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## **THE CHARTIST ROBIN HOOD: THOMAS MILLER'S ROYSTON GOWER; OR, THE DAYS OF KING JOHN (1838)**

*Stephen Basdeo*

Thomas Miller was born in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire in 1807, to a poor family and in his early youth worked as a ploughboy before becoming a shoemaker's apprentice. He had a limited education, but his mother encouraged him to read on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup> In his adult life, he became a professional author. He greatly admired Walter Scott, whom he referred to as "the immortal author of *Waverley*."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, such was his admiration that it was in emulation of Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) that Miller authored his own Robin Hood novel titled *Royston Gower; or, The Days of King John*, published in December 1838.<sup>3</sup>

*Ivanhoe* had a profound influence upon the Robin Hood legend. Scott's portrayal of the outlaw as an Anglo-Saxon freedom fighter, a concept that is absent in earlier Robin Hood literature, is one that has persisted in modern retellings of the Robin Hood story. By the time that Miller was writing, the idea that Robin Hood was of an Anglo-Saxon heritage, and that he fought Norman tyrants, had virtually become a fact in historical writing.<sup>4</sup> This essay highlights the ways that Miller's *Royston Gower* reworks Walter Scott's idea in *Ivanhoe* of racial conflict between the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans, casting Robin Hood as a Saxon freedom fighter to serve the Chartist cause. Miller superimposes ideas of class on to

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<sup>1</sup> Owen Ashton and Stephen Roberts, "Thomas Miller," *The Victorian Working Class Writer* (London: Mansell, 1999), 32-45.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Miller, *Royston Gower; or, The Days of King John* (London: W. Nicholson; Wakefield: the Albion Works, [n.d.; 1874 or later]), 7; in-text references to *Royston Gower* are from this edition, which appears to use plates from the one-volume Ward, Lock edition [1874].

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Miller, *Royston Gower; or, The Days of King John*, 3 vols (London: H. Colburn, 1838), I: xxiv.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Stephen Basdeo, "Ivanhoe's Afterlives: Walter Scott's Legacy upon 19th-Century Robin Hood scholarship in England and France," in *Tradition(s) – Innovation(s) en Angleterre au XIX Siecle*, ed. Odile Boucher, Stephane Guy, Francois Ropert, and Francoise Baillet (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2017), 19-33.

Scott's Saxon/Norman racialism; the Saxons represent the downtrodden working classes, while the Normans represent the nineteenth-century upper classes who are resistant to any demands for political reform. Furthermore, Miller places great emphasis upon ideas of liberty and of the rights and sovereignty of the people, and Robin Hood fights for freedom against tyranny and the establishment of a "charter of rights." The Robin Hood who appears in this novel may justifiably be termed "The Chartist Robin Hood."

Miller's life and works have so far received very little critical attention beyond a chapter in Owen Ashton's and Stephen Roberts's *The Victorian Working-Class Writer* (1999), and Louis James's entry in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>5</sup> Even Stephen Knight, whose research made the post-medieval Robin Hood tradition an important area of scholarly inquiry, touches on Miller's novel only briefly.<sup>6</sup> There is clearly scope for more detailed examination.

While Miller was rarely political in his later works, his sympathy towards the Chartist movement in the late 1830s offers a partial challenge to analyses suggesting that, after about 1830, nineteenth-century mediaevalism turned conservative. Chartism was hardly a conservative movement.<sup>7</sup> The campaign for the People's Charter, which would gradually be designated as Chartism, emerged between 1836 and 1838. In its final form, the Charter contained six demands: a vote for all men over twenty-one, a secret ballot, abolition of the property qualification for MPs, payment for MPs, electoral districts of equal size, and annual elections for Parliament. An entire body of prose and poetry complemented the movement, with a large corpus of literary works written by its members in support of it, or by writers such as Pierce Egan the Younger who, although they were not activists, sympathised heavily with the movement.<sup>8</sup> By

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<sup>5</sup> Ashton and Roberts, as in n. 1 above; Louis James, "Miller, Thomas (1807–1874)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004; accessed July 17, 2017): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18738>.

<sup>6</sup> See Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 142-3, and *Reading Robin Hood: Content, Form and Reception in the Outlaw Myth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 154-8.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g.: Clare A. Simmons, *Popular Medievalism in Romantic-Era Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 191-94; see also her earlier *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Dorothy Thompson, *The Dignity of Chartism* (London: Verso, 2015), 7. Recent studies include: Michael Sanders, *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); *The Literature of Struggle: An Anthology of Chartist Fiction*, ed. Ian Haywood (Abingdon:

focusing upon Miller's novel set in the thirteenth century, this article will also further scholars' understanding of Chartist medievalism. Leading Chartists often drew inspiration from the medieval past: Magna Carta, or "the Great Charter", was a symbol co-opted by many Chartist writers to provide continuity with the struggle for rights in the past and connect it to their fight for political representation in the present.<sup>9</sup>

The early nineteenth century also witnessed Robin Hood's first appearance in the novel. In addition to the poems of John Keats and John Hamilton Reynolds, three Robin Hood novels appeared in this period: the anonymous *Robin Hood: A Tale of the Olden Time* was published in the early part of 1819, while Scott's *Ivanhoe* appeared in December of that year, and Thomas Love Peacock's *Maid Marian* appeared in 1822.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, although Scott scholars have not taken note of it, the first of these, published a few months before Scott began writing *Ivanhoe*, may have had some influence upon Scott's novel.<sup>11</sup> The anonymous *Robin Hood* is the first novel to associate Robin Hood with the Saxons, and the name of one of the principal characters in the novel, Athelstane, would, of course, reappear in *Ivanhoe*.<sup>12</sup> *Robin Hood* and *Maid Marian* went quickly

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Routledge, 2017). See the following works on Pierce Egan the Younger's *Wat Tyler* (1840-41) and its Chartist credentials: Chris R. Vanden Bossche, *Reform Acts: Chartism, Social Agency and the Victorian Novel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 37-49; Stephen Basdeo, "Radical Medievalism: Pierce Egan the Younger's Robin Hood, Wat Tyler, and Adam Bell," in *Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies, Volume 15: Imagining the Victorians* ed. Stephen Basdeo and Lauren Padgett (Leeds: Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 2016), 48-64.

<sup>9</sup> Simon Rennie, *The Poetry of Ernest Jones Myth, Song, and the 'Mighty Mind'* (Cambridge & Abingdon: Legenda, 2016), 60-1; cf. Clare A. Simmons, 'Introduction', in *Medievalism and the Quest for the Real Middle Ages* ed. Clare A. Simmons (London: F. Cass, 2005), 8.

<sup>10</sup> On Thomas Love Peacock's *Maid Marian* (1822), see, e.g.: Marilyn Butler, "The Good Old Times: *Maid Marian*," in *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism* ed. Stephen Knight (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), 141-54; Rob Gossedge, "Thomas Love Peacock, Robin Hood, and the Enclosure of Windsor Forest," in *Robin Hood in Greenwood Stood: Alterity and Context in the English Outlaw Tradition*, ed. Stephen Knight (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 135-64.

<sup>11</sup> Robin Hood appears even earlier in Robert Southey's unpublished 1791 novel *Harold: or, The Castle of Morford* (Bodleian MS. Eng. Misc. e. 114); Southey's Richard I is a reformist king who, as in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, travels into the forest *incognito* and associates with Robin's band of outlaws. Southey also uses Saxon names such as Athelwold and Ulfrida, similar to names used by Scott. See Stephen Basdeo and Mark Truesdale, eds., *The First Robin Hood Novel: Robert Southey's Harold: or, The Castle of Morford* (Abingdon: Routledge, [forthcoming 2020]).

