

ONE

PERSPECTIVE

KRITTEKA GREGORY

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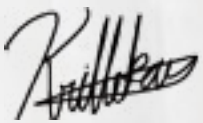
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# ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgements is made in the acknowledgements.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kritteka Gregory', written in a cursive style.

Kritteka Gregory

# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The researcher/author/designer asserts the intellectual and moral copyright of the creative work *One Perspective*, contained in this dissertation.

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Kritteka Gregory

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# ABSTRACT

*One Perspective* is an essay film that investigates notions of home and identity from an immigrant's perspective. The project explores how an essayistic film can be used to examine the in-between, intricate and chaotic space an individual is positioned in, as they attempt to negotiate and reconcile two different cultures.

An investigation of the subjects of diaspora and an immigrant's sense of identity and home, form the underpinnings of this project. It questions how an autoethnographic enquiry be implied in an essay film to investigate notions of home as it relates to an immigrants experience.

Using autoethnography as the methodological framework, the 'I' is made the subject of research in an effort to articulate a personal narrative of travelling through cultural paradigms.

This project draws inspiration from films such as *San Soleil*<sup>1</sup> and *Night and Fog*<sup>2</sup>, to understand the complexities of portraying an essayistic formatted film. I aim to initiate a conversation with viewers to reflect upon their own narrative.

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1 Marker 1983.

2 Resnais 1955.

# INTRODUCTION

This exegesis presents the critical framework and methodologies employed in *One Perspective*. It provides examples through filmmakers and theories that set the boundaries within this project. This exegesis has three chapters:

## 1. Positioning Statement

This chapter positions the 'I' as the subject of research because the inquiry draws upon subjective experiences. It details my experience as an immigrant and the process of migration as I travel between cultural paradigms. It outlines the reasons for undertaking this project.

## 2. Critical Framework

This chapter is divided in two. The first section examines the theories within *One Perspective*. The project begins with an explanation of diaspora and explores an overview of the theory of home and identity.

The second section of this chapter discusses the medium of an essay film and the reasons for choosing this medium in this exegesis. The chapter also considers Chris Marker's film *San Soleil*, for its influence on the development of *One Perspective*.

## 3. Methodology

The third chapter outlines the development process and the methods that have been employed in this project. I discuss the experimentations that have influenced the film, the decision-making of the shot process and the editing that affected the production of *One Perspective*.

## POSITIONING STATEMENT

I immigrated to New Zealand in 1999 from Chennai, India. I moved away from my country of birth at the impressionable age of nine, and have been grappling with the profound changes this move created within me since then. Now, at the age of 24, the impact of that move still resonates through my life. My initial years in New Zealand were spent as an observer followed by a slow integration into a lifestyle and culture that was alien to me. As the years went past, my adaption to this new way of life brought with it a feeling that New Zealand had now become home. This is the journey that initiated my research project. Using an autoethnographic framework through subjective film investigation, I have researched how immigration impacts people and how it shapes their perception of themselves and society for the rest of their lives. I ask how an autoethnographic inquiry may be applied in a subjective film to investigate notions of home as it relates to an immigrant's experience.

Soon after the sense of New Zealand being 'home' finally settled in, I was forced to reevaluate my notions around what 'home' really meant. I have travelled<sup>3</sup> across the world as an athlete and immigrant, returning to India for both personal and professional reasons. With the re-exploration of India, I have reflected upon the complexity of my existence in this world and how I perceive the world outside me. This reflection led me to the realization that the word 'home' operates on multiple levels of meaning. Home is fragile and dislocated. Home is a fluid idea that moulds itself to the new experiences and cultures it is exposed to. Home is a jigsaw puzzle, with each piece a fragment that can originate from a different cultural experience.



Figure 1. Siva Kumar, *Leaving India*, 24 March, 1999. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Chennai, India.

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<sup>3</sup> I have travelled across Europe and Asia from 2011-2013 as an athlete. The travels I refer to through this exegesis refers to the two years of travelling. My travel schedule involved a minimum stay of one week in most countries before moving on to the next.



Figure 2. Kritteka Gregory, *Home in Anna Nagar*, 5 February, 2011. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Chennai, India.



Kritteka Gregory, Figure 3. *Home in Auckland*, 16 April 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Auckland, New Zealand.

I first encountered the idea of diaspora in the beginning stages of my research and found that it applied to my own situation. Diaspora is used to describe people who have “originated in a land other than which it currently resides...”<sup>4</sup> The term diaspora can mean different things. I will use Vertovec’s explanation of diaspora as a type of consciousness as my starting point. This pushed me to reflect upon how I could communicate the idea of ‘me’ in the design of the project. I understand that we live in a global world and this means that while every immigrant has their own unique story, all immigrant stories have shared experiences. Having personally observed this, my interest was piqued and I delved further into my autoethnographic inquiry.

Autoethnography is a subjective research methodology that allows the researcher to gain a cultural understanding of the self and others. The method involves the researcher using their tacit understandings and reflecting upon their own stories to gain a third perspective.<sup>5a</sup> This method of inquiry has allowed me to capture my own experiences and put them under a microscope so that I may be able to view New Zealand and India from an outsider’s perspective.

*One Perspective* is a subjective film that explores the notions of home from a first person narrative. In the process of creating the film, I began to question what it is to be in this world as an Indian and as a New Zealander. The production of this film has helped me to negotiate the empty space I deal with as I move between different cultural dimensions. As a filmmaker I was challenged to narrate my story in a way that would enable viewers to understand the web of ideas that connects our identities in one paradigm. I knit together experiences, thoughts and feelings to make sense of this diasporic situation.

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4 Vertovec 1997, 277.

5 Chang 2008.

# CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

*“The banyan tree has thrust down roots in soil which is stony, sandy, marshy – and has somehow drawn sustenance from diverse unpromising conditions. Yet the banyan tree itself has changed; its similarity to the original growth is still there, but it has changed in response to its different environment”*<sup>6</sup>

- Hugh Tinker

This notion of the banyan tree carried me through this project. It was the turning point and I kept returning to it through my research. It informs my practice and the critical framework.

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the critical frameworks that I have used as pillars to position the theoretical aspects of this project. Here, I will discuss notions of diaspora and double consciousness in addition to which I will look at the complicated and indeterminate form of the essay film. I shall review the modes relevant to my project, and films that inform the development of *One Perspective*.

The film is ambiguous and attempts to visualize the complicated experiences of living an intercultural life. Through *One Perspective* I hope to encourage the audience to reflect upon their own life narratives, be they immigrants or not.

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<sup>6</sup> Tinker 1977, 19.

## Diaspora

Diaspora is a concept that emerged as a result “of the Babylonian Exile of 586 BC after the Babylonians conquered the Kingdom of Judah, [and] part of the Jewish population was deported...”<sup>7</sup> It was a word whose definition began to drift, much like my project. It is a term used for individuals<sup>8</sup> or a group of people who reside in a country that is not their own. Studies of diaspora have evolved over the years from a negative connotation to an abstract definition. Vertovec discusses diaspora as a type of consciousness “describing a variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity.”<sup>9</sup> For example, a type of diasporic situation is the displacement that individuals or groups experience as they realize the cultural differences that sets them apart. In the present age, the term diaspora had evolved further and denotes more than the concept of a set of people being dispersed from their original homeland. Roy writes that diaspora can also be “reconceptualis[ed]... as a deterritorialised community disengaged from spatiality whether it is defined as a place of origin, continent, nation or region.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, diaspora is not only a physical experience but also a psychological experience of immigration.

The book *India in New Zealand*,<sup>11</sup> discusses Indians in New Zealand, the history of their migration and the New Zealand-Indian identity. The book includes interviews that were conducted between 1994 and 1996 as part of a Youth and Family Project. Despite these interviews being held almost a decade ago, their findings regarding feelings and emotions are still relevant today. It was concluded after the interviews that an individual's ideas about migration shaped how they perceived themselves. The interviews mention that immigrants frequently switch between cultures. Gwyn William, in *India in New Zealand*<sup>12</sup>, refers to this as ‘code switching’<sup>13</sup> When I am in India, my behavior or style of clothes change in an attempt to belong, but if I am in New Zealand I am less restricted. The idea of being lost in between two worlds where two cultures overlap and give birth to conflict.<sup>14</sup> It is an internal battle where we need “to negotiate and seek a balance between ‘where you're from’ and ‘where you're at.’”<sup>15</sup>

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7 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. “Diaspora”, accessed July 27, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/161756/Diaspora>.

8 A person is an individual irrespective of any cultural identity they might have) needs to balance both worlds.

9 Vertovec 1997, 284.

10 Roy 2008, 2.

11 Bandyopadhyay, Sekhara 2010.

12 Bandyopadhyay, Sekhara 2010.

13 Bandyopadhyay ed 2010, 135.

14 Bandyopadhyay ed 2010, 135.

15 Bandyopadhyay ed 2010, 135.

## Notion of Home

*"[Migrant] lives in the clarity of the fact of being, not in mysteries. He is both a window through which those who have been left behind may see the world and the mirror in which they may see themselves, even if in distortion."*<sup>16</sup>

- Vilém Flusser

In the above quote, Flusser<sup>17</sup> presents the idea of the immigrant as a transparent figure filled with experiences. The physical experience of immigration changes perceptions of home. John Di Stefano suggests that the "notion of home is perhaps best understood as a sense of being between places, rather than being rooted definitely in one singular place."<sup>18</sup> *One Perspective* investigates the sense of being between two places. The subject of home can be interpreted in different ways. Home can either be a physical or a psychological notion. As the frequency of my travels increased, my private notions about what home meant also transformed. If home could be called a place of comfort, my comfort of home began to grow in the interstitial space<sup>19</sup> of the airport. It became routine to go through customs and immigration. Airports became a place of stability and familiarity. "It is the tension of knowing both worlds and never being able to arrive or entirely depart"<sup>20</sup> that creates the difficulty of belonging to one place. This space of tension was a space that I no longer needed to navigate as long as I was cocooned in the safety of an airport. As I began to find the comfort of home in these nameless airports, my dual identity of a New Zealand- Indian began to develop and evolve in new ways.



