard-hearted magistrate, and sends "scores of poachers to Botany Bay."[57] There is an undercurrent in the Robin Hood tradition of texts such as *Little John's Answer* that resist the trend towards gentrification. Thus ballads such as *Little John's Answer* allow Robin Hood scholars to chart the highs and lows in the course of the legend's gentrification.

This is the first time that *Little John's Answer* has appeared in print, owing to the fact that it has only recently been brought to light. For Robin Hood scholars it means that there is now an additional ballad that can be added to the Robin Hood canon. Yet whilst *Little John's Answer* is a relatively recent ballad, dating from 1727, the fact that new texts can resurface, even in 2015—after almost 250 years of various antiquaries' and historians' efforts in uncovering material relating to the Robin Hood legend—holds out the tantalising possibility that other, perhaps even older, texts may have gone unnoticed and may also resurface in the future.

[56] Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*, 1.

[57] William Makepeace Thackeray, *Rebecca and Rowena* (London: Hesperus, 2002), 13-14.

Little John’s Answer, to ROBIN-HOOD and the Duke of Lancaster. A Ballad, *To the Tune of* The Abbot of Canterbury.

LONDON: Printed by *T. White*, in *Chancery Lane*, 1727.

[Price 4*d*.]

	Here’s a story reviv’d from twelve hundred & two,	
	Of bold *Robin-Hood*, but I know not how true;	
	How the Duke of *Lancashire* came to King *John*,	*Lancaster* (see note)
	To tell of things in his Kingdom was done.	
5	*Derry down, down, down, derry down*.	
	What could be the meaning, this bold little Duke,	
	Did ride in such hast, with his liege to dispute;	
	To foam at the Mouth, it shewed Malice and Spleen;	*showed*
	Search out, gentle Reader, what can all this mean?	
10	*Derry down &c.*	
	The terrible Knock, which he gave at the Gate,	
	Was not half so hard, as his Heart that did beat,	
	Least his Viset, so hastly, don’t answer his End,	*Visit*; *hastily*
	What he had to say, he therefore had Pen’d.	
15	*Derry down, &c.*	
	The Porter affronted, he spoke very stern,	
	His Business he therefore wanted to learn;	
	My Business is with King John, quoth the Duke,	
	And you’ve no Reason, the same to dispute.	
20	*Derry down, &c.*	
	I’ve the Message in Hand, and my Liege I must see,	
	You shall be admitted then immediately:	
	A very fine story he had to relate,	
	He had something in Hand, and more in his Pate.	*head*
25	*Derry &c.*	
	The bold little Duke, push’d on with desire,	
	Of raising a States-Man, still higher and higher,	
	And turn *Robin* out in a Woeful Condition;	
	For tho’ he’s a Lawyer, he’s no Politician.	
30	*Derry &c.*	
	He told the good Yeoman, that he was a Peer;	
	Admitted, away to King *John* he did steer,	
	To free him from Vermin, as he did pretend,	

But he that speaks fair, is not always a Friend.
35 *Derry, &c.*

The Dwarf, that was trimming the Beard of the King,
Did start, for to see his Stature come in,
Much more for to see him so foam in a Per,
My Liege was surpriz’d, to see him a Sweat.
40 *Derry, &c.*

Then soon the Duke, his Tale did begin,
How bold *Robin-Hood*, did abuse his good King,
By keeping his Subjects, inclos’d in a Wood, *enclosed*
Says my Liege, to himself, *Would you be* Robin-Hood?
45 *Derry, &c.*

He complained how Bold *Robin* did kill the King’s Deer,
But nothing he had said, had he shar’d of the Cheer;
If the little Duke, could but share of the Fees,
He’d never have said nothing, let who would keep the Keys.
50 *Derry, &c.*

This thing it is *Robbing*, the Law does direct;
But *Thieves* and *Receivers*, are much of a Sect,
But Robin-Hood’s Cunning, he none of the Gang,
Was there none to impeach, there’s none could be Hang’d.
55 *Derry, &c.*

Says my Liege, should I make *Harry Gambol* a Keeper,
I do not think that the Plot it could never be deeper;
My Court, when he comes, shall ne’er be much thinner,
For I’ll keep him out, sir, as I am a Sinner.
60 *Derry, &c.*

Should I turn Robin *out, that would not be all,*
You tell me, You would have no *Robbing* at all:
But Robin *will* Robb*, do all that you can,*
For he is a Wit, and a vast Cunning Man.
65 Derry, &c.

