

of what twenty-first-century Blackness is, but by offering multiple options of what could be. This text is a valuable resource for scholars interested in analyzing pop culture. The in-depth analysis and contemporary conversations are also great for students seeking to understand better the culture they are experiencing. The discussion of pop culture and memorable events make the advanced theoretical conversations relevant and approachable. By writing Black people and their contributions into the written record, this text helps to correct the whitewashed Blackness that fuels popular culture.

Alesandra Christmas  
The Ohio State University

## HEAT AND ALTERITY IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE: SOUTH-SOUTH CHOREOGRAPHIES

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In many ways, dance is closely associated with the concept of time. On a microscopic scale, time forms the basis for rhythm in movement. On a macroscopic scale, dance is very much a product of the era in which it is produced and performed. Moreover, in this unprecedented period, artists are finding new meaning in their practices. COVID-19 has revealed existing and new inequalities seen in dance practices, funding structures, and governmental policies, shifting the ways that artists perceive their practices. Crediting yet expanding on the concept of time, Ananya Chatterjea's *Heat and Alterity in Contemporary Dance: South-South Choreographies* explosively redefines the "contemporary."

While the term intrinsically seems to imply a relationship with time, Chatterjea perceives time as one of many considerations in contemporary dance today, explaining, "Periodizing structures . . . do not live as water-tight compartments: they are always contingent upon an overlapping series of factors" (114). Expanding on the environments that inspire innovation and referring to them as conditions of alterity, her text first defines the conditions of

"unbelonging" and then sees the physicality of heat as a thread through which movement responds to adversity. The contemporary carries the expectation of responding to the moment, particularly in its multiplicity across various populations. Chatterjea's text is a reflection of her long-term experience as a scholar and an interdisciplinary artist and director of Ananya Dancer Theatre and the Shawngram Institute for Performance and Social Justice. In *Heat and Alterity*, she draws from both decolonial theories and practice/performance analysis of artists. The first three chapters provide a retheorization of contemporary and difference as they relate to dance. In the five chapters following, specific contemporary approaches and contexts are analyzed in relation to heat and alterity.

First, Chatterjea addresses the contemporary label with regard to geographically based aesthetics in particular. Drawing on Walter Mignolo's approach to decoloniality in reference to the global South, she argues, "The self-reflexivity that characterizes contemporary experimental dance-making in the Euro-North, then, is limited: it does not investigate all positionalities and governing practices affiliated with its circuitry" (13). By framing her text as "South-South," she underscores the importance of choreography through a decolonial lens of the "South" while also traversing multiple intersections of unbelonging such as feminism, race, and class. Chatterjea's gesture to Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality is particularly relevant in these times, when it must be noted that British colonialism, for example, is decidedly different from what is currently being experienced by Native people in North America for many reasons (24). Rather than coopting the concept of intersections, Chatterjea asks how they come together to define alterity.

In stating the link between contemporary and Eurocentrism, Chatterjea points out blind spots in choreography and positionality. She talks of the "blatant appropriation" in contemporary dance from dancers and artists of color. Taking a direct tone, this text contrasts "just-world-making" and "place-making," whereby world-making is seen as "futurity untrammled by historic and systemic violences and equipped with collective strategies for addressing them should they recur" (93). On the other hand, place-making appears

egalitarian but actually perpetuates colonial systems. Through these critiques, the author interrogates “white dance” and coloniality in general. But at the same time, her text speaks to the experiences of many artists today who navigate the shifting trends within the contemporary dance label. For example, my experience with Indian dancers has revealed that artists with choreography inspired by social justice find that their work is rarely recognized in the category of “contemporary” while utilizing vocabulary from a non-Western form of dance. Chatterjea emboldens identities that do not fit into the titles of “traditional” and “ancient” yet are not seen as aesthetically “contemporary” in the West through her own experience and claims, “In my unbelonging is my different empowerment” (xii).

Another significant theme includes the consideration of “radical” efforts to equalize experiences through bodily choreography. While there exists an aim to create an egalitarian environment onstage, these efforts can also erase significant motivators that turn to movement. What of the individualized experiences involving caste, race, gender, sexuality, and class today? These lenses are held in the body and must be seen as individual experiences, exercised through “bodily autonomy” rather than erased in choreography (45). Chatterjea’s claim about seeing dancers’ autonomous experiences in South-South choreography is similar to a discussion on Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre and Arthur Miller by scholar Clare Croft, in which the author distinguishes between self-determination and assimilation in dance choreography (Croft 2015, 78). By describing the importance of how South-South choreographies visibilize unique individual experiences of alterity, Chatterjea’s discussion of contemporary movement similarly makes relevant the critical application of dance studies during the course of political movements today. How can the body make visible the histories of “South-South” positionality rather than erase them? Black Lives Matter is an example of an effort which aims to give specific value to the generational, systemic discrimination faced by Black Americans. Dancers’ experiences of alterity must be seen in their entirety.

