TREACHEROUS 'SARACENS' AND INTEGRATED MUSLIMS: THE ISLAMIC OUTLAW IN ROBIN HOOD'S BAND AND THE RE-IMAGINING OF ENGLISH IDENTITY, 1800 TO THE PRESENT[1]

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In a recent Associated Press article on the impending decay of Sherwood Forest, a director of the conservancy forestry commission remarked, "If you ask someone to think of something typically English or British, they think of the Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood… They are part of our national identity" (Schuman 2007: 1). As this quote suggests, Robin Hood has become an integral component of what it means to be English. Yet the solidification of Robin Hood as a national symbol only dates from the 19th century. The Robin Hood legend is an evolving narrative. Each generation has been free to appropriate Robin Hood for its own purposes and to graft elements of its contemporary society onto Robin's medieval world. In this process, modern society has re-imagined the past to suit various needs. One of the needs for which Robin Hood has been re-imagined during late modern history has been the refashioning of English identity. What it means to be English has not been static, but rather in a constant state of revision during the past two centuries. Therefore, Robin Hood has been adjusted accordingly.

Fictional narratives erase the incongruities through which national identity was formed into a linear and seemingly inevitable progression, thereby fashioning modern national consciousness. As social scientist Etiénne Balibar argues, the "formation of the nation thus appears as the fulfillment of a 'project' stretching over centuries, in which there are different stages and moments of coming to self-awareness" (1991: 86). Nations, as imaginary constructions whose

authentication rests on a system of cultural fictions, rely in part on popular media, such as literature and now television, to help preserve stories of national origin and evolution. Robin Hood, as a popular fictional narrative of history, plays a significant role in the development of modern social cohesion and English identity.

Within the larger shaping of Robin Hood to help form changing imaginations of English identity is one of the most overlooked additions to the legend since 1800: a Muslim character who becomes a member of Robin's band. In this article, I propose two interpretive arguments that are unique to studies on Robin Hood. First, the different Muslim characters, despite their diverse names, constitute variations of the same character, which has become a fixture in the legend. Second, we can divide this character's variations into two general types: the treacherous "Saracen" and the integrated Muslim. The first type is characteristic of 19th-century England as part of the British Empire, while the second type is characteristic of postwar (and post-Empire) England. Both types of the Muslim character, but in different ways, contributed to the re-imagining of English identity. This article seeks to trace how the transformation of this character from treacherous "Saracen" to integrated Muslim within the context of the development of Robin Hood reflects changing conceptions of Englishness.

The treacherous "Saracen" variation, characteristic of 19th-century England, likely dates to the literary work of Joachim Stocqueler in the 1840s. Due to the lack of studies on the addition of Muslim characters to Robin Hood and scholars' failure to associate them as variations of one character, it is hard to be certain. Stocqueler's work contains the earliest version of this character of which I am aware. Nevertheless, even if an earlier version exists, Stocqueler's work provides a clear prototype of the treacherous "Saracen", and subsequent literary versions of this type follow Stocqueler's lead. The treacherous "Saracen" possesses certain common characteristics, including the fact that he cannot be trusted, has a strange religion and/or magic, and has a corrupting influence on England.

During the 19th century, Robin Hood was used to promote political stances, including advocating isolationism and criticizing the amount of resources used for the Empire, by connecting the Crusades with modern imperialism. To further negative views of colonialism, the treacherous "Saracen" was portrayed as an evil colonial "Other", a term that evokes French philosopher Michel Foucault's notion (derived from the antagonistic subject/object relationship established by Freud and Lacan) that nations establish the Other as a "bad race" or "inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal)" whose elimination "will make life in general […] healthier and purer" (1997: 255). Historians have shown how individual European identities were formed earlier through interaction with its colonial peoples (examples: Hall and Rose 2006; Hall 2000). Historian Linda Colley has argued

that the English, while leading the establishment of an empire, "came to define themselves as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores" (1992: 6). Therefore, the identity in the metropole was formed in a process of consolidation that defined what Englishness was in opposition to what it was not as seen outside Britain.

The integrated Muslim variation, characteristic of postwar (and post-Empire) England, represents the character's radical transformation. The integrated Muslim emerged in the 1980s in the television series *Robin of Sherwood* (ITV, 1984-6). Versions of this character have appeared in all subsequent British or British-linked adaptations, including *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), *Maid Marian and Her Merry Men* (BBC, 1989-94), and *Robin Hood* (BBC, 2006-2009). Robin Hood studies have largely ignored the links between these characters or how they reflect the image of Englishness that has emerged as a cornerstone of the legend.[2] The integrated Muslim possesses certain common characteristics, including that he or she is trustworthy, loyal, has a religion that should be respected, and although not born in England, is a welcomed and equal member of English society.

The transformation of the treacherous "Saracen" to the integrated Muslim reflects the need to re-imagine a national identity that incorporates the changing composition of England. England has become increasingly culturally diverse in the wake of decolonization and large-scale immigration of subjects from the former British colonies following World War II. Agitation for social equality by growing minority groups, which began in earnest in the 1960s and continues to the present, has forced England to reconsider who and what constitutes the nation. Therefore, as studies have shown, contemporary English identity has been engaged in an ongoing process of re-imagination (examples: Morely and Robins 2001; Julios 2008; Storey and Childs 2008; Behlmer and Leventhal 2000). The interaction between England and the Empire's colonial peoples has undergone a fundamental shift. Rather than defining identity in opposition to the colonial Other "beyond their shores", English identity now has to learn how to assimilate the colonial Other. The formation of this new identity is crucial for social cohesion.

