

## **JIŘÍ STÁREK'S M.A. THESIS – REVIEW WRITTEN BY THE OPPONENT**

Mr. Stárek's M.A. thesis, **An Outlaw Journalist's Journey Through an Era Decadent and Deprived: Hunter S. Thompson in the Context of America of the 1960s and Early 1970s**, is a very persuasive attempt to see this rather unique writer and his works in a proper perspective. Mr. Stárek's thesis is a truly interdisciplinary one, as he manages to connect history, sociology and larger cultural shifts and issues with a precise literary analysis of those primary texts he has chosen. I have to stress that I particularly enjoyed the parallels he has drawn with Thomas Pynchon, Tom Robbins, and Don DeLillo, as I find them extremely relevant in light of those conclusions Mr. Stárek managed to reach, and I was also impressed with the number and quality of secondary sources Mr. Stárek relied on. Not only that the vast majority of them is extremely contemporary, but also their range is admirable, and Mr. Stárek thus apparently has the mind of a researcher.

Next to that, this thesis proves that he also has the mind of a scholar. His argument is always focused and structured, which is reflected already on the level of the individual chapters and sub-chapters. While he seems to be approaching the theme of his thesis primarily in a chronological fashion, which makes complete sense, he is almost always exploring it from several different viewpoints. Thus, the final picture the reader is presented with is both clear and complex, which is not so common (and now I am not talking only about the M.A. theses) as it should be. Here, I also feel obliged to comment on Mr. Stárek's language: it is often quite theoretical, yet there is a natural flow to it, and again, such a combination is rare.

Having said that, there is one unsupported claim Mr. Stárek is making (p. 53: Thompson... „could perhaps be seen as an heir to the angry young men“), and I have to admit that I find it problematic. Where precisely would Mr. Stárek wish to see that legacy, and aren't there rather considerable differences in between the angry young men and the beats already? Also, I feel that Mr. Stárek could have explained or defined some of the terms he is using: e.g. on p. 22 there is „a far more realistic, even decadent type of person“, while on p. 25 he states that „drinking represented an image heavily romanticized“ – isn't he contradicting himself? On p. 32, he seems to be suggesting that new journalism is a „style“, while on p. 31 and elsewhere he uses the term „genre“ – again, could he clarify that at least during the oral defense? And finally, on p. 36 he writes about „a modern, or, more precisely, postmodern notion of Nirvana“. Not only am I unsure about nirvana here; what I find even more puzzling are, as could have been guessed by now, the very adjectives „modern“ and „postmodern“ in this very instance.

In spite of the above-mentioned minor remarks, I still believe that Mr. Stárek deserves the grade „výborně / excellent“. The final result, though, depends on the review written by the supervisor and on Mr. Stárek's performance during the oral defense.

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Dr. Hana Ulmanová, M.A.