Expanding on the politics of difference and world-building, *Heat and Alterity* follows multiple artists’ responses to alterity in order to

showcase myriad contemporary dance practices today. Deliberately selecting artists whose work is grounded by her notion of “South-South” and rejecting the norms of “avant-garde” mainstream contemporary dance, Chatterjea demonstrates subversion through various measures and definitions of heat. While Sardono Kusumo expresses heat through mythology and vibrations, Lemi Ponifasio sees heat and contemporary as being in the moment, using indigenous concepts of Samoa, and Rulan Tangen creates heat in the energy of connection and relationality. Nora Chipaumire’s chapter was particularly compelling; the author frames her work as decolonizing heat through the redefinition of pivotal works, *Poems/Dark Swan* and *Rite/Riot*, in concert dance. Tracing these compositions’ past avatars allows the readers to follow the dancer’s efforts in representing postcolonialism and a feminism “of a new order” (189). *Dark Swan* reminds its viewers of Anna Pavlova’s famous “Dying Swan,” suggesting that the experiences of colonialism and race serve as a haunting figure throughout the piece. In *Rite/Riot*, Chipaumire retells Nijinsky’s famous *Rite of Spring* and draws on both the conceptualization and reception of his work. While *Rite of Spring* is famous for its visual of a human sacrifice, Chipaumire instead glorifies a defiant female body. Chatterjea’s moving descriptions empower her interlocutors by not only studying their movement practice but also their intent throughout their entire body of work over time, establishing an understanding of their relationship with the decolonial contemporary. While it was challenging at times to follow such a vast range of scholarly citations within the theoretical premise, Chatterjea’s references showcased the many intersections of heat and alterity, demonstrating a deep investment in the plurality of contemporary dance.

Chatterjea’s *Heat and Alterity in Contemporary Dance: South-South Choreographies* is a necessary call to action during this significant period of art making, suggesting that “we all enter contemporary, innovation, experimentation, conceptual versus representational, and other concepts and debates in dance-making from our particular contextual lens” (271). We must interrogate our contextual lenses. Anthropologist Johannes Fabian posits that the concept of time can create distance between people (Fabian 2014, 28). Similarly, for Indian dancers like myself, our

association with terms such as traditional and contemporary must shift to understand how all techniques can respond to the present. Chandralekha, a contemporary Indian dancer of the late twentieth century and discussed in this book, created impactful choreography not solely because it was ahead of its time but because it reflected ideologies of feminism and politics that she strongly believed in. The contemporary requires a sharp questioning of the dynamics of our time, and it will continue to move and shift. In locating the multiple approaches to alterity, we all have access to the contemporary; we must look ahead.

Preethi Ramaprasad  
University of California Riverside

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## HOT FEET AND SOCIAL CHANGE: AFRICAN DANCE AND DIASPORA COMMUNITIES

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*Hot Feet and Social Change: African Dance and Diaspora Communities* traces the transmission and dissemination of West African dance in the United States. Focusing on the African American diaspora, which is defined by the editors as extending "from Canada to Chile, the Caribbean to the Hawaiian Islands" (1), this book serves as a great resource for researchers, practitioners, and readers interested in both theory and practice. Central to the text is the

positioning of African dance as a progenitor of community engagement and social change. Editors Kariamuwelsh, Esailama G. A. Diouf, and Yvonne Daniel situate dance within a larger artistic whole and attempt to decolonize the field of dance by educating readers "concerning pervasive Eurocentrism and lingering, under-served (literal and figurative) capitalization of references to former colonial and paternalistic canons, institutions, and perspectives" (6). In order to do so, highlighted are the voices and work of master instructors—many of whom have been omitted from the American dance canon—who discuss the vast diversity within African dance. The book presents African dance as a social institution that allows communities and individuals to "embody and demonstrate their values in physical space" (6).

During the first Council of African Diaspora Dance conference at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina (2014), co-editor Kariamuwelsh envisioned "a book that would be inclusive in that it would present voices that represented different regions and different perspectives on the important African dances that have spread across the American African Diaspora" (3). This collection fulfills Welsh's vision by presenting African dance as a dynamic and complex ideology that extends beyond the continent and the performance stage, as well as by explaining how it impacts the daily lives of Black people.

The first section, "Hot Feet and Local Histories," focuses on history and genealogy. Building upon dancer/choreographer M. Jacqui Alexander's concept of *spirit knowing*, a mechanism for making the world and the metaworlds intelligible, scholar and artist Esailama G. A. Diouf introduces *spirit talk* as a way of knowing within the African diaspora. Spirit talk is a liminal moment wherein the spirit of the dancer interlocks with the spirit of the dance and transcends to a meta-level of creative expression. Welsh's concept of *epic memory*, and renowned choreographer Alvin Ailey's concept of *blood memory*, describe how practitioners are able to develop empathetic and kinesthetic connections to an African identity through movement. Ways of knowing—such as spirit talk, epic memory, and blood memory—have been influential in the work of many Black artists and described by many members of the African dance community. In another essay, dance