To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Sherron C. Lux entitled "Maid Marian, Greenwood Lady." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

Laura Howes, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

MAID MARIAN, GREENWOOD LADY

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Sherron C. Lux
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ABSTRACT

In this study, I am beginning an examination of Maid Marian, exploring when she first actually appears in written literature in some form up until the present (1997), with some speculation about how she may have functioned in early oral tradition. Although this inquiry is by no means complete, I have studied numerous primary texts from the thirteenth through the twentieth centuries, as well as several twentieth-century films and television programs devoted to the Matter of the Greenwood. In addition, I have read a variety of secondary texts, many on the Robin Hood legend, others on ballads, history, heroes, literature, feminism, film, and popular culture.

Surprisingly, Maid Marian does not appear in written records until rather late, mentioned in only two ballads before 1600, although she had been paired--or at least connected--with Robin Hood in the May Games since the fourteenth century, when the English appear to have borrowed her name partly from the shepherdess-heroine of Adam de la Halle's late thirteenth-century pastoral play Robin et Marion. Thereafter, she moves in and out of the legend, emerging in various plays, ballads, novels, and light operas, until the advent of cinema in the twentieth century makes her a permanent part of the Greenwood Legend, whether in print or on film. As a character of legend, Maid Marian both reflects and critiques the culture in which she appears: aloof and chaste one moment, troublesomely sensual the next; now an aristocratic lady, now an English freewoman; a chaste May Queen or a lusty Morris dancer; sometimes a loyal but passive onlooker, while at others a maker of her own destiny. While always recognizable as a very human character, Marian also represents an ideal--an ideal of Woman at a particular instance in time.

PREFACE

In his Forward to the Exhibition catalog for Robin Hood: The Many Faces of that Celebrated English Outlaw, Brian Alderson states that while many years ago he wrote that "'every generation gets the Robin Hood that it deserves,'" he now believes that, "Every generation surely creates for itself the Robin Hood that it needs" (9). We can make the same observation about Maid Marian, Robin's often shadowy Greenwood Lady, who was first paired with Robin in the medieval English May games and plays (Dobson & Taylor, Rymes 39). Along with Robin, Friar Tuck, and Little John, Maid Marian joined the springtime Morris dancers of the sixteenth century, at which time her role was taken by a man or youth (Wiles 23). However, she does not play a major part in the written legend until Anthony Munday's plays of 1598 and 1599, The Downfall and The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon; shortly thereafter, we find her in the forest, disguised as a youth, in the ballad of "Robin Hood and Maid Marian." She then flits in and out of the legend (sometimes under other names) until Thomas Love Peacock's burlesque romance Maid Marian in 1822 and Tennyson's play The Foresters in 1892; she is also a necessary character in various nineteenth-century light operas (or ballad operas) on the Matter of the Greenwood. In the light operas in particular, Marian becomes part of a love-triangle involving Robin Hood and a generally aristocratic villain. The love triangle has served twentieth-century filmmakers quite well; a few twentieth-century novelists have also made use of it (e.g., Robin McKinley's 1988 The Outlaws of Sherwood, Parke Godwin's 1991 Sherwood and his 1993 Robin and the King, and Jennifer Roberson's 1992 Lady of the Forest).

Throughout these past centuries, Marian's character has continued to change. Although she is always seen as beautiful and brave, often desired by many men, Marian

shifts from an elegant and chaste May Queen to a lewd greenwood wench who exists solely to satisfy male desires, from an aloof onlooker to chattel to active maker of her own destiny, from an aristocratic lady to a country freewoman. In the most recent novel, in a new departure for the Greenwood legend, she appears as a self-knowing character in a Virtual Reality game; however, her ultimate identity remains ambivalent (Esther Friesner's 1995 The Sherwood Game).

Of course, Marian has always been ambivalent, with her origins in the mists of oral tradition and, quite possibly, in mythology and Christianity as well as folk-legend. She, like her Robin, is malleable: always part of our world, while at the same time part of an ideal world, always a recognizable person yet always an ideal--whatever the ideal is for a given moment.

"Maid Marian, Greenwood Lady" is a study of this legendary character. In it, I do not pretend to be exhaustive, as there is much more I still need to examine. I only hope that what follows will be of interest, and that it may inspire someone else to wander among the great oaks and dense thickets of Barnesdale and Sherwood in search of the maid in whom we recognize something of ourselves.

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CHAPTER ONE

Virgin/virgin--Maid/May

In discussing Thomas Love Peacock's 1822 Maid Marian, Bryan Burns correctly observes that Peacock presents Marian as "at one with Nature" (129), fresh, black-haired, sparkling-eyed, and green-clad, hunting in the greenwood with her bow and arrows, then adds that "a problem is caused by Marian's virginity. Of course, this is traditional...." (129).

The question to ask here is, How traditional is Maid Marian's virginity? Her origins lie first in the misty realms of oral tradition and myth, where she may well have been a nature goddess and therefore sexual. At the same time, her origins also include the Virgin Mary, who hovers over the earliest texts from the written Robin Hood tradition. For example, Robin and his men venerate the Virgin Mary and do not harm women for her sake, as we see in A Littel Gest of Robyn Hood:

> Robyn loved Oure dere Lady;
>
> For dout of dydly synne,
>
> Wolde he neuer do compani harme
>
> That any woman was in. (st. 10)

Intriguingly, Marian is absent from this most important early work in the English written tradition, which Wynken de Worde printed in 1508, but of which slightly older fragments survive; Dobson and Taylor state that "the presence of a number of Middle English literary forms have suggested that the component parts of the Gest could have their origin in the period c. 1400" ("Early" 38). Here, the lady wife of Sir Richard at the Lea comes to tell Robin that her husband is in trouble for having helped the outlaws, while the most notable woman, although spoken of briefly, is the wicked prioress who connives with her lover in

Robin's death. At the same time, a woman's presence does overshadow large portions of the Gest and of some of the earliest ballads: The Virgin Mary, to whom Robin is devoted. In addition to Robin's veneration for the Virgin leading to his care for women, we find Robin, in the First, Second, and Fourth Fyttes of the Gest, helping a poor knight who has mortgaged his lands to the Abbot of St. Mary's in order to free his son from a murder charge (the young man killed a knight and a squire in a tournament); he will lose his lands as he still lacks the 400 pounds necessary to redeem the mortgage. His only security, he tells Robin, is Our Lady herself--good enough security for Robin, who gladly loans the money. A year later, as the outlaws await the knight's coming to repay his debt, they accost two monks from St. Mary's, York, who claim to have only twenty marks between them. Little John, however, searches their bags and finds they actually have 800 pounds, which Robin appropriates with thanks to St. Mary for her wonderful security: her monks, he says, have returned to him his money with interest (which the monks deny, naturally); had the monks told the truth about the amount in their bags, they would have actually been allowed to keep half of it, in which case we can assume that Robin would have praised St. Mary for at least returning his principal. When the knight arrives, having delayed to assist a yeoman who was being denied his rightful victory in a wrestling match, Robin refuses his money, tells him of Our Lady's generosity, and then gives the knight the extra 400 pounds. Some of the Virgin Mary's generosity as well as her purity can be seen in various Marians who, like Ben Jonson's lovely huntress (in The Sad Shepherd, c. 1640), willingly share what they have with others and who, when their friends are in trouble, attempt to assist them.

The other Mary invoked in the Gest is St. Mary Magdelene, whose chapel Robin may have built in Barnesdale Forest (st. 440); because the chapel appears to be a ruse on Robin's part to gain the king's permission to return to Barnesdale, J.C. Holt sees the chapel as fictitious (RH 50), and I am inclined to agree, since the outlaw's devotion throughout the Gest (as well as in "Robin Hood and the Monk" and "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisbourne,"

both early ballads) is to the Virgin Mary. Does Robin feel that claiming a non-existent chapel of St. Mary Magdalene will endanger his soul less than claiming a non-existent chapel of Our Lady? Or does he reverence the Virgin Mary so much that he can claim nothing false in her name? His choice of saint for his supposed chapel is intriguing, however, especially when we consider Robin's veneration of the Virgin Mary, as both the epitome of virginity and the medieval type of the repentent prostitute color the earthly lover--often called "Marian"--who largely replaces them from at least the seventeenth century on.

Parallel with Marian's chaste origin in the Virgin Mary and congruent with the hint of Mary Magdalene we find other, probably even older, origins in ancient fertility rites where her now-shadowy ancestresses presided as fertility goddesses or spirits of the spring season; Lewis Spence states that "'Maid Marian'...is merely a later and more elaborated form of 'Maid May'--that is, 'the Maiden of the May,' the spirit of the burgeoning season" (33). Speaking of Robin and Marian, John Matthews considers that

> The need to ensure the safe continuance of the seasonal round was always in the mind of our ancestors. It was from such fears and shadows that myths of the sacrificed god arose, and with it the embodiment of the principles of nature such as the Green Man and the struggle for the Flower Bride. (111)

Matthews anticipates the difficulty some of us will have applying this statement to the Greenwood pair, and so hurries to add: "It may be argued that there is no surviving story of Robin fighting for the hand of Marian, but this need not deter us from seeing the ages old pattern which lies beneath the medieval ballad-stories" (111); he then proceeds to discuss the ballad of "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" (Child's no. 118) as containing "more than a hint of a lost tale in which Gisborne was the challenger and Robin the defender" (111)--a very praiseworthy attempt, but the fact remains that this ballad has

nothing whatsoever to do with Marian, as it ultimately involves Robin's fighting and killing a cruel bounty hunter so that he can save his own life as well as the captive Little John's. Perhaps Marian can be a kind of Flower Bride without being either raped or fought over, as Matthews obliquely suggests in his quote from C.A. Burland's 1972 study, Echoes of Magic:

> [T]he weight of evidence is that May Queens [also called "Maid Marians"; see Wiles 21, 56] were a revival of something almost forgotten. The ancient goddess returned to the scene by way of a procession of little girls who went around the village in their best dresses carrying miniature maypoles garlanded with flowers, and a May queen who was just a doll in a box all decorated with fresh blossoms. (qtd 88)

It looks as though a once-powerful figure of fertility and sexuality has become merely a beautiful "doll." However, Lewis Spence adds another dimension to this custom when he observes that in some parts of England, the spirit of May itself was believed

> to be ensouled in [the Maypole], or immanent in it...conceived of as separate or detached from the tree. In some cases it is represented as a doll or puppet, at others as a living person. Thus English children were in the habit of decorating their Maytide hoops of flowers with a doll, which they called 'the Lady of the May.' (146)

Traditionally phallic, the maypole also embraces the feminine, so that "the Lady of the May," representing "the Spirit of May," would have at least partly represented fecundity and burgeoning new life; in the English May Games, "Maid Marian" and "the Lady of the May" are interchangeable, indicating that at least a few of Marian's origins lie in ancient fertility rites, with "May" or some form of "Marian" as the presiding goddess or spirit and, most likely, sexual.

Prior to her full-blown ballad introduction as Robin's sweetheart in the ballad of

"Robin Hood and Maid Marian" by S.S. (Child's no. 150) circa 1600, where she disguises herself as a page-boy to seek Robin in the greenwood, fights with him, and joins him and his men, Marian seems to have been primarily a participant in the May games and the Morris Dance, and on occasion the May Queen. As May Queen, she is beautiful and chaste; as a member of the May games (sometimes) and especially the Morris Dance, however, she more often comes across as a greenwood wench, Robin's lover--some commentators have suggested Friar Tuck's, originally--with all the sexual connotations.

We need to further consider Marian's associations with May and springtime. Peter Stallybrass states that, "May was the month of Maid Marion. It was also the month when the regulations of village and urban life gave way to the liberties of the forest....The tales of Robin Hood are also commonly set in May....in May, the liberties of the outlaw were celebrated" (57). Marian and her companions reside outside the law, but paradoxically are often seen as free, and allowed to reverse the social order once a year: the outlaws become, in a sense, the upholders of the laws of nature, which during spring festivals triumphed over the laws of society.

May itself becomes somewhat ambivalent, however, as Robert Graves points out in his lengthy discussion of the tree-alphabet in Roderick O'Flaherty's Ogygia; O'Flaherty presents the tree-alphabet "as a genuine relic of Druidism orally transmitted down the centuries" (Graves 165). The sixth tree in this alphabet is the "whitethorn, hawthorn or may, which takes its name from the month of May. It is, in general, an unlucky tree" (174), as May seems to be an unlucky month, when people in ancient Greece as well as in Britain went around in old clothes and abstained from sexual intercourse, making May an unlucky month in which to get married. Part of the explanation for the unpropitious aspect of May relates to a powerful ancient goddess: "The Greek Goddess Maia, though she is represented in English poetry as 'ever fair and young' took her name from maia, 'grandmother'; she was a malevolent beldame whose son Hermes conducted souls to Hell.

She was in fact the White Goddess, who under the name of Cardea...cast spells with the hawthorn" (Graves 174), rendering the Month of the May/Hawthorn a month of "enforced chastity" which actually "begins on May 13th, when the may is first in flower, and ends on June 9th" (175). Graves further adds that the "later orgiastic use" to which the hawthorn was put is related to the cult of the goddess Flora (176)--originally a prostitute--brought to England by the Romans and apparently connected with the Furry Dance still performed in Cornwall on May 8th (Long 76-78): the townspeople head for the fields between four and five o'clock in the morning "to collect garlands of flowers and green branches, and deck themselves therewith. Then they dance in the streets in couples and go right through the houses, in at the front door and out at the back" (Long 76). George Long adds that the dance itself is led by a man and a woman, and that the traditional Furry Dance song to which it is performed mentions Robin Hood and Little John (76-77). Although the song does not mention Maid Marian, she and Robin are both implied in the couple who lead the garlanded dancers. It also strikes me as a strong possibility that the dance itself, weaving through the village houses, reflects its origins in an ancient blessing, most likely for fertility, as the dancers adorn themselves in flowers and green branches. In addition to Long's association of the prostitute-cum-goddess-Flora with the Furry Dance, Graves connects her with the basic English medieval transformation of the ascetic may/hawthorn, "the tree of enforced chastity" (175), into a tree of revelry as villagers and townsfolk, especially youths and maidens, rode or walked out "on May Morning to pluck flowering hawthorn boughs and dance around the maypole" (176).

The medieval dual nature of the symbolism of the may/hawthorn and the month to which it gives its name may also derive from the opening days of May before the hawthorn actually flowers, as Lewis Spence remarks that, "The annual games associated with [Robin Hood's] name were admittedly of considerable antiquity, and were celebrated on the first and succeeding days of May to the eighth, the same period allotted to the Celtic festival of

Beltane--in itself a suggestive circumstance" (30). Beltaine was an ancient Celtic fire-festival in praise of the god Bel, Belenus, or Bíle, "who was not only a god of death but of life as well" (Ellis 40), a solar deity who triumphed over the powers of darkness. The people extinguished their household fires which the druids rekindled "from torches lit by 'the sacred fires of Bel,' the rays of the sun, and the new flames symbolized a fresh start for everyone" (Ellis 40); the night before, bonfires were lit, giving the festival its name "Bel-tinne, fires of Bel" (Ellis 39), also the time when cattle were purified, again suggestive of new life and a fresh start. Caitlín Matthews states that, "This release from winter confinement heralded ecstatic celebrations. As the sidhe doors were open, this night was also one for the Faery revels" (85), a time when the doors of the Otherworld were open and when, therefore, anything could happen. While Lewis Spence observes that "Robin Hood's games were coincidental in date with the ancient Celtic festival of Bealteinn," he adds that they "do not appear to have been similar to it" (37-38). However, this may be because Spence associates Robin Hood as archer with his archery prowess primarily symbolic of fertilizing showers (37), although arrows (especially flaming arrows) are traditionally associated with the rays of the sun, as Phoebus Apollo is an archer. Therefore, perhaps in Robin and Marian, in addition to a yearly wedding of a fertility god and goddess with the sacrifice of the god, we also have the sun-god and the Flower Maiden or the moon-goddess--and all are associated with sexuality and fertility.

We cannot help but notice that the "unlucky" aspect of May--at least the greater part of the month, after its festive beginning--comes about after some form of organised religion arises, as this unlucky element is associated with a powerful goddess. At the same time, I am struck by the resemblance to the Christian season of Lent (despite the differences in the dates of observance): Lent is traditionally a time of fasting and other forms of abstinence, including a certain amount of sexual abstinence, but it is preceeded by the riotous merrymaking of carnival--and the Robin Hood/May Games fall during the old

Celtic holiday of Beltaine, a carnivalesque celebration which ends shortly before the "unlucky" portion of May commences.

Lewis Spence, following Lord Raglan (The Hero, 1949), suggests that the Robin Hood ballads and tales grew out of the May Games with their probable pagan fertility origin and their Lord/King and Lady/Queen of the May. In many ballads, Robin does not win the quarrels he picks with strangers but the strangers, having proven their mettle, are invited to join the outlaw band; Spence and Raglan suggest that these outlines follow the tradition of the sacrificial king, who had to fight once a year for his title, and possibly his life and his consort, as well (Spence 32). In his study of the early Robin Hood plays, David Wiles likewise suggests that the Games "often inspired the creation of ballads" (2-3), although he does not trace the Games back to pagan mythology. He further observes that by the late fifteenth century, when members of the Greenwood company join the Morris dancers, that "the may" comes to be associated with the period from Pentecost to Whitsuntide, as various church-wardens' rolls and references indicate; in Albion's England of 1598, William Warner confirms this dating:

> At Paske began our morris, and ere Pentecost our May,
>
> Tho Robin Hood, Li'ell John, Friar Tuck and Marian deftly play. (qtd Wiles4)

The Morris Dance gradually replaced the Robin Hood Games by the sixteenth century, with the first recorded English Morris performed before Henry VII in 1494 (Wiles 5).

