Contemporary dance and the performance of multicultural identities.

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This paper examines ways in which dance performance signifies meanings in multicultural society. Focusing on the dance piece *Kaash,* created in 2002 by the young British choreographer Akram Khan, it considers what happens when such contemporary work created by British Asians enters the public domain through performance. *Kaash*, which in Hindi means 'what if', was a 55 minute long dance piece for five dancers, including Khan himself. It had a commissioned musical score by Nitin Sawhney and a set by the sculptor Anish Kapoor. The choreographer, composer, and visual artist all worked on the common theme of aspects of the Hindu God Shiva. The dance had three sections which explore Shiva's cosmic violence, his meditative nature, and the eternal cycle of creation and destruction which he initiates. *Kaash* not only took its thematic material from Indian mythology but, in developing the movement material for the piece, Khan drew on both European and Indian dance traditions. Much of the critical literature about the classical Indian dance styles stress their antiquity and legitimate their aesthetics in relation to ancient Sanskrit treatises. Furthermore these dance styles carry with them particular nationalistic meanings because of the way these were revived during the 1930s and 1940s as part of the nationalist movement leading to independence from British colonial rule. Avant-garde and contemporary artistic production is largely seen as a modern European and American development. What is interesting about the critical reception that *Kaash* has received however is that it has been located as modern and contemporary rather than traditional and historical. What is significant therefore is not the fact that *Kaash* initiated dialogues between modern western aesthetic ideologies and Indian cultural traditions but in the qualitiative nature of these dialogues and the new kinds of cultural meanings which they have enabled. My aim in this paper is therefore to present a reading of *Kaash*'s relationship with classical Indian dance and contemporary (Western) dance that places it in the context of discourses on multiculturalism and globalisation.

Khan was born in London in 1974. He is a third generation British Asian, his grandparents having emigrated from Bangladesh. Sawhney is also British Asian, while Kapoor, born in Mumbai with an Indian father and an Iraqi Jewish mother, came to London at the age of nineteen to study sculpture. Two of the dancers in *Kaash*, Moya Michael and Shanell Winlock are from South Africa, while Inn Pang Ooi trained in Hong Kong. All of the dancers trained in contemporary dance. Khan himself began his training in Kathak at an early age before studying contemporary dance at De Montfort University[1]

and at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Nearly all those involved in *Kaash* are therefore working with modern Western cultural traditions having come from or having family connections with former British colonies. While these countries are now independent from British rule and the colonial era is past, racist and imperialist attitudes nevertheless still linger. As Historian Catherine Hall has observed: 'Both colonisers and colonised are linked through their histories, histories which are forgotten in the desire to throw off the embarrassing reminders of Empire, to focus instead on the European future' (1996: 67). It is however necessary to recognise how these shared histories have had effects which are still at work within current inequalities and racialised social relations and in discourses of cultural identity. From a liberal point of view, cultural diversity is considered to be of positive value and to be in need of protection and maintenance. If, as Hall proposes, the challenge of the postcolonial moment is to 'build a different kind of future which [is] inclusive rather than exclusive when whiteness would not be a condition of belonging' (ibid.: 76), the problem remains how to do so in ways that do not perpetuate the colonial subordination of non-western cultural traditions. I shall argue that the kinds of dialogues that *Kaash* has initiated can play a role in imagining common elements which are sufficiently central to people's experience of globalisation in multicultural Western countries to permit an appreciation of difference. This paper therefore proceeds as follows. First it considers the relationship between the revival of classical Indian dance styles and the construction of national identities in the Indian subcontinent and for diasporic immigrant communities in the West. I will then consider the way in which *Kaash* negotiates between the conventions and traditions of classical Indian dance and contemporary (western) dance. This negotiation, I will argue, can help us imagine the kinds of common elements that can lead, in the context of modern, multicultural nation states within a globalized world economy, to an appreciation of and openness towards difference.

