



RESEARCH PAPER

A Feministic Analysis of *Goodbye Mr. Chips* by James Hilton

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ABSTRACT

The present research focuses on the feministic analysis of “Goodbye Mr. Chips” by James Hilton. “Goodbye, Mr. Chips” is a novella that is written in the background of World War-I and raises a feministic point of curiosity. Novel as ever been a source of investigation and scrutiny. The research focuses on analyzing the views of Katherine Bridges and searching out the feminism in Katherine Bridges. Katherine Bridges, in the novel, exposes herself to be a radical feminist. Wollstonecraft (1792) theory of feminism applies to the novel and discusses it regarding feminism. This movement is concerned with women's rights in society. The woman at that time was considered inferior to man. Feminism is the idea that all genders have equal rights in society. Through this novel writer wants to show the basic and major rights of women that are not given to them, especially the middle and lower class. The selected paragraphs from the novel have been taken as the focus for data discussion in the light of theory. The research proves that the women, even in the pre-world war I, were much advance in thinking and action. Their thoughts were positive and constructive. The research unveils many new vistas for further research.

Keywords: Feminism, Katherine Bridges, radical, women, World War I

Introduction

Different cultures and historical eras produced different forms and styles of narrative fiction. The development of the novel forms its ancient roots in the Greek and Roman prose narratives such as the works of Petronius, Apuleius, and Heliodors. These stories often combined elements of romance, adventure, satire, and fantasy and influenced later writers such as Boccaccio, Cervantes, and Shakespeare. Another way is to focus on the emergence of the novel in Europe during the 18th century when writers Such as Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne experimented with new forms of realism, characterization, and humor. These novels reflected the Social and Political changes of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution and appealed to a growing middle-class audience.

Novel in the Elizabethan Era

The Elizabethan Era was named after Queen Elizabeth I of England, which lasted from 1558 to 1603. The novel in the Elizabethan era was not a well-established popular genre, as most readers preferred poetry, drama, and prose romances. However, some writers did experiment with prose fiction, often influenced by classical or continental sources.

Some of the notable examples are:

- I. Euphues by John Lyly (1578-1590)
- II. The Unfortunate Traveler by Thomas Nashe (1594)

Novel in the Modern Era

The versatility and evolution in the novels in the 18th and 19th centuries are included in this era. Writers from different places and backgrounds explored new themes, genres, and techniques. Some of the important examples are the Gothic novels of Walpole, Radcliffe, and Shelley, the historical novels of Scott, Hugo, and Tolstoy, the realist novels of Balzac, Flaubert, and Dickens, the psychological novels of Dostoyevsky, James, and Woolf, and the modernist novels of Joyce.

Proust and Kafka and the postmodern novels of Borges, Nabokov, and Calvino. The novel is a rich and diverse literary form that continues to evolve and directly challenge readers.

Novel and Novelette

A novelette is a small work of fiction, typically spanning between 7,500 and 17,500 words. It allows writers to tell stories under a strict word count restriction. Novelettes often focus on a single character or situation and may not have the same level of complexity as novels. Novels are known for their complex plots, detailed character development, and immersive worlds. They can be divided into chapters or sections and often take months or years to write. A novel is longer than a novelette and is meant to be read over several days.

Goodbye, Mr. Chips as a Novella

“Goodbye, Mr. Chips” is a classic novella written by James Hilton(1934). It was first published in 1934. The novella tells the heartwarming story of Mr. Chips, a dedicated and beloved schoolteacher at the fictional Brookfield School in England. Through the years, Mr. Chips witnesses changes in education, society, and his own life. The novella beautifully captures the themes of love, loss, and the impact of a teacher's legacy on generations of students. It remains a timeless exploration of the human spirit and the lasting value of educators.

Katherine Bridges as a Feminist in “Mr. Chips”

Katherine Bridges, a character from the 1934 novella “Good Bye, Mr. Chips” by English novelist and screenwriter James Hilton presents an intriguing exploration of feminism. Hilton's depiction of Katherine initially portrays her as a strong and witty character. She possesses intelligence surpassing many of her male counterparts. However, Katherine's journey takes a turn. She eventually becomes less willing than her sister Bianca to challenge the men in her life. Her evolution prompts reflection on the delicate balance between personal agency and societal expectations.

Background of Feminism

Feminism is about all genders having equal rights and opportunities. It is the advocacy of women's rights based on the equality of the sexes. The origins of feminist

theory are rooted in the 18th century with development in the 1960s and 1980s equality movements.