We do have information on these later "Mayings" and Morrises; the difficulty lies in the earlier May Games, which evidently involved the maypole, as well as the taking of the boughs which decked it from the woodlands of the wealthy throughout at least the fifteenth century, although legislation to curb the theft of greenery begins in the sixteenth (Wiles 19), which may help to explain how Robin, Marian, and the rest of the Greenwood clan were transferred from the May Games to the Whitsun Morris Dances, as the ritual thievery of the boughs would connect both the outlaw and the "Green Man-symbol-of-

Spring" elements of Robin Hood: outlaw the traditional ritual thievery, and we essentially outlaw the outlaw.

No one knows how far back the May Games go, although J.C. Holt notes that reforming bishops such as Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln and Walter Cantilupe of Worcester condemned May Games during the 1230s and 1240s, and that "Puritan divines still thundered against such sprees in the sixteenth century" (RH 159). Likewise, we do not know what they were originally like, as they underwent various shifts over time, but they do always seem to have involved a couple, a man and a woman, presiding over the fun and the feasting; the couple could be called King and Queen, Lord and Lady, or Robin Hood and Maid (or May) Marian, as Francis Douce notes (336). In regard to the presence of Robin and Marian in the games, Christina Hole observes that,

> Maid Marion was an important character in the May-games, and in some places the chosen May Queen seems to have borne this title. It is, of course, possible that the name was conferred upon the queen in honour of Robin Hood's traditional mate; it is equally possible, and perhaps more probable, that Maid Marion was originally quite distinct from the Robin Hood saga and was only later incorporated with it. A 'love interest' was doubtless as much appreciated in the Middle Ages as it is to-day, and to join in one legend the principal character of the May-games, and of the Robin Hood plays which formed part of them, was an easy method of providing one. (84)

She adds later: "Once popular tradition had transformed Maid Marion into [Robin Hood's] wife, it was an easy matter to confuse Robin Hood himself with the King of May who, no less than his partner, represented the summer and all its joys" (Hole 91). Some of the elements in the characters of Marian and Robin undoubtedly stem from the May Games: in the plays of both Anthony Munday and Ben Jonson, Robin and Marian preside at

greenwood feasts--although Jonson's Marian takes her bow, her quiver, and her men and goes off to hunt the main course. The presence of a couple implies sexuality, but in the case of Marian we see it veering off into both the courtly and the bawdy.

As Dobson and Taylor note,

> No romantic interest is to be found in the medieval tales. Even when Maid Marian appeared through the medium of the May Games, a burlesque element was frequently present, and it was left to Elizabethan dramatists to rescue her from the 'coarse Elizabethan clown' she had become. ("Early" 43)

David Wiles proposes that, "Prima facie evidence for the greater antiquity for the courtly Marian is provided by her etymology, for she seems to derive her name from the Marion who is mistress to Robin in the French pastourelles" (21), musical poems and plays about shepherds for royal and aristocratic courts; the association of both pastoral and greenwood with an idyllic life away from the confines of the court, while simultaneously critiquing and reinforcing the values of the courtly world, no doubt suggested a connection between pastoral shepherds and greenwood outlaws--in addition to helping provide Robin Hood with a consort. At the same time, we have seen that Maid Marian's origins include the Virgin Mary, who was often treated in the Middle Ages as the ultimate courtly lady, the Queen of Heaven, to whom heroes such as King Arthur and Robin Hood were said to be devoted. At the same time, an examination of the most notable of the French pastourelles and a work which predates any known English Robin Hood ballads, Adam de la Halle's late thirteenth-century Le Jeu de Robin et Marion, reveals a sexual relationship between the title characters, as well as connections with May Games, as the shepherds finally enjoy their feast and their dancing in the second part of the play. As Nicoletta Gossen observes in her notes on the play for the recording by Thomas Binkley and his Musicians of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis,

> As with so many medieval texts, this one reveals many levels of interpretation. On the one hand much of the text seems harmless when taken for what it says; however, that same text often has spicy undertones. Apples, cheese, cress, a bread sack, the staff of the shepherd--common objects in the play--are all secondarily parts of the body. (trans. Binkley, Focus 913 liner notes)

Thus, when the shepherdess Marion tells the importunate chevalier that she and her Robin are special to each other and that he shows her how special she is by giving her a breadbag, a staff, and a knife (<<cheste panetiere, cheste houlete et chest coutel>>--Focus 913 CD text), we are aware of the sexual implications, as we are with the apples Robin brings her and the rustic bagpipes he plays. At the same time, Marion (or Mariette, as she is also called here) remains loyal to her shepherd swain Robin despite the insistent attentions of this passing knight, whose attempts at abduction she foils three times. In the second half of the play, having finally freed herself from the chevalier, Marion joins Robin and their friends for a rustic feast and dancing, after Robin redeems himself by rescuing a ewe from a wolf--since Marion had had to rescue herself from the "wolf"-chevalier. At the feast, Robin and Marion decide they will get married, to the delight of their friends, and the play ends in a dance led by the happy couple. The combination of feasting and dancing led by a couple strongly implies the May Games of both the continent and England.

Albert Pauphilet further sees Robin et Marion as the beginning of French comic opera and as anticipating the comedies of Molière four centuries later (158); certainly both comic operas and Molière's comedies often turn on a sexual jest or problem. In addition to her sexual nature, Adam's Marion is for Pierre-Yves Badel "the incarnation of a dream, a young woman who combines grace and mischievousness, affection and clear-sightedness, naturalness and knowledge of life" (20; my translation) [<<Marion incarne ce rêve, elle qui unit grâce et malice, tendresse et clairvoyance, naturel et savoir-vivre>> (20)]. The rustic

but courtly French shepherdess Marion, then, lends her personality to the English Maid-Marian-as-May-Queen, but only the rusticity is left by the time the Morris Dance is well entrenched in the English tradition, leaving us to assume that the seventeenth-century "Ballad of Robin Hood and Maid Marian" (Child's no. 150) comes from very early in the century, as ballad-maker S.S. calls Maid Marian, "A bonny fine maid of a noble degree" (st. 1), lover of the "Earl of Huntington, nobly born" (st. 4). At the same time, Holt suggests that apparently the pastoral and the greenwood Robin and Marian developed side by side, but independently, throughout the fifteenth century, although both "drew ultimately through the spring and summer festivals, on a literary source, the French pastoral play Robin et Marion, composed c. 1283 by Adam de la Halle" (RH 160).

The May Games, the spring and summer festivals themselves, as Holt observes, involve "The challenge, the combat, the recruitment to the band...almost a ritual, easy to present theatrically" (RH 173). Certainly these elements are present in the earliest play-scripts we have, all from fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century manuscripts, and David Wiles suggests that not only do these elements mark Robin himself as a kind of Lord of Misrule--since he usually loses--but also that the games and plays helped to inspire the ballad-writers (46). Holt believes that Robin first joined Marian in the English May Games around 1450 (RH 192), although by that time she had frequently presided as May Queen for approximately 200 years. She is not present in the three or four surviving play-scripts, however, which might partly account for her even later entry into the ballads.

Marian is, nonetheless, present in the May Games. Part of our confusion as to the when, why, and wherefore of her role stems from the blending of "the May games, those of Robin Hood, the ales, and the morris dances" together "as convenience or caprice happened to dictate," in the words of Francis Douce (339). As the beautiful and chaste May Queen, for example, she would have sat enthroned in a kind of Summer House or flowery bower, as did Margaret More of Wistow in 1469, "'making herself agreeable, but

with decency'" (qtd Hole 94); Christina Hole adds that, "Similar arbours were built for Robin Hood and Maid Marion where their games were played," with the churchyard or a convenient meadow being favorite locations (94). In his Echoes of Magic, C.A. Burland tells us that:

> The central figure of May Day was the May Queen. In historic and recent times she wore a white gown and garlands of flowers. She was carried in procession seated on her throne, and her position was much coveted. She had to be a girl of good character [i.e. a virgin] who was chosen by her fellows. The blessing on her was that the position made her a desirable bride, a symbol of life and love. (qtd J. Matthews 88, emphasis mine)

The May Queen's virginity, then, is connected with her latent sexuality as a worthy bride, "a symbol of life and love," and so she remains even when she comes to be called Maid Marian, as Robin Hood appropriated the role of the May King or May Lord. At the same time, as we have seen, her presence contains echoes of pagan goddesses of sexuality and fertility; her medieval virginal character probably represents an earlier Christianization of an ancient pagan figure--and it is this medieval virginal character ennobled as an aristocratic lady that dramatists such as Anthony Munday will essentially resurrect after Marian's gradual debasement in the Morris Dances.

The Morris Dances present us with another set of problems, beginning with their name. As Lewis Spence observes, "Morris" is traditionally said

> to be merely a corruption of 'Moorish,' and certain factors in the dance itself appear to bear this out--the circumstance that the performers frequently blackened their faces with soot to represent people of colour, and that in puppet-shows the images who 'performed' it were attired to represent Moors. (142)

Francis Douce, pointing to a 1649 mention of a "Spanish Morisco," states that in its uncorrupted state the Morris was to be found in Spain, "where it still continues to delight both natives and strangers under the name of the fandango" (330); based on the English versions of the dance itself, Douce suggests that its origins may also lie in ancient sword dances (331). On the other hand, Robert Graves claims that, "This same word 'morris,' as the prefix to 'pike,' is first written 'maris': so it is likely that the morris-men were Mary's men, not moriscoes or Moorish men, as is usually supposed" (398n.). Since Marian in some form is associated with the Morris, Graves's conjectures may not be completely out of line. George Long further notes that "there are several features in the Morris ceremonies which seem to me characteristic of hunting usages" (104), including the hobby-horse and, at Bampton, a cake impaled on a sword; he adds that: "In Sherwood Forest the mediaeval hunting season for deer was from June 24th to September 14th and November 11th to February 2nd" (105). Interestingly, it is when the denizens of the Greenwood take up Morris dancing that their celebration shifts to Whitsuntide in mid to late June--corresponding to the beginning of the summer deer season in medieval Sherwood--and, as Long points out, "these were very definitely huntsmen--even if illicit" (108).

With regard to Marian's role in the Morris, George Long states that "the Morris Dancers consist of men only, but there is one--'The Princess Royal'--in which there is one lady and one man" (112), all of which adds to the confusion. John Matthews relates that the characters in the Morris on Tollett's famous window of painted glass in Betley Old Hall, Staffordshire (also Holt, RH 160), include the May Queen, often identified as Maid Marian; as Matthews observes, the red pink in her hand, her golden crown, and her colorful clothing--purple coif, blue surcote, white cuffs, yellow skirt, carnation-pink sleeves, red stomacher with yellow lace--appear "like an attempt to create a woman dressed in all the colours of spring, not unlike the figure of the Flower Bride" (121). David Wiles notes further that the Betley window's May Queen appears to be a woman, not a man dressed as

a woman. Wiles adds, "References to a male Marian are exclusively Elizabethan" and, "The part of Marian was given over to a male in 1516" as, based on church-warden's accounts, it appears that Robin, Marian, and company began to dance that year (23). Wiles further states that, "It would have been socially unacceptable for a girl to dance alone with a group of males; while it was traditional for a maiden to serve as May Queen, the morris dance, then as now, was a male preserve" (24)--yet the Betley window itself, perhaps partly reflecting the aristocratic Marian of the professional theatre, was painted circa 1620 (J.Matthews 145). Curiously, Maid Marian and the Friar apparently undergo some temporary dissociation from the Greenwood legend once they join the Morris dancers, and especially once Maid Marian's role there is taken by a man or youth; by 1529, only about thirteen years from the time a male first took her role, we find him/her dressed "in a robust coat of canvas alongside the morris men at Reading" (Wiles 24), and a man-woman character, the (Maid) Marian, is clearly well underway. Having a man or youth playing a woman in village dances and games associated with combat and hunting might lead to a debasement of the female character herself, especially as the young man playing her apparently adopted a mincing gait (Douce 344-345). Francis Douce remarks that Marian in her degraded state is sometimes "assimilated to a vulgar drudge or scullion both in name [e.g., "Malkyn"] and condition" (345).

The Play of Robin Hood, printed circa 1562, is the only play-script which includes a woman, but she is not named in the manuscript. David Wiles claims that the "trul of trust, to serue a frier at his lust" (script in Wiles 76) of the part dealing with Robin Hood and the Friar is "clearly a version of the male Marian" (39, 76) as she has been debased through association with the Morris Dance, although I do not see any reason why Robin would simply hand over his own lover to the friar to be the latter's leman. Perhaps her character, especially in the Morris Dance, partly arose because a boy generally took her rather limited role in these nonprofessional fun-and-games productions of various towns and villages.

This brings us to the professional theatre, to the Robin Hood plays of Anthony Munday (with Henry Chettle), The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon (probably played in 1598 but not printed until 1601) and The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon a year later. Here, Robin Hood is an outlawed earl and Maid Marian is actually the Lady Matilda who, when she joins Robin in Sherwood, takes the name "Maid Marian" to indicate that she lives a chaste life; Prince John (later King John) attempts to win her for his mistress, both before and after Robin's death, but the chaste and loyal Matilda accepts poison rather than enter John's bed. Munday brings in Drayton's Matilda the faire and chaste daughter of Lord R. Fitzwater (1594) to create a love-interest for his Earl Robin, a love-triangle, and a romantic tragedy; his fair Matilda/ Marian is played by a lively boy, but the role is not that of a greenwood wench. Munday is writing for a London audience and, as he raises Robin Hood to the peerage by right, so he needs an aristocratic lady for his earl. Both Marian's nobility and her virginity--especially her virginity--are stressed in the opening dumb-show which suggests the action to follow:

> This youth that leads yon virgin by the hand
> (As doth the Sunne, the morning richly clad)
> Is our Earle Robert, or your Robin Hoode,
> That in those daies, was Earle of Huntington. (ll. 86-89)

Munday's Marian, while completely loyal to her Robin in the face of both his outlawed state and Prince John's desire for her, remains a somewhat passive, elegant figure even when she joins Robin and his men in the forest; aside from her beauty, her most consistent trait is her virginity. As Robin assures old Lord Fitzwater, Marian's father banished by Prince John:

> Why, shee is cald maid Marian, honest friend,
> Because she liues a spotlesse maiden life:
> And shall, till Robins outlawe life haue ende,
> That he may lawfully take her to wife. (ll. 1539-1542)

In the greenwood, names change: Robert becomes Robin while Matilda becomes Marian, as Munday seeks to reconcile his aristocratic Robin and Marian with the Robin and Marian of the ballads and games. Of course, as Malcolm Nelson points out, Munday's chaste Matilda/Marian "has come a long way from the May plays" (148) and the Morris dances; in addition to borrowing from Drayton, perhaps Munday also wished to compliment Queen Elizabeth, the "Virgin Queen" of England.

Michael Drayton, too, has a Maid Marian, but he wisely did not borrow from Munday's borrowing of him. In "The Sixe and Twentieth Song" of Poly-Olbion, a long poem published between 1612 and 1619 praising the wonders of England, Drayton's Muse takes him to Nottinghamshire and Sherwood, where Sherwood Forest herself, as a nymph, sings to him of "That lustie Robin Hood, who long time like a King/Within her compasse liv'd" (ll.300-301), of how good Robin was to those in need, especially women, and of how much he loved Marian:

> The Widdow in distresse he graciously reliev'd,
> And remedied the wrongs of many a Virgin griev'd:
> He from the husbands bed no married woman wan,
> But to his Mistris deare, his loved Marian
> Was ever constant knowne, which wheresoere shee came,
> Was soveraigne of the Woods, chiefe Lady of the Game:
> Her Clothes tuck'd to the knee, and daintie braided haire,
> With Bow and Quiver arm'd, shee wandred here and there,
> Amongst the Forrests wild; Diana never knew
> Such pleasures, nor such Harts as Mariana slew. (ll.349-358)

While Munday borrowed from Drayton's retellings of the legend of Matilda to largely create the "tradition" of Maid Marian's chastity, Drayton himself essentially makes Marian a virgin huntress, an English Diana--or is Drayton's Marian a virgin huntress? Yes, Drayton

compares her directly to Diana, the Roman version of the Greek Goddess of the Hunt, Artemis, but Artemis-Diana herself had a love affair with the hunter Orion (whom her brother Apollo tricked her into killing), not to mention her liaison with Endymion. In addition, the lines "He from the husbands bed no married woman wan,/But to his Mistris deare, his loved Marian,/Was ever constant knowne" (ll. 51-53) appear ambiguous: Do Drayton's Marian and Robin have a sexual relationship as well as an ideal love? While Munday basically inaugurated the "tradition" of Marian's virginity at the end of the sixteenth century, Drayton recreates her as a lovely huntress but renders her virginity doubtful early in the seventeenth.

In his unfinished pastoral play The Sad Shepherd: A Play of Robin-hood, published in 1640, Ben Jonson keeps Drayton's huntress but further muddies the virgin waters. Not only does Marian hunt the deer for the main course of the feast which Robin orders and directs, thus implying a certain role reversal, but her relationship with Robin, while idealized, appears sexual, especially when Robin and Marian meet after she has hunted the deer:

> Robin: My Marian, and my Mistris! Marian: My lov'd Robin!
>
> Mellifleur: The Moone's at full, the happy paire are met!
>
> Marian: How hath this morning paid me, for my rising!
>
> First, with my sports; but most with meeting you!
>
> I did not halfe so well reward my hounds,
>
> As she hath me to day: although I gave them
>
> All the sweet morsels, Calle, Tongue, Eares, and Dowcets!
>
> Robin: What? and the inch-pin? Marian: Yes. Robin: Your
>
> sports then pleas'd you?
>
> Marian: You are a wanton. Robin: One I doe confesse
>
> I wanted till you came, but now I have you,
>
> Ile growe to your embraces, till two soules

Distilled into kisses, through our lips

Doe make one spirit of love. Marian: O Robin! Robin!

