

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction to the study and consists of s subchapters. They are the research background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significances of the study, scope and limitation, assumption, operational definition.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The evolution of the origins of literary creations encompasses a variety of expressions. Literary expressions encompass diverse formats such as novels, plays, poems, short stories, and more, each capable of assuming different styles and themes. These genres are defined by their shared characteristics in terms of form, style, or subject matter. According to Abrams (1971) the fundamental categories in literature are Comedy, Romance, Tragedy, and Satire. Many literary works describe as inspiration from the realities of the era. The structure of a literary piece embodies two crucial aspects that the underlying concept and the literary composition itself, (Wahyuni, 2018).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the role of women in English literature became a significant topic of discussion. In fact, *women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were involved in the Antislavery Crusade in the 19th century. Stanton along with Mott marked history by starting a reform about women's rights at the Seneca Falls convention* (Wahyuni, 2018).

In literary works of that time, one can often find courageous female characters who grapple with reconciling societal expectations with religious norms, thereby living within the constraints of their society without conforming strictly to traditional or religiously oriented feminist narratives. Novels from this period, including Charles Dickens' "*Great Expectations*," "*Wuthering Heights*," and "*Pride and Prejudice*," exemplify this literary exploration.

The reason for selecting Charles Dickens as the subject of analysis in the fact that his renowned work, "*Great Expectations*," offers a wealth of content for the examination of diverse themes, particularly those pertaining to gender and feminism. This classic novel is set against the backdrop of Victorian society, known for its inflexible gender norms and societal demands placed upon both men and women. Delving into how these gender dynamics are portrayed in the novel provides valuable insights into how the Victorian era perceived and constrained the roles of women.

The research journal on Charles Dickens' "*Great Expectations*" explores feminist themes. Feminism is characterized as a movement that questions the cultural and historical constraints placed on women and strives for their economic, political, and social empowerment. This ideology gained recognition and prominence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading to the emergence of numerous female writers like George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell (Travers, 1967). It's worth noting that the concept of feminism as a literary approach goes back further, with early Victorian writers like Jane Austen producing work now considered as feminist literature. Their writings sought to uncover women's

agency and their efforts to transcend the limitations imposed by a male dominated society (Wollstonecraft,1975).

Victorian feminism refers to the endeavour by women to secure equal rights across the political, social, and economic spheres within the context of Victorian society. This segment offers an introduction to the gender dynamics prevalent in the Victorian era and explores Charles Dickens' contributions to the discourse on Victorian feminism (Jagdale and Karmveer, 2021).

The presence of literature during the Victorian era, particularly exemplified by Charles Dickens' novel "*Great Expectations*," garnered significant interest due to its portrayal of female characters as intelligent individuals deeply intertwined with the established traditions of a British society that upheld a patriarchal system. This system entails male dominance over women across various facets of society (Johannsdottir, 2009).

Victoria tries to break the patriarchy by becoming a more independent woman and proving that women can be equal to men. Women are not always tender and emotional, women can also be independent, tough and logical. Victoria's participation in male-dominated activities such as archery, chess, and horse riding were a bold move to break the patriarchal system when women were not allowed to participate in these activities because women were required not to participate in activities that were dangerous and oppressive. Those Victorian brains managed to break down the idea that through these activities' women, including those who are tender and emotional, become strong, logical and powerful people.

An examination of "*Great Expectations*" through a feminist lens shows that

Dickens depicts women not as passive rewards shaped by gentlemen for men but rather as cunning individuals who deceive and ensnare men. Pip's encounters with women in his life prompt a transformation in his understanding of women and their societal roles, ultimately causing him to re-evaluate the influence of social connections.

Nancy C.M. (1996) argues that just as women's lives provide ample opportunity to criticize the capitalist system's exploitation of labor, women's lives criticize patriarchy and patriarchal capitalist ideologies. I believe it provides ample opportunities.