First Wave of Feminism

The first wave of feminism started in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. In this wave, women started to cut down traditional gender norms and seek legal equality. In this time, women strive hard for women's right to vote.

Second Wave of Feminism

The second wave raised in the 1960s investigated deeper into cultural and societal structures. Women claimed equal opportunities in the workplace and challenged prevailing norms that limited their roles. The issues like reproductive rights, domestic violence, and workplace discrimination were more focal points at that time.

Third Wave of Feminism

In the late 20th century, the third wave of feminism emerged in the 1990s, symbolized by a more inclusive approach. It sought to address the intersections of gender with race, class, and sexual orientation. In this wave, feminism aimed to showcase individuality and freedom.

Fourth Wave of Feminism

Although the fourth wave of feminism is difficult to define, the emergence of the internet has certainly led to a new brand of social media-fueled activism. The 'Me Too' movement, which took off in 2017, brought attention to the sexual misconduct of influential film producer Harvey Weinstein, in addition to holding powerful men accountable.

Literature Review

De Beauvoir,(1949) a French existentialist, philosopher and writer, in her seminal work "The Second Sex" she famously stated: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." This underscores the idea that gender roles and identities are socially constructed rather than biologically determined. This statement basically comes in reference to second wave of feminism. In her statement, writer, De Beauvoir states that although there are biological differences between the sexes, women only become woman because of the circumstances of their society, leading her to the conclusion that the facts of biology take on the values of social norms. Stephen Glynn (2016) highlights the class difference even in education through this novel as there are two schools; Brookfield and Grammar School. It also depicts of feminine disorder in post-World War 1. McCulloch (2013), Carol, Collins and Singh, (2013) also say the same thing about feminism in their works.

This paper gives the idea that there is no discrimination based on gender. In this paper, he says how well-known fictional narratives are used on male teachers. The identity construction of male teachers discusses how society retained their old traditions and renewal of established traditions.

Different works and research have been done on Mr. Chips' novella. Hilton in terms of love, life, and cooperation but no one worked on the anti-age ideas of Mr. Chips.

Many researchers found out about their love story. A lot of work is also done on their personal life. Yet a little laxness of work on their ideas which I try to complete - this gap. Also, I am going to work on feminism used in this novella by Hilton. So, my paper is unique. Then, other works in terms of feminism and anti-age ideas are used in the novella.

Material and Methods

Nature of Research

The nature of the research is qualitative. It deals with the narrative style of writing, not with the type of calculative. In this type, I can give answers to questions that relate to "How". All the calculations are prohibited. In this paper, all the answers will be different.

On the other hand, in quantitative research data will be accurate and the same.

Data Selection and Delimitations

The data chosen for this research is from the "Good Bye, Mr. Chips" by James Hilton (1934). It is impossible to research all the novella and all its characters. Out of our research is Katharine Bridges. The main aim of choosing this character of Katharine Bridges is to relate to a feministic point of view.

Theoretical Framework

Wollstonecraft (1792) in her work "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" argues that women ought to have an intimate role in society, claiming that women play an essential role in educating their children. They are the champions of their husband's rather than mere wives. Wollstonecraft (1792) maintains that females deserve some fundamental rights as men. She responds to those educational and political theorists of the eighteenth century who did not believe women should receive a rational education.

"Make women rational creatures and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives and mothers." In the above quotation, Wollstonecraft (1792) says that all human beings have equal educational opportunities. They will be free from all the traditional restrictions. An educated woman should be a better mother and wife. These educated women will be more effective in improving a nation at the international level.

In "Good Bye, Mr. Chips," Katherine Bridges has a kind of personality. She believed that women should be admitted to universities and her main motive was women's right to cast a vote. She says that all human beings are equal, and there will be no discrimination based on gender or sex. Katherine Bridges is a broad-minded girl who thinks that there will be equal opportunities for education and work for men and women. Women's work should go out for work.

She says that men should not be treated as superior to women. Justice would be the same for both genders.

Results and Discussion

There was a fellow named Bernard Shaw who had the strongest and most reprehensible opinions. There were Thirstiest too with his disturbing plays, and there was the new craze for

bicycling which was being taken up by women, especially with men's chips and not held with all this modern newness and freedom. (8)

In this paragraph, he includes the record of how women of that time were trying to take their rights. They were inspired by Bernard Shaw and Ibsen both were revolutionary and Katherine Bridges also wanted a revolutionary movement.

