

RUSSO EMILIANA

Evaluation form for PhD dissertation

Za zgodność z oryginałem
 Podpis specjalista
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Evaluation form

Title of the thesis

An investigation into Shakespeare's Original Pronunciation (OP): Systematising debates and data, and exploring OP at the Globe in the 21st century

Affiliation of the reviewer

Department of English Philology, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Report

Emiliana Russo's PhD research project is a one-of-a-kind in-depth exploration of the reconstruction, implementation and reception of Original Pronunciation practices in the Shakespearean performance culture of the last two decades. In my opinion Ms. Russo has produced an excellent doctoral thesis in which she clearly identifies a subject worth exploring, proposes and implements a coherent methodology and strategy through which to carry out her analysis, and consequently develops a series of previously unidentified conclusions and scholarly findings that will enrich the area of study to which this thesis belongs. In other words, with this thesis Ms. Russo has undoubtedly satisfied the requirements to successfully become a doctor, and in my opinion should be considered for the 'cum laude' distinction. A hearty congratulations to the doctoral candidate as well as to her supervisors for such an extraordinary achievement.

The excellence of the thesis notwithstanding, there are still some comments and recommendations I would like to relay to Ms. Russo as a way of possibly improving what I hope will soon become a published monograph. And it is in that key, that of 'how to turn this thesis into a book', that I wish my comments to be received. I was once explained by a mentor of mine that a PhD thesis is like a woodworking apprentice building a 'table' in order to prove their ability to go ahead and complete the full dining room set (which would be the book): this is an excellent 'table' as it is, but the monograph would have to be slightly different in order to serve a different purpose and audience. With that in mind, I have prepared my comments chronologically, according to the thesis' different sections, with an introductory miscellaneous note that applies to the whole of the project. Once again congratulations to Ms. Russo, Prof. Plescia and Prof. Boryslawski and I look forward to following soon-to

-be Dr. Russo's career and research in this fascinating world that is OP performance studies.

GENERAL NOTES

Overall, I would encourage you to adopt a less apologetic, more positive and constructive tone in your writing. From the very top of the thesis you claim to be coming short of what you should be doing, that you are not including something because you haven't been able to

25. whether the use of social accents actually exceeds that of regional ones in Shakespeare. Rather, I intend..." This is an unnecessary concession of work not done! Similarly, avoid unveilings of non-work (eg. "I will not venture to state whether..." on p. 188), it's better for you not to draw attention to things you didn't do and instead place all the focus on what you did achieve.

Linked to the previous note, I would also reduce *your* presence (i.e. personal discourse) so as not to draw any attention away from the research subject and unto yourself. The text is constantly infused with 'I's and 'My's, and in doing so you are directing your reader's attention onto yourself, making yourself the subject of the text and not your research project. Finally, there are some slight inconsistencies in how you name scholars (especially the 4-5 linguists repeatedly mentioned and cited in chs 1-2): you sometimes begin by giving only their last names, followed by using their full names just a couple of lines below... I assume this is probably the product of having written the text in a non-linear way, but you should go over it to make sure the first mention always includes the full name, and subsequent mentions in a short span -- eg. in the same paragraph -- should be only last names so as not to overburden the text).

INTRODUCTION

At the very top of the introduction a clearer, more precise thesis statement is needed beyond saying you are mapping out the debates surrounding OP. What is your objective and/or conclusion? A clear and concise preview of what is to follow (that is, the 'elevator pitch') would be welcome.

CH1 ORIGINAL PRONUNCIATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: FROM PAST STUDIES TO THE SEGMENTAL DIMENSION

This chapter surveys the history and the features that conform OP and similar reconstruction projects, including the debates surrounding their logic and processes. While it doesn't advance the promise of the thesis' title, it lays down the necessary groundwork for what is to come. In terms of thinking of transformations to turn the thesis into a book, this is the section I would suggest to synthesise the most (not because it's not interesting, but because this isn't your original contribution, which begins more properly in ch3).

CH2 ORIGINAL PRONUNCIATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: SUPRASEGMENTAL DIMENSION AND REGIONAL AND FOREIGN SOUNDS

Continuation of ch1, and consequently the previous note applies to here as well.