<sup>12</sup> Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography*, 116-18.

out of print. It is only Scott's novel that had a lasting effect upon Robin Hood literature during the nineteenth century, particularly with regards to Scott's completely invented idea of enmity between the Anglo-Saxon "race" and the Normans alluded to above. The racialism in *Ivanhoe* links the outlaw to a conservative agenda, and is used as a means of showing how all sections of a divided society could unite in a common cause and become one nation under a just and benevolent king, Richard I. But this comes with certain caveats, of course, for in the words of Alice Chandler, "the serf should be willing to die for his master, the master willing to die for the man he considered his sovereign."<sup>13</sup> To Scott, medieval social structures, or feudalism, could be adapted for the nineteenth century, because if each class owed loyalty to one another, and supported and cared for one another, society would be harmonious. The need for the classes to come together was pressing, for 1819, when Scott wrote *Ivanhoe*, was a turbulent year, with the Peterloo Massacre, and there had been significant riots previously in London in 1817. In the feast scene towards the close of *Ivanhoe*, all classes of society are present, from the humble Saxon serf to the monarch, but Locksley does not have any clear political goals, such as political enfranchisement. Once Richard I regains his throne, it is clear that the people who should lead the nation are the middle classes, symbolised by *Ivanhoe* and Rowena, and the upper classes, symbolised in the person of Richard.

Scott drew upon a number of primary sources when writing *Ivanhoe*, and his knowledge of Robin Hood came primarily from his acquaintance with Joseph Ritson's *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads* (1795). Ritson "rediscovered" medieval Robin Hood poems such as *A Gest of Robyn Hode* (c. 1495). The *Gest* depicts Robin Hood and his men not only as highway robbers, but also as poachers who regularly kill the king's deer in defiance of the forest laws.<sup>14</sup> After the Norman Conquest of 1066, lawmakers designated certain forests as the personal property of the king for hunting. Punishments for poachers could be severe, with offenders being sentenced to either mutilation or death. The laws were a major source of grievance throughout the medieval period, and shortly after the passage of Magna Carta in 1215, a separate Charter of the Forest was enacted in 1217 which limited some of the more draconian

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<sup>13</sup> Alice Chandler, "Sir Walter Scott and the Medieval Revival," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 19.4 (1965), 315-32 (324).

<sup>14</sup> "A Gest of Robyn Hode," in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, ed. Stephen Knight & Thomas Ohlgren (Kalamzoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 135.

features of the existing forest laws.<sup>15</sup> The authors of post-medieval Robin Hood texts often used the harsh forest laws as a backdrop for their own stories. For instance, in *Ivanhoe*, it is “the severity of the forest laws [which] had reduced [the outlaws] to this roving and desperate mode of life.”<sup>16</sup> Scott returned to the subject of these laws in his section upon French history for *Tales of a Grandfather* (1831).<sup>17</sup> In Peacock’s *Maid Marian*, one of the reasons, among many, that Robin is outlawed is because he has regularly been caught hunting the king’s deer.<sup>18</sup> The same is true in Pierce Egan the Younger’s phenomenally successful penny blood titled *Robin Hood and Little John; or, The Merry Men of Sherwood Forest* (1838-40).<sup>19</sup>

In emulation of Scott, one of Miller’s aims in his novel is to highlight “the tyranny of the Norman Forest laws” (*Royston Gower*, 7). Miller shows how, while the good Saxons starve, they are not permitted to feed themselves upon the abundance of food that the natural world provides:

During the reigns of the Saxon princes, forest laws were first established in Britain; for while the Romans held possession of the island, it was free to the poorest hunter. The Saxon laws were, nevertheless, mild, and only useless wastes and untenanted wilds were set apart for the chase.... William the Norman was the first to destroy villages and churches, make slaves of the inhabitants, and turning their possessions into forests, guard his regal hunting grounds by cruel and vexatious laws (*Royston Gower*, 25).