In order to clarify terminology, it is important to indicate that this article will use England and Englishness because they are the identity references used in the Robin Hood adaptations examined here and because these versions are concerned with England rather than the rest of the British Isles. In the 19th century, nationalism led to the assertion of Englishness (as well as Scottishness and Irishness) over the sporadic uses of Britishness made since the Scottish Stuarts' accession to the English throne in 1603. Being British was regarded more as a uniting civil identity than a "racial" (or ethnic) one like English. Numerous 19th-century histories of England

for the English public praised England and its institutions. Historian Stephanie Barczewski has noted that these accounts gave a cursory acknowledgement of other parts of the British Isles, focusing on "triumphal English expansion" that in their view rescued the rest of the Isles from a fate "as provincial backwaters". Consequently, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland "were blessed to be parts —albeit subordinate ones— of the greatest nation on […] earth". This "British" history remained dominant during much of the 20th century. Amidst the recent dual challenges of a multiethnic Britain and the 1990s push for greater autonomy in "the Celtic fringe", political circles have renewed efforts to foster a more equal supranational British identity. Yet, national identities (such as English) still compete in usage (see: Barczewski 2000: 48–49; Cannadine 1995: 12–30; Jones 1998). Recent research from the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Office of National Statistics suggests that current minorities prefer British to English, even though nearly all minorities reside in England. The same research notes that the white population favors English, Scottish, Irish, or Welsh (John 2004: 1–2; Taher 2007: 1–2). Current white resistance to a supranational Britishness implies a degree of hostility toward diversity. Such evidence, combined with the fact that the Robin Hood adaptations with the integrated Muslim depict white Englishmen learning to accept "foreigners" as part of the new English nation (rather than the other way round), suggests that this character is directed at the white majority rather than the minorities themselves.

The Treacherous "Saracen"

Before tracing the specific evolution of the treacherous "Saracen", it is first important to establish how Robin Hood emerged as a national symbol. If Robin Hood had never become a "national" legend, it could not be used as a fictional narrative of history within which conceptions of national identity could be forged.

Robin Hood first became important to the construction of national identity in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Robin Hood was likely chosen for national appropriation because of its renown and long development in English culture. The Age of Revolutions (1789-1848) witnessed competition to appropriate the medieval past. In this period, Romantic nationalism emphasized the role of tradition and myth in national development and led to efforts to trace the nation's cultural origins. The medieval past became a battleground between competing visions of what the nation had been and what it should be. In the 1800s, intellectuals considered race an "important component of national identity". Invented "blood" ties allowed nations to create identities for themselves.[3] Following this intellectual current, the English came to perceive themselves as

Anglo-Saxons (Knight 2006: 155–156; Knight 2003: 98–118; Barczewski 2000: 8, 124–161).

Sir Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* (1819-20) was the single greatest influence on Robin Hood as a nationalist legend. It replaced loyalty to previous symbols of identity (such as the king) by introducing notions of race, solidifying Robin as a Saxon hero in the era of Richard I (see: Lampe 2000: 129–140; Knight 2006: 155). Scott incorporated the notion of the Norman "yoke", which dates from the 17th century (see: Hill 1965: 50–112). Influenced by England's struggles with France in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Scott made parallels between the Normans and the French, who emerge as the Other. He depicts Robin Hood as a story of racial struggle between the oppressed (English) Saxons and their conquerors, the (French) Normans (see: Knight 2003: 110–116). As Scott writes, "four generations had not sufficed to blend the hostile blood of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons, or to unite, by common language and mutual interests, two hostile races" (2004: 2). Robin, distinctly Saxon, functions as a symbol of patriotic resistance to Norman oppression. Thus, *Ivanhoe* re-imagined Englishness in opposition to the French. By dating this feud to the 1066 Norman conquest of England, Scott restrospectively created an age-long battle that continued to his time. However, Scott's use of the French in this manner contradicted "the most respected contemporary historical scholarship" (see: Barczewski 2000: 129; Knight 2006: 155; Knight 2003: 111–112; Bartlett 2000).

In the 1800s, as Britain was creating a global empire, its island status created a sense of distinctiveness and separation. In creating an English Robin Hood whose essential components included untainted Saxon blood, 19th-century authors reinforced notions of Englishness that implied exclusivity. Such writers opposed miscegenation in the colonies and the presence of colonial peoples in England. This distinction and separation were maintained by depicting subjugated colonial peoples as the Other and that intimate interactions between the two would have dire consequences (example: Philips 2006).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Robin Hood was used to criticize imperialism. In the creative imagination, Sherwood became a place of freedom in which normal social constraints were suspended. This "escapist value of the forest" enabled Robin Hood to serve as a "possible critique of the present" (Pollard 2004: 184–210; Knight 2003: 107). The domestic chaos caused by King Richard's absence on the Crusades made excellent fodder for those arguing that governments should focus on home. Just as Richard had deserted his country and squandered its resources abroad, so the government was in danger of wasting its resources on imperialist ventures. For example, the anonymous *History and Famous Exploits of Robin Hood* (1806) tells that Richard, "transported with a blind and religious zeal,

57

ruined himself and almost his whole nation, to carry on a war against the Infidels […] and during his absence England was filled with intestine troubles" (iv).

The Muslim character emerged within this context of the appropriation of the Robin Hood story for nationalist and anti-imperialist pursuits. The Muslim character's first variation, the treacherous "Saracen", shows features mentioned in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Said argues that Western writings on the Orient depict a Eurocentric bias against the peoples and cultures of Asia and the Middle East. This bias was depicted through a tradition of incorrect, romanticized images in literature and non-fiction writing that constructed artificial divisions between the East and West that could be attributed to unchangeable "essences" in the Oriental character and composition. In this process, the West was depicted as culturally superior, placing Europe as the norm from which the "exotic" and "inscrutable" Orient deviates (Said 2003).

Adding a Muslim character to Robin's band situated a contemporary colonial Other in the context of the medieval military conflict between the English and Muslims to make allusions between the past and present. In all cases, a Muslim character is brought from the Holy Land to England. The character is portrayed as sinister and having a negative impact on English society. As negative characters, they are described as "Saracens", which implied the same as "barbarians" or destroyers of civilization. While they initially appear to be good, they are in fact not to be trusted. Englishness was consolidated by juxtaposing the heroics of the "English" Robin and his band with the evil and alien nature of the Muslim character. The readers (mostly white Englishmen) were meant to perceive the superiority of the English and that intimate social relations between the two would be detrimental to England. Furthermore, these negative images of the Muslim character fostered distrust among the English of colonial peoples and the notion that their presence in England was something to be avoided.

