

Rehepapp and Robin Hood: Tricksters or Heroes?

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Abstract: In reference books and specialised literature, the traditional distinction between the culture hero and the trickster remains surprisingly unequivocal: the latter mythological character is usually defined as the demonic or comical counterpart of the former. While it might be a useful if rigid description for an encyclopaedia, does it always hold true in works of fiction? The present essay attempts to demonstrate that the interaction of the two types is much more ambiguous, and this complex and contradictory relationship is traced through the juxtaposition of probably the best-known characters in Estonian and English folklore, Rehepapp and Robin Hood. Albeit to a different degree, these personages possess traits of both the trickster and the hero but play somewhat different roles in their respective societies. The aim of the article, therefore, is to compare these functions in *Rehepapp ehk november* by Andrus Kivirähk and *The Adventures of Robin Hood and His Merry Outlaws* by J. Walker McSpadden and Charles Wilson.

Keywords: folklore; mythology; tricksters; heroes; Rehepapp; Robin Hood

In times of great historical calamities, political upheavals, or personal tragedies, people often turn to characters who, either through their courage and leadership or humour and resourcefulness, are able to overcome all obstacles, defeat all enemies, and restore order in the world. This is definitely true of Rehepapp and Robin Hood, two of the most famous and well-loved protagonists in Estonian and English folklore. Let us examine, then, how they fit the hero/trickster dichotomy by viewing the roles the two men play in their societies.

The texts selected for this comparison are Andrus Kivirähk's novel *Rehepapp ehk november*¹, published in 2000, and J. Walker McSpadden and Charles Wilson's immensely popular *The Adventures of Robin Hood and His Merry Outlaws*, originally published as retellings of old ballads in 1891 and reprinted in 1984.

¹ Despite its critical and commercial success, *Rehepapp* has not been translated into English yet. The protagonist's name is usually rendered as Old Barny.

As one of the oldest and most famous personages in Estonian folklore, Rehepapp is endowed with many trickster and hero features. His roots and origins are mysterious because, as his nickname in English suggests, he is very old. The little information that we possess about his origin and youth is scattered throughout his tales.

Rehepapp's real name is Sander, as revealed in Kivirähk's stories. He has always been keen on tricking Vanapagan² (Old Devil). According to Kunder, the first trick the brave Rehepapp plays on Vanapagan is when Rehepapp lies to Vanapagan that he is making medicine for the eyes, although in reality he is melting tin. Vanapagan, without realising the trick, is interested in this "witchcraft" and wants a piece of it, so Rehepapp pours the liquid tin in Vanapagan's eyes, thus driving the wicked one away (Kunder 1991: 77–80).

In Kivirähk's version people learn more about Rehepapp's background. First of all, it is quite difficult to establish the exact time when Rehepapp lived, but as Heinapuu and Kikas point out, for an Estonian or a person familiar with Estonia's history, it is quite obvious the action takes place in the period when the Baltic Germans dominated the land (2004: 25). Technically, Rehepapp would have been a youngster more than fifty years before that time if one does not take into consideration the magical elements of the stories. Thus, Rehepapp could be hundreds of years old. He is also described as being old, having a grey beard and hunched back (Kivirähk 2000: 146).

In *Rehepapp ehk november*, other details of Rehepapp's earlier years and origin can be found. In one instance Rehepapp is talking with the local witch Minna, whom he has known since his youth. As the two are conversing, some memories emerge, shedding new light on Rehepapp's background. When they were little, they played together and after that the witch fell in love with Rehepapp, but the love was one-sided as Rehepapp married another woman and the witch moved out of the village. The witch confesses to be the one who "killed" Rehepapp's wife in revenge, so it appears that Rehepapp would have been a bachelor for many years, for he comments that he thought it might have been the witch's doing, which suggests that they had to be quite young when it happened as the death seemed suspicious and could not be explained by natural causes. It also appears that Rehepapp has always been a smart man everybody summoned when they needed him (Kivirähk 2000: 144–47).

Information about Robin Hood is more detailed. He is an old English figure dating back to the 12th century. The stories of him have developed and transformed throughout time: Knight claims that Robin in the Middle

² Vanapagan is one of many names given to the antagonist of many Estonian folk tales who combines characteristics of an evil spirit, Satan, and a foolish giant.

