



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**SUPERVISORS'S REPORT
B.A. THESIS**

Markéta Čížková
Gender Differences in Selected Works of Ernest Hemingway

The thesis sets to demonstrate that female characters in Hemingway's fiction have a more than decorative function and that they significantly affect the male characters – who, under the influence of their female counterparts, become more than mannequins of bravado and machismo. In theory this is an interesting objective, but it is rather difficult to carry out in practice, not because of the limitations of the author of the thesis but because of the limitations of Hemingway's fiction itself. The thesis, in fact, demonstrates nearly the opposite of what it intends to: i.e. Ms. Čížková eventually shows that Hemingway's work is populated with a limited range of both male and female characters as well as a limited range of settings and plot lines. For example only the fact that all three novels she analyzes conclude with broken relationships suggests that "Hemingway is only comfortable in dealing with 'men without women,'" as one critic put it, rather than that his female characters are depicted as beneficial to the male characters. Or, at several places, Ms. Čížková unwittingly demonstrates that Hemingway presented us with stereotypical heroines – e.g. on p. 9, where Catherine is depicted as the neck that turns the head; on p. 27, where Brett is compared to an "ungovernable and sexually powerful 'bull,'" or on p. 38, where Pilar is characterized as feeling ugly because of not being loved by a man. If this is how Hemingway indeed depicted his female protagonists, does this not only prove that his characterization of women is flat and sexist? To some extent, the thesis seems to be aware of this problem, but it continues to insist that Hemingway's female characters are more than mere puppets and male fantasies.

The second limitation of the thesis is its continual reliance on biographical interpretation, which does seem to dominate the criticism of Hemingway's fiction, but it would have been interesting to interpret his work for example via the less author-oriented lens of feminist criticism (which I did try to introduce to the student, with little success).

Having said all this, however, I do think that the thesis has developed significantly in the process of its composition and that in the light of the remarks above, it may be graded as "very good" (velmi dobře).

Pavla Veselá, PhD.
June 12, 2014

Proposed Grade: **velmi dobře** (very good)