

## THE PORTRAYAL OF ENGLISH GENTLEMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AS SEEN IN DICKENS' *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* NOVEL

**Fatimah Muhajir**

English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences  
Mulawarman University, East Kalimantan, Indonesia  
E-mail: [fatimah\\_muhajir@yahoo.com](mailto:fatimah_muhajir@yahoo.com)

### ABSTRACT

This study deals with the portrayal of English gentleman in the 19th century as seen in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. The purpose of this study is to describe a portrait of the English gentlemen that are represented by the characters such as Pip, Herbert Pocket, Dumble, Matthew Pocket, Mr. Jaggers and Compeyson as illustrated by Dickens. This research uses descriptive qualitative method and sociology of literature theory by Diana Lawrenson and Alan Swingewood in analyzing the relationship between the portrayal of English gentleman and its social conditions in at the time. The results of this study shows that there are several categories of gentleman title that represented by the characters in the story, namely: Drummle is gentleman by birth (aristocrats), Pip is gentleman by wealth, Gentleman by education or the gentleman students include Pip, Herbert Pocket, and Dummle. The gentleman by profession represented by Mr. Matthew and Mr. Jaggers. While moral code ethics of the gentleman can determine a man if he the true gentleman or fake / wicked gentleman. In fact the true gentleman in this story is Mr. Matthew while the fake gentleman is Compeyson.

**Keywords:** The Portrayal, English Gentleman, *Great Expectations*.

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini berkaitan dengan penggambaran Gentleman Inggris di abad ke-19 seperti yang terlihat dalam Great Expectations Karya Charles Dickens. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meneliti potret gentleman Inggris yang direpresentasikan oleh tokoh-tokoh dalam cerita seperti, Pip, Herbert Pocket, Dumble, Matthew Pocket, Mr. Jaggers dan Compeyson seperti yang diilustrasikan oleh Dickens. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan teori sosiologi sastra oleh Diana Lawrenson dan Alan Swingewood, dalam menganalisis hubungan antara penggambaran gentleman Inggris dan kondisi sosialnya pada saat itu. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa kategori gelar gentleman yang diwakili oleh tokoh-tokoh dalam cerita, yaitu: Drummle adalah gentleman berdasarkan kelahiran (bangsawan), Pip adalah gentleman karena kekayaan, gentleman karena pendidikan termasuk, Pip, Herbert Pocket dan Dummle. gentleman karena profesi direpresentasikan oleh Mr. Matthew dan Mr. Jaggers. Sementara itu kode etik moral gentleman sebagai tolak ukur untuk menentukan seorang pria apakah dia gentleman sejati atau palsu/jahat. Faktanya gentleman sejati dalam cerita ini adalah Mr. Matthew sementara gentleman palsu adalah Compeyson.*

**Kata kunci:** Penggambaran, Gentleman Inggris, *Great Expectations*

## A. INTRODUCTION

One of the most historical periods in English literature was the industrial revolution period. This period became the most influential era that inspire many literary authors in the 19th century. It was the period when Britain held the massive changes because of the industrialization and at the some time England was under the rule of Queen Victoria around (1837-1901). McDonnell *et al.* illustrated this era as one of the most historical event of industrial revolution in England as a period of massive change in the economical, social and technological aspects in the England (1982).

Eventhough England experienced a massive changes in many aspects of social life, however this period brought the ironical life and called the "age of controversy" because industrialization created two new social classes with different economy and social conditions, they were the new rich, living in luxury life in the city in contrast with the working class who lived in poverty in the slum areas. The life of upper class became the attraction view of some people from the lower class were tempted to come to the city to enjoy the life there. As James W. Tuttleto explains that "The young person from the small town or farm who comes to the city, usually seeking escape (from oppression of some sort) into an envisioned freedom and a richer, more rewarding, more fulfilling life".