Ages was a yeoman who did not have any interest in women, was not a hero and robbed the rich for his own pleasure, not to help the poor (2011: 396). However, the more popular belief is that the clever archer was probably from the twelfth and thirteenth century (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 12) and had a noble heart. McSpadden and Wilson wonder if Robin Hood was a real person, and the question does not have a simple answer. According to them, over the years many scholars have researched this character and different answers have emerged: some say that he really did exist and helped people; others claim the stories told of him arose from the deeds of a group of men; and still others assert he is just a product of imagination and folk tales (1984: 9–10). Nevertheless, Robin Hood's adventures continue to occupy a significant place in popular culture.

Robin, or Robert as his parents named him, is a clever young man, able to read and write, but his true love is the bow and arrow. After becoming an orphan, Robin moves in with his uncle, but he misses archery and the forest. This longing leads him to his first adventure to win the archers' tournament. But before arriving at the contest, he makes enemies when he kills the King's deer and the forest guard, thus becoming the famous outlaw we all know (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 18–24).

The Characters as Tricksters

Even though the characters come from two different worlds, one from the world full of magic, the other from the woods of England with no exposure to magic, they possess many similar trickster characteristics. At the same time, as tricksters go, the two could not be more different.

Mischievous and deceptive behaviour is one of the main characteristics of tricksters, and in the original trickster stories, trickery is very often random and evil-spirited. Even though most of the times Rehepapp and Robin Hood play tricks on others for a good cause, the tricks are still tricks and someone is fooled. Rehepapp is well known for being the one who is always able to trick supernatural beings: for him it is not difficult to hoodwink the plague, Vanapagan, or even the devil.

Rehepapp's lifestyle is pro-trickery. On one night he tells his womble that people's lives are also stolen and that they have to steal their lives by conning and tricking every day so they could stay alive (Kivirähk 2000: 182).

In Rehepapp's mythical village, many people have little servant creatures known as wombles. However, they are not merely servants: they are supernatural creatures created from discarded miscellaneous rummage and brought

to life by way of a ritual involving the blood of the would-be master who wishes to invoke the powers of Vanapagan. Vanapagan would then give the wombles a soul in exchange for the owner's three drops of blood. After the creatures die, the owner would be killed by Vanapagan and their souls would be taken to hell with him. Rehepapp, being the wise man in the village, has created a plan to deceive Vanapagan and stay alive even after the womble dies. He collects redcurrants so people could secretly give Vanapagan three drops of currant juice instead of real blood (Kivirähk 2000: 19). In addition, Rehepapp owns a womble he found in a runnel and for whom he did not have to give his name or blood. This explains why the womble does not have any power over Rehepapp (Kivirähk 2000: 18).

As mentioned above, Rehepapp is able to trick even the devil and plague. In at least one episode some similarities to the North American Winnebago trickster can be seen: he makes a dying person eat pea soup so that he will break wind and the devil will take the gas with him to hell and let the deceased's soul go to heaven (Kivirähk 2000: 41–22). In the Winnebago myth cycle, the trickster lets his behind scare away creatures he does not want there (Radin 1956: 16).

In contrast to Rehepapp, Robin Hood's favourite trick seems to be making people believe he is someone he is not in order to rob them of their money. On various occasions he presents himself as a public servant: a tax collector or a King's forest guard. Yet he likes to cast pretence aside quite fast. When robbing a courtier, he tells him that he is the equaliser of shillings and that there are many people worthy of the courtier's money who should have it instead (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 79), not even trying to hide the wrong he wants to do them. On another occasion, he picks a fight with a tanner and presents himself as the keeper of the forest, the guard of the King's deer (194). With this he also sheds bad light on his enemies by pretending to be them and acting as an unfair guard.

Another way to approach the trickster in Robin Hood is through the outlaw discourse³ set against the trickster discourse. It is widely known that Robin Hood is a noble outlaw, although without much reason. Yet he sometimes acts accordingly, which makes him an occasional outlaw. Boyd and VanSlette admit that tricksters can be connected with outlaws, as being a trickster includes the possibility of a joker or an antagonist who breaks the law through playfulness and jests (2011: 592). Robin Hood as a trickster character plays

³ The term "outlaw discourse" is used to describe a group or an individual who breaks the rules and refuses to act in accordance to the norms set in his/her culture (qtd. in Boyd and VanSlette 2011: 592).

with people's ethics and comprehension of right and wrong, turning them in his favour by doing bad and playing evil tricks on the rich and evil. So does the original trickster: he plays with assumptions of right and wrong and disrupts cultural norms (Boyd and VanSlette 2011: 592).

