

Review of: "Passing Strange: Radical Chic, Race, Sex, Song, and Dance in "Moanin' Low""

Thangaraja Arumugam¹

¹ Vellore Institute of Technology

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Strengths:

1. **Topic Relevance:** The subject is intriguing and offers a valuable historical perspective on theatrical performances and their socio-cultural implications.
2. **Descriptive Detail:** The vivid description of the performance provides a clear image of the event, which is crucial for understanding its impact and significance.
3. **Contextual Analysis:** You've skillfully placed the performance within the broader context of 1920s America, offering insights into the cultural and racial dynamics of the period.

Areas for Improvement:

1. **Clarification of Thesis:** The abstract mentions that the performance signifies a cultural mutation and is a founding text of radical chic. This is a significant claim that could be elaborated upon in the introduction for clarity. What specifically makes it a "founding text"? How does it signify cultural mutation?
2. **Analysis of Blackface:** While the manuscript recognizes the problematic nature of blackface, it could benefit from a deeper analysis of its implications, particularly in the context of the time. How did contemporary audiences perceive it, and how does that reflect broader societal attitudes?
3. **Cultural and Historical Context:** More background on the cultural significance of the "New Negro" and the concept of "radical chic" could help readers unfamiliar with these terms. How did these concepts influence perceptions of the performance?
4. **Impact and Legacy:** Expand on the long-term impact of this performance. Did it influence subsequent theatrical productions? How is it viewed in retrospect?
5. **Scholarly Engagement:** The manuscript would benefit from engagement with existing scholarship on this topic. How does your analysis compare with or challenge existing interpretations?
6. **Citations and References:** Ensure that all claims, especially those that are historical or interpretative, are properly cited. This will strengthen the manuscript's academic rigor.

Additional Considerations:

Structure: If not already included, sections on the methodology, theoretical framework, and a literature review could enhance the paper.

Conclusion: A strong conclusion that not only summarizes the main points but also suggests areas for further research or implications of your findings would be beneficial.

Overall Impression:

The manuscript tackles an interesting and complex topic with a rich descriptive approach. Enhancing its analytical depth and providing more contextual and theoretical background will make it a more compelling and scholarly piece.