The classical Indian dance styles performed today were the subject of substantial reforms during the 1930s and 1940s as part of the nationalist movement leading to independence from British colonial rule. In many cases this involved making the dances respectable for Brahmin women to learn and perform in public. Thus white evangelical Christians and Indian nationalist politicians both campaigned for the suppression of the supposedly lascivious Devadasis or temple dancers of Southern India. Part of the process of legitimating these dances also included research into old Sanskrit treatises leading to appreciation of the venerable antiquity of these dance traditions, their conventions and aesthetics. While in some ways this was a process of reclaiming Indian heritage from colonial, orientalizing

ideologies, in other ways it nevertheless reinforced some of these ideologies. Nationalist ideologies often seek legitimacy through reference to history, to a shared heritage and a sense of continuity and common goals. The fact that the Indian post office recently issued a series of stamps each celebrating one of the recognised classical Indian dance styles demonstrates that these dances still occupy a privileged position as signifiers of national identity. However as the Australian philosopher Ross Poole argues the content of nationalisms 'is not determined by history but by ongoing political struggles and debates' which determine the way we interpret the past (1999: 42). Just as our understanding and interpretation of the past is fluid and changing, so notions of nationalism and national identity are not fixed but are processual and evolving. As the Turkish professor of International Relations Umut Özkirimli has proposed, the nationalist discourse can only be effective if it is produced on a daily basis. For the purposes of this paper it is useful to conceptualise this process of daily production as performance.

To see the daily production of nationalist discourse and identity as a performance is to draw on the same theoretical ideas about performative speech acts that Judith Butler has used to propose that gender is performative. Butler has argued that gender is not an expression of the truth or an innate, biological given, but something that is performatively created through repetitive discursive practices.[2] One could say that national identities are created in similar ways. For Butler, gender is an act which a person is incited to perform through interpellation. Butler cites Althusser's proposal of the way in which ideologies hail or interpellate individuals as subjects. Althusser's well known example of this is the situation where a policeman shouts out to someone in the street 'Hey! You!' and the individual replies 'Who? Me?' By acknowledging the call the individual recognizes her or himself as subject to the law. For Butler, the individual is called upon to perform gender and in responding to that call recognizes her or himself as subject to gender norms. Where national identities are concerned, individuals are similarly interpellated into nationalist discourses including those found within movement forms invested with cultural significance.

Recent scholarship in performance studies has been concerned with the liveness of theatrical performance, taking the unique, unrepeatable quality of the moment of performance as its object of investigation rather than the choreographed or dramaturgical text performed. In doing so some scholars have turned, admittedly in a potentially confusing way, to work on performative speech acts to propose an account of performance as a process of social signification enacted through repetitions. Butler's view

of gender performativity supports this. As she has proposed: 'The act one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again' (1990: 277). What both dance performance and the performance of gendered and national identities have in common is that all involve the repetition of discourses that take on a unique significance within the context in which they are performed: within predetermined and regulated limits, these allow for varying possibilities of interpretation by the performers.

The performance of classical Indian dance can therefore be seen as part of the process of constructing national identity. Most scholars agree that nation states are a modern phenomenon produced through modern nation-building processes that include economic, political, and cultural components. It is as a result of these processes that the state can attract the allegiance of its citizens because, as Benedict Anderson has famously observed, a nation is an imagined political community. 'All communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined' (Anderson 1983: 6). In Anderson's account, modern cultural factors enable the possibility for individuals to imagine belonging to this larger political community. Among these he proposes that bureaucratic and academic processes of classification, through censuses, maps, and museums, construct frameworks through which individual citizens understand national identity. Cultural history sometimes functioned as one of these classificatory systems which used to identify what Anderson has called 'secular decadence'. Evidence of the past achievements of a colonised people were sometimes taken as proof: 'that contemporary natives were no longer capable of their putative ancestor's achievements' (Anderson 1991: 181). This in turn seemed to support the need for the present colonial rule. The rediscovery of classical Indian dance styles and their ancient origins can be seen as an attempt to disprove the idea that contemporary Indians were no longer capable of matching their ancestors' achievements. But at the same time the revivers in effect largely left unchallenged the colonial view that the cultures of India and of other colonised countries were pre-modern, because they were supposedly either decadent or primitive. It is in this way that modern Europeans and Americans maintained a virtual monopoly on avant-garde and contemporary artistic production. A problem that young choreographers like Akram Khan, who work with classical Indian dance styles, face is how to

use the aesthetic and expressive potential of these styles without being dismissed as old-fashioned and being considered to produce work that is marginal to contemporary concerns and experience.

