

## The Rise of the Anti-Hero

*Why the characters in TV and movies we love most are the ones with fatal flaws.*

A lot of TV is dark these days. Some of television's most celebrated shows over the past 10 years have taken us deep into the shadiest, seediest—and sometimes scariest—areas of our world, fantasies, and the human psyche. And you know what? Apparently, we love it.

We are hooked on shows like *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, *The Wire*, *Dexter*, *Game of Thrones*, *Weeds*, *American Horror Story*, *The Sopranos*, *True Blood* and *House of Cards*, just to name a few.



Network and Cable TV is entering a mini golden era in which solid writing, high production value and A-list actors have combined to produce top-quality shows that we can't seem to devour fast enough.

Unlike the traditional hero who is morally upright and steadfast, the anti-hero usually has a flawed moral character.

Of course, for some people, these shows are just a bit too dark. But for the rest of us who tune in to these series weekly (or binge watch them via Netflix), what draws us to these stories? And what keeps us coming back? Is it that we have a sick fascination with watching the underbelly of society live out our own secret desires? Or is it that we are waiting for redemptive resolution that affirms our understanding of right and wrong?

To answer that question, we must first consider the anti-hero.

The “anti-hero” (also known as the flawed hero) is a common character archetype for the antagonist that has been around since the comedies and tragedies of Greek theater. Unlike the traditional hero who is morally upright and steadfast, the anti-hero usually has a flawed moral character. The moral compromises he or she makes can often be seen as the unpleasant means to an appropriately desired end—such as breaking a finger to get answers—whatever it takes for the protagonist to come to justice. Other times, however, the moral flaws are simply moral flaws, like alcoholism, infidelity, or an uncontrollable and violent temper.

(Source : <http://www.relevantmagazine.com/culture/tv/rise-anti-hero>)