The first versions of the treacherous "Saracen" were developed by Joachim Stocqueler, a minor writer who pursued various careers in journalism, government, and business. He traveled in various parts of the British Empire in Africa and Asia and worked in India for twenty years (1821-41). Stocqueler's cynical views on imperialism and colonial peoples influenced his work, which depicts contact with "infidels" as disruptive, dangerous, and to be avoided (see: Knight 2003: 124–132). His representation of the effects of "Oriental perversity" on English society was common in Victorian thought. Further, as Said argues, a 19th-century Englishman's interests in Asia and North Africa could not be "tinged and impressed with, [even] violated" by viewing these areas as colonies (see: Lindeborg 1994: 382–387; Said 2003: 11). Before writing his two versions of Robin Hood, Stocqueler had written many works on the Empire (and areas under its influence) and military history (see: Peers 2007).[4]

58

Stocqueler's first attempt at Robin Hood was *Robin Hood and Richard Coeur de Lion,* which he co-wrote in 1846 with fellow writers C.W. Brooks and C.L. Kearney. It was a theatrical comedy piece in which Robin is backed by Abd El Kadir, referred to as the "Old Man of the Mountains". Abd El Kadir's character was anachronistic, since he was a 19th-century Algerian political figure who opposed French imperialist forces. The label "Old Man of the Mountains" referred to the leader of the Ismailis, or Assassins, who plagued Crusaders in the Middle East. By combining Abd El Kadir with the "Old Man of the Mountains", Stocqueler was making a general connection between the European imperialism of the Crusades with that of the 19th century. By associating his fictitious Islamic figure with Robin and, ostensibly, justice, he was castigating European imperialism and advocating isolationism (Knight 2003: 147–148; Brooks, Kearney, and Stocqueler 1859).

Stocqueler's *Maid Marian, or, The Forest Queen* (1849) had a larger impact because of its popularity as a sequel to contemporary illustrator and popular writer Pierce Egan's best-selling *Robin Hood and Little John, or, The Merry Men of Sherwood Forest* (1840). *Maid Marian* opens with a description of the problems associated with King Richard's absence, which "threw the kingdom into commotion" (2005: 21). Robin is fighting in the Crusades with Richard. During the siege of Acre, the Christians engage in pillaging. Yet, Robin "remembered that he was the avowed follower of the Great Teacher of Humanity" (2005: 5). He stumbles upon a wounded Suleiman, a Muslim chief and "noble figure" about "35 or 40 years of age". Suleiman was being helped by his daughter, Leila, a "beautiful girl, whose olive complexion […] bespoke […] of a high-souled Moor". Suleiman attempts to fight, but collapses due to loss of blood. Robin tells Suleiman that he comes in peace and protects him until recovery (2005: 16–18).

Robin saves the king's life and is allowed to return home as reward. The king grants Robin his "prisoners", Suleiman and Leila, as slaves. Although Robin prefers gold, the king has none. Robin therefore accepts possession of Suleiman and Leila and contemplates ransoming them. However, all Suleiman's wealth and friends were lost in the siege. Robin is reluctant to sell them, for the two would likely be separated (not because the act of selling them was perceived as wrong). Consequently, Robin gives them the "option whether they would have their liberty […] or accompany" him to England. Suleiman and Leila, "lured by Robin's talk of 'bonnie England'" decide to follow him home (2005: 79–80). After several adventures, the three arrive in Sherwood. A celebration is held, during which Suleiman, "regardless of the prophet's injunctions", indulges in drinking alcohol and Leila performs an "Oriental" dance. The dance is described as "sexual" and "passionate" (2005: 78, 83–86). Thus, from early on, Suleiman, described as "a dark and swarthy man […] costumed […] in the Oriental style", and Leila are depicted in the manner Said outlined as "Orientals", or stereotypes of Asian and

59

Middle Eastern peoples formed via Orientalism. Male Orientals are depicted as weak and/or strangely dangerous, while female Orientals are depicted as eager to be sexually dominated and exotic (Stocqueler 2005: 75; Said 2003: 1–110, 113–197).

Suleiman and Leila are also depicted as having a strange religion. On first meeting, Tuck believes that Suleiman works for "the Evil One" and declares Arabic to be a "beautiful language". Yet, it is a "heathen tongue" because it is used to worship "false gods". Suleiman gets angry at such insults, yet Robin, despite outward gestures of friendship toward the Muslims, agrees with Tuck's assessment of Islam's inferiority and "Orientals" when he chastises Suleiman for lifting his "hand in anger to a Christian". Robin announces that he and Suleiman had brokered a deal: Suleiman would conform to the laws of Sherwood provided his religion "be respected so long as he continues a stranger to the Light of Gospel Truth". Robin encourages his men "never to allude to the errors of the Orientals" in Suleiman's presence (2005: 80, 83). Robin's phrasing does not inspire respect. Suleiman tells his daughter that "not a day has passed […] in which some one […] has not mocked at our devotion". After Leila reveals Marian's attempts to convert her, Suleiman and his daughter become enraged by "religious fanaticism" (2005: 89–90, 93). Although Robin and his band have violated their word, they have done no wrong because Islam is perceived as a religion unworthy of respect. Further, Suleiman is depicted as a religious hypocrite. Although he is angered by the outlaws' disrespect toward Islam, he repeatedly breaks Islamic laws regarding alcohol (2005: 78, 82).

As was to be expected of the treacherous "Saracen", Suleiman cannot be trusted. Robin's efforts to convert the "Saracen chief into a forester" are unsuccessful because of innate differences between Englishmen and Oriental Others. At first, it seems that they are adjusting to their new environment, but beneath the surface all is not well. If a "mortal eye [could] have penetrated [Suleiman's] heart, even in moments of apparent hilarity, it would have traced disquietude and lurking evil passions which craved expression and indulgence" (2005: 88). Robin and Marian ask Suleiman and Leila if there is anything that they can do for them, even offering to take them back to Palestine. Yet, Suleiman is depicted as duplicitous, smiling at Robin while conspiring against him and the outlaws (2005: 89, 93).

Suleiman and Leila invoke the sanction of their "Creator to a deed of blood". They seek out Sherwood's Witch of Deathwood to make a poison in exchange for Leila's mother's jewelry. After Suleiman and Leila leave, the witch conspires against them, for even to a witch, Muslims are "heathens" (2005: 90–92). Marian, afraid Robin will succumb to Leila's exoticism, requests a love potion from the witch. The witch gives Marian a love potion, which is actually the poison that Suleiman and Leila requested, and tells her to share it secretly with the outlaws (including Suleiman

and Leila) to end the "estrangement in the forest society" (2005: 124). Robin and Little John, who were spying on the Muslims and Marian during their visits to the witch, believe that Suleiman is involved in a plot. They confront Suleiman and put him on trial after Leila flees. Robin asks Suleiman, now possessing the "devil's chuckle", why he would attempt to harm his English "friends", none of whom "willfully did […him] wrong" (2005: 131). Thus, the Oriental Other, despite outward appearances, is seen to be nothing but a treacherous demon.

Suleiman is banished from Sherwood. Meanwhile, Leila falls in with Prince John, who is conspiring against his brother, King Richard. Suleiman's treachery continues. He rejoins his daughter and plots to kill the Crusader who wounded him in the Holy Land, a chief supporter of Richard, at a tournament. There, Robin disrupts the plot and slays Suleiman with an arrow. Leila dies of grief. The two are buried in an unmarked grave and "no one wept […] or prayed for […] their souls" (2005: 201).

Stocqueler depicts Suleiman and Leila as disruptive influences on English society. The forest and its inhabitants are negatively altered by their arrival. As Stocqueler writes, with reference to the period shortly after their arrival in Sherwood, "the utter absence of care which their bronzed and good-natured faces evinced, was now exchanged for a partial gloominess and uneasiness, for which few of them could very satisfactorily account" (2005: 118). Robin suspects that Suleiman and Leila are corrupting influences. He remarks to Little John, "I more than half repent […] that I brought [Suleiman] to England" and that Leila "disturbs the serenity of some of our younger fellows" who have vowed chastity (2005: 108). Yet, after the removal of Suleiman and Leila, "life in the greenwood […] resumed its ancient cheerfulness" (2005: 144). They were alien to England and their presence magically cast a dark spell over the country. Therefore, the presence of colonial peoples in England, and intimate social interaction between colonial peoples and Englishmen, were to be avoided.

The notion that contact with "exotic" foreigners was dangerous lingered into the early 20th century. In *For Richard and the Right* (1901-1906?), Tuck attempts to rescue Marian from an evil baron. En route, Tuck is tricked by Melchior "the Saracen", who uses magic to stun him. Clearly, Melchior is the evil, alien Other, who is treacherous, has a "foreign" religion, uses "magic", and whose presence has disruptive effects on England. As Tuck is helpless, he sees "an evil, mocking light" glowing in the eyes of "the dark-visaged stranger". Later, the two battle. The "Oriental's eyes flamed with passion" as he slashed "his keen scimitar". Tuck gives him a blow with his quarterstaff, and "with a loud cry to Allah and Mahomet […] Melchior […] went down like a felled ox" (Brand 1901-1906?: 19, 27). Such a depiction of the Muslim character consolidated the view that a colonial presence in England would have negative effects and furthered the exclusivity of Englishness.

The treacherous "Saracen" was not depicted often in 19th- and early-20th-century novels. Yet, the versions of the treacherous "Saracen" were significant in adding the first new major character to Robin Hood in the past 300 years and in helping to define Englishness. In all cases, the treacherous "Saracen" was perceived distinctly as the Other and as having a corrupting influence on England. As a result, such Robin Hood adaptations were used to criticize a multicultural England that would occur as a result of its Empire. Ironically, it was precisely this multicultural England that was to emerge as a result of postwar decolonization.

The Integrated Muslim

In postwar England, Robin Hood and popular fictional narratives of history maintained their roles in developing social cohesion and national identity. In the late 20th century, it became increasingly common in Robin Hood to replace the Saxon-Norman conflict, which reflected tensions between the English and an external group, with an English-Muslim conflict to reflect contemporary internal social tensions in England. However, the English-Muslim conflict depicted in late 20th-century Robin Hood adaptations, unlike the 19th-century depictions of the Saxon-Norman conflict, did not seek to consolidate Englishness in opposition to an external Other. Rather, the English-Muslim conflict sought to build on the early 20th-century depictions of the Saxon-Norman conflict in which the social tensions between the two are overcome.

In the early 20th century, this shift in the relations between Normans and Saxons occurred in Robin Hood as World War I approached. Normans and Saxons set aside their enmity in the interest of national unity. During the early 20th century, which was dominated by world war, France, now a British ally, was replaced by Germany as the European Other. It was imperative to stress the similarities between Saxons and Normans rather than their differences. For example, in *Sherwood* (1911), Alfred Noyes writes, "There shall be no more talk of rich and poor/ Norman and Saxon. We shall be one people/ One family, clustering all with happy hands" (84).

This Saxon-Norman union marks the beginning in Robin Hood of the notion of inclusion, or unity of diverse elements, in the constitution of Englishness. In the first and last paragraphs of Major Charles Gilson's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1940), this development is articulated clearly. The novel states that at the time of the 1066 Norman invasion, "the England that we know to-day had even then been for centuries in the making". The English are a "mongrel race" for "the blood that flows in their veins is that of many conquering adventurers who" thought England worth conquering. "For thus […] was our England formed and moulded" (1971: 9, 124).

62

In portraying Robin Hood as a force to overcome social divisions, a member of the "opposition" is depicted as one of Robin's band. In some versions, such as that of Noyes, this role is reserved for Robin, who as a Norman noble sides with the Saxon people. In some, such as Paul Creswick's *Robin Hood* (1917), it is Will Scarlet. In many others, this role is reserved for Marian and thus the marriage between the Saxon Robin and the Norman Marian symbolizes the union between the two groups.

In building on this early 20th-century depiction of the Saxon-Norman conflict, late 20th-century Robin Hood adaptations depict Robin and his band working to form one nation by eliminating social tensions between Muslims and Englishmen. By making tensions between Englishmen and Muslims a central component, a character from the "opposition" as a member of Robin's band becomes more important in facilitating the message that this division is to be overcome. For this purpose, the Muslim character has assumed an increasingly prominent position in Robin Hood. The Muslim character is perceived initially by Robin's men as the Other. Yet, Robin becomes an advocate of equality and integration. In the forest utopia, all are equal, regardless of skin color or religion, as members of English society. Thus, inspired by Robin, his band seeks to eliminate English-Muslim tensions.