(I.vi.1-13)

As Stephen Knight has observed, Jonson's unfinished play "is the only Robin Hood text until recent times that actually shows Robin and Marian as being in sexual rapport, in [this] impressive scene when they meet and display credible affection" (Study 141). He further suggests, however, that "it is also conceivable that the witch-centered strain that enters the relationship later is a negative response to this realization of sexual contact" (Knight, Study 142). The old witch Maudlin of Papplewicke envies Marian her beauty, her generosity, and her relationship with Robin; she further envies the relationship between the shepherds and the greenwood "family" of Robin and Marian, and seeks to destroy both by impersonating Marian, which she accomplishes by the means of a "'browdred belt, with Characters'" (II.iii.38), wrought for her at moonlight by "'A Gypsan Ladie, and a right Beldame.../Upo' your Granams grave, that verie night/Wee earth'd her...'" (II.iii.39, 41-42). As long as she wears this belt, she can appear as Marian; the belt is the only way her own son and daughter will be able to recognize her when she takes on Marian's appearance.

Tom Hayes correctly points to the "distinguished antecedent" (54) for Maudlin's magic belt in Spenser's Faerie Queene, especially in Book Three, Cantos 7 and 8; when the witch's uncouth son and her magic hyena-type beast chase "faire Florimell" to the sea where she escapes, she leaves her golden girdle behind on the beach. Sir Satyrane uses the girdle to bind the beast, which he mournfully thinks has killed Florimell; the beast later breaks his bonds, and Sir Satyrane keeps the girdle as a kind of relic. In Book Four, we find several knights wearing golden girdles in memory of Florimell, and later in Book Four, Sir Satyrane offers the true girdle as a prize in a tournament--a tournament where each knight fights to prove his own lady the fairest and purest, and therefore the most worthy to wear Florimell's girdle, which we now learn is a magic girdle, "made by Vulcan," as Hayes says,

"as a symbol of chaste love for his wife Venus, who left it behind after she made love with Mars" (55), and which can only be worn by a chaste woman. In addition, both Spenser's and Jonson's magic girdles recall the belt of Hippolyta, which Heracles had to steal as one of his twelve labors. Tom Hayes adds:

> This story [of the girdle of Hippolyta], of course, has other analogues that involve transgressive sexuality, such as the girdle the Lady gives to Sir Gawain and the handkerchief Othello gives to Desdemona (which was given to him by his mother, who had given it to his father to 'subdue' him).....Roman Catholic midwives made magic girdles for women to wear in labor. (55)

Of course, Florimell's golden girdle is a symbol of chaste love, not a symbol of "transgressive sexuality," while Maudlin's "browdred belt" definitely carries overtones of various forms of sexual transgression as she uses it to try to separate Marian from her lover.*

The witch Maudlin, however, oversteps her own boundaries and appears as herself to gleefully thank Marian for "'A whole Stagge, Madam! and so fat a Deere!'" (II.vi.6). When Marian denies sending the deer to Maudlin or speaking ill to Robin and the other foresters and shepherds, the shepherdesses vouch for her; Mellifleur states: "'Shee never left my side/Since I came in, here, nor I hers'" (II.v.37-38). Robin now begins to suspect that Maudlin is somehow deceiving them all, but needs more proof. Meanwhile, he humbles himself to Marian:

* Jonson is further playing with the idea of a "true Marian" and a "false Marian" in addition to the notion of the magic belt. One source for both the belt and the "true" and "false" Marians in The Sad Shepherd is Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene (1590 & 1596), beginning with Book Three where Spenser introduces both the true "faire Florimell" and the false "snowy Florimell"; a Hag creates the latter for her lewd son who pines for the real lady. The "snowy Florimell" deceives everyone until the true returns; the witch's creation literally melts away when "faire Florimell" retrieves her own magic girdle of constancy. The Penguin edition of The Faerie Queene, edited by Thomas Roche, Jr. (1978/rep. 1987), is generally available.

Robin: Would I could see her

Once more in Marians forme! for I am certaine

Now, it was shee abus'd us; as I think

My Marian, and my Love, now, innocent:

Which faith I seale unto her, with this kisse,

And call you all to witnesse of my pennance. (II.vi.125-130)

When Marian next appears, it is to tell the foresters and shepherds that Amie, whom they were quite worried about, is fine, for "'Maudlin, the cunning Woman...wrought upon her a miraculous Cure'" (III.iv.23-25). She tries to leave when Robin reappears, still concerned about Amie; he disbelieves both her news and her, and suspects she is really Maudlin. Grabbing her by the girdle, he runs out with her as she struggles, the only time we see Jonson's Robin involved in some form of physical violence. When he returns, dragging her onstage in her own shape, he holds aloft the broken girdle: "'Was this the charmed circle:/The Copy that so couzen'd, and deceive'd us?'" (III.iv.48-49). To break Maudlin's belt, then, a symbol of her femaleness, is to break her spell. The play itself breaks off before we see the complete reconciliation between Robin and Marian, but we know it will now happen; indeed, it began as soon as Robin realized that they might all be victims of Maudlin's deceptions.

Tom Hayes sees Robin in this moment of violence becoming a guardian of patriarchy, humilating the rebellious woman and subordinating her: "Robin's 'rape' of the witch, who represents the malevolent aspect of the feminine Other, breaks the demonic possession that threatened the hegemony of patriarchy" (154). However, most of the foresters and shepherds in Jonson's play appear more interested in the spirit of their own shared community and concerned about the emotional or physical difficulties of two or three of their number, both male and female, than in maintaining a patriarchal society as

such: Innocent Amie has fallen in love with the shepherd Karol and cannot understand what is wrong with her; beautiful Earine, mourned as drowned by Aeglamour, the Sad Shepherd of the title, is actually imprisoned by the witch Maudlin and wooed by her uncouth son, Lorel--but her friends have no knowledge of this event; Marian has seemingly changed of a sudden from her sunny, generous self to a shrewish scold. Fortunately, Marian's difficulties are resolved here, but the others are left hanging in this incomplete work.

One element we can definitely identify, of course, is the split personality of Woman or, perhaps we should say, the split stereotype of Woman, which Jonson's Marian blurs just as she blurs the virginity question. This Marian is a chaste lover, as Robin is clearly the only man she loves, but she is also an excellent huntress; when she and some of the men return with the deer, Marian attempts to tell Robin all about the hunt, including the correct "undoing" of the dead deer, but Robin continually interrupts her with kisses. She and old Scathlocke also relate the ominous circumstance of the raven's alighting on a dead branch and croaking all the while they were undoing the deer; Scathlocke suspects Maudlin (I.vi), and in the next scene, Maudlin appears as Marian. Therefore, we see Maudlin connected with the raven, the bird of death, croaking in the vicinity where Marian hunts while Robin remains in his bower to direct other preparations for the feast. Jonson's Robin remains fairly passive until his fierce attack on Maudlin-as-Marian; in The Sad Shepherd, for the most part, the women act while the men wait. Hayes suggests that Marian and Maudlin, taken together, form "the Janus-faced carnivalized woman of folk culture...masterless, in charge of her own sexuality" (148), that if Marian basically represents positive feminine values (despite her hunting prowess?) then Maudlin represents the "castrating mother" men fear. Stephen Knight reminds us that "in its full spelling of Magdalene [Maudlin's] name has New Testament connections with sexuality as well as the sentimentality of the word 'maudlin'" (Study 141), although Mary Magdalene in the New Testament is not associated

with sexuality but with demon-possession, as the writer of Luke tells us that Jesus cast seven devils from her (perhaps fitting in the context of Jonson's play); her name begins to imply sexuality when the Middle Ages turn her into a type of the repentant prostitute, chiefly under the influence of the writings of Pope Gregory the Great (Farmer 270), but also from medieval confusion of Mary of Magdala with the penitent hermit Mary of Egypt (Farmer 271), and Jacobus de Voragine's conflation of Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, and Mary of Bethany (in the Gospels, the sister of Martha and Lazarus) in his capsule account of Mary Magdalene in The Golden Legend (355-364) especially popular during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. If Jonson knew both connotations--the demonic and the sexual--of the name Magdalene or Maudlin, then his "hag," as various characters call her, is appropriately named. Marian herself (as herself!) comes across as a warm, spontaneous, passionate woman, not a threat to Robin's masculinity; Hayes notwithstanding, she neither "seduces" Robin nor "assume[s] the masculine position of power" (121), as she hunts the deer at Robin's request (I.ii). Rather, until the witch usurps Marian's form, Robin and Marian appear in complete accord--as we assume they will be again. In addition, once the witch is unmasked, Marian's own identity is clarified once more, and the others do not have to wonder every time she appears if they see Maudlin or Marian. Of course, Maudlin is ultimately unmasked by a man, by the "Robin-hood" of the play's subtitle rather than by Marian, the woman whose identity she usurps. If Marian did the unmasking herself, would Jonson and the men in his projected audience have found the situation too threatening, especially as his Marian has already demonstrated her hunting prowess?

Nevertheless, as Malcolm Nelson has observed, Ben Jonson's unfinished play pulls together strands of the ever evolving and ever more complex Matter of the Greenwood: He successfully blends classical pastoralism with the Robin Hood tradition, with Robin and Marian as noble lovers--but not ennobled, not aristocratic (i.e., not earl and lady) (Nelson

221)--who speak and behave courteously and even elegantly except when their rapport is temporarily frustrated by the witch Maudlin. The lovers have already undergone the transformation of ennoblement into aristocrats, primarily through Munday's plays, and with few exceptions they will largely remain aristocrats, but Jonson manages to give Robin and Marian noble hearts without aristocratic titles. His noble Robin and Marian also hark back to the May Games tradition, as they head the feast; however,

> The Robin Hood of this play is not so much 'Lord of Misrule' as he is 'King of May' in quite a new sense....He and Marian are 'a pair of Turtles' [Sad Shepherd I.v.108] standing between the frequently excessive and conventional expressions of love from the classical shepherds, and the rusticity of Robin Hood's men and Maudlin's group. (Nelson 234)

At the same time, Jonson draws in Drayton's huntress-Marian; however, Jonson's Marian, unlike Drayton's, is definitely not a "transmutation into a figure of myth" (Knight, Study 137), but a woman: a happy woman in love with her man, distressed when he repudiates her and, we can conjecture, joyful in her restoration. In addition, Jonson's Marian is not a decorative accessary; she is an excellent huntress and a compassionate friend, as well as a spirited defender of her own innocence when Robin and his men accuse her of speaking rudely to them and then sending the stag to Maudlin. In Maudlin, of course, Jonson gives us Marian's opposite number, so to speak: the Hag, the shape-shifter, the bringer of death to love and to community, while Marian is the reconciler of differences; yet Maudlin's presence in the play and especially her temporary assumption of Marian's identity indicate the unease that a man may feel in the presence of a strong, sexual woman, no matter how charming she is--and Jonson's Marian is strong and sexual as well as charming.

Likewise, the title character in Thomas Love Peacock's 1822 novel Maid Marian is a strong, sexual, but charming woman--with a difference. Although Peacock dipped into Joseph Ritson's collection of Robin Hood material for his own burlesque romance version of

the legend, his Lady Matilda/Maid Marian appears fashioned from other sources: Peacock's Marian is aristocratic and chaste (Munday), but a passionate huntress (Drayton and Jonson) and an excellent archer and swordswoman (ballads), a happy singer, a loyal sweetheart, a young woman who knows her own mind and who refuses to bow to any form of unjust authority. As Stephen Knight observes about the novel itself:

> Peacock....is the first, and in some ways the most successful, writer to rationalize the Robin Hood narrative materials into one structure. Essentially he fitted much of the ballad stories into the framework devised by Munday. His story opens, like The Downfall, with the wedding of Robin and Marian disrupted by the king's officials; Robin goes into outlaw exile; various adventures occur, many of them taken from Ritson's ballads, involving Robin, Marian, the Gamwell family and a decidedly upmarket version of Tuck, Brother Michael. Eventually King Richard does return and restores order but at the end Munday's sombre story is picked up as John is king at last and the forces of good take again to the forests. (Study 183)

Peacock augments the triangular structure of Munday's Marian-Robin-Prince John to Marian-Robin-Prince John-Sir Ralph Montfaucon, the latter the commander of the soldiers who initially disrupt the wedding of Earl Robert and Lady Matilda. Peacock's Matilda/Marian is something of a paragon; her confessor, Brother Michael, describes her as generous, kind, sensible, resolute, and highly skilled in recognized "feminine" crafts--but with troublesome mythological overtones connected with sexual aggression: "'for embroidery an Arachne: for music a Siren: and for pickling and preserving, did not one of her jars of sugared apricots give you your last surfeit at Arlingford Castle?'" (450). In addition, however, she is a highly skilled archer and swordswoman, as both Sir Ralph and Prince John learn later in the novel. Robin and Marian "were companions from the cradle, and reciprocally fashioned each other to the love of the fern and the fox-glove"; in addition,

"They are twin plants of the forest, and are identified with its growth" (457). Marian's spirits are compared to "the wing of the eagle, without his beak or his claw" and her gentleness is as "the summer wind" (456). This identification of Lady Matilda with nature is carried almost to an extreme in our first good look at her, since we saw little of her during her interrupted wedding:

> Matilda, not dreaming of visitors, tripped into the apartment in a dress of forest green, with a small quiver by her side, and a bow and arrow in her hand. Her hair, black and glossy as the raven's wing, curled like wandering clusters of dark ripe grapes under the edge of her round bonnet; and a plume of black feathers fell back negligently above it, with an almost horizontal inclination, that seemed the habitual effect of rapid motion against the wind. Her black eyes sparkled like sunbeams on a river: a clear, deep, liquid radiance, the reflection of ethereal fire,--tempered, not subdued, in the medium of its living and gentle mirror. (462-463)

Peacock's Matilda/Marian is a virtual forest goddess come to life, an Artemis-Diana figure, but one whose virginity, unlike the goddess's or the huntress-Marians of Drayton and Jonson, is not in doubt. This Marian also hints at affinities with the ancient fertility goddesses, but her virginity militates against the association. Nevertheless, she is a sprightly lady and, as she has been a virgin lover, eventually becomes a chaste wife to her Robin, having foiled the attempts of Prince John and Sir Ralph against her virtue. Peacock does seem aware of some inconsistency in regard to the tradition, largely inaugurated by Munday, of Marian's virginity. At the novel's end, with King Richard dead and Prince John firmly on the throne, the restored earl and his lady-wife, with "their old and tried adherents, the friar among the foremost," are forced to flee once more into the forest, where "in merry Sherwood they long lived together, the lady still retaining her former [forest] name of Maid Marian, though the appellation was then as much a misnomer as that of Little John" (540).

Peacock's Marian, although various men attempt to order her about, refuses to acquiesce. When Earl Robert loses his lands and is outlawed, her father forbids her to have any more to do with the earl, yet Matilda/Marian is steadfast in her loyalty to her bridegroom. Both Sir Ralph and Prince John want the beautiful woman in their beds, but she refuses adamantly, even wounding Sir Ralph with an arrow (479) and engaging in a swordfight with Prince John (494). Marian is not "goods" for a male "market," to borrow Luce Iragary's terms (108), and she protects herself vigorously.

In The Foresters: Robin Hood and Maid Marian, written in 1881 but not acted or published until 1892 (Organ 19), Alfred Lord Tennyson's Marian likewise refuses to see herself as "goods," although both Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham desire her, and her father sees her marriage with the sheriff as the only way to keep his lands, which he has mortgaged to the sheriff's brother, the Prior of York. Tennyson brings in Sir Richard atte Lee, the impoverished knight of A Littel Gest of Robyn Hood, but makes him Marian's father, Sir Richard Lea, who has mortgaged his lands to the Prior of York for money to pay his son's ransom from the Moors, who have captured the young knight while he was on Crusade with King Richard. Although she loves the now-outlawed "Earl Robin Hood of Huntingdon," Maid Marian (Tennyson evidently did not believe in woodland name-changes) finds herself pressured by her father to yield to the sheriff's suit; the sheriff promises to meet the mortgage deadline for Sir Richard if Marian agrees to become his wife. But Marian has made a vow that she will not marry until King Richard himself gives her away; she loves Robin, but hates Prince John, who merely wants to bed her, and comes to hate the sheriff who would wed her--and, as Robin observes, her land (II.i), since no one knows if her brother even lives, making her, until the play's end and the appearance of her brother, her father's sole heir. Tennyson's Marian has spirit (surprising for Tennyson), defying both the sheriff and Prince John, and, in company with her maidservant Kate, helping the "foresters" rob those who claim to have little but who actually have much. She is also

golden-tressed (IV.i) and virginal, but carries her purity to something of an extreme; we are, after all, actually in Victorian England here despite the supposed medieval setting. Robin himself is a young Victorian gentleman of upstanding morals who hates Prince John "for his want of chivalry" (I.ii) as the licentious prince is known to "pluck the flower of maidenhood/From off the stalk and trample it in the mire,/And boast that he hath trampled it" (I.ii); Tennyson's Robin respects all women for the sake of his late mother and "the blessed Queen of Heaven" (II.i). Not only do Tennyson's Robin and Marian "never whisper close as lovers do,/Nor care to leap into each other's arms" (III.i) as Kate observes but when, as they talk in the woods together, Robin asks Marian for a kiss, his lady replies:

> Robin, I will not kiss thee,
> For that belongs to marriage; but I hold thee
> The husband of my heart, the noblest light
> That ever flash'd across my life, and I
> Embrace thee with the kisses of the soul. (III.i)

Perhaps Tennyson's Marian needs to cling to an extreme version of purity, as some people assume that her appearing in the forest with Robin indicates that the two are physical lovers; certainly the three captured friars do, as under their breaths they respond to Robin's insistence that they pledge "'Maid Marian!/Queen o' the woods!'" with '"Maid?'...'Paramour!'...'Hell take her!'" (III.i). The abbot and the justiciary, coming to the forest to discuss the terms of Sir Richard's bond while attempting to keep his lands for the prior, make impossible demands which not even the outlaws can meet; they then accuse Robin of violating Marian:

> You hide this damsel in your forest here,
> You hope to hold and keep her for yourself,
> <u>You heed not how you soil her maiden fame,</u>
> You scheme against her father's weal and hers,

For so this maid would wed our brother, he

Would pay us all the debt at once, and thus

This old Sir Richard might redeem his land. (IV.i, emphasis mine)

While the sheriff might indeed pay Sir Richard's debt if he can get his hands on Marian, we have had ample proof that Robin would never seek to violate Marian, and that her own purity is beyond reproach. However, those who are corrupt in themselves are quick to see the possibility of corruption in others.

