

**CROSSING OVER: THEORISING MEHTA'S FILM TRILOGY;
PRACTISING DIASPORIC CREATIVITY**

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Sukhmani Khorana and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library catalogue, the Australasian Digital Theses Program (ADTP) and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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ABSTRACT

This project, titled “Crossing Over: Theorising Mehta’s Film Trilogy, Practising Diasporic Creativity” articulates a critical-creative research discourse. It crosses over in terms of traversing critical scholarship on genre and audience, assuming multiple cultural positions, as well as in bridging the theory/practice divide. The most critical theoretical intervention made by this project is to insist on a more nuanced (rather than homogeneously “transnational”) account of situated diasporic practice.

The thesis comprises the critical component, and consists of a preface and five chapters on the theory, location, genre, audience and remixing of diasporic creative practice. In addition to the critical component, the project consists of a 20-minute visual essay and a web-log of production notes that constitute the creative component.

The aim of the critical section is to theorise the intertwining of personal, political, and poetic attributes of diasporic creative practice through the conception, development and distribution stages. Such a theorisation demonstrates the situated nature of diasporic production and reception, and its crossover potential is exemplified through the study of Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta and her well-known “elements” film trilogy. The critical approach is an epistemological and methodological convergence of the auteur, genre, and audience/cultural studies approaches, and hence a theoretical crossover.

The visual essay, titled *I Journey Like a Paisley* is itself a crossover of various textual genres, as well as creatively manifesting the multiple cultural positions of diasporic practice laid out in the critical component. It documents the lives of a group of young Indian-Australians residing in Adelaide through the personal-political-poetic specificities of my diasporic lens. Production choices and screening responses are discussed briefly at the end of the critical component. For a more comprehensive understanding of the production of the theoretical and visual components and their cross overs, entries from the web-log maintained throughout the project (<http://over-exposed-image.blogspot.com>) have been included in the appendix. Significantly, the research discourse is established as a remixed, theoretically informed practice that crosses cultural and genre/audience boundaries.

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