

Robin Hood: The Greenwood's Reaper

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Abstract

The stories of Robin Hood taking from the rich and giving to the poor are common knowledge for nearly every person drawing breath. And while in today's world Robin is in no way seen as an unassailable hero; conversely, he is not deemed a flat-out villain. He is somewhere in the middle, and what that means is he is a good guy, just with some "quirks" similar to the merc with the mouth, Deadpool. However, I posit that Robin Hood is a crazed, relentless murderer way ahead of his time in the practice of psychopathy. The greenwood is his playground, and its occupants are his play things; he is enabled in his dastardly deeds by tacit permission from the Virgin Mary. Whether it's maiming the face of a dead knight or justifying his heinous actions through divine influence, Robin commits acts that even Ted Bundy would consider extremely wicked. Society has made this medieval figure into a folksy fox for animated films, but in truth one can trace his origins to countless crimes and misdeeds. I believe the adoration surrounding Robin's heroics is an example of the Mandela effect, a communal misremembering by a society. I hope to examine some of Robin's more violent exploits and compare them to modern killers in both action and state of mind. I also hope to see how the public view of Robin has changed, and how he's maintained the persona of a lovable anti-hero for all these years while concealing the true nature of a killer.

Major Questions:

How has the mythos of Robin Hood from medieval literature influenced the perception of him in modern settings?

What is a villain/psychopath?

Does Robin Hood fit this criteria?

Modern Perception of Robin Hood

While Robin Hood has been a staple of culture and literature for many years, his public perception has changed a lot since his medieval beginnings.

Film TV

Most modern representations of Robin Hood have come in the form of films or TV. In these films his exploits are much less violent and his morality and heroics are more readily apparent than in medieval works. In these films the stakes are much less life and death and much more happy-go-lucky. Since the first film adaptation in 1908, Robin Hood has firmly positioned himself as a hero, "over the near 100 years of Robin Hood films analyzed, a portrait emerged of behaviors shifting from a more self-protective leader to a more team-oriented leader" (Bartlett 12).



Methods

- Close reading of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, *Robin Hood and The Monk*, and *A Gest of Robyn Hode*
- Examination of psychopathy in literature as well as real life

Robin Hood is a PSYCHO

Robin Hood as a Modern Day Serial Killer

In Robin Hood's earlier works, he behaves less like the prince of thieves and more like the prince of darkness. All of the figures below, other than the beloved Robin Hood, are widely accepted as being evil psychopaths. When looking at each of their exploits, it's hard to tell why Robin is not lumped in with criminals like this.

Serial Killers	Robin Hood	Son of Sam	Ted Bundy	Charles Manson
Multiple victims	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speaks to divine force	✓	✓		
Shows no remorse, no regard for own life	✓		✓	✓
Takes trophies	✓		✓	
Plays with victims before murder	✓		✓	✓

The Many Crimes Of Robin Hood

Crime	Justification
In <i>Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne</i> , Robin Hood approaches a knight in the greenwood. When learning this knight is looking for Robin Hood he does not run in fear, he proceeds to embarrass the man in an archery contest before revealing himself. After beating the knight in a battle, he removes his clothing and cuts his face up until he is unrecognizable. Before departing he makes sure to apologize to the disfigured face of the knight and engage him in conversation.	Robin's reasoning for killing the knight is justified, he was after his head and could have slain him. If given the right chance. However, Robin's only justification for playing with his food before he eats it is to assert his dominance and highlight his narcissism. After besting his foe, he maims his face and takes his clothes, in hopes of passing as him on his next stop.
In <i>Robin Hood and The Monk</i> , Robin is at his most tame and while he engages in no violence himself, he instigates and perpetuates it everywhere he goes. The story begins with Robin deciding out of the blue that he must attend a church. He does so even when Little John strongly advises against it. While at the service he is recognized for his criminal exploits and is promptly arrested, leading to great bloodshed. When his crew comes to rescue him.	Robin knows he will be captured or at least recognized if he goes to the service, yet he shows no regard for his well-being or his crew's. He enters the church in almost a trance, totally enveloped by the Virgin Mary. When officers arrest him, he shows no struggle, still transfixed on the divine force he was communicating with. Robin does this because he fancies himself a godly man, albeit one willing to jeopardize the lives of innocent townspeople and his greenwood crew.
In the beginning of <i>A Gest of Robyn Hode</i> , Robin and his compatriots are preparing a feast, but Robin refuses to begin until someone comes and dines with him. Until a very lucky knight approaches, Robin robs every stranger who comes in.	Robin does this. For seemingly no reason other than to flex his power and dominance over the greenwood. The lucky knight only receives kindness from Robin because he sees an opportunity for himself in the knight. Robin does not act out of kindness.

While the general public may view the legend of Robin Hood as one about a lovable outlaw with a heart of gold, his origins feel much more sinister. If it were up to him the greenwood would transform into the "redwood." The evidence is in, and Robin Hood, prince of thieves, is a certified psychopath.

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