

**OPPONENT'S REPORT**  
**BA THESIS**  
**Forms of Alienation and Loss in Hemingway's Texts**  
Alžběta Rücklová

Following a brief introduction to the inter-war era during which Hemingway's works discussed in this thesis were published, Ms. Rücklová focuses on several characters in order to "examine the nature and degree of loss and alienation in each hero, while commenting on Hemingway's writing style" (3). Specifically, she discusses Harry from "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," Francis from "The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and Jake from *The Sun Also Rises*, and analyzes them with references to Soren Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* because, Ms. Rücklová argues, "both [Hemingway and Kierkegaard] analyse the issue of meaningful life, each writing about the same topic, albeit using very different words" (3). The three characters are interpreted primarily as aesthete figures. Harry, we read, never assumes responsibility for his actions, never concedes to "becoming oneself and being oneself, finding and following's one [sic] calling" (12). Only towards the end of his life, when it is too late, does he "admit[...] to himself his failures and the familiar lies he had been living in" (15). Francis awakens in light of his "cowardice" during the lion episode, after which he "feels like himself, like the master of his own fate" (25), but his "happiness" is short-lived. Jake appears as the most successful of the three, similar to Harry in his longing for a spiritual ascent but becoming "a true hero" (39) while alive.

In my view the thesis presents a rather stereotypical consideration of masculinity, arguing for example that Macomber (who is labeled a "coward" over 20 times in the chapter devoted to the story) never becomes "a grown, full-blooded man" (23), that Cohn is not "a true man" (36), etc. Could Ms. Rücklová perhaps elaborate on the question "what is a man" in her view and also further comment on the gender dynamics in these selected works by Hemingway?

Another question could perhaps consider (the application of) Kierkegaard's text, e.g. the issue of aesthetic and ethical choice. The thesis argues that there is a "gaping absence of God or any other spiritual authority" (12) in Hemingway's literary universe, which renders his characters to the realm of the aesthetic; however "constantly choosing aesthetically [...], as Kierkegaard has said, is no choice at all" (27). Could Ms. Rücklová elaborate on this question, with references to the writings of both Kierkegaard and Hemingway?

**Proposed grade:** Velmi dobře (2) or Dobře (3)

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