

Supervisor's Report on B.A. thesis by

**Tomáš Bazika**

ORSON WELLES: FILM NOIR AND ITS AESTHETIC LEGACY

Mr. Tomáš Bazika aims in his thesis to delineate the aesthetic facets, functions, properties, and stylistic markings of the cycle of films known as "film noir" in the cultural heritage of American film with special reference to Orson Welles's contribution in a band of his own directed film noirs as well as Welles's enduring influence in such later neo-noirs as *Taxi Driver*, *Blade Runner* and *Dark City*.

The thesis contains 65 pp. across an introduction, seven main chapters, which includes a conclusion, and a bibliography. As for the prose style, it reads cleanly and has been well crafted and well written, albeit there are a few typos e.g. "promtd" should be "prompted" (18), "separetely" should be "separately" (25), but there are a decided paucity of examples of such errors.

This critical reader esteemed the thoughtful use of contextualized close reading of important aesthetic moments, including technical aspects, strategies, and themes, in the target cinematic works, which range from some major Welles pictures (*The Lady from Shanghai* etc.) closing with the paradigmatic Wellesian noir film of *Touch of Evil* to later noirs such as *Dark City*; the very solid comparative cultural research that marks the candidate's compositional work is also to be commended. Leading edge critics of the aesthetic heritage of film noir are wheeled in to good effect.

Further than these observations, I would ask for elaboration from the candidate

- 1) on the economic, political, and even psychological dimensions of the functional status of the film noir/neo-noir artwork in general in the cultural system, and
- 2) on the more specific question of whether the cultural form of the film noir/neo-noir constitutes either a system-underminer or a system-sustainer overall in the dynamic of culture, of power, and of society, given film noir is a reified cultural product and so an agent of big capital and of capitalist power? The whole question of the filmic collective creative team in the production of a film, and of their relation to the cinematic artwork, is also broached here, and whether this film noir or neo-noir artwork stands as a legitimizing or an undercutting mediating agent for other relationships of authority, community, power, and control?

In light of the foregoing mentions, I hereby recommend for Tomáš Bazika the pre thesis defense mark of 1 (výborně) for the thesis work.

Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil. (Oxon.),  
2 September 2013.