

Mahmut TERCI

International Computer High School of Constanta
Constanta/ Romania

The Wicked Gentleman in David Copperfield

Abstract

Wicked or evil characters were indispensable tools for the Victorian writers. Dickens also used this instrument to make his stories more attractive and to create suspense. It has been aimed that the more the Good struggle against the Evil, the more the Victorian readers are trapped in the novel plots. The wicked gentlemen, whom Dickens chose for the novel David Copperfield, are 'Mr. Murdstone', 'James Steerforth' and 'Uriah Heep'. As David Copperfield is Dickens's most autobiographical novel and 'favourite child,' these wicked gentlemen play important roles in various periods of his life. Mr. Murdstone enters David's life as a step-father and he immediately becomes his first enemy as a result of his "firmness" and brutal behavior. While it is quite easy to guess from his name that Mr. Murdstone becomes one of the obvious wicked gentlemen in the novel, it takes some time for the readers to see especially Steerforth's real face and Uriah also disguises behind his 'umble' background.

Keywords: Gentleman; Charles Dickens; David Copperfield; The True Gentleman; The Wicked Gentleman; Crime

1- Introduction

The term 'gentleman' has been used in English culture by an enormous number of people loading varied meanings to its concept. The idea of the 'gentleman' has attracted many historians, philosophers, religious figures and writers. Countless comments have been uttered and a large number of studies have been written about it and probably many more will be published in the future. Who were or are called gentlemen then or now? What qualities are necessary for a person to be a gentleman?

When the term first appeared in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, it was used ironically to describe a 'verray, parfit, gentil knight' (Pollard; 1907). The chivalrous characteristics were the main focus in the connotation of the term. In the following centuries (the 16th and 17th), the 'gentlemen' were a social group in the English gentry just below the baronets, knights and esquires. Prestigious professions or wealth made the lower class people call the upper class social status as 'gentleman.' The developments in economy and sciences within the expanding of the English empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had a great influence on scientific, social and moral issues. The term was preferred to be used to envisage the manners of the people rather than class signification in the Victorian age. Conduct books were extremely popular in the nineteenth century. In the modern time the reputation of the concept has almost faded away, but to become a real 'gentle' and 'kind' man has never lost its importance.

Recent research on the concept of the gentleman has pointed out various definitions and interpretations of the term taking into consideration distinct approaches by writers, sociologists, historians, philosophers and religious figures. Not only have the varied perspectives on the concept of the gentleman by different people in different periods made it more difficult to pinpoint the term, but also the changes in the class system related to the expansion of the empire, those in the education system, in people's moral values and social behaviors have added a plurality of additional meanings to the word. In addition, the concept is really ambiguous because its meanings depend so much on the context. Philip Mason, who traces the rise and the fall of the ideal English gentleman from Chaucer to the nineteenth century, states that "there is hardly a book in the whole range of English literature or a character in English history who has not something to say somewhere about the idea of the gentleman" (Mason; 1982) When he compares the past to the present in terms of the influence of the idea on people, he considers that the idea of the gentleman is no longer a social force at all.

Other writers, who have done research on the image of the gentleman in English culture, such as Christine Berberich and David Castronovo, share the similar view that the gentleman is no longer a central figure in English culture. Berberich writes that "These men lived and, more poignantly, died according to the rules of an ideal which had been in existence in Britain for centuries. It had changed and been modified over the ages, but it was still going strong by the time Titanic went down, and held values which were understood, followed and admired – albeit sometimes

ridiculed as well – all over the world’ (Berberich; 2007). On the contrary, David Castronovo, suggests that although “the gentleman is no longer a central figure in culture, [...] the issues of status, power, self-assertion, and self-cultivation never seem to disappear” (Castronovo; 1987).

2- The “Wicked Gentleman”

As we look closer to the ‘construction’ of the gentleman, the ‘wicked gentleman’ represents the ‘deformed’ aspect or the ‘disguised’ portrait of the gentleman. While the process of becoming a ‘true gentleman’ is rather long, this type of gentleman prefers to be ‘looked’ upon as a gentleman due to the importance, prestige or image he has acquired in the society. This type of gentleman can also be included in various categories: some who care only about their appearance, some who fake intellectual qualities and morality. The ‘wicked gentleman’ stands just opposite to the ‘true gentleman’. As for his characteristics, unlike the true gentleman who cares the other people living together or around, the ‘wicked gentleman’ gives harms to the others in the society. Types of harming could vary from a simple humiliating attitude to making fun of the others; from revealing pleasure in verbally or physically attacking the others to being a professional liar; from being dishonest, selfish and unreliable to neglecting the importance of virtues such as honor, honesty and generosity, and from being concentrated on his own luxury to ignoring the poor, ill or needed people.

According to Ben Wilson, who wrote the book entitled *The Making of Victorian Values: Decency and Dissent in Britain, 1789-1837* (2007), the modern and advancing country, England, gave birth to new crimes as a result of the depravity and degradation of the people (Wilson; 2007). Wilson claims that looking back on his youth, Francis Place was convinced that there had been a revolution in the manners, morals and education of his contemporaries. People were more respectable, sober and ambitious and enjoyed a better standard of living. Things weren’t perfect, there were signs that the middle and working classes were progressing toward a happier and more enlightened state. There was less drunkenness, cruelty, and lewdness seen on the streets of major cities; parents were desperate to send their children to school; the need to save money was firmly ingrained in the mind. The contrast with the London of Place’s youth was becoming yearly more marked. Yet this was an age when the Society for the Suppression of Vice beat the drum for moral reform and conservative journalists wrote of a “mighty and deplorable change” in the people. Britain had fallen “from the pre-eminence in intelligence and virtue to so low a point of ignorance” that stood at “the abyss of barbarism, guilt and misery” (Wilson; 2007).

Wilson points out the historical facts; from the great increase in the consumption of ‘gin’ and ‘beer’ related to the sudden increase in the number of alehouses, to government’s various reform acts from banning the alehouses to increasing the number of police force, and from some specific crime as frauds, financial chicanery, forgery and psychotic murders to plebeian violence, thieving and rape. However, the religious education given in the charity schools for the poor people living in

the slums improved the hopes of the parents about the future. For the solution of the problems, Wilson also concludes the two different perspectives supported and represented in the parliament as follows:

As the committee reported to Parliament, a strict line had to be drawn between lower-class pleasures and criminality. The two committees – on mendacity and on policing – illustrated the collision of two ideas of Britain. Those that looked at the problem of vagrancy believed that control and surveillance were indispensable; that systematic action could remake the country and spark moral reformation. Bennet's committee took a more old-fashioned view. Life was messy, disorganized and complicated; perfection was an impossible dream and the state should have no active role in utopian projects (Wilson; 2007).

The information Wilson puts together about the crimes related to the degeneration in the characters of some Victorian people is very useful to understand the Victorian society. However, what lacks in his approach is the description that most of the crimes are attached to the people in the lower class who were unable to move up in the social hierarchy. Although the crimes might have some relations with the consumption of the alcoholic drinks or with the poor people who cannot find proper jobs for surviving, the individuals' moral preferences related to their characters in the inclination or declination of the crimes have far more importance. Wilson pinpoints a very important issue about the education of the children given by the volunteers especially in poor areas to make them peaceful members of the society. The moral education which will have positive influence in the minds and hearts of every people in the society from any background is very essential for the crime-free society. Because the 'fake' or 'wicked' gentlemen's crimes from the aristocracy or the privileged are much more destructive as they might destroy not only a few people but they might give a huge damage to a lot of people or even to the whole nation.