Figure 4. Kriteka Gregory, *Sydney Airport*, 3 March, 2012. Private Collection of Kriteka Gregory, Sydney, Australia. (still image)



Figure 5. Kriteka Gregory, *Turkey Airport*, 23 November, 2011. Private Collection of Kriteka Gregory, Istanbul, Turkey.

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16 Flusser and Finger 2003, 114.

17 Flusser is a philosopher and a writer born in Czechoslovakia, his work was influenced by existentialism and phenomenology.

18 Di Stefano 2002, 38.

19 Interstitial space refers to the space in-between. This term is used to define the limbo I am in between two worlds.

20 Di Stefano 2002, 40.

The diasporic experiences cause an individual to deal with two identities, that of the host country and that of their homeland. It is this cultural difference and the process of migration that creates conflict and confusion. *One Perspective* explores two identities between Indian and New Zealand culture.

Ideally a person must 'choose' what constitutes 'their' culture, and what it means to be 'Indian', as they craft their individuated selves. Growing up Indian is simultaneously a process of becoming one self and finding one self in society. It entails the individual cobbling together of identity elements drawn from a cultural pool, a sort of conscious bricolage enacted by the self. An individual must become and remain conscious of their culture because culture is such a thing that it may be 'lost'.<sup>21</sup>

The question of what it means to be 'Indian' in a multicultural society has become increasingly vague. The identity I am forming is being crafted from the experience of travelling around the world. It is not the specific notion of what it means to be Indian or a New Zealander, but what it means to be 'me'. The quote suggests an individual should be conscious of their culture so as to not lose it. During my repeated travels to India, I began to admire the richness of the land that I had left behind. This admiration stemmed from the fact that the passage of time had made me an outsider to what it meant to be an Indian. The culture and its traditions had become alien to my eyes, leading me to the realisation that I was indeed losing my culture. I was no longer an "Indian" but had constructed my identity by piecing together various aspects of my experience, much like the way an individual builds their home.

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21 Bandyopadhyay 2010,122.

## Double Consciousness

W.E.B Du Bois uses the idea of double consciousness to describe the internal battle that occurs when an individual is faced with reconciling two different cultural identities. The early 20th century, American sociologists used this term in the context of black Americans who were devalued and alienated by society until laws changed as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. Double consciousness is a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others...one never feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts...”<sup>22</sup> Double consciousness goes beyond race and is also experienced through immigrants leaving their homelands. The two identities are not united, so the immigrant seeks equilibrium between both identities. The double consciousness in *One Perspective* is the two identities I struggle with through my journey. The two sometimes conflict in terms of culture and, on occasion, assist in understanding the other culture from a new perspective. There is a constant negotiation between the two selves, which leads to a questioning of the two identities in conflict. Figure 6 includes a video clip from *One Perspective*, as I deal with the idea of two minds.

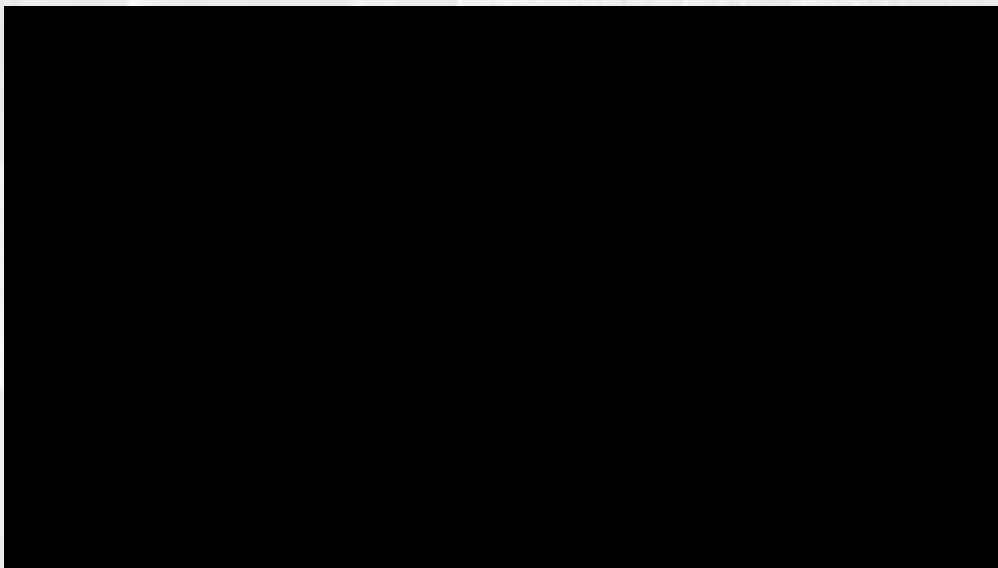


Figure 6. Gregory, Kritteka “Two Minds” (video clip). Directed by Kritteka Gregory.

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<sup>22</sup> Du Bois 1903, 9.

## Identity

The notion of identity is a vast, complicated and questioned subject. Identity in *One Perspective* is constantly shifting. My identity began to lose shape and form during my travels, from being an Indian-New Zealander to a cosmopolitan individual. As my travels continued I realised the in-between place I was in. This project therefore explores the idea of a shifting identity. Stuart Hall quotes Roger Scruton's words that resonate with this project and me. The quote portrays the individual as a being that has a sense of belonging; they need to belong somewhere, whether it is a country or a religion. He quotes:

The condition of man requires that the individual, while he exists and acts as an autonomous being, does so only because he can first identify himself as something greater – as a member of a society, group, class or nation, of some arrangement to which he may not attach a name, but which he recognizes instinctively as home.<sup>23</sup>

For me, being Indian was my first sense of identity. India was home. That idea was broken when I immigrated to New Zealand. More complications arose as I travelled back and forth, which led me to question my identity.

The chapter *An Introduction to Modern Societies*<sup>24</sup> explores three concepts of identity. The two concepts I identified with were, the sociological subject and post-modern subject. The sociological subject explores the “interaction between self and society.”<sup>25</sup> It is through the experiences with the cultural world that the identity is allowed to take shape as the ties between the self and the society strengthen. It “bridges the gap between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’”<sup>26</sup> – the gap that I am aiming to portray in *One Perspective*.

Through these experiences such as this, the notion of identity creates a web where “the subject, previously experienced as having a unified and stable identity, is becoming fragmented.”<sup>27</sup> The article confirms my understanding of identity, as being unstable. Hall explains that sense of identities can change at different times depending on the situation. Regardless of dealing with cultural experiences, one's identity is always shifting.

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23 Hall 1996, 612.

24 Hall 1996.

25 Hall 1996, 596.

26 Hall 1996, 597.

27 Hall 1996, 598.

*One Perspective* examines how an identity is shifting between being an Indian and being a New Zealander and also brings to light how a third identity is developed during travels. As a consequence, the question develops from, “what is my identity,” to asking, “what is it to have multiple identities that float around and are not able to be pinned down.” Identity drifts in a limbo. Identity takes on a complex role that cannot be defined by a simple description. Instead it depends on the individuals and whether he/she identifies himself/herself as an Indian or New Zealander or both. It also calls into question whether or not identity has to be defined. The ‘I’ in this project chooses to explore the notion of identity as ‘the self has questioned it.’ Through the journal writing process, I have been trying to figure out whether I identify myself as what others see me or do I identify myself depending on how I feel? There cannot be one right answer since it is a personal ever-changing choice. To gain a clear idea, *One Perspective* creates a conversation with the self and the viewers in the hope of gaining a clearer perspective on the notion of identity.

Filmmakers such as Mira Nair have grappled with the notion of identity through the medium of film. Mira Nair is a director, who has created films such as *Mississippi Masala*<sup>28</sup> and *The Namesake*.<sup>29</sup> Her films are strongly rooted in Indian culture. Some of the chosen films explore the cultural differences migrant’s experience. For example, *The Namesake* is a film about an immigrant family settling New York City. The mother and the father struggle to keep their Indian culture alive with their children. This film focuses specifically on the Indian diaspora and double consciousness, which occurs with the protagonist Gogol. I was able to relate to the film in certain aspects, such as when the son would not pay attention to his family’s needs and goes about his life as an individual. Yet the cultural bond is evident in scenes such as when Gogol brings home his girlfriend and informs her beforehand what to do and what not to do. It is clear that there are cultural differences between what is expected ‘inside’ the home and ‘outside’ the home. The theme of belonging comes through strongly, because it is apparent in the film how Gogol is suspended between the two worlds, as he does not want to disturb the balance between both. In a similar vein, the ability to have dual sets of behavior for ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the home allows me to mould myself towards the form that is expected in New Zealand rather than abide by what I have been taught ‘at home’ by my parents. In effect, I end up in a space where I micromanage the two different aspects of my identity so that the equilibrium between my two worlds is not put in jeopardy.

This film was useful in the sense that it was a visual interpretation of the Indian diaspora, for example the confusion that occurs within Gogol is depicted in a crisp manner. The film allowed me to understand the hardships of my parents of settling in New Zealand. It shows me some possible approaches to portraying a story involving the Indian diaspora and how migrants deal with new cultures. Nair has illustrated the themes of alienation and belonging, which I aim for in *One Perspective* in order to portray my experience and contribute a fresh perspective exploring the issue of diaspora in New Zealand. The form that I chose to portray this balancing act that I live in is the essay film. The uncertain nature of the form has given me a fluid platform to deconstruct notions of home to explore my own identity.

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28 Nair 1991.

