

# *Feng Chia University* *Outstanding Academic Paper by Students*

Title : Book Review of Great Crime

《Great Crime》書評

**Author(s)** : 張子庭 Amy Chang

Class : 3rd year of Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Student ID : D0142992

**Course** : Composition(5)

Instructor: Prof. Wei-Wei Shen

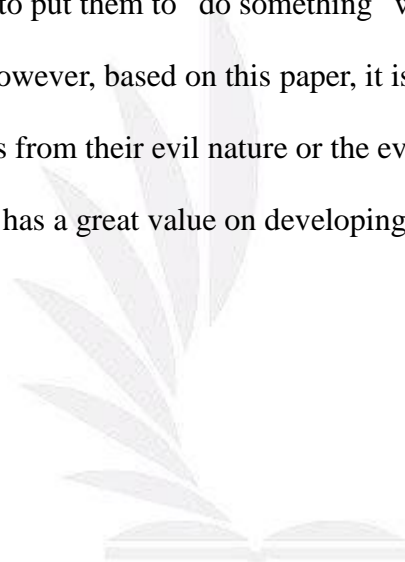
Department: Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Academic Year: Semester 2, 2013-2014



## Abstract

This paper is to review the book *Great Crime*, written by John Escott, who loves to write stories about crime and mysteries. It has found a theme about human greed and irony. The paper has analyzed that although there are 11 separated crimes which happened in different places and time, all the cases in the book have a resemblance due to human greed. People commit crimes for they have their own greed, which is to be loved, to have money, or to be free from the world. Moreover, this paper also found that greed is a strong desire to put them to “do something” when the reality cannot meet one’s own standard. However, based on this paper, it is hard to judge that the criminals committing crimes from their evil nature or the evil world. Thus, this paper finally praises that the book has a great value on developing critical thinking.



**Keyword** : critical thinking, Great Crime, greed, irony, John Escott, book review

## 中文摘要

此篇文章評論約翰·艾斯考特(John Escott)的著作《Great Crime》，此書作者喜愛寫犯罪小說及神秘小說。此書以諷刺及人性的貪婪為主題。書中收錄的十一個不同的犯罪案例，然而這些犯罪確有相同之處—人性的貪婪。對於愛的貪求，錢財的貪心，以及自由的貪戀，使得人犯罪。文章中還發現了，人之所以有如此的貪念，皆來自對於現實生活中的不滿足。然而，若是滿足了，人就真的不會犯罪了嗎？在書中，在約翰·艾斯考特的筆下，引發出了一個諷刺問題—究竟是罪犯惡性去犯罪，還是環境迫使人去犯罪？作者經過長時間寫了許多的整裡再將一件件案件慢慢的比較、思考，本文發現《Great Crime》的作者想表達一個重要的概念：犯罪的起因很難歸結，因此我認為本書富有培養深度批判思考的價值。

**關鍵字：**犯罪、批判思考、約翰·艾斯考特、貪婪、書評

## 目 次

一、	摘要 (Abstract)	-----1
二、	書評 (Book Review)	-----4
三、	參考資料 (References)	-----7



## Book Review of Great Crime

John Escott, enjoying writing crime and mystery thrillers, collected 11 real crimes and wrote the book *Great Crime*, published in Oxford Bookworm series in 2008. Although the cases in the *Great Crime* are different, they all have the same writing style and one attitude under Escott's hand—irony. The fact that solving cases stay mysteries is the reason that arouses my interest to read this book. Therefore, I am going to write about the plots and why they are so ironic.

The plots in the book are not related to each other, but there is still a resemblance—human greed. For example, greed for love, like in the case of Dr. Crippen, he could not receive love from his wife, for she spent money and showed interest in other men. So, he chose to love other woman and killed his wife. Moreover, in this book some other cases showed the greed for money, such as Mona Lisa—lost and found, Lindbergh Kidnapping, the Great Train Robbery, and Shergar. In these cases, kidnappers, thieves, and robbers commit the crime for money's sake. Just like people say, "Money talks."

In addition to greed for love and money, some people are greedy for freedom. Take Bonnie and Clyde as an example. Bonnie and Clyde were criminals. They robbed banks, stole cars, and killed cops. In the story, Ecott mentions that Bonnie liked to write poems. One poem about Bonnie and Clyde, which was written by her, ends like this: "...To few it'll be grief, to the law a relief [...] But it's death for Bonnie and Clyde." (From Chapter 9, page 59) Although they died in a gun fight with cops and the bodies looked like a bee's nest, from the poem we could tell that they never regretted their deeds. Bonnie and Clyde chose their way to live, which is to play under the rules. They already knew they would die anyway, but they wanted their freedom by living without limit and law. Although all the crimes in the book were separated

(they were not even happened at the same place or same time), the crimes, in fact, are the same because of the human greed.

Moreover, throughout the plots, the tone of irony is obvious. I believe that greed leads people into two different ways. One is successful. The other one is criminal. How contrary these two words are, successful and criminal! From chapter 1, Dr. Crippen, at the end of the story, Escott wrote, “What a wonderful thing radio is!” said Dr Crippen. But that wonderful thing meant death for Dr Crippen.” (From Chapter 1, page 8) In these two sentences, Escott briefly shows how the real world mocks at those who think the world is on their side. When Dr Crippen praised the radio, he was happy about his happily after future and successfully escaped from the police. However, the radio is wonderful for it connects the whole world into one world. Therefore, the English police could contact with Canadian police and catch Crippen at the time he arrived.

There is another interesting example for tone of irony of this book. In the last chapter, Elmyr de Hory was a clever painter, who became famous for faking other’s paintings. In the book, Escott wrote like this, “So died one of the art world’s greatest forgers—a clever painter who could only succeed by painting other people’s paintings.” (From Chapter 11, page 72) If the painter is clever enough, he should be famous with his name, but Elmyr de Hory was famous with others names. It is funny that a painter, who can paint like Vincent Van Gogh, and Picasso, could not accomplish gold by his own name. The world only praises for those who were already dead. And something that has famous names on could be the great sellers. People are blind and can only be followers. Then, there is a question that comes into my mind—who pull the trigger, the world or the killer?

In the book, *Great Crime*, those cases become the same because of human greed. In fact, throughout the book, those criminals were greedy for some particular

## Book Review of Great Crime

reasons—love, money, or freedom. The author uses ironic tone to write the book to create a feeling that sometimes the criminals are not voluntary to commit crimes, but forced to. Therefore, I highly recommend those who love critical thinking to read this book, for it contains all materials that are worth to think about the conflict nature of human mind.



## 參考文獻

Goodreader. (2014, Nov 16). John Escott [About this Author] Available at:

[http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/25541.John\\_Escott](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/25541.John_Escott)

John Escott. (2008). Great Crime.