It was also one of Dickens's aims to warn the readers and the government to pay more attention to the existing crimes as a result of the criminals settled in big cities. Philip Collins, in the preface of his book entitled *Dickens and Crime* (1994), underlines the fact that Dickens gave a great attention to the issues – namely 'education' and 'crime' - as follows:

For Dickens, these two very topical and controversial issues were inextricably connected, for he held the common and over optimistic belief that if more and better schools were provided, and all children were pushed through them, criminality would decrease dramatically, because children would have acquired both good moral principles and enough skills to earn themselves an honest livelihood. (Collins; 1994)

The further reason why Dickens used this issue in this novel is pointed out by Collins as follows:

There was a further reason why, inevitably, Dickens gave so much attention to this topic. Crime, then as now, was not merely the morbid concern of the newspaper

addict, the great stand-by of popular story-teller: it was inescapable social problem, and Dickens is of course conspicuous among great novelists for his passion for dramatizing and commenting upon the outstanding topical issues of his day. Particularly in his early years, crime was topical issues of his day (Collins; 1994). There have always been crimes that we read or see thousand kinds of them from the news. As Collins pinpoints the crimes have always been inescapable social problems now and then. When we compare and contrast the characteristics of crimes in the past and present time, we will surely see that the illegal organizations are worse now as the criminals have been involved in many kinds of crimes; from assassinations of famous people to coups, from drug trafficking to smuggling, from robbery to illegal organ transplantations and from creating ethnic conflicts in a country to selling unauthorized weapons.

Now, we focus on the Dickens's David Copperfield to see how Dickens described the wicked gentlemen in terms of his approach to the idea of the gentleman which was once a great social force in his time. Some of the male characters in David Copperfield may hardly be called gentlemen, though they are often referred to as such. Therefore, we propose a new "type" of the gentleman, the wicked and the devious. Or, in other words, could we consider a wicked and devious person to be a real gentleman? And how was such a person characterized in Dickens's time? Is there a distinction between the content of the concept and its form? And what is the relationship between the two? And last, but not least, how did Dickens himself imagine the perfect gentleman, if such a person really existed? How did Dickens contribute to the use, misuse and enrichment of the term's multiple connotations? Dickens gives a special care in naming the characters. They are not chosen randomly in his works. They all have a significant meaning. In Harry Stone's view, Dickens's names "are not simply emanations of the plot but often had a shamanistic significance: the name not only stood for the named but took on the very life and attributes of the thing named. The name was part of the thing itself: change the name and you change the thing, change the thing and you must change the name" (Stone; 1985).

Quoting from Stone, Natalie and Ronal Schroeder draw a comparison between Miss. Murdstone and Miss. Trotwood considering that "stone is inorganic and incapable of change except when violent external forces act against it; thus the second half of Miss Murdstone's name becomes integrally connected with the first half, "Murd," as in diminutive form of "murder" or "murderer" (Schroeder; 2002). As regards the word "wood", the two critics claim that it represents firmness, hardness, inflexibility, yet it is not identical to stone. However, wood is organic, and therefore susceptible to change – as Aunt Betsey's character grows and changes, while Miss Murdstone's is static. (Schroeder; 2002) Critics also claim that, as Miss Murdstone is the blood sister of the murderous Mr. Murdstone, so Miss Murdstone and Aunt Betsey are sisters in spirit. As evidenced by their appearances, their attitudes, and their treatment of David and his mother, the two are related psychologically as doubles. Both embody a dark, cruel, and aggressive side of human nature, a dimension of identity or aspect of personality that is unyielding, harsh, insensitive, and inhumane. In the end, Aunt Betsey is the one who triumphs: she dismisses the

Murdstones and transforms herself from David's jailer to his guardian (Schroeder; 2002).

We will argue, however, that even the stones can be transformed into beautifully shaped architectural artifact as long as they are shaped by the hands of masters. Although some of Dickens's wicked gentlemen such as Fagin and Uriah are imprisoned as a punishment, or killed like Bill Sikes some others are transformed into true gentlemen or at least they stop being wicked like Jingle in *The Pickwick Papers*. By the end of *The Pickwick Papers*, for example, Mr. Pickwick not only forgives all the evil deeds Jingle has planned and performed but he also helps him to get his freedom by paying his debts and giving him financial aid afterwards. As for Mr. Murdstone, whose name refers to two terms as 'murderer' and 'stone', he murders David's mother with his firm authority, tyranny as Dickens calls it in the novel. He beats David during his studies with his mother at home, then by giving him a harsh punishment imprisonment in his room, he tries to disconnect him from his mother and at last by sending him to a boarding school where the children are treated very badly, he aims to get rid of him. Moreover, after the mother's death, he sends David to a blacking factory where the working conditions are very hard for a little boy of his age. David, unfortunately, observes Mr. Murdstone's wickedness in his cruel and aggressive attitudes and feels that he disturbs the Murdestones with his presence. To be much clearer, Mr. Murdstone has the qualities of the wicked gentleman as he has lack of moral and behavioral richness in his attitudes as he gets evil pleasure with his verbal and physical attacks not only at a little boy, but also at the young women he seduced in the novel. Here are the examples from the novel;

'I'll conquer that fellow"; and if it were to cost him all the blood he had, I should do it. What is that upon your face?'
'Dirt,' I said.