29 Nair 2006.

## The Essay Film

The essay film is a genre that, while difficult to pin down, allows the filmmaker to record his/her journey from a subjective point of view opening a discourse between the viewer and the filmmaker. The term 'essay' and 'essay film' correlate as the notion of an essay film is derived from essays. In an essay the writer sets out to explore his chosen topic. The author is not certain about the conclusion of the essay as the writer himself is in the process of interrogating the topic. Through the comparison of literature to film, essay films emerged.

Han Richter was one of the first to note essay film in *The Film Essay: A New Form of Documentary Film*.<sup>30</sup> It explores a new genre of film, which allows the filmmaker to "make the 'invisible' world of thoughts and ideas visible on screen."<sup>31</sup> From the essay, it progressed into photo essay, which took the viewers into a new dimension in which authors were able to explore the depths of their stories. The essay film began to emerge as an experimental film. Academics have attempted to define an essay film and there have been certain characteristics mentioned by Phillip Lopate<sup>32</sup> that shall be used as a model within this project:

- "Essay film must have words."<sup>33</sup> Lopate explains if visual images are portrayed, essay films should have words whether it is subtitles or inter-titled.
- "The text [body of work] must represent a single voice."<sup>34</sup> The film should be from one perspective, even if the director uses quotes or other artists' ideas.
- "The text must represent an attempt to work out some reasoned line of discourse on a problem."<sup>35</sup>
- "The text must impart more than information; it must have a strong, personal point of view."<sup>36</sup> Lopate explains the usual documentary voice-over comes across as journalistic rather than essayistic. I do not agree with this statement, as the voice-over is a personal point of view in an essay film, but the text is not required to be personal. In *Night and Fog*,<sup>37</sup> we do not see text that is personalized, rather it merely informs the viewers of the whereabouts of the location.
- "The texts language should be as eloquent, well written and interesting as possible."<sup>38</sup> The text and the voice-over work together. The video is in first-person perspective, which might be similar to documentary style, but the difference lies in the content.

The essay film redefines the self and portrays to the world who you are, while simultaneously distancing yourself from who you are, and evaluating and reflecting, which results in you recreating the self (you). This form of film is constructed through the filmmaker's perspective and offers the viewers insight into the director's realm of thought and narrative. The essayist allows the answers to emerge somewhere else. *One Perspective* conveys the notions of home and identity while travelling between two realms; I negotiate my thoughts and feelings of being away from home, and grapple with a new sense of belonging in a new land. Through the medium of an essay film, sub-genres emerge with techniques that I chose to adopt in my own filmmaking.

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30 Richter 1940.

31 Walter 2003.

32 Lopate 1996.

33 Lopate 1996, 246.

34 Lopate 1996, 246.

35 Lopate 1996, 246.

36 Lopate 1996, 246.

37 Lopate 1996, 246.

38 Lopate 1996, 246.

## Essayistic Travel

*Travel essay discovers another self in the process of thinking through new or old environments and thinking of self as a different environment.*<sup>39</sup>

– Corrigan

Essayistic travel was a relevant genre for *One Perspective*. Corrigan mentions “epistolary voice of a traveller becomes a drifting and dislocated voice – an absent subject in foreign lands, an alien at home, a mind exiled from nature – exploring interior and exterior geographies of everyday life...”<sup>40</sup> The reflective voice in *One Perspective* is a response to the voice referred to by Corrigan that drifts in and out of the film. The idea of experiencing a place, or a culture, is a way to understand the world and to reconstruct my identity.

Corrigan distinguishes the difference between travelogues and excursions. Travelogues are not structured around an argument.<sup>41</sup> Bruzzi argues that the film is a log of events through travels with no set narrative.<sup>42</sup> An excursion film “maps that incomplete journey in a way that also describes or suggests how the excursion has fundamentally altered and destabilized the travelling subject.”<sup>43</sup> Excursive travel is explained as though one loses themselves through exploring different locations and spaces. Corrigan writes that the explorer will become overwhelmed with the space and the constant effort of locating himself/herself within that space. Essayistic travellers “become more often than not, transformed and undone as they struggle to stabilize themselves psychologically and linguistically in space...”<sup>44</sup> I, the traveller, have become lost through the journey, as every country has had something to offer. It was piecing together the experiences that overwhelmed me. It is from travelogues and excursive films that one is able to draw inspiration and articulate the experience subjectively. An alternative element of subjectivity is the idea of space. For Michel de Certeau,<sup>45</sup> space can be experienced as different versions of “the believable, the memorable, and the primitive.”<sup>46</sup> The believable is what makes possible ‘spatial appropriations’, the memorable is ‘what is recalled in them’ and the primitive is what is ‘structured in them’. De Certeau’s<sup>47</sup> model is to travel and carry out his exploration along the way.

Though the essay film is not clearly defined, the sub-genre proposed as the excursive essay fits within this research project. The journey began with my immigration to New Zealand. From there, my travels around the world and travelling back to India, *One Perspective* has settled within an excursive model.

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39 Corrigan 2011, 105.

40 Corrigan 2011, 105-6.

41 Corrigan 2011.

42 Corrigan 2011, 111.

43 Corrigan 2011,112.

44 Corrigan 2011, 120.

45 Corrigan 2011.

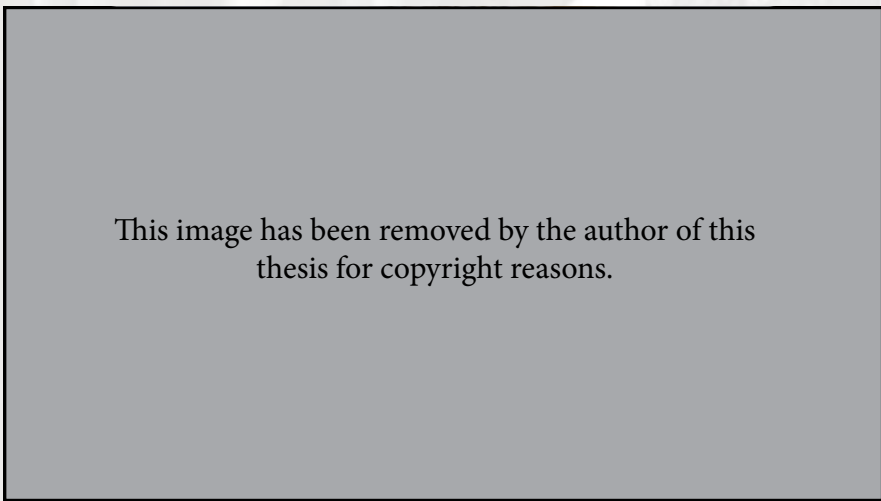
46 Corrigan 2011,119.

47 Corrigan 2011.

## Essay Films

The following are a number of examples of essay films that exemplify the method I have chosen to use in my investigation. For example, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*<sup>48</sup> directed by Thom Andersen portrays a film through scenes from other films all set in Los Angeles. The film explores the society and the way of life then to now. Los Angeles comes across as a city that is a product of and used for entertainment. The city is depicted through fragmented pieces over space and time. The exploration of the city informs the viewers of the city that has developed over time through media. This video essay is used as an example of how space is explored and expressed.

*London*,<sup>49</sup> another travelogue, directed by Patrick Keiller is a film that explores the city of London. It allows the viewer to drift in and out of the film as Keiller narrates. The static footage of everyday life in London lets us experience the city through Keiller's eyes. This film is used as an example because of the exploration of space over a twelve-month period.



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 7. Patrick Keiller, *London Street*, 1994 [circa], British Film Institute, London. (still image)

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48 Andersen 2003.

49 Keiller 1994.

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Figure 8. Alan Resnais, *Concentration Camp Then*, 1955 [circa], Argos Films. (still image)

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Figure 9. Alan Resnais, *Concentration Camp Now*, 1955 [circa]. Argos Films. (still image)

Along with travelogues, reflective films were also relevant towards the project as it connected to autoethnographic method. One such reflective film is *Night and Fog*.<sup>50</sup> It is based on the holocaust in Germany with Alan Resnais acting as the narrator who takes the audience through the story. He goes back and forth through time using historic footage and photographs of the devastating effects of the concentration camps of World War Two. He takes the viewer to the same locations of the camps, now un-touched and over-grown with grass and time. (fig.9) Yet the images shown from the past linger on as the images are compared against each other through the film. (fig. 8) It was a film I found quite hard to watch, because of its factual information and the poetic narrative of the film. This is an excellent example to look into when it comes to the structure of the film; simple, informative and leaves the audience speechless. This film leads me to Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*,<sup>51</sup> which is an essay film where a woman narrates the film through a voice-over. She begins with "he wrote me..." The film travels from Africa to Japan exploring the culture and the concept of time and space. Through the film, Marker attempts to capture events in different parts of the world, but the restriction of time makes it impossible. The montage creates a confusion of different cultures as the film jumps across different continents. The voice-over reflects upon Marker's experiences. It takes the viewer in and out of Marker's thoughts, which creates a dialogue with the viewers. This film inspired *One Perspective*, in the sense of capturing the simplicity of travelling and capturing events that are perceived culturally different from other cultures. (fig. 12)

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50 Resnais 1955.

51 Marker 1983.

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for copyright reasons.

Figure 10. Chris Marker, *African Masks*, 1983 [circa], Argos Films. (still image)

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for copyright reasons.

Figure 11. Chris Marker, *Japanese Cats*, 1983 [circa], Argos Films. (still image)



Figure 12. Kriteka Gregory, *Brinddas Wedding*, February 2014, AUT University, India (still image)

Another example of an influential essay film is *Bright Leaves*<sup>52</sup> directed by Ross McElwee. He begins with a goal, and the viewers embark on a journey with the filmmaker. His film *Bright Leaves* depicts a story between McElwee's great grandfather and the Duke family. During this film McElwee questions his identity and where he is from, as he deals with the possible truth he had learnt from the film. The film is done by voice-overs and includes interviews with people from the town as they are trying to quit smoking as a sub-plot. At one point we see McElwee sitting on a bench by himself reflecting. *Bright Leaves* includes the audience as viewers watching and listening as McElwee deals and contemplates the alternative life that he could have led. This film can be used to analyse how McElwee began with an idea to discover his family history and the tobacco industry, how that idea changed and how he included his audience with this change of direction. The audience began part of the conversation through his reflections.