Sir, would you succeed him? pray let us dispute,
Obedience and Silence, answer’d the Duke;
The King turn’d about, and he smil’d for to hear,
That the Duke would *partake* of *Robin’s* Stolen Deer.
70 *Derry, &c.*

I guess what your Grace, now, does mean, very plain,

If Robin's *a Thief, sir, You would be the same;*
I may as well have my Keeper, a R------- *that I know,*
Sir, You have your Answer, and so you may go.
75 *Derry, &c.*

NOTES

[titlepage]	I have retained the spelling, capitalization, and italicization of the title which appears on the front of the ballad.
[titlepage] Lancaster]	The sister ballad to *Little John's Answer* entitled *Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster* is available in the following places: *Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster. A Ballad to the Tune of The Abbot of Canterbury* (London: T. White, 1727), 4pp. Leeds, Brotherton Library Special Collections BC Lt q/WAL/L; John Mathew Gutch, *A Lytell Geste of Robin Hode*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1847), 1:397-400; *The Life and Exploits of Robin Hood; and Robin Hood's Garland* (Halifax: Milner and Sowerby, 1859), ccxlvi-ccxlviii; R. B. Dobson & J. Taylor, ed., *Rymes of Robyn Hode: An Introduction to the English Outlaw*, 3rd ed. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997),191-194.
[titlepage] Canterbury]	The full title usually given is *King John and the Abbot of Canterbury* (Child Ballads no. 4, and Roud Folk Song Index 302). For a modern critical edition see Arthur Quiller Couch, ed., *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, 6th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), 849-853.
2	Perhaps an acknowledgment on the part of the ballad's author that this is not a genuine Robin Hood ballad. Indeed, the Duchy of Lancaster was not created until 1351, a full century and a half after the events in this ballad.
3	The royal Duchy of Lancaster is in the County of Lancashire. Nicholas Lechmere was the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancashire, hence the Duke of Lancaster in the ballad. See A. A. Hanham, "Lechmere, Nicholas, Baron Lechmere (1675–1727)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16262, Accessed 8 Oct 2015.
6	There appear to be no contemporary references to Lechmere's stature in contemporary sources, which suggests that it refers to the fact that, with Lechmere being a member of the rival Whig faction in the Commons, he was of diminished importance compared to Walpole. His being "bold," as an older edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* indicates, probably refers to the fact that he was "of a temper violent, proud, and

impracticable." See "Lechmere, Nicholas, Lord Lechmere (1675–1727)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen, 63 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1885-1900), 32:336.

29 Lechmere was "a good lawyer, a quick and distinguished orator, much courted by the Whig party," but unable, it seems, to master the subtlety of temper required for being a good politician. See Edward Pearce, *The Great Man: Sir Robert Walpole: Scoundrel, Genius and Britain's First Prime Minister* (London: Pimlico, 2006), 108.

31 Lechmere was elevated to the Peerage on 25 August 1721. See Clive Jones, *A Pillar of the Constitution: The House of Lords in British Politics, 1640-1784* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), 89.

34 Walpole was accused of "keeping the king to himself, and for permitting none to approach his person who might tell unwelcome truths," Coxe, *Memoirs*, 252-53.

36 The dwarf also appears in *Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster*. These references are perhaps an allusion to Christian Ulrich Jorrey "a Polish dwarf […] presented to George I as a gift, from the Duke of Saxe Gotha […] Despite his small stature, Ulrich had an immensely loud, foundation-shaking voice, almost deafening enough 'to endanger the Royal Palace at full volume.' Sometimes he wore Turkish dress, sometimes a fur-trimmed Polish cap. Ulrich also benefitted from English and painting lessons at the King's expense, and had his own servants." Lucy Worsley, *Courtiers: The Secret History of the Georgian Court* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), 78.

38 Per] The printer may have made a mistake here, and the word is probably intended to be "pet" instead. I say this because the only reference I have managed to find in the eighteenth century to a similar word indicating agitation comes from a description of the satirist Richard Steele once being described as being "in a damned confounded pet." Cited in Charles A. Knight, *A Political Biography of Richard Steele* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), 24. Furthermore, there is a scene in Sir Walter Scott's *The Antiquary* (1816) which refers to "cases of pet" when Sir Arthur Wardour is agitated. See Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1816), 1:141. Moreover, "pet" would rhyme with the next line which ends in "sweat."

48 Allegations of fraud and financial mismanagement were regularly

directed at the Walpole regime, and Walpole's detractors in both Parliament and the Press asserted that his government was "fundamentally corrupt," often siphoning off money into their own pockets; see Philip Woodfine, "Tempters or Tempted: The Rhetoric and Practice of Corruption in Walpolean Politics," in *Corrupt Histories*, ed. Emmanuel Kreike and William Chester Jordan (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 167-96 at 167. Although both Walpole and Lechmere were Whigs, they were members of rival factions. The fact that the Duke of Lancaster is not sharing in the "cheer" of ill-gotten gains probably suggests that Lechmere is bitter over not being part of Walpole's clique.

52 "Thieves and receivers are much of a sect" is perhaps an allusion to Jonathan Wild (1683-1725), the self-styled "Thief Taker General of Great Britain" who functioned as London's chief law-enforcement officer but was also the head of a vast organised crime network in London. The phrase "But Robin Hood's cunning, he's none of the gang" seems also to imply this; Wild, though he was the head of a network of criminals, was never seen to be associated with his henchmen. Walpole was equated on a number of occasions with Wild in contemporary popular culture, such as in the character of Peachum, in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), and Henry Fielding's *The Life and Death of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743). See Moore, *The Thieves' Opera*.