Another feature of Robin Hood's tricksterism is the humour he uses. The evil antagonists and, surprisingly, the real heroes are seldom portrayed through humour and irony, to make the characters seem more serious, but the trickster character is nearly always funny, witty, and comic (qtd. in Boyd and VanSlette 2011: 596). Robin Hood and his merry men are usually seen pulling funny pranks on the authorities, rich people, or each other. Boyd and VanSlette believe that outlaws like Robin Hood might soften their message of rebellion with humour (2011: 597).

Moving on to other traits, tricksters are often associated with animals: they either are animals or can shape shift and turn into animals. The case of Robin Hood seems to offer no support for this feature, as in the original stories he is neither an animal nor a shapeshifter, yet in many children's books Robin is depicted as a fox wearing green and saving the woods. Fox is a well-known trickster character in many fairy tales and creation stories, who is intelligent and clever and always able to trick people. A similar analogy can be traced to Puck and Robin Goodfellow from earlier Anglo-Saxon stories.

Furthermore, the trickster is usually connected to the Earth: creating or changing it, but usually present in shaping its form. Although not in a shaper role directly, Rehepapp and Robin Hood are intimately linked to nature: Robin Hood actually lives in the woods, while Rehepapp resides in a village near the forest, familiar with the rules of nature, thus also being close to it.

Robin's closeness to nature and shaping his life in a natural environment comes from his roots: he was brought up in the woods and has always enjoyed living there. Furthermore, his robe is forest green (helping him to blend in with the trees and bushes), and whenever he is forced to stay away from nature and interact with civilisation, he returns to the woods again with pleasure: "He longed for the fresh pure air of the greenwood" (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 284).

In spite of the above similarities, the two characters display important differences with regard to their trickster traits. Robin Hood, unlike Rehepapp, is a very hot-headed young man. On many occasions Robin loses his temper and acts as a trickster, getting into fights. Ballads often tell of such brawls, for example one in which he kills a deer and a forest guard or the story of how Robin tries to fight with a beggar (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 23, 123–24). This incident leads him to another feature characteristic of tricksters – making people laugh. As Robin is about to be defeated by the beggar, he runs away,

his actions being educative and funny at the same time. The story shows in a true tricksterlike manner that picking a fight is never a good idea but remains hilarious even for the people surrounding the protagonist (125).

Compared to Robin Hood, Rehepapp is a steadier character. He is the best example of a procrastinating trickster finding ways to get things done for him without doing much work himself. This is supported by the fact that he has a womble who does the hard work for him. In addition, the womble comments on Rehepapp's laziness when Rehepapp is being more active. Rehepapp responds that he would love nothing more than lie down and think his own thoughts, as he is used to doing (Kivirähk 2000: 151).

In his review of Hasso Krull's work, Viik notes that, according to Krull, Rehepapp is a partial trickster whose cosmological functions are still preserved (Viik 2006). He is still somewhat of a trickster, unlike many other former trickster characters whose traits have been turned in time into those of a travelling joker without real trickster traits (qtd. in Viik 2006). As a true Estonian trickster associated with creation stories, Rehepapp is also associated with these tales. For example, on one occasion Rehepapp is able to help Koera Kaarel to beat malaria by making Kaarel stink badly of vodka. They believe that malaria was a creature who did not tolerate bad smells, so they decide to make Kaarel smell of alcohol (Kivirähk 2000: 52–53). As in Estonia many people make vodka socks (socks saturated with vodka) to beat the cold, this can be construed as a distant creation story of why old Estonians have this specific home remedy. Rehepapp as a trickster shapes the traditions and beliefs of his people.

Unlike Rehepapp, Robin Hood has often been compared to more traditional and typical tricksters. In her paper "Awakening the Trickster," Wyatt draws parallels between the Greek god Hermes and Robin Hood. She notes that Hermes is a god of thieves and a trickster known around the world and adds that "tricksters steal from the gods what humans need to survive or what is inequitable distributed" (Wyatt 2005: 3). Robin Hood is a known king of thieves in English folklore as he steals money for poor people in order for them to survive, thus being similar to Hermes in a way. Wyatt seems to agree with this statement by saying that parallels between Hermes and Robin Hood exist, though Robin Hood remains, compared to Hermes, on a more mundane level.