As it can be seen in this review, there has been range of films that have inspired and informed the making of this project. The films I have included in this research project have been inspirational towards the project. They have offered a window to the essayistic films made through the years. The style of Chris Marker and Ross McElwee is the model *One Perspective* is based on. Through the travels, I begin with a reflective voice, creating a conversation with myself, compared to McElwee's direct conversation with the viewers. The reflective voice in *One Perspective* gradually invites the viewers into the film to reflect how they perceive themselves.

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52 McElwee 2003.

## Conclusion

*One Perspective* is built on the foundation of diaspora as a universal experience, experienced individually that should speak to anyone that has travelled. The diasporic experience began when I immigrated to New Zealand. I learnt home is where an individual is comfortable. Travelling to different comfort zones such as my home in New Zealand and my home in India, lead me to question my identity. Two homes gave me two chaotic and dynamic identities. This double consciousness<sup>53</sup> created a fragmented identity that was hard to negotiate. Through my travels, I began seeing airports as home and a place of comfort and familiarity. The airport was a place of routine, customs, immigration and bag checks. Over time, I discovered that I had found another place that felt like home, leading me to add another piece to my changing and shifting identity.

I have chosen to visually communicate these ideas through an essay film. My decision to use an essay film is due to its subjective approach, which is appropriate to the task of exploring the identity of the self. Although the documentary style is open to interpretation, the essay film genre, which shares similarities with documentary, allows me to explore these themes within my own project. The answer is uncovered through exploration and discovery. It is a form that records the filmmaker's journey through time and space as the viewers are invited into *One Perspective* to follow the journey. Essayistic travel finds its origins in essay films, which allow the 'I' in a film to become a voice across transcontinental lands as one attempts to locate their place in this world.

*One Perspective* articulates the dislocated, diverse and complicated emotions an immigrant experiences. It is through fragmented and distorted memories that I create an essay film that will invoke discussion within the audience about their own identity and enable the audience to engage with my journey of seeking a balance.

The creation of the *One Perspective* is detailed in the next chapter. The chapter layouts the methodology process to negotiate the abstract ideas of home and identity. The idea from the overview of theory discussed in this chapter is taken and experimented with in the methodology chapter through visual mediums.

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53 Du Bois 1903.

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

The word 'I' is of importance to this chapter as the methodologies I discuss to 'you' are subjective in literary and visual forms. The literary form of autoethnography is an extensive self-discovery process, learning about yourself and your cultural context. Autoethnography allows the researcher to bring forth tacit knowledge, and reflect upon it to use it within academia. This chapter presents to 'you' early experiments of juxtaposing images of the 'I' in India and the 'I' in New Zealand through an essayistic form. I discuss how autoethnography has been employed towards the planning and creation of *One Perspective* and the technical aspects of placing it within the autoethnographic method.

*Stepping into Chennai has always brought a feeling of comfort. Home. 'So good to be back,' I think, 'Can't wait to start the wedding celebrations.' I'm sticky from the humid weather. I love it. The noise, the dust, the orange tone, makes it home. Driving around in the streets with the heavy traffic. Yes. This is home.*

*Or is it?*

*What about New Zealand, I have a home there too. Right now, I'm biased since I'm in Chennai; I'm going to call this home. Just for now.*

*Home doesn't seem to stay the same for me. The physical environment of 'Home' keeps shifting.*

## Autoethnography as an arts-based inquiry

Autoethnography is a journey of the self.<sup>54</sup> This research method is aimed at enabling readers and authors to gain a better understanding of the culture. It “evokes self reflection and self analysis through which self discovery becomes a possibility.”<sup>55</sup> Autoethnography explores the author’s experience, then reflects upon the events and relates to the cultural context they live within. The constant zoom in and out, helps create the third perspective.<sup>56</sup> The third perspective is the negotiatin of the in-between place, which constitutes part of that journey of the self.

In academia, autoethnography is not fully defined. Autoethnography blends with ethnography, which is a branch of anthropology dealing with scientific description of individual cultures. Ethnographers place themselves in the culture and observe the way of living. Carolyn Ellis, an American sociological writer, pushed the term ‘autoethnography’. Ellis explained in *Anyalysing analytic autoethnography* that “autoethnography was instigated by a desire to move ethnography away from the gaze of the distanced and detached observer and toward the embrace of intimate involvement, engagement, and embodied.”<sup>57</sup> It was a change in sociology. Rather than relying on statistics to prove her hypothesis, Ellis used evocative writing and found that it received a higher response from the audience. She felt it to be satisfying and therapeutic. Evocative writing allows the reader to participate in an emotional process rather than observing a resolution.<sup>58</sup> It “concentrates on telling a personal, evocative story to provoke others stories and adds blood and tissue to the abstract bones of theoretical discourse.”<sup>59</sup>

The purpose of evocative writing is for the readers to experience the feelings and conflicts the author went through.<sup>60</sup> This constant telling and retelling of these living stories, whereby you live and relive the stories, provides “opportunities for growth, change and resistance to our cultures canonical narratives.”<sup>61</sup> Practitioners have expressed concerns that an approach such as this may delve into narcissism.<sup>62</sup> However, autoethnography does not focus on oneself; it begins with the researcher and broadens out to society. The subject of autoethnography has been explored and used by philosphers, who have included theories in their work of the implications of the method.

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54 ‘Self’ is a term used to identify oneself and also the self as an extension of the community. Heewon explored the concept of self as it has evolved from to present day. There is no single definition for ‘self’, however in regards to autoethnography “cultural self-analysis rests on understanding that self is part of a cultural community.” (Chang 2008, 26)

55 Heewon 2008, 17.

56 Ellis, 1999.

57 Ellis 2006, 433.

58 Ellis 1997.

59 Ellis 1997, 117.

60 Ellis 2004.

61 Ellis 2004, 134.

62 Ellis 2004, 134.

The position that I have found myself in as the researcher and ethnographer, has given me a unique insight as the 'insider' and the 'outsider' as I examine my own sense of self. As an 'insider', it is possible to delve into the life I led in India and the feelings I experienced while settling in New Zealand. As an 'outsider', I am in-between two worlds that perceive me as a foreign immigrant. It is this interstitial space that allows me to intertwine the two paradigms to create *One Perspective*. I have included vignettes within this chapter that have been taken from the journal writing process, which depict my different perspectives as an insider and outsider.

Autoethnography has mainly been used for literary projects, but there have been autoethnographic inquiry within design practice. Tatiana Tavares, a PhD graphic design student created a series of images expressing her immigrant experiences in New Zealand. Her project "Carnival Land: A Performance of Metaphors"<sup>62</sup> used autoethnographic method with heuristic inquiry. Tavares narrates a story of her life in Sao Paulo and the challenges she faced when she migrated to New Zealand. She discusses the change of perspective towards her homeland after living in New Zealand. Tavares explores the outsiders perspective through her images. The use of autoethnography in "Carnival Land" has given an understanding on how autoethnography can be applied in creative practice. "Carnival Land" thus presented a project that was parallel in themes, such as immigration and identity, to *One Perspective*. The project affirmed my belief that an autoethnography would be a suitable paradigm for the self-inquiry that I intended to embark upon.

# Viktor Frankl

Viktor Frankl is an existentialist<sup>63</sup> philosopher and psychiatrist who provides some theories that I explore within this research project. Frankl wrote an autobiographical book of his experiences as a psychiatrist imprisoned in the Auschwitz, Kauferting and Turkheim death camps. During his time in prison he took the advantage of being a psychiatrist and explored the “...human response to unavoidable suffering ...”<sup>64</sup> Frankl wrote his first-hand experience of living in the death camps and took advantage of his situation as a psychiatrist as it allowed him to analyze the situation simultaneously.

The article, Autoethnography and existentialism: The conceptual contributions of Viktor Frankl<sup>65</sup> provided illustrations of Frankl’s dimensional ontology.<sup>66</sup> Frankl described two laws. The first law stated that “one and the same phenomenon projected out of its own dimension into different dimensions lower than its own is depicted in such a way that the individual pictures contradict one another.”<sup>67</sup>

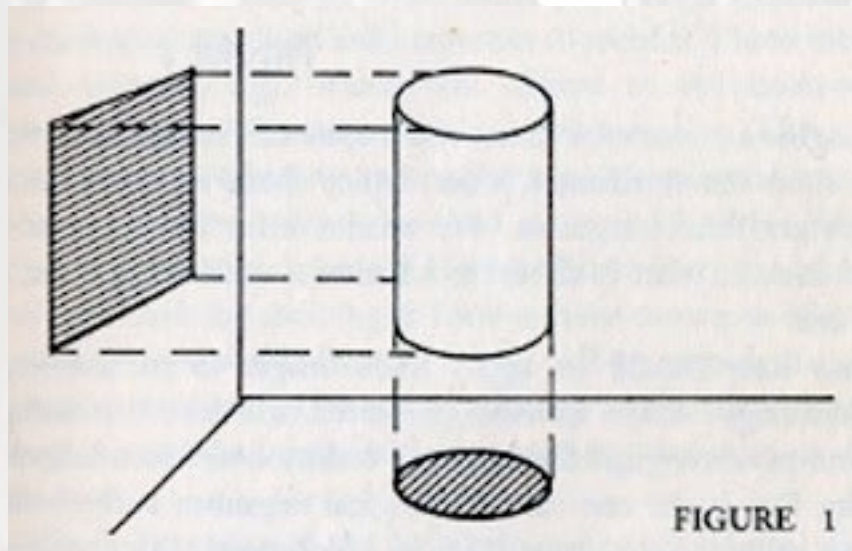


Figure 13. Viktor Frankl First Law. (image) Accessed 15 March, 2013. <http://logotalkshownotes.blogspot.co.nz/2009/03/episode-3-frankls-laws-of-dimensional.html>

63 Existentialism was used by philosopher in 19th to 20th century, it is a movement focusing on the study of human existence and centers on human choice.