63

Yet, why was there a need to replace the Saxon-Norman conflict with one between the English and Muslims? What were some of the social changes occurring in mid-20th-century England? After World War II, Great Britain encouraged immigration from its territories in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. In 1948, the British Nationality Act granted full British citizenship to imperial or Commonwealth subjects. Around the same time, England in particular was experiencing a labor shortage and America was tightening immigration laws. Such factors encouraged migration to England. Huge waves of immigration began in the 1950s and 1960s. Although blacks and Muslims had existed in England for centuries, their numbers had never been so large.[5] The influx of immigrants brought new social struggles for access to education, legal rights, and social equality. Early Muslim immigrants arrived from South Asia (India and Pakistan), yet Muslim immigrants in the 1970s came from West Asia and North Africa (see: Katznelson 1973; Brock 1986; Paul 1997; Baxter 2006: 164–192; Joly 1995; Lewis 1994).

Increasing numbers of immigrants in England led to amplified sentiments of racism and xenophobia. Such sentiments were demonstrated by anti-minority rioting in England in 1958 and the passing of the first Commonwealth Immigrants Bill in 1961. The Conservative bill reduced non-white immigrants' entry. Furthermore, it reclassified as "immigrants" many dark-skinned citizens. Reformers believed that

the ignorance of the white majority caused racist sentiment, while racial violence was the recourse of an irrational minority. Consequently, some felt that "educating" white Englishmen about the historic cultural connections between England and the British colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean would help to reduce the perceived "foreignness" of non-white residents. For this purpose, interracial organizations were set up in urban areas to improve race relations through education and social interaction.

Minorities had viewed Labour as their political champion. However, the Labour government's 1965 restriction on immigration tarnished this belief, despite simultaneously passing the first Race Relations Act. Although the Act recognized minority rights, minorities continued to face racism in the form of police brutality and employment discrimination throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Immigration was restricted through further legislation in 1968, 1973, and 1981. Consequently, minorities developed their own political and cultural organizations. In addition, newer generations of English-born minorities were becoming increasingly assertive in demanding equality (see: Pryce 1985: 35–52; Small 1994; Whitfield 2004).

In 1981, black Britons marched in London to protest what they considered to be the police department's inadequate investigation of a Deptford house fire in which thirteen black youths had died. Minorities believed that the fire was an act of racially-motivated arson. As the Brixton police became involved, they were met with violent resistance. Rioting spread to other cities, including Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, and Bristol. The riots shook Britain and authorities realized that the treatment of minorities needed to be addressed (on minorities in Britain, see: Fryer 1984; Gilroy 1987; Hiro 1991; Paul 1997; Runnymede Trust 2000; Tabili 1994).

In an attempt to reduce and, eventually, eradicate the racist and xenophobic divisions in English society, a new conception of an integrated England needed to be formed. Rejecting assimilation in favor of multiculturalism, England promoted tolerance and integration, while allowing immigrants and ethnic groups to maintain cultural identities and customs. Building on earlier notions that racism resulted from the ignorance of the white majority, the re-imagining of Englishness became primarily concerned with "educating" white Englishmen on the historic and integrative cultural connections between England and the former British colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean to diminish the "foreignness" of non-white citizens.

In building an integrated England, revised fictional narratives of history were needed to further new senses of national ancestry, tradition, and citizenship amongst the people. In the 19th century, literature was the most important form of popular media in the development of national consciousness. However, as

64

historian Stephanie Barczewski has argued, in the 20th century, new technology replaced literature in this role with film and television (2000: 52). Through TV watching, viewers at different locations are connected to each other by the images before them, thus laying the foundations for an "imagined community" (Anderson 2006). A 2002 television regulatory report indicated that people believed minority representation on television should be increased to portray "social cohesion and inclusivity" (Hargrave 2002: 5, 60, 66, 93). A 2005 poll revealed similar views, with 62 percent of the general population favoring multiculturalism (Casciani 2005: 1–3; Sullivan 2005: 1–2). The late 20th-century Robin Hood adaptations and their Muslim character are of vital importance for providing a new fictional historical narrative to build an integrated England. The transition from the treacherous "Saracen" to the integrated Muslim was not completed immediately, but developed gradually. At first, the character is viewed as being a resident in England with equal rights, but not as being English. Later, the character is viewed as "English".

The first contemporary depiction of a Muslim character in Robin's band emerged in the ITV series *Robin of Sherwood* (1984-86), written by Richard Carpenter. The Muslim character, Nasir, depicted as a West Asian, marked the transition of the treacherous "Saracen" to the integrated Muslim. This transition, as will be discussed, was not planned initially. Having a Muslim hero figure in a national legend like Robin Hood went a long way toward diluting the notion of the Muslim as the Other and offered a significant counter to the "reel bad Arabs" analyzed by scholars (Shaheen 2003: 171–193).

Scholars often describe the much-praised *Robin of Sherwood* as "innovative" and "compelling". Yet, scholars do not cite the contribution of a Muslim member of Robin's band as contributing to this view (example: Knight 1994: 240). What is notable to them is that the series, which followed Scott's model of Saxon-Norman conflict, reinvigorated Robin as a social rebel and as an advocate of what can be interpreted as left-wing politics in opposition to the conservatism of 1980s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Blunk 2000: 29, 30; Knight 2003: xiv, 164, 207; Knight 2000: 128; Knight 2006: 156). However, the perception of Robin as social rebel was not unique, as current politics had influenced earlier Robin Hoods (Harty 2000: 87–100).

Like the 19th-century treacherous "Saracen", a Crusader brings Nasir to England as a servant. In this instance, the Crusader is an evil Baron who practices magic. Nasir is dressed in black and has a dark, sober presence. He rarely speaks. Thus, he is "foreign", practices a "strange" religion, and has a mysterious aura that initially makes his character reminiscent of the treacherous "Saracen". The end of the pilot episode follows the pattern outlined above when discussing the treacherous

"Saracen" in *For Richard and the Right:* The evil Baron kidnaps Marian with the ostensible intention of marrying her against her will. In actuality, he wants to use her as a sacrifice. Robin goes to save her and encounters the "Saracen" Nasir. Like previous Saracen Others, Nasir was fated to be killed but the actor playing Nasir, Mark Ryan, was popular with the cast and producers. Consequently, Nasir lives and we learn that he only served the Baron because he was under a spell. Once Robin kills the Baron, Nasir is freed. Having respect for Robin's prowess in battle, Nasir joins Robin's band (Carpenter 1984b; Wright 1998b: 2–4; Wright 1998a: 2).

