

## **Ms. Barbora Šedivá's M. A. thesis – review written by the opponent**

Ms. Šedivá's M. A. thesis, *Your Goal Is Your Starting Place: The Transformative Forces of the Road in the Novels of Jack Kerouac*, is a clearly focused and neatly structured study of the given phenomenon. Ms. Šedivá's main argument is relying on a large body of secondary literature (texts that can be considered classics as well as recent findings) and her enthusiasm for the material she is working with is apparent. Her line of thought is fluent and her analysis solid, but since the role of the opponent is to point out the real or potential weaker spots, I would wish to ask the following questions.

While I appreciate the diversity of sources Ms. Šedivá is using, do we actually know whether Kerouac was familiar with T. S. Eliot? And it is certainly wise to list all the major critics of the Beat Generation (Fiedler, Podhoretz, etc.) and sum up their views, but how would Ms. Šedivá respond to their remarks? Had we taken them into consideration, perhaps we could have arrived at a more nuanced and refined conclusion. As it is now, I do not find the closing parts that persuasive. Is Ms. Šedivá sure about the Beat Generation legacy in the U. S. these days; how about Trump or the corporate America? And why is she thinking that tourism is relevant in this respect (in my humble opinion, it differs greatly from the mobility she had in mind).

And a few truly marginal points regarding terminology. On p. 9, Ms. Šedivá refers to the Great West, a term borrowed from Turner; would the term Wild West do as well? On p. 57, Ms. Šedivá says „the symbol of the East“; is it a symbol indeed, and which definition of a symbol would she propose here? And finally, I do not quite understand why is she using the English term Beat Generation also in the Czech abstract – does she think that it is impossible to adequately translate that into Czech?

I have to stress, though, that all these remarks of mine are not meant to undermine the merit of the submitted thesis. Ms. Šedivá's study clearly meets the standards required at our department, and I have to applaud the level of her English – simply put, it is a good read. The only major issue is that she could have stated what her actual contribution to the existing scholarship is; did she aim for that, or was she happy achieving just minor goals?

This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: either výborně/excellent, or velmi dobře/very good. The final result will thus very much depend on the review written by the supervisor, as well as on Ms. Šedivá's performance during the oral defense.

Dr. Hana Ulmanová

Prague, Aug 23, 2019