54 This may be an allusion to the fact that, despite multiple allegations of fraud and corruption, none of Walpole's accusers could ever tie any concrete evidence of financial mismanagement to him. See Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783*, New Oxford History of England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 21-22.

56 *Harry Gambol*] The contemporary sobriquet for Bolingbroke.

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A Review of the Year's Publications in Robin Hood Scholarship

Mikee Delony
Abilene Christian University

Peer-reviewed Robin Hood scholarship published in 2015 includes two single-author books, two edited book chapters, and eight journal articles. These publications examine specific texts from the matter of Robin Hood, providing new approaches to familiar texts and further exploration of less-familiar materials. Many scholars also comment on the tradition's capacity for seemingly endless adaptation and highlight the similar ideological and political threads woven through the materials. Shining an academic light upon five centuries of Robin Hood texts that celebrate political resistance and public activism against oppression takes on new importance in light of contemporary global resistance to government overreach and systemic oppression.

Since Robin Hood scholarship also tends to resist categorization, I have loosely grouped these reviews by literary chronology and genre.

General Studies

In *Reading Robin Hood: Content, Form, and Reception in the Outlaw Myth*,[1] Stephen Knight revisits the Robin Hood literary tradition from his position as one of the early pioneers in the field of Robin Hood studies. In his survey, which ranges from medieval oral ballads to twenty-first film and television adaptations, Knight notes the multivalent, "unhierarchial, nonlinear" (10) nature of the tradition and suggests that Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic "model of multiplicity" (234) might best describe the "various, porous, [and] richly labile" legend (10). Writing that the Robin Hood tradition "renews itself in turns of current political forces and media of dissemination and consistently has as scant a respect for literary and formalistic authority as it has for social and legal forces of order" (253), Knight celebrates the characteristics that prevent the tradition from achieving canonical status at the same time they have remained relevant for centuries. The essays reviewed here are evidence of the truth in his statement.

In his second book of 2015, *The Politics of Myth*,[2] Knight examines nine Western European mythical characters that, he argues, are still popular and relevant today. His chapter on Robin Hood is particularly useful for those who are new to Robin Hood studies. Describing the

[1] Stephen Knight, *Reading Robin Hood*: *Content, Form, and Reception in the Outlaw Myth*, Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015). For more detailed reviews of this book see John Marshall, review of *Reading Robin Hood: Content, Form, and Reception in the Outlaw Myth*, by Stephen Knight, *Arthuriana* 26, no. 2 (2016): 141-43; and Sabina Rahman, "Knight: Reading Robin Hood," *Medievally Speaking*, 6 November 2015, http://medievallyspeaking.blogspot.com/2015/11/knight-reading-robin-hood.html.

[2] Steven Knight, *The Politics of Myth* (Carlton, AUS: Melbourne University Press, 2015), 88-112.

The Bulletin of the International Association for Robin Hood Studies 1 (2017): 32-43.

medieval outlaw as a "socially resistant figure" (94), Knight briefly surveys familiar texts from each century, broadly noting changes and additions to the legend, and emphasizing its adaptability. He suggests that pre-nineteenth-century materials, particularly the eighteenth-century broadside ballads, acted as "safety valve[s]" (100) for an increasingly revolutionary population, and he credits nineteenth-century texts—novels, poems, and biographies by authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Love Peacock, among others, with "shaping a version of the hero and his activities that has kept him vigorously alive ... in [popular culture] when other medieval popular heroes faded away" (101). Moreover, Knight argues that twentieth-century film and television adaptations brought Robin Hood into the international spotlight. He concludes this chapter by reaffirming his thesis that although the details of the tale may change, Robin Hood consistently acts as a "natural, active, entertaining force against the oppressive officials who misuse the authority of higher forces" (112), a statement with which a few of his colleagues reviewed here will disagree.

