



POSUDEK VEDOUCÍHO BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura**

Název práce: **The Reception of Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl***

Autorka práce: **Barbora Houšková**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **doc. PhDr. Mariana Machová, Ph.D.**

Oponentka bakalářské práce: **Einat Adar, M.A., Ph.D.**

Quality of Research

1) Please rate the following statements about the thesis on a scale of 1 (insufficient) to 3 (excellent)

The topic of the thesis is suitable for the scope and well defined: 3

Sets clear goals or questions for research: 3

Demonstrates conceptual clarity and accuracy: 3

Demonstrates a good understanding of the literary work discussed: 3

Engages with the subject critically and analytically: 3

Uses relevant scholarship meaningfully: 3

2) Comment briefly on the quality of the research presented in the thesis:

The thesis has a very clear aim, it is well argued and well-researched, offers interesting insights into the primary source and demonstrates good knowledge of relevant scholarship on the subject.

Quality of Writing

1) Please rate the following statements about the thesis on a scale of 1 (insufficient) to 3 (excellent)

Has a clear and suitable structure: 3

Employs appropriate register and academic style: 3

Uses correct and relevant terminology: 3

Adheres to academic thesis guidelines, format and MLA style guide: 3

Written in correct and fluent English (both grammar and vocabulary): 2

Carefully edited with few typos or mistakes: 2

2) Comment briefly on the quality of the writing presented in the thesis:

The thesis reads well, it has a clear, fluent academic style, its structure is clear and logical, and it fulfills the formal requirements. There are occasional language errors and typos, which, however, do not diminish the pleasure of reading the text.

Overall Review and Assessment

(short description of the thesis and its findings, what has been achieved, and areas for improvement)

The BA thesis examines the publication history and the reception of Harriet Jacobs' slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, one of the key texts of 19th-century African American literature, which - unlike its more famous counterpart, the *Narrative of Frederick Douglass* - struggled for a long time to enter the literary canon. The thesis traces the obstacles Harriet Jacobs faced in the process of the original publication of her manuscript in the late 1850s and early 1860s, which were, as the thesis persuasively demonstrates,



largely due to the intersectionality of Jacobs' condition of being a woman of colour (moreover, a woman who openly wrote about sexual abuse). The thesis then follows the later reception of the work, showing that similar issues that complicated the original publication were at play decades and even centuries later in the long process of the incorporation of the work into the literary canon.

The thesis reads very well and betrays the student's enthusiasm and deep interest in the topics throughout the work. The topic discussed is not presented merely as a self-contained issue of limited scholarly interest, but as an issue with a longstanding general impact. Literature and its historical and social contexts are shown as an area of fascinating struggles, where the text itself is an important factor, but its cultural acceptance often depends on stereotypes, cultural expectations and biases. In this way, the thesis raises important questions that are not limited to the work it discusses.

As the thesis supervisor I have to commend the candidate on her highly professional approach to her work, which is far above the level of an undergraduate student. She required only very basic guidance and advice in her research, and she responded to all the suggestions creatively and intelligently and proved perfectly capable of her own independent research (including e-mail correspondence with one of the US scholars in order to obtain some resources).

Overall, the thesis is a real achievement and I hope its author will continue her research efforts as she clearly has the intellectual capability, the diligence and the enthusiasm necessary for scholarly work.

Questions for Defence

(please provide two questions for the student to answer during their defence)

1. Could you identify some of the areas in which the research could be developed further and comment on them?
2. Can you think of any other works in American literature that could be examined in a similar way?

Práci doporučuji k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **výborně**

31. 5. 2023

Datum

Podpis

* Numerical assessments are provided as a guideline for recommending the final grade following an indicative scale:

over 32 "výborně"

28 - 32 "velmi dobře"

24-28 "dobře"

below 24 points the work is in danger of failing.

The final grade will be determined by the committee following the thesis defence.