Carpenter, as he later wrote, hoped to remain "true to the spirit of Robin Hood while […] providing a few new ideas" (Carpenter 1985d: 5). These new ideas included incorporating issues relevant to contemporary England. Once Nasir became a regular, Ryan collaborated with Carpenter to develop the character in accordance with this agenda (Wright 1998b: 4, 5, 6–7).[6] Carpenter perceives the Crusades as having "a huge cultural influence on Europe" (Wright 1998a: 2). In building on the 19th-century tradition that connected the Crusades to colonialism, Carpenter continued the allusion to the era of decolonization. He portrays the Crusades as having an effect on Europe similar to that of decolonization: the influx into England of peoples and cultures from other parts of the world, in which England had historical ties. Nasir represents this demographic and cultural influx. Yet, unlike the 19th-century treacherous "Saracen", this influx is portrayed as positive. Thus, a more inclusive notion of Englishness was emerging.

Nasir is depicted as brave and loyal. A memorable aspect of Nasir's character was that he always fought with a scimitar in each hand. He is regarded as a skilled fighter who always attempts to help his friends, at times even planning rescue attempts of the entire band single-handedly (Carpenter 1985b). None of the outlaws doubt Nasir's loyalty. For example, in one episode, Will Scarlet spies Nasir secretly going off into Sherwood with two Arabic-speaking men. When Will tells his comrades Tuck and Little John about it, none of them doubt that he will return or suspect that he is up to anything; they are not proven wrong in their assumptions (Carpenter 1985b).

Since the series focuses on the Saxon-Norman conflict, the issues of discrimination against Muslims and modern racism are not developed in detail. Following the 19th-century models, Nasir is, however, often given the pejorative name of "Saracen". The frequent use of this term highlights the fact that the character is a transition between the "treacherous" Saracen and the integrated Muslim, and also suggests that England in the early 1980s was at a crossroads. In general, however, the name "Saracen" is not used by Robin or the outlaws or the "common" people of England. The name is usually used by the villains: the sheriff; the sheriff's brother, Abbot Hugo; the sheriff's henchman, Sir Guy; and Norman lords. At times, the sheriff adds

an expletive, such as "filthy Saracen", to accentuate Nasir's "barbarianness" (Carpenter 1986a). On encountering the (French) Norman king in disguise, the king remarks to Robin that he could "buy four Saracens in the slave markets" with the prized horse that Robin is about to steal. Robin calls Nasir to his side as an equal and says, "Here's a Saracen… Try buying him with a thousand horses […]. In Sherwood, we know the difference between men and animals" (Carpenter 1984a).

Nasir is often shown among the band, partaking in its decisions. Thus, he is shown as an integrated and welcomed member of (Saxon) England rather than an Other. Carpenter's "Time of the Wolf" novelization declares that "Robin and Nasir moved swiftly through the forest in the half light. This was their world. They were part of it" (Carpenter 1988: 76). Thus, Robin and Nasir are part of the same world, equals, in Sherwood, which, free of Norman control, is the "true" England. In the episode "Lord of the Trees", English peasants and the outlaws celebrate a Saxon religious festival. Nasir is greeted warmly by the peasants as the band arrives to celebrate with them (Carpenter 1985c). Despite this equal treatment, Nasir is not regarded as "English". In "Herne's Son", for example, the temporarily-dispersed band is trying to regroup. When the band wonders where Nasir might be, Will Scarlet suggests that he was "back with his own people" (Carpenter 1986a).

Since *Robin of Sherwood* retains the traditional Saxon-Norman conflict, it does not emphasize Robin's role in "educating" his men to overcome religious or racial bigotry, yet it does present the view that all religions (with the exception of devil worship) are to be respected. In the series, religion is one of the causes of the Saxon-Norman conflict. The Saxons practice a pre-Christian religion based on nature and Robin is the son of Herne, the horned-god of the forest. The Saxons maintain their religion as part of their defiance of the Normans and their Christianity, despite the historical fact that the Saxons had been Christianized centuries prior to the Norman invasion. Further, Nasir is shown observing Islamic practices, such as refraining from eating pork, without negative reactions from his peers or other Englishmen (Carpenter 1986b). In depicting Robin and his band as practitioners of different religions, the series advocates respect and tolerance for all faiths.

Religious tolerance is an issue in "The Children of Israel", which comments on contemporary Jewish-Muslim conflict over the creation of modern Israel. The sheriff falls in debt to a Jewish moneylender. Unable to pay, he rouses anti-Semitic sentiments and incites a riot against the local Jewish community. The moneylender and his family escape to Sherwood, where they are rescued by Robin and his band. Nasir speaks to the children in "their tongue" and then says, "Ash-shalom alaykum". He then becomes the Jewish children's protector. In showing Robin and his band as protectors of all religious groups, the series advocates respect for all religions. While chasing the Jewish moneylender, the sheriff remarks that there is not much difference "between outlaws and outcasts". Connecting the people on

the margins of society with the heroes furthers the need for understanding between different groups and that the wrongs committed against the "heroes" are equal to the wrongs committed against all social minorities (Carpenter 1985a).

The character of Nasir inspired subsequent variations of the character, including Barrington in the BBC spoof *Maid Marian and Her Merry Men* (1989-94).[7] Nasir was so established that a variation of him was included in the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991). While *Prince of Thieves* is an American production, the film's English screenwriters/ producers borrowed heavily from *Robin of Sherwood,* and *Prince of Thieves* had a strong influence on later British television Robin Hoods (Pearce 1991: 61–63). Despite Nasir's influence on *Prince of Thieves'* Azeem, only Stephen Knight refers to connections between the two (2003: 168). Knight suggests that Azeem was made African (rather than West or South Asian) to generate greater resonance with Americans (1994: 243). The film's multicultural aspect was noticed as novel in reviews that were unlikely to be familiar with British television (Alleva 1991: 485; "What, no tights?" 1991: 91; Klawans 1991: 64–65). Yet, the scholar Richard Clouet, who features Nasir in his Robin Hood essay, perceives no connection between the two and bafflingly declares that *Prince of Thieves* introduced "a non-European character into Robin Hood's band" to reflect contemporary "multicultural realities". Strangely, he does not perceive the "Arab" Nasir as a "non-European character" (2001-2002: 44).