64 Esping 2010, 203.

65 Esping 2010.

66 Ontology is the study of the nature of being and things that have existence

67 Esping 2010, 208.

In (fig.9) the cylinder is the subject (I). If a light shines on this subject, it shows two different shadows with different shapes, but the true shape contradicts the shadows. The question becomes which shadow is true? In fact, they are both partial truths and “limited depictions of the same thing.”<sup>68</sup> So if an individual stands in front a cathedral, they only see the entrance of the building. The true form in front of them cannot be fully revealed as they can only see a ‘limited depiction’, however if there are two people standing on the opposite ends of the cathedral, the collective perception of both individuals will be closer to the true form of the church rather than the limited perception. Frankl explains this in the second image.

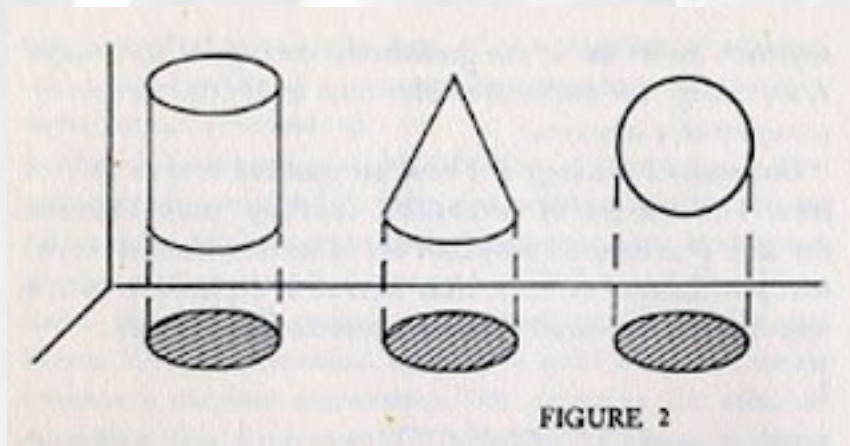


Figure 14. Viktor Frankl Second Law. (image) Accessed 15 March, 2013. <http://logotalkshownotes.blogspot.co.nz/2009/03/episode-3-frankls-laws-of-dimensional.html>

The second law stated that “ different phenomena projected out of their own dimension into one dimension lower than their own are depicted in such a manner that the pictures are ambiguous.”<sup>69</sup> The second image has three different shapes, representing three different subjects. If the light shines on them from the same angle [perspective], the shadows are of the same shape.

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68 Esping 2010, 209.

69 Esping 2010, 209.

If Frankl's laws are taken together, it uncovers "why the collective contribution of autoethnographers from many unique positions are necessary in order to develop a rich, dimensionally-complex picture of human experience."<sup>70</sup> The first image projects a 'partial truth'. The second image allows the possibility of a complete picture, yet it creates a generalized version of the reality. It is a unique experience that I would like to share. Although there have been people in parallel situations to me in the sense of migration; the tacit knowledge, the upbringing and settling in New Zealand would be different for any other immigrant. The negotiation deals with the notions of home and identity that are universal. Frankl suggests that an "autoethnographic researcher should put effort into fully describing what she can actually see, given her particular combination of disposition, situation and position."<sup>71</sup> This project describes through the chapters beginning with the positioning statement, my disposition and position. The situation is the matter I am investigating, of being in the in-between. *One Perspective* will contribute to research in the academic field, which brings the notion of 'home' and 'identity' closer to being understood, as my work will become part of the collective knowledge. I use these theories in the practical aspect of the project, beginning with experiments.

*I enter the hall to begin my badminton training session for the morning. It is thirty-six degrees Celsius, month of May in Chennai. We begin with a warm up as usual. The coach starts talking and I automatically respond with my head bobbling and my accent changes as I reply in Tamil, in shock he looks at me, "You understand Tamil?" I smile in response. This is exactly what I wanted – for him to recognize me as an Indian. "Yes I'm originally from Chennai," I replied, quite pleased that I had been found out. During the period I was there, I would speak in Tamil to the coaches and carry on conversing in my Kiwi accent with the rest of the 'internationals' that I was part of. I felt I needed to be recognized as a Tamilian while I was in Chennai rather than being known as a New Zealander, but simultaneously I wanted to have the 'international' status.*

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70 Esping 2010, 209.

71 Esping 201, 212.

## Early Experiments

The project's autoethnographic process began by sketching<sup>72</sup> and journal writing.<sup>73</sup> The journal includes vignettes of when I immigrated to New Zealand. Through these memories, I presented a chronological picture of events that created a culture clash with my home life and social situations. In the reflection process themes emerged, such as alienation and confusion, along with emotions of sadness and nostalgia. These narratives were useful in creating a voice over script<sup>74</sup>, that will be explained further in this chapter.

In order to express some of the emotions that I had experienced, I constructed a series of images. I juxtaposed and superimposed images of New Zealand and India. I attempted to construct a hybrid of these worlds to reflect upon their parallel and combined existences. The images were designed to be comical to explore the strangeness within them.



Figure 15. *Indian Queen Street*. Photograph by Kritteka Gregory, 15 March, 2011. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Auckland, New Zealand



Figure 16. *Taj Dome*. Photograph by Kritteka Gregory, 15 March, 2011. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Auckland, New Zealand

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72 See Appendix 1. Sketching did not play a major role in the end product, however it is placed in this document as part of the methodology process.

73 See Appendix 2.

74 See Appendix 3. This is the final script that was used in the film.

I did an imitation of an Indian temple (fig. 16) from the domain museum in Auckland. The dome is from the iconic Taj Mahal and the Indian sculptures have been added to give an essence of Indian culture.

These images were a way of expressing a world in which I live, a process of merging both worlds. From this experiment, I progressed to moving images.



Figure 17. Gregory, Kritteka "Comparison" (video clip). Directed by Kritteka Gregory.

I compared video footage of streets in New Zealand and streets in India.(fig.17) I placed both images side by side as a direct comparison. I experimented with audio. (fig.18) the audio from India overpowers New Zealand streets, in sense of sound and physical space.



Figure 18. Gregory, Kritteka "Comparison Audio" (video clip). Directed by Kritteka Gregory.

In the third experiment, (fig. 19) I placed the footage beside each other and split it into three. The middle section became the in-between where both cultures overlapped. It was the middle screen of two cultures merging, I wanted to explore in *One Perspective*. These experiments led me to the decision of creating a short film. I began gathering footage from my tour around the world.



Figure 19. Gregory, Kritteka "Blending" (video clip). Directed by Kritteka Gregory.

## Challenges

Filming was one of the main challenges. I had known the countries I was traveling to, but did not know what kind of environment I would be filming in or how the people who lived there would react. I was not able to prepare, nor know what I was about to experience. To support each experience, I wrote reflections<sup>75</sup> about each trip, which helped create a voice over narrative. During my travels, several of my belongings were stolen in Paris, including my footage. This misfortune, although devastating at the time, allowed a fresh perspective. This became part of the methodology process. When I began to gather new footage, I had a clearer picture of what to film and the style of editing.

*In 2011, I was in India for a month, my cousin Brinda was twenty-seven years old and the time had come for her to get married. She was explaining to me how her mother was looking for someone for her, while she on the other hand wanted to choose a guy by herself. My advice to her was to tell her mum that she would like to choose, she commented back with “Kritteka. You wouldn’t understand how it is, you. You don’t live here anymore.” I was a bit taken aback and felt a bit hurt. All of a sudden I did not feel I belonged in India nor did I belong in New Zealand. Up until that moment my mind believed ‘I am Indian’, but once I realized that my family in India overlook that and see me as westernized, I automatically felt disconnected. What was the point in me visiting my family in India when there is no connection other than blood? I truly felt lost.*

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75 See Appendix 3.

## Editing

Drawing upon the experiments, I began differentiating the footage, as New Zealand, India and Overseas. The idea began as three separate narratives placed alongside each other.(fig 21, 22, 23) The voice-over would lead the viewer in and out of the three screens. The concept of presentation was for the viewers to feel disorientated. However this idea was discarded, and evolved to placing all three narratives in one linear narrative.

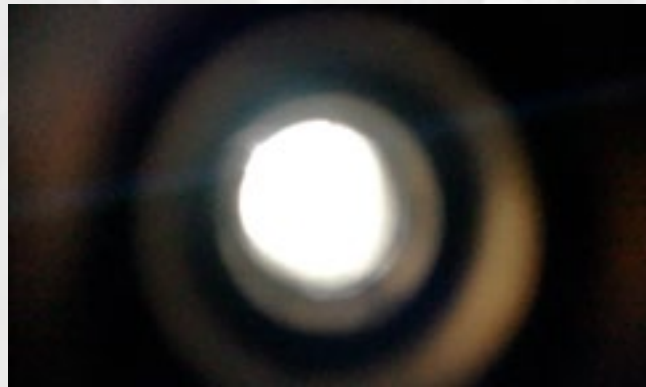


Figure 20. Kritteka Gregory, *Home Perspective*, 2012, Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory. New Zealand. (still image)



Figure 21. Kritteka Gregory, *Welcome*, 2014, Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, India. (still image)



Figure 22. Kritteka Gregory, *Ikast Train*, 2014, Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory. Denmark. (still image)

I experimented with montage techniques within the editing process. Eisenstein<sup>76</sup> said: "... each montage piece exists no longer as something unrelated... the juxtaposition of these partial details... binds together all the details into a whole..."<sup>77</sup> Through editing, it was clear this was a better choice, as the film was shaping up to be a fragmented discourse over space and time, which I aim for the viewers to be able to relate to. The montage used in the film, (fig.23) creates a conversation with the images placed side by side. The film aimed to entangle the complicated ideas of identity and home. The three physical spaces is the idea of capturing everyday life, yet potraying them simultaneously, fragments the image as well as the physical space. It is a representation of split identity and home, which always transforming.



