



Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Opponent's Report on B.A. Thesis  
STRUGGLES IN KEN KESEY'S NOVELS  
*ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST AND SOMETIMES A GREAT NOTION*  
by Filip Čížek

This thesis examines the theme of struggle in two novels by the countercultural figure, Ken Kesey. It is written in a clear, lucid style, and carefully adduces its evidence through ample reference to plot, character and setting. He is alert to the social aspects of the psychological battles that are waged, and at the end of the thesis one is sure that the theme of struggle is central to Kesey.

The problem is that one is sure of this before beginning the thesis. In other words, it will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Kesey's work that struggles of several kinds appear in it. There were many struggles in that decade and it is not surprising to find this theme in the novels. I feel that the student did not take full advantage of the intervening half century in order to enjoy proper critical distance from his subject. There is little or no secondary recent material that would provide a context for understanding these novels (apart from criticism that deals directly with Kesey). What have recent critics said about the decade's fiction in general? How does Kesey fit in there? One cannot find this out from the thesis. It is important to note that this is not merely a question of name-checking recent critics, but of opening original approaches to this well-known literary figure.

In class, I know the student as exacting and original. Unfortunately I did not find enough evidence of these qualities in the thesis to recommend any higher grade than 'very good' (**velmi dobře**).

doc. Justin Quinn Ph.D.  
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