He knew it was the mark of tears as well as I. But if he had asked the question twenty times, each time with twenty blows, I believe my baby heart would have burst before I would have told him so. (Dickens;__)

Due to this kind of verbal attacks, David's heart feels suffers a lot from the insults and both David and the readers start hating him as Dickens intended. Dickens portrays his own thoughts about this wicked gentleman's stone part as follows:

Firmness, I may observe, was the grand quality on which both Mr. and Miss Murdstone took their stand. However I might have expressed my comprehension of it at that time, if I had been called upon, I nevertheless did clearly comprehend in my own way, that it was another name for tyranny; and for a certain gloomy, arrogant, devil's humour, that was in them both. The creed, as I should state it now, was this. Mr. Murdstone was firm; nobody in his world was to be so firm as Mr. Murdstone; nobody else in his world was to be firm at all, for everybody was to be bent to his firmness. (Dickens; __)

The wicked gentleman enjoys a lot when he is shown respect in the society. They always ask for the respect whether it is gotten by force or it is the natural result of their firm authority. As Dickens gives a special emphasis on the quality of the wicked gentleman that 'everybody has to bend to his firmness.' We have also mentioned that when he – the wicked gentleman – has the power, he resembles the tyrants and he tyrannizes the people around him. Mr. Murdstone never gets ashamed to use his physical power in the punishment of a little, weak and miserable child. The following lines express the psychology of a tyrannized child who has been tortured with the harsh behavior of the wicked gentleman and the wicked lady.

As to any recreation with other children of my age, I had very little of that; for the gloomy theology of the Murdstones made all children out to be a swarm of little vipers though there WAS a child once set in the midst of the Disciples, and held that they contaminated one another. The natural result of this treatment, continued, I suppose, for some six months or more, was to make me sullen, dull, and dogged. I was not made the less so by my sense of being daily more and more shut out and alienated from my mother. I believe I should have been almost stupefied but for one circumstance (Dickens; ___).

... They disliked me; and they sullenly, sternly, steadily, overlooked me. I think Mr. Murdstone's means were straitened at about this time; but it is little to the purpose. He could not bear me; and in putting me from him he tried, as I believe, to put away the notion that I had any claim upon him – and succeeded. I was not actively ill-used. I was not beaten, or starved; but the wrong that was done to me had no intervals of relenting, and was done in a systematic, passionless manner. Day after day, week after week, month after month, I was coldly neglected (Dickens; ___).

"They could not bear me! I was coldly neglected! And systematic and passionless manners" are the clear pictures of the unkind manners of the Murdstones. David is not the only person Mr. Murdstone destroys in the novel. David's mother, Clara, is also the other person who has been wounded and then murdered by the wounds he has opened in her heart. Dickens portrays Mr. Murdstone's tyrannous character in Betsey Trotwood's analysis as follows:

"Mr. Murdstone," she said, shaking her finger at him, "you were a tyrant to the simple baby, and you broke her heart. She was a loving baby – I know that; I knew it, years before you ever saw her – and through the best part of her weakness, you gave her the wounds she died of. There is the truth for your comfort, however you like it. And you and your instruments may make the most of it" (Dickens; ___).

Furthermore, the readers also easily understand that not only David's mother but also other young women become the victims of the wicked gentleman throughout the novel. To stone as a verb means that 'to hurl or throw stones at, esp. to kill with stone'. Dickens's professional use of this name here also implies that Mr. Murdstone's marriages to other women again and again break his wife's David's mother 'spirit' after her death (Davis; 2007). Seducing other women in the novel are also the proofs that his main concern courting the young and unprotected women

is mostly die to his evil pleasures as well as his materialistic benefits he could obtain from the properties they possess.