According to Hughes (1998) industrialization compelled urbanization of the people from the countryside to the city for earning money and wanted to change their life from the hardship. This became the social phenomena at the time. In addition Gilmour (1981) clarified that the because of increase in wealth at the time, many people could call themselves wealthy, and they began to see new possibilities. It was reasonable that people craved for social esteem and then the gentleman position in the social life became one of the attractions for many people. Becoming a gentleman was more prestigious. Access to the gentleman rank had been opened to be entered by the lower class in the nineteenth century. Although in practice it was not quite easy. But, due to the increasing number of wealthy people, brough possibility for a man made himself to be a gentleman to enter the higher class if he had enough money.

Analogously with the illustration, Adams (2009), also illustrated that the new economy offered the potential for amassing wealth, these phenomena had never happened before, when the mobility from "rags to riches" could be seem in society.

As illustrated by Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* a young man came from the working class and had a desire to taste the life of the British elite at that time that attached to the luxury. *Great Expectations* is one example of a story from the experience of Dickens himself. He represented himself through the main character "Pip". In the preface part of the novel, Weintraub (2009) says that Dickens portrayed an orphan young boy (Pip) in Victorian England as a representation of his own life through the content of *Great Expectations*. Since Pip as the main character in *Great Expectations* and few elements in the plot were closely similar to his autobiographical life. Dickens concerned with faithfulness and disloyalty that money and gentility (gentleman) are everything else, but eventually, he overcame with guilt and lies deceit. (Dickens iv)

Based on the illustration, this research discussed the portrayal of English gentleman in the in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The researcher correlated Dickens' *Great Expectations* with its social context by using the sociology of literature approach and these are the ways of the researcher to develop this research.

## B. THEORY

### 1. Sociology of Literature Theory

Principally, sociology of literature means that the study of literary work through the unification between literature and sociology or interdisciplinary study. Initially, sociology of literature had already been presented by a Greek philosopher Plato, in the document on the title "*Ion and Republic*", discussed the relationship between the literary works and society. He believes that everything in this world is actually just an imitation of the highest fact in the world of thought. Therefore logically, the early development of literature could not be separated from social activities and influenced by elements of culture and social circumstances (Damono, 1984: 14).

It is essentially studying about man in society, the study of social institutions and social process. It seeks to answer the question of phenomena in social life. In understanding this theory, Laurensen and Swingewood put the theory into three classifications as a basic principle in sociological approach.

First, **Literature as a Mirror of Age**. This part can be meant that literary work is a reflection of the social life. It is related on the historical background when the literary work was created by an author. Laurensen and Swingewood (1972: 13) state that "sociology of literature considers to the documentary aspects of literature on the grounds that literature as "a mirror of the age" In the concept of literature as a mirror of age in the sociological study, this view assumes that literature is a direct reflection of the various aspects such as the social structure, family relationships, and class conflicts and so on. The second part, is **social Background of the Author** this approach deals with the social background of the author and how the action and response of an author him/herself to the system that has been built in society where he/she lives and when he/she creates his/her works. Laurensen and Swingewood (1972: 17). Third **sociology of the Readers** the historical background of society in the particular time related to the literary work itself as the result of the author's view. This approach deals with the condition of the community or reader. Laurensen and Swingewood (1972: 21) say that sociology of the readers as the third perspective demands the skills level of the particular society in receiving the literary work in the particular historical moment

### 2. The English Gentleman

The term of gentleman is still debated by the experts, due to the concept of a gentleman itself which always changes in over time. Therefore some experts consider that the concept of gentleman is difficult to be defined. Including the moral component made Victorians uncertain to determine a man to be a gentleman, and it means that the nature of gentleman itself is constantly debated and redefined during the time. However, for more description about the gentleman in the 19th century, there are four categories as the main points that can help us to understand this concept,

#### a. Nobleman class

Barberich (2007: 9) mentioned the term of gentleman that was formed of the French *gentilhomme*; or rather of *gentil*, "fine, and fashionable." In Spanish called *hidalgo*, means "the son of somebody or a person of noble". However if we go farther back, we shall find the word gentleman was originally derived from the Latin *gentiles homo*; which was used among the Romans for a race of noble persons. Based on this view, historically the Romans were the first who used the gentleman term in their daily

life as a special designation for nobleman class. Furthermore Barberich (2007: 5) said that in the 16th century, a gentleman title 'in its original and strict' was a term or only as a symbol for denoting a man who was born in the noble lineage or from good family. However the emphasis of the gentleman meaning began to shift in the eighteenth century. Some experts agree that a gentleman is not longer to a man who born of right lineage, or nobleman. As Gilmour (1981: 3) stated that originally, the gentleman was the man of noble birth with his pure gens however in the 19th century, a birth alone did not make a complete gentleman.

