

# The Endearing Iniquity in the Fictional World of London Literature

## Abstract

The world of literature abounds with the characters that are famous for their negative roles but are most loved by the readers. London fiction is replete with characters that rule the fictional world with their atrocious acts; writers take pleasure in creating such villainous characters. The fictional world is replete with the esteemed and the repulsive, who are actually treasured; such characters are called villains, vampires, the negative characters, the evil ones and the wicked ones. They are loved for their iniquity. It would not be wrong to say that the fictional world would lose its charm if the wicked ones don't survive. They add real spice to the story and its motion. The evil spaces add beauty to their wickedness. The literature of London, specifically fiction genre, has etched in our minds wicked characters that grace this world of fiction, till the end of living. The wicked characters to grace the pages of London fiction are "The Wicked Witch (The Wonderful Wizard of Oz), Pap Finn (Huckleberry Finn), Sauron (The Lord of Rings), Bill Sikes (Oliver Twist), Uriah Heep (David Copperfield) and Javert (Les Miserables)".

**Keywords:** London Fictional World, Charles Dickens.

## Introduction

To take the Wicked Witch of the West, it is a fictional character and the most significant antagonist in L.Frank Baum's children's book The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900). In Baum's subsequent Oz books, it is the Nome King who is the Chief villain, the Wicked Witch of the West is hardly ever even referred to again after her death in the first book.

The character became so illustrious that other writers also took it to make their novels and stories attractive for the children. The story chronicles the adventures of a young girl named Dorothy Gale in the Land of Oz, after being swept away from her Kansas farm home in a cyclone (Baum uses the word cyclone, and then proceeds to describe a tornado). The novel is one of the best known stories in the popular culture of fiction and has been widely translated. Dorothy Gale is a young girl who lives with her Aunt Eve and Uncle Henry and her little dog Toto on a Kansas farm. One day Dorothy and Toto are caught up in a cyclone that deposits her farmhouse into Munchkin Country in the Magical Land of Oz. The falling house has killed the Wicked Witch of the East, the evil ruler of the Munchkins. The Good witch of the North arrives with the grateful Munchkins and gives Dorothy the Silver Shoes that once belonged to the witch. The good witch tells Dorothy that the only way she can return home is to go to Emerald City and ask the great and powerful witch of Oz to help her. On her way down the yellow brick road, Dorothy attends a banquet held by a Munchkin man named Bog. The next day, Dorothy frees the scarecrow from the pole, applies oil from a can to the rusted connection of the Tin Woodman, then meets the Cowardly lion, and encourages the three of them to journey with her and Toto to the Emerald City. The Scarecrow wants a brain, the Tin Woodman wants a heart, and a Cowardly lion wants courage. All four believe that the wizard can solve their troubles. When the travelers finally arrive at the gates of the Emerald City, they are asked by the Guardian of the Gates to wear green tinted glasses to keep their eyes from being blind by the brilliance of the city. Dorothy and others see the wizard as a giant head on a marble throne, the Scarecrow as a lovely lady in a silk gauge, the Tin woodman as a terrible beast, and the cowardly lion as a ball of fire. The wizard agrees them to help them all if they defeat the wicked witch of the west, who rules over Oz's Winkie country. The guardian warns them that no one has ever managed to defeat the witch.

The Wicked Witch of the West sees the travelers approaching with her on one telescopic eye. She sends a pack of wolves to slash them to pieces, but the tin woodman kills them with his axe. She sends wild crows to peck their eyes out, but the Scarecrow kills them by breaking their

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necks. She summons a swarm of black bees to sting them, but they are killed trying to sting the Tin woodman, while the Scarecrow's straw hides the other three. She sends her Winkie soldiers to attack them, but the cowardly lion stands firm to repel them. Finally, she uses the power of the Golden Cap to send the winged Monkey to capture Dorothy, Toto, and the cowardly lion, and unstuffed the Scarecrow dent the Tin woodman. Dorothy is forced to become the witch's personal slave, who schemes to steal Dorothy's Silver Shoes.

The wicked witch melts, from the W.W. Denslow's publication of the first edition (1900). The wicked witch successfully tricks Dorothy out of one of the silver shoes. Dorothy throws a bucket of water at her, and is shocked to see that the witch melts away. The winkies rejoice at being freed of the witch's tyranny and help restuff the scarecrow and mend the Tin Woodman. Dorothy with the assistance of winked Monkey manages to reach home to Kansas.