Yet both characters lack the trickster's trait of randomness. Robin Hood's adventures are driven by the wish to help people, the desire to avenge his father's death, and by the suffering of common people. Similarly, as Rehepapp is the wise man of his small village, his purpose is to help people with his wisdom and tricks to keep the supernatural harm and hunger away. Neither

man is greedy, which is not very tricksterlike. However, they both steal, but they do it to get by in their lives, one better than the other, as Rehepapp sticks to modesty but young Robin steals somewhat more than necessary for himself alone. If Robin Hood and Rehepapp were to be classified as typical tricksters, they would be earth-bound tricksters, “ribald, aggressive, selfish, without moral compass.” Scheub adds that in this sense these personages are “the closest to the basest of humans” as they lack “the sublime connection with the gods” (2013: 34).

The Characters as Heroes

As Scheub puts it, the hero exists within a context of history and myth (2013: 188), which applies to both Robin Hood and Rehepapp. They are originally titled more as heroes of their people, not tricksters. Robin Hood’s heroic deeds are widely known as he is the champion of the poor and weak. Rehepapp is deemed a hero as well. Heinapuu and Kikas point out that when Kivirähk published *Rehepapp*, people claimed Rehepapp to have an almost national hero status, borrowing expressions and catch phrases from the character (2004: 102). Yet heroic is not always what they do, but what they represent (Scheub 2013: 195).

To be a hero, one also needs heroic traits in them, not only people’s general favour. The most important traits one hero could possess are courage, a sense of justice, and the will to fight villains. These traits are present in both Robin Hood and Rehepapp. The latter as the wise man in the village always has a plan for helping people. He steps up as a fearless leader in the fight against the plague when everybody else is about to succumb to the epidemic (Kivirähk 2000: 95–107). When no one else knows how to beat the plague, Rehepapp devises a plan and fearlessly fights the plague by stabbing it in its legs and throwing it into the fire (2000: 106–07). By this heroic act he demonstrates his sense of justice: when some suggest that the manor people deserve the plague, Rehepapp tells them all to calm down as the plague will take anyone no matter the status and they should kill it no matter what, as it harms people everywhere (Kivirähk 2000: 101).

This trait is also obvious in Robin Hood’s stories in the way he helps the poor. Yet there are other occasions when this hero displays courage and a sense of justice. In one episode, Robin Hood and his men help Sir Richard of the Lea, who has been wronged by the Bishop and tax collectors. Sir Richard has lost all his money trying to save his family and thus falling from a rich lifestyle to poverty. After hearing his story, Robin and his merry men decide

to help the knight by giving him money so that he can pay his debt, as no one should live in this kind of poverty, especially knights returning from crusades (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 213), which demonstrates Robin's true sense of justice. In order to retrieve the knight's money Robin and his merry men show their courage when they put themselves in danger by using a disguise and inviting the Bishop to dine with them (1984: 217). The Bishop knows the men from previous encounters and is their enemy; in addition, he has guards with him, which makes the meeting even riskier.

Another trait that is usually connected with heroes is the motivation of anger or rebellion (Ingalls 2010: 343). Even though Rehepapp does not show this motivation (as his origins are unknown), Robin Hood is very closely linked to this trait. This is closely related to another trait typical of heroes: family as a thriving factor (Ingalls 2010: 336). The "refugee" life of Robin Hood begins when he kills the forest guards, but the hatred towards them started when his father was wronged and put to jail without any good reason. Yet Robin, as a true hero, is able to forgive the authorities if need be and helps the knight to get back on his feet.

A hero is also surrounded by characters who are companions in his exploits (Ramaswamy 2014: 641). Rehepapp, once again, is not a typical hero in this case, as he is mostly alone in his activities, yet Robin is surrounded by his merry men such as Little John, Will Scarlet, and Allan-a-Dale. They all seem to have specialised qualities helpful for the different adventures he undertakes. Some of his companions had belonged to the group even before Robin Hood joined them, welcomed to the group for his assistance, but most of them were added after Robin Hood, having fought with them, was impressed with their prowess and concluded that they would be great assets to the team.

Another hero trait that applies only to Robin Hood and not to Rehepapp is the motif of journeys or quests. Many stories involve Robin and his merry men going on a journey to complete a task or to help people. But this literal journey is not the only type in his stories. One of them is the quest for love: although Robin is popular with women (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 48), his true love belongs to Maid Marian, for whom he goes on countless adventures – to meet, accompany, or save her. He seems to have always held her heart, but the journey towards their marriage proves long and tiring.

Another journey Robin embarks on is somewhat spiritual. He starts as a sacrificial hero, ready to die for the poor, but in the end he returns as a knightly hero after being honoured by King Richard. Through the numerous journeys and after being knighted, he finds himself and returns to his normal life in the woods as a true hero.