Significantly, *Prince of Thieves* omits the Saxon-Norman conflict, replacing this central component with an English-Muslim conflict that derives from the Crusades. Azeem occupies the role of a member of the "opposition" who joins the band to abolish social divisions. This change enables Robin Hood to incorporate earlier notions of English reformers that ethnic bigotry is rooted in ignorance, and presents Robin as an educator seeking to create greater understanding between white Englishmen and Muslims: a role that Robin will play in subsequent versions.

The character of Azeem added components that would become customary in future variations of the Muslim character, including the possession of advanced scientific knowledge and being black.[8] Like Nasir, Azeem is brought back from the Crusades, but this time by Robin, who rescues Azeem when they break free from a Jerusalem prison. Azeem believes that he owes his life to Robin; thus, he must stay with Robin until he has saved his. The two travel to England, where Robin discovers his father's murder and is outlawed. Azeem joins Robin's band as his primary confidant.

Azeem is depicted as trustworthy and loyal, even though Robin initially views Muslims negatively. The impression of Robin as an "English" hero is established at the beginning of the film, set in Jerusalem, where a frightening Muslim guard is about to sever Robin's hand for stealing bread. As he prepares for his punishment, Robin declares, "This is English courage". Later, this "English" Robin reveals his bigotry,

stating his surprise that a "barbarian" Muslim could have such "clarity of thinking". Yet, as Robin gets to know Azeem better, he comes to respect him and abandons his prejudice. Thus, racism is rooted in ignorance and defeated through education. In the film, Azeem is constantly at Robin's side. In the finale, the two save Marian together. After Robin defeats the evil sheriff, Azeem kills the sheriff's sorceress to save Robin (Densham and Watson 1991). Thus, Azeem occupies the position often reserved for Little John as Robin's confidant, and their mutual respect and friendship represents the ideal relationship between white Englishmen and Muslims.

The Saxon-Norman conflict is replaced by an English-Muslim conflict, which exists as a result of the Crusades. When Robin and Azeem first arrive in England, Azeem walks behind Robin, for there he is "the infidel". Thus, Azeem must "pretend" that he and Robin are not equals to be socially acceptable. Although Azeem is described as a "barbarian", he is depicted as more civilized than the English. For example, when Robin and Azeem are searching for the sheriff's soldiers, Azeem pulls out a telescope to locate them. He hands the telescope to Robin, who jumps and draws his sword. Azeem asks, "How did your ignorant kind ever take Jerusalem?" (Densham and Watson 1991).

The outlaws' racism derives from the propaganda of the Crusades and their own ignorance. Robin's men, backward and uneducated, perceive Azeem as the Other. The ignorance of Robin's men is demonstrated when Robin tells them that five guards are approaching when in fact there are twenty. When Azeem looks at Robin to question his lie, Robin explains that his men cannot count, "so why scare them?" Drinking mead around a campfire, one outlaw passes the jug over Azeem because he is a "savage". Robin replies, "Of course he's a savage. But no more than you or I" (Densham and Watson 1991). Thus, Robin tries to reverse his band's xenophobic behavior. Yet, the outlaws have difficulty accepting Azeem. In the film novelization, Azeem's "dark skin" is described as bringing him "attention that would have made anyone else uncomfortable". Yet, once the outlaws "discovered he was a fugitive [...] like them, they accepted him... *More or less*" (Green 1991: 85–86). Thus, although they "accept" Azeem, they are suspicious of him. Although progress is being made in depicting an "integrated" Muslim, much needs to be done. Yet, the film makes the viewer sympathize with Azeem and perceive the men's actions as wrong. In this process, the viewer is made to question his or her own beliefs.

Azeem's uneasy acceptance by the band is demonstrated when Little John's wife has difficulties giving birth. Azeem attempts to deliver the breech baby by caesarean section. Little John's wife screams, and Tuck, with anti-Muslim malice, declares, "I tell you the barbarian is killing her". Yet, the healthy baby is delivered. Robin declares Azeem "truly [...] a great one". Tuck admits that he is "not worldly" and recognizes his error (Densham and Watson 1991). Thus, as the band interacts with Azeem and learns more about him, they come to respect him. He is considered

an equal member of English society and an equal to any Englishman, but not "English". For example, Robin declares Azeem an honor to "his countrymen", not the English. Also, in the finale, Azeem calls out to the English, "I am not one of you, but I fight!" (Densham and Watson 1991).

By the time of the BBC's Robin Hood (2006), there were concerted efforts to achieve greater socio-cultural cohesion amongst the diverse groups in Great Britain (see: Julios 2008; Storey and Childs 2008; Morely and Robins 2001). *Robin Hood* chronicled the adventures of the English noble, Robin, on his return from the Crusades with his servant, Much. The series includes a Muslim character in Robin's band named Djaq. Being a woman, Djaq is unique in the Robin Hood tradition. She is a dark-skinned Muslim slave and is the most integrated version of the Muslim character thus far. The sheriff brings Djaq to England to work in a mine and she helps Robin free her fellow slaves. In the series, Djaq is portrayed as a good, equal, and integrated member of her adopted English community.

English-Muslim tensions, which exist as a result of the Crusades, again replace Saxon-Norman tensions. Robin and his band struggle to overcome these tensions. Building on earlier notions that bigotry resulted from the ignorance of the white majority, Robin advocates equality through respect for all cultures and "educates" his band to reduce the perceived "foreignness" of Muslims in England. In the series, Robin demonstrates knowledge of Islam and admiration for Muslim practices, including an episode in which Robin shows consideration for the religious customs of rescued Muslim slaves and one in which he quotes from the Quran (Oates 2006; Wadlow 2006). Robin also bears a "Saracen" sword throughout. In this simple act, Robin connects himself with the "foreign" culture, making his image synonymous with integration.