As to the other disguised wicked gentleman in the novel, James Steerforth, he first appears as the hero of David at school. At first David idolizes him due to his influence as the head boy at Salem House School. The fact that his using the secret information he has heard from David causes Mr. Mell's departure from the school and this unkind and cruel behavior shocks David at first. David's feels that, for myself, I felt so much self-reproach and contrition for my part in what had happened, that nothing would have enabled me to keep back my tears but the fear that Steerforth, who often looked at me, I saw might think it unfriendly or I should rather say, considering our relative ages, and the feeling with which I regarded him, undutiful if I showed the emotion which distressed me (Dickens; ___).

The only person, who honestly tells Steerforth he has been wrong with this kind of sadistic behavior, is Traddles and he becomes one of David's sincere friends. Traddles becomes a true gentleman later in the novel and Dickens shows his honesty which is really admired by David through this incident. While David observes Steerforth's dishonest behavior he also notices Traddles honest behavior which makes him a close friend and a business partner later in his life.

When they both finish school and meet in London by coincidence, David is invited to Steerforth's house and there he notices his cruelty – in fact his real face – for the second time. When David sees a noticeable scar on Miss. Dartle's lip, it is figured out that it has been caused by Steerforth. David gets shocked not with his throwing a hammer to his cousin but Steerforth never gets ashamed of what he has done and shows no regrets about this incident that occurred many years before. Instead he admires himself that those remarkable scars he has made on her face her which will make her never forget him at all.

“What a remarkable scar that is upon her lip!” I said.

Steerforth's face fell, and he paused a moment.

“Why, the fact is,” he returned, “– J did that.”

“By an unfortunate accident!”

“No. I was a young boy, and she exasperated me, and I threw a hammer at her. A promising young angel I must have been!”

I was deeply sorry to have touched on such a painful theme, but that was useless now (Dickens; ___).

Furthermore, from time to time David meets Steerforth during the beginning of his manhood and he is invited to a couple of feasts. David gets severely drunk. Seeing David's miserable situation and the evil face of Steerforth, Agnes tries to warn him that he has to be careful with Steerforth's badly influences.

“It is very bold in me,” said Agnes, looking up again; ‘who have lived in such seclusion, and can know so little of the world, to give you my advice so confidently, or even to have this strong opinion. But I know in what it is engendered, Trotwood,

– in how true a remembrance of our having grown up together, and in how true an interest in all relating to you. It is that which makes me bold. I am certain that what I say is right. I am quite sure it is. I feel as if it were some one else speaking to you, and not I, when I caution you that you have made a dangerous friend,” (Dickens; __).

David always tries to see Steerforth’s good sides and he is not aware that he is being poisoned by him. David gets his third shock when he humiliates his ‘dear’ people from the lower class, Pegotty and her relatives whom David really loves and admires:

“That’s rather a chuckle-headed fellow for the girl; isn’t he?” said Steerforth. He had been so hearty with him, and with them all, that I felt a shock in this unexpected and cold reply (Dickens; __).

David himself notices Steerforth’s difference during his stay in the country side with Pegotty. Although they all show their kindness to Steerforth, he believes that he has to be respected because he is rich, handsome and from the upper class. But the reasons why they have been so kind to him are that he is one of David’s close friends from the school in the first place and he is human. David’s and Steerforth’s perspectives about what makes a person a true gentleman are completely different. Dickens underlines his approach to the idea of the gentleman through Steerforth’s false conception. David never sees any difference between the lower and the upper class as they share similar tastes and the class difference should not play a changing role in people’s social behavior.

When I see how perfectly you understand them, how exquisitely you can enter into happiness like this plain fisherman’s, or humour a love like my old nurse’s, I know that there is not a joy or sorrow, not an emotion, of such people, that can be indifferent to you (Dickens; __).

