

Behind the “bad guys”

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Even though in the Bible, God Jehovah instructed Noah to build Noah's Ark to screen out the good and evil human beings, since Eden and Eve's descendants were full of corruption, violence and wickedness, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, where they picked the fruit of wisdom, I opined, proved from the origin of human beings that no matter how screened, the duality of people is inevitable.

“Round character”, the concept originated from a British novelist named E.M. Forster, who first introduced it in his 1927 book titled *Aspects of the Novel*, faultlessly interpreting its meaning, also confirmed this view in the field of literature. Taking three characters of British literary works as examples to find commonalities and characteristics, I want to explore its more profound significance behind —— the multidimensional human nature.

First, Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*. At the end of the play, all characters of Christian got happy endings, while desperately complaining of the injustice of the world, the greedy Jewish loan shark Shylock reflected to the judge the true state of his and his people's humiliation, only to found that he would be stripped of all his possessions and forced by them to renounce his faith, bringing me to a question that whether the Christians themselves were showing the kind of mercy they expected from the Jew. For “bad guy” Shylock, as a pagan living in a Christian city-state, he suffered grievous injustice and bullying; and as a father, he was disconsolately abandoned and betrayed by his own flesh and blood. Then, for other “good guys”, the most hypocritical and ironic thing is that, after all this, the Christians demanded mercy from the Jews who had been so dreadfully treated by them, as if there were a common moral standard of

right and wrong. No one is absolutely a villain, who is sometimes both the perpetrator and victim, licking the wounds alone without anyone considering.

Second, Professor James Moriarty from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Known as "Napoleon of Crime" in London, a genius who regards crime as art, he is the archenemy of Sherlock Holmes, whom I like as much as I like Holmes, engaging in and managing more than half of London's crimes in the novel. With the blood flowing characteristics of crime, dangerous as he is, he has the cultivation of nobility and the intellectual level of Holmes, leading his extremely criminal art elegantly and rationally. Even Holmes couldn't help but comment, I have to admit that I ran into at least one opponent with the same level of intelligence as me. I admire his skills more than I dislike his crimes. The thin line between genius and insanity determines that as a counterweight to the main character, "bad guys" always have a deadly and captivating attraction in some certain ways.

Then, Judge Waggrave from *And Then There Were None*. Having pronounced numerous death and prison sentences, he felt compassion for the perennial criminal court experience, witnessing the situation that criminals in his hands could not be brought to justice for various reasons, thus when he found himself suffering from an incurable disease after the retirement of long-time criminal court judge, he organized the graceful execution. In the novel, he is both a murderer of nine other people and an enforcer who tries to "do justice" through God's eyes. Even though the "bad guy" he ran counter to the universal concept of morality, with a strong sense of justice to judge the public at the same time, he carried out his dying wish for the public good.

Accordingly, what we can see is that a person who is judged and defined by only one standard is insufficient and not alive. Behind the "bad guys", there may be a sympathetic cause and motive, a fascinating personality and charm, or an understandable way of thinking. Through the portrayal of "round characters", three authors reveal the true face of greed, selfishness and evil of human nature on the one hand; on the other hand, they express the realistic appeal of harmonious development of ethics and law, reflecting the unfortunate reality that victims are wronged and have no place to appeal.

Characters in literature are microcosm of the real world, which means that no one in the world is born a villain or a complete bad guy. Nowadays, with no end of news on social media platforms, they sympathize with the weak and target cyber violence at the “bad guy”, putting their personal emotions in life under the coat of moral criticism, while at the same time, once the story changes, the rough water of zounds will be reversed, full of arrogant people misunderstandings and accusations against each other, causing a new round of more serious violence in the opposite direction, owing to their less tolerance to any flaw in their beloved victims. In fact, due to the asymmetry of information, as long as you stand in the perspective of others to consider everything, you can understand we are all “round characters”. For example, Yuan ShiKai, the despotic tyrant who wanted to restore the monarchy, but we cannot deny that his wisdom in the construction of the army promoted the process of Modernization of China. Hitler, who was stained with Jewish blood on his hands during World War II, was undoubtedly also an excellent leader, full of knowledge and talent, making Germany one of the top powers in a short period of time. No.44 bus driver Chu Yuanyuan deliberately drove her car off the cliff, resulting in the death of the whole car, but actually before the accident happened, when she was raped in desperation by the assailants who hijacked the bus, under the indifferent gaze of all the passengers, no one lent a helping hand.

"To err is human, to forgive, divine." Even Confucius, the great sage of ancient China, had an affair with Nanzi, let alone imperfect others. Now, we are not talking about this for the sake of meaningless criticism and praise of historical or literary figures, but after reading these works, as a member of humans to gain a deeper understanding of the multidimensional human nature. As the saying goes, do not preach kindness to others till they suffer. With some secrets and errors that can't lay bare to the sun, no one is qualified to stand on the moral high ground to severely condemn another person, because everyone has been born with the label of good and evil, and if we show our good all the time, but because we hide our evil better through the correction of later education.