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH CHRONICLE TRADITION

In "John Mair's Historiographical Humanism: Portraits of Outlaws, Robbers, and Rebels in his *Historia Maioris Brianniae tam Angalie quam Scotiae (History of Greater Britain)*,"[3] Alexander L. Kaufman examines the John Mair's 1521 text in the context of the medieval chronicle tradition, which he describes as "writing [that] describe[s] historical moments with a greater amount of elaboration, subjectivity, introspection, and sometimes, bias" (104). Crediting Mair with a "more nuanced elaboration," Kaufman first provides a thorough biographical sketch of the Scottish Mair's life, education, and prolific teaching and writing career, and places his account of three "transgressive figures" (115)—Robin Hood, William Wallace, and Jack Cade—within the context of Mair's own political and philosophical views, particularly his "nationalistic leanings and his own notions of humanism" (105). Noting that his "desire for balance, especially in political thought and action" (106) influences his representations of Robin Hood, Wallace, and Cade (106), Kaufman explains that for Mair, the connection between political and social events, his own "humanistic values" (106), and his judgment of the outlaws' status and purpose for their actions influence his definition of balance. In his section on the mythical Robin Hood, Mair follows the lead of previous chroniclers who progressively pushed Robin's timeline back from the early fourteenth-century reign of Edward III to the turn of the thirteenth-century reign of the notorious King John—1199-1216—the era in which most post-medieval texts locate the legend. Additionally, Mair raises Robin's status and may have, according to Kaufman (and Knight and Ohlgren), based his version of Robin Hood on "Foulke fitx Waryn," an outlaw who lived during the reign of King John. After examining Mair's accounts of William Wallace, in which Kaufman comments that Mair raised the Scottish hero to "near mythical status" (110), and of Jack Cade and his 1450 rebellion, which Mair soundly condemns, Kaufman concludes that in addition to balance, "Mair's notion of political resistance is tied to a stratified political system" (114).

[3] Alexander L. Kaufman, "John Mair's Historiographical Humanism: Portraits of Outlaws, Robbers, and Rebels in his *Historia Maioris Brianniae tam Angalie quam Scotiae (History of Greater Britain), Enarratio* 19 (2015): 104-18.

Wallace was "recognized" by the ruling class; however, Cade was a "shadowy figure . . . radical, contradictory, and ultimately dangerous" (114). And because the mythical Robin Hood figure Mair describes in his chronicle is English, is one who "took the life of no man, unless he either attacked them or offered resistance in defense of his property" (Mair, qtd in Kaufman 107), and is a leader of "some one hundred men," Robin Hood meets Mair's requirements for "balance" and thus warrants a benign characterization of this medieval outlaw. In this case, Kaufman writes that like Wallace, Robin Hood is "part of a glorified legendary past" (114).

SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DRAMA[4]

In "Political Fortunes of Robin Hood on the Early Modern Stage,"[5] the early modern drama scholar Jean E. Howard reports that seven different Robin Hood plays appeared on stage in the last decade of the sixteenth-century, not including Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.[6] Referencing the legend's flexibility, Howard describes the early modern adaptation of the popular hero to the stage as a period of "energetic shuffling and transposition of its elements and the addition of some new ones" (277). Additionally, Howard argues, theater-goers and producers participated in a shared theater culture in which the audience anticipated and enjoyed different versions of Robin Hood.

After briefly summarizing "the Matter of Robin Hood" (275) and emphasizing the myth's association with "popular resistance, carnival, and rebellion ... [and] the greenwood" (273), Howard examines the remaining four extant Robin Hood plays as well as Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and, surprisingly, *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, paying particular attention to gender construction and political arguments. Of particular interest to Robin Hood scholars is Howard's description of the less well-known *Chronicle of King Edward, the First* (1593) by George Peele, which is somewhat unique in Robin Hood literature because the famous outlaw is not a "person but a role inscribed in a *book*" (279, emphasis mine). Members of the court consult the book on stage as they *perform* the roles of Robin and his Merry Men. Howard comments, "rather than being one who uses disguise to fool abbots or the Sheriff of Nottingham, he is now the disguise that others wear" (279).

Howard's unusual reading of *Henry IV* is also worthy of attention. She suggests that Hal offers an "imaginative and daring engagement with the matter of Robin Hood" (284) and that Hal's "masculinity ... is a strange amalgamation of the tonalities that have variously accrued to

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[4] Thank you to Joe Stephenson, a scholar of early modern drama and my colleague, for his assistance in my review of the Howard and Quarmby essays.

[5] Jean Howard, "Political Fortunes of Robin Hood on the Early Modern Stage" in *Forms of Association: Making Publics in Early Modern Europe,* Massachusetts Studies in Early Modern Culture, ed. Paul Yachnin and Marlene Eberhart (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 272-88.

[6] Howard includes the following Robin Hood dramas in her analysis: *The Comedy of George a Greene,* performed at the Rose by Sussex's Men in 1593-94; George Peele's *The Chronicle of King Edward the First,* performed by the Admiral's Men throughout the 1590s; and Anthony Munday's 1598-1600 paired plays, *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington.* Additionally, she reads William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and *Henry IV, Part I* and *Part II* as including substantial illusions to Robin Hood.

the Robin Hood figure" (284). Moreover, she argues that at times he is a "chivalric hero," a "trickster leader of a homosocial band," or "a philosophical leader," and suggests that by casting Hal in both roles—urban outlaw and heir to the throne—Shakespeare blurs the line between the two, highlighting Hal's slippage into the liminal space between the world of the tavern (i.e., greenwood space) and of the court, or between the resistance and the crown (284). Howard concludes her thoughtful essay by referring to Robin Hood as an "exploitable resource ... whose political implications shifted and changed as dramatists" featured different aspects of the legend and "responded to the innovations of fellow dramatists" (287).