This research has benefited from the contributions of numerous other feminist theorists. Authors can credit important contributions to feminist theory to (Collins, 2000; Sismondo, 1995; Smith, 1987). Sysmend attempts to apply perspective theory to science and technology, but the theory's foundation is Smith's sociological theory. Collins (2000) developed a black feminist position theory. However, these contributions not only support but also sometimes challenge the theory. Black feminist perspectives, for example, have made the issue of difference more visible.

Other developments, such as postmodernism and poststructuralism, have posed theoretical challenges that go beyond the issue of difference. This development calls into question women's privileged position. They wonder what the relevant questions are, how one can produce knowledge that is not true somewhere, and, secondly, how one can distinguish between a possible criticism (Demilesen, 2018; Hekman, 1996).

While there has been extensive scholarly analysis of "*Great Expectations*,"

the exploration of feminist themes within the novel using a hermeneutic approach is a relatively underdeveloped area of study. Existing research has primarily focused on other aspects of the novel, such as social class, identity, and morality. Thus, there is a gap in the scholarly literature concerning an in-depth feminist analysis of the female characters in *Great Expectations*.

*Great Expectations* refuses to be forced into historical literary discourses and critical hermeneutic singularities. The study of interpretation is known as hermeneutics (George, 2020). Hermeneutics is used in various fields where the themes require an interpretive approach. This is because the subject of the field usually concerns the meaning of human intentions, beliefs, and actions, or the meaning of human experience found in art and literature, historical evidence, and other artifacts. (George, 2020).

The existing body of research on "*Great Expectations*" tends to overlook the intricate ways in which female characters like Estella, Biddy, and Mrs. Joe navigate the constraints of Victorian society. This study aims to fill this gap by employing a hermeneutic approach to unearth the layers of meaning related to feminism in the novel. A hermeneutic approach allows for a deep exploration of the text, uncovering subtle nuances and providing a fresh perspective on the roles and experiences of women in the Victorian era, as depicted by Dickens.

The writer tries to explain this research using several hermeneutic theories. One of them is Grondin's theory. The study of interpretation is called hermeneutics (Grondin, 1994). Hermeneutics is used in various disciplines that require an interpretative approach, usually because the subject matter of the discipline is

related to the meanings of mind, belief and human actions, or the meanings of human experience preserved in art and literature, historical testimonies and other artifacts (Grondin, 1994).

After analysis from Gradin's hermeneutical theory, in this study it is more suitable to use Hand-Gadamer's theory because there are many explanations about the relationship between hermeneutics and feminism. The writer use of the basis for this perspective is suggested by Hans- Georg Gadamer in his work, *Truth and Method* because the theory can be related (Gadamer, 1998). Gadamer describes how understanding is possible, which may be called ontological hermeneutics. He is also concerned with how to reconcile commitments to truth with the condition of diversity and difference. Therefore, the writer will focus on hermeneutics suggested by Gadamer. The writer, will attempt a systematic reconstruction of Gadamer's hermeneutics for guiding a feminist theory.

The writer applies Gadamer's theory to argue that the role of interpretation must be to make the meaningless real and understandable. It should be noted when interpreting texts that no text is free of sociological and psychological prejudices (Gadamer, 1994).

Finally, this research will evaluate hermeneutics of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* in the interpretation on feminism. The writer will focus on the theoretical paradigms and critical assumptions from which these analyses have been articulated, and on the themes and concerns of Charles Dickens' production to which critics have paid most attention.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

1.2.1. How is feminism portrayed in main character Pip in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* using Hermeneutics approach?

## 1.3. Objective of the study

This study's aim is describing in the previously stated problem. Its primary objective is to employ a Hermeneutics approach to analyse the depiction of feminism in the main character, Pip, within Charles Dickens' "*Great Expectations*."

## 1.4. Significance of the study

The result of this study is expected to have the following significance:

### 1.1.1. Theoretical significance

The theoretical significance of this research is to obtain a description feminism portrayed in main character Pip in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* using Hermeneutics approach?

### 1.1.2. Practical Significance

Through the description of type of interpretation on feminism using hermeneutic in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. For educators and students, can be an additional reference in English literature studies especially was the hermeneutics thoughts of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* in the interpretation on feminism.

## 1.5. Scope and limitation of the study

Being aware of how enormous the topic of this study, will be and how limited the time given to finish it, the writer thinks it necessary to limit the scope of the study. This study is limited to analysing the novel *Great Expectations* written by Charles Dickens' (1860-1861), and in analysing the novel the writer limits the scope to its hermeneutics approach of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* in the interpretation on feminism.

The matters discussed in this study only cover the main points following. First is kind of feminism interpretation using Hermeneutic in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

## 1.6. Operation definition

### 1.6.1. Hermeneutics

1.6.1.1. According to Grodin (1994) hermeneutics is characterized as the science or art of interpretation, asserting itself as a fundamental aspect of comprehending human scientific investigations. Health practice researchers acknowledge the ever evolving and situational nature of comprehension. Our existence in the world is intrinsically linked to our historical and cultural context, guiding our interpretive direction.

1.6.1.2. Hermeneutics encompasses the cognitive and linguistic abilities that enable us to reflect upon and reinterpret our



experiences. Consequently, there is an ongoing and dynamic interplay (Gadamer, 1982), between tradition and the individual who is experiencing and interpreting. In the process of understanding, a person's present, past, and future are all inherently intertwined. The concept of effective historical consciousness (Gadamer, 1982) elucidates our incapacity to disregard our historical context, whether we are aware of it or not.

1.6.1.3. Hermeneutics involves historical consciousness, which involves acknowledging the preconceptions that shape our comprehension, and effective historical consciousness entails recognizing how history shapes our interpretation (Hekman, 1986). True understanding necessitates not only a conscious recognition of one's own historical perspective but also an evaluation or discourse about its influence.

## **1.6.2. Feminism**

1.6.2.1. Feminism is the conviction in achieving complete social, economic, and political parity for women. While feminism primarily emerged as a response to Western customs that constrained women's rights, feminist ideologies exhibit diverse global expressions and adaptations (Laura, 2023).

1.6.2.2. Feminist literature encompasses works of fiction, nonfiction, drama, or poetry that align with the objectives of feminism, which involve articulating, establishing, and safeguarding equal civil, political, economic, and social rights for women. Such literature frequently highlights the disparity in women's roles compared to men, particularly in terms of status, privilege, and authority, often depicting the negative repercussions for women, men, families, communities, and societies (Butler, 1995).

### **1.6.3. Interpretation**

1.6.3.1. Analysing a literary piece is a intricate and multi-dimensional undertaking that encompasses not only the theoretical context of the subject matter but also linguistic and cultural elements, phrase usage, word choice, and the stylistic attributes of the language being examined. Additionally, it involves considering the reader's worldview, life experiences, and perspective. The interpretation of a literary work is distinctively personal due to the interplay and communication between the author and the reader (Victorovna, 2017).

1.6.3.2. The act of interpreting literature involves the art of giving life to words through presentation, with the aim of

shedding light on a discourse concerning the human experience (Meg Howell, 2023).

### **1.7. Assumption**

According to (Chodorow, 1998) feminist theory is the extension of feminist ideas into theoretical, fictional, or philosophical discussions aimed at understanding the roots of gender inequality. Across various fields such as anthropology, sociology, communication, politics, media studies, psychoanalysis, home economics, literature, education, and culture, it investigates the societal positions and functions of women (Limun., M. F., Winardi, Y., & Fadillah, E., 2021).

The investigation of gender inequality is the primary emphasis of feminism theory, which also explores the themes of discrimination, objectification, particularly sexual objectification, oppression, patriarchy, and stereotypes.

In this thesis, the writer can describe as feminism portrayed in main character Pip in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* by employing hermeneutics approach. According to Negru (2007) claims that a philosophical study in the middle of the sciences is restoring overly complex conceptual foundations to their straightforward but fundamental, objective, and reflective foundations on self-improvement.