Until the 1930s, the classical Indian dance style Kathak was performed exclusively by men, though male Kathaks occasionally and selectively taught some elements of their dancing to low caste women who danced for men's entertainment.[3] With the Bharata Natyam style in Southern India there was a substantial shift from the dancing of the Devadasis to that of educated Brahmin women; but in the north, the tradition of Kathak dance gurus continued without interruption, although since the 1930s their pupils have no longer been exclusively male. From the time of the Moghul Empire in Northern India during the 14th century down to the late colonial period, many male Kathak dancers enjoyed royal patronage. This is the style in which Akram Khan has trained. Khan's guru Pratap Pawar was trained by Birju Maharaj, the leader of the Lucknow school or tradition of Kathak. Birju Maharaj was trained by his father Acchan Maharaj who, during the last decades of the nineteenth century served Raja Chakrandhar Singh of Raigarth and the Nawab of Rampur, while his uncle Bindadin Maharaj danced at the court of Wajid Ali Khan in Lucknow. These were the last important royal patrons of Kathak.

Whereas most classical Indian dance dramas are exclusively based on Hindu theology and philosophy, Kathak assimilated Persian and Arabic influence, both in the poetry and songs to which it is performed and in the ragas and time cycles of its musical accompaniment as a result of patronage by the Islamic Emperor Akbar the Great and his successors. This is perhaps particularly important to Khan whose family background is Muslim rather than Hindu. A Kathak recital usually consists of a solo dancer accompanied by a small group of musicians led by a tabla (drum) player. The first part consists of a series of pieces that use mimetic dancing to perform the content of secular love songs and songs that narrate stories of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. It concludes with a section in which dancer and tabla player improvise complicated abstract rhythms around sixteen count sequences, in dialogue and sometimes in admiring competition with one another. Raymond Massey has characterised these improvisations as 'brilliant variations of rhythm, the beauty of which is heightened by tantalising pauses and lightning pirouettes' (Massey 1989: 77). As well as creating contemporary dance pieces for a group of dancers, Khan still also performs traditional Kathak recitals.[4]

As a child Khan began learning Kathak from Pratap Pawar in London. Shobana Jeyasingh, a contemporary British choreographer from an older generation to Khan who works with the Bharata

Natyam style of classical Indian dance, remembers that her parents wanted her to learn dance as a child: 'I think it has to do with those political reasons why Indians such as my parents felt that in dance and music one had some image of India which they wanted to hold very precious' (Jeyasingh 1998: 52). For Indian immigrants in Western countries, to learn and perform classical Indian dance styles such as Kathak and Bharata Natyam is one way of embodying Indian cultural traditions and Hindu moral and religious teachings, and thus maintaining a sense of roots despite the experience of displacement. One approach through which scholars have sought explanations for this maintenance of distant cultural roots draws on the recent theorisation of diaspora. The term diaspora was initially used to describe the way Jewish people, after their expulsion from Israel in the Roman period, were dispersed across the Eastern and Western world while continuing to maintain their religious and cultural traditions. The idea of multiple communities of dispersed peoples maintaining common identity across borders has recently been taken up to discuss other groups: these include the descendents of African slaves in the Americas as well as other émigré communities of Chinese, Greek, Irish, and Indian people. Recent discussions have focused on the particular consciousness that diasporic groups have developed. As Anthropologist James Clifford has observed, diasporic cultural forms 'are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to host cultures and their norms' (1993: 307). British immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, as they learn and perform dance styles such as Kathak and Bharata Natyam can therefore be seen as simultaneously both accommodating and resisting dominant British culture and its norms. I maintain however that Khan, Kapoor, Sawhney, and others who create contemporary work that draws on classical Indian dance are doing more than this, and actually contributing to the richness and diversity of contemporary British culture. *Kaash* has received widespread international acclaim, with nearly 200 performances in over 20 countries during the last 18 months. Significantly it has been presented in some countries through the auspices of the British Council, who for example helped promote a tour of India by Akram Khan and his company in December 2003.