In order to make a twenty-first century social justice argument in "'Bardwashing' Shakespeare: Food Justice, Enclosure, and the Poaching Poet,"[7] Kevin A. Quarmby hijacks Shakespeare's allusions to Robin Hood's greenwood and his role as a social bandit in *As You Like It* in an attempt to provide evidence that bolsters Katherine Duncan-Jones' unflattering depiction of Shakespeare as a greedy, ambitious social climber in her 2001 biography, *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life.*[8] By conflating Shakespeare's fictions with Duncan-Jones' account of his personal financial dealings, Quarmby argues that Shakespeare benefited from the Robin Hood mythology present in his play and that his fictional celebration of Robin Hood as social bandit and "proto food activist" (1) is hypocritical in light of Duncan-Jones' argument that Shakespeare had little regard for the starving poor. This essay is based on faulty scholarship; specifically, Quarmby reads Shakespeare's play as an intentionally misleading autobiography that Shakespeare uses as a cover for his own shady financial dealings. If indeed strong evidence exists that corroborates the Duncan-Jones account, then why use his fiction? Quarmby's use of *As You Like It* as a convenient, although anachronistic, vehicle for his own polemic attack on Shakespeare's alleged self-serving role in the sixteenth-century Enclosure Debates calls the entire argument into question.

SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BROADSIDE BALLADS

The only ballad-focused essay published in 2015 is Alexander L. Kaufman's second publication, "A Desire for Origins: The Marginal Robin Hood of the Later Ballads."[9] In this essay Kaufman calls attention to the marginalized seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Robin Hood broadside ballads in order to make a larger argument about the marginalization of Hood studies as a whole within the discipline of literary studies. Noting the "outsider, transgressive status" (51) of Robin Hood scholars and texts, Kaufman writes that he set out, like Robin Hood himself, "to 'right a wrong' and position these later, post-medieval texts as worthy of attention ... as works of medievalism ... [and as] valuable resources for those who seek

[7] Kevin A. Quarmby, "'Bardwashing' Shakespeare: Food Justice, Enclosure, and the Poaching Poet," *Journal of Social Justice* 15 (2015): 1-21.

[8] Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare, Scenes from His Life,* Arden Shakespeare Library, (London: Arden/Bloomburg, 2001).

[9] Alexander L. Kaufman, "A Desire for Origins: The Marginal Robin Hood of the Later Ballads," *Studies in Medievalism XXIV: Medievalism in the Margins,* ed. Karl Fugelso, Vincent Ferré, and Alicia C. Montoya, (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer/ Boydell & Brewer, 2015): 104-18.

Robin's outlaw origins in literature" (55). Noting that the medieval texts lack an origin story, he examines several post-medieval ballads that "present a multiplicity of origins, each unique yet each one clearly about Robin Hood."[10] In addition to summarizing their plots, Kaufman traces each ballad's publication history through a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Garlands. These ballads portray contrasting images of Robin Hood, including several that position the young Robin as part of the gentry class, often featuring his darker side reminiscent of his violence in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Even the gentrified Robin of *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage,* heir to his uncle's manor and leader of his Sherwood Forest band, kills five yeomen in self-defense. However, *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* presents the opposite extreme, a Robin Hood that Kaufman labels a "teenage psychopath" (59). When he encounters fifteen men while traveling to an archery contest in Nottingham, they mock him, and after he wins a wager that he cannot kill a deer at one hundred rod (550 yards) (59), they threaten him. In retaliation, he kills all fifteen men with his bow and arrow.

Kaufman's careful analysis of these origin ballads, particularly their noted contrasts between Robin's roles as gentrified man of the greenwood and as violent outlaw, supports his secondary argument about value of the tales' medievalism. Kaufman argues for the inclusion of these later ballads as important and useful literary texts, noting that although their "literary origins are from the Middle Ages ... [their] biological origins are works of pure medievalism" (62). Additionally, he convincingly maintains that writers of these ballads were "free" to create new narratives about Robin Hood's origins, and like Howard's argument about early modern drama, Kaufman maintains that "readers, then and now, continue to accept degrees of variation in Robin's personality and biography" (60).

NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVELS

In "The Novelist, the Heiress, the Artisan, and the Banker: The Emergence of the Robin Hood Legend at Edwinstowe, c. 1819-1849,"[11] David Crook details his historical and literary search for the source(s) of the connection between the Nottinghamshire village of Edwinstowe and the Robin Hood tradition, particularly the two famous oak trees—Major Oak and Robin's Larder—and Robin's marriage to Marian in the village church. Crook's detective work uncovers evidence hidden within the pages of four early nineteenth-century texts that settle the question of how and why Edwinstowe became an integral part of the Robin Hood legend centuries after its medieval origins. The authors and texts which Crook found most valuable in his research include Thomas Love Peacock's 1822 novel *Maid Marian* (the Novelist), Elizabeth Sarah Villa-Real Gooch's 1804 novel, *Sherwood Forest: or Northern Adventure* (the Heiress),

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[10] Ballads that Kaufman examines in this essay include *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage*; *Robin's Progress to Nottingham; Robin Hood and the Forresters; A True Tale of Robin Hood*. *Robin Hood and Queen Catherine*; *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*. *Robin Hood and the Valiant Knight* are alternate titles for *Robin Hood and the Forresters.*

[11] David Crook, "The Novelist, the Heiress, the Artisan, and the Banker: The Emergence of the Robin Hood Legend at Edwinstowe, c. 1819-1849," *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 119 (2015): 169-81.