Figure 23. Gregory, Kritteka "Montage Experiment" (video clip). Directed by Kritteka Gregory.

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76 Sergei Einstein is a Russian film director. He was a pioneer in film montage.

77 Eisenstein 1986,19.

## Shot Selection

Through research and filming, the shots were filmed spontaneously. It was at the end of my travels that main themes such as dislocation, and the loss of identity emerged through the footage. I was subconsciously filming scenes, that gave me a sense of belonging. I have detailed repetitive shots in the film that signified and resonated with me. These details helped tie the film together.

The choice of airports is used as the idea of home. Being in transit defined the interstitial space I am in between India and New Zealand. The abstract idea of in-betweenness was represented through the physical space of the airport. It became a place of familiarity and the notion of home. Leaving an airport allowed time for reflection.



Figure 24. Kritteka Gregory, *Sydney Transit*, 15 March, 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Sydney, Australia. (still image)



Figure 25. Kritteka Gregory, *Sydney City*, 15 March, 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Sydney, Australia.(still image)

In-flight shots, overlooking the clouds, symbolise reflection and thinking. It was a place of silence, which allowed me to reflect upon my experiences. It became a place of stillness where I did not have to find my sense of direction or security.

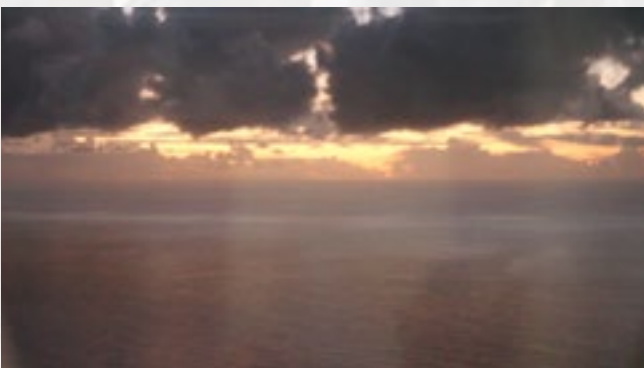


Figure 26. Kritteka Gregory, *Reflection Space*, 10 March, 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory. (still image)



Figure 27. Kritteka Gregory, *Thinking Space*, 15 March, 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory.(still image)

City shots represent the idea of the world being the same regardless of where we are. The repetition emphasizes each city looking the same over time.



Figure 28. Kritteka Gregory, *San Francisco City*, 26 July, 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, San Francisco, USA. (still image)



Figure 29. Kritteka Gregory, *Istanbul City*, 26 July, 2013. Private Collection of Kritteka Gregory, Istanbul, Turkey.

The film layered with the audio as a reflective narrative and the video as a separate narrative to portray my experience. I aim for a third layer that involves the viewers understanding of *One Perspective* by blending the audio and visual. Chris Marker's *San Soleil*<sup>78</sup> is an example of this. The letter read as the voice-over in Marker's film occasionally connects with the video, but overall it is a narrative on its own.

*Sans Soleil*<sup>79</sup> does not reveal the narrator in person, nor the person who writes the letter. Instead we see the camera walking amongst people and observing everyday life in Japan, which in turn takes us viewers through a journey of Japan. We are led into Marker's reflective thinking and it allows 'I' to realize the simple things in life that we overlook within the society. I admire the simplicity of the images, powerful, informative and realistic. The voice-over is "central to its articulation"<sup>80</sup> and ties the film together. *One Perspective* draws from *Sans Soleil*<sup>81</sup> the simplicity of images seen around the world and uses this simplicity to effectively portray the thoughts of being an immigrant within an autoethnographic inquiry. The portrayal of thoughts was done in the reflection process through voice-over.

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78 Marker 1983.

79 Marker 1983.

80 Dancyger 2010, 352.

81 Marker 1983.

## Feedback

A draft of *One Perspective* was given to people to receive feedback. The film was a test to see how it was perceived. Few key points that were mentioned:

- To add images of when I was younger, so the viewers are familiar with the film-maker.
- The voice over needed to be more animated, it was not clear enough in some areas.
- Have variety of shots of the airport. Through the film certain shots were reused, the repetition was not received well by others.
- Stabilise some shots, so I could detach the camera to move from the presence of a human hand behind it. If the author was removed the idea of detachment allows the viewer to focus on the imagery and symbolism, which is separate from identity. The idea should be contrasted of being an observer into culture/country and existing with it, which is already represented by hand held camera.
- To stylise some areas of the film, to differentiate from one idea to another.
- The footage needed to be longer, for the audience to reflect on the voice over. Or include black screen which allows the viewers to understand what has been said and shown.
- Include arrows in scenes that include me, so it adds humour to the film.

From the feedback I began to change aspects of the film.

I included photographs of when I was younger, in the introduction. This led me to include footage of my badminton games for the viewers to gain better understanding.

The city montage was changed from colour to black and white to create the idea of the cities looking the same. The feedback and editing has become a reflection process, as my ideas evolve and change due to my thoughts and feelings, the notion of home and identity simultaneously change.

## Reflection

The reflection process consists of analyzing and interpreting the footage, journal writing and reflections. I began the reflection process, which later evolved into a script for the voice-narration. Chang suggests a number of strategies, of which I chose three methods, that were appropriate towards the process. Beginning with:

- Connecting the present with the past

Chang<sup>82</sup> suggests connecting the present with the past will help the researchers discover how their thinking and behaviour are rooted in past experiences. I chose this method due to my travels back and forth to India, I was often traveling to my 'past', which was distorting over time as I was exposed to new cultures in between my visits.

- Analyzing relationships between self and others

Throughout my journey, analyzing relationships between the others and myself was inevitable. The others "represent communities of practices, sets of values, and identities different from yours and unfamiliar to you."<sup>83</sup> In every country I had traveled to, it is a constant reminder of how far away home was. Yet the longer I stayed in one place, it began to grow into the idea of home. Though the environment was new, it took some time to gain a basic understanding of cultural ways in order to form a sense of belonging.

- Contextualizing broadly

The third method was contextualising what lies beyond the data gathered. I attempt to interpret my experiences within the cultural contexts I journeyed to.<sup>84</sup> For example, during my stay in Denmark, I came across changing rooms with open showers. This concept was new as the Indian part of me has had never been in a such situation. To me it seemed absurd, but daring. However, my life in New Zealand had taught me that cultures vary. What is perceived as fanatical in India is ordinary in Denmark. The cultural experience that I have gained over three years has put into motion a conversation within myself over where home is.

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82 Chang 2008.

83 Chang 2008, 134.

84 Chang 2008.

However, my life in New Zealand had taught me that cultures vary. What is perceived as fanatical in India is ordinary in Denmark. The cultural experience that I have gained over three years has put into motion a conversation within myself over where home is.

Utilizing the three methods, I was able to create a script that analyzed and reflected on my explorations to gain an understanding of the cultures we are surrounded by.

*It has taken me ten years to feel like I belong in New Zealand. I am now able to communicate and understand the way of speaking. My trip to India in 2012 made me realize that I have been moving further away from my Indian heritage. I have always wanted to remember my roots, but in the excitement of feeling the sense of belonging I have lost sight of where I come from. Visiting India made me question my identity, who I have become. I was able to see the differences clearly from an outside perspective; I was constantly shifting between Indian and New Zealander, which is where the conflict lies. How do I gain balance between both worlds?*

## Conclusion

Autoethnography is a method that relies on personal experiences across different societies, which shapes our own perception of our identity views. The methodology employed in this research project draws on tacit knowledge and experience that helps to negotiate the ideas of home and identity. I employ Franks theory to “make valuable contributions to the collective effort to represent reality”<sup>85</sup> that helps *One Perspective* as a contribution towards the whole truth in the academic field. Gathering data as per the Heewon Chang’s<sup>86</sup> model, I was able to script a narrative that was heartfelt and raw towards my personal story. The search of home and identity, through my distorted memories, the reflection upon my journey has created a deep understanding of the culture I live in. The ‘I’ that has been investigated and explored will always be evolving. There is no stagnant point. However through autoethnography I was able to add another layer to create a multifaceted project. *One Perspective* begins with the ‘I’ and expands to the world we live within.

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85 Esping 2010, 213.

86 Chang 2008.

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## APPENDIX 1: Sketching



## APPENDIX 2: Journal Writing

### Diary Entry 1:

I remember struggling a lot with friends when I was younger. My accent was heavy and my social skills were low. I did not understand the life style here. I went to school and I would do my homework and be quiet. I learnt to observe, it was easier that way.

I didn't know how to be. They were different here, in the way they speak and things they say. I just didn't understand. I began to isolate myself.

### Diary entry 2:

When I used to have friends over, they used to comment on the way the food looked. My mother makes some interesting Indian dishes, what was normal to me was unique and different to my friends. They didn't experience Indian food on a daily basis.

I became used to explaining what it was, and why it might look out of the ordinary, with the spices used. Sometimes I used to feel a bit embarrassed, because I felt it wasn't normal. I began to say and do things to what was expected, just to fit in. I felt the cultural difference was a hindrance.

It was only in my late teens that I learnt to put the difference aside and use it to my advantage. I might be from a culture my friends don't understand, but I have something to share. The position I am in is unique. I began to see differences between New Zealand and India clearly. There was a lot of trouble during my teens to deal with the differences, especially when it came to my parents. It would have been harder for them to adapt to the change. It took me ten years to feel I belonged in New Zealand. I never saw myself as one or the other. I was born in India, but moved to New Zealand, this has exposed me to different cultures and an insight to how different cultures and people can be.