The starting point for Khan, Kapoor, and Sawhney's collaboration was aspects of the Hindu God Shiva, although in the end each exercised different degrees of freedom in interpreting this. Sawhney's score for *Kaash* used explores the interface between western techno dance music and the common musical time cycles of traditional Indian music. He used a seven beat cycle that is associated with the vigorous, violent, explosive aspects of Shiva. Kapoor's set consists of a translucent, backlit backdrop

with a black rectangular shape painted on it. When illuminated in greys, blues or, at the end, a deep red, this central shape seems, as Kapoor himself has suggested, like a window in the stage onto a void. Kapoor talks about this in terms of Eastern and Western secular and religious philosophy, as well as ideas from astrophysics about black holes. The set thus directly relates to some of Kapoor's drawings and to works like his 1988-89 sculpture *Adam*. This is a rough-hewn, sandstone block in which a large cavity has been excavated through a precisely cut rectangular slot. The cavity has been coloured with dry, black pigment so that the darkened space seems much larger that the block containing it. In *Kaash*, the backdrop and Aideen Malone's lighting design create a similar effect.

Although only some of the dancers in *Kaash* have solos, they are all dressed the same and the choreography does not single Khan out as a star[5] so that his dance company functions as an ensemble. Formal developments in *Kaash* emerge through interactive and simultaneous movement. This is very different from the way a solo dancer in traditional Kathak programmes mimes a story by performing one role after another or passing back and forward between them in quick succession. Traditionally performed in a palace interior where dancer, musicians and spectators are all relatively close to one another, the dancer uses arm movements, gestures and sculptural poses to bring to life the space immediately around his body. In *Kaash* the convention of the proscenium arch separates dancers from spectators and visually frames the dancer's floor patterns, creating a sense of space and depth within the stage. For example, in the last section dancers form lines and sweep in formation across the floor in a striking manner: As Zoe Anderson, dance critic of the London *Independent* newspaper, put it: 'In one great arc the dancers shift from the side to the front of the stage, the line of people moving as if on a hinge' (11-12-2003). Stage space is opened up and refocused in ways that advance the structural development of the choreography as a whole.

Kaash contains passages of lightning pirouettes and tantalizing pauses that recall Kathak improvisations and is largely concerned with structural and mathematical elements. There are nevertheless a few components that hint at a hidden narrative or symbolism. Two mudras, or hand gestures, from classical Indian dance recur in a number of places, often appearing in momentary pauses between dynamic movement sequence. Khan has said he chose these mudras specifically for this piece, 'because they were hand gestures that related directly to Shiva so there was a sense of aesthetic beauty but also a purpose to these gestures even though they didn't say a story in sequence' (Khan 2002, www.londondance.com). In one recurring motif, the fingers and thumb are wedged tightly together

with the hand pointing down and held at arms length above the head then slowly lowered in a tense arc towards the side of the body. At the start of the piece, while the audience are still settling into their seats, Inn Pang Ooi comes on stage and stands still with his arms by his side and his back to the audience. After the house lights go down and the stage lights come up, one of the female dancers comes and whispers something into his ear. At the end of the piece Ooi stands in the same position and the same dancer returns and again whispers, suggesting that the piece as a whole is cyclical.[6] There is another allusive motif: in a duet in the slow central section Khan gently passes the palm of his hand across Moya Michael's forehead and down over her eyes. These narrative motifs, like the use of the two Indian mudras, are signs that hint allusively at meanings that remain undefined while contributing to the overall aesthetic and emotional ambience of *Kaash*. It is in this richly complex and multi-layered way that *Kaash* draws on traditions and conventions from both classical Indian and contemporary dance allowing a productive dialogue to develop between them.

This dialogue presented the danced markers of Indian identities not as static signs of origin but as signifiers of the fluid nature of contemporary multicultural experience within the globalized world economy. As I suggested earlier, what is therefore significant is not the fact that *Kaash* includes elements of both Kathak and contemporary dance but how these elements interact within it. One way of looking at this interaction is through ideas about hybridity which have been developed by postcolonial theorists as part of a process of rethinking racist and imperialist attitudes that still linger from the colonial past. Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Homi Bhabha and others have argued that the rupture of colonial and diasporic dislocation has inevitably created situations in which both colonial European and colonised non-European cultural traditions have been reworked and synthesised in order to create new, hybrid forms.[7] These allowed expression of responses to the lived experience of ruptured and dislocated subjectivities. Within the context of globalisation, these can mediate experiences that are common to both immigrant and host communities.