CH3 OP IN THEATRE IN THE 21ST CENTURY: RAMIFICATIONS, EFFECTS AND AUDIENCE RESPONSE

As predicted above, this is where the original insight gets most interesting. You note that the most performed play was a comedy (MND), the years with most OP performances were 2016-2017, and the place where the majority of these took place was the US. That said, I would ask the following questions:

- Is it anomalous that MND is the most performed play in OP, considering it is probably one of the most performed play in the Shakespeare canon? It would be interesting to find situations in which some of the least performed plays overall find more currency and favour in the OP performance world.

Section 3.3 once again goes back to talking about the logic and intention of OP instead of its reception, so it feels a little bit out of place. Maybe it should be relocated to chs 1-2?

The section about the performers (3.4) is fascinating, and a true value to your thesis. That said, since most of the actors are not household names I admit I found it a little bit difficult to follow in terms of the constant names being brought up; if there were any way to simplify this (perhaps recurring more often to the characters' names instead of the actors; or grouping all comments on a single performer into one paragraph...) I think it would improve a lot.

3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 are what we came for, and they delivered. The idea of ownership seems

25 6/16/24 09:24 AM HEAD OF GREAT SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE: "ROMEO AND JULIET", "TROIUS AND CRESSIDA" AND BEYOND

Very interesting walkthrough of your research process and results, a true addition to the field of OP studies (beyond trusting Crystal and his interested analysis). Understanding the constraints of time and pandemic-era conditions, it would be fantastic if in the future you could follow this work up *somehow* with interviews or audience reports that illustrate the opinions of non-scholars and non-avid-Shakespeare-goers (even though the section in the previous chapter about the positive reactions to the US production is a good enough contribution as is). Anyhow, when thinking about a potential book project based on the thesis, I think this chapter should be the focal point around which to build the exercise, because this work is so important and unique (and laborious, I am sure!)

CONCLUSIONS

Very few notes here, it is a very thorough and clear recap of the thesis. And here, in the "Future directions and Limitations of my Study" section, is where I would concentrate any possible shortcomings of my work and not throughout the whole text (see note below on this).

WORKS CITED

p. 287 - Erne's chapter "Why size Matters" should probably be cited as just the book itself, not a chapter within.

p. 291-292 - I am pretty sure the ISE editions of plays have individual editors who should be acknowledged. If not, it would still make more sense to list these publications under "Shakespeare"...

VOLUME 2

This material here is priceless, and I would hate for it to end up buried and unseen, as it is a testament to the gargantuan amount of work you carried out during your thesis. I would encourage you to find a way to present/publish it as well under a more easily legible format. Perhaps not as an investigative article, but rather just an expository "this is what these productions did..." or perhaps a digital website/repository other scholars can access?

ERRATA

p. 16 - "century" missing after 21st (second paragraph)

p. 74 - italics missing in "Modern"? (last paragraph before citation)

Confidential report (it will not be shown to the candidate)

Evaluation file (optional)

Presentation and clarity

None Poor Average Good Excellent

The reviewer should be able to read the text without difficulty. This implies that the dissertation is clear and 'user friendly', without duplications or repetitions.

Integration and coherence

None Poor Average Good Excellent

Introduction to scientific background

None Poor Average Good Excellent

The text should contain a satisfactory introduction to the scientific background which is relevant to the research, preparing the reader to the exposition of the problem.

Review of relevant literature

None Poor Average Good Excellent

The candidate must have a detailed knowledge of original sources, have a thorough knowledge of the field, and understand the main theoretical and methodological issues.

Statement of research problem

None Poor Average Good Excellent

A clear statement of the research problem should be made, together with specific hypotheses, predictions, or questions which the research is designed to address.

Originality

None Poor Average Good Excellent

The research must be the candidate's own work. The degree of independence may vary according to the research topic.

Contribution to knowledge and scientific relevance

None Poor Average Good Excellent

The dissertation should be substantial enough to be able to form the basis of two articles on refereed journal, a book or research monograph.

None Poor Average Good Excellent

The candidate must be proficient in written English and show mastery of appropriate scientific/technical language.

The thesis can be considered for a 'cum laude' award

Yes No

A major goal of the review process is to evaluate if the present version of the thesis is:

- 1) adequate as is
- 2) require minor revision
- 3) require major revision

for admission of the candidate to the defense of the work in front of a national evaluation board.

Accept as is Minor revision Major revision

Date: 5/28/2024

Reviewer: Amelang David J.