The design of the character was beautiful for the time, with illustrations of the physical appearance of the witch. The Grand Rapids Herald wrote that Denslow's illustrations are "quite as such of the story as in the writing" (Denslow) the editorial was of the view that had it not been for Denslow's pictures, the readers would be unable to picture precisely the figures of Dorothy, Toto and the other characters (6). The distinctive look led to imitators at the time, most notably Eva Katherine Gibson's *Zauberlinda*, the wise witch, which mimicked both the typography and the illustration design of *Oz* (7). The typeface was the newly designed monotype old style. Denslow's illustrations were so well known that merchants of many products obtained permission to use them to promote their wares.

We can see the popularity of an evil character. How much people loved the wicked ones. A new edition of the book appeared in 1944, with illustration by Evelyn Cooperman (9). The Evil Character creates an interesting atmosphere and does not dwell upon killing and deeds of violence. Enough stirring and adventurous they are however, to flavor it with zest, and it will indeed be strange if there be a normal child who will not enjoy the story. It is the wicked witch which keeps hanging on the reader's to mind. (The Newyork Times)

The wonderful wizard of *Oz* received positive critical reviews upon release. The Newyork Times praised the novel by saying that it would appeal to child readers and to younger children who could not read yet. During the first 50 years after the wizard of *Oz*'s publication in 1900, it received little critical analysis from scholars of children's literature. Some of the critics even suggested 'ban' for the wizard of *Oz* saying it is of "No value for children today' for supporting "negativism", and for bringing children's minds to a Cowardly level." Encountering such reviews from the literary and social world as well, the witch still has its magical effect on the mind of children.

Pap Finn, another wicked one who is the source of interest in reading the novel is creation of Twains' *Huckleberry Finn*. Pap Finn is the antagonist

in the novel "*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*". His appearance is around 50 years old, and he looked like a beggar, he has tangled hair, long, black whiskers, and a pale white face. Pap has no love or compassion for his son, Huck Finn. The only person he loves is himself. Everyone in town scorns and hates him for his actions, attitude and his endlessly envious behaviour towards the people around him. He is town drunk, and never does well. Pap is a wreck when he appears at the beginning of the novel, with disgusting, ghostlike white skin and tattered clothes. The illiterate Pap does not let Huck study; he disapproves of his being educated. He represents both the general debasement of white society and the failure of family structure in the novel. Pap is seen always hiding from the law. He sometimes leaves Huck Finn and doesn't return of about a year. When he does return, Pap often verbally abuses and beats up Huck "like a rented mule", gets drunk in front of Huck, and on one occasion tried to kill Huck so he can get the inheritance. His boot contained a nail cross on his heel to ward of the devil. It is the character of Pap that keeps the mind of reader questioning what next! The activity done by Pap to his son develops in us the feeling of sympathy towards Huck.

Savron from Tolkien's "*The Lord of Rings*" is another evil character gracing the pages of fiction of London. He wants the whole world to be his providence. He reminds us of a dramatic character of Marlow's Dr. Faustus. Savron wants whole of middle earth to be under his control. The evil played by Savron even takes us to Satan's character that revolted against Almighty God.

Despite being the title character of the *Lord of the Rings* Savron never appears directly. Nowhere is any comprehensive description is given of what he looks like, other than are vague terms. In the *Silmarillion*, Savron is described as being forms, including that of a serpent, a vampire, and a great wolf. The history of the middle earth includes a passage describing how the numenoreaus (*Silmarillion*) said him; "upon that ship which was cast highest and stood dry upon a hill, there was a man, or one in man's shape, but greater than any even of the race of Numenor in stature.... And it seemed to men that Sauron was great, though they feared the light of his eyes. To Many he appeared fair, to others terrible, but to some evil" (15). A few clues are given as to Sauron's appearance as the Dark Lord after he lost his ability to take a fair form: Tolkien in one of his letters described Sauron as having the form of more than human stature, but not gigantic and as an image of malice and hatred made visible. In addition to his physical appearance, Sauron also apparently had an aura of incredible male violence. A passage is the *Silmarillion* describes him as having a "dreadful presence" and daunting eyes. Furthermore, his mere presence could bend all but the strongest wills (7).

Among Sauron's chief powers were deception and disguise. He bears a coat of arms that is black charged with a red eye. An interesting dichotomy is set up between his deceptive nature and his symbol. While rarely appearing personally and deceiving all but most of the way, he represented himself as an all

seeing eye that could pierce all disguises. Consistent with Tolkien's theme of evil being finite, wasteful and self-destructive, Savron's powers gradually decreased as time went on. The extent, nature, and specifics of Savron's power are largely left to the imagination. Like his master Morgoth, he was capable of altering the physical substance of the world around him by mere effort of will.