### Diary Entry 3:

Listening to Indian songs takes me back to India. I visualize myself sitting on a couch with my cousins and grandparents watching television with all the India adverts of new and upcoming films. It is a feeling of comfort

I am currently listening to a song "Adhoore" from the film *Break ke Baad* (2010). This was a film I watched in February when I was in Delhi. The feeling of family where everyone is there, where I am able to call and see when I please, makes me appreciate having family. Makes me question whether I will be able to live in India, I am adaptable, but living, working, socializing could be totally different here.

There is an internal conflict going on not only as I write, but as I think through these situations and feelings. I wonder what I would be have been like if I never moved to NZ..

#### **Diary Entry 4:**

I went to Chennai for my 21st this year. It was my choice to spend it with family, even though I don't remember some family members.

I wonder how they see me and what they think of me. Am I spoilt kid who just speaks English in an accent they don't understand. I feel they all think back to when I was younger or when they saw me last and are constantly comparing.

#### **Diary Entry 5:**

During all these years and my trips to India since 1999. I never questioned my identity as an Indian. I remember all my trips to India were enjoyable and so good to see aunties and uncles. My trip to India this year Jan 2011 was an experience I did not expect to have. I would say I have grown and matured. I was staying with Brindda (cousin). She is 27, her mother was trying to find a groom. She was explaining that she does not want to marry now, but possibly in a year. I told her to talk to her mother. She quickly said I don't live here so I won't understand. This comment caught me off guard and this was not the only time I heard it, was repeated to me by my other family members.

This made me question, myself. I always felt I belonged with all my family in India, but the moment I heard that statement. I lost my sense of belonging. I know that a lot of New Zealander look at me and it is obvious, that I am not from NZ. But to go back to India to find out my family didn't think I was Indian made me feel like I was in limbo.

By the end of the trip I felt disconnected from everyone. Trip was about 6 weeks long. For me it felt like I dropped in on their daily routines where it was interrupted and then the moment I left they carried on and I came home and went back into routine.

#### **Diary Entry 6:**

Religion is not a topic I was always interested in. It did not seem important, but now when the conversation is brought up. I stop and think and I really do not know what I believe in.

My mother is Hindu and my father is Catholic. All through my years I always followed what my mother told me. When we go to a temple I follow her every step. She tells me what mantra to say and I say it without questioning. She takes a flower from a deity and so do I. I also used to go to church on Sundays. We never sat through the whole mass. I never thought about what to follow.

Moving to New Zealand has helped me think for myself. Having parents from cultural backgrounds does make it a bit difficult. But living here and seeing the way New Zealanders live it has made me step back and reflect upon my own culture and question my own beliefs and values. I feel if I was in India where my family followed Hindu traditions I would have followed their ways because I was born into it. I believe that living in New Zealand has given me a outer perspective on Indian culture.

### **Diary Entry 7:**

I am sometimes ashamed of losing a bit of my identity. I feel privileged at times to be from a culture and that has rich history. I have my moments where I wish things would be easier. For example I am not obliged to move out of the house till I am married. However friends I have in New Zealand moved out when they turned 18. I do feel embarrassed but I have learnt to embrace my culture and stand up for it. The answer is balance. Finding a balance with both cultures. I am who I am through my experiences of both NZ and Indian cultures.

### **Diary Entry 8:**

Coming home after four months I don't know where to begin. Home! Finally safe and secure my own bed. Felt surreal being home yet everyone is here, familiar places, no language barrier, back to reality. Everywhere I went English was common however countries like Zurich, Denmark, English was not their first language. This is good of course in the sense they want to preserve their culture.

### **Diary Entry 9:**

Every country began to look the same. As long as I know my way around it doesn't seem to affect me too much. I have set out for self-belonging, Can I belong in two cultures? I have become quite attracted to my Indian heritage. I'll confess that I do not follow the culture as I should.

I have learnt through travels to understand another culture, there is no right or wrong, it matters how you have been brought up.

Examples: Denmark has open showers, compared to New Zealand. In New Zealand the idea of open showers is absurd. However in Denmark people think its absurd to have cubicles.

It's all to do with their upbringing and sociological background. Travelling around getting exposure to these different contrasting cultures you realize there is no right answer for any questioning.

I wasn't comfortable with open showers, once I put myself in a situation its only changing the thinking that makes it easier. I like placing myself outside my own comfort zone, pushing my physical and mental boundaries. It was an eye opener however, to realize I am not defined by my cultural beliefs alone. In India this would be frowned upon. Due to the fact I have been living in New Zealand, the concrete beliefs that were being taught to me as a child, became fragmented when I moved. I began to see the in-between space as anything can happen.

### **Diary Entry 10:**

In India I'm not considered Indian as I question the way of thinking. However when I am in New Zealand, I feel Indian in few things that happens. So is there such thing as a level of Indian-ness?

### **Diary Entry 11:**

These trips I have been going on are slowly clearing a path to what is home. I have lived within two (New Zealand and Indian) cultures that are contrasting. I have had a taste of cultures seeing how I interact with their lifestyles and how the Indian and New Zealand aspect of me works together to deal with new cultures. My project will not have one answer that I can end with. I have noticed that I have more questions than answers.

Our primitive instincts come into play, no matter where we are in the world, give it time and it shall slowly become the idea of home. Home becomes a place where one person feels content with their environment.

### **Diary Entry 12:**

Been traveling for so long now that it has become normal. I was home for one week and I began to feel uneasy and wanted to go to my next destination. China. The excitement of a new place and the unknown has become an addiction.

Time is going too fast. I had my travels all planned out that my plans and work was all just going with. Home has become a split idea. I seem content anywhere I am at the moment, however, with the constant travel I am not able to stop and take in what has been happening.

## APPENDIX 3: Reflections

### PARIS

Thinking about the week in Paris has been surreal. Was I really there? It seems to be a blur and I know the rest of the trip will be. I did a lot of filming everywhere I went and everything I saw from the Eiffel Tower to the Louvre to just walking in the streets to sitting on the train.

I feel I was finally getting a grasp on speaking minimum French and the hellos and goodbyes that included kisses, then I had to leave of course. Coming from an Indian culture or Western I should say, I am so used to keeping certain distance with strangers, but here it felt like it was a courtesy that was shown in France that I was not able to feel comfortable with.

A trip to such a well-known place such as Paris with shopping and brands that I have not been around, and being in the city of Love really makes one wonder, what we are made of. If once place is filled with so much history, it's unimaginable how much history every country has to be where it is today, economically, politically...

The chateau I went to in Paris was a grand house the King of France lived in (I think) and the paintings in each room had a bit of Rome and Greek feel to them, I'm sure it was inspired somewhat by them, this only goes to show that every culture is connected one way or another... I cannot say I am Indian only or New Zealand only.. I have had influences from both cultures where I play a part in both.

In many ways I can say I am more understanding towards a new culture only because I had to adjust to the New Zealand culture coming from an Indian culture, but now I somewhat adjust to Indian culture coming from NZ... the roles have reversed...

Being surrounded by French language, I should have felt lost because I couldn't understand a word that was being said. Once I landed everything was written in English except the fact not a single word made sense. The foreign feeling was there.

One thing I noticed; the one question I got asked is where I am from and they were usually of Indian origin and I could sense that they knew I was from India too. Just to see if my suspicions were right I would say NZ, they would follow up my answer with 'are you born there?' and then of course I would say no I am from India. Must be stereotypical things that make me Indian.

### OSLO

Oslo felt like another world all together, the cleanliness, the buildings, the people, the cost! The place was amazing, the people and the atmosphere though it was cold.

However compared to New Zealand it was a lot cleaner, the first thing I did was to go to the supermarket get bread, salad, cheese, ham and that's my lunch sorted. Breakfast was included in our accommodation and that was a buffet breakfast. Once the essentials were sorted, I started to feel quite comfortable. Sharing a room makes a big difference, feel more at home, with someone from home with you.

## CHRISTMAS

A Christmas I will not forget. This is the third Christmas away from home. I am in Switzerland and spent my Christmas with my friend here who took me in. Her family is a mix of Spanish and Swiss and the plan was to drive to Fribourg and have Christmas with her family. What I learnt on this mini trip was that in parts of Swiss, German or French was more common in one side of the country so the people were expected to know German Swiss and French Swiss and little did I know that I shall be surrounded by people that could speak Spanish, French, German. I was surrounded by differently languages flying all around and I was hyponitized by it all, I was able to pick up words in Spanish here and there but overall, I had no idea what was being said, I just had to read their body language and figure out what they were trying to say in broken English. Once I was introduced to everyone we did the kiss on the cheek three times. The homely feeling, togetherness and family made me think of the times when I was living in India and basically most weekends we would all have a family meet. Isn't it funny how when your younger everything seems so happy and cheery but then you grow up and things change.

We had a well planned out dinner, which was crepes, which we made with a mini crepe maker and we would have it nice and hot, there was some cheese, ham, fruity chutneys and my favorite nutella, I had about six and I was good. We then all shuffled to the lounge and they started singing Christmas songs in Swiss.. I was able to sing the english version in my head or hum : ) then before you know it everyone is opening up the presents :) At that point I did wonder what i was doing so far away from home, and family why am I not with the people that I should be and Im wandering the world instead. Even though I got to say that Im loving every minute of it, but at the same time I am distancing myself.

Travelling now is the normal thing, being surrounded by different languages I surprisingly feel normal and inspired to learn more languages and be multilingual, I think it is a great skill to have.