The worst shock hits David when everybody finds out that Steerforth has eloped with Emily just before her scheduled marriage with Ham. Later news about Emily that she has been abandoned in abroad and she has become a fallen woman really disappoints David. He becomes aware of his cruelty and wickedness with this heart-break incident. He feels that he has also taken some parts in polluting the honest home he has always respected. David has always tended not to see his real face but after the cruel things he has caused in this beloved family he admits that all the ties that bound him and Steerforth are broken.

... so I am not afraid to write that I never had loved Steerforth better than when the ties that bound me to him were broken. In the keen distress of the discovery of his unworthiness, I thought more of all that was brilliant in him, I softened more towards all that was good in him, I did more justice to the qualities that might have made him a man of a noble nature and a great name, than ever I had done in the height of my devotion to him. Deeply as I felt my own unconscious part in his pollution of an honest home, I believed that if I had been brought face to face with him, I could

not have uttered one reproach (Dickens; ___).

Dickens gives the punishment that Steerforth really deserves by killing him in a storm close to the end of novel. In his comment in this incident, Paul Davis states that “although David comes to realize Steerforth’s villainy, he is still drawn to Steerforth’s charismatic gentility, even as he sees him lying dead on the sands of Yarmouth, “lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him at school’ (Davis; 2007). Steerforth used to be David’s first hero possessing charismatic personality as well as his gentility. But David disconnects his ties when he ruins his first love in the honest home. As for Ham’s death when he tries to save the sailor’s (Steerforth’s) life, is an example of how humble, lower class people may be more honest, even ready to sacrifice their lives to save anybody, irrespective of social class. It is very risky for Ham to attempt to save the (unknown) sailor from the storm, but he never hesitates to give assistance although it has been a matter of life and dead for him. Ham tries to save Steerforth’s life but they are both found dead after the storm is over. Emily is found by Mr. Pegotty with David’s help and is persuaded to go back with her uncle to Yarmouth. As a result of Mr. Pegotty’s admirable persistence for the harsh search of Emily in many places spending most of his little fortune and his great love and respect for her as well as Emily’s sincere regret as a result of her wrong decision to go away with Steerforth, they are sent to the new world to start a new life. With Dickens, therefore, evil can be obliterated only by running away from it. He actually does the same thing with other characters confronted by evil doers. An example, in this respect, could be Little Nell whose purpose throughout the novel is to run away from Mr. Quilp.

In David Copperfield, Dickens portrays three significant wicked gentlemen belonging to different classes or backgrounds as Mr. Murdstone from the middle class, Steerforth from the upper class and Heep from the lower class. While Mr. Murdstone’s cruelty and wickedness is apparent, Steerforth’s and Heep’s villainy and wickedness becomes clear in the meantime. The last wicked gentleman – Uriah Heep hides himself behind his humble manners and humble origin. While, at the beginning of his acquaintance with David he calls him ‘Master David’ later in the novel when he gets enough power, he addresses David as ‘Mister David’. In fact, Heep shows his real face and the hatred he has hidden for David becomes apparent when Heep gets the power (albeit he gets this power in an illegal way). During a heated conversation, Uriah openly gives his real thoughts about ‘humility’ that really shocks David. Uriah says that:

“Didn’t I know it! But how little you think of the rightful umbleness of a person in my station, Master Copperfield! Father and me was both brought up at a foundation school for boys; and mother, she was likewise brought up at a public, sort of charitable, establishment. They taught us all a deal of umbleness – not much else that I know of, from morning to night. We was to be umble to this person, and umbel to that; and to pull off our caps here, and to make bows there; and always to know our place, and abase ourselves before our betters. And we had such a lot of betters! Father got the monitor medal by being umble. So did I. Father got made a sexton fry being umble. He had the character, among the gentlefolks, of being such

a well-behaved man, that they were determined to bring him in. 'Be umble, Uriah,' says father to me, 'and you'll get on. It was what was always being dinned into you and me at school; it's what goes down best. Be umble,' says father, 'and you'll do! 'And really it ain't done bad!' (Dickens; __).

According to Uriah, being 'humble' means that they have to pull off their caps and bow to the people from the upper class and know their place in the social life. In other words, he thinks that they have been pushed to show respect to people from the upper class and to be happy with their position in life. When he gets a chance to be – mainly financially – like the others, then it means that he may stop being 'humble' and behave as the others might do towards the inferior class. What Uriah understands from 'humility' is more or less like that and this way of thinking really disappoints David.