Theories of diaspora and hybridity both emphasise the importance of culture in the formation of national and multicultural identities, and they argue that culture has the potential to bring about social and political transformations. A diasporic account of the teaching and performance of classical Indian dance styles by members of immigrant communities would stress continuities of practice across geographical boundaries. A hybrid account identifies differences which are not only interpreted in terms of accommodation with and resistance to host cultures but also evaluated for their potential to

suggest new possibilities for egalitarian co-existence. The sociologist Floya Anthias has warned of the dangers of overestimating the potential of hybrid cultural forms to bring about social change. She points out that while white English adolescents can be attracted to cultural forms that synthesize white culture with the new cultures of minorities, the resulting hybridised youth culture does not necessarily produce positive effects on racialised relations (Anthias 2001: 628).[8] While acknowledging that ethnic identities function as a kind of social marker, Anthias points out that class and gender differences interplay with those of race to produce complex forms of hierarchy (ibid.: 635). Individuals are also positioned through their access to resources, and this includes not just economic factors but also access to political and cultural resources. Anthias therefore proposes that the lived practices through which multicultural identities are performed involve a dialogue between individual agency and the social, political, and cultural hierarchies within which ethnicities are positioned .

Just as individuals negotiate their position within complex forms of hierarchies, so dancers and choreographers negotiate their position within complex interpretative frameworks and aesthetic hierarchies. One thing that Khan has said in a number of interviews and post-performance discussions is that he doesn't like his work being described as a fusion of Indian and western dance. To describe his work as a fusion, he feels, suggests that he devised a formula on an intellectual level with which he then created a fixed vocabulary of contemporary Kathak dance movement. Instead each performance of *Kaash* shows part of an ongoing process that is experiential. Khan says that 'as a result of going to university and studying contemporary dance, my body got confused so my body started making decisions for itself' (2002 londondance.com). In saying that his body became confused, Khan was recognizing that the effects of early training never disappear. Rather than trying to consciously combine these technical approaches, he chose instead to focus deeply on the internal, somatic sources of dance movement within his neuro-skeleto-muscular continuum. To try to identify these sources as clearly as possible became a way of letting himself gradually discover how he could move. He has done this on his own and in collaboration with others.[9] When selecting dancers for *Kaash*, Khan decided not to use performers who had trained in classical Indian dance. 'I feel that classical dancers have a boundary' he has observed, 'and it is difficult to break that boundary in order to risk going into new territory' (2002 londondance.com). With *Kaash* Khan felt he did not have sufficient time to do this. Choosing contemporary-trained dancers instead, he taught them dance material in a Kathak style

and waited until they experienced a kind of confusion. The resulting openness to new movement ideas was the starting point for making the movement material for *Kaash*.

Whereas dance choreographers in the United States during the Twentieth century created works in a particular technique which dancers learnt and which usually bore the choreographer's own name -- for example the Cunningham and Graham techniques -- European dancers from Mary Wigman to Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker have generally gone back to basics with each new piece and developed a unique way of moving in response to an individual source of inspiration. This is what Khan did in *Kaash*. The western avant-garde tradition particularly values the abandonment of the known and familiar in order to try and imagine new, previously inconceivable possibilities for aesthetic experience.

As a teenager, Akram Khan performed the key role of the Boy in Peter Brook's international theatre production of the *Mahabharata* (1985). Brook is a director famous for his proposal that all that is needed to make theatre is an empty space. In pieces like *Mahabharata*, he has also brought together performers who came from Eastern and Western performance traditions. Scholars like Richard Schechner and Philip Zarrilli have suggested that there are similarities between European avant-garde approaches to actor training and the teaching methods of some Indian performance forms (Schechner 1993, Zarrilli 1984). Drawing on Zarilli's work, Purnimah Shah has analyzed the teaching of Kathak. When Kathak gurus teach pupils the dance mime style of narrating stories, they initially teach them to imitate a range of different narrative situations and then wait for them to assimilate these. Shah argues that the aim is to provoke a creative breakthrough, after which the pupil will attain 'a heightened integration of the intellectual and intuitive powers of imagination, the inner intent of creation, and mastery in physicalising the imagined intent' (Shah 1998: 6-7). The pupil learns to focus their energy into conveying emotions with humility rather than allowing the expression of an egocentric desire to make an impact on stage. This humility allows the dancer to perform the role of the Gods and to change convincingly from one role to another. 'Only after an inner control of one's ego is achieved' Shah writes, 'does the disciple become capable of transcending expressive states from mere human to superhuman or divine imagery' (ibid.: 7). Khan's own account of using his sense of confusion to find a deeper synthesis and then using this as a way of teaching his dancers to do the same could be seen as a creative breakthrough that is similar to the one which Shah has analysed in Kathak teaching. *Kaash* expresses superhuman and divine imagery in non-traditional ways. The discovery of new and

previously inconceivable possibilities through creative breakthroughs resembles the emergence of postcolonial hybridity out of rupture and dislocation.