I have been to six different countries in less than two months. Travelling has taught me to enjoy the simplicities of life. Having your own bed and just being familiar and feeling like you belong where you live. It is only when I have started to travel I realized how it takes time to feel secure in where you live and feel safe and to take pleasure in the simplicities. In NZ I tend to take those things for granted, but lately when people have been talking to me about home I have been having two minds. One in India and one in NZ as much as I love NZ, I have been looking forward to going to India to see my family including my parents and being around that noise and old familiarity that I always dream about.

I always tend to call the place I am currently staying at home regardless of where that is, just a safe place where I am residing. However, when I mention I would like to go back home, there is NZ as that is where I have history and my parents is there, and I live there, but I know that I do not want to settle down in NZ, which means that I will be creating a home elsewhere in my future.

I wonder how other people describe home? it is so nice to see that each place I go to, the people I stay with have their own house and have created their life there where they have stories around that city, in that very house. I am making memories around the world, which of course wont be forgotten but during a time like Christmas it makes me think twice seeing the cultures and food! Food is amazing here the cheese, the bread all with exciting new flavours that I have never explore and since I come from an Indian background the types of food they eat are of great interest and something new. India seems so full of colour and vibrant whereas Europe seems to have a type of hidden vibrancy that bursts through the food and the people we meet.

It is always good to see how NZ or India is seen from other peoples point of view, if anything I can learn something about both my cultures from an outsiders perspective.

## INDIA

Stepped into Chennai with the warm air, which invites me everytime. I can feel myself getting sticky with sweat. Wearing boots and jeans are not the best clothing in a country like Chennai with the humidity and heat. Either way I feel the excitement creeping in. Everytime I enter its like a dream.

My cousin, my aunt all welcome me with smiles and I enter back into the world I feel familiar with, only eight months ago I was staying in this house and here I am again and straight away I feel like I am home. The house is white with tiles and fan that is constantly going which gives the atmosphere a constant buzz.

I go to my usual room and place all my things and unpack. I take a moment to take a breath where I become aware that I actually am in Chennai. Everytime I come back I realize how much I miss it.

The dirt, the pollution, the mosquitos, the fan buzzing, the tiled houses...the cows oh its endless.. these little things make the biggest difference. Everything of who I am comes through these minute details. What have I been doing all these years? Living overseas creating a better life for myself academically.

I am the brides maid so the things that were expected of me I didn't know. The rituals I was going to witness through the weddings were not of shock or surprise but rather admiration. I am from a strong culture, these rituals and ways of celebrating a marriage or anything for that matter should be cherished. Surely in the past it was important that we are carrying it into modern days now. The colours in the wedding was spectacular, the flowers, saris. I'm not sure where to begin exactly when it comes to the rituals.

Having my hands done with henna dressing up in a sari, having the jewels on that I would never wear, I was taking my place as a Tamilian girl and some family members were not able to recognize me at all! Well Im partly glad but also taken aback.. I was quite happy that I fit in the role that means my identity as an Indian is still there, I still know how to behave and listen to elders and do the things that are expected. I just might have a broader perspective than the normal Tamilian girl. Well I hope so, living in New Zealand and traveling over the 3 months has opened my mind.

India is my home, family, history, childhood memories are all embedded there that I can never be away from it, the connection will always be there. No matter how far away from home I am home is home. Home is becoming a place where all my loved ones are. I am becoming aware of how the world works.

I was in Denmark for 6 weeks beforehand and of course the first week or two is always a bit hard because settling in takes a while and the people that we meet we need to find a middle point where we can get along even with the language barrier and cultural difference.

Travelling through the countries, even though I have adapted to each place quite well, the feeling of home is exponentially different in India than in any other country. I have not yet gone back to NZ, maybe I will get a similar feeling there, but this feeling I only get in Chennai is something I shall always have with me no matter where I am. I have learnt now to take in every moment of where I am, what I'm doing and enjoy it. It won't last forever.

My life right now has become being on the move, I'm lucky if I spend sometime in a country for over three weeks. Being on the move is good, but once you have people you care about and your leaving them, it just becomes harder than it should.

You have been living with your parents all your life, and in Indian culture you don't really move out unless your studying abroad or travelling. So when it comes to getting married, you no longer go to the house that you have been living in, you go to a new house, which will now become your home. How does home keep switching? Is there one place that can be home? Or can there be many?

It was interesting spending a week living within the culture that I was born in. My thinking, my speaking also changed I was able to talk Tamil quite well, but is it possible for me to have a life in India if I were to move there? Can I live within the restrictions for a Tamilian girl after seeing the world and being independent to do the things I want to do? Will be people object? Is it possible to find a middle point where I follow the rules yet I do not lose my identity.

I'm writing this in transit in Frankfurt and just getting back into walking through airports, customs and immigration it feels like I'm getting back into reality after leaving Chennai. I look around and see the people also in transit I wonder what their story is. Are they here on holiday? Business? Family? I see families, business partners, children just running around. I feel like I live in an airport just constantly in the in-between I felt a bit lonely. It's the in-between that I want to get out of. It's a web of different things that brings me to this point where I'm questioning everything.

At the end of the day it ends up being what we do with our lives to be happy.

## CROSSROADS

I realised through my travels that all my balancing acts have been spiraling. Finding the balance in life is the key. Because of this balancing act that I'm struggling with.

The pillars that people depend on when they are in one place (stability), is what I am missing, over the two years of hopping from one place to another, adapting to different lifestyles and cultures. my cultural background and lifestyle now has layers of different cultures and mannerisms that I have picked up. Some may say that this is a good thing, I see it both ways, It is good that I have broad perspective and picking up little pieces of knowledge here and there, then there is the bad where the people around you aren't able to truly understand the full circumstance of where your point of view is coming from.

Recently I came back from USA, it was a great trip one to learn from, full of ups and downs. After seeing the country portrayed on media and hearing about it, I felt unreal to go there and experience it myself.

## APPENDIX 3: Voice-Over

### VOICEOVER

#### **Intro:**

My name is Kritteka Gregory. I was born in Chennai india. When I was nine years old my family and I migrated to New Zealand. Since then the idea of home has become distant and intangible. This left me at odds with who I am and where I fit in in this world.

Im writing this in transit (ENUNCIATE) and back into reality, customs, immigration same old routine. I feel like I live in an airport

My mother is hindu and my father is catholic, I celebrated Christmas and also went to Hindu temples I always followed what my parents said without question, having parents from different cultures was interesting enough but once I migrated to nz this made me question what it was I was following and reflect upon my own cultures from a different perspective.

I remember first stepping into new Zealand, clean green and quiet. The first school I went to was edenedale primary when I was nine. My English was below average. I remember in class I asked the teacher if I could go outside I must have talked really fast my heavy accent made it difficult for anyone to understand me. This was one of many differences that I was going to discover so I became the quiet observer.

It was the sense of alienation that brings me to this point.

Since coming to NZ, I have only returned to India 6 times. I never questioned my identity as an Indian. (PAUSE). I was 21 when I first felt I was in the inbetween state My cousin 27 at the time was about to get an arranged marriage. She didn't want one so I told her to tell her mother that. Her response was that I wouldn't understand because I wasn't from India. This automatically put me in a limbo.

Can I belong in two cultures? Who am I if im not considered indian or new Zealander.

When people talk to me about home I have two minds. One in india and one in new Zealand.

I look forward to visiting india to see my family and to be around the noise and familiarity

Stepping into Chennai with its warm air is comforting, I can feel myself getting sticky from the humidity and the excitement creeps in. everytime I come back I realize how much I miss Chennai.

The dirt, the pollution, the mosquitos the tiled houses, its endless these little things that make the biggest differences. Who I am comes from these minute details. What do you see what do you feel, what do you hear? the sounds resonate within me...

My cousin didn't get an arranged marriage. She chose a man of her own. Her wedding was done in a traditional Hindu style.

The rituals here even I don't understand yet I admire the history behind it them. My hands are tattooed with henna, I'm dressed up in a sari I take my place as a Tamilian Girl

## **IDENTITY**

Playing badminton has given me the opportunity to travel. As an athlete representing NZ in badminton These travels have started to fill restlessness within me; PAUSE a void.

Through the two years of travelling to different countries I have now picked up different cultural mannerisms that has placed in a unique position of seeing myself from an outside perspective.

Finding the balance is the key

Time has become a blur and I ha.ve become a drifter between countries. I don't feel like I belong in India or New Zealand, where is home?

My search for identity I have lost who I am. Experiencing different cultures has shown me there is no fixed identity. It is how I perceive myself. It will always be changing.

I feel I need to be on the move otherwise I get restless. This feeling of not belonging has become a double-edged sword of unease and comfort.

## **HOME**

The airport has become my second home. As I go from country to country one airport becomes another. The idea of home is constantly shifting; this abstract idea travels with you regardless of your destination. Sometimes I feel living in nz is like living away from home, but wherever I am stopping becomes the idea of home. Home is a safe haven.

The world now has become a multicultural society.

Travelling has taught me to enjoy the simplicities of life, things like having your own bed and feeling familiar, and like you belong where you live. It is only when I started to travel I realized it takes time to feel secure.

I set out to discover self-belonging, during the search I have become drawn towards my Indian heritage. The familiarity and sense of direction is what people depend on when they are in one place is. Over the two years of hopping from one country to the next and adapting to different cultures I have alienated myself.

Each city started to look the same, other than cultural differences the way of life was similar. There are exceptions, did you know in Denamrk they have same sex open showers? I have never come across this till I went to the otherside of the world. It is unheard of in india. It is moments like these that my cultural differences come through, and Im happy to say Im okay with it. My parents wont be, my family in Indian definitely wont be. . It is the in-between space I am in that has opened my mind to the endless possibilities.

## **REFLECTION**

Looking back upon my travels, I feel home is wherever I am most comfortable.; though I am still looking, I have not found it in one space, but in fragments scattered about during travels.

Living in New Zealand with an Indian background, has allowed me to see the world through an outsiders' lens. I have learnt to adapt to my changing environment, perhaps it is in this change that I find comfort.