It was the first time it had ever occurred to me, that this detestable cant of false humility might have originated out of the Heep family. I had seen the harvest, but had never thought of the seed (Dickens; __).

Getting a job as a clerk, Heep steps into a better position up the social scale. He becomes closer to Mr. Wickfield and Agnes. This fact really makes David worried and as, Tara Macdonald suggests 'what unnerves David is not only Uriah desires to be Wickfield's partner and Agnes's husband, but that Uriah parades his humbleness to excess' (Macdonald; 2005). She also points out the difference how the Peggottys and Heep use the term 'master' when they address David. Peggotty's modest, kind and affectionate 'Mas'r Davy' is quite different from Uriah's scornful 'Master Copperfield'. As the readers figure out the real face of Uriah's, David's attitude towards him changes radically, the language Dickens uses for Uriah changing too. Thus, Dickens uses numerous animals from 'fox' to 'ape' in order to compare Uriah with. Not only Dickens but also Tara Macdonald chooses the title of her essay as 'Red-headed animal': Race, Sexuality and Dickens's Uriah Heep. She explains why Uriah is likened to various animals as follows:

Throughout David Copperfield, Uriah is variously likened to a 'fox', 'vulture', 'bat', 'fish', 'eel', 'snail', 'ape' and 'baboon'. This multiplicity of animal references suggests not only that David sees Uriah as a degenerate man, with the clear associations of race that this implies, but that Uriah cannot be sufficiently cast within any one taxonomy (Macdonald; 2005).

Furthermore, the critic makes a connection of Heep's disgusting behavior with his race. The red-headed men, such as Fagin and Uriah, who are thought to be Jews, have been attached to the crimes as well as their low social position in the Victorian period. Dickens has been criticized for the connection he more or less made between Jews and crimes.

In his well-known defence of Fagin in 1863, Dickens writes to Mrs. Eliza Davis that Fagin is a Jew, 'because it unfortunately was true of the time to which that story refers, that that class of criminal invariably was a Jew.' This assertion implies that

Dickens was content to draw uncritically upon the racial discourses of his time (Macdonald; 2005).

Dickens's attitude about this issue is a kind of discrimination or labeling which can hardly be tolerated. Authors have the rights to describe the things they observe in their surroundings but when it comes to label a 'group of people' or a 'race' with a shameful attitude – even it might be true at that time within a community – nobody has any right to create a negative stereotypical 'image' for the other people. Today, some gypsies might have been involved in crimes such as 'stealing' in Romania or some terrorists might have had 'Islamic views'. Nevertheless, nobody has any right to draw a conclusion or generalize on such situations in the form of 'all gypsies are thieves' or 'all Muslims are terrorists'. It might be true that in Victorian times some Jews may have been involved in crimes, but Dickens should have been more careful in labeling a 'group of people' or a 'race' in this manner, as this has always been a very sensitive issue.

Some critics believe that Uriah Heep is the dark double of David Copperfield. While David works hard to become a true gentleman in the social life, Heep illegally manages to get to the top. And while David tries to help the people around him, Heep destroys the lives of the people he is in touch with. John Reed and Harry Stone describes Dickens's villain, Uriah Heep, as inverting the Christian teachings at the heart of David Copperfield.

His "humility" is a hypocritical mask for his class envy and calls attention to the upper-class snobbery of Steerforth, his mother, and Rosa Dartle. Heep's false forgiveness contrasts with the true forgiveness of Daniel Peggotty and Doctor Strong (Reed in Davis; 2007).

Thus, Uriah serves as doppelganger, or as a dark 'double', to David. In addition, Harry Stone analyses Heep's ambition to rise in the world as "a ruthless and hypocritical version of David's desire for a secure and respectable position," which would set David and Heep in striking opposition. (Stone in Davis, 2007, p.85)

Uriah's 'humility' is a 'hypocritical mask' that helps him to disguise until he reaches his main desire to become what he thinks a gentleman may be. He sees gentility mainly as a class distinction rather than true personal qualities such as honesty, dignity, kindness and nobility in manners. With Dickens, Heep is the opposite of the gentleman; he represents the most hateful part of what a true gentleman should be.

3- Conclusion

The 'villains' and 'evil characters' in general and 'fake and wicked gentlemen' specifically have found their places in the real life as well as in the literary works. The classifications have been made to illuminate the concept of the gentleman better. However, the most important thing that we have to underline is that we have not attempted to label any group of people – in the past and present – as 'wicked gentlemen'. The label does not belong to a certain person or to a certain group of people. Human beings have unlimited potential in terms of their goodness and

wickedness; from time to time even the angels might be proud of the admirable, kind, gentle and generous behavior of a true gentleman; from time to time even the devils are ashamed of the disgusting, revolting and debauchery behavior of a wicked gentleman. Sometimes even a gentleman might make a mistake and causes a crime or sometimes even the worst murderers or thieves might understand their mistakes, they change their bad habits eagerly and they contribute the peace in the society they live in. Colin McGinn's suggestion, in his work entitled *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction*, "to have an evil character is to feel pleasure in the face of other people's pain and to feel pain in the face of other people's pleasure" (McGinn in Calder; 2003) is criticized by Todd Calder in terms of its lack to define the characteristic of 'evil character'. According to Calder "Those who have these desire sets will also be inclined to carry out their despicable plans and take pleasure in the fruition of these plans. However, they may not do so. Their evil plans may be spoiled by their own cowardice or incompetence or by other inhibiting factors, and they may not derive pleasure from accomplishing their despicable deeds. Thus, it seems that all that is required for evilness of character is a consistent propensity for e-desire sets" (Calder; 2003). The idea not only the evil characters but also the ordinary people can also do or cause evil things that we have mentioned is also claimed by Arendt and social psychologists such as Leo Katz and Stanley Milgram who implies that "not only the ordinary people without evil characters can commit evil acts on occasion, but that ordinary people can cause evil on a regular basis." To Philip Mason, "In the 19th century, the idea of the gentleman became almost a religion" (Mason; 1982) However, many critics such as Philip Mason, Christine Berberich, Robin Gilmour – believe that in time the concept has lost its influence in the modern age. On the one hand, it might be suggested that it is almost impossible to see the rise of the gentleman again in the post-modern England as it seems sociologically impossible; on the other hand, the concept is still alive psychologically and pedagogically and we suggest that the gentlemanly behaviors fit everybody like decent clothe on human beings but as for the evil behaviors, they have be kept away and never worn because they are already 'worn out'.

REFERENCES

Berberich, C. (2007). *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia*. Cornwall: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Calder, T. (2003). *The Apparent Banality of Evil: The Relationship between Evil Acts and Evil Character*. *Journal of Social Philosophy*. (Vol.34 No.3, Fall 2003, pp. 364-376) Retrieved from Blackwell Publishing Inc.

Castronovo, D. (1987). *The English Gentleman: Images and Ideals in Literature and Society*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Collins, P. (1994). *Dickens and Crime*. New York: St. Martin's Press Inc.

Dickens, C. (2010). *The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield*. Retrieved from <http://www.archive.org/details/personalhistoryOOdick>

Davis, P. (2007). *Critical Companion to Charles Dickens: A Literary Reference to His life and Work*. New York: Facts On File, Inc.

Macdonald, T. (2005). 'Red headed animal': Race, Sexuality and Dickens's Uriah Heep. *Critical Survey*. Volume 17, Number 2

Mason, P. (1982). *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal*. London: AndreDeutsch.

Pollard, Alfred. (1907). *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. Vol I. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.

Schroeder, Natalie E. & Ronald A. (2002). *Betsey Trotwood and Jane Murdstone: Dickensian Doubles. David Copperfield*. The University of Mississippi. pp. 268-278 Retrieved from EBSCO database.

Stone, Harry. (1985). *What's in a Name: Fantasy and Calculation in Dickens*. *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* 14

Wilson, Ben. (2007). *The Making of Victorian Values: Decency and Dissent in Britain 1789 – 1837*. New York: The Penguin Press.