To conclude, the highly regarded New York dance critic of the *Village Voice*, Deborah Jowitt, praised what she called 'the superb hour-long *Kaash*' whose movement style she characterized as follows: '[Khan] hints at Kathak's strong, rhythmic footwork, and he designs the body in space with a linear precision akin to that of the North Indian style; he also has recourse to all the compositional strategies and movement possibilities of Western modern dance. But nothing in his choreography looks like traditional vocabulary' (Jowitt 2003). Khan's guru, Pratap Pawar said in a television documentary that though *Kaash* is a contemporary piece, its strength lay in what Khan had learnt from Kathak. The London-based dancer and the New York writer were not only saying the same thing, but also demonstrating that they each felt that they fully understood *Kaash* and valued it very highly. Because *Kaash* was perceived as modern, Khan was able to present work that developed from his deep understanding of Kathak traditions without these being subordinated and marginalised as markers of historical origin. This is significant because, as I have demonstrated, multicultural identities are not fixed and static but processual and evolving. *Kaash* has played a role in the reproduction of ideas about multicultural identities through the fluid and responsive dialogue which it has initiated between Kathak and contemporary dance, and avant-garde Western and traditional Indian approaches to performance pedagogy. The enormous demand for Khan's work demonstrates the relevance of this dialogue to the experience of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds in our transnational, globalized times.

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[1] As one of his lecturers, I taught him on four courses while he was studying at De Montfort.

[2] Butler has warned against a 'bad reading' of her work which suggests 'I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other' (Butler 1992: 83). 'My whole point' she has written, 'was that the very formation of subjects, the very formation of persons, presupposes gender in a certain way – that gender is not chosen and that "performativity" is not radical choice and it's not voluntarism'(ibid.: 94).

[3] For a fuller discussion of the relationship between Nautch dancers and Kathak, see Shah 1998: 15. Shah says the women were called *nachnis* a name which the British mispronounced as nautch. Alternatively Shanta Serbjeet Singh says nautch is a mispronunciation of *nach* or *nachna*, the Hindi word derived from the Sanskrit *nritya*, meaning dance (Singh 1997: 42).

[4] The fact that the history of Kathak includes periods of adaptation and synthesis through contact in the north of India with non-Hindu cultures and because its practice includes the performance of abstract,

improvised movement, it is arguably better suited to a dialogue or accommodation with western contemporary dance traditions than other classical Indian dance styles.

[5] Many of the dance critics who have written about *Kaash* have singled him out as the star. Having seen *Kaash* three times, I think the criticism that has been made more than once that he dances in a way that singles him out is unfounded (e.g. Roy 2003, Mackrell 2002).

[6] There is also a moment in the middle of the piece when a dancer whispers in another dancer's ear.

[7] Gilroy (1993) has looked at diasporic consciousness of people of African origin in Europe and the United states - which he calls the Black Atlantic - in terms of E. B. Du Bois's notion of double consciousness. Stuart Hall (1996) has considered the creolised subjectivities of displaced African and Asian Indian peoples that developed within the colonial and post-colonial Caribbean. Homi Bhabha has proposed that these new hybrid forms exist in fluid, potentially subversive 'in-between' spaces brought into being between the fixed identifications of older pre-colonial European and non-European cultures. In the postcolonial moment, these new forms open up, as Bhabha puts it: 'the possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy' (1994: 4).

[8] The acid test of hybridity, Anthias argues, 'lies in the response of culturally dominant groups, not only in terms of incorporating (or co-opting) cultural products of marginal or subordinate groups, but in being open to transforming and abandoning some of their own central cultural systems and practices of hegemony' (Anthias 2001: 630).

[9] Khan has said that the English dance artist Jonathan Burrows helped clarify his thinking. Burrows is also particularly interested in the somatic sources of dance movement. Together they created a duet, *Duo*, in 1999 (Sanders 2003: 21).