Rehepapp and Robin Hood Juxtaposed

The list of trickster characteristics of Robin Hood and Rehepapp is longer than the list of hero traits, but this does not necessarily mean they are more tricksters than heroes. After all, tricksters are complex characters with many (often ambiguous) features defining them, while heroes are more straightforward characters without many specific traits.

The previous sections show that Rehepapp and Robin Hood indeed possess traits of tricksters and heroes, but this hardly proves anything conclusively. There are still traits of both character types that they either do not have or make them somewhat contradictory or even paradoxical. This raises a question: who are they then exactly?

The complexity of hero versus trickster emerges especially prominently in Rehepapp, as he is the profane hero-trickster who saves lives and helps people by teaching them tricking and stealing. It cannot be overlooked that almost everything Rehepapp does is to help people in his village, yet the methods are somewhat questionable from the point of view of contemporary ethics. Besides, his actions are not only tricky and cunning, but he adds, in a truly tricksterlike fashion, the elements of taboo or impoliteness to the mix.

When it comes to social restrictions, tricksters are good examples of taboo masters. Sexuality and sex changes are very popular among typical tricksters, as seen in the Winnebago stories, where the Trickster becomes a woman and engages in another taboo, homosexuality, when having a child with a man (Radin 1956: 22–23). Even though Rehepapp and Robin Hood never show any signs of frantic sex hunger and never change their sex in the way the Native American trickster does, Robin Hood dresses up on various occasions as a woman to trick the forest guards, which raises the question whether it is more of a trickster or a hero act, as many (super-)heroes hide their identity by cross-dressing to be unrecognisable. This creates a paradox, as presenting oneself as someone else seems like a trick played on people, which makes the heroes appear also as tricksters.

A trait speaking against Rehepapp being a trickster is his position in the village as a healer. It should be mentioned that most trickster stories come from Native Americans (Grádinaru 2012: 85), since they have been always spiritual and separated from Christianity. They have shamans and healers as the heroes of community. But according to Ricketts, in the Native American stories shamans or healers are the counterbalancing characters to tricksters (1966: 39). Rehepapp, however, is not a healer in the Native American sense but rather in a wily sense: he tricks the disease into leaving the person instead of performing magical rituals as shamans do. In a way he is like a trickster who

tries to imitate a shaman's ceremonies and rituals with the exception of not failing miserably.

To turn our focus back on both characters, the trait of praising their own work should be discussed. Scheub points out that Beowulf is a trickster-hero as he sings his own praises after a victorious battle (2013: 202). This is very similar to young Robin Hood, who sometimes seems to be hot-headed and likes to boast. In the story where Robin fights Guy of Gisborne, he states the fact with a hint of self-praising by asking (about himself): "Has he ever taken from the rich that he did not give again to the poor? Does he not protect the women and children and side with the weak and helpless? Is not his greatest crime the shooting of a few King's deer?" (McSpadden and Wilson 1984: 139). Even Rehepapp, as a generally calm character, has the boasting characteristic in plain sight. In a scene with his womble Joosep, he subtly hints at his rarely present vanity as he vilifies the people who create wombles too often and later by mistake die at the hands of Vanapagan (Kivirähk 2000: 16). He boasts to Joosep that making a womble is for a real man only, that he has created hundreds of wombles, and that every time he has survived to create a new one (2000: 17).

It is rarely seen that a true hero praises the great work he has done. Scheub asserts that the hero never boasts about his achievements (2013: 159). The hero is generally a selfless and modest person, ready to sacrifice himself for the good of his people. Although Robin Hood shows the sacrificial trait, he lacks complete selflessness as he emphasises his good deeds on various occasions. Rehepapp, on the other hand, seldom shows any sacrificial traits as a hero but hardly ever boasts about his deeds either, although when doing that he finds himself on the verge of being similar to any other selfish character.

Rehepapp and Robin Hood both seem to balance on many different borders. They do not sway only on the trickster-hero border, but also physically on the borders of where they live and where they test the abstract borders of their society. As tricksters are characters living on the borderlands, Rehepapp justifies the trickster name. Although the stories never state exactly where he lives in the village, there are implications that he might dwell on its very edge. In the story where Muna Ott returns home from his life in Hell and is nearing the village, the snowstorm is so heavy that he turns to the first house he sees (Kivirähk 2000: 30), which belongs to Rehepapp.

