



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
MA THESIS**

**The African-American Slave Narrative in Context: Frederick Douglass
and Harriet Ann Jacobs**

Bc. Jana Chýlková



“The African-American Slave Narrative in Context: Frederick Douglass and Harriet Ann Jacobs” considers selected slave and neo-slave narratives in their socio-cultural contexts. At the outset, Bc. Jana Chýlková provides a brief survey of early English and American slave narratives; she also offers a discussion of selected critical studies of the genre, with the objective of highlighting the difficulty of its definition. Subsequently, the student moves to an in-depth analysis of Frederick Douglass's autobiographies, Harriet A. Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and the novel *Dessa Rose* by Sherley Anne Williams.

Proceeding determinedly and independently, Ms. Chýlková has compiled an informed, well-researched and engaging historical study that reflects her dedication to questions of race and gender. Some issues could have been addressed with more precision and consideration; for example I have questioned the list of figures chosen as representative of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century racist attitudes (on pages 9-10) for it conflates different personalities and thinkers from very different backgrounds. Second, the prose of the thesis remains rather dense at places and some formulations are difficult to comprehend. This problem has significantly improved but unfortunately, much editing was done under severe time constraints, which is a shame because the text would have benefited from further editing (as I have told the student already as well).

Notwithstanding, to repeat, this is a well-researched thesis informed by the student's great interest in an important literary genre. It may be graded excellent or very good, depending on the view of the opponent and the defense.

Pavla Veselá, PhD.
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