UNEXPECTED DEPARTURES: EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF AND EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

WITHIN THE TAMIL COMMUNITY

by

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An MRP

presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Social Work

in the program of

Social Work

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Unexpected Departures: Experiences of Grief and Epistemic Injustice within the Tamil
Community
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This narrative based qualitative research study examined how grief (vastly defined) and
epistemic injustice has been existent in the Tamil community since their time of mass arrival from
Sri Lanka to Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The narratives shared by three Tamil
participants discussed direct experiences of the civil war, loss, adapting to a new way of living,
and describes how their knowledge has been taken up in Canada. Narrative research was conducted
through the use of semi-structured interviews in order to better understand participant perspectives.
Anti-colonial and anti-sanist frameworks were used to theorize the research, alongside literature
on epistemic injustice. Data analysis involved thematic analysis. The findings highlighted the
experiences of the war, adapting to living in Canada, overcoming barriers, racism, and resilience
in the Tamil community.

Key words: Tamil, civil war, Sri Lanka, community, grief, loss, epistemic injustice, experiences

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper firstly to my late mother. Amma, you have shaped me to be the woman that I am today and for that I am eternally grateful, thank you.

I also dedicate this paper to members of the Tamil Eelam community, who continue to wear their stories, as an armor of resilience and strength despite all they have endured.

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How It All Began

In 1983 a civil war broke out on the island of Sri Lanka, between the Sinhalese Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) (Affleck, Thamotharampillai, Jeyakumar & Whitley, 2018; Beiser, Goodwill, Albanese, McShane & Kanthasamy, 2015; George, 2013; George & Jettner, 2016). This civil war continued to take place between 1983 until the mid-2000s; wherein 2009 a ceasefire had been declared by the Sinhalese Sri Lankan government following the murder of LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran (Williams, Weaver & agencies, 2009). Though the civil war in Sri Lanka may have been declared as a ceasefire by the Sinhalese Sri Lankan government, the repercussions and negative effects of the civil war continue to take a toll on the Tamil community today.

The civil war resulted in a mass genocide of the Tamil population residing on the island, which has only become public knowledge in recent years (PR Newswire, 2014). Sri Lanka has also been ranked as holding one of the world's largest number of mass disappearances since the late 1980s, a trend still continuing to this day (Amnesty International, 2020). Many Tamils living in Sri Lanka are still disappearing and the Sri Lankan state has been criticized by many other nations and human rights officials for drawing a veil over the plethora of disappearances. This contributes to the number of harmful realities which continue to impact Tamil people, both those living on the island, or those who have migrated to a new country, as many had to flee for their safety.

Canada is now home to the largest diaspora of Tamils living outside of the island, and Toronto holds a large percentage of this population (Affleck et al., 2018; Amarasingam, 2013; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Simich, Andermann, Rummens & Lo, 2008). Due to the impacts of migrating, having to adapt to a new way of living, and recalling past

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traumatic events, psychological distress has been largely linked to this population (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser, Simich, Pandalangat, 2003; Beiser et al., 2015).

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of grief and epistemic injustice within the Tamil community who currently live in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Throughout this study, I will be vastly defining grief as *more than emotion regarding a loss of a loved one*, and further regarding it as encompassing various losses such as a home, connection to culture and language, etc. Epistemic injustice is a term coined by Miranda Fricker in 2007. Epistemic injustice refers to the injustice that is done against someone regarding their scope of knowledge or their specific "capacity as a knower" (Fricker, 2007, p.44). Fricker (2007) narrowed down epistemic injustice into two types of injustice: *testimonial injustice* and *hermeneutical injustice*. For the purpose of this research, testimonial injustice will be utilized. Testimonial injustice considers how "the speaker suffers a testimonial injustice just if prejudice on the hearer's part causes him to give the speaker less credibility than he would otherwise have given" (Fricker, 2007, p.4).

I utilized anti-colonial and anti-sanist theoretical frameworks to guide my narrative approach, with the purpose of examining mental health, grief, and the conversations thereof, and how they are seen in the context of the Tamil community in the areas of Toronto and the GTA. Two key research questions that guide my study are: 1) What are the experiences of grief (vastly defined) of members of the Tamil community living in Toronto or the GTA? and 2) How has epistemic injustice played a role in the way that the narratives of the Tamil community have been portrayed or taken up by the broader society? To address these research questions, I will be speaking to self-identified Tamil community members aged 18 and older who reside in the GTA.

The key findings revealed five themes; 1) Trauma, 2) Grief, 3) Discomfort in adapting to a new way of living, 4) The efforts to overcome barriers and 5) Resilience. These themes outlined the various narratives of participant experiences surrounding direct relations to the civil war, adapting to a new lifestyle in Canada, and experiences with racism and acceptance as members of the Tamil community in Toronto and the GTA. The narratives brought forward both negative and positive perspectives in relation to grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice. Moving forward, it is important to bring forward further narratives surrounding members of the Tamil community on a local level, as no narrative or experience has been similar to another.

What Does the Literature Have to Say?

In order to gain a better conceptual understanding, I have probed through a number of literature pieces ranging from 1998-2005 and 2008-2018, all of which are different forms of studies, as well as various dissertations/theses pertaining to this community. The literature is derived in forms of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies. This was done in order to first identify why this research was conducted, as it is imperative to draw upon the historical context of the civil war in Sri Lanka in order to touch on its impact and repercussions.

Sri Lanka claimed its independence in 1948, after being held under British colonial rule (Beiser, Simich, Pandalangat, Nowakowski & Tian, 2011). Once claiming independence, the majority government, Sri Lankan Sinhalese-Buddhist at the time, passed policies and legislation that caused the Tamil population to experience grave repercussions in relation to their language and culture (Beiser et al., 2011). One key example was the enactment of the Citizenship and Official Languages Act, where the Tamil community at large experienced threats in response to the use of their mother tongue (Beiser et al., 2011). As tensions had peaked by the 1980s, civil war erupted on the small Island in July 1983 as a result of the ongoing conflict between the majority Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic minority groups (Kanagaratnam, Mason, Hyman, Manuel, Berman & Toner, 2012; Steel, Silove, Bird