In Tennyson, Marian's carefully-preserved virginity is placed in doubt by a few evil-thinkers, but their skepticism does her no harm. One hundred years later, Lady Marian FitzWalter of Ravenskeep, the titular heroine of Jennifer Roberson's Lady of the Forest (1992), finds that skepticism can destroy. A landed orphan now that her father has died in the Crusades (her mother had died some years before), young and incredibly beautiful Lady Marian finds herself the object--yes, object--of desire of Prince John, the Sheriff of Nottingham, and the sheriff's aide, Sir Guy of Gisbourne. The sheriff's desire for her ultimately endangers her, as an escaping convict seizes the woman standing with the sheriff; although Will Scathlocke/Scarlet plans simply to use her as a hostage, as a way to buy his freedom--as another kind of object--Marian emerges from the forest with her reputation as soiled and shredded as her gown. Never mind that no one violated her; the general consensus is that she has been despoiled, that every outlaw in Sherwood Forest has been beneath her skirts, and the sheriff wields this general belief as a weapon to break her, to force her to wed him, but she refuses--and gives herself to the young man who helped to rescue her from Will Scarlet, Sir Robert of Locksley (whose late mother called him "Robin"), returned Crusader-son of the Earl of Huntington, who saw her father die and still blames himself for not being able to prevent the older knight's death. Robin is her choice for herself; they love each other, and only she can grant him some kind of absolution in her father's death. In the end, the sheriff almost wins, having her kidnapped and setting her up

as a witch, but Marian defies him at the trial, Robin challenges him to fight, and King Richard happens along in the nick of time to take over the trial and declare Marian innocent, to pardon Robin and his men since their thievery helped pay his own ransom, to give his blessing to the forthcoming marriage of Robin and Marian--and to take himself off to another war, this time in Normandy. Robin and Marian return to Ravenskeep, as Robin's father is appalled that his son would keep company with and wish to marry a "despoiled" woman, the irony being that Marian was a virgin until she gave herself to Robin. At the same time, Roberson's sexually-awakened Marian may give up her virginity but not her chastity, as she loves Robin alone and refuses all other offers and demands for either her person or her hand. In the 1990s, through her Lady Marian of Ravenskeep, Roberson can somewhat explore the complexity of the issue of a woman's innocence in the midst of an assault on her person--an issue which in the 1880s and 1890s Tennyson could only approach gingerly by virtually exaggerating Marian's notions of purity and quietly dismissing the evil-minded skeptics.

Parke Godwin's Marian is likewise an orphan who finds herself desired by the Sheriff of Nottingham, but with a different set of complications from Roberson's, not all of them sexual. Godwin sets Sherwood (1991) and Robin and the King (1993) in the years following the Norman conquest, partly so that the Saxon-Norman antagonism makes sense, with Robin's father, Thane Aelred of Denby, and then Robin himself as Saxon resistance leaders. When Aelred is killed at the battle of York in 1070, his 20-year-old son Robin, one of the leading archers, barely manages to escape--in the company of 16-year-old Marian of Tadcaster, burned out of her home by Normans who killed her parents and even her precious kitten while Marian herself had gone out to call the pigs. She assists the wounded Robin on the road; he invites her to come with him to Denby. At Denby, Robin takes up the thane's duties while his grieving mother, Lady Maud, makes Marian welcome and gives her the responsibility of caring for the newborn calves. Sunny-tempered, golden-haired,

brown-eyed Marian soon attracts John Littlerede, the widower smith in the nearby town of Blidworth. She also attracts "Lord Robin," who finally asks her to marry him. In addition, however, the new Norman High Sheriff of Nottingham, Sire Ralf FitzGerald, wants Marian. While admitting her own mysterious attraction to the exotic foreign sheriff, Marian sincerely loves Robin and remains true to him, even when he is outlawed and she, along with Lady Maud and Robin's beautiful cousin Lady Judith, becomes a prisoner of the king and queen; even when Robin is believed dead, Marian refuses the sheriff, who later marries Lady Judith and makes peace with Robin and Marian. Godwin's Marian has an honest sensual streak, but she is chaste in her love for one man, and virgin before their marriage.

These and other more recent Marians in novels and film are fairly unproblematic in terms of the "tradition" of Maid Marian's virginity, as they are universally chaste in loving and desiring one man. Roberson's Marian is somewhat unusual in giving herself to Robin before they can be married, as is Uma Thurman's Lady Marian in John Irvin's 1991 film, Robin Hood. Brought face to face with the brutality of the Norman soldiers--her own nation--toward the Saxon freeborn and peasant people, and seeing her Saxon Robin's despair at not being able to help in time, Marian comforts him with her love; forcibly returned to her uncle-guardian's castle, she tells the cruel Norman knight her uncle insists she marry: "It's too late, Miles. What you want has already been given to another man--with the greatest of pleasure!" Unfortunately, Sir Miles, although furious, is determined to marry her, and only between her refusal at the altar and Robin's intervention is Marian freed to finally marry her true lover.

Probably the twentieth-century Marian who most closely returns to both the Artemis-Diana huntress and the ambiguity of sexuality of the Marians of Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson is the "golden lady" in The Sword in the Stone (1939), T.H. White's playful yet serious creation of a boyhood for King Arthur, who was fostered on kindly Sir Ector and raised with that knight's son, Kay. When young Arthur, nicknamed "Wart," asks

his magician-tutor Merlin for an adventure which he and Kay can share (instead of only Wart having the adventure), Merlin sends the boys to the greenwood, where they meet Robin Hood--who Little John tells them is actually Robin Wood--with Maid Marian. Our first glimpse of White's Marian almost presents a nature goddess:

> Robin Wood lay happily with his head in Marian's lap. She sat between the roots of the lime tree, clad in a one-piece smock of green girded with a quiver of arrows, and her feet and arms were bare. She had let down the brown shining waterfall of her hair, which was usually kept braided in pigtails for convenience in hunting and cookery, and with the falling waves of this she framed his head. She was singing a duet with him softly, and tickling the ends of his nose with the fine hairs. (95)

White's Marian is referred to both as Robin's mistress and as his wife; even if she is not a virgin, she is chaste, as she has no lover but Robin. Although appearing almost as a goddess, she is very much a woman, and a woman who commands respect, however grudging (initially), from Wart and Kay, who find themselves in her band rather than in Robin's as they join the outlaws to rescue three men and a dog from the fairy Castle Chariot. This Marian is woods-wise, and she uses the seven-mile hike to the fairy castle to teach the boys some of her craft. Wart is finally impressed enough to feel that he has now seen the kind of woman he just might be able to marry; Marian's woodscraft, coupled with her subtle sexuality, raise her above the stature of the women both boys know.

White's Marian actually embodies several aspects of Robin Hood's consort. Although Maid Marian's origins include the Virgin Mary and chaste May Queens, her origins also include ancient nature- and fertility-goddesses, pastoral shepherdesses, and often loose Morris-dancer Marians. Munday seems to have largely originated the "tradition" of Maid Marian's virginity, which Peacock and later writers insist upon even when it strikes the reader as not completely believable, and which more recent writers and even filmmakers

have begun to play with; in this respect, we have briefly examined Jennifer Roberson's Lady of the Forest as well as John Irvin's 1991 film Robin Hood. Part of Marian's continuing fascination stems from the ambiguity of her origins, which allow a multiplicity of interpretations and transformations: aristocratic virgin, free Englishwoman, wife, lover, mannish clown, courtly lady, maiden, and nature goddess-type huntress.

CHAPTER TWO

"A Bonny Fine Maid"--in Youth's Clothing

May/Maid/Mary/Marian: Robin Hood's "Bonny Fine Maid" (in Child's ballad no. 150, "Robin Hood and Maid Marian") is a somewhat shadowy presence in the earliest surviving ballads and tales of Robin Hood. She may have joined Robin's legend via the May Games, and may even have had a few stories of her own, now lost in the mists of oral tradition. Her name probably derives partly from Robin Hood's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well from Adam de la Halle's thirteenth-century pastoral play, Le Jeu de Robin et Marion, all the more plausible when we remember that "Marian" is not English, but French, and that even the English Robin occasionally disguises himself as a shepherd (e.g., Child's no. 144, "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford") or has dealings with shepherds (e.g., Child's no. 135, "Robin Hood and the Shepherd"); in "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor, and Marriage," written for the Tutbury Bull-Running, Robin falls for "Clorinda, Queen of the Shepherds" (a "pastoral knick-knack," according to Malcolm Nelson (211)). Robin and Marian also keep company with shepherds in Ben Jonson's unfinished play, The Sad Shepherd.

Maid Marian's lack of an active part in the earlier Robin Hood material becomes almost puzzling when we consider the connections between Robin Hood and King Arthur: both are known for their courtesy as well as their valor; both lead groups of fighters pledged to serve the king, honor all women, and protect the oppressed; both are devoted to the Virgin Mary. Arthur's queen becomes a controversial figure quite early in these stories, but the central woman of the earlier Robin Hood tales is the Virgin Mary. In the Robin Hood stories, we find violence, cunning, jollity, and male bonding; obviously, too, we find yeomen-outlaws as opposed to noble knights, but yeomen-outlaws who frequently behave

like noble knights. Therefore, Robin's seeming lack of a lady may imply an anti-courtly element in the earlier tales--at least in the ones we have. Perhaps we can also see some fear of women, especially since one tradition connects a woman with Robin Hood's death.* At the same time, Sir Richard's wife (in the Gest of Robyn Hood) comes to Robin and his men to seek help for her unjustly-imprisoned husband, and the sheriff's wife (in "Robin Hood and the Potter," Child's no. 121) kindly entertains Robin in his potter's disguise; later Robin tells the sheriff that the latter's wife "ys ffoll godde" (st.73).

In other words, women do appear, even good women, but Robin Hood and his men basically avoid romantic entanglements, at least until around the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, although by then Maid Marian, in various guises (not always named "Marian") has been paired with Robin Hood in the May Games for around 200 years. Is this a case of the woman on the margin? Not until around 1600, in a ballad often maligned by ballad collectors and critics, does Marian have a clearly independent part to play while, at the same time, she is fully assimilated into the Robin Hood legend. Despite critical scorn, this ballad, "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" or, to give it its full title, "A Famous Battle between Robin Hood and Maid Marian, declaring their Love, Life, and Liberty," signed by one S.S., has had an effect on the Robin Hood tradition, as can be seen in such later

* In A Gest of Robyn Hode, Child's no. 117 (although a ballad-romance-epic rather than a ballad), "a wycked woman,/The pryoresse of Kyrkesly" (st.451) and her lover Sir Roger of Donkesly conspire to murder the elderly and ailing Robin Hood when he comes to the prioress, his kinswoman, to be bled (in Sargent & Kittredge 256-278). Likewise, in the ballad "Robin Hood's Death," Child's no. 120, the A version, the "dame prioresse" weakens Robin when he comes to her to be bled; when he seeks to escape, "Red Roger, with a grounden glaue,/Thrust him through the milke-white side" (st.20). The manuscript of the A Version, in which Robin is forewarned by the old woman kneeling at the "blacke water" and "banning Robin Hode" (sts. 7-8) unfortunately is damaged, with large chunks missing after stanzas 4, 8, and 18; it breaks off completely in mid-line at the end of stanza 27 . The A version was printed in 1786, but appears older with its Celtic strain (S&K 286-288). In the later, B version of this ballad, Robin's cousin at "fair Kirkly-hall" (st.3) essentially bleeds Robin to death; there is no mention of a lover, she is not styled the abbess, and it is here we first see the so-called tradition of Robin shooting an arrow out the window to mark his grave-site (S&K 288-289). For these ballads, a convenient source is English and Scottish Popular Ballads, ed. Helen Child Sargent & George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1904, rep. 1932).

versions of the legend as Thomas Love Peacock's Maid Marian (1822), Paul Creswick's Robin Hood (1917, rep. 1984), an anonymous Robin Hood in The Children's Classics series (1924/1961), and Robin McKinley's The Outlaws of Sherwood (1988); it even plays a part in Tennyson's play The Foresters (1892), as well as in a few films, most notably Ken Annakin's The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men (for Walt Disney, 1952), Kevin Reynold's Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991), and especially John Irvin's Robin Hood (1991). In all these versions of the legend, as in the ballad, Marian is not only beautiful but courageous, loyal, spunky, independent-minded--and spends part of the action disguised as a boy. Other versions of the Robin Hood legend leave out Marian's boy-disguise but keep her salient characteristics, especially novels such as T.H. White's The Sword in the Stone (1939), Parke Godwin's Sherwood (1991) and Robin and the King (1993), Jennifer Roberson's Lady of the Forest (1992), and Esther Friesner's The Sherwood Game (1995), and films such as Allan Dwan's Robin Hood (1922) and Michael Curtiz's The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938), as well as Richard Carpenter's Robin Hood series with HTV/ Goldcrest Television and the BBC (1984-1985). Marian's beauty, intelligence, and independence of spirit are also in evidence in two plays by Anthony Munday with Henry Chettle at the close of the sixteenth century, The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon (especially) and The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, and hinted at rather strongly by Michael Drayton in the Twenty-Sixth Song of his Poly-Olbion (1612-1619), as well as by Ben Jonson in The Sad Shepherd (c.1640).

The clash of swords rings through the forest as in a clearing a youth struggles with a man. They appear evenly matched, and each wounds the other. The man pauses first:

'O hold thy hand, hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood,
'And thou shalt be one of my string,
To range in the wood with bold Robin Hood,
To hear the sweet nightingall sing.'

When Marian did hear the voice of her love,

Her self shee did quickly discover,

And with kisses sweet she did him greet,

Like to a most loyall lover. (stanzas 12-13, vol. 3 Child 218)

Marian has come to the forest disguised as a youth to search for her outlawed lover the Earl of Huntington [sic], with whom she has just inadvertently fought, as he is likewise disguised. Overjoyed when Marian reveals herself to him, Robin embraces her and then winds his horn to bring his companions to them; Little John kills a deer, so they all feast together. Maid Marian joins her lover and his men in the forest where they live landless, but content.

Oddly, critics and editors of the Robin Hood ballads almost univerally subject "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" to frequently vituperative disparagement--when they include it at all. Francis Child calls it a "foolish ditty" (3: 218), while Malcolm Nelson concludes that, "Maid Marian might have been better off without a ballad of her own" (210). For Dobson and Taylor, it is an "original if feeble addition to the canon of Robin Hood Ballads" (176). Perhaps its content is part of the difficulty; James C. Holt does not find the combat convincing (166) and Stephen Knight finds it "surprising," as "the woman in Robin's life has, it seems, to go through the generic requirements for joining the outlaws" (85)--fighting with Robin to prove her worth--although admittedly neither of these writers heaps scholarly scorn upon the ballad. Maybe they feel that Dobson and Taylor have said it all:

> Despite its complete lack of any literary merit, 'Robin Hood and Maid Marian' deserves inclusion in this selection as the most extreme and implausible attempt ever made to combine the unusual theme of Robin Hood as a lover with the more traditional motif of his single-handed fight against an opponent unaware of his real identity. In this case we are even expected to believe that Robin failed to recognize his own 'bonny fine maid.' (176)

On the other hand, ballad-writer S.S. quite possibly knew some of Shakespeare's plays, including The Two Gentlemen of Verona (c.1594) and, especially, As You Like It (c.1599); in both plays a young woman disguises herself as a youth and enters the forest, where she encounters her lover--her lover, who fails to recognize her in her boy-disguise. Admittedly, in both these plays she recognizes him, but in neither is he disguised, as Robin is in "Robin Hood and Maid Marian."

This Marian's independent spirit may trouble some, or perhaps her prowess as a fighter: "Whose vallour bold Robin admir'd" (st.10); we learn that when she went to Sherwood: "With quiver and bow, sword, buckler, and all,/Thus armed was Marian most bold" (st.9). This appears to be in line with some now-shadowy tradition, however, as "Maid Marryan" is one of the archers Queen Katherine especially requests to champion her against King Henry's archers at a St. George's Day shooting match, in "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine," Child's number 145, collected by Bishop Percy in the eighteenth century but apparently older. The opening stanzas of another ballad, "Robin Hood's Golden Prize" (Child's no. 147), hint at both Marian's independent spirit and her possible independent existence as a legendary character:

> I have heard talk of bold Robin Hood,
>
> Derry derry down
>
> And of brave Little John,
>
> Of Fryer Tuck, and Will Scarlet,
>
> Loxley, and **Maid Marion.**
>
> Hey down derry derry down.
>
> But such a tale as this before
>
> I think there was never none;

For Robin Hood disguised himself,

And to the wood is gone. (st. 1-2, emphasis mine)

Christina Hole suggests it is possible "that Maid Marian was originally quite distinct from the Robin Hood saga and was only later incorporated with it" (84). The anonymous author of "Robin Hood's Golden Prize" implies, in fact, that not only "Maid Marion" but some of the most famous members of the Greenwood band--including a "Loxley" who seems to be separate from Robin Hood--began their legendary lives as independent characters, as he lists several possible heroes for his ballad, and then concentrates on Robin; only Robin enters this tale, disguised as a friar, and tricks "two lusty priests" (st. 4) out of their money. While the ballad-maker implies that these notorious outlaws have been independent of each other, he also may imply that they are beginning to be gathered together; Francis Child states that

> Edition a [sic] seems to be signed L.P., probably the initials of the versifier. The kernel of the story is an old tale, found, for example, in Pauli's Schimpf und Ernst, 1533 (Oesterley, Anhang, No. 14). (qtd in Sargent & Kittredge, 347)

We can also note the spelling of the woman's name in this ballad: Marion, like the thirteenth-century French shepherdess who knows her own mind and whose story reads almost like a May game; we can assume that once Robin entered the English May games, it was easy enough to pair him with the Maid of the May, who had been an independent character for quite some time before Robin Hood joined her.

