

2017 Tamil Studies Symposium
Transnational Configurations of Tamil Identities
8 & 9 September 2017

8 September 2017
Room 519, 5th floor, Kaneff Tower
York University (Keele campus)

10:00 am Opening remarks

Ananya Mukherjee-Reed, Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, York University
Abidin Kusno, Director, York Centre for Asian Research

10:15 am – 11:45 am

Panel 1: *States and Conflicts in the Era of Transnational Identities*

Transnational Memorialization and Documenting Tamil Genocide: Implications for Justice and Accountability – Harini Sivalingam, Socio-Legal Studies, York University

Territory and Terrain: Indigenous Knowledges and State Violences – Arun Nedra Rodrigo, Humanities, York University

Reconstruction or Transformation of the Status Quo: Gendered Citizenship in post-war Sri Lanka – Thursica Kovinthan, Education, University of Ottawa

Terror's Lawfare: Anti/Counter-Terror Laws in Canada and Sri Lanka – Fathima Cader, Cader Law.

The Tamil Immigrant Experience: Geopolitics, Conflict and the Emotional Geographies of the Tamil Diaspora in Toronto – Saruka Pararajasingam, History, York University

Moderator: Nadarajah Sriskandarajah, Uppsala University

11:45 am – 1:15 pm

Panel 2: *Gender, Generations and Diasporic Practices*

Risk Factors for Social Isolation Among Tamil Elders Internationally: A Review of the Evidence – Thrmiga Sathiyamoorthy, Interdisciplinary Studies, York University

Hyperculturalized Diasporic Communities: Segmented Identities and Mental Health in Second Generation Sri Lankan Tamils – Shaaranya Pillai, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Studies, New York University

A History of Emotions: Childhood Memories of Politically Active Women in Australia – Niro Kandasamy, Historical and Political Studies, University of Melbourne

From Kuli to Coolie: Examining Indian Indentured Labour to the Fiji Islands and Indo-Fijian Identities in the Diaspora – Esha Pillay, School of Oriental and African Studies

Moderator: Nadia Hasan, York Centre for Asian Research

1:15 – 1:45 pm Lunch

1:45 – 3:15 pm

Panel 3: *Ethnography and Archive in the Transnational Context*

(Introduction to the panel) Framing the Local and Diasporic Archive, Vasuki Shanmuganathan, Tamil Archive Project, University of Toronto

Militarized Masculinity and Tamil Women's Resistance: An Analysis of Ongoing Protests in Keppapilavu – Laxana Paskaran, University of Toronto

Reclaiming Identity and Narrative through Collaborative Storytelling for South Asian Women – Nirali Patel, University of Toronto

Fear Being the Item of Inheritance: War Trauma and Family Histories – Ragave Sathiyaseelan, University of Toronto

Sterilization Rates Amongst Up Country Tamil Women: An Examination of Estate Narratives Surrounding Family Planning —Meera Sharma, University of Toronto

Self and the Sri Lankan Identity: Unpacking Relationships with the Country We Called Enigma – Arany Uthayakumar, Psychology, UC Berkeley

Moderator: Vasuki Shanmuganathan

3:15 – 4:45 pm

Panel 4: *Depicting a Shifting Tamilness*

Artistic Responsibility and Questions of Diversity – Josh Vettivelu, Director of Programming, Whippersnapper Art Gallery, OCAD University

Filmmaking as a Personal Journey – Lenin Sivam, filmmaker

Alex and I: Moving Pictures – A Video Essay – Sumugan Sivanesan, filmmaker (via Skype)

A Place for Memory – Shamanthi Rajasingham, Artist; Illustrator, Sri Lanka (via Skype)

Challenges Facing Tamil Feminist Filmmakers – Sumathy Balaram, filmmaker

Performing 'Vadavai' – Pulari Collective

Moderator: Arun Nedra Rodrigo, York University

4:45 – 5:15 pm

Coffee Break

5:15 – 7:30 pm *Screening of 'Pungudutivu, a Disintegrating Island'*

Thanges Paramsothy, Documentarian (followed by Skype Q&A with filmmaker)

9 September 2017
Transportation Hall, Markham Museum
9350 Markham Road, Markham

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Panel 1: *Advocacy in the Transnational Context*

Deconstructing Empowerment in a Victor's Peace: Women's Working Lives in Post-War Jaffna –
Jayanthi Lingham, School of Oriental and African Studies

Emissaries of Empowerment – Nimmi Gowrinathan Politics of Sexual Violence Initiative, City College
of New York and Kate Cronin-Furman, International Security Program, Kennedy School,
Harvard

Documenting Tamil Narratives of the Conflict: Moving Beyond the Confines of Victimization –
Kirthika Umasuthan, Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research, Sri Lanka

Watering Our Roots: Tamil Diasporic Youth and Sustainable Development in the North and East –
Sunthar Vykunthanathan, Comduit Volunteer

Moderator: Arabi Rajeswaran, Community member

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Panel 2: *The Travels of Tamil Literature*

Transnational Tamil Poetry: A Reading of the Collection *In Our Translated World* – Geetha
Sukumaran, Humanities, York University

Literatures of Apocalypse: Representation, Ethics and Commitment – R. Cheran, Sociology,
Anthropology and Criminology, University of Windsor

Multiple Voices Captured in Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry: A Study on the Poems Appearing in *Uprooting
the Pumpkin* – Kandiah Srikaneshan, English, University of Jaffna

Lost and Found: Multiple Identities in the Canadian Diaspora. A Comparative Study of Shyam
Selvadurai's 'Funny Boy', and Anand Mahadevan's 'The Strike' – Nanditha Narayanamoorthy,
Modern Languages and Literatures, University of Ottawa

Moderator: Anindo Hazra, York Centre for Asian Research

4:00 – 4:30 pm Coffee break

4:30 – 6:00 pm

Panel 3 and Reading: *The Enchanted Loom, A Play by Dr. Suvendrini Lena*

Bilingual reading of excerpts from the play:

Bhavani Sathiyaseelan

S. Thambi

Rethuskaran Ramaneekaran

Kurumbasiddy R Rasarathnam

Dharshini Varapragasam

Kavini Vijayasekaran

Paper presentations:

The Enchanted Loom: Dynamics of war-trauma in the Tamil community – Pushpa Kanagaratnam,
Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

Theatre Diversified: The Enchanted Loom and its woven ways – Dr. Anindo Hazra, York Centre for
Asian Research, York University

Material Realities Behind ‘The Enchanted Loom’: Immigration and Health Impacts – Mayoore
Malankov, South Asian Legal Clinic Ontario

The Enchanted Loom: Art and Science – Suvendrini Lena, Neurologist, Centre for Addiction and
Mental Health; Playwright

Moderator: R. Cheran, University of Windsor