The Norman Conquest, Miller notes, saw the establishment of a tyrannical and self-serving elite composed of the Church and the aristocracy who advance their own interests through the forest laws. These oppressive laws result in near starvation for the Saxons, while the outcast Elwerwolf, the Hag of the Heath,” describes the Normans in these words:

They are rich and powerful, yet dissatisfied, while the Saxons are poor, and oppressed with heavy talliage. The Normans live in lofty

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<sup>15</sup> On the Norman Forest Laws see, e.g.: A. J. Pollard, *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late Medieval Stories in Historical Context* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 82-110; John Hudson, *Forest Laws from Anglo-Saxon England to the Early Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Charles R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (Edinburgh: Black, 1871), 188.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather; Being Stories Taken from the History of France*, 4 vols (Paris: Galignani, 1831), 1: 138-55.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Love Peacock, *Maid Marian and Crotchet Castle*, ed. George Saintsbury (London: MacMillan, 1895), 13.

<sup>19</sup> Pierce Egan, *Robin Hood and Little John; or, The Merry Men of Sherwood Forest* (London: W. S. Johnson, 1850), 212.

castles stored with plenty, and rendered secure by moats and walls ; yet, they begrudge the wild wastes and useless marshes which are scattered over with the reedy huts, and humble hovels of the Saxons. They revel in idleness and luxury, are all knights or nobles; while we eat of the bitter bread, nor look for aught beyond the appeasing of hunger (*Royston Gower*, 269)

That Miller intended his twelfth-century Normans to be equated with the early Victorian political elite is evinced in the comparisons he makes between the Norman nobility and nineteenth-century politicians; of one courtier's conversation with the king, for instance, he comments that "with a tact, which politicians in our own day occasionally copy, he shaped his reply to suit his interests" (*Royston Gower*, 107). Yet the problem in medieval England, according to Miller, is one of class inequality, perpetuated by treacherous monks and cunning aristocrats, rather than a problem of race. He points out that there are poor Normans, and there are also rich Normans who are good characters (*Royston Gower*, 26, 117).

Because of their political oppression, the Saxons in *Royston Gower* seek the establishment of a code of laws, or a "Charter" which, while of immediate benefit to the Anglo-Saxons, will benefit all medieval paupers, be they Saxon or Norman. From the preface, it is clear that Miller intended to adapt Chartist discourse and superimpose it on to his twelfth-century tale, and a pivotal scene in the novel is when one of the men with whom Robin is associated, a Saxon named Hereward, attempts to rebut the Normans' expropriation by producing a "charter" as proof of his rights (*Royston Gower*, 117).<sup>20</sup> Obviously, allusions are made in the novel to Magna Carta, but Miller's choice of spelling in the preface and elsewhere is noteworthy: when Victorians wrote about Magna Carta, they usually spelt it as "Magna Charta."<sup>21</sup> Miller's "Charta," however, like Hereward's, is a literal "charter." Indeed, in what seems to be a deliberate attempt to encourage readers to associate the charter of the novel with the nineteenth-century People's Charter, the actual demands contained in the Anglo-Saxons' people's charter are left unspecified. It is a charter which enjoys the support of all the Saxons, or the medieval working classes. It is initially presented in good faith to King John and the barons, but it is rejected

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<sup>20</sup> Miller, *Royston Gower*, 117. Readers would likely have made a connection to the historical Hereward the Wake, an anti-Norman freedom fighter in the eleventh century who was occasionally appropriated by Chartists. His most famous literary reincarnation was in *Hereward the Wake* (1865), by Charles Kingsley, himself a Chartist sympathizer in the late 1840s.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g.: *An Historical Essay on the Magna Charta of King John* (London: John Major, 1829); *Magna Charta* (London: S. Rousseau, 1810); John Cleland Wells, *Magna Charta: or, The Rise and Progress of Constitutional Civil Liberty in England and America* (London: Mills, 1880).

immediately by the Norman political elites. Such scenes anticipate the dismissal of the first Chartist petition by the government in 1839.