The pastoral French counterpart of the English Maid Marian, whose name the English appear to have borrowed for their greenwood lady, certainly demonstrates independence of spirit. In Adam de la Halle's musical play of circa 1280, the shepherdess "Marion" with words alone manages three times to evade the importunate chevalier who seeks to ravish her--even when the third time he succeeds in carrying her off on his horse.

After appeals to his gentility fail, Marion says directly, "Besides, there's no way you can appeal to me" ["ne de riens ne me poés plaire"]; when he still attempts to win her, Marion responds firmly: "My lord, it's impossible;/there's no way it can work," more literally and forcefully, "You are nothing I want" (my translation) ["Sire, sachiés chertainement/que nenil; riens ne vous i vaut"] (Focus 913 CD liner notes). Thoroughly frustrated by her loyalty to both her Robin and her shepherd class, the chevalier finally leaves her. As Kevin Brownlee observes,

> It is by means of her deft manipulation of words that she successfully wards off the chevalier as would-be lover in the first half. And it is her authoritative articulation of a code of linguistic propriety--a kind of shepherd-version of courtoisie--in the second half that enables her to transform, to 'educate,' Robin into an exemplary lover. (421)

Adam's lovely shepherdess proves herself intelligent and clever as well as loyal to her chosen lover; this Marion fights with words, but her words are effective and, although she occasionally tells us that she is frightened, we see her as a very brave young woman, standing up to the knight in the first half of the play even when her shepherd swain Robin cannot.

Adam's Marion, then, like most of the Marians in the English, Scottish, and American Robin Hood traditions, insists on her right to choose her life and her lover for herself; in Luce Irigaray's terms, although men see her as "the goods," Marian refuses "to go to market" ("When the Goods Get Together" 110). It may be that "Woman exists only as the possibility of mediation, transaction, transition, transference--between man and his fellow-creatures, indeed between man and himself" (Irigaray 108), but this is the role Marian generally refuses to accept, despite having it foisted on her almost every time she makes an appearance in The Matter of the Greenwood.

Marian certainly refuses to accept the role of "goods" in the late twentieth century where the words of the thirteenth-century shepherdess Marion--"You are nothing I want"--find their defiant echo in one of her more recent descendants, Uma Thurman's Marian in John Irvin's 1991 film Robin Hood for Twentieth-Century Fox and Working Title. The orphaned Lady Marian's guardian, her uncle the powerful Baron Daguerre, stands to gain a great deal of money if he marries her to the cruel Sir Miles Falconet. With the wedding only a few days away, Marian continues to resist. When Daguerre and Falconet visit her while her dress is being fitted, Falconet assures her he will fight the Infidel and anyone else for her. Looking him in the eye, Marian responds firmly: "Conquer your own lechery, Miles. Fight your own stupid greed--and do battle with anybody as far away as possible. I don't want you." Here, the "goods" definitely "refuses to go to market," despite the power an androcentric society grants to Marian's uncle and would-be husband. Like her earlier counterpart, also, Thurman's Marian has to talk to her thick-headed suitor more than once; unlike the shepherdess, however, Lady Marian finally needs the help of her Robin to escape the unwelcome clutches of a cruel knight. Even when her marriage to Robin finally becomes possible, Thurman's Marian makes it plain that she is a person--her own person. At the end of the film, when her uncle, reconciled to Robin, proposes a wedding "between Saxon and Norman, between Robert and Marianne," that young woman does not immediately respond as all expect her to:

> 'I will not marry to symbolize a peace or to ratify a treaty. But, this man I will take--because he makes the May-tree blossom and the bees buzz in my breast. I will take this man because he brings springtime to my heart.'

At the same time, Thurman's Marian is not limited to speech; in the latter part of the film, in the chapel, at the very altar, she refuses to wed Sir Miles, and then she comes to the aid of Robin when he finds himself facing Falconet along with several of that knight's soldiers. Not only does Marian wreak a little havoc among them with a large candleholder, but she

even kills one soldier with the sword Robin tosses to her, and we hear again another echo, this time from the early seventeenth-century ballad: "Whose vallour bold Robin admir'd."

Also like her earlier counterpart, Thurman's Marian takes to the forest disguised as a boy; unlike the ballad Marian, however, this Marian goes to the forest not so much "troubled in mind,/For the absence of her friend" (st.7) as in a desperate attempt to escape a hated marriage--a desperate attempt of the "goods" to avoid "going to market." While interested in Robert Hode, Earl of Huntingdon, she does not fall in love with him until she knows him as Robin Hood. Ironically, her boy-disguise as "Martin Pride" is so good that while Robin knows she looks familiar, he cannot place her. Since Patrick Bergin's Robin Hood is not in disguise, the situation moves closer to Shakespeare's Rosalind and Orlando.

The element of disguise, here and elsewhere, points up an important theme of the Robin Hood legend: the question of **identity**, whether or not disguise is an issue. In Adam de la Halle's thirteenth-century play, Marion repeatedly denies that the chevalier has any claim on her just because he is an aristocrat and she a shepherdess:

Chevalier: How easily you dis-	Cuideriés empirier
miss me!	de moi,
Do you think you would be	qui si loing getés
stooping to say yes to me?	me proiere?
I am a knight--and you	Chevalier sui et
a shepherdess.	vous bergiere.
Marion: I still won't ever love	Je pour chou ne vous
you.	amerai.
A shepherdess I am, but I have	Bergeronnete sui; mais j'ai
a friend	Ame bel et cointe et gai.
who's handsome and	
well-bred and lively. (Text & trans. Focus 913 CD liner notes)	

Adam's spunky shepherdess insists on her own personhood, here partly defined by social class as she refuses to be dazzled by the possibility of an amour with a member of the aristocracy, happy to be loved by one of her own social standing; as Brownlee observes, Marion here demonstrates that she knows courtly discourse and can utilize it even while she rejects the courtly representative, the chevalier (423). This Marion's self-confidence stems from her clear sense of who she is and of her place in the world.

A later shepherdess also demonstrates her sense of selfhood in a rather weak early eighteenth-century ballad, "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor and Marriage" (Child's no. 149), where Robin falls for "Clorinda.../The queen of the shepherds" (st.27), a Marian-figuure. (Interestingly, as late as 1782, "Clorinda" turns up as Robin's lady-love in Lawrence McNally's opera Robin Hood or Sherwood Forest; see Knight, Study 150-151.) A dark-haired archer who shoots a fat deer, Clorinda joins Robin and his men for a feast in their bower, where she asks her host his name. Robin tells her, extolling life in the greenwood and asking her to marry him. She blushes, but agrees; however, when Robin wishes to send for a priest right away, she stops him, as she has a previous obligation:

> But she said, It may not be so, gentle sir,
>
> For I must be at Titbury feast;
>
> And if Robin Hood will go thither with me,
>
> I'll make him the most welcome guest. (st. 39)

This particular ballad was written for the bull-running at Titbury (or Tutbury); Clorinda appears to be not only Queen of the Shepherds but Queen of the Titbury Feast. Upon returning to Sherwood afterwards, Robin and Clorinda are married and, instead of being placed apart as an independent individual, Clorinda's identity then merges with Robin's.

While Marian in the ballad by S.S. fights with a sword, Clorinda's archery skill may have been suggested by Michael Drayton's Diana-like Marian in "The Sixe and Twentieth Song" of his Poly-Olbion of 1612-1619:

With Bow and Quiver arm'd, shee wandred here and there,

Amongst the Forrests wild; Diana never knew

Such pleasures, nor such Harts as Mariana slew. (ll.356-358)

Drayton's emphatic pun on hart/heart, as well as his description of Marian, may have inspired the anonymous ballad-maker's portrait of Clorinda, both archer and queen of the shepherds.

The early eighteenth-century ballad-maker may have also known Ben Jonson's foray into the Matter of the Greenwood, his unfinished masque-play The Sad Shepherd, printed in the 1640 Folio. Here, Robin and Marian are "The chiefe Wood-man, Master of the Feast" and "His Lady, the Mistris" (7). Styled neither outlaws nor aristocrats, Robin and Marian serve to link the "Theocritan shepherds" and the "native foresters" (Nelson 220). Malcolm Nelson observes that: "They belong to the native tradition, but are more refined than their followers....noble sweethearts and gracious hosts" (220). In The Sad Shepherd, Marian is far more active than Robin; he gives the orders and greets his banquet guests, the shepherds, but, a keen huntress, she takes her men to hunt the main course, at Robin's request:

Marian: Know you, or can you guesse, my merry men,

What 'tis that keepes your Master Robin-hood

So long both from his Marian, and the Wood?

Tuck: Forsooth, Madam, hee will be here by noone,

And prayes it of your bounty as a boone,

That you by then have kild him Venison some,

To feast his jolly friends....

.....

Marian: Away then, when my Robin bids a Feast,

'Twere sin in Marian to defraud a guest. (I.i.1-7,20-21)

But Marian will herself be defrauded, in a sense, by the old witch Maudlin of Papplewicke, who hates Marian for her beauty and generosity. By means of an enchanted girdle, Maudlin appears to Robin and the other men as Marian; she insults Robin, the woodsmen, and the shepherds, bewildering them and creating difficulties for the true Marian. Robin finally suspects the truth, that Maudlin is defrauding them all, so when Maudlin later reappears as Marian, Robin pursues her and takes her charmed girdle, forcing her to be seen "in her owne shape" (III.iv stage direction). Jonson only finished one more scene, between Maudlin and her familiar, but we can safely assume that Marian's identity crisis is now past, and that she is once more to Robin, "My Marian, and my Mistris!" (I.vi.1). **

Despite its dramatic possibilities, the conflict between a "true Marian" and a "false Marian" has not taken hold in the tradition, perhaps because this conflict can shift the focus of a story from Robin and his lieutenants. In Jonson, the true and the false Marians are not two aspects of the same woman, but two ways of seeing a woman: the true Marian is not only beautiful but kind, generous, brave, and loyal; the false Marian, even when physically attractive (as she is not in The Sad Shepherd) is a traitor. Two films do play with the true and false Marians. In John Irvin's 1991 Robin Hood, Robin (Patrick Bergin) joyfully rides out for a secret rendevous; he has gotten a message that Lady Marian still loves him, and that she will be awaiting him at a certain deserted farmhouse. Fortunately, Robin takes the newest member of his band, young "Martin Pride," along as his squire--and we have already seen that "Martin Pride" is really Marian (Uma Thurman) in boy-disguise. Upon learning that Robin has had a message from "Marian," Marian-as-Martin all but propels her bewildered leader out of the vicinity of the old farmhouse, even as Robin tries to respond to the seductive calling of "Marian," in reality Nichole [sic], the pretty

** In addition to his obvious source in Spenser's Faerie Queene (see Chapter 1 note on page 26), Jonson may have also derived the idea of a "false Marian" from one strand of the Arthurian tradition, where we find a false Guinevere who manages through magic charms to so ensnare King Arthur that he is prepared to barbarously punish the true Guinevere as a false harlot who has endangered his soul and his kingdom. See Norma Lorre Goodrich, Guinevere (1991. NY: HarperCollins, 1992), especially chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7.

mistress of Marian's uncle the Baron Daguerre. Had Robin not taken "Martin" with him, the outlawed earl would have found himself back at Daguerre's castle in chains--or dead. Of course, once she has unmasked the false Marian, Marian-as-Martin must confess her true name and gender to a surprised but delighted Robin.

An earlier film makes more extended use of the notion of a true and a false Marian. In C.M. Pennington-Richards' 1967 A Challenge for Robin Hood, Robin de Courtenay (Barrie Ingham) is not attracted to blonde, blue-eyed, but haughty "Lady Marian Fitzwarren" (Jenny Till), but he is quite taken with her maidservant, black-haired, dark-eyed, modest "Mary" (Gay Hamilton). Of course, lovely "Mary" turns out to be the real Lady Marian Fitzwarren; she hid with the servants when the Normans came to her family's castle after driving out her father and young brother. The Sheriff of Nottingham needed a Lady Marian Fitzwarren, so he gave another woman the title and the true Lady Marian became Mary the maidservant: quiet, simply dressed, humbly obedient--all in a vain attempt to remain unnoticed. The Sheriff notices her; he accosts her in a dark passage of the De Courtenay castle and attempts to make an assignation with her. When he lifts her hand to kiss it, she slaps him, shocking him:

> SHERIFF: A girl of spirit--good. Men have been killed for doing less to Nottingham.
>
> MARIAN (feigning wide-eyed innocence): Oh, I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know you were the sheriff.
>
> SHERIFF (patting her cheek): Well, now you do.
>
> MARIAN: (slapping him again): So there's another for good measure.

She continues through the passage, leaving the sheriff bemused.

Like other Marians, Gay Hamilton's refuses to be "goods" and "go to market." In her guise as a maidservant, Marian is vulnerable, but she generally attempts to deal with the threat. Once Robin learns her real identity from her young brother, of course, he and

his band can take her back to Sherwood, to the delight of young Stephen--and of Robin. Once in the forest, she retrieves her name, but changes her maidservant's plain black gown for a tunic and hose similar to what most of the outlaws wear. This Marian, however, seems merely to dress to suit the circumstances; her true identity is known to the outlaws, so she has no need to pass as a youth. Only close to the end of the film is the false Marian unmasked, when Robin, despite the risk, returns to his cousin's castle to rescue Marian and her young brother, who have essentially been re-abducted by the sheriff's men. Unfortunately, the false Marian here becomes one of those loose ends which never gets resolved; we never learn who she really was, nor what happens to her after she leaves the room when Robin both denounces and dismisses her. Perhaps this is partly because Gay Hamilton's Marian, despite the possibilities of her complex identity, is never allowed to become a well-developed character, maybe because to develop Marian's character in this film would be to risk Robin's supremacy.

Robin basically does lose his supremacy as a narrative character to an interesting Marian-figure who turns up in Scotland in "Rose the Red, and White Lilly," a ballad of unknown date collected by Sir Walter Scott in the early nineteenth century (Gutch 2:377), and its variant, "The Wedding of Robin Hood and Little John." The question of identity looms large here, not because of a "false Marian" but because we again see young women passing themselves off as men in a pair of ballads from sometime between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries; given the motif of young-woman-disguised-as-youth-goes-to-the-forest-to-seek-her-lover, I opt for the seventeenth century, when the the ballad of "Robin Hood and Maid Marian," partly inspired by Shakespeare's forest comedies, appears. The fairy-tale names for the ladies may also indicate that these ballads have a little age on them (although as ballads go, the seventeenth century is a bit late); intriguingly, in their names we have two female types represented: the sexually awakened young woman in "Rose the Red" and the pure virgin in "White Lilly"--but in these two ballads the types are reversed.

In both ballads, a widower with two beautiful young daughters marries "an ill woman" who drives the daughters from their home. In both ballads, the ladies cut their hair, dress like young men, take male names, and leave their home. In "The Wedding of Robin Hood and Little John," they both head for the greenwood to join Robin Hood who, when he hears "Roger Roun" singing one day, realizes that: "'Instead of boys to carry the bow,/Twa ladies we've got here'" (in Gutch 2:391). "Roger Roun" becomes Robin's mistress; heavy with child, she begs for a bower-attendant. The next portion of the text is missing, but the last stanza assures us that "The tane was wedded to Robin Hood,/And the tither to Little John" (in Gutch 2:391).

"Rose the Red and White Lilly" is somewhat more complicated, for the ladies journey across the sea to a chapel of Our Lady where they change their names and promise each other that if one blows the bugle-horn, the other will come to her. Rose the Red/"Sweet Willie" goes to court to be near her love, Bauld Arthur (and one member of Robin Hood's band in some older ballads is Arthur a' Bland), while White Lilly/"Rouge the Rounde" heads for the greenwood to find Brown Robin (apparently Robin Hood or a Robin Hood-figure, especially when we consider that in the variant he is simply "Robin Hood"). Like Shakespeare's Rosalind, these ladies know their men but their men do not recognize them, so "Sweet Willie" becomes Bauld Arthur's page. Brown Robin learns at least part of "Rouge the Rounde's" identity one day when the outlaws are putting the stone; it is really too heavy for "Rouge," and Brown Robin, startled, exclaims, "'But that's a woman's moan!'" (in Gutch 2:382). White Lilly still withholds her name, while remarking that Brown Robin should have known from her "rosy lips" and "yellow heair" that she is a woman. Brown Robin and White Lilly now live together (after threatening each other with swords!) and she becomes pregnant; as her time approaches, she requests a bower-attendant and asks for her horn so she can summon her "brother." Brown Robin, jealously thinking she loves her brother more than she loves him, waits outside the bower with drawn sword to

fight "Sweet Willie" when "he" appears. They fight until evening, and Rose the Red is wounded:

She leant her back against an aik,

Said, 'Robin, let me be:

For it is a ladye, bred and born,

That has fought this day wi' thee.' (in Gutch 2: 384)

In a sense, then, Rose the Red and White Lilly both become Marian-figures, as White Lilly loves him and Rose the Red fights him: a kind of split identity, perhaps, brought into sharper relief by the switched name-typing, as Rose the Red is the virgin warrior and White Lilly the sexually-awakened young woman; this reversal of name-typing seems to indicate that both possibilities exist in both women, and as we have seen (in Chapter One) exist in Marian herself, the woman in Robin Hood's life who eventually claims him, so to speak, despite occasional lapses on his (or the novelist's or the librettist's) part. During the time between Marian's and Robin's being brought together in the May games and Marian's eventual place as Robin Hood's love, ballad-makers and other writers wishing to give Robin a sweetheart give her no name ("Robin Hood and the Tanner's Daughter," for example), give her a pastoral or type name (as above; also, Clorinda in "The Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage"), or give her the name Marian--the name by which we have come to know her.