Charles Dickens who is quite famous in the field of English literature for depicting London life has unforgettable evil minds in his works of fiction. Uriah Heep, Bill Sikes, Mr. Bumble have equal share in adding the evil beauty to the works. Uriah Heep from David Copperfield is not a person, he is an evil machine. The novel becomes more interesting when Uriah assures David. "I am well aware that I am the humblest person going. My Mother is likewise a my unable person" (David Copperfield, 90) From his obsequious greediness to his superiority complex, Charles Dickens' dastardly antagonist the novel gives us chills because he embodies our worst traits.

The name Uriah Heep has become a byword for a falsely humble hypocrite. Charles Dickens has made this character repulsive- bereft of eyelashes and brows, high shouldered, bony and writhing. But it is Heep's sinister greed and patent insincerity, his grating claims to be nothing but an "umble servant" even as he attempts to rob his better blind that have kept him so alive in popular imagination. The wriggling motions of Uriah Heep are considered to be an extended metaphor. When young David first shakes Heep's hand, David describes it as cold and fishy. Heep is compared to eel and a fish. His coldness of heart and scheming ways suggest that Heep's condition might have been used to enhance these metaphors. Some critics might think that Dickens was attempting to defame people who have illness by giving Heep a medical disorder. Dickens' novels which have physical disorders are excellent folk. Uriah Heep pretends to be humble. Many people believe that truly humble person would not proclaim his or her humility, because that would be the opposite of being humble. Uriah Heep uses his claim of being 'Umble' to refuse favours and thereby work behind the scenes to corrupt the law practice of his employer, Mr. Wickfield, and to deliberately steal money from David's great aunt and other clients of Wickfield's practice. Later in the novel Uriah Heep accepts that he hated David and did his best to put him down. As suits a Dickens' novel, Uriah Heep ultimately gets his punishment, in a scene where he is criticized by David's friends Wilkins Micawber as a "Heep of infamy"! Heep's schemes are uncovered, and he ultimately is failed, when David visits him in jail, Heep is much admired by the jailors as showing true repentance: Nevertheless, Heep is one of Dickens' most memorable characters. In Charles Dickens' David Copperfield, we get our first glimpse of one of the greatest villains ever to stalk the pages of a book.

The other character is Bill Sikes from Oliver Twist. The words 'violent' and 'cruel' barely skim the surface when it comes to describe the character of Bill Sikes. He is a monstrous brute created by Dickens. Most would say that the antagonist in Oliver Twist is miserly Fagin, the old man responsible for taking

young poor boys and turning them into career criminals for his own financial gain. Yes, Fagin is probably the nectar in the story. However, it can rightfully be dubious that the crudest, most vicious and barbaric character is none other than Fagin's criminal business associate Bill Sikes. Much is not known about Sikes, we can most likely assume that he grew up poor somewhere in the ghettos of London. We do know that he is very strong and stout and that he often works with Fagin in various criminal endeavors. Bill Sikes represents the ultimate outcome of a brutalizing existence. Totally lacking in any kind of humor, he is openly scornful of anything resembling ethical or moral principles. Except for his controlling relationship with Nancy, Sikes has little respect for any human life, excluding his own. Rarely has a villain come along who is more dark and frightening than Bill Sikes. Men much like him existed then and men much like him exist now. He is the one man on the streets of London who never showed a scrap of kindness apparent or otherwise- to young orphan Oliver and remains probably Charles Dickens' darkest character.

Javert is a fictional character, the primary analogist of Victor Hugo's 1862 novel *Les Misérables*'. He is a Police Inspector who becomes, over the course of the novel, obsessively concerned with the pursuit and punishment of the escaped convict Jean Valjean. Javert is so observed with enforcing society's laws and morals that he does not realize he is living by mistaken assumption- a tragic and ironic flaw in a man who believes so strongly in enforcing what he believes is right. Javert's flaw, however, is that he never stops to question whether the laws themselves are just. In his mind a man is guilty when the law declares him so. Although he is a man of logic, he is impassioned about his work. To this end, Hugo frequently uses animal imagery to describe Javert, particularly when he likens him to a tiger. In the end it is difficult to feel anything other than pity for Javert, who assumes his duty with such savagery that he seems "more animal than man" (*Les Misérables*'s).

#### **Conclusion**

To conclude I must say that the lovable unloved are the ones who makes the importance of the good character in the novel. London fiction from the ancient times has been beautifully creating evil characters so tactfully that the wicked are more loved than the good ones. Heroes cannot be defined without the presence of evil characters. Therefore evil characters play important role in the existence of any sort of fiction, and once in a rare while, an author creates a villain who may be evil through and through but also has a sympathetic side. That's when the reading gets truly interesting.

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