THESIS SAMPLE

Name and ID number: XXXXXXX

Bodily Fictions: The Body in Modern American Literature

Dr. Dokou

Gender Dislocation and the Collapse of Male Order in Hemingway’s *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* (1927)

Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley are the protagonists of Hemingway’s *Fiesta: The* *Sun Also Rises* (1927). At first reading, the story seems to be a typical roman à clef of modernist times. But, from a feminist point of view, *Fiesta* is rather a complex projection of Hemingway’s increasing anxiety over the new role of women in contemporary societies and the effects that such a ‘feminine invasion’ could have on the masculine understanding of the self and the modern world in general.

In my assignment I will try to show how Brett’s strongly manifested sexual liberalism works as a pole of degradation and disruption on a social, moral and psychological level, even to the extent of gender confusion throughout the novel. Brett is the seducer, the heartbreaker with the reckless sexual appetite and boyish looks or, in other words, the New Woman that threatens the established patriarchal order with emasculation. Jake, on the other hand, is the new ‘quiet thing’: a sexually impotent man who cries for Brett’s love and willingly sacrifices his will for her pleasure in good or harsh times. This role reversal, as a result of Brett’s strong sense of independence, brings nothing more than loss and violence. The cost is immense, especially for her, who ends up alone, having lost Jake’s past love and affection. The re-making of a more vulnerable position for Brett and the re-acquisition of Jake’s independence provides a reassertion of male order in Hemingway’s novel and constitutes a political statement on his part. Nevertheless, nothing is going to be the same again. The novel’s inconclusive ending suggests Jake’s lack of confidence over the permanence of this situation and betrays a kind of reticence which suits more a female rather than a male consciousness.

Title:

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 *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises (1927)***

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. The fluidity of gender identity in the modernist context; the modernist war of sexes
3. Hemingway’s rivalry towards the “New Woman” and the fear of emasculation
4. The Distortion/Reversal of Sexual Roles: The ‘manly’ Brett VS the ‘womanly’ Jake
5. Brett as the embodiment of the “New Woman”
6. Brett’s Manliness; the rise of the flapper
7. Brett’s boyish looks
8. Brett’s over-socialization
9. Brett’s acquisitive sexuality
10. Jake’s ‘crippled’ masculinity
11. Jake’s effeminacy
12. Jake’s sexual impotency
13. Jake’s emotional victimization for Brett’s sake
14. Jake’s passivity; the new ‘quiet thing’

1. A feminist reading of Brett Vs Hemingway’s misogyny

A. Brett’s sexual liberalism as an expression of her unyielding spirit

1. Constructing a positive image of Brett’s promiscuity
2. Brett’s sexuality in accordance with modern feminist positions concerning bodily experience
3. Irigaray’s theory of the plurality of female sexuality and Brett’s unusually active sexual appetite
4. Brett’s love for Jake on the basis of equality: her rejection of a one-sided self-sacrificial love affair

B. Hemingway’s attack on modernist female liberation

1. Constructing a negative image of Brett
2. Brett’s portrait as a modern Circe
3. Brett’s overt sexuality resulting in violence, moral degradation and self-pain
4. Hemingway’s fear of castration as a justification of Jake’s undercurrent obsession with controlling Brett’s image
5. Jake dominates Brett by:
6. Being her author
7. By making himself the object of her deepest desire
8. By asserting his moral superiority over her moral deterioration
9. Hemingway’s/the patriarchal desire of controlling the female body
10. Atwood’s presentation of the male fantasy of restraining the feminine body
11. Hemingway’s stance to Brett as his political statement on female liberation
12. The reclamation of masculinity
13. The assertion of male powerfulness and the re-establishment of a vulnerable femininity
14. Brett’s “impotent” femininity Vs Jake’s essential masculinity
15. The irresolvable paradox: Brett’s inability to acquire a fully feminine role and her nymphomaniac inclinations
16. Brett’s need of Jake Vs Jake’s tarnished respect for her
17. Jake’s indifference and final cynical response as a statement of his masculine independence
18. Hemingway’s reticence over the prevalence of masculine order
19. Jake’s rather feminine-like final response
20. The unreliability of Jake’s narration
21. In-retrospect, first-person narration
22. The novel’s inconclusive ending: Jake’s lack of confidence
23. The inconsistent portrait of Brett:
24. Brett’s portrait as an extraordinary woman of class Vs Brett’s portrait as a common “slut”
25. Jake’s own emotional inconsistency towards her
26. Brett’s defiant attitude Vs Brett’s undermining self-definitions

1. Conclusion
2. Brett’s inability of reaching “true” womanhood according to Spilka and Fiedler’s reading
3. Brett’s negative portrayal as a projection of the patriarchal fear of loss of control over women

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