White Lilly, then, can be seen as a type of Marian who disguises herself as a youth and goes to the forest to seek her Robin, who initially fails to recognize her in her boy-disguise. Brown Robin, however, appears a bit denser than some other Robins, as Rose the Red, when she identifies herself to him, also gives him a a real shock: somehow, Brown Robin has not realized that the woman with whom he has lived for over a year and who has just borne his chid is his beloved White Lilly! One can only wonder what White Lilly thinks of her lover's lack of perception. At any rate, with these questions of identity cleared up,

we only have a few more to go, so of course the king hears about the marvel, "That a forester's page, in gude grene-wood,/Had born a bonny son" (in Gutch 2: 384) and must see for himself. Hoping to find his page, Bauld Arthur joins the king. In Brown Robin's bower "they saw her, White Lilly,/Nursing her bonny young son" (in Gutch 2: 386); the mystery is partly solved in this Madonna-and-Child image. Rose the Red now tells the king their story, and Bauld Arthur realizes that his page, "Sweet Willie," is really his sweetheart. To complete this latest identity shift,

> The king has sent for robes o' green,
>
> And girdles o' shining gold;
>
> And sae sune have the ladyes busked themselves,
>
> Sae glorious to behold. (in Gutch 2: 387)

With the king's blessing, the double wedding takes place: "And when they cam to the king's court,/For joy the bells did ring" (in Gutch 2:388), just as Robin weds dark-haired Clorinda, Queen of the Shepherds, at the end of "The Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage"; a little earlier, the ballad of "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" closes with Robin and Marian living together in the forest.

Various later Marians disguise themselves as youths and enter the greenwood; they generally emerge to dress once again as women and marry (or live with) their Robins. In his 1822 novel Maid Marian, Thomas Love Peacock manages to combine two ballads, "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" and "The King's Disguise, and Friendship with Robin Hood" (Child's no. 151) in a scene towards the end of the book. A knight riding through Sherwood Forest sees "a fine young outlaw leaning, in the true Sherwood fashion, with his back against a tree" (532). The youth accosts the knight, telling him that he is to dine with Robin Hood; the knight refuses, so the outlaw responds, "'If persuasion avail not, I must use other argument'" (532). When the knight sneers at the youth's "stripling rhetoric," the outlaw turns thoughtful: "'Perhaps,' said the youth, 'my strength is more than my seeming, and

my cunning more than my strength'" (532). The knight dismounts and they fight hard until they are interrupted by Friar Tuck exclaiming, "'Well fought, girl'" (533) to the knight's astonishment: "'[I]f this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long'" (533). Of course, the knight turns out to be King Richard I, who restores to Maid Marian/Lady Matilda both her father and his lands, which he had lost to Prince John. He further reinstates Robin as Earl of Huntingdon and attends the nuptials of Marian and Robin. Marian's boy-disguise allows her to blur the boundaries of traditional male and female roles; had the king-disguised-as-a-knight come across a young woman leaning against a tree, her skirts and hair blowing gently in the breeze, his response would have been less belligerent.

Peacock's Marian is beautiful, brave, and skilled in many arts, as is Robin McKinley's Marian in her 1988 novel The Outlaws of Sherwood. Marian here is a part-Norman lady and Robin an outlawed Saxon yeoman who gathers other mistreated Saxons around him almost in spite of himself. The joke here is that Robin is a fairly mediocre archer, but Marian is superb--a joke which turns against her when, seeking to make Robin's legend live, she goes disguised as a boy to the archery contest at Nottingham Fair, where everyone thinks she is Robin Hood. Unfortunately, the Sheriff has hired the cruel bounty hunter Guy of Gisbourne to kill Robin at the contest, and Gisbourne gets in a wicked sword-thrust before Marian can be rescued by Little John and Cecily, at the fair in disguise themselves to gather information. But all ends well, and King Richard decides that Marian's experiences in her multiple identities--as landed lady, as superior archer, as outlaws' friend--fit her for an important administrative post: the new Sheriff of Nottingham. But first, the Crusades....

So Maid Marian is last seen in McKinley's novel knowing she will wed her Robin, that they and their friends will join the king on Crusade, and that when they return she will be the Sheriff of Nottingham in one of the many new twists recent novelists and filmmakers have given to the story of the "bonny fine maid" who, refusing to simply be

"goods" for someone else's "market," sought her outlawed lover in the depths of Sherwood Forest. However, regardless of new complications, Maid Marian remains, like Robin Hood, a symbol of personal freedom and oneness with nature, but with a bit of the forest goddess clinging to her hair.

CHAPTER THREE

...And the "Reel" Maid Marian?

While we have Sir Richard's wife and the wicked prioress in the Gest of Robin Hood, as well as the "ffoll godde" sheriff's wife (st.73) in "Robin Hood and the Potter," Child's no. 121, women remain largely on the periphery of the earliest Robin Hood ballads and tales. The Virgin Mary appears to be the central female-figure of the earlier tales as Robin, like Arthur, is devoted to her, but she is a presence in the tales, not a person. While Maid Marian joins Robin Hood in the May Games during the Middle Ages, even once she establishes a foothold in the tradition via the plays of Munday and Chettle circa 1600 as well as the slightly later ballad of "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" (Child's no. 150), she does not appear consistently in Robin Hood stories until the advent of film in the twentieth century. In Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw, Stephen Knight observes that Marian has been part of the Robin Hood film tradition since the first one-reeler in 1909 (219).

Who is this "reel" Maid Marian? How do we view her in films and television series? With rare exceptions such as Richard Lester's 1976 Robin and Marian, the lady in question is just that--a titled lady--and young, as well. In addition, she is often the orphaned ward of King Richard I (or of some other nobleman, or she has only one living parent), a lady wooed by noblemen (whose titles generally are their most noble elements). Although not only beautiful but also intelligent and resourceful, this Marian at some point finds herself in a corner so tight that only Robin Hood can rescue her, a corner that may involve the unwelcome attentions of a so-called nobleman: for example, Sir Guy of Gisbourne in the classic 1922 and 1938 films of Allan Dwan and Michael Curtiz, respectively; or Sir Miles Falconet in John Irvin's 1991 Robin Hood; or the Sheriff of Nottingham in C.M. Pennington-

Richards' 1967 A Challenge for Robin Hood and in Kevin Reynolds' 1991 Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves; or a sorcerer-baron, a barbarian lord, and King John in Richard Carpenter's 1984-1985 HTV/Goldcrest Television series.

Further, briefly consider the two Robin Hood films from Walt Disney Productions: the 1952 live-action The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men with Joan Rice's spunky, adventuresome Marian, and the 1973 animated-animals feature Robin Hood with Marian as a sweet, pretty, but completely enclosed little vixen who appears almost obsessed with marriage and children and who never acts on her own. Perhaps this second Disney Marian is a subtle slap in the face of the Women's Movement, which was gaining momentum in the early 1970's, while Joan Rice's 1952 Britain-filmed Marian could be depicted as somewhat independent--but even Rice's Marian finds herself simply handed over to Robin Hood, now the Baron of Locksley, at the end of the film.

As we watch Maid Marian in a Robin Hood film, what are we seeing? Is she a token woman merely to add a little romantic spice to the film p(l)ot? Or do we come to know and care about her as a character as opposed to simply admiring her pretty face? This varies from film to film.

As Jeffrey Richards points out, Allan Dwan's 1922 silent spectacle Robin Hood is "visually...pure 19th-century Romanticism"; furthermore, this Robin is really "a grown-up schoolboy, a pre-Raphaelite boy scout" (137). Despite the presence of women, the 1922 film really presents a male society: knights in the first half, outlaws in the second. Lady Marian Fitzwalter (Enid Bennett) is a beautiful young lady of the court attracted to the ebullient yet woman-shy Earl of Huntingdon (Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.) but pursued by the vicious Sir Guy of Gisbourne (Paul Dickey). Marian and the Earl become sweethearts when he rescues her from the brutal attentions of Guy and Prince John. At the same time, even the gallant Earl somewhat reifies Marian. Less than 24 hours after he rescues her, the Earl must "to horse" with King Richard; calling his faithful squire (Alan Hale) to him, he instructs

the squire to protect Lady Marian: "I leave in your care **my dearest treasure**. Guard her with your life." "My dearest treasure," no matter how romantic-sounding, still translates as "my goods," "my property." Admittedly, the Earl means well, but he still turns Marian into an object.

When the king and his army, including the Earl of Huntingdon, go off on Crusade, Prince John takes over and terrorizes the country, taxing and burning. The intertitle card proclaims: "One woman braver than the rest," and then we see Lady Marian, with her waiting-woman and the earl's squire at a discreet distance, approach Prince John:

MARIAN: Have mercy on the people of England.

JOHN: Fret not your pretty head for such as they.

MARIAN: Prince, your oppressions will not please our king.

JOHN (reaching for her braid): A Prince at home outranks a King abroad. Think you not so, beautiful lady?

MARIAN: If Richard knew these things, there would be no Prince at home.

JOHN (to his cohorts as she leaves): That maid bears watching.

Marian's courage costs her, as Prince John learns she sent a message to the Earl of Huntingdon and therefore plans to execute her. In a tense sequence, Lady Marian and her waiting-woman escape with the assistance of the other palace ladies who, when Prince John and his soldiers burst into the women's quarters, refuse to talk. Unfortunately, one soldier manages to look out a window; seeing the two women fleeing on horseback, John sends his men after them. Desperate, Lady Marian fakes her own death. When the soldiers catch up to the waiting-woman, they find her standing on a bluff overlooking the rushing river; weeping, she shows the ledge from which her mistress leaped into the foaming water. Of course, Lady Marian turns up alive in a convent much later in the film, but not before the Earl, thinking she is dead, becomes Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest; his

"Merry Men" include his faithful squire, now known as Little John. Unfortunately Gisbourne, returning to England, captures her and takes her to Nottingham Castle. With the help of a stranger knight, who turns out to be King Richard (naturally), Robin and his men break into the castle and rescue Marian again. The king pardons Robin, and gladly celebrates the nuptials of Robin and Marian. At the very end of the film, bride and groom escape to their moonlit chamber and refuse to open the door even to the king's insistent knocking and calling. Huntingdon has been reinstated as the king's favorite courtier-knight, but the king finds himself in the position of a father whose son has grown up and left home: Robin has learned that the father's call is not the only one to which he must respond, an irony, given that earlier the king almost insisted that his Earl, though "afeared of women," find a sweetheart.

In the 1922 Robin Hood, then, Marian is little more than a beautiful plot device, although she is brave and loyal. At the same time, we see the "goods" refusing "to go to market," as we see again in the 1938 film The Adventures of Robin Hood, directed by Michael Curtiz with William Keighley, and starring Erroll Flynn and Olivia de Havilland. While Enid Bennett's Lady Marian simply "is," with no mention of parents or guardians, Olivia de Havilland's Marian is the orphaned ward of King Richard I (Ian Hunter). This film confirms Marian's place as Robin's love, as well as a beautiful and elegant lady who generally knows her own mind and attempts to act on her knowledge and beliefs. De Havilland's Marian grows as a character, as well, as she learns the (filmic) truth about her own Norman people's treatment of the conquered Saxons, and that Sir Robin of Loxley (Erroll Flynn), the bold Saxon knight-named-outlaw whose conduct initially offends her, is actually a good man who cares for "beaten, helpless people." By the time she becomes his wife, Lady Marian Fitzwalter has refused to marry the cruel Norman knight chosen for her by Prince John (with Richard off on Crusade, as usual), has engineered Robin's escape from the gallows, and has spent time in the castle dungeons under sentence of death for sending

Robin the message that Richard had returned and needed to fear for his life. Olivia de Havilland's Marian, then, is more than a brave and beautiful plot device; instead, she is crucial to the story.

Likewise, Joan Rice's Marian is vital to Ken Annakin's 1952 film for Walt Disney, misleadingly called The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men; it is Marian's story, as well, because without her, very little story would be left. Joan Rice gives us a bright, spunky young Lady Marian, daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon (her mother apparently is dead), loyal to her childhood friend Robin Fitzooth (Richard Todd); she eventually falls in love with him despite the social barriers: she is, after all, an earl's daughter, while he is merely the son of her father's head forester. However, Rice's Marian has a distinctly independent turn of mind, unlike her later Disney counterpart, the little vixen in the 1973 animated-animals musical Robin Hood directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Although beautiful and charming, the vixen Marian is actually a rather passive little lady (again, King Richard's ward); she never makes a decision on her own, and the story would work just as well without her.

Audrey Hepburn's Marian in Richard Lester's 1976 Robin and Marian is another matter. Hepburn and Sean Connery break with tradition by playing older lovers, the end of the story rather than the beginning. Hepburn's Marian is a complex woman who has not only adjusted to life as a nun after Robin left for the Crusades; she has become an abbess who feels fulfilled in her new calling, and then has to deal with Robin Hood and her own feelings for him when he shows up on her doorstep twenty years later. Connery's son Jason, along with Michael Praed and Judi Trott, also broke with traditions in Richard Carpenter's HTV/Goldcrest Television series for the BBC in 1984-1985, not by playing older heroes, but by playing with older traditions--Celtic magic and ritual, and two of the best-known "historical" possibilities for Robin Hood--in Robin of Sherwood, released in the United States as Robin Hood (in 1992). Judi Trott's delicately beautiful Marion is tougher

than she looks as she defies her treacherous guardians, Abbot Hugo and his brother, the Sheriff of Nottingham, and even tries to fight Praed's Robin (literally) for full membership among the Outlaws; she also refuses to accept being treated as a commodity.

Two Robin Hood films appeared in 1991, both with strong Marians. In Kevin Reynolds' Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio's forthright but charming Lady Marian--here, King Richard's cousin--deserves a sprightlier lover than Kevin Costner's rather wooden Robin. (She also deserves a better script.) Mastrantonio's Marian manages to keep the amorous but mad sheriff at bay throughout much of the film, alternating between pleasant smiles and pointed comments on how "deeply moved" King Richard will be to know of the sheriff's concern for her, subtle reminders that although the king is on Crusade, his, not the sheriff's, is still the ultimate power. In John Irvin's Robin Hood, Uma Thurman's rather intense Lady Marian is fortunate in Patrick Bergin's Robin, with his surplus of energy and sense of humor. Thurman's Marian, like Mastrantonio's, spends much of her time attempting to sidestep a cruel and unwanted suitor, in this case, Sir Miles Falconet, whom her guardian-uncle wants her to marry to increase his own wealth. In the end--not surprising in films with Robin Hood's name in their titles--both Mastrantonio's and Thurman's Marians need the timely assistance of their Robins to save them from forced marriages. At the same time, however, both these Marians are smart and spunky as well as beautiful as, indeed, are most of our film Marians.

Let us begin with the ways two of these ladies are first presented to Robin Hood. (In the other films, Robin and Marian are not strangers to each other.) In the 1938 film, Sir Robin of Loxley, a leading Saxon knight, impudently forces his way into the castle of a very Norman knight, Sir Guy of Gisbourne, as Gisbourne feasts Prince John, Lady Marian, and a host of other Norman knights and ladies. Robin (Erroll Flynn) brings a dead deer--an act of defiance--and attempts to talk some sense into Prince John. Robin's eyes light up as he is introduced to the Lady Marian (who is actually trying to escape at that moment) and he

hopes "that my lady had a pleasant journey." Already taken aback by his behavior, Marian (Olivia de Havilland) attempts to dismiss him: "What you hope can hardly be important." He teases her a bit, however, obviously somewhat piqued by her aloofness and, we can safely assume, already smitten by her beauty (which he refers to frequently throughout the film).

Likewise, in the 1984-1985 HTV/Goldcrest Television series, we see the initial meeting between Marian and both young men who become Robin Hood. Here, we will focus on the meeting in Episode One, in which the young peasant Robin of Loxley (Michael Praed), having escaped from the dungeon of Nottingham Castle (and having helped the other prisoners to escape) flees through the castle, pursued by the sheriff's henchman, Guy of Gisbourne (Robert Addie) and the guards. Robin finally takes refuge in the nearest door he can open--which turns out to be the bedchamber of a beautiful young woman, Lady Marion (Judi Trott). Although shocked, Marion keeps her composure (and her distance); Robin stops in midflight and stares at her: "You're like a May morning." When Gisbourne pounds on her door, calling to her to lock up because prisoners have escaped, Robin and Marion look at each other (her only sustained eye contact with him throughout this scene). Robin turns and bolts the door, appeasing the ignorant Gisbourne. Then: "Why didn't you call out?" he asks in some wonderment. She gives a simple reply: "They would have killed you."