It eliminated the prejudice women held against women since all women were equal to men. Katherine Bridges wanted a broader-minded goal which is that all human beings are equal. There will be no discrimination or limitations in the case of gender. That passage is complete justice with the feminist movement wave two.

According to this, women's goal was equal opportunities in the workplace, education, and social places. Katherine Bridges has the same kind of mindset she wants women to run bicycles, and some of what she considered were equal. According to her mind men are not superior than women.

But Chip's point of view is different about women. His ideology expresses that men are superior to women. In this text, Katherine Bridges represents a suitable character of feministic theory.

She read and admired Ibsen; she believed that women ought to be admitted to the universities; she even thought they ought to have a vote. In politics, she was a radical, with leanings toward the views of people like Bernard Shaw and William Morris.(9)

The whole paragraph is a reflection of the feministic movement wave I. Katherine Bridges is the complete reflection of the feminist movement. She raised these two points which are some needs in wave first feminist movement. Katherine claimed that women's ideas extend to universities.

Just like a man's feminism theory, the second point is exactly matched with Katherine Bridges' ideas. She is a revolutionary woman. Katherine Bridges also understood politics or the modern point of view. Katherine says that women are also equally treated as men. Like a man, she else has a right to cast a vote.

We are not lesser than anyone there. All women have the right to be educated and cast a vote. No one has the restrictions to stop women in these departments. According to Katherine, there will be equality. Katherine also engages in politics.

The reference to Bernard Shaw and William Morris indicates that the character's radical political views were influenced by these prominent figures. Bernard Shaw was an Irish playwright and socialist who advocated for progressive social reforms, while William Morris was an English writer, artist, and socialist activist who championed workers' rights and the Arts and Crafts movement.

Both Bernard Shaw and William Morris were known for their socialist and feminist ideologies. Shaw advocated for women's rights and challenged traditional gender roles, while Morris believed in the empowerment of workers and the abolition of class distinctions. By associating

the character with these figures, the text suggests that her radicalism likely encompassed feminist and socialist principles.

The novel "Goodbye Mr. Chips" was published in 1934, a time when social and political movements were gaining momentum in various parts of the world. The character's radicalism and alignment with figures like Shaw and Morris reflect the broader societal shifts and debates around issues such as gender equality, workers' rights, and social reform.

This brief description of the character's political leanings provides insight into their personality, values, and motivations. It suggests that the character may challenge traditional societal norms and advocate for progressive change, potentially setting the stage for conflicts or plot developments related to their radical beliefs.

Discussion

Katherine actively supports Mr. Chips in his career as a teacher. Despite societal expectations of women's roles being primarily domestic, Katherine involves herself in school affairs and shows genuine interest in Chips' work. Katherine champions the idea of equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of gender. By challenging the traditional gender roles of her time, Katherine embodies feminist principles. She asserts that women can have their interests and pursuits beyond domestic duties. Katherine engages in intellectual discussions with Mr. Chips, treating him as an intellectual equal.

This portrayal highlights Katherine Bridges' belief in gender equality in terms of intellect. As a character, Katherine can be seen as representing feminism through various aspects of her portrayal. She might embody traits such as independence and a strong sense of agency. Additionally, her actions and decisions within the story may challenge traditional gender roles or societal expectations, illustrating feminist ideals of empowerment and equality. Depicted as a self-reliant individual, Katherine chose her path regardless of societal norms. She believes in her abilities and steps forward without relying on others for validation.

Katherine's character is portrayed as intelligent, stable, and strong-willed, Katherine Bridges challenges the stereotype of women as intellectually inferior. Throughout the story, Katherine rejects traditional gender roles and expectations. Depending on the story's context, she may also address issues of intersectionality by acknowledging how factors such as race, class, sexuality, and ability intersect with gender to shape her experiences and identity as a feminist.

A feminist analysis of Katherine Bridges in shows how gender roles and power dynamics have been the main focal points throughout the novel. The narrative *specifically addresses the depiction of women and how they challenge or reinforce traditional gender norms. It aims to uncover any underlying themes of gender inequality or empowerment present in the works. Katherine Bridges' character provides vivid studies of power dynamics in early 20th-century British society. The text also explores women's rights, such as the right to vote, education, property rights, and independence in society. This discussion illustrates how Katherine Bridges raised her voice and rebelled against the typical norms inflicted upon women

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