

## HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

### Masaryk University

#### Applicant

Mgr. Martina Horáková, Ph.D.

#### Habilitation thesis

Pursuits of Settler Belonging in Contemporary Australian Memoirs

#### Reviewer: Associate Professor

Lars Jensen

#### Reviewer's home unit, institution

Cultural Encounters, IKH,  
Roskilde University, Denmark

Horakova's Habilitation Thesis is exemplary, broad-ranging, thoroughly researched and carefully executed. Her engagement with the question of settler belonging over the last two to three decades will provide scholars with rich material for further exploration. She carefully explores the explosive question of belonging/unbelonging that continues (also in her reading) to haunt settler Australians' sense of selfhood in a country that they took from another people. A country settlers turned into a nation yet failed to convert into Country. Her framings in each chapter of the selected groups of writing and writers is a really useful way of mapping the terrain of settler belonging. The choice of texts from a relatively short period of time enables a more cross-genre approach and more thorough contemporary engagement than a more long-term historical exploration would have. The amount of material engaged in the Habilitation Thesis is formidable. It leaves few stones unturned. *Pursuits of Settler Belonging in Contemporary Australian Memoirs* will become a standard reference work for the many Australian Studies scholars working on questions of contemporary belonging in Australia, and the issue of a politics of national identity for many years to come.

#### Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

Horakova would know I have many questions for her. Not so much because of lacunae in her work, but more because inevitably in embarking on a trajectory in research, decisions over inclusions and exclusions have to be made. My selected questions go both to this aspect and to invite her to explore some of her own findings further. I know other reviewers have questions too, and I do not expect Horakova to deal with all my questions. In fact, I would prefer if Horakova could herself select the questions closest to the tenor of her work.

Question: What defines remoteness in your book? And how does your definition of Indigeneity fit into the question of what constitutes remoteness? Or is remoteness simply a metaphor that lends itself to a number of different and also obviously contested imaginings?

Question: How does one negotiate settler belonging as an internal dialogic imagination and as one always predicated on the exclusion of that which it requires displacing in order to

become fulfilled? Is settler belonging an exclusively white discourse? Is it an Angloaustraliancentric discourse? Does it offer anything to Australians who perceive themselves not in relation to landscape and certainly not in relation to remoteness as a condition?

Question: When is or was post-Mabo? What does post-Mabo as a conceptual terrain entail? Is post-Mabo most productively understood as a moment of transformation, a zeit-geist, or a gradual transitional/accumulative change? This question also has implications more generally for the issue of whether or under what conditions settler narratives of belonging can be characterised as part of a process deemed progressive. Some of the readings suggest regressive is almost as prominent a feature as progressive.

Question: Isn't Country the Indigenous equivalent to settlers' conceptualisation of belonging, yet paradoxically also premised on being its reverse? (I am echoing Lucashenko and Moreton-Robinson's critique of Winton here)

Question: How does gender delineate the fault lines of various settler conceptualisations of belonging?

## **Conclusion**

The habilitation thesis entitled *Pursuits of Settler Belonging in Australian Contemporary Memoirs* Mgr. Martina Horáková, Ph.D., **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Germanic Languages and Literature.

Date: April 14, 2026

Signature: