

# Anthropological Forum

A Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology

ISSN: 0066-4677 (Print) 1469-2902 (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/canf20](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/canf20)

## Scripted Heritage in Improvised Spaces—Tamil School Plays as Mnemonic Socialisation and Placemaking in Diaspora

Orly Orbach

To cite this article: Orly Orbach (27 May 2025): Scripted Heritage in Improvised Spaces—Tamil School Plays as Mnemonic Socialisation and Placemaking in Diaspora, Anthropological Forum, DOI: [10.1080/00664677.2025.2484396](https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2025.2484396)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2025.2484396>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 27 May 2025.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 147



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Scripted Heritage in Improvised Spaces—Tamil School Plays as Mnemonic Socialisation and Placemaking in Diaspora

Orly Orbach

Department of Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK

## ABSTRACT

On makeshift stages across London, students from a Tamil Saturday school reenact myths and stories from Sri Lanka. Based on multi-sited ethnographic research across the city, I show how these school plays move difficult and painful cultural memories from the edge of visibility into the public realm. Performed at the Museum of London, Trafalgar Square, temples and the Houses of Parliament, they expand where Tamil cultural heritage belongs. The plays reveal how memories suppressed in Sri Lanka find new public articulations in the UK. The article considers the difficulties of sharing memories of violence with children as an aesthetic and pedagogical problem (Daniel 1996, Jeganathan 2020). As expressions of postmemory in migration, school plays offer oblique forms of remembering violent pasts remotely. Through carefully worded scripts devised by their parents, the plays provide a reflective and embodied process by which children become custodians of their cultural heritage, transforming intergenerational memories of collective trauma into meaningful lessons that enable young people to act in this world.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 8 October 2024

Accepted 20 March 2025

## KEYWORDS

Tamil intangible heritage;  
postmemory;  
intergenerational memory;  
migration; diaspora  
placemaking

## Relocating Memory

This article explores how school plays transform intergenerational memories of violent pasts in migration. Based on the premise that to deter war we need to be able to look at the aftermath of violence, the article observes how Tamil supplementary school plays deal with the moral and practical challenges of remembering violent pasts and making them publicly visible.

The article is based on ethnographic research conducted with Tamil supplementary school students in South London, set up for the purpose of teaching children Tamil cultural heritage, which alongside memories of violence and war, is suppressed in their parents' home-country, and not yet widely known in the UK. I examine three plays in five different locations to show how they reconfigure the relationship between place,

**CONTACT** Orly Orbach  orlyorbach@gmail.com  Department of Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London, SE14 6NW, London, UK

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

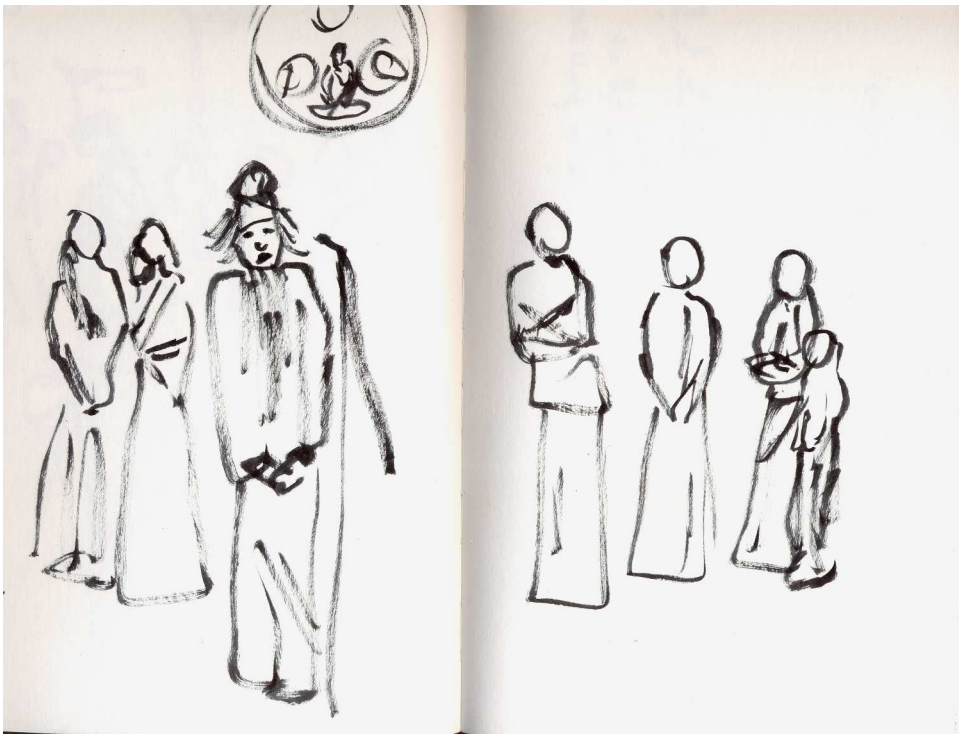
memory and identity, for young people and their community, and produce new sites from which memories can be shared, commemorations held and traditions practiced.

Social memory is dependent upon the spaces and environments that shape how and what we can remember. Finding these spaces are not readily available, many families that migrate to the UK set up their own supplementary schools to help their children develop their cultural knowledge, practice mother-tongue and learn histories not taught in state schools. The UK provides communities the freedom to set up these schools, but no financial support. Parents fund these schools, find buildings to rent and often volunteer as staff. Supplementary schools reveal the resourcefulness of communities in diaspora, navigating a new cultural landscape, setting up classes outside the State-system to ensure children remain connected to their roots.

The relatively small Tamil Saturday school of 15 students where I conducted my research is one of an estimated 2000–5000 supplementary schools in the UK, each with its own cultural program. Together these schools make up a different memory landscape of Britain, based on multiple histories of migration and colonial legacies. Records of supplementary schools in the UK date back to the 1900s. Today, they can be found in almost every London neighbourhood, run independently and discretely by diasporic groups in the spaces in-between state education, in rented classrooms and community halls. The insecurity of renting together with the precarity of being a migrant in Britain means that supplementary schools are almost permanently at risk from closure. They can be ‘kicked out’ without prior warning. Schools that have endured have often had to relocate or temporarily shut to find a new venue. Consequently, schools tend to keep a low profile, using invisibility as a strategy for survival in migration (Fortier 2020).

Yet despite the risks that come with public visibility, many supplementary schools work towards making their cultural heritage publicly recognised. Staged plays is one method by which young people, dressed in spectacular costume, give cultural heritage visibility in diaspora, moving it from obscurity into the public realm. For the students, performing plays is not only a means of embodying history but also acts of place-making, creating new spaces where they can speak publicly in their mother-tongue, recite Tamil poetry and commemorate events that took place in their parents’ home-country (Figure 1) (David 2012a).

In the last 30 years, supplementary schools have moved in and out of public visibility as they fell in and out of favour with changing governments. In the 1990s, when the New Labour party pledged to make education its number one priority, supplementary schools were considered worthy of research as well as public funding for the first time. Whereas previous governments favoured assimilation policies, the newly elected government supported multicultural policy programs to tackle issues around cultural discrimination and exclusion. In a pre-internet age, the government commissioned an organisation called ‘Contin-You’ to collate the first comprehensive supplementary school list, and a printed book was publicly available, detailing each school’s location, cultural curriculum and community languages taught.<sup>1</sup> This was the first time supplementary schools were recognised by the State as a sector. In the 2000s, in the shadow of 9/11, the government continued to regard these self-organised schools as a potential resource for improving public education, but also a potential public threat, with growing anxieties that young people from minority backgrounds could be radicalised without the government’s



**Figure 1.** Children dressed as sages, temple play.

scrutiny. Evidently, the 2000s saw a sharp increase in ethnographic research on supplementary schools advocating for their social value, but also addressing public concerns about radicalisation (e.g. work on long-distance nationalism by Blackledge and Creese 2009), and minorities' experiences of racism and cultural exclusion (for instance, see Archer, Francis, and Mau 2010; Mirza and Reay 2000). By 2011, the newly elected Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron declared that 'State multiculturalism has failed'.<sup>2</sup> Community language projects ceased to be supported by the government, and in many public spaces such as libraries, community language resources were removed. 'Contin-You' was dismantled, the UK supplementary schools' list was no longer centralised, and the schools became invisible once more. During my research schools were so unknown even to each other that the Tamil school I was researching with was unaware of another Tamil school in the next borough. It was through events such as performances in temples, public commemorations and Tamil street-dance competitions that schools would meet. Supplementary school plays are therefore not only means for remembering the past, but of creating diasporic mnemonic environments in the present.

Anthropologists depicting 'landscape as memory' have foregrounded the importance of tangible heritage, highlighting how place-based memories are re-activated through human movement (e.g. Argenti and Schramm 2009, 25; Basso 1996; Feld and Basso 1996; Gell 1998, 107; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Strang 2016, 55; Van Dyke 2019). Amongst many case studies about people journeying to be in the presence of a storied landscape, a poignant example is Feldman's ethnography of Israeli youth pilgrimages to Auschwitz that describes how the power of commemorative performances

is derived from the sense of ‘being there’, in the touch and smell of the barracks, the presence of the witness in the environment of horror and the immediacy of the witness’s reference to them ‘pointing “here,” “there”’ (Feldman 2019, 115). The actuality of the site is key—‘as if those sites themselves could “give testimony”’ (Argenti and Schramm 2009, 25).

My research, on the other hand, is concerned with the activation of intergenerational memory in the absence of landscape-as-material-record (Strang 2016, 55). In my case study, parental memories are rooted in Sri Lanka, but activated by their children in Britain. Remembered remotely, place-based memories are made tangible through oration and performance (Keane 2003; Orford and Becker 2020). Taking a material culture approach to performance (Mitchell 2006, 385), I set out to show how Tamil school plays transfers memories between generations, whilst constructing new sites for a mnemonic community to practice remembering in diaspora.

The Tamil supplementary school I researched was set up in London at the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka. Despite being part of Britain’s colonial past, little is publicly known about how Britain shaped Sri Lanka and shifted its power-structures pre-Independence. The 21 million inhabitants of the island state of Sri Lanka include two main ethno-national groups: Sinhalese, who are mainly Buddhist, make up the state’s majority. Tamils, who are mainly Hindu and also Christian, are the island’s largest minority group. The country’s Northeast is claimed by Tamils as their traditional homeland (Seoighe 2016). Over the centuries, Sri Lanka’s south was colonised by the Portuguese and Dutch, and most recently by the British. When Sri Lanka was still known as Ceylon, a significant number of Tamils from South India were brought to Sri Lanka to work as indentured labourers on British-owned coffee, tea and rubber plantations, significantly changing its demography<sup>3</sup> (Chandrabose 2014). At the same time, Britain re-orientated Sri Lanka’s political authority to London by building a colonial port city of Colombo, reorganising the island into a single administrative space and political unit which became predominantly Sinhalese (Perera 1997; Seoighe 2016).

Whereas Sri Lanka’s anti-colonial struggle against Britain was shared by Sinhalese, Tamils and other ethnic groups on the island, in 1948, after gaining independence, the State turned towards a Sinhalization Buddhist-nationalist strategy, excluding its Tamil population and minoritising the Tamil language (Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004, 658). The ‘Sinhala-Only Act’ introduced in 1956 facilitated discrimination against Tamils in education, public service employment and interaction with state institutions and the majority Sinhala community (DeVotta 2005 cited in Seoighe 2016, 363). Along with public policies that minoritised the Tamil language were acts of material destruction of Tamil cultural heritage, most famously the burning of Jaffna Library in 1981, where an estimated 95,000 volumes and priceless manuscripts were deliberately destroyed. Amidst ethnic polarisation and growing violence, deepening state oppression was met with intensifying resistance and retaliation by the Tamil separatist group LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam). Amongst the many underreported acts of ethnic violence (McGowan 1992) was ‘Black July’—a significant dark moment in Sri Lanka’s history in which pogroms were carried out against the Tamil population by Sinhalese Mobs, looting Tamil homes and businesses, killing hundreds of Tamil civilians. A brutal 26-year civil war followed, sending hundreds of thousands of Tamils into exile (Seoighe 2016, 363).

In the closing stages of the war, tens of thousands of Tamil civilians trapped in a designated No-Fly-Zone in the area of Mullivaikkal in the northern part of the country were indiscriminately shelled by the Sinhalese army. The 18th of May 2009, declared by the State as the last day of the war, is publicly celebrated as ‘Victory Day’ in Sri Lanka. For Tamil communities, the same date marks the Mullivaikkal genocide,<sup>4</sup> and Remembrance Day events are held by Tamil groups in diaspora to commemorate the dead and the estimated 146,679 Tamils still missing, unaccounted for by the State.

The civil war had split the country’s national memory in two: the State celebrates the Sinhalese victory through public monuments and museums, but accounts of the war as experienced by Tamil survivors continue to face censorship at home. Public commemorations of the war dead and missing are prohibited in Sri Lanka at the time of writing (Kuljić 2009; cited in Fridman 2022, 19). It is in diaspora that transnational Tamil communities openly gather to commemorate 18th May as Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day.

This article does not explain the complex ways by which violence deepened divisions or shaped ethnic identities on the island based on linguistic, religious or territorial differences, neither does it provide details of violent events, which can be found elsewhere (see Daniel 1996). My research begins 10 years after the war, and considers how young people in London reconnect with Tamil heritage, memories and traditions that were disrupted by violence and distanced by migration, whilst moving these memories into new sites, to make them visible in the public realm.

### Re-Scripted Pasts: School Plays as a Medium for Postmemory

Supplementary schools are examples of memory activism from below, foregrounding counter memories that challenge ‘prevailing notions of what is considered acceptable remembrance in public space’ (Andrews 2014; Fridman 2022, 19; Orbach 2022).

The school I was researching teaches Tamil as an academic language for native speakers, drama and Tamil street-dance (Kuthu),<sup>5</sup> through which contemporary, transnational Tamil–British ethnic identities are cultivated. Observing the drama lessons, I witnessed how the past ‘came out’ in mythical plays and historical re-enactments.

I use the term ‘scripted heritage’ in this article to highlight some of the complexities around school plays as a medium of postmemory. The term is inspired by a discrete comment made by a couple of museum officers who, having watched a Tamil school play performed in a family festival felt it was ‘too scripted’. Their remark was not something you’d expect to hear from museum staff in a festival designed to support minorities and promote cultural diversity. Most school plays are expected to have a script. How can a play be ‘too scripted’?

Their comment, I guessed, was not about the quality of the children’s performance, but directed towards their parents or teachers who are ‘scripting’ the play. It echoed sentiments I occasionally encountered during fieldwork that criticised parents for sending their children to supplementary schools and ‘making’ them learn their parents’ cultural heritage in their spare time. Why should children’s play be ‘scripted’ by their parents’ past?—was the criticism.

This question concerns all cultures to some extent, but tends to be directed at migrant parents whose traditions are less familiar in a new country, where their efforts to educate their children about their cultural histories stand out.

I took time to consider the cultural meaning of ‘scripted heritage’ in a Tamil context. Amongst the most highly regarded cultural values in the school is the Tamil script, an alphabetical system that consists of 247 letters. The importance placed on the Tamil language extends to children becoming familiar with ancient Tamil literary works and literary figures. The three Tamil plays discussed in this article incorporate ancient myth, Tamil poetry, literary and oral tradition as well as more recent memories of violence, either implicitly through defiant speech, or through commemorative re-enactments.

In many cultures, the ‘school play’ is a malleable form of memory transmission through which children awkwardly demonstrate their capacity to act as public orators and represent their community’s cultural values (For instance, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989). The school play becomes a fraught media when heritage is under threat, such as it is for the Sri Lankan Tamil school in this article, for whom school plays contain cultural memories suppressed in their parents’ home-country, and in danger of disappearing in diaspora where children can forget their parents’ past, mother-tongue and cultural values.

Since many Tamil stories have no fixed script or English translation, parents devise the plays, although it is ultimately the children and young people who take centre-stage, a process by which they become the main actors in preserving Tamils myths and histories. Plays carefully scripted by parents are used as a pedagogical tool for their children to remember the past, as well as their mother-tongue. All plays in this article were written by one mother-volunteer that teaches at the school. Understanding these plays as expressions of postmemory, I use the term ‘scripted heritage’ to describe the process by which the vastness of violent pasts is transformed into carefully worded texts and choreographed scenes that can be shared with children. Myth and memories are acted out in highly stylised stage plays, where they are reworked into different contexts and gain new meaning. They are embodied lessons about the past, taught to enable children to act in this world, despite violence.

School plays are scripted, but performance spaces have to be improvised. The fuller title of this article—‘scripted heritage in improvised spaces’—describes how migrant parents create new sites for their children where Tamil intangible heritage can be performed and narrated in public. Like rented supplementary school classrooms, public stages and audiences are improvised and changeable. The parents who write the plays also find venues, cultural programs and events where their heritage and traditions can be included. In a single year, the school group of 15 students performed plays in 5 different venues: the Museum of London, 2 temples, the Houses of Parliament and Trafalgar Square. Introducing Tamil heritage into new contexts and environments, staged plays become acts of placemaking that transform the city.

Following these performances, I show how school plays, as a live medium that requires the presence of actor and audience, create a new kind of witnessing that embed cultural heritage into new spaces (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989). School plays are portable means by which students embody cultural heritage whilst incorporating histories and familial



memories into new locations, producing new sites of memory that link London to Sri Lanka (La Rose 2014; Nora 1989; Winter 1998).

In these ways, heritage is both scripted and improvised. Rehearsing the script, students gain a sense of readiness and preparedness. Not knowing in advance where or when they will perform next, they are able to turn up at a moment's notice and recite Tamil poetry or perform a myth in places they have never been before. Plays are adapted to different locations, audiences and occasions which in part determine what cultural memories are included or omitted, and the degree to which plays implicitly or explicitly reference the conflict in Sri Lanka.

### ***The Doubling of Selves in Diaspora: Postmemory, Performance and Personhood***

*Tamil language class.*

*A rented community hall in a South London suburb.*

*Saturday morning, summer 2019.*

*I arrive early, and decide to discretely sit at the end of a long table. No one here yet. A mum and her 12 year-old daughter soon arrive, and sit on either side next to me.*

*I am in this intimate space, between mum and daughter.*

*The girl asks her mum questions, her mum explains: 'Tamil New Year is in April'.*

*The girl: 'New Year in Sri Lanka'.*

*The mum explains: 'not all Sri Lanka- there are also Muslims, Sinhalese, other people. Sinhalese people also celebrate New Year in April'.*

*The girl asks: 'Why do Sinhalese people have a war with us? Why does Sri Lanka have a war with India? With Sinhalese?'*

*Mum replies decisively: 'leave it leave it'.*

*The mum smiles at me, explains: 'too big'. Instead, the girl's attention is redirected towards her textbook. They are here to study Tamil language class right now, not get caught up in history.*

*(notes from school visit, July 2019)*

The conversation took place a month after students from this very school performed a play in Trafalgar Square as part of Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day. On stage, students acted out a play about the dangers of ignoring genocide, yet when asking her mother direct questions in class, the girl was not given an answer and the topic was avoided.

There are two points to note here. The first is that performance can express what cannot be easily communicated in ordinary speech, or in the mother's words, when the past is 'too big'. How can she explain decades of war and displacement to her child? Written by parents and performed by their children, school plays are intergenerational memory spaces where stories and recollections of violence that are difficult to discuss in ordinary conversation, are instead visualised and verbalised through metaphor, symbolic action, speech and spectacle. They can communicate memories of violence that fall outside what is comprehensible or rational. Performed across London, they allow the past to unfold gradually, and become a process by which parents and children narrativise events and make sense of histories that are otherwise too painful, immense and overwhelming.



Secondly, the conversation above points to how children make their parents' silences public. Whether the mother's avoidance of the topic is understood in terms of trauma or taboo, it is the child's presence and her questions that expose her mother's silence.

Writing as part of anthropology's 'reflexive' turn in the 1980s, Fischer describes how parental silences stemming from difficult and painful histories that fall outside public memory were made public through literary works by second-generation children of African, Armenian, Chinese, Indian, Jewish and Mexican immigrants brought up in the US. Fischer uses the term 'ethnic anxiety' to describe how second-generation immigrants who witness parental silences and avoidances experience ambivalence towards their ethnic identities. Parental silences become a force larger than oneself, compelling children to search for their past through creative outputs, filling the silences and voids with creative literary works (Fischer 1986).

Fischer describes how parents' unspoken stories of struggles and suppressed memories are recovered by their children through playful word games, poetry and dream. Performance features obliquely as the method of recovering silenced pasts that 'cannot be articulated in rational language but can only be acted out' (Fischer 1986, 204). His work already alludes to the idea of 'postmemory', a term coined later by Hirsch to describe events so powerful or traumatic that they surpass generational boundaries (Hirsch 2008). Hirsch uses the term postmemory in connection with the 'hinge-generation', children of Holocaust survivors who still have direct access to witness accounts, and become guardians of their parents' traumatic pasts that are yet to become public history (Hirsch 2008, 1). Like Fischer, Hirsch describes how silences and half-told stories that surround powerful or traumatic events compel the second generation to rework these memories into creative outputs.

Postmemory is therefore relational, describing the second generation's direct connection to parental memories, and their responses to these memories. The creative medium through which postmemory manifests, for instance, a photograph of a concentration camp reworked into a graphic novel (Spiegelman 1986), are both the force of traumatic memories and the medium that enables audiences, including its author, to 'see' violent events and hear silenced pasts and people. The next generation finds creative means by which to give voice to these events, re-invest story and meaning in them, and make the past public and visible. Tamil school plays and re-enactments in this article can be understood in this vein, as manifestations of postmemory in migration, where traumatic memories suppressed in one location, in one generation, find new creative outlets in a new country by the next.

Both Fischer and Hirsch's works describe a doubling up of identities in diaspora. Fischer shows how second-generation immigrants in 1970s US re-invent ethnic identities that are hyphenated, and have not existed before: 'To be Chinese-American is not the same thing as being Chinese in America. In this sense there is no role model for becoming Chinese-American' (Fischer 1986, 196). Constructed through displacement and migration, the hyphenated self (e.g. Armenian-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Afro-Americans, Mexican-Americans) articulates cultural experiences that have hitherto not been included in public discourse. It is the emerging ethnicities of second-generation immigrants, their hyphenated, dual identities, that connect distant homelands with their immediate locality. Likewise, Tamil-British identities can be conceived as new

ethnicities which are articulated by children, whose performances make the historical connection between the UK and Sri Lanka publicly visible.

The concept of postmemory further complicates how we understand identities, since rather than memories 'belonging' to us as individuals, they span across generations. According to Hirsch, although violent events of the past were not experienced directly by children of survivors, they are brought up as witnesses to these events through parents' actions and behaviours, stories and silences which transmit these experiences so deeply and affectively that they *seem* to constitute memories in their own right (Hirsch 2008, 107). Hirsch is not using the idea of postmemory metaphorically to suggest children imaginatively identify with their parents, but describes how for these children, the events are so powerful that they are remembered as their own experiences. In this way, postmemory describes the porousness of personhood, where powerful memories belong both to parent and child and continue to flow between the two.

The medium of postmemory has been previously used to refer to individual expressions by children of survivors, but Tamil school plays describe collective outputs involving a group effort of location-scouting, script-writing, memorising lines and making props and costumes, which actively involve children and their parents. The term 'postmemory' here therefore manifests as a collective, rather than individual experience.

Whereas postmemory emphasises the 'double-personhood' of a child experiencing their parents' memories as their own, and migration produces dual-ethnicities, stage-acting doubles identities in a different way, by combining the agency of the actor with the character they are inhabiting on stage (Hastrup 2003). Interviewing professional stage actors, Kirsten Hastrup notes they often speak about themselves and their character interchangeably, and sometimes as 'we', as if speaking for two people at once (Hastrup 2003, 38). The doubling of selves is a common theatrical process where the actor aligns themselves with a character's mood and motivation. In the context of diaspora, this 'doubling-up' becomes a path for Tamil-British students to articulate their dual-heritage and parental memories. Students inhabit historical and mythical characters from the past, speaking both as themselves and their community, channelling the voices of their parents, ancestors, the missing and the dead.

Anthropologists have long speculated on the potential of performance to transcend boundaries, extend selves and restructure social life (Barba and Savarese 2003; Schechner 2006; Turner 1969). As theatrical spectacles, what the school plays do in a very practical way is transform histories remembered privately to being visualised and shared publicly. Performing transnational memories in London, the plays transcend where these memories 'belong'. Thus, although intended primarily as a pedagogical tool, Tamil school plays have the effect of re-rooting heritage in migration. Written by parents and acted out by children, school plays extend who is 'doing' the remembering, moving memories from belonging to a private group to a general audience, from parents to children, and from characters to the actors.

There is another sense in which identities are 'doubled' in school plays, which I learned whilst sketching the children waiting to perform. Some were dressed as Siva, Parvati and Murugan, in gold and wearing a crown. I noted five were wearing the same costume. A student explained: 'they are all playing the same character'. In addition, one child was featured in two roles to cover for someone who was absent that day. In this



**Figure 2.** 'Children dressed in gold with crown' 'they are all playing the same character'—field sketch with participants' comments, temple play 2019.

interchangeable way, one character can be played by several children, and a child can play multiple roles, moving beyond the idea of a singular self (Figure 2).

### ***School Plays as Mnemonic Socialisation***

'Mnemonic socialisation' refers to the processes by which we acquire a group's collective memory and become members of a mnemonic community (Zerubavel 2011, 224). Much of what we remember we did not experience personally, but do so as members of families, organisations, nations and other mnemonic communities and institutions (Zerubavel 2011). Mnemonic socialisation involves a filtering process by which some events, including our own personal experiences, are recognised and become part of the group's official memory, whereas other events are not narrativised by the group, and are intentionally or accidentally forgotten.

This filtering process relies on a group's mnemonic practices, such as history lessons taught by state school, or celebrating public holidays. On a small scale, the family plays a critical role in our ability to recall the past, as the first mnemonic community most of us belong to, but mnemonic communities vary in scale and include any institution through which we remember the past (Halbwachs 2020; Zerubavel 2011). Mnemonic socialisation processes are often taken for-granted, but become visible in diaspora, when children attending state school on weekdays and supplementary school on weekends notice the discrepancy between what is taught in state school and the histories and traditions they learn from parents.

Moving between mnemonic communities, second-generation children are in a unique position to move memories across institution. Performing plays about Tamil pasts to British audiences, they act as cultural translators, incorporating their parents' transnational memories into new spaces. Because of their youth, different institutions are invested in their moral, cultural and spiritual identities, and design youth-centred programs and events. In this case study, institutions include a city museum fostering their civic identities, temples interested in their spiritual upbringing, and the Houses of Parliament which acknowledges their commonwealth backgrounds. As the first generation in their family to be brought up in Britain, students easily adjust to different audiences and can carry transnational memories into new locations in ways that their parents cannot.

Mnemonic socialisation occurs in several ways through their school plays: within the Tamil community, students are socialised into the mnemonic practices of adult worlds, becoming competent knowledge holders of Tamil heritage. Through external community programs such as museum partnerships, students are incorporated into British public institutions. Yet memories in migration are multidirectional (Rothberg 2009) and it is through the medium of school plays that children and young people in turn socialise British public institutions and audiences into their Tamil–Sri Lankan mnemonic community. Through their plays, cultural memories move between generations, private and public realms, play and reality.

### **Background and Methodology**

This article stems from a larger research project I conducted about museums and migration, with case studies based at the Museum of London's Supplementary School Programme, running between 2016 and 2022.<sup>6</sup> This program can be seen as part of a wider trend across European museums to respond to migration and reform curatorial methods by collaborating with source communities (Golding 2009; Harrison 2013; Karp et al. 2006; Karp and Lavine 1991; Kreps 2003; Macdonald 2013; Peers and Brown 2003). Such projects inspired a new field of museum-and-migration research, focusing on the role of museums in supporting social integration and community cohesion (Grosfoguel, Le Bot, and Poli 2011; Innocenti 2014; Johansson and Bevelander 2017; Labadi 2018; Poehls 2011; Whitehead, Eckersley, and Mason 2012; Whitehead et al. 2016). The proliferation of short-term collaborations between museums and migrant communities, of which supplementary school plays are a pertinent example, have raised questions about whether such projects can have long-term impact on public memory, but little scholarly attention has been paid to their impact on intergenerational memory.

My focus on placemaking in diaspora connects the problem maintaining multicultural public spaces with that of intergenerational memory. Researchers have shown how negative public perceptions of minority languages can deter children from speaking their mother-tongue in public, to the point that they silence their parents (Blackledge 2004). The survival of a mnemonic community is contingent on how it is accommodated in public spaces, for instance, whether children can speak to their parents in their home language in their local park (Blackledge 2004). Making space for cultural heritage learning in diaspora not only entails finding physical sites, but removing the stigma attached to a cultural identity so children can practice traditions in public without fear. As a

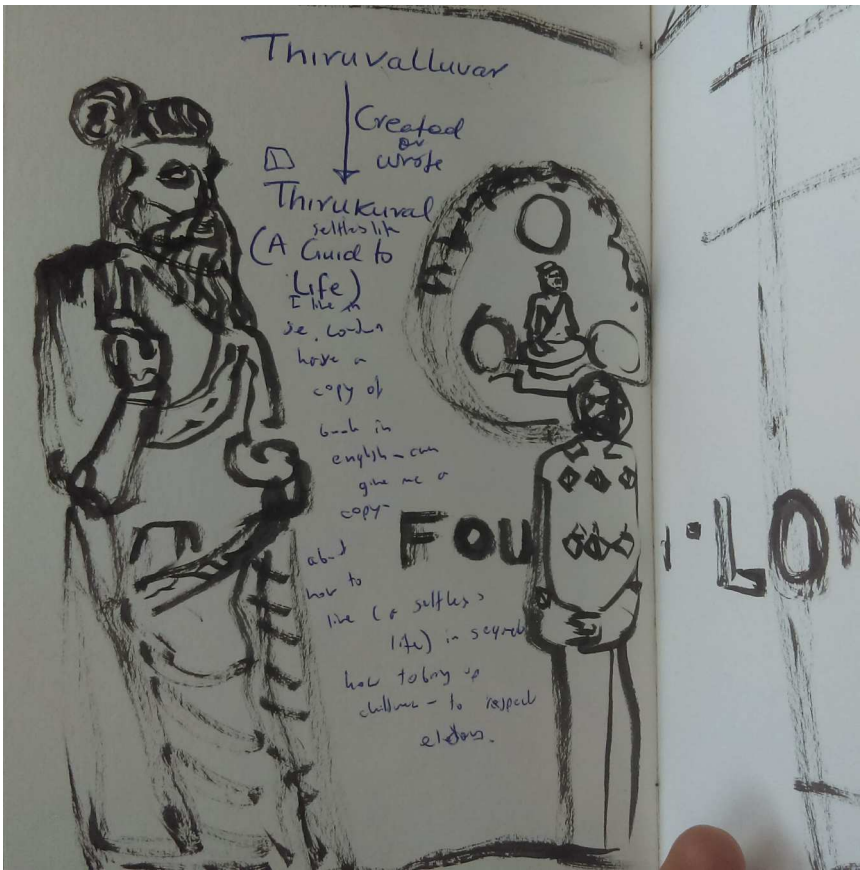
Hebrew-speaking mother I am all too familiar with the challenges of continuing to speak home-languages with children in public spaces, especially during times of political conflict. I appreciate the freedom that diaspora affords in choosing how and what home languages and heritages are taught, but have also witnessed cultural heritages disappear within a generation. This research is therefore informed by my appreciation of the extraordinary efforts of minority groups and individuals in maintaining cultural memories, language and other forms of knowledge in diaspora. This research also stems from my continued desire as a museum practitioner towards creating safe spaces for minority groups in the city, with an understanding of the flaws and limits of museum-initiated multicultural programs. I was keen to observe how different communities make space for their cultural heritage with and outside of the museum, and decided not to research a single community, but several, as part of my ongoing personal interest in exploring multiculturalism and its limitations.

I conduct long-term research with several schools participating in the museum program. My initial ambition was to create new permanent museum representations with the schools, but I soon learned the importance communities place on intangible cultural heritage, of which the school play was a widely used method for children to practice mother-tongue, acquire embodied knowledge and demonstrate cultural competence.

As a format, supplementary school plays are very fleeting museum representations that could easily be missed. Children would arrive at the museum magnificently dressed in traditional costume, briefly sing, dance and perform stories in their mother-tongue, recalling histories and traditions from across the globe. Yet beyond a photograph or two, these school performances went undocumented. They were spectacular but would last only a few minutes.

I therefore applied my previous training as an illustrator and community artist, using drawing, photography and other audiovisual methods as a delicate way to document performances. I carried a sketchbook so research participants can see and add to my field-notes. Drawing was a practical way to capture actions and emotions on stage whilst anonymising the identities of individual children. More than that, drawing was my way of participating in the creative endeavours of supplementary schools seeking to visualise the past, and my own method of observing dynamic, moving representations. The drawings became visual records through which I could revisit the performances, share my observations with participants and make the plays 'public' (Figure 3).

Beyond school plays and rehearsals, I also attended adult conferences and events that supplementary school communities participated in where children were not present. In the conference 'Stop the Cycle of Violence and Genocide Against Tamils in Sri Lanka', held at the Houses of Parliament in 23rd July 2019, I met young people from whom I learned what methods of dissemination do not work. A young man in his early 20s told me about growing up in London, where he attended a majority-white, English Boys' School, and he was the only student of Sri Lankan heritage. Trying to educate his classmates about Black July, he presented a PowerPoint in class which was not well received. His classmates found the content distressing and were upset with him for exposing them to images of violence. His teenage experience speaks directly to the problem of how to share unwanted memories of violence (Fridman 2022; Jeganathan 2020) and the barrier experienced by diasporic groups as they try to make their histories known to their children and people outside their community. In contrast to his anecdote



**Figure 3.** Field sketch of temple play with annotations by community members in the audience. Beyond school plays and rehearsals, I also attended adult conferences and events organized by supplementary school communities where children were not present.

of a 'failed PowerPoint', school plays offer an intellectual and emotionally reflexive method for intercultural and intergenerational communication, where memories of violence are symbolically reenacted, aestheticised and therefore become watchable and comprehensible. The school play transforms painful memories into new aesthetic forms through which students can reinterpret complex and unsettled pasts.

### Three Plays

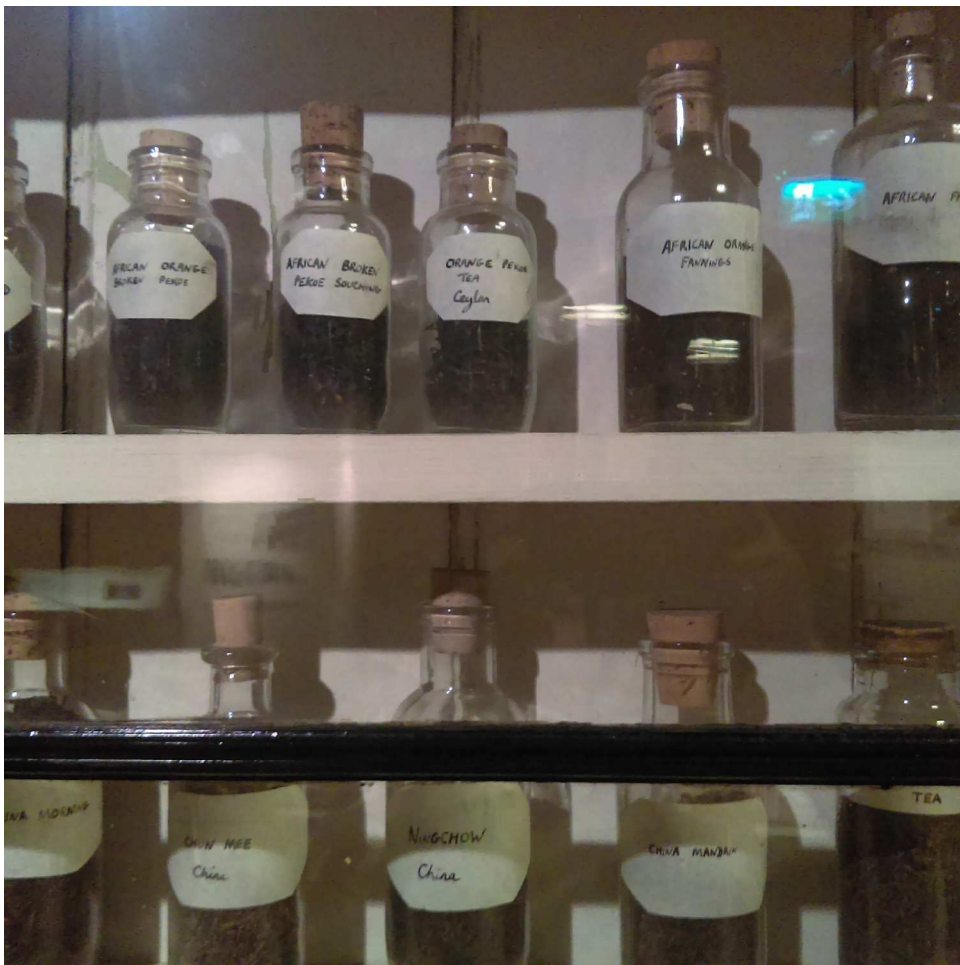
#### *'Tamil Language Drama'—A School Play in a Museum Festival*

I first encountered the students through their performance in the Museum of London Docklands. Situated on the river front, this museum was once the largest warehouse in the world, built to store commodities brought in through colonial trade. Sampling cases that once belonged to the East India Company display remnants of British colonial trade routes, with jars of spices and beans from different continents, wood samples, walrus and elephant tusks. Amongst these are coffee and orange pekoe tea from



‘Ceylon’—Sri Lanka’s previous name when under British rule, quietly attesting to how Tamil heritage is part of British colonial history (Figure 4).

Converted into a city museum, today the warehouse tells multiple stories of migration, showing London’s global connections through the river. Where once goods imported from around the world were measured and sampled in this building, it is now diasporic heritages that are on display, unpacked and exchanged. In a bustling museum festival called ‘The Languages of London’ (2019), language diversity was celebrated through sonic and interactive spectacles: sign language sessions, spoken-word poets, Chinese and Hebrew calligraphy, Spanish rhyme-time for under-5’s and a graffiti artist getting visitors to spray-paint welcome signs by the door. Amidst all this commotion, fifteen students from a South London Tamil school had prepared a play about the importance of the Tamil language. Joyful and excited, the group was getting ready to perform. The room was packed.



**Figure 4.** Jar with tea from Ceylon (Sri Lanka). ‘Warehouse of the World’ Gallery. Museum of London Docklands. Photograph taken by the author.



The children were a sight to behold. Dressed as ancient Tamil scholars, publishers, philosophers and poets, they wore colourful or bright white outfits, sporting artificial long beards, grey wigs, some with three white lines painted across their forehead. They came skipping passed us—small sounds of bells, flashes of colour—and arranged themselves in formation at the front of the room.

Two 14-year-old girls acting as *Narrators* addressed us, one in Tamil, the other in English:

*Tamil Language Drama! By order of appearance Tamil would be considered the world's oldest language. No one knows when the Tamil language appeared. However, we had Tamil literature from the First Century. It is still a widely spoken language all over the world. Approximately 120 million people can speak Tamil.*

*We believe that Tamil is not only our language, it is representing our life, culture. It is our life, it is our culture.*

*'It is our life. It is our culture!'*—the group echoed in unison.

*'We believe that this is a time to remember our Tamil Scholars who revived and reformed our Tamil language throughout the difficult periods', proclaimed the Narrator seriously, then gestured towards a boy: 'Do you know who he is?'*

The boy, perhaps 13 years of age, wearing a wig of white, curly long locks, partially tied in a bun, stepped forward.

*'He is Thiruvalluvar, the ancient poet and philosopher of Tamil history—the girl explained—No one could learn the Tamil language without learning his work and name. He is the author of the Thirukkural'.*

*'Please listen to some of my thirukuri'*—The boy said, then spoke importantly in Tamil.

The Narrator translated: *'Thirukural is a collection of couplets on ethical, political, economic matters and love. Listen to his teachings'.*

One by one, each child addressed us as an ancient Tamil scholar, quoting from their work:

*'Anger should be reduced slash controlled', exclaimed a thirteen-year-old boy: 'Respecting elders. Don't stop doing charity work. Do not give up hope, self-confidence. The joy of the learned. Learn flawlessly. Ancient poet 4rd century'.*

A petite 12-year-old girl addressed the audience in Tamil in an animated voice. The Narrators asked us: *'Do you know who she is?'* (We did not.)

*She is Auvaiyar, the first female poet and author in Tamil literacy. She wrote nursery rhymes with morals in each verse.*

A teenage boy with a deep voice spoke as Thamotharampillai: *'I devoted my life to the work of editing and publishing some of the oldest works of classical Tamil poetry and grammar. Without me there is no Tamil literary'.*

The two Narrators concluded the play:

*Even though we have everything we feel as if we are missing something.*

One raised her index finger, speaking in Tamil. The other translated:

*But there is one thing missing ... Tamil is spoken across many continents and in many countries, yet Tamil language does not have a motherland.*

The First Narrator spoke in Tamil. Everyone repeated her words loudly, like a proclamation.

The Second Narrator translated: *'We will never let our Tamil language to die'.*

The Group: *'We will never let our Tamil language to die'.*

Pause

Like an afterthought, a small girl came forward to deliver the closing lines: *'This is how we say "thank you" in Tamil'.*

The audience clapped awkwardly, unsure if the play is over.

There was something uncanny about seeing children dressed as sages, giving voice and form to absent heroes of Tamil literature. A history of violence was very obliquely referenced, with no mention of any specific geography, only that their language is missing a motherland, is under threat, and that there have been 'difficult periods'.

I was utterly mesmerised by children and young people openly discussing ethics, philosophy and reciting poetry, which for me was unfamiliar and new. The students seemed to shine, the place felt brighter with their presence. I tried to jot down bits of the script and wanted to learn more. The play left a strong impression on me, and it was because of this play that I decided to carry out research with this school outside the museum.

Reactions from museum staff differed. Through word-of-mouth I learned that a couple of festival organisers felt that the play was too 'scripted'. Their comment may have been in response to the formality of the presentation; for the most part students stood quite still, reciting their lines, whereas other community performances comprised of songs and dances. At the time no community officer was appointed. Staff had little knowledge of the school and had not worked with them before. The play's political undertone seemed to deviate from their efforts to depict the museum as a microcosm of untroubled multiculturalism.

When the play ended, two Japanese women politely got up to leave, exchanging smiles with me to signal they thought the children were very cute. A large group of Albanian mothers whose supplementary school would be performing in the next festival had come to check out the venue. One audience member who had arrived especially was a dad with two pre-school girls who sat eagerly near the front, waiting for the play to begin. The dad, a white English man, told me his wife is Tamil. They had no connection with the school. Their mum (who was not present) does not speak Tamil and had never attended supplementary school. He had brought his young girls to the museum festival especially to watch this play. He is keen for his girls to know more about their Tamil heritage. Their mum was brought up in the English countryside. It was different then, the dad explained to me, her parents preferred to assimilate to English culture. It was not easy at that time, there was a lot of prejudice. He spoke carefully, the girls within earshot. This bilingual play was immensely meaningful to an audience of three, the dad and his girls who do not (yet) speak Tamil, for whom the museum offered a promise of return, the recovery of roots and lost heritage.

### **Temple Play: A Continuous Rehearsal**

I was under the impression that the museum festival was the big event for which the school had prepared this play, but the following week they continue to rehearse the same script in their school, preparing for a different venue. This time they were invited to performed in a temple as part of the Thai Pongal festival—a Tamil harvest celebration (Figure 5).

The temple is on the outskirts of London. Barefoot or in socks, we spent most of the day in the temple carpark, which was transformed into an open-air communal cooking space. It was remarkable to see a space as mundane and unattractive as a London carpark be temporarily transformed into a ritual space (David 2009, 224; 2012b); colourful, full of aroma and light, as groups gathered round dozens of large pots over open fires, stirring ingredients into the traditional sweet rice pudding, with live music playing in the background. We watched our pudding slowly change colour, fire smoke in our eyes, waiting for the milk to boil over, at which point we all exclaim: ‘Pongalo Pongal!’ Students were familiar with this festival, although they had no memory of this particular temple.

In the evening, when it was finally their turn to perform, some were a little nervous, overwhelmed by the strong stage lights and the sheer size of the hall. The audience, who were almost entirely Tamil and familiar with the characters children were enacting, were warm and encouraging. The script was slightly adjusted to reference the harvest, the narrators thanking the sun. Notably, their play was the only one with English translation, other plays were performed entirely in Tamil.

The crowd, almost entirely Tamil, arrived from far and wide to be here. Some flew in from Tamil Nadu to join this event, including a man who donated all the cooking pots to the temple. His friend volunteered to give me a tour of the temple’s driveway which was decorated with large colourful banners portraying the same ancient and modern Tamil literary heroes, philosophers, publishers and poets which featured in the school play.

Back in the temple, the audience was lively, casual. Adults continued to converse as children performed. This was considered the lighter part of the evening. The play felt less ‘scripted’ here compared with the tightly choreographed traditional dance pieces, where every tiny move including the eye gaze is carried with minute precision. The newness of the script came through, how ancient verse and modern poetry was collaged together.

After the food was shared and cooking pots packed away, I found the children in the temple kitchen, still rehearsing:

*I am dead but still living now for ever ...*

*Without me there is no Tamil history ...*

### **School Play at the Houses of Parliament**

A week later they performed the same play at the Houses of Parliament, in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association room, a small room with thick, green carpet and crumbling books such as ‘Pioneer Peasant Colonisation in Ceylon’ locked inside tall glass display-cases. Tamil food was prepared in the adjacent kitchen. A replica of a harvest pot was installed in one corner of the room, with cotton wool spilling out to represent



**Figure 5.** Temple driveway with a temporary display of Tamil literary heroes.

the milk boiling over. The other corner of the room had a roll-up banner showing an aerial photo of the bombed site of Mullivaikal, with the caption: ‘146,679? Not just a number of people missing’.

The event was part Thai Pongal celebration, part commemoration, oscillating in tone and content. Several Tamil schools performed songs and dances, sometimes near the harvest pot, sometimes in front of the banner. School plays were paused while Members of Parliament dropped in to give speeches of solidarity or ask us to hold a moment’s silence to remember those who have died or are still missing. Despite the formal setting, the play felt more casual. Performed in front of Tamil families and British MPs already familiar with Sri Lanka’s history, the play was ‘at home’ here. Families sat cross-legged on the crowded carpet, sharing freshly made Sri Lankan food and preparing take-aways to MPs. The space felt intimate, as if this was not the Houses of Parliament but someone’s living room.

‘Do you know who I am?’ asked a boy.

‘Yes, you are Thirukkural!’—a dad in the audience interjected, and another dad giggled.

A senior Tamil gentleman who helped organise the event told me that the aim of such plays is two-fold:

*‘One, sharing to the other people about what our culture is, what our arts is about. At the same time, giving the opportunity for the children, who have taken the time to learn it, this is an opportunity for them to perform in front of people, otherwise what is the point of learning? So whatever opportunities we can give, we need to encourage these guys’*

His remark made me reconsider the purpose of school plays; they are intended to enlighten the public about Tamil culture, but at the heart of it public performances are designed to motivate children to learn. Grown-ups gather so that students have an audience to perform to. Although school plays are performed in public, the primary audience are arguably the actors themselves, who feel they are gaining public acknowledgment for their accomplishments.

Before arriving, a 14-year-old girl told me nonchalantly that they performed here last year. Afterwards, a 13-year-old boy admitted with unconcealed enthusiasm that it 'feels like, awesome'.

Performed in the three venues, the same play would become a museum representation in a language festival, religious practice in a temple, and part of the ongoing Tamil campaign for international justice at the Commonwealth Room. For the school, this play was always understood as a cultural performance. At the museum, the play felt more politically loaded, its message of resistance more acute, whilst at the Houses of Parliament the same play felt more ludic, received with humour and heckling from parents.

Following the school, it became clear that the museum is not the final stop in a journey towards cultural preservation, but part of a 'line up' of potential sites where children can perform their heritage, along with the temple and Houses of Parliament. For me, the sites are very much distinct. I had presumed that likewise, children would be able to identify the locations where they performed. This was not the case. Back at the school a younger girl, aged 6 or 8, mistook a temple performance for the museum, and was corrected by her older brother. The different settings have had little impact on her memory. For her, location seems to matter less than the plays, which provides continuity amidst the changing settings. Children perform the same script, surrounded by their families, dressed up in the same costumes. The sites alternate, but the script remains a 'constant'.

### **Remembrance Day in Trafalgar Square**

The next school play was performed outdoors in Trafalgar Square, a short walk from the Houses of Parliament. I was invited by the drama teacher to attend what she described as an important event. On this rainy Saturday afternoon on the 18th of May, 2019, Trafalgar Square became a site for Tamil communities to gather from across the UK to commemorate Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day, marking 10 years since the end of Sri Lanka's civil war. The commemoration included testimonies from survivors, political speeches, displays and performance from several supplementary schools.

Trafalgar Square is a national symbol of the right to protest in the UK, described by the Mayor's office as 'a centre of national democracy and protest', where 'rallies and demonstrations are frequently held at weekends on different political, religious and general issues' and communities 'given access to such causes'. Originally designed to celebrate the victory of the Napoleonic wars, today it has become a site of memory for different communities, accommodating diverse and rapidly changing cultural festivals, public protests and commemorations, ranging from Chinese New Year to Gay Pride. On this afternoon half of Trafalgar Square was made available for the Mullivaikkal commemoration. Young volunteers carried large panels with photographs of war victims and vandalised cemeteries to set up a temporary exhibition. A memorial shrine was quickly built. A long queue formed, people picked flowers and placed petals by portraits of the missing and dead (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Temporary memorial, Mullivaikkal commemoration, Trafalgar Square, London 2019.

On this occasion only teenagers aged 12–15 performed. Students arrived straight from their supplementary school across the other side of London. I have not been to the rehearsals and had no idea what the play is about. They were all dressed in black, with blood-red scarves draped around their necks, except for one boy in a light blue buttoned up shirt, a world map across his chest, cardboard binoculars tided with string round his neck, opaque sunglasses and a hat that concealed his face. I was surprised that Sri Lanka was not highlighted on his map. I was more baffled by the many placards other students brought with them. Handwritten in pen, one girl held a green cardboard with the words: ‘Help for Animal Rights!’ Another held a card that said: ‘Help the environment!’ A few students argued amongst themselves whether they had to just hold the cards up, or whether they also had to ‘say it’: ‘*you have to say it, no you don’t*’. They would soon be performing this for the first time and details were still being worked out. Word spread that-yes- they have to say the words in their card out loud. One student said he would rather just hold up the sign (Figure 7).

A raised stage had been set up by the Lion Statues. The commemoration begun with speeches by politicians:

*We would like you to join us in remembering all those who were unlawfully and brutally murdered by the Sri Lankan state.*

We held a two-minute silence.

One speaker discussed the history of the term ‘genocide’, mentioning Lemkin, the Armenian genocide, Darfur.

Another man on stage addressed parents:

‘Don’t let your children forget their language, their culture, their tradition. We will carry on fighting until there is justice’

*The culture of impunity on the island exists ...*

*... killings, rapes and torture, and appropriation of Tamil Land.*



When it was their turn to perform, the teenagers entered the fenced-off stage area, placed bouquets by the temporary memorial, and stepped on stage in socks, leaving their shoes on the ground below. The 13-year-old boy playing the 'World' took centre-stage. The others formed two rows on either side of him, crouched on the floor, their backs facing the audience.

The school play took me by complete surprise. The 'World' gazed into the middle-distance through cardboard binocular, calling out loud and clear: *'Perfect. Yeah! Everything is perfect'*.

A teenage boy approached the world and crouched below him on bended knee. The boy took off his red scarf and bunched it in his hand, holding it up for the World to see, pleading:

*Help us, please!*

*'Help the Tamil Genocide'* exclaimed a teenage girl, joining the boy on bended knee, holding up her red scarf.

The others rushed one by one, on bended knee, calling:

*Please!*

*Help!*

*Please!*

*Help!*

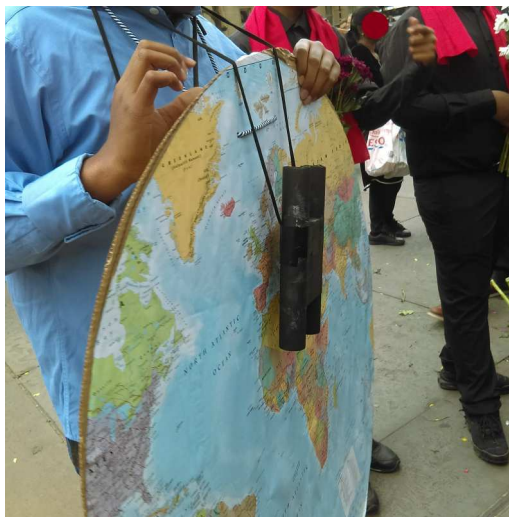
But the World did not hear them. They returned to their formations ([Figure 8](#)).

A student approached the 'World' with a different cause, holding a placard and reading it out:

*'Help for environment!'* he exclaimed.

*'Delivered'*. The 'World' quickly responded.

New causes were introduced:



**Figure 7.** Boy dressed as 'the World', 2019.





**Figure 8.** Drawing of the play in Trafalgar Square.

*'Help for humanity!'*

*'Delivered!'*—responded the 'World'.

*'Help for woman's rights!'*

*'Help for animal rights!'*

The world responded quickly: *'Delivered!'*

At intervals, students continued pleading with the World to help the Tamil people, gathering one by one by the boy's feet, holding their red scarves in their clasped hands like flows of pouring blood, calling out together.

The 'World' ignored them and continued to gaze into the distance.

Finally the whole group pleaded with the world, kneeling and calling, rhythmically, in unison: *'Please Help Please Help Please Help!'*

But the 'World' did not hear them.

They called out for the last time: *'help us, please!'*, the whole group repeating the phrase over and over, then lay on the floor, as if falling down dead.

The boy representing the world remained oblivious to their cause. He stepped over one of the bodies to look further into the distance through his binoculars, concluding:

*Hmmm, something is happening there. Yeah. Something is definitely happening there. Ok.*

The 'World' walked back without care (Figure 9).

The group got up and began the second part of the performance, this time addressing the audience, each actor speaking one line:



**Figure 9.** Justice delayed, Justice denied. Commemorative Play. Trafalgar Square, 2019.

*A full ten years have passed  
 A full ten years have passed  
 We still do not know why we have lost our loved ones!  
 We still do not know why we have lost our loved ones!  
 We still do not know why we have lost our loved ones!  
 We still do not know where our relatives are!  
 We still do not know where our relatives are.  
 We still do not know where our relatives are.  
 We still do not know why we have lost our shelters!  
 We still do not know why we have lost our shelters  
 We still do not know why we have lost our shelters  
 We still do not know why, the world leaders let us down*

Teenage boy:	'We still do not know (... pause ...) who would listen to our story'.
Teenage girl:	'We still do not know who would listen to our story'.
Another teenage girl:	'We still (... .long pause ...) do not know (... .second pause ... .) who would listen to our story'.
Teenage boy:	'Ten years back we were begging all the world leaders to stop this genocide, but nothing happened!'
Teenage girl:	'Ten years back we were begging all the world leaders to stop this genocide, but nothing happened!'
Together:	'But nothing happened!'
Fourteen-year-old teenage boy:	'Still, we have not received the justice for this!'
Twelve-year-old girl:	'Still, we have not received the justice for this!'
	'Do you think, the world leaders did not know about this?'
Girl:	'Clearly, they did know'.
Another Girl:	'Clearly, they did know'.

Another Girl:	<i>'Justice delayed, justice denied'.</i>
Teenage boy:	<i>'Justice delayed, justice denied'.</i>
Older teenage boy,	<i>'Justice delayed, justice denied'.</i>
holding one arm up:	
Everyone:	<i>'Justice delayed, justice denied'.</i>

Throughout the play, and the rest of the long, wet afternoon, during moving speeches by children of survivors and the stillness of a two-minute commemorative silence, disinterested tourists continued to climb the Lion Statues, oblivious to the commemoration a couple of metres below their feet.

### ***Murugan: How Violence was Made Immortal in Our World***

Following the commemoration, students spent their Saturday mornings preparing a new play: the creation of Murugan, a youth-God known for protecting villagers from repeated attacks by an immortal villain.

Back in the school I watched several rehearsals of this sacred myth. I watched a boy speak his lines in heavy monotone, and a mum, who is the drama teacher, demonstrating how to deliver the speech with more animation, her voice rising at the end of the sentence like a question.

Acted out entirely in Tamil, I could not follow the story. The older teenagers had less prominent roles in this play. They sat by my side and translated the action. Not understanding Tamil became an opportunity to hear different interpretations of the story in their own words:

The story begins with a boy and a girl, sat on plastic chairs in the back of the room. They are the Gods, Siva and his wife Parvati. A boy who will soon become the villain prays to Lord Siva, asking for immortality. Lord Siva grants wishes to all his devotees. If you want an extra hand, you get an extra hand. The villain asks: 'I never want to die'. Because the villain prays well, explain the students, Siva grants his wish.

Made immortal, this character, played by a plump 14-year-old boy, turns out to be a villain. He comes on set skipping and sings.

All join in: 'a-ma a ma'.

The villagers, performed by three children, are engrossed in game of 'catch' with an invisible ball.

The villain marches intimidatingly towards them. They fall down screaming.

This scene reoccurs.

The myth does not explain why the villain wants to attack the villagers, simply that he does. The villagers hold a meeting and decide to approach Lord Siva for help. Siva deliberates: he had already granted the villain immortality, and cannot take it back. Parvati, Siva's wife, intervenes, reminding him that he is a God after all. Surely something can be done?

And so Siva creates Murugan, to protect the villagers from future attacks. Importantly, a student tells me—Murugan is not born, but created by Siva.

In a penultimate scene, the immortal villain and Murugan go head-to-head in a stylised battle: Murugan backed by three villagers confronts the immortal villain backed by three henchmen. Murugan and the villain race toward each other, physically clash, take a

few steps back, then repeat. All the while, the Gods sit on plastic chairs at a distance and watch the actions unfold, as if witnessing the event but unable to interfere.

Finally, Murugan holds a special trident with a diamond—a *vel*—to defeat the villain. The students explain he is supernatural, a god, and the *vel* is his attribute. The story describes how good things overpower bad things. The villain and his three cronies lie on floor, defeated.

In one rehearsal the ‘villain’ falls clumsily on the floor, making parents and children burst out laughing. A student scolds them: this is a serious story! On another occasion a girl ‘villager’ comes over to the teenagers. Her older brother, also playing ‘villager’, is taunting her. An older teenage girl tells her she is strong, to stand up for herself. We joke about whether he should be re-cast into the other group, to play one of the cronies.

Between the play and reality, teenagers translated the story to me and discuss their thoughts on morality, children, orphans, innocence and responsibility. Rehearsing Tamil myths, traditional stories and historical events becomes a reflexive space for them to process and invest their own meaning in the past.

On the morning of the final rehearsals there is more commotion than usual. There is a confusing exchange of families leaving and arriving after street dance and before drama class. The oldest teenage girl who had previously played ‘the narrator’ in *Tamil Language Drama* would not take part in this play. She leaves with her sister, and tells me she

is sorry to have to miss out, she and a few others had to go to an important event. There is a gathering, her dad, there are a lot of people from his village, where he is from (in Sri Lanka). A lot of people arriving today, a meeting to discuss how to help the people in their village back home.

She spoke casually and calmly but there seemed to be an undercurrent of emotion, like an intense excitement she was trying to contain. I took it in, her feeling. There was much more that was not said. I nodded and said I hope to see her soon, and she left the room.

It felt like a departure from the rehearsal space. Still a teenager, now almost 16, she was no longer taking part in a school play, but hosting visitors from her parents’ homeland, transitioning from children’s acting to community action.

I went back to watch the rehearsal, wondering about this other, parallel event. She ran back in suddenly, as if she had something important to tell me: ‘*the villain—he is not an actual person. He is just the definition of evil*’. she said to me, referring to the villain in the play.

I looked at her, surprised, and wrote down what she just told me, word for word. She repeated to make sure I understand, carefully watching me write her words. I asked: *is it something she just thought of?*

She said she ‘*only just realise. Because it’s bad to kill someone*’.

It was the way in which she run back in urgency that strikes me that this is really important, significant and something she has been grappling with herself, carrying around, the killing of people, in the play, in Sri Lanka. The villain will be defeated in the play, he will fall down as if killed, together with the other young actors representing the bad guys. So she wanted to clarify—she thinks that the good villagers are not doing any killing of any people, but are killing a metaphorical being, which she calls the ‘definition of evil’.

Her profound remark shows how she differentiates between the symbolic event of ‘killing evil’ on stage, and killing an actual person, which she condemns.

That very evening, the play was performed in a temple on the other side of the city, as part of an annually held drama competition between three Tamil supplementary schools. Sandwiched between a row of residential houses, after an off-license, sushi shop and hair-dressers, the temple stands out like a fata morgana, a golden Ganesha on its façade gleaming against a cloudy grey North London skyline.

The children perform their play with confidence. A young girl steps forward. She is petite. Her voice is loud and strong. She stands tall with her arms straight, hands held together, and introduces the play: ‘*Tamil Moli*’.

### Discussion: Postmemory in Public Space

This article describes school plays as a process by which young people, through stage acting, become social actors in the world. As a medium of postmemory, school plays provide a ‘sense of living connection’ between survivors of war and children born afterwards in a different continent (Hirsch 2008). Fischer and Hirsch describe the ‘post-ness’ of memory as the belated responses of second-generation writers and artists to the powerful and painful memories of their parents (Fischer 1986; Hirsch 2008, 3). Making a clear distinction between the generation of postmemory and that of their parents, the term ‘postmemory’ describes the mediated representations and creative explorations into difficult past produced by those who ‘came after’. In contrast, school plays are a more open, social and collaborative process by which children acquire their parents’ memories. Here representations of the past are produced by parents together with their children. There is still an intergenerational ‘post-ness’ or ‘belatedness’; memories suppressed in the parents’ home-country are performed by their children a decade later. The difference is that in school plays the past is not hidden by the parents but intentionally made visible.

Visualising violent pasts is a challenge both in child pedagogy and public dissemination. Parents want the past to be seen yet must consider how to visualise violent events in ways that are not off-putting to the public or damaging to their children. In diaspora parents need to tread with even greater caution to ensure material is not too overwhelming, since children might otherwise decide to ‘drop out’ of Tamil school and disengage with their parents’ past, now or in later life.

The common tendency to avoid looking directly at images of violence or speaking openly about war were demonstrated by my interlocutors, in the first example of a mother avoiding her daughter’s questions about war in Tamil class, and the second example in the methodology section of a Tamil teenager preparing a PowerPoint about Black July which is then vehemently rejected by his English classmates who blame him for the violent content.

Tamil supplementary school plays in London demonstrate the transformative potential of memory work (Brauchler and Emde, this issue), by not only make memories of violence publicly visible, but also watchable and discernible. Carefully scripted by parents, school plays make it aesthetically possible to look at violent pasts. Using Tamil cultural forms of choreography, selected poems, mythical heroes and folk lore,

students can think through the place of violence in the world and the community's experiences of war. In acting and re-interpreting traditional myths like Murugan, embodying Tamil historical literary heroes and performing in community commemorations, young people's thoughts and personal reflections on violence can be articulated.

In a very reflexive manner, and to different degrees, all three plays address the crisis of the senses caused by violence, which renders us speechless, unable to look or to act in the world. In 'Tamil Language Drama' the play in the museum came across as 'mute'—neither Sri Lanka nor any specific historical event was mentioned. During the Mullivaikkal commemoration, the crisis of seeing violence was acted out by the boy playing the 'world', turning a blind eye to Tamil suffering, not registering the fallen students by his feet. The third play addresses the crisis of acting in response to violence through a metanarrative: no longer attached to a singular event, the myth of Murugan describes how violence is a repeated occurrence that gained an immortal presence on earth through an oversight on Siva's behalf. Although Siva can see the village attacked, he seems unable to intervene. It is only in the third play that violence is overcome: unlike the commemorative play in Trafalgar Square that ended with the actors lying on the floor, in the play of Murugan the villagers get up again. Siva, however, is unable to directly help the villagers under attack. It is Siva's son, the child rather than the parent, who is able to change the course of events, throwing his *vel* to end the violence.

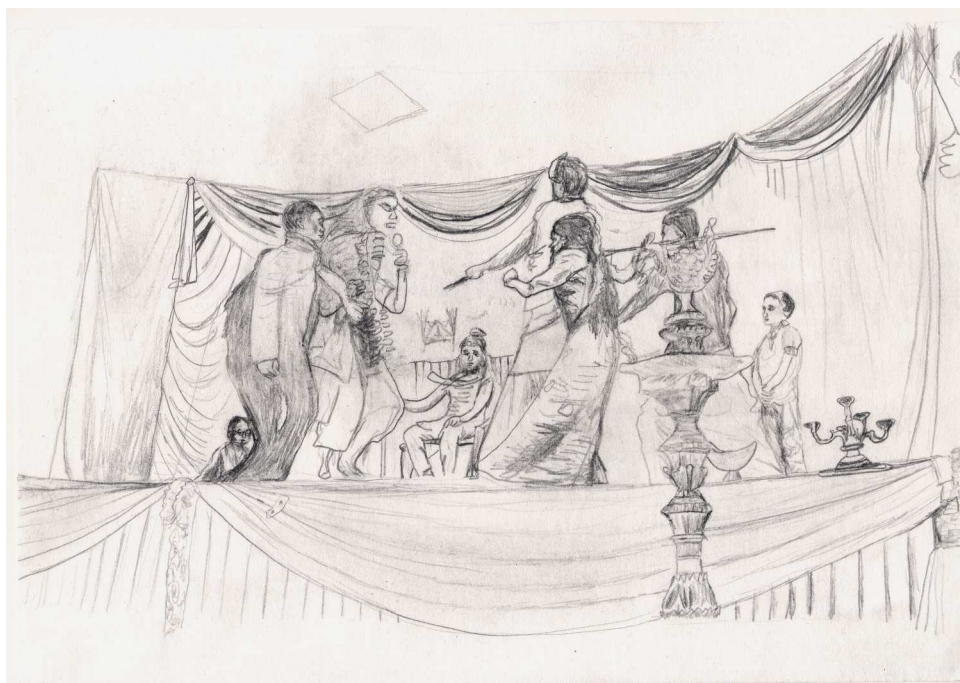
Like Siva's *vel*, school plays are a media that bestow certain powers onto children to bring about cultural change that their parents cannot. It is the second-generation that can easily move between different mnemonic practices and institutions. Unlike their parents, their dual identity is firmly rooted in Britain, and they can speak as British-Tamils without fear of their British identities revoked. Their bicultural heritage and youth status make their plays 'fit' into multiple institutional programs, extending where Tamil pasts are performed and remembered in diaspora. Permitted to play, young people can explore the past in ways that are less restrictive and more expressive than adults can.

In previous work I introduced the term 'ludic heritage' to examine the tensions between children's play and heritage preservation (Orbach 2022). Showing how school plays move heritage in migration between different venues, I continue here to consider what happens when heritage becomes a 'site of play' but focus on the spatial dimensions of intergenerational memory.

In this article, I have shown how Tamil school plays incorporate embodied practices and traditions into new physical environments, opening up spaces for remembering Tamil pasts. Adapted to different venues, plays transform Tamil pasts from being remembered in isolation to their inclusion in public festivals and commemorations. By performing in museums, temples and other venues, young people are not only connecting with the past, but extending how and where Tamil cultural history belongs, transforming places in a very real and tangible way.

The plays sustain the awkward spaces between myth, memory and lived experience. Although these are mere plays, the experience of performing them in public renders them real. These performative acts of remembering do not begin and end in one location or event, and the past continues to be explored through rehearsal and performance. Through their play, children establish public spaces where they can continue to practice their cultural heritage safely and peacefully (Figure 10).





**Figure 10.** Murugan: how violence entered our world, 2019.

## Notes

1. Under New Labour, a government-supported organisation called 'Contin-You' was commissioned to collate the supplementary schools list. Contin-You advocated for supplementary schools to be recognised as a public sector. 'ContinYou' was later dismantled. A small element of the organisation survived and was turned into the 'National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education' which still exists, and a digitised list of some supplementary schools is currently online, but no longer comprehensive or reflective of supplementary school across the UK.
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994>, accessed 30 November 2020.
3. In 1871, there were around 123,000 Indian Tamils involved in the plantation sector and this increased to 235,000 by 1891 (Chandrabose 2014, 147).
4. The term 'genocide' as developed by Raphael Lemkin is both contested and incredibly hard to prove. In this article, I use the term 'genocide' to mean the intentional, premediated, systematic and ongoing attempts to eliminate a specific ethnic group that is targeted because of its religious, ethno-linguistic or other cultural or visibly identifiable markers, a crime which is to be differentiated from 'collateral damage', a massacre, general war crimes and crimes against humanity. Whilst it is outside the scope of this article to provide a full discussion about the term's origins, legal implications, cultural misuses and reappropriations (for this see Jones 2016.), it is important to highlight here that I am using an anthropological approach by which I explain the positions and perspectives of my interlocutors, for whom the massacre at Mullivaikal is perceived as an act of State genocide: premediated, discriminatory and intentional. As Buthpitiya describes: 'Politically vocal sections of the global Tamil diaspora have called for the atrocities of 2009 to be afforded formal recognition as an act of genocide. These indictments have been resolutely denied by the government, which has maintained the line of a "humanitarian rescue operation", citing "zero civilian casualties"' (Buthpitiya 2022, 120). One such example of voices in diaspora is the British Tamils



Forum (BTF), a grassroots organisation representing the voices of up to 400,000 Tamil people in the UK, which continues to call for an independent international investigation into the allegation of war crimes against Tamils, which are viewed as acts of genocide committed by military officers and government officials which the Sri Lankan government has failed to investigate ([www.britishtamilsforum.org](http://www.britishtamilsforum.org)).

