



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

M.A. THESIS
AMERICAN LITERATURE SPECIALISATION
Community in Toni Morrison's Novels
Michaela Brzobohatá

Through a close reading of Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon* and *Paradise*, Ms. Brzobohatá's outlines the transformation of the African-American writer's conception of community. The candidate demonstrates a thorough understanding of the primary texts that she analyses as she provides a detailed account of their characters' dilemmas and life struggles. For the most part, the critical views of Herskovits, Girard, Kubitschek, Magali, Romero, and others are well incorporated. The prose is clear. As a whole, the thesis is a satisfactory text that may be graded **very good or excellent (velmi dobře or výborně)**, depending on the views of the opponent and on the defense.

My only major objection to the argument of the thesis has concerned the status of slavery. Given colonialism's pervasiveness and brutality, it is hard to believe that the process of destruction of African traditions would begin only when blacks were freed to adopt the values of white capitalism, and that the bonds of Africa survived through slavery. Did not the destruction of African societies begin as the first colonizer set his foot on the African shore; was not slavery integral to white capitalism?

I have also wondered about the conclusion of the thesis, namely the dynamic, all-inclusive communities that *Paradise* apparently gestures towards—not because I would necessarily disagree, but because I would have liked Ms. Brzobohatá to elaborate. Where in Morrison's work does she see communities that are “more inclusive and [that] embrace diversity and thus promote individuality, not individualism” (57)? And is the Convent in *Paradise* even a valid model of such an open, inclusive community? It is racially diverse but all-female and, moreover, it is composed of abused women for whom, as Ms. Brzobohatá observes elsewhere, “sexuality implies menace” (56).

Finally, could the candidate perhaps briefly comment on two issues: 1. Why, in her view, did Morrison's conception of community change? 2. How does this thesis build on Ms. Brzobohatá's previous (BA) thesis on *Sula* and *Beloved*?

Pavla Veselá, PhD.
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