

La Sapienza

Revisione esterna tesi dott. SARA RICCETTI (37 ciclo)

RICCETTI SARA

Wydział Humanistyczny
 Starszy specjalista
 w Biurowie Ewaluacji i Obsługi Instytutów
 mgr Karolina Koneczna-Montak

Evaluation form for PhD dissertation

Evaluation form

Title of the thesis

Sovereign Performances: Indigenous Women's Theatre and the Legal and Political Work of Decolonization in the U.S. and Canada"

Affiliation of the reviewer

Università di Napoli "L'Orientale"

Report

The thesis offers a thorough and original analysis of Indigenous women's theatre, highlighting the crucial role that the selected works play in challenging and reshaping colonial legal structures. The interdisciplinary approach, which combines legal studies, Indigenous feminist theory, and theatrical practices, is particularly innovative and makes a significant contribution to the field. The research not only explores the complexity of theatrical representations but also emphasizes the importance of storytelling as a tool for resistance and decolonization. The candidate demonstrates an excellent understanding of the theoretical framework within which she analyzes the complex landscape of contemporary Indigenous theatre, using appropriate methodological tools. This comprehensive theoretical foundation allows her to engage deeply with the subject matter and provide an insightful analysis of the selected works.

Suggestions and criticism:

While the introduction provides a comprehensive overview of the study, it lacks a clear articulation of the original contributions of the research to the field. In paragraph 1.3.4, the thesis effectively situates Indigenous theatre within the broader field of transnational Indigenous studies and highlights the communal and healing aspects of Indigenous performance. However, it lacks a clear articulation of the originality of the thesis and the specific contribution it makes to the areas of study identified. While the section demonstrates the candidate's strong grasp of the currents within this field, it would benefit from explicitly positioning the research as advancing these frameworks or addressing gaps in existing scholarship. For instance, the thesis could emphasize how its focus on legal critique in Indigenous women's theatre uniquely contributes to both Indigenous theatre studies and cultural legal studies. Additionally, the works analyzed in the thesis (Sovereignty, The Unplugging, and Antikoni) should be introduced and briefly described earlier in the dissertation, before pg. 22. This would give readers a clearer sense of the research's scope and central focus. For instance, the language in which the analyzed plays are written should be specified in the beginning. It would also be interesting to see whether these works make use of any ancestral languages, even if this is not a central focus of the dissertation.

The positionality statement currently included in the Methodology section (pg. 24) would be more impactful if introduced at the beginning of the thesis, perhaps in the introduction. This

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would provide essential context about the candidate's perspective as a non-Indigenous scholar. The statement could then be repeated or elaborated upon in the Methodology section, allowing for deeper reflection and reinforcing its importance throughout the thesis.

Finally, for each of the playwrights analyzed, it would be beneficial to include a brief biographical sketch. This would help contextualize their works by situating them within their personal, cultural, and professional backgrounds. For instance, mentioning Nagle's dual role as a playwright and lawyer, Nolan's leadership in Indigenous theatre, or Piatote's work in language revitalization would enhance the reader's understanding of the influences shaping their creative and political contributions.

The analysis leans on legal frameworks but some terminology requires further clarification, especially in the beginning of the thesis (for example: legal values). In the discussion on page 104 regarding the Indian Act, the candidate provides a relevant overview but misses an opportunity to delve into the contrasting debates surrounding this legislation. The Indian Act is not only a direct effect of early colonial policies but also remains a highly contested piece of legislation that has shaped Indigenous lives in Canada in profound ways. To strengthen this section, it would be beneficial to incorporate a more nuanced analysis of the critiques and defenses of the Act.

To further enrich the thesis and provide a more comprehensive analysis, it would be valuable to include a section on the reception of the works discussed in the study, particularly in relation to how they have been received by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, as well as by critics. This aspect seems to be limited to The Unplugging only.

Overall, this thesis offers a valuable and original contribution to the field of Indigenous theatre studies. The candidate displays exceptional depth of knowledge and analytical skill, effectively integrating theoretical frameworks with practical analysis of contemporary Indigenous women's theatre. The interdisciplinary approach, combining legal studies, Indigenous feminist theory, and theatre, offers fresh insights into the role of Indigenous theatre as both a form of cultural expression and a tool for decolonization. The clarity of the writing, the comprehensive literature review, and the thoughtful application of methodology all demonstrate the candidate's strong academic capability.

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

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My comments and small criticisms are intended solely to further refine and enhance the thesis, making it even more comprehensive. The thesis does not exhibit any major theoretical or methodological shortcomings.

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

The manuscript should present logical and rational links between different parts of the thesis.

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.

Mastery of the English language

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: 12/9/2024

Reviewer: Mongibello Anna