Carter's 1850 travel guide to Sherwood Forest (the Banker). Each text added a crucial piece to Crook's puzzle. Additionally, he argues that these particular additions to the traditional legend arise in the early nineteenth century because Edwinstowe and Sherwood Forest were popular sites for tourists whose visits were inspired by the period's romantic novels, particularly Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819). Crook's article provides fascinating insight into ways in which the Robin Hood legend grew and expanded throughout the centuries, continually incorporating new storylines while retaining the essence of the greenwood social bandit.

Stephen Basdeo's essay, "Radical Medievalism: Pierce Egan's the Younger's *Robin Hood, Wat Tyler, and Adam Bell,*"[12] focuses, like Kaufman's, on marginalized texts and writers, in this case, the nineteenth-century novelist Pierce Egan the Younger. Basdeo examines three of Egan's outlaw novels along with their historical and cultural background and suggests that Egan's focus on medieval outlaws serves the political purpose of "highlight[ing] the plight of the poor and their need for political enfranchisement . . . by presenting [these outlaws] as working class heroes who stood up for their political rights" (50).

Of interest for this review is Basdeo's section on Egan's novel, *Robin Hood and Little John.* He begins by highlighting the novel's prolific publishing history, beginning with its first publication in 1838 and continuing for more than 30 years in both England and France. Moreover, he also credits Walter Scott's 1819 novel, *Ivanhoe,* in this case, for the "notion that the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans were opposed to each other" (51). This antagonism is a concept that plays an important role in Egan's novel as well as in the politics of the Young England movement that, perhaps coincidentally, coincides with the period of the novel's publication. In Egan's *Robin Hood,* the titular hero demands that his fellow outlaws *elect* as him leader of the outlaw band rather than appointing him because of his higher social status. Basdeo responds to Robin Hood's out-of-character request with a rhetorical question: "what could have been more radical to Victorian readers than seeing people of lowly birth voting for their leader? Robin's election, furthermore, is based upon merit rather than his "'noble' birth" (52). Basdeo also explains that despite Robin's election, Egan's novels do not necessarily provide a "vision of a democratic society" (53) but rather use well-known anti-establishment characters such as Robin Hood to draw "attention to the problems in Britain's political system" (53) The outlaws in Egan's novels, Basdeo argues, are not criminals but vehicles that he uses to expose the "Old Corruption" (58) of the Normans and their self-serving politics. Basdeo concludes by pointing out that, unfortunately, Egan's contemporary reviewers did not recognize his political stance, perhaps, ironically, because the medieval settings were "too remote" (59) for early Victorian reviewers to recognize Egan's critique of their own political situation.

Twentieth- and Twenty-First Century Novels, Films, and Television Series

This final section reviews one essay that analyzes a number of novels and films as well three essays that focus on twentieth- and twenty-first century television series and films. Rob

[12] Stephen Basdeo, "Radical Medievalism: Pierce Egan's the Younger's *Robin Hood, Wat Tyler, and Adam Bell,*" *Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies. Vol 15: Imagining the Victorian,* ed. Lauren Padgett and Stephen Basdeo, (Leeds: LCVS, 2016), 49-65.

Gossedge begins his chapter "'We Are Robin Hood': The Outlaw Tradition in Contemporary Popular Culture"[13] by reminding us that "[t]he Robin Hood tradition is always open to radical rewritings" (251). With the expectation that postmodern cultural changes, particularly "gender politics" and "an increased awareness of ethnic and religious conflict" may be evident in popular Robin Hood texts, Gossedge examines a selection of novels published between 1990 and 2010 and of visual media produced between 1984 and 2010. He limits his study to select feminist- and masculinist-authored novels, sequels, and visual texts that reference the crusades and include a Middle Eastern/Muslim character.[14] Although he credits many feminist-authored novels and Robin Hood sequels with increasing gender equality overall and with consistently writing strong Marians, he finds that masculinist texts tend to return to the male-centric focus of the medieval ballads. He also notes that with the exception of some recognition for the Third Crusade, film and television adaptations remain "rigidly stuck in the twelfth century" (257). His analysis of the inclusion of Arabic-Muslim characters in film and television productions suggests some increased representation, particularly since beginning of US-led Middle-Eastern conflicts; nonetheless, he concludes that the Arab and Muslim roles are uneven and often stereotypical and shallow.

Throughout the essay, Gossedge expresses frustration with the failure of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Robin Hood texts to reflect the significant cultural and social changes of the period, in contrast with previous generations of writers who reframed Robin Hood materials in ways that critiqued and engaged with their own cultural conflicts and changes. Unlike Knight's optimistic assertion that Robin Hood "consistently acts as a "natural, active, entertaining force against the oppressive officials" (*Politics of Myth* 112), Gossedge writes that the final result of his immersion into relatively recent Robin Hood texts is the realization that despite the explosion of Robin Hood-themed materials created during political and socioeconomic conditions in which "the tradition typically flourishes" (251), the myth has increasingly "focused on the politics of the individuated self" and has "ceased to represent anything but the tamest resistance to authority" (252).

The following two essays analyze mid-twentieth-century film and television productions, and like Gossedge express similar disappointment with the increased emphasis Robin Hood retellings place on the American trait of individualism and their failure to represent the legend's signature resistance in any significant way. In "Reassessing Blacklist Era

[13] Rob Gossedge, "'We Are Robin Hood': The Outlaw Tradition in Contemporary Popular Culture," *Medieval Afterlives in Contemporary Culture,* ed. Gail Ashton, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 251-62.

[14] Gossedge references the following texts in his analysis: Robin McKinley's *The Outlaws of Sherwood*; Jennifer Roberson's, *The Lady of the Forest*; Gayle Feyrers' *The Thief's Mistress;* Kathryn Lasky's *Hawksmaid*; Theresa Tomlinson's *The Forestwife*; Paul Storrie's *Robyn of Sherwood*; Nancy Springers' *Rowan Hood*; Disney's *Princess of Thieves*; Dana Taylor's *Royal Rebel*; R. M. ArceJaegar's *Robin: Lady of Legend*; A. C. Gaughen's *Scarlett*; Michael Cadnum's *In a Dark Wood;* Michael Morpurgo's *Outlaw*; Stephen Lawhead's *Hood*; Steven McKay's *Wolf's Head*; Kevin Reynold's *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*; Ridley Scott's 2010 *Robin Hood*; John Irvin's 1991 *Robin Hood*; Douglas Fairbank's 1922 *Robin Hood*; BBC's *Robin Hood* series; Michael Praed's *Robin of Sherwood* series; BBC's *Maid Marian and Her Merry Men*; and Mel Brook's *Robin Hood: Men in Tights.*

Television: Civil Libertarianism in You Are There, The Adventures of Robin Hood, and *The Buccaneers,*"[15] Andrew Paul examines the little-known connection between the 1950s McCarthy trials and three popular 1950s BBC and CBS television series. Until this hidden story was brought to light by Michael Eaton in his 1991 film *Fellow Traveller*, few were aware that blacklisted American writers were hired under multiple pseudonyms to write for British television producers. Paul argues that although these blacklisted writers were hired to "challenge the dominant discourses of the cold war" (30), over time they adopted "a civil libertarian rhetoric that emphasized individual liberties over matters of social justice" (30).

Paul analyzes *The Adventures of Robin Hood* television series, which aired in the US and Britain in 1955-58 with "143 original episodes [that] would continue to be shown through the early sixties" (30). Writing under a number of pseudonyms, blacklisted writers Ring Lardner, Jr. and Ian McLellan Hunter believed that clandestine writing for television was a way to strike back against the ideology of the contemporary Red Scare; the Robin Hood trope of Anglo-Saxons suffering under the oppression of Norman invaders spoke "directly to the injustices of the Hollywood blacklist" (41). However, differences between the liberal socialist writers and the increasingly culturally and politically conservative audiences led to a television show that finds "solutions in a kind of populism that celebrates a mythic individualist idea" (42). Concluding that perhaps Robin Hood was an inappropriate vehicle for accomplishing the producers' and writers' goals, Paul suggests, like Basdeo, that Robin Hood tales of "a preindustrial age . . . are ill-equipped to critique the extra-state governance of advanced liberal capitalism" (49). Overall, Paul's essay provides a thoughtful commentary on the ways in which social democracy was more likely hindered rather than advanced by this popular television program.

Noel Brown, author of "Individualism and National Identity in Disney's Early British Films," [16] also investigates the mid-century representation of Robin Hood in the Disney film *The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men,* produced and filmed in Britain in 1952. Like Gossedge and Paul, Brown emphasizes Robin Hood's American trait of individualism. *Robin Hood and his Merrie Men* is part of a series of live-action Disney movies set and filmed in Britain and released between the early 1950s and the late 1960s.[17] The purpose of Brown's analysis is twofold: to determine the process by which Disney attempted to negotiate "a mid-Atlantic path between British and North American customs and ideologies" (189) and to determine the success of this endeavor. Although created for a young audience, Brown argues that "far from being simple and vacuous exploitation releases, these apparently artless and undistinguished productions reflect complex ideologies of freedom and individualism" (189). Additionally, they are also "inherently liminal" (189) and occupy a space between the continents, made in Britain for a largely American audience by an American filmmaker, but also box office successes in Britain as well.