In both of these scenes, Robin is the intruder into Marian's space, quite literally thrusting himself into the room. However, in neither scene is he seeking her--he does not even know she is there--and in neither scene does he offer violence to her. In the 1938 film, Olivia de Havilland's Marian meets the daredevil intruder in a secure social setting, a huge banquet, attended by those of her Norman blood. She has a place of honor on the dais, and so has a psychological advantage over Robin; elegantly gowned, with her hair hidden beneath a fashionable veil, she exudes self-confidence, having just parried Prince

John's direct "hints" that she marry Guy of Gisbourne. De Havilland's Lady Marian can meet Flynn's Sir Robin with equanimity, secure in herself and her friends. Judi Trott's Lady Marion, however, is alone in her bed and appears very vulnerable, with her magnificent auburn hair cascading down her back and around her white nightgown-clad shoulders; her heavy hair and large eyes, her slim body, the oversized bed, and the high-ceilinged room, all contribute to her vulnerability. Although she is clearly not a fearful young woman, as Robin, entranced, moves slowly toward her bed, Marion gathers the bedclothes about herself and begins to slide back farther in the bed. Robin pauses, reducing the threat. An interesting aspect of this scene is its relative lack of titillation, which it manages by focussing on Marion's vulnerability and, paradoxically, her inner strength--a strength that keeps her from crying out when Robin suddenly slips into her bedchamber--and by focussing on Robin's gentleness despite his seeming threat, a gentleness reassuring to female viewers (as well as to Marion).

In both these scenes, of course, the woman is at least somewhat reified, but she is strong enough to attempt to return the male gaze. This is obviously easier for De Havilland's Marian than it is for Trott's. Because she sits on the dais while he stands on the floor, De Havilland's Marian quite literally looks <u>down</u> on Flynn's Robin; their physical positions essentially reinforce her scorn, and she looks at him directly. Trott's Marion, on the other hand, looks at Praed's Robin differently, cutting her eyes away from his when they meet too directly; in both scenes, the man stares at the beautiful woman, but in the 1984 series the setting particularly renders the male gaze a threat. At the same time, we note that it is also perceived as a threat in the 1938 film, although not by Marian. When Robin flings the deer's carcass down on the banqueting table, Marian begins to rise and requests permission to leave, but Prince John (Claude Rains) assures her that everything is fine: "Sit back down, my dear. He'll not harm you." Now, Marian does not appear concerned about harm to herself, but she <u>is</u> offended by Robin's behavior, while Prince

John interprets her desire to leave as fear. Has he noticed Robin looking at Marian? Or is he a man who automatically assumes that a woman seeks to escape from a situation because she is afraid? Has it occurred to him that other motives might operate in a woman's brain? All we can state here with any certainty is that in the relative safety of the social setting, the 1938 Marian can give Robin--who is definitely not safe in the same setting--the brush-off, while her 1984 counterpart in an isolated situation, who clearly wants to look, feels that she must not, although she is quite frankly stared at.

How do we look at Marian? When I watch the two scenes just described, I am fairly comfortable with the first, but the second still makes me a little nervous; even though I have seen it several times now, and even though I knew the first time that Robin simply could not harm Marion, I nevertheless found (and still find) the 1984 scene threatening. In both scenes, but especially in the first (1938), the viewer is invited to place himself--or herself--as Robin. In the second scene (1984), the implied threat leads the viewer to possibly place herself or himself as Lady Marion at times, and experience the threat. The camera reinforces this possibility, initially slipping into the room with Robin and then, as Marion, startled, sits up in bed, shifting somewhat abruptly to her point of view, and thereafter moving between the two points of view, thus emphasizing not only that Marion can be in a subject position even while being objectified, but that this subject stands in grave danger of being reduced simply to object position--a danger with which women still live.

And object position is exactly where her noble but nefarious guardians attempt to place Judi Trott's Marion. As an orphaned noblewoman and not a peasant, she is subject to guardianship, in this case, that of the sour-souled Abbot Hugo and his ruthless brother, Robert de Rainault, the Sheriff of Nottingham, who plot to keep her lands for themselves. In Episode One, we see her planning to become a nun, but the powerful and evil sorcerer Baron de Bellame (an ironic name: "beautiful soul") demands her for himself. She refuses

him politely but firmly and leaves the room, angering him; he later returns to Abbot Hugo and the Sheriff to promise that if they will give him Marion, he will destroy Robin Hood for them. The Abbot is still anxious; after all, the Baron does practice the Dark Arts, so the Sheriff persuades him: "One headstrong Saxon virgin to put an end to a dangerous rebel! Seems like a bargain to me," regardless of what it would be to Marion. The Baron, as it turns out, reifies Marion almost out of existence: He does not want a new wife (his first wife is dead), but he needs a pure maiden to sacrifice to his devils, and actually has Marion bound at the altar when Robin appears fortuitously on the scene. Even when she first stands before Bellame in his cold hall and learns her fate, Marion yet has the strength and courage to defy the evil baron; as he prays to his devil, Marion taunts him: "You're not his servant! You're his victim"--ironic in many respects, since he has clearly placed her as the victim, but true. And so he ultimately becomes the victim when Robin kills him, but not before Marion--and we--have undergone a heart-stopping ordeal.

In fact, Judi Trott's Marion, along with most of her film counterparts, frequently finds herself positioned as object/victim, as merchandise, as goods for the taking, but she always refuses to accept such a demeaning position, even from the man she loves. In Episode Two, Marion wishes to go with the men when they go out to see if there is someone they can waylay, but Robin refuses her for fear she would be injured (despite her excellent archery prowess and other accomplishments). She mopes around the camp while the men are off having hair-raising adventures. When they return, she acts as nurse to Little John, who is slightly wounded, and then feels left out as the men begin to reminisce about their day. No one pays any attention to her until she gets up and walks away from the fire; then Robin, troubled, follows her to the stream:

ROBIN: Why are you behaving like this? It's ridiculous!

MARION: Ridiculous, am I? What am I to you?

ROBIN: Everything.

MARION: Yes--wife, cook, and nurse. I had more freedom in Kirkless Abbey.

For all that this is set in the middle of Sherwood Forest at the close of the twelfth century, Marion expresses the frustrations no doubt felt by many British and American women (in particular) in the 1980s.

Even after she fights Robin for a place in the band, Judi Trott's Marion must deal with others who would reify her: The barbarian lord, Owen of Clun, kidnapping Marion after he has insulted her at the home of the Earl of Huntingdon (Episode 12), leans close to her menacingly and declares harshly: "What I want, I take!" That word "what" signals another attempt to depersonalize her, and is carried further when the Dark Mage Gulnar forces her to drink a potion which causes her almost to lust for Owen. On the day of her wedding--fortunately interrupted by Jason Connery's Robert of Huntingdon/new Robin Hood, with the followers of her late husband--Marion is led into Owen's hall as a stranger even to herself: her clothes belong to someone else, her desires belong to a sinister potion, and even her eyes have been painted as a mask. At this moment, she is clearly not-Marion, but will be restored by friends to her true self.

Judi Trott's is not the only Marian who needs rescuing despite her courage and skills. Enid Bennett's lovely lady (1922) certainly does, and Olivia de Havilland's Marian (1938) is threatened by Prince John with execution because she tries to warn King Richard of John's perfidy, but Flynn's Robin manages to save both Lady Marian and the king's throne. Joan Rice's spunky Marian (1952) finds herself tricked by Prince John into being shut up in the dungeon so that she will not ride out with the Queen Mother and so realize that the "outlaws" who rob them of the ransom money for King Richard are not really Robin and his men; fortunately, the real outlaws foil the fakes and then go to the castle disguised as soldiers to rescue Marian--and to dump Prince John into the dungeon. The animated little vixen-Marian (1973) also needs rescuing; while they are dodging the wolf-Sheriff's

rhinocerous-soldiers after the archery tournament, fox-Robin proposes to Marian and they discuss the number of children they will have, while Robin continues to fight off the Sheriff's soldiers and Marian watches--although almost any other film Marian would attempt to strike at least one blow with her man! Audrey Hepburn's abbess Marian, "Mother Jennett" (1976), finds herself rescued against her will: King John has ordered all the higher clergy out of England, but Marian has refused to go, so knows that the Sheriff is coming to take her to prison. She and Robin are both stubborn; she hits him when he tries to interfere, so he hits her back hard enough to knock her out, and then carries her off in front of the Sheriff's astonished eyes.

On the other hand, Mary Elizabeth Mastrontonio's Marian (Reynolds 1991) desperately needs to be rescued, although earlier in the film she kept insisting that she did not need a protector: "No more boy heroes," she had admonished Robin. Now, believing Robin dead and knowing that if she refuses to wed the mad Sheriff (Alan Rickman) all the prisoners from Sherwood will die, including the children, she agrees to the marriage, whispering in despair, "I have no choice, do I?" At the travesty of a marriage ceremony, the Sheriff even denies her the right to speak and refuse him, clapping his hand over her mouth and stating flippantly, "Of course she does." Naturally, Robin and his friend Azeem the Moor arrive in the nick of time.

Likewise, Uma Thurman's Lady Marian (Irvin 1991) must be rescued at the altar where she is about to be forcibly wed to the cruel knight Sir Miles Falconet (Jurgen Prochnow) so that her uncle, the Baron Daguerre (Jeroen Krabbe), will acquire a tremendous amount of money. In spite of her drooping spirits, Marian refuses to be sold to the highest bidder, raising her head when the abbot puts the question to her, and responding, "I will not marry him--not before God or anyone else," before Falconet and Daguerre can quite recover their wits. Robin, of course, has been hiding in the choir; hearing Marian's refusal, he shows himself. The remainder of the scene is bedlam,

especially once Marian leaps into the fray when Robin is greatly outnumbered. In a sense, then, while Bergin's Robin rescues Thurman's Marian, she also helps to rescue him, a nice touch.

Indeed, most Marians, despite needing to be rescued themselves, at some point help to rescue their Robins or some other worthy--like King Richard. In the 1922 film, for example, Enid Bennett's Lady Marian sends a letter to the Earl of Huntingdon, who is en route to the Holy Land with the king, telling the Earl of Prince John's perfidious behavior towards the king's subjects and asking the Earl to help take care of the situation; Olivia de Havilland's 1938 Lady Marian likewise writes a letter to her beloved to warn him specifically that King Richard has returned to England and that his treacherous brother plans to kill the king, while Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio's 1991 Lady Marian actually writes a letter to the king, her cousin, to tell him of the dastardly doings at home while he is away on crusade. The letter from De Havilland's Marian never makes it to Robin, but her confidante Bess (Una O'Connor), who hides when soldiers come to arrest Marian, manages to deliver the message. Likewise, the letter from Mastrantonio's Marian is confiscated; in this case, her confidante Sarah is captured by the messenger she accompanies (as this Marian has mistakenly trusted the local bishop, in cahoots with the insane sheriff), so when King Richard does show up in the middle of Sherwood Forest at the end of the film, we are not sure how he knew to come there. Of course, their attempts to help the king and his subjects endanger the lives of all three of these Lady Marians, and they end up having to be rescued. In this respect, De Havilland's Marian is more complex, because she plans Robin's escape from the gallows, and goes alone at night to the tavern where she has learned (from Bess, sweetheart of the outlaw Much) that the Merry Men sometimes gather. At first, the outlaws suspect "another Norman trick," but Marian wins them over: "Would I come here alone if it were a trap? What's to prevent you from killing me?" Once she swears by Our Lady that she wants to help Robin, the men gather around to hear her plan. As it turns out,

her part in Robin's escape becomes rather perilous, as she must sit in the box with her jealous would-be lover Sir Guy of Gisbourne along with Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham, while avoiding giving herself away to them, which she barely manages. Audrey Hepburn's 1976 Marian helps Robin and Little John rescue her nuns, who have been taken by the Sheriff in an attempt to trap the outlaws; in order to help, Marian has to disobey Robin and go into Nottingham, but her presence means the getaway cart has a driver when Robin and Little John quickly help the nuns aboard. In the 1984-1985 television series, Judi Trott's Marion comes to Robin's aid on several occasions, even breaking him out of the dungeon of Earl Godwin's castle (Episode 6).

In general, then, we can say that film Marians are good women concerned with the well-being of others as well as of themselves. Also (with the possible exception of the little animated vixen), they fight being seen as object, as chattel. As Luce Irigaray asks, "But what if all the 'goods' refused to go to market?" (110), exactly what these Marians attempt. In their various refusals to remain chattel, they encourage women and girl viewers to be courageous despite the dangers, whether these be physical, emotional, or a combination of the two. Moreover, while their defiance generally encourages and delights women, it has the potential to frighten men and bruise egos, so it is "de-fused" by having a man eventually come to the woman's rescue, even if she has helped rescue him, and even if we have seen enough to know that she should be able to handle the situation by herself. Utilizing Lacan's "mirror phase" in a discussion of the cinema, Laura Mulvey observes that "the cinema has structures of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing it" (435). While women are almost constantly asked to identify with men (as in the Norman banquet scene of the 1938 Adventures of Robin Hood), perhaps for a man--for most men?--temporarily losing his ego to a woman while simultaneously reinforcing it as feminine is simply too threatening, so filmmakers (frequently men, still) figure out ways to reduce the threat of men's losing their egos to a woman.

But what about those elements in a film that are even more threatening? What about a rape scene or a scene of attempted rape in which women as well as men are asked to identify with the aggressor/man and, furthermore, to find the entire situation normal or even comic? This kind of scene reifies the woman not only as victim but as plaything, thus trivializing a violent experience of violation--even when the scene is somewhat undercut by having the hero enter at the last minute. This kind of scene forms a climactic moment in the 1991 Kevin Reynolds film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves; the film's popularity renders the violent scene in the sheriff's chapel even more troubling. This scene, the travesty of a wedding between Lady Marian and the mad Sheriff of Nottingham, is structured in such a way that we are obviously supposed to find it funny: the madman dragging the woman through the corridors so fast that in order to keep up with him she has to "catch up" her skirts so high that they swirl around her hips, with the camera following at a discreet distance (but, obviously, not discreet enough); the confident man flippantly ignoring the seething fury of the helpless young woman in front of the nervous bishop; the madman tearing most of his clothes off during the ceremony and then grabbing at the terrified woman; the man standing over the kicking, screaming young woman and telling her to relax, that he's almost there; the distraught woman turning her head toward the bewildered bishop and screaming, "You're letting him do this?", the madman grotesquely beginning to thrust before he has all their clothes off, with the camera peeking obscenely up from the rear. The sheriff's characterization has a good bit to do with the theoretical humor of this scene: if he is mad, then in some way he is not fully responsible for his actions and, besides, he has been a rather amusing character--all that overacting, you know. And we can be sure that Robin will arrive in the nick of time and that Marian will have done all that screaming "for nothing."

Furthermore, the camera is complicitous; primarily a "third-person narrator" in this scene, it generally maintains an air of detachment: easy on the close-ups, except when it

shows Marian's face as she writhes helplessly on the floor and screams up at the bishop, or when it shows the sheriff's rolling-eyed visage as he tells Marian he is "almost there" while he attempts to rape her. The sheriff's and the bishop's looking down on Marian reinforces her helplessness just as our seeing the sheriff look down on Marian reinforces his power over her. At the same time, the camera does occasionally "look" from a point of view, but when it does, that point of view is generally the sheriff's; the one moment it might possibly be Marian's we instinctively know from the camera angle that this point of view could not possibly be hers, that the "omniscient" camera is playing games with us as it glances up at the sheriff from the floor--but from the wrong direction to be Marian's point of view. The question is: What kinds of games does the camera play? This film is rated "PG-13," so the producers are suggesting that small children not see it, although adolescents should be all right. What kind of message do they--and the rest of us--get from this scene in particular? Earlier in the film we saw Marian, disguised as a young man, give a pretty good account of herself at swordplay with Robin; we also saw her take charge of the thieves who attempted (albeit clumsily) to rob her and Sarah as they rode through Sherwood Forest. She even assisted Azeem with Little John's wife Fanny's caesarean section. Why is she suddenly so helpless? Is it because no woman "can" stand against sexual threat?--an extremely dangerous and disturbing notion, yet what, consciously or not, the chapel scene implies in Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves.

What happens if, in a similar set-up, the woman takes charge for as long as possible? What happens if the woman refuses to be the victim, the "goods"? For this, we need to turn back to Richard Carpenter's HTV/Goldcrest Television series, specifically to Episode Fifteen in the second set of programs. Here, Marion finds herself in the clutches of lecherous King John, who thinks that while he has Marion at Nottingham Castle, Gisbourne and his men will go join the king's henchman Roger de Carnac in destroying Robin Hood (Jason Connery) and his men. Marion knows that this is now impossible, as De Carnac and

his soldiers have already lost to the outlaws with De Carnac himself falling to Robin's sword. Still, Marion is trapped. The king wants her prepared, a perfumed bath, and then "something suitable...this, I think; it matches the blue of your eyes," holding up a gown "of the finest Byzantine silk." Marion's eyes are enormous in her slim face as she simulates resigned acceptance, although we can almost see her brain at work. She manages to dawdle long enough over the bath (a treat for her, no doubt, living in the forest as she does) to irritate the king, who snaps at the sheriff to fetch her: "The queen doesn't keep me waiting this long!" As the sheriff drags Marion through the corridors, the camera watches them from the front, as opposed to the rear in Kevin Reynolds' 1991 copycat scene. Although not lecherous himself (but he is cruel), Nickolas Grace's sheriff is still dragging Judi Trott's Marion to the same kind of appointment as will later turn up in Reynolds' 1991 film. However, Trott's Marion manages to temporarily work her hand loose from the sheriff's clutch to exclaim, tongue in cheek: "Be careful, my lord! This is the finest Byzantine silk," as she smooths her sleeve. When the sheriff grabs her again, she refuses to keep up with him, forcing him to slow down.

Confronted by King John in his chamber, Marion's control momentarily slips and she panics, exclaiming "NO!" when he reaches for her hand, but she recovers quickly, beginning to murmur "I mean...well, Your Majesty, I hold you in such awe..." smiling sweetly while backing away. Presented with a glass of wine, she finds it "too heavy, My Liege," so King John sends the reluctant sheriff for "some of your best claret." After he leaves, John begins to move closer to Marion, who backs gracefully away and then sidesteps him, suggesting a game "such as the country lovers play. It warms the blood better than wine": the girl pretends to resist her suitor, who must answer her sweetly regardless of what she says or does. The king agrees to play, and Marion, who is making up the game, has a field day telling King John in no uncertain words what she thinks of him, all the while laughing at his stumbling efforts to restrain his violent temper. She gets

in such wonderful verbal shafts as, "Why, you loathsome little man! You make my flesh creep!" all the while eluding his grasp by darting nimbly around corners or behind pillars. This is a genuinely amusing scene, despite our realization that, since this is a Robin Hood program, that young man will ultimately be needed to rescue Marion, but up until that point--therefore, for most of the scene--Marion takes charge, teasing, even sweet at times, but she makes her frustrated, would-be rapist dance to her tune for awhile.

Finally, King John's frustrations grow too great, and he grabs Marion. Since she has been in the bath, we can assume that someone has confiscated her knife; even if she had it, would she dare to use it on the king? What would happen to her if she did? The scene turns suddenly serious, but not for long, as Robin, in the armor of his slain enemy De Carnac, enters the chamber despite the guards. The musicians ignore both him and the struggling couple within the bed-curtains, from which Robin (and we) can hear Marian's protests and John's blandishments. Since their feet protrude a little from under the curtains, Robin ascertains which side of the bed Marion is on, and tweaks back the curtain just a trifle so that Marion can look up, relieved, and see him smiling at her. King John is oblivous to everything except his attempted seduction of Marion, so when she suddenly says, "Well, my lord, you've won; I'll be right back," he is delighted. He never hears two people slip quietly over to the window; he never hears them drop down into a hay wagon beneath the window. Our heroes have the last laugh, and it is a good one. But wait--Marion has another chuckle coming. As the wagon pulls away from Nottingham Castle, Robin and Marion sit up, shaking hay from their clothes and hair. Robin looks at Marion: "I like your dress. It matches your eyes." To which Marion responds, smiling, "That's what the king said." Robin's smile vanishes as he lies back in the hay and turns away from her: "Oh." Marion leans over him, still smiling: "Jealous?" Without looking at her, Robin attempts to protest: "Oh, no..." but then turns toward her: "Yes." Still smiling, Marion bends over him and their lips meet in the final image of the episode.

"The Betrayal," Episode 15 of the HTV/Goldcrest Television series Robin Hood presents the viewer, whether male or female, with a certain amount of balance. To be sure, men probably find themselves somewhat uncomfortable if they identify with King John, although they have had plenty of opportunities earlier in the episode to take Robin as their mirror-image and, of course, they have another chance. Actually, the scene between Marion and John is constructed in such a manner that a man can identify with Marion; for instance, any man who has ever felt at the mercy of his boss can enjoy the number of "good blows" Marion gets in verbally before John gets tired of waiting.

A smart lady, Judi Trott's Marion, and nobody's fool: a brave woman, too, who can think through and around the fear, the threat--an excellent model. In "The Betrayal," a would-be assaulter becomes the victim of the intended victim in a genuinely amusing way; after all, nothing is hurt but the king's pride. We do not see a full-scale reversal of gender roles here; Marion does take over, but the king had had her brought to him in the first place, and besides, he participates willingly in the "game" she proposes. In a real sense, even when Marion takes charge, she remains in a precarious position in regard to the king. However, he is brought down by a woman because he wanted to look, because the woman was willing to look back at him, thereby threatening him. As Ann Kaplan observes,

> ...the sexualization and the objectification of women is not simply for the purposes of eroticism; from a psychoanalytic point of view, it is designed to annihilate the threat that woman (as castrated and possessing a sinister genital organ) poses. (31)

When the woman looks back, she revives the perceived threat to men: the one who looks occupies a subject, rather than an object, position--so the one looked at becomes an object. In one sense, then, Judi Trott's Marion becomes a castrating woman where King John is concerned, as her courage in looking at him allows her to essentially take over the "male" role of aggressor for much of this scene. Of course, she is really on the defense, which

partly leads to Robin's needing to rescue her, but at least Trott's Marion refuses to simply become a victim.

While more recent film Marians find themselves threatened sexually, and while virtually all the film Marians risk their lives at some point, we make a serious mistake if we merely see Marian as an endangered woman. She has her fun, too. Most of the Marians dance in the forest at least once. Some, like Olivia de Havilland's Marian, enjoy court pleasures, while others, like Judi Trott's Marion, range the forest with their men, not only stopping tax-gatherers and wealthy travellers, but hunting, practicing sports, and playing games.

Still other Marians, like Joan Rice's bright-eyed adolescent in Ken Annakin's 1952 film, go out and have adventures. When Rice's young Lady Marian learns of her friend Robin's outlawry, her first thought is to seek him out to see if this is really so, but the Queen Mother (Martita Hunt), to whose care her father entrusted her while he is on Crusade, does not want Marian to risk going into Sherwood Forest to look for Robin. However, beginning with the first ballad Marian circa 1600 (in Child's no. 150, "Robin Hood and Maid Marian"), various non-film Marians have dressed in boy's garb to escape from society into the forest to search for their Robins so, typical of Marian, so to speak, Rice's spunky teenager borrows clothes from a page-boy and joins up with the wandering minstrel Allan-a-Dale (Elton Hayes), who is also going through Sherwood; as far as I can determine at present, Rice's young lady is the first film Marian to take up the boy-disguise. In this disguise, Marian even tussles with Robin (Richard Todd) over the question of a certain miller's honesty. Finally realizing who she is, Robin takes her back to the outlaws' camp, where they persuade her of their good faith; she collects money from them towards King Richard's ransom. Later, when the outlaws rescue her from the dungeon where Prince John has locked her, Marian stays with them to nurse Robin, who was wounded while helping her to escape. Therefore, she is on hand when Richard himself returns, but is not

immediately present when the king comes to Sherwood Forest, finds Robin, and names him a baron. When Marian does appear, garbed like the outlaws in tunic, leggings, and cap, she kneels to the king (as Little John gently removes the cap from her glossy dark braids). Richard tells her that she is to return to court with him; the Queen Mother is waiting to prepare her for her wedding with the Baron of Locksley. Dismayed, she turns to Robin, who solemnly echoes the king's words. The men do not carry their joke any further, fortunately, and the king reveals to her Robin's new status. Marian actually sets up the last laugh of the film, as her delight at hearing that the man the king commands her to marry is her beloved Robin causes her to rush toward Robin with such exuberance that she knocks him down, to the laughter of the king and the now-pardoned outlaws.

While Ken Annakin's 1952 The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men does have its tense moments and even its sad ones, especially when Robin's father is treacherously shot in the back by a jealous forester early in the film, this is balanced by a sense of playfulness (despite Richard Todd's tendency to be a little stiff; at least he is not wooden), and the intelligence, loyalty, and sense of fun of Joan Rice's Marian contribute to that mood. A major problem, however, does occur at the end of the film when Rice's Marian, like De Havilland's, is simply given by the king to Robin. Yes, this is realistic; women were often quite literally means of exchange in the Early and High Middle Ages, but this ending never feels quite right in the films, perhaps because some men seem to have remained in the Middle Ages in this respect, generally without the courtly respect for women which medieval men at least claimed to have.

Two film Marians, however, do essentially write their own endings, although the first of these implies desperation rather than empowerment. Audrey Hepburn's Marian, reconciled to Robin after his twenty-year absence in the Crusades, finally realizes that she still loves him as strongly as ever, and tells him: "I'll do everything for you but mourn." True to her word, when Robin is severely wounded by the sheriff (whom he manages to kill

afterwards), Marian prepares some pain medicine for him; with her back to Robin, she drinks some herself before turning to offer him the cup. When Robin realizes by her drooping posture and halting speech, and the numbness in his own legs, that she has poisoned them both, he is at first shocked. Then, when Marian haltingly and beautifully tells him that she loves him better than anything or anyone--"I love you more than God"--he understands: "It's better this way." The lovers attempt to reach out and clasp hands, but cannot quite touch. Nevertheless, Marian chooses "not to mourn" Robin's death by choosing to die with him, and she will finally have him back again, as grieving Little John agrees to bury them in the same grave.

Judi Trott's Marion likewise chooses, in a sense. Still grieving for Robin of Loxley a year after he was killed by the sheriff, she finds herself loved by his successor, Robert, son of the Earl of Huntingdon. She is almost afraid to love again, it is so risky, but Jason Connery's Robert/Robin is gently persistent until the wedding is set (Episode 22). However, a crisis involving the evil Dark Mage, Gulnar, separates them, and Marion has a nightmare in which she sees Robin lying dead in the stone Circle of the Nine Maidens. Rushing to the spot, she weeps over what she believes to be his dead body, unaware that in reality it is Gulnar's last spell, destroyed by Robert/Robin, who is no more surprised to see her as a novice at Halstead than she is to see him still alive when he comes for her. She tries to explain to him:

> 'I said good-bye to you....My heart was broken yesterday....I can't be your wife, knowing that each day I might lose you....I need to be at peace, and I found it here at Halstead Abbey. Let me live in your heart, but let me go.'

Although distressed, Robin is an honorable man and a true lover: "You'll always live in my heart."

Do we see these two Marians make real choices for themselves? Or, are their choices dictated by circumstances or what they perceive to be cirucmstances? Or, do circumstances (or perceived circumstances) dictate all our choices? Both of these Marians have given of themselves, and now they need something for themselves: peace. Audrey Hepburn's Marian thought for years that she had found peace in a convent, but then Robin returned to her. What about Judi Trott's Marion? All the way back in Episode One, she was planning to become a nun. Perhaps she needs this; she has spent most of her young life in various men's worlds; perhaps she needs a woman's world now. Judi Trott's Marion has had virtually no female companions--not even an old nurse for a confidante, as have Olivia de Havilland's and the little animated vixen's Marians. (Even "old" is not all that old, of course.) Mary Elizabeth Mastrantoio's Marian has a lady-in-waiting, Sara, but the confidantes in all cases definitely become second-class citizens when the possibility of Marian's marrying Robin begins to be fairly obvious. Joan Rice's Marian spends some time with her old nurse, and the Queen Mother is obviously fond of her, but she does not appear to have any close female ties. We see another situation when we look at Audrey Hepburn's Marian: She has been with a community of nuns for almost twenty years, and has found real joy and satisfaction in her service; when we first see her, she is tending an ailing nun despite the fact that she knows the sheriff will show up to arrest her at any moment. We do see Judi Trott's Marion befriend and support various women who need her throughout the television series, but she appears to have no close women friends with whom she comes in frequent contact. Perhaps she <u>needs</u> the convent and women-centered relationships!

Why do these Marians live in such women-starved worlds? Is it because the writers and directors of these films are male? Is this yet another way to "reduce women's threat"? While in their novels Parke Godwin (<u>Sherwood</u> and <u>Robin and the King</u>) and especially Robin McKinley (<u>The Outlaws of Sherwood</u>) not only give Marian and other women prominent

roles but show Marian interacting with woman friends, none of the films made thus far on the Matter of the Greenwood seem to worry about "the woman's part."

What else do we see when we look at Marian in the films? We see women hedged in, circumscribed by social conventions; most of these Marians either find the holes in the wall or simply climb over, so to speak. For example, we see Joan Rice's Marian, upset because the queen Mother will not let her go into the forest to look for Robin, standing within the great curtain wall which surrounds the castle and leaning disconsolately on the edge of the wall, staring out towards Sherwood Forest. She is quite literally contained within both the wall and the castle until the page-boy comes in, complaining about all the errands he has yet to run this day; the "hole" here is the page-boy's livery, which will enable Marian to slip out of the castle. Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio's Marian likewise finds "holes": by dressing as a man, complete with helmet and sword, she can test Robin. Another time, she and her lady-in-waiting, Sara, simply "climb over the wall" as they ride out into the forest to look for Robin Hood. (Of course, Mastrantonio's Marian does not have to answer to the Queen Mother.) Uma Thurman's Marian cuts and dyes her hair, dresses as a youth, and heads for the forest to find Robin--and especially to avoid being forced to marry the cruel Sir Miles Falconet. On the other hand, the pretty little animated vixen-Marian remains enclosed: We first see her with her chicken confidante, comic Lady Kluck, playing badminton in a walled garden; we next see them in Marian's room, and then in a box next to the royal box at the archery tournament. When fox-Robin snatches her to safety during a military brawl, his "arm" encircles her waist, and he takes her to a tower landing. Even the forest, where other Marians appear especially free, encloses this little Marian, as the trees and waterfalls among which she and Robin go wandering appear to encircle them; back at Robin's camp, Marian finds herself surrounded by outlaws and villagers. After this interlude, she unaccountably disappears until the wedding near the end of the film, where she and Robin exit from the church and enter their closed carriage.

Given the popularity among children (and adults) of this 1973 animated musical Robin Hood, the portrayal of Marian as intelligent, beautiful, and sweet, but enclosed and almost completely passive--she never really acts--is fairly problematic. Lady Kluck is the "strong" female figure here, and she is, above all else, comic, and even "unfeminine," especially when she essentially shoves Marian at Robin during the brawl after the archery contest, exclaiming, "Out of the way, lassie! This is no place for a lady!" and then charges into the rhinocerous-soldiers like a football running-back--with appropriate music and the sound of a cheering crowd. Lady Kluck's comic and "unfeminine" characteristics keep her from being the character with whom most young girls are encouraged to identify; they will turn to sweet, pretty Marian who has the most dashing (bow?) beau of all--and then find that they need a Lady Kluck to give them some spice. Of course, perhaps in 1973, at the height of the Women's Movement, the Disney filmmakers wanted to reinforce the notion that to be feminine and, therefore, desirable to men meant to be pretty but happy to leave the decision-making to others. Unfortunately, the popularity of the 1973 Disney animated Robin Hood means that this negative notion of "feminine" does indeed get reinforced. Reitherman and his crew picked up the idea of Elton Hayes's Allan-a-Dale as folksinging frame-narrator from the 1952 film; had they also borrowed something of the personality of Joan Rice's independent-minded young Marian, the 1973 animated little vixen-Marian would actually be a far more "feminine" heroine with whom female members of the audience can identify: a smart, strong, loyal, yet fun-loving young "woman."

Maid Marian on film: beautiful, intelligent, often reified, just as often refusing to be "goods" and "go to market"--why must she always need to be rescued? Why can she engineer Robin's escape from his enemies, as Olivia de Havilland's and Judi Trott's Marians do, and not engineer her own escape from those who would simply use her to gratify their own desires? Perhaps expectations are part of the problem, the expectations of the audience about a film (or other story venue) treating the Matter of the Greenwood, as well

as the expectations which film producers assume audiences have--expectations most likely fueled, in this case, by previous films. In a discussion of music, Theodor Adorno may provide a clue:

> If one seeks to find out who 'likes' a commercial piece, one cannot avoid the suspicion that liking and disliking are inappropriate to the situation, even if the person questioned clothes his reactions in those words. The familiarity of the piece is a surrogate for the quality ascribed to it. To like it is almost the same thing as to recognize it. (26, emphasis mine)

A Marian capable of ultimately engineering her own escape, sans Robin, would not be "recognizable," and would therefore not fit into the format of a Greenwood film which takes itself at all seriously, even if--as usually happens--it contains comic elements. Significantly, Stephen Knight observes that, "The strongest contender for genuine revisionism [in any form] has been the BBC television series entitled 'Maid Marian and Her Merry Men,'" which begins "by displacing Robin entirely as a figure of any authority....his major function is to be a decorative and mildly enthusiastic aide to the determined, buxom Marian played with caricaturizing energy by Kate Lonergan" (Study 241). In other words, do a fairly complete role reversal, but make it fully comic, "in the tradition of English pantomime," where "Robin and masculinity are made farcical rather than satirized when he goes to the archery contest disguised as a chicken" (Knight, Study 241). Role reversal is the stuff of comedy, after all, and so we "recognize" it as comedy, as somehow transgressing the status quo, which might be threatened if the reversal were allowed to proceed unimpeded in a less farcical manner.

Is Maid Marian even relevant to women any more? Yes, I think so. The animated vixen-Marian aside, Maid Marian has long been, with Robin Hood, a symbol of political and personal freedom. Marian also stands for loyalty and courage, qualities she shares with others in the Sherwood community, as all must work together and care for each other in

order to survive. Since one of the great points about legends is their adaptability, let filmmakers introduce more women into the Sherwood community and give them more prominence. Marian and her "sisters" have a lot to offer.

CONCLUSION

"Take me for wife but not for granted," a lively young Marian admonishes her amorous Robin in Parke Godwin's 1991 novel Sherwood (120). Perhaps too often we are guilty of taking Marian for granted, making the assumption that we know who she is. Even from this all-too-brief-and-incomplete survey we can say she is a woman with the characteristics of the Virgin Mary or of a nature goddess; likewise, she is either sexually awakened or so pure she will not let Robin kiss her until after they are married. She can give a good account of herself with sword or bow, or she can find herself trapped and wait to be rescued. She is an elegant aristocrat or a pragmatic country woman. Polarities, however, will not reveal Maid Marian because she is seldom so easy to define. The Marians of Michael Drayton, Ben Jonson, and T.H. White, for example, are beautiful huntresses with nature-goddess ancestries who blur the line between virginity and sexuality.

At the same time, despite the differences we see among them, we can make a few statements about Marian with certainty. Whatever her social standing, Marian is beautiful, intelligent, and spirited; she is also chaste, having no man but Robin Hood. In addition, Marian generally defies guardians, fathers, or other male authority-figures, refusing to be seen as "goods," refusing to "go to market" to satisfy the whims or desires of a man. Furthermore, we can recognize her, and recognize something of ourselves in her: each new version of Maid Marian presents us with an ideal, and new versions are necessary as ideals change along with us.

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