

Opponent's report on B.A. thesis by

Ms. Magdalena Císlerová

“Free of Inhibitions and Full of Pleasure: The Image of Europe in the Works of James Salter”

In her thesis, Ms. Magdalena Císlerová sets out to assess the aesthetic achievement in narrative prose of the contemporary US author, James Salter (1925-2015) with regard to the problem of Americans in Europe and the contrast between the two lands and social bodies. The study is both well researched and well written and contains work to be commended. The target novels are as follows: *A Sport and a Pastime* (2007), *Burning the Days* (2007), *Light Years* (2007), *Solo Faces* (2008), and *All That Is* (2013).

The thesis contains sixty-one pages across an Introduction, three chapters that constitute the body of the thesis, a Conclusion and a rich Bibliography. All in all, the thesis is well-structured and organized and clear in the exposition of its presentation strategy. Stylistically the thesis is well written although there is the odd error e.g., “synthesises” should be “an home” (9), “an home” should be “an homme” (13), “the ongoing strive for glory” should be “the ongoing striving for glory” (53) and there are other such errors from time to time in the text, but again all in all it is written in a good English.

In the light of the special richness of the thesis I have five questions to pose. **First question:** the notion as you write in Salter's fiction that “Paris was a special place of absolute freedom and rich cultural heritage” is a classic observation; therefore, is there a sense at all in which Salter gives this idea a new spin? If so how? And if not why does it still matter that his fiction valorizes that city and ideological universe? Another nice distinction that the candidate makes is how the commodity universe of significant objects is surmounted in Europe with a greater emphasis on the idea of experience. **Second question:** Is there any sense in which this idea is complicated in any of Salter's works or is it really that black and white in comparing the US with Europe (so-called)? **Third question:** Indeed further than this what constitutes the ideological space and territory of Europe for the candidate?

The candidate also makes the claim that Europe is the new frontier for the conquering individuality of the American to experience. **Fourth question:** Could the candidate make it a bit more clear as to in what precise senses this is the case? And **fifth question:** does the candidate consider Salter insufficiently dialectical and critical about the merits of so-called European civilizational achievement as against that of the USA?

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

Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil. (Oxon.)
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