

CATR/ACTR 2016 Call for Participants

Decolonizing Theatre and Performance Studies Seminar #2: Indigenization, Settler Methodologies, and Intergenerational Responsibility

Organizers: Jill Carter (U of T), Heather Davis-Fisch (UFV), Dylan Robinson (Queen's)

Indigenization has, in the last decade, been positioned as a key way that post-secondary institutions, disciplines, and scholars might respond to the challenges of decolonization and reconciliation. Without in any way diminishing the importance of indigenizing initiatives, it is important to note that such initiatives also require critical scrutiny; there is a real threat of indigenization leading to methodologically sloppy or unethical practices, such as the elision of cultural differences between nations in a messy form of pan-Indigeneity; the introduction of perfunctory changes to canons, curricula, and research methods; the off-loading of responsibility for decolonizing effort to Indigenous scholars exclusively; and the pressure to “publish or perish” leading settler researchers to engage with Indigenous communities in only superficial or historical ways, without developing reciprocal relationships. Particularly in the context of the 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, there is a need for scholars and performance practitioners, of Indigenous and settler ancestry, to critically consider their roles and responsibilities with a view to recognizing and developing responsible “settler,” “relational,” and “arrivant” methodologies.

In this seminar, we invite participants of Indigenous and settler ancestry to reflect upon their own experiences with indigenization and decolonization and to consider the following questions: How can “settler methodologies” acknowledge the history of colonialism through a consideration of concepts such as guest-ness, self-unsettlement, and intergenerational responsibility? How can research practices be responsive to Indigenous communities and contribute to the creation of alliances? How exactly might theatre and performance, as embodied practices that often connect academic, professional, and cultural communities, be deployed to respond to the challenges of reconciliation? This seminar will follow “Decolonizing Theatre and Performance Studies Seminar #1: Performance Historiographies and Indigenous Epistemologies,” in which invited participants will discuss questions and critiques that arise when Indigenous epistemologies are brought to bear on the subject of performance historiography.

Prospective participants will submit a short statement of interest (250 words) that briefly outlines why they would like to participate in the seminar and what they hope to learn from it. Statements are due on January 15, 2016. If accepted, participants will be asked to share a position statement (approximately 1000 words) by April 15, 2016, and will be placed in sub-groups to discuss the above questions, either over email, in a blog format, or through Skype conversations, in advance of the conference. When we meet in person, there will be opportunities for

sub-groups to meet, for discussion with the whole seminar group, and for audience questions and comments.

Questions and statements of interest should be sent to heather.davisfisch@ufv.ca.