Miller never appears to have come out publicly in support of Chartism. However, among his boyhood friends in Lincolnshire had been Thomas Cooper, a prominent Chartist activist, and the pair remained on good terms throughout their lives.<sup>22</sup> His lifelong friendship with Cooper suggests some sympathy with and implies some knowledge of his friend's political views, and it seems likely that he was in some degree influenced by the movement. Indeed, it might be said that Miller, at this early stage in his literary career, was an independent radical, of the type written about by Michael J. Turner. These men were not always allied to a particular cause, and they often did not hold to a clear and coherent ideology, but they did place great emphasis in their writings upon the rights and sovereignty of the people.<sup>23</sup> In a similar manner, Miller's outlaws' make repeated references to rights of the people specifically connected to the medieval "chartist" cause: for instance, early on, Hereward is praised for "opposing all innovations on the rights of commonage, and withstanding all oppression," and later a Saxon named Edwin tells Royston, "Boldly will I demand my rights ; and it is not in merry England that a man ... need fear of carving out that justice for himself that others may deny him" (*Royston Gower*, 20; 272-273).

Miller's choice of historical setting is also significant. He could have emulated Scott to the letter by placing his novel in the days of King Richard. When a Robin Hood story is set during the time of Richard I, Robin's opposition to Prince John, who plots to steal the throne of England from his brother, makes the story inherently conservative. In such cases Robin Hood becomes, according to Stephen Knight, an upholder of the true political order.<sup>24</sup> However, Miller opts for the reign of King John, setting his story slightly later, between 1199 and 1216. This may appear to be worthy of little note, yet it is actually very significant. During the nineteenth century, King Richard was widely perceived as a good king, a perception which emerged partly as a result of the popularity of Scott's novel. Yet the fact that Robin Hood and his men fight against King John, and never declare any allegiance to a tyrannical monarch, allows Miller's Robin Hood to be truly anti-establishment.

It was not enough that independent radicals such as Miller simply complain about socio-economic conditions of the present, but they also had

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Cooper, *The Life of Thomas Cooper Written by Himself* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1872), 60.

<sup>23</sup> Michael J. Turner, *Independent Radicalism in Early Victorian Britain* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 4.

<sup>24</sup> Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography*, 53.



to present solutions to them as well.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in his novel, Miller presents an alternative model of society to the government of King John and the barons. The outlaws' forest society is governed by principles similar to the ones presented in the charter to King John. As a result, the forest functions as a model of good government. This is the effect for which the forest is used in several reinterpretations of the Robin Hood story. For example, in Ritson's *Robin Hood*, which has some claim to being one of the most important literary works in the entire Robin Hood tradition, it is said that, "in these forests, and with this company, he for many years reigned like an independent sovereign."<sup>26</sup> In *Ivanhoe*, when mainstream society is governed in a tyrannical way by Prince John and the traitorous Norman barons, it is Locksley's forest society which represents the fellowship of free men, although King Richard, in disguise as the Black Knight, also has a place in Scott's outlaw fraternity.<sup>27</sup> The forest is used to the same effect in Peacock's *Maid Marian*, as the outlaws operate according to the principles of "legitimacy, equity, hospitality, chivalry, chastity, and courtesy."<sup>28</sup> And it is a theme that was carried on in Pierce Egan's *Robin Hood and Little John*, which began its serialisation in 1838, the same year that *Royston Gower* was published.<sup>29</sup> In Miller's novel, life in Sherwood is arranged along egalitarian principles: every outlaw including Robin Hood must prove himself willing to do any kind of task, however menial—from keeping the watch to serving meals—so that "it left no grounds for murmuring and made servitude equal" (*Royston Gower*, 36).

Furthermore, when society is run according to the principles of freedom and liberty, people do not go hungry. This is best illustrated by a scene of feasting in the forest, at which Little John sings a "Song of the Outlaws," which combines radical political sentiments, ideas of liberty and freedom with an abundance of food:

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<sup>25</sup> Turner, *Independent Radicalism*, 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads, Now Extant, Relative to that Celebrated English Outlaw*, ed. Joseph Ritson, 2 vols (London: T. Egerton, 1795), vol. 1: v.

<sup>27</sup> Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography*, 114-16.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Love Peacock, *Maid Marian and Crochet Castle* ed. George Saintsbury (London: MacMillan, 1895), 88.

<sup>29</sup> Pierce Egan, *Robin Hood and Little John; or, The Merry Men of Sherwood Forest* (London, 1840; repr. London: W. S. Johnson, 1851), 101 and 190; for example, there is equality in Sherwood forest society as when the aristocratic Matilda goes to live with Robin Hood and the outlaws in the forest, she takes the name of Maid Marian so that people will not think her higher or lower than other forest dwellers; also, Robin Hood says that he had no choice but to build an egalitarian forest society, because mainstream society, with its laws that favour the rich, do not protect people.

As free as the wind is the life that we lead,  
 That sweeps without let over mountain and mead;  
 We own not a tyrant, no foeman we fear,  
 Our home is the Greenwood well-stocked with deer.

...

We lack not a stoup of good berry-brown beer,  
 We lack not a pasty, well-lined with fat deer,  
 We lack not an arm when the tyrant does wrong,  
 To succour the weak, and strike down the strong

(*Royston Gower*, 170).

In spite of their aversion to tyranny, Miller seeks to portray Robin Hood and his outlaws' actions as those of reformers, rather than revolutionaries. This is of course how many Chartists saw themselves: they did not wish to overturn the political order but desired to share in it. In the preface, for instance, he had described Robin as "this early reformer" (*Royston Gower*, 7). Because of their commitment to reform, Robin and the outlaws are "patriots" in their resistance to Norman pretensions, as Miller's contemporaries were in resisting the Game Laws:

Such were the laws of England before the passing of Magna Charta, and many an ancient hill and tranquil valley, which we traverse daily, contains the graves of those forgotten patriots whose blood was spilt in struggling to overthrow the strongholds of oppression, and upon whose mouldered dust is laid the foundation of our glorious liberty. A liberty yet disgraced by a few relics of the barbarous age, the embers of which are still alive in the codes for trespass and game-laws. in the maintenance of which, blood is even now wantonly shed (*Royston Gower*, 333).

It is only by working to better the nation and the condition of everyone in it that they can count themselves as truly loyal to it.

Chartist writers often appropriated patriotic language, but it was a patriotism centred upon the people of the nation and the English constitution.<sup>30</sup> In Miller's novel, the patriotism of the Anglo-Saxons is what Eric Hobsbawm would term the social-democratic kind, that looks back to the language of earlier forms of American and French nationalism during the late eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> While adapted from Scott's novel, Miller's idea of patriotism is wholly unlike the nationalism found in

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<sup>30</sup> See Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism', in *Routledge Revivals: Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, ed. Raphael Samuel (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 57-89.

<sup>31</sup> On the various definitions of "nation" and "patriotism", see Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14-45.

*Ivanhoe*, which is centred upon loyalty to King Richard I. For Miller, aders true patriotism lies in lending their support to political reform.

Walter Scott's reinvention in 1819 of Robin Hood as an Anglo-Saxon freedom fighter has had a lasting impact upon later portrayals of the outlaw's story, all the way into the twentieth century. The life and works of Thomas Miller have thus far received very little critical attention by scholars, but it is clear that Scott's novel influenced his portrayal of the Robin Hood story. Miller takes Scott's idea of enmity between the Saxons and the Normans and reworks it for the eighteen-thirties as a conflict that is class-based. The fact that Miller compares nineteenth-century politicians to Norman barons makes it clear that he intended his novel to be applicable to a nineteenth-century readership. The only way for the Anglo-Saxons in the novel to achieve true equality is, with the help of the outlaws, to seek the establishment of a charter, and it is clear that Miller's novel offers an alternative to the argument that after 1830 nineteenth-century medievalism became largely conservative or pro-establishment. In spite of their commitment to the medieval "chartist" cause, the outlaws in *Royston Gower* are not traitors to their country, for they have at heart the best interests of the people of the nation. The conservative themes in *Ivanhoe*, originally written by the Tory Walter Scott, where Locksley is loyal to the true king, Richard I, are reworked in Miller's novel to fit the different world-view of the early Chartist movement, and Scott's aristocratic outlaw becomes "The Chartist Robin Hood."

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