Despite Robin's esteem for Muslims (and Djaq's status as a member of the outlaws), his band commonly perceives Muslims as the Other at first meeting. As in *Prince of Thieves,* Robin directs them to rise above these perceptions. In *Robin Hood,* Robin is generally successful in convincing his men that their suspicions of Muslims or "foreigners" are wrong. Thus, it becomes heroic to accept those who seem different. In "Turk Flu", for example, the sheriff imports Muslim slaves from the Holy Land. The slave trader perceives the slaves as dirty, contagious, and subhuman —to him, they are the Other. He warns the outlaws to stay away from them. Robin's band, believing the trader's rhetoric, views the Muslims as foreign and strange. Robin angrily declares that Muslims have no disease; "ignorance and superstition" further this view. Much asks the slaves to convert and give up their native customs (i.e. assimilate), for enslaving Christians was forbidden. Robin remarks that they should not have to abandon their customs and that "people fear what they do not understand" (Oates 2006). In another episode, the outlaws find a mask belonging to a Muslim ambassador. Little John and Allan A'Dale think the

mask, later revealed to be a tool for practicing acupuncture, is strange; thus, associating "strange", or "foreign", with evil, they assume the mask must be used for witchcraft. Robin indicates that superstition and ignorance "build on fear" (Kurti and Doyle 2006).

Unlike Robin's band, the sheriff and his men regard Muslims as the Other, thereby perpetuating their evilness. In one episode, the sheriff believes Robin's behavior must result from a mind "perverted" in the Holy Land through contact with Muslims (Minghella 2006). In another episode, Robin and his band use the villains' fear of Muslims to devise a plan for defeating them, claiming Muslim slaves have a fictitious contagion. Thus, the soldiers' racism leads to their defeat (Oates 2006). When hosting a Muslim ambassador, the sheriff serves goat brains, believing rumors spread in ignorance about Muslims that they eat such "barbaric" foods. Yet, the ambassador, with a sour face, comments that he has never had such "exotic" food. Such a comment reinforces the ignorance underlying the villains' racism. Later, Sir Guy, the sheriff's henchman, snidely remarks, "Be careful they don't cheat us. You know what these Saracens are like". It is clear that the villains have no idea what Muslims are like, and this is the cause of their villainous racism. As Robin declares, "listening" leads to understanding, and through this, unity (Kurti and Doyle 2006).

Although not born in England, Djaq is a welcomed and equal member of the band. In Djaq's debut, she saves Little John's life. In this act, she proved her loyalty to England and that she could be trusted as an equal. Afterward, Robin asks Djaq to "join them" (Oates 2006). Thus, she emerges as a crucial link in bridging the English-Muslim divide. When later questioned why the band includes a Muslim, Much declares her "one of the lads" (Kurti and Doyle 2006). Thus, there is no reason why a Muslim or anyone of a different race should not be welcome in the Sherwood fellowship. More importantly, her status as "one of the lads" suggests that she is an integrated and full member. Moreover, both Allan A'Dale and Will Scarlett develop romantic feelings for her (Mitchell 2006). Djaq is thus depicted as an equal, suitable love interest for her white companions. Further, England is declared "her home", underlining the concept of a diverse England becoming one nation.

71

Conclusion

Robin Hood, as a popular fictional narrative of history, occupies a crucial role in the development of modern social cohesion and has emerged as a useful way to re-imagine Englishness. The Muslim character added to Robin Hood is a crucial step in the re-imagining of English history. By inserting a character from the former colonies in medieval England who functions in a band of (white) English heroes,

the late 20th-century Robin Hood adaptations reviewed in this study occupy a crucial role in creating a "retrospective illusion" for the white majority that minority groups from the former colonies have existed in England for centuries, functioning as equals and (English) heroes. In other words, in the construction of an imagined reality imposed on the past through the visual retellings of Robin Hood, an unreal reality become more real than the real (to paraphrase philosopher Jean Baudrillard) in reflecting a planned multiethnic England. By pointing to ancestral heroes from whom the nation's present inhabitants are purportedly descended, it suggests continuity. In addition, it displays the past as a mirror of the future. Thus, the re-imagined England is implied as the culmination of an ongoing, predestined process.

Notes

2. For example, Robin Hood scholar Stephen Knight is one of the few to mention the *possible* connections between the characters (2003: 168, 171).

3. Theories of racial conflict date from 17th-century debates about innate differences between what we would today call ethnicities. In the 18th century, differences amongst human groups became a subject of scientific study. The merging of folk beliefs about group differences with scientific explanations produced notions that races were primordial, natural, enduring, and distinct. During the 19th century, attempts were made to change race from a taxonomic to a biological concept. Several natural scientists wrote on race seeking to explain the behavioral and cultural differences that they attributed to groups. These scientists, in general, made several claims about race, including that races are objective, there is a strong relationship between biological races and other human phenomena, and that race is a valid scientific category that can be used to explain and predict behavior of certain groups or individuals from a certain group. Races were distinguished by such characteristics as skin color, facial types, cranial size, and hair texture. In addition, races were considered to demonstrate group differences in morality and sophistication.

4. Examples include: *Fifteen Months Pilgrimage through Untrodden Tracts in Khuzistan and Persia* (1832), *Handbook for India and Egypt* (1841), *and Memorials of Afghanistan* (1843).

5. Many former British colonies became independent (although some retained ties to Britain as members of the Commonwealth) following the end of the Empire after World War II. At this time, "black" referred to those from the former colonies in India, Africa, and the Caribbean. In current Britain, "black" is used generally to describe

British residents of African descent who identify themselves as "black," "African," or "Afro-Caribbean." "Black" can also be used to signify all minority groups. Thus, the term has been used to refer to South Asians and others of non-European descent. This paper uses the expansive connotation of "black," which includes those originating from the former colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

6. Mark Ryan later wrote a story about Robin Hood for the *Green Arrow Annual #4* (1991), which celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the DC Comics superhero. The story includes a Muslim character, similar to Nasir, named Rassan.

7. *Maid Marian and Her Merry Men*, a BBC children's television series (1989-94), was a unique comic take on Robin Hood

drawing inspiration from *Robin of Sherwood* and later from *Prince of Thieves.* In the series, Barrington, while not a Muslim, falls within the same category of character. Barrington, as a black Rastafarian from the British Caribbean, is also a character from an area formerly part of the Empire and his incorporation as a member of the band fulfills the same objective of portraying a multi-cultural England and of offering comments against racism, for there was substantial social and pop-cultural commentary within the episodes (Martone 2009: 450–452).

8. Azeem also influenced American variations of the Muslim character, including Kemal on TNT's *New Adventures of Robin Hood* (1997-99), and Achoo and Asneeze in Mel Brooks's spoof *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993).

73

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74

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76