**b. Wealth**

It could be mean that the use of the title also refers to a man who has the higher economical level such as wealthy landowner, the mercantile elite in industrial revolution era. Pool (1993: 50) said that the the massive changes in English society in the early nineteenth century altered this some form of static hierarchy, industrialization had created the new sources of wealth to be obtained and complete with its land. Moreover Pool (1993: 85) also clarified that in the last nineteenth century, people could save and invest their money into the land, which was socially prestigious, it was the major source of income for most of the landed gentry and nobility at the time. Then, the new industrial and mercantile elites, in the face of opposition from the aristocracy, certainly attempted to have themselves designated as gentlemen as a natural consequence of their growing wealth. Hughes, (1998: 58) says that "People came to urban area for earning money in the city and wanted to change their life from hardship".

**c. Profession and Education**

Hesse (2004) argues that the idea of the Victorian gentleman is actually already come from the moral sense. For example a man who holds the important positions in his social life such as: clergymen, property owner, doctor, professor, etc. are basically have followed the gentlemanly code. Meanwhile Pool (1993: 51) mentioned that, some professions become more influential and more respected for the gentleman title such as: the Member of Parliament, army officer, doctor, clergyman etc. The doctors and clergyman in England church for example, if they more conscious about their duties and responsibilities, then they gave the real contributions into society, so they would become a gentleman. In addition education and upbringing were very important to gentleman status too. For example a clergyman deserved the gentleman designation by his profession and education status. Additionally, Barberich (2007: 20) explained that businessmen aspired to setting up new homes in the country and sending their sons to Eton and Oxbridge, in order to assure them of the gentlemanly upbringing of their family with an established upper class one, with its consequent social elevation. Pool also believed that to enter the gentleman class, it was not only for a man who has the wealth, but in the 19th century education level became an important one. Some stories of the nineteenth century were the fact that the concept of the gentleman had been changes. It eliminated the humble origins; people could climb a gentleman status without having the large estates. Basically in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a national school system at the beginning of the era but it was rather that no one cared. The poor were apprenticed at an early age in industrial area while the rich had a governess for their children and a clergyman tutor for teaching till their children were sent away to Eton, or Oxford school (Pool, 1993: 125).

#### d. Moral code of gentleman

Moral component became the main category for a man to be called as a true gentleman. Cody (2011) said in his article entitled *The Gentleman* that the concept of gentleman in the 19th century was a complex one to be determined, but it emphasized that a gentleman title was not merely a social or class designation because there was also a moral component inherent into the gentleman concept as a chivalric moral code derived from the feudal past. According to Barberich (2007: 30) the Victorian gentleman was consciously had to submit to and fashion himself according to a set of rules, etiquettes, and moral values, without these, society would not be able to consider him as a true gentleman. Analogously with this statement, Gilmour (1981: 4) also stated that the gentleman was a moral as well as a social category. Embodied in the idea of a gentleman were also gentleness, sympathy, a fine disposition and a fine imagination. A true gentleman was a mirror of desirable moral and social values, and a cultural goal.

Therefore to rely on the Barberich's view about the English gentleman especially in the 19th century, emphasized that the Reform Bill of 1832 has done its work; the "middle classes" have come into their own; and the word "gentleman" has come in **common use to signify not a distinction of blood but a distinction of position, education and manners**. It is no longer good birth, or the right to bear arms. In its best use, "gentleman" involves a certain superior standard of conduct, due to "that self-respect and intellectual refinement which manifest themselves in unrestrained yet delicate manners" (Barberich, 2007: 36). Thus, principally a gentleman is a man of a well breed, but then the experts agreed that the image of English gentleman in the 19th century was defined by a number of categories, a gentleman was no longer based on a man of nobleman, but also it was referred to the economical level, education or intellectual refinement, particular profession or certain role in society which becomes very influential for the gentleman designation, and the moral code become a qualification to be a true gentleman.

### C. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of the research was a the descriptive qualitative method because it was most suitable to analyze the data from the story in the form of words, phrases, and sentences that related to the topic. The primary data was taken from the novel Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition printed by Penguin Group in 2009. The secondary data was books, journals, articles, and thesis, both printed and electronics that possibly relevant to the topic the research. Through the library research, the researcher gains the data from the sources by reading the textbooks, articles, journals, etc. which related to the research.

The researcher did close reading of the novel, determined the focus of the research and highlighted some important quotations from the novel to support the analysis. The steps of data analysis were chronologically arranged in, (1). The researcher read the novel *Great Expectations* carefully, and marked some important notes or some the important quotations. (2). The researcher identified the incidents or events which considered as acts of containing the idea of the gentleman in the novel and the perceptions of the main character in pursuit the gentleman status. 3). The researcher cited some related quotations

of the novel as the materials analysis. 4). The researcher collected some related literatures to support the object that analyzed. 5). The researcher applied sociological approach in analyzing the data. 6). The last, the researcher drawn conclusion based on the result of the research.

#### **D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In the nineteenth century, the representation of gentleman came to the wider use, it did not only refer to a man of high birth class, or aristocrate class. However it could be reached by any man who fulfills the criteria of gentleman. Those categories could be seen from some classifications, such as gentleman by birth, gentleman by wealth, gentleman by profession and education, and the moral code became the important one to determine to whom the man could be called as the true gentleman and to whom were not. The following were the explanations

##### **1. Gentleman by birth**

It was represented by Drummle, a young man who had the “root” of nobility. He came from the rich a member of minor aristocrat family in Somernetsire. He was nursed to be a gentleman. Drummle who had the first name was Bentley that he most likely would became a baron one day. As Dickens “*That Drummle, whose Christian name was Bentley, was actually the next heir but one to a baronetcy*” (Dickens, 2009: 190), Drummle was a gentleman by birth, for he indeed was born to be a gentleman because he would inherit an aristocrat title.

##### **2. A gentleman by wealth.**

The proof that the title of gentleman also referred to any man who had the increase in wealth as the impact of industrialization, for example Pip as the main character in the story could be called as a gentleman by money. Pip basically didn't have the “root” of nobility. Born from the poor working class family, he was nurtured by his poor old sister with a “heavy hand”, and with a blacksmith brother in law Mr. Joe. He spent his childhood as a poor apprentice blacksmith. However, one day he got a luck, the fortune in his side and finally it surely to alter his social class from the poor blacksmith to be a rich gentleman.

*“That person is the person from whom you derive your expectations, and the secret is solely held by that person and by me. Again, not a very difficult condition with which to encumber such a rise in fortune (Dickens, 2009: 139)*

In the illustration, Dickens firstly illustrated that the life of Pip begun to change when Mr. Jaggers, a lawyer who came from the city, brought a mandate from a secret benefactor with a number of money in order to make gentleman on Pip. Being a lawyer as well as a guardian for Pip, Mr. Jagger emphasized that it's possible for a poor young man like Pip to be brought up into the classy gentleman by fortune. Moreover Mr. Joe started to call Pip “gentleman” as in the quotation, ‘*Pip's a gentleman of fortun' then, said Joe*’ (Dickens, 2009: 144). In another case, it also could be seen in the narration when Magwich, a secret benefactor came to see “his young gentleman” by saying,

"I've come to the old country to see my gentleman spend his money like a gentleman." (Dickens, 2009: 331).

"Yes, Pip, dear boy, I've made a gentleman on you! It's me wot has done it! I swore that time, sure as ever I earned a guinea, that guinea should go to you....you should get rich (Dickens, 2009: 320).

Based on the quotation, Magwitch swore to make money to create a "Gentleman" for Pip by his "own hands" or "self-made gentleman", with money which earned by his toil as a sheep farmer in Australia used for raising Pip's social status. Magwitch had made a sacrifice for making fortune to elevate Pip's social status from the "rags to the rich". Gentleman that represented by the character was a man should be a rich, living in the better life. This case shown that in the 19th century, a gentleman class was not only addressed for the man who had the higher birth, but also it could be reached by any man wherever he came from, he can be a gentleman as long as he has much money.

### 3. Gentleman by Profession and Education

The third part of the English gentleman in this study is gentleman by profession and education. Mr. Matthew Pocket was described as an educated man and had a profession as a tutor for the gentleman student in London such as, Pip, Bentley Dumble, Startop and his own son Herbert Pocket. Education and profession certainly made him a gentleman. This evidence could be seen When Mr. Jaggers came to see Pip and Mr. Joe at village, he explained that Pip will be known and taught by a gentleman tutor named Mr. Matthew Pocket. As Mr. Jaggers Said *'There is a certain tutor, of whom I have some knowledge, who I think might suit the purpose,' said Mr. Jaggers. 'The gentleman I speak of is one Mr. Matthew Pocket.'* (Dickens, 2009: 140). This quotation, the reader can see how Mr. Jaggers illustrated and called Mr. Matthew Pocket as a "gentleman", because he was a tutor.

In another example of the portrayed of a gentleman could be seen in the next narration, when Pip said, *'By degrees I learnt, and chiefly from Herbert, that Mr. Pocket had been educated at Harrow and at Cambridge, where he had distinguished himself,* (Dickens, 2009: 189).

When Pip came to Mr. Matthew Pocket's family for the first time, he learnt the information from his friend, Mr. Herbert that Mr. Matthew had ever been sent and taken the education appropriate as a gentleman from two colleges at once, at Harrow and at Cambridge. In this case Mr. Matthew Pockets was an educated man, a gentleman by education since he had got such good education and some well manners education in Harrow and Cambridge. It was the reflection of 19th century, when some people sent their young boys to the certain colleges to get education properly for gentleman.

The next example of gentleman by education can be seen from the illustration of the main character, Pip. After he received money, his education was rapidly more improved. Mr. Jaggers informs that Pip had come to the "handsome property" and he would be brought up and educated like a gentleman. As Mr. Jaggers said:

*You must know that, ... There is already lodged in my hands a sum of money amply sufficient for your suitable education and maintenance. .. It is considered that you must be better educated, in accordance with your altered position, and that you will be alive to the importance and necessity of at once entering on that advantage."* (Dickens, 2009: 140).

The quotation above, showed reader that Pip would become a gentleman as his “expectation”, he would be educated like a gentleman. Mr. Jaggers realizes that, Pip, a less educated boy, needed to get a worthy education for coming to his new status. Some educations the nineteenth century were designed special for gentleman.

The next character that reflected the gentleman by profession is, Mr. Jaggers. Mr. Jaggers was described by Pip as “the strange gentleman”, when he came to a local bar named “Tree Jolly Bargemen” at marshes country. Pip surprised with him because he appeared like a gentleman who knows everything, even the confidential things of others.

The strange gentleman, with an air of authority not to be disputed, and with a manner expressive of knowing something secret about every one of us that would effectually do for each individual if he chose to disclose it, left the back of the settle, and came into the space between the two settles, in front of the fire, where he remained standing: his left hand in his pocket, and he biting the forefinger of his right. (Dickens, 2009: 137)

The “strange gentleman” basically showed his characteristics of his role and profession. He looks like a man who has the authority and the power of his role, even he looks like a very assertive and an intelligent person, knowing many things and very skilled in debate. After revealing his visit, in fact “the strange gentleman” named Mr. Jaggers was a lawyer. He had great power and an important role as prominent attorney in London society. He represented the interests of diverse clients, both criminal and civil. Thus it could be said that his profession and social role as a great lawyer made him a gentleman who respected and feared by people in London.

