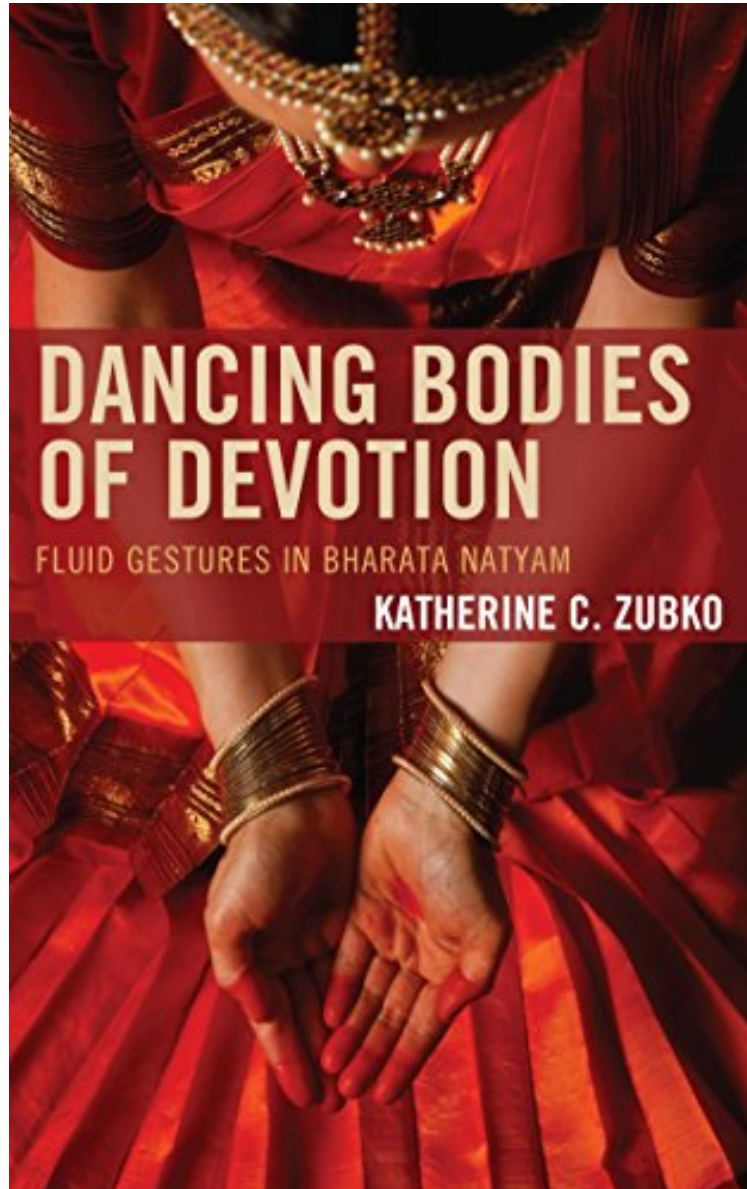


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Dancing Bodies of Devotion: Fluid Gestures in Bharata Natyam (Studies in Body and Religion)

Katherine C. Zubko

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Katherine C. Zubko : Dancing Bodies of Devotion: Fluid Gestures in Bharata Natyam (Studies in Body and Religion) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dancing Bodies of Devotion: Fluid Gestures in Bharata Natyam (Studies in Body and Religion):

Dancing Bodies of Devotion: Fluid Gestures in Bharata Natyam examines how Bharata Natyam, a traditionally Hindu storytelling dance form, moves across religious boundaries through both incorporating choreography on Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and Jain themes and the pluralistic identities of participants. Dancers traverse religious boundaries by reformulating an aesthetic foundation based on performative rather than solely textual understandings of *rasa*, conventionally defined as a formula for how to physically craft emotion on stage. Through the ethnographic case studies of this volume, dancers of Bharata Natyam innovatively demonstrate how the *rasa* of devotion (*bhakti rasa*), surprisingly absent from classic dance-related texts, serves as the pivotal framework for expanding on their own interreligious thematic and interpretive possibilities. In contemporary Bharata Natyam, *bhakti rasa* is not just about enhancing religious experience; instead, these dancers choreographically adapt various religious identities and ideas in order to emphasize pluralistic cultural and ethical dimensions in their work. Through the dancing body, multiple religious and secular interpretations fluidly co-exist.

Dancing Bodies of Devotion offers a deep investigation of the embodied aesthetics of Bharata Natyam and an extensive exploration of its interpretive qualities, from Hindu devotional aesthetics to inter-religious experiences in differing geographical contexts by different practitioners. (Pallabi Chakravorty, Swarthmore College) Original, thoughtful, and nuanced, *Dancing Bodies of Devotion* examines religious plurality in contemporary Bharata Natyam. Drawing on a wealth of research, Zubko paints an image of both *bhakti* and Bharata Natyam as dynamic and inclusive. This important study shows us that *bhakti* retains its progressive potential in the modern world and opens up the dance to a multiplicity of religious expressions. Detailed yet broad in scope, this text is a welcome addition to the literature in South Asian studies, dance studies, and religious studies. (Janet O'Shea, University of California Los Angeles) About the Author Katherine C. Zubko is assistant professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina Asheville.