Robin's living on a borderline is not as literal as Rehepapp's, for he resides deep in the woods. Yet he lives on the border of good and bad. He is the character stealing and fighting, causing harm to other people. Even though the harm he causes is directed only towards the rich people in order to help the less fortunate, it is still somewhat questionable if his methods and actions are ethical. On many occasions the tricks he plays on the rich are quite as evil

as the things the rich do to the poor. Although he never crosses the border of ethics so far as to become a villain, his actions make one wonder if he truly is a hero when he stoops to the villains' level with his tricks. The only reason people think of him as a hero and not as a rascal is that he harms the ones who harm others. This produces another paradox: if one hurts people who harm others, does this make one a hero or a villain? If one does harm, he clearly is somewhat evil, yet if one harms bad people he is ... a bad hero? He clearly tries the limits of society by being the vigilante – neither good nor bad – to see how far is too far.

Before arriving at any conclusions, the aspect of paradoxicality has to be discussed. The reason for all the paradoxes and contradictions hides in the fact that, according to Scheub, a hero is the great embodiment of a god, a mortal man, and a trickster (2013: 144). He points out that if one dissects the hero, one can find all these components inside him: they urge the hero to act, eliminating his fears and giving him ideas to defeat his opponents. The trickster, inside the hero (and all humans), is the character people put masks over when entering society: he is the humans' darkest ideas and wishes; he is naked, untamed, and emerges only in the case of need or social urgency, giving the hero his identity (Scheub 2013: 33).

In a sense the trickster and the hero are both part of tales, myths, and epics that deal with precarious periods in people's lives and great upheavals in culture (Scheub 2013: 131). So are Rehepapp and Robin Hood part of stories told of unstable times in their cultures: Rehepapp is part of the period when common Estonians did not have any rights in their own land, and Robin Hood belongs to a time when crusades and feudal wars were violently shaping the world into a different place. This shows that they are characters balancing on the border of trickster and hero, sharing the common traits of both characters. This period of change, as Scheub notes, is the time when the hero acts more like a trickster, being creative and destructive (2013: 139).

Conclusion

It can be said that both the hero and the trickster are the design of their own society as well as the basis of the design of a human being (Scheub 2013: 133). The hero might possess certain trickster traits, but in the end he has them under control, unlike the pure trickster character. Finally, let us sum up our discussion of the two protagonists.

Even though Rehepapp, the wise man from Estonian folklore, has been called a hero on many an occasion, there are indications he is less a hero than

a trickster. His stories do include magic and references to heaven and hell, yet God is never mentioned and Rehepapp's actions are successful due to his clever tricks, not due to divine intervention or luck. Moreover, he lacks the main traits of a literary hero: his actions are never self-sacrificing; he does not complete a journey; and his character does not go through any personal development. He lives in his limited world and has no outside vision, which separates the hero from the trickster, and literally dwells on the border of his culture as tricksters do. Rehepapp is rude and profane and likes tricking anyone and anything whenever it is possible. Yet he helps and teaches people and, unlike other Estonian tricksters, does not destroy or create something on purpose. He might have received the hero title as in his stories he creates a mythical history for Estonians and keeps this mythology alive, but in the end he is predominantly a trickster with a small hero part. Even his last deed in the novel is a manifestation of his mischievous side: he tricks Vanapagan and eats his fish (Kivirähk 2000: 195). As stated before, trickster is a contradiction, and that is exactly what Rehepapp is.

Robin Hood, on the other hand, is close to the embodiment of a human hero. Even though he resembles Robin Goodfellow, the famous Anglo-Saxon trickster, Robin Hood is more of a hero than a trickster because he manages to keep the more playful traits under control. He has strong trickster energy within him, but he channels it towards helping people. He is a good-natured man whose journey from a hot-headed tricksterlike bruiser to a real sacrificial and brave hero has been told for hundreds of years around the world. He uses his trickster energy, like Odysseus, to move to heroism. If taken apart, his character has a trickster, a hero, a mortal, and a god within him and, all of this combined, makes a true hero. He has a vision throughout his tales to improve Sherwood and lessen poverty among his people. As Scheub puts it, "a hero is never without helpers" (2013: 132), and indeed he never misses the assistance of his friends, the merry men.

Thus, Rehepapp, Robin Hood, and countless other hero-tricksters from all over the world remain attractive and continue to inspire people by setting examples, good and bad, and by giving us hope in a time of great uncertainty and doubt.

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