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[15] Andrew Paul, "Reassessing Blacklist Era Television: Civil Libertarianism in *You Are There, The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and *The Buccaneers*," *American Studies* 54, no. 1 (2015): 29-52.

[16] Noel Brown, "Individualism and National Identity in Disney's Early British Films," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 43 (2015): 188-200.

[17] Other Disney films discussed in Brown's essay include *The Sword and the Rose* (1953), *Rob Roy, The Highland Rogue* (1953), *Kidnapped* (1960), and *The Fighting Prince of Donegal* (1966).

Brown's analysis begins with an assertion that Disney's Robin Hood narrative emphasizes "tension points within British national identity" (194), a contrast between two antithetical forms of Englishness. The heroes, most notably Robin Hood, the Merrie Men, Marian, and King Richard, represent a number of idealized characteristics including "freedom of movement and expression," courage, a home in the idealized greenwood, "self-reliance," "camaraderie," and "egalitarianism," i.e., quintessential American characteristics (194). On the other hand, the villains, Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham, represent the "undesirable qualities" of "cruelty, perfidiousness, cowardliness, rule by fear and intimidation ... ostentation ... and ... imperialistic oppression" (194). Brown concludes his analysis by arguing that the Disney project overall, and *Robin Hood and his Merrie Men* (1952), in particular, "colonize" British narratives and landscape into stories of American individualism (190). Brown is most disturbed by the "lone [authority] figure, a charismatic and galvanizing leader" that, he claims, represents American "individualism" as the "antithesis" of "collectivism" (191). Overall, he argues that rather than charting a "middle path," these films "correspond with North America's projected ideals of the 1950s and 1960s: democracy, responsibly small-scale capitalism, freedom, close affinity with the land, and mistrust of Big Government, high taxes, and advanced industrialization" (192).

The final essay featuring film analysis is Valerie B. Johnson's article, "Ecomedievalism: Applying Ecotheory to Medievalism and Neomedievalism."[18] Johnson focuses on three iconic visual texts (two American films and one BBC series) spanning seventy years, and as her title suggests, Johnson demonstrates ways in which studying neomedievalist texts "through the bifurcated lens of ecocriticism and ecomaterialism" (31) enhances recognition of the inherent romantic fantasies about the Middle Ages that are often a part of neomedievalism. In her analysis of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), *Robin Hood* (2010), and the BBC series *Robin Hood* (2006-09), Johnson narrows her focus to the forest, Robin Hood's iconic greenwood, explaining that "[n]eomedieval texts . . . deploy environmental descriptions and language to develop a sense of an authentic medieval setting . . . yet little critical attention is devoted to analyzing these methods from an ecological perspective" (31). The process of reading Robin Hood's greenwood through an ecomedieval lens "demonstrates the power of a medieval setting as a blank slate for modern fantasy" (33), which in turns reminds the viewer that these film forests are constructed set-pieces which provide the illusion of a pristine greenwood, "a rhetoric of greenery" (34) rather than the historical reality of a greenspace cultivated and defined by landowners and political authorities. Johnson emphasizes the artificiality of the movie-set forest, an artificiality which, she argues, is erased by the film-making process, so that the audience sees a fantasy, neomedieval, and primeval greenwood setting rather than an authentic constructed forest space in which outlaws and other outcasts hide from or prey upon wealthy noblemen and starving peasants as they hunt (or poach) royal deer. Since, as Johnson explains, each successive Robin Hood film builds upon the vivid greenwood established in earlier films, the pristinely beautiful constructed greenwood becomes "a visual metonymy for Robin Hood" (38). As she concludes Johnson

[18] Valerie B. Johnson, "Ecomedievalism: Applying Ecotheory to Medievalism and Neomedievalism," *Studies in Medievalism XXIV: Medievalism in the Margins,* ed. Karl Fugelso, Vincent Ferré, and Alicia C. Montoya (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 31-37.

reminds us that the erasure of the human habitation in "ecologically diverse" and "politically constructed" woodlands in favor of the neomedieval quest for the "inauthentic authenticity,"[19] of a "primeval . . . untouched wilderness" (37) is a fantasy that slips easily into reality for the consumers of Robin Hood productions. Johnson argues convincingly that "[e]comedievalism allows us to see that these networks and relations exist, that they are not 'natural,' and that the facts of our environment are as much a narrative as our own stories" (37).

The writers reviewed here have studied a range of Robin Hood from a corpus of nearly five centuries of material and have contributed to the body of Robin Hood studies in important and often quite original ways. They have grappled with the ways in which these transgressive (and some not transgressive enough) texts reveal cultural and social tensions that may often encourage political resistance. The diversity of theoretical perspectives employed and primary texts studied aptly demonstrate the rhizomatic nature of the matter of Robin Hood and Robin Hood studies.

[19] Jacques Le Goff, "The Wilderness of the Medieval West," in *The Medieval Imagination,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 47-59, quoted in Johnson, 35.

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