5. I mention Tamil street dance in this article in order to highlight that the cultural curriculum at the school is varied, not solely focused on traditional practices, but also new artforms. The instructor explained the dance is called 'Kuthu' back home, but 'Ga-ana' in the UK, and simply means 'street dance'. Tamil street dance lessons were practiced by boys and girls of all ages. Students prepared for a dance competition against other UK Tamil supplementary schools, held in June 2019 in a large auditorium in London's West End. Much could be said about Tamil street dance as an emergent form of cultural expression that enhances Tamil identities in diaspora, but this art form does not describe postmemory in any explicit way, and is therefore outside the scope of this article. The dance involves a sequence of quick moves—kicks, jerks, chest pops, jumping back from a squatting position, sliding back in a 'creeping walk'. The students all move together like one body, mirroring each other, synchronise their steps. Moves are pre-choreographed by a young male dance instructor.
6. Fieldwork was conducted as part of my PhD research between 2018 and 2020 working with the Museum of London Supplementary School Programme and six participating supplementary schools. Fieldwork was extended to sites used by the schools for community gatherings and performances. Participant-observation was the core method, complemented by interviews with museum staff and community members, and the co-creation of museum displays. I had envisaged making several museum displays with supplementary schools, but since school plays were the predominant medium by which community representations manifested in the museum, I adapted my plans accordingly and began researching supplementary school plays, observing and sketching rehearsals, supporting drama lessons and stewarding schools as they prepared to perform.

## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Lochana Jagatheeswaraiyer, students and teachers from various supplementary schools, Sarita Mesmeri and staff at the Museum of London for supporting this research.

## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

This research was supported by the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-East England (Chase) and funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The author reports there are no conflicts of interests to disclose.

## Images

All drawings and photographs were made by Orly Orbach.

## Permissions

The school plays described in this article were devised by Lochana Jagatheeswaraiyer, and printed here with her permission.

## References

- Andrews, K. 2014. *Resisting Racism: The Black Supplementary School Movement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Archer, Louise, Becky Francis, and Ada Mau. 2010. "The Culture Project: Diasporic Negotiations of Ethnicity, Identity and Culture among Teachers, Pupils and Parents in Chinese Language Schools." *Oxford Review of Education* 36 (4): 407–426. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054981003775293>.
- Argenti, N., and K. Schramm, eds. 2009. *Remembering Violence: Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Barba, Eugenio, and Nicola Savarese. 2003. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*. New York: Routledge.
- Basso, K. H. 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: UNM Press.
- Blackledge, Adrian. 2004. "Constructions of Identity in Political Discourse in Multilingual Britain." In *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*, edited by A. Pavlenko and A. Blackledge, 68–92. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Blackledge, Adrian, and Angela Creese. 2009. "'Because tumi Bangali': Inventing and Disinventing the National in Multilingual Communities in the UK." *Ethnicities* 9 (4): 451–476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796809345605>.
- Buthpitiya, V. 2022. "Absence in Technicolour: Protesting Enforced Disappearances in Northern Sri Lanka." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 28 (S1): 118–134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13758>.
- Chandrabose, A. S. 2014. "Cultural Identity of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka: A Measurement of Multi-Dimensional Status of the Indian Tamil Society in Sri Lanka." *Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia During 18th to 20th Centuries*. SAARC Culture CCentre, GGalle, 145–163.
- Daniel, E. V. 1996. *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropography of Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- David, Ann R. 2009. "Performing for the Gods? Dance and Embodied Ritual in British Hindu Temples." *South Asian Popular Culture* 7 (3): 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746680903125580>.
- David, Ann R. 2012a. "Embodied Migration: Performance Practices of Diasporic Sri Lankan Tamil Communities in London." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 33 (4): 375–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2012.693815>.
- David, Ann R. 2012b. "Sacralising the City: Sound, Space and Performance in Hindu Ritual Practices in London." *Culture and Religion* 13 (4): 449–467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2012.728141>.
- Feld, S., and K. H. Basso. 1996. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press.
- Feldman, Jackie. 2019. "Nationalising Personal Trauma, Personalizing National Redemption: Performing Testimony at Auschwitz-Birkenau." In *Remembering Violence: Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission*, edited by Nicolas Argenti and Katharina Schramm, 103–134. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Fischer, Michael M. J. 1986. "'Ethnicity and the Arts of Memory.'" In *Writing Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James Clifford and George E Marcus, 194–233. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fortier, A. M. 2020. *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Fridman, Orli. 2022. *Memory Activism and Digital Practices After Conflict*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Golding, Vivien. 2009. *Learning at the Museum Frontiers Identity, Race and Power*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Grosfoguel, Ramn, Yvon Le Bot, and Alexandra Poli. 2011. "Museum and Migration: An Introduction." *Human Architecture* 9 (4): 1–4.

- Halbwachs, M. 2020. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Harrison, Rodney. 2013. *Heritage : Critical Approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Hastrup, Kirsten. 2003. "Theatre as a Site of Passage: Some Reflections on the Magic of Acting." In *Ritual, Performance, Media*, edited by Hughes-Freeland, Felicia, 29–45. Swansea: Routledge.
- Hirsch, M. 2008. "The Generation of Postmemory." *Poetics Today* 29 (1): 103–128. <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2007-019>.
- Innocenti, Perla, ed. 2014. *Migrating Heritage: Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Jeganathan, Pradeep. 2020. "Pain, Politics, and the Epistemological Ethics of Anthropological Disciplinarity." In *Embedding Ethics*, 147–167. Oxon: Routledge.
- Johansson, Christina, and Peter Bevelander, eds. 2017. *Museums in a Time of Migration: Rethinking Museums' Roles, Representations, Collections and Collaborations*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- Jones, Adam. 2016. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge.
- Karp, Ivan, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, and Toms Ybarra-Frausto, eds. 2006. *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Karp, Ivan, and Steven Lavine. 1991. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Keane, Webb. 2003. "Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things." *Language & Communication* 23 (3-4): 409–425.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1989. "Performance of Percepts/Percepts of Performance: Hasidic Celebrations of Purim in Brooklyn." In *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, edited by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, 109–117. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kreps, Christina F. 2003. *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation, and Heritage Preservation*. London: Routledge.
- Kuljić, Todor. 2009. "Remembering Crimes: Proposals and Reactions." In *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy, Volume III: Serbia at the Political Crossroads*, edited by Dragica Vujadinovic and Vladimir Goati, 197–212. Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Centre for Democratic Transition.
- Labadi, Sophia. 2018. *Museums, Immigrants, and Social Justice*. London: Routledge.
- La Rose, John. 2014. *Unending Journey - Selected Writing*. London: New Beacon Books.
- Low, S. M., and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga. 2003. *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Macdonald, Sharon. 2013. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London: Routledge.
- McGowan, William. 1992. *Only Man is Vile: The Tragedy of Sri Lanka*. New York: Picador.
- Mirza, Heidi S., and Diane Reay. 2000. "Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement." *Sociology* 34 (3): 521–544. <https://doi.org/10.1177/S0038038500000328>.
- Mitchell, Jon P. 2006. "Performance." In *Handbook of Material Culture The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edited by Hicks Dan and Mary C. Beaudry, 384–401. Oxford: OUP.
- Nora, P. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire." *Representations* 26:7–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>.
- Orbach, Orly. 2022. "Ludic Heritage: Supplementary School Plays, Museum Collaborations, and the Futurity of Histories in Migration." *Collaborative Anthropologies* 14 (2): 14–33. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cia.2022.0001>.
- Orford, M., and H. Becker. 2020. "Homes and Exiles: Owambo Women's Literature." In *Contested Landscapes*, 289–302. Routledge.
- Peers, Laura, and Alison Brown. 2003. *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Perera, Nihal. 1997. "Territorial Spaces and National Identities: Representations of Sri Lanka." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 20 (suppl 1): 23–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856409708723303>.

- Poehls, Kerstin. 2011. "Europe Blurred – Migration, Margins and the Museum." *Culture Unbound* 3 (3): 337–353. <https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.113337>.
- Rothberg, Michael, and American Council of Learned Societies. 2009. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* / Michael Rothberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP. Print. Cultural Memory in the Present.
- Schechner, Richard. 2006. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Seoighe, Rachel. 2016. "Inscribing the Victor's Land: Nationalistic Authorship in Sri Lanka's Post-War Northeast." *Conflict Security and Development* 16 (5): 443–471. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2016.1219507>.
- Spiegelman, Art. 1986. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Strang, V. 2016. "Uncommon Ground: Landscape as Social Geography." In *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*, edited by Thomas Julian and David Bruno, 51–59. Routledge.
- Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.
- Van Dyke, R. M. 2019. "Archaeology and Social Memory." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 48:207–225.
- Whitehead, Christopher, Lloyd Katherine, Eckersley Susannah, and Mason Rhiannon. 2016. *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe: Peoples, Places and Identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Whitehead, Christopher, Susannah Eckersley, and Rhiannon Mason. 2012. *Placing Migration in European Museums: Theoretical, Contextual and Methodological Foundations*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano DPA.
- Winter, Jay. 1998. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yiftachel, Oren, and As'ad Ghanem. 2004. "Understanding 'Ethnocratic' Regimes: The Politics of Seizing Contested Territories." *Political Geography* 23 (6): 647–676. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2004.04.003>.
- Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2011. "Social Memories: Steps towards a Sociology of the Past." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, 221–224. Oxford: Oxford University Press.