#### **4. Moral code of gentleman.**

In the nineteenth century, some experts claimed that the moral code was the most important aspect of being the true gentleman. Moral code as the way to identify the “wicked gentleman” and the “true gentleman”. The wicked gentleman was an immoral figure while the true gentleman was the man who follow the moral code of a gentleman. The wicked gentleman was the opposite of the true gentleman. The term *Wicked gentleman* represents the “deformed” aspect or the ‘disguised’ portrait of the gentleman. This type of gentleman could 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’ (Tercy, 2013: 46).

The “wicked gentleman” represented by Compeyson and Bentley Drummle. Compeyson was called a gentleman, with good looking like gentleman, but he was a criminal. He was described as a professional swindler throughout the story. After meeting Magwitch, a poor lower class man who had a criminal background, Compeyson decided that the poor man (Magwitch) was agreeable to be taken as a partner in his criminal affair. As Magwitch illustrated:

*I got acquainted wi' a man ... His right name was Compeyson; and that's the man. ... "He set up fur a gentleman, ... when I went in, and the landlord (which had a knowledge of me, and was a sporting one) called him out, and said, 'I think this is a man that might suit you' - meaning I was.*



*"I went to Compeyson next night, same place, and Compeyson took me on to be his man and pardner. And what was Compeyson's business in which we was to go pardners? Compeyson's business was the swindling, handwriting forging, stolen bank-note passing, and such-like. (Dickens, 2009: 346-347).*

Compeyson was a swindler who smarter than Magwitch. He had done many things for his advantages. He was really a crafty gentleman to do crime. Later both Magwitch and Compeyson became hostile one each other, after they were really accused for a serious crime, of being charged with putting stolen notes in circulation.

*At last, me and Compeyson was both committed for felony - on a charge of putting stolen notes in circulation - and there was other charges behind. Compeyson says to me, 'Separate defences, no communication,' and that was all. And I was so miserable poor, that I sold all the clothes I had, except what hung on my back, afore I could get Jagers. (Dickens, 2009: 349).*

Compeyson did not only deceive others but also his own accomplice, Magwitch. When they were caught and sent to the court, Compeyson arranged to have a separate defense without communication during their trials. Because Compeyson would appear like a gentleman in the court room, while Magwitch was so miserable poor and had to sell all his clothes for paying a lawyer. Compeyson manipulated and blamed all the crimes on Magwitch. Therefore he got a lighter sentence because the lawyer determined that Compeyson was younger gentleman and good upbringing. While Magwitch was judged as a poor man who always leaning to come to the worse and crime. Thus Compeyson was the wicked man who disguised behind of the handsome appearance of a gentleman.

In contrast with the portrait of the true gentleman in the story, that could be seen the meaning behind the notion of Mr. Matthew Pockets. It was a principle of him that:

*No man who was not a true gentleman at heart, ever was, since the world began, a true gentleman in manner. He says, no varnish can hide the grain of the wood; and that the more varnish you put on, the more the grain will express itself." (Dickens, 2009: 179)*

The researcher assumed that this view was the main point of the idea of the true gentleman in the novel. We could say that a true nature of someone was always visible although it was always polished or "varnish" more and more. The true gentleman itself is a man who good in manner and behavior without basting himself by hiding meanness. A true gentleman basically was man who behaved and acted morally based on the moral code in society. The principle of Matthew Pocket above reflected himself as a wise man. The researcher could say that Mathew pocket himself was a true gentleman. Due to his profession as a tutor for gentleman education, indubitably he must have acted and followed the manners and moral code of a gentleman. He certainly realized and understood about his own principle and the real portrait of a true the gentleman itself, because a true gentleman was a mirror of desirable moral.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Having analyzed about the reflection of gentleman, finally the researcher could draw the conclusion that, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens was the representation of the social phenomena in England social life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the gentleman status at the time. This novel utterly rejected that the image of English gentleman was merely defined by high birth or class system. Thus Dickens participated to rebuild the concept of gentleman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by showing the performance of an innocent character Pip, who pursued material and status as gentleman based on his own view, causing his moral downfall yet it was improved in the end. Therefore this novel promoted that moral code was the essential thing to determine who worthy to be called a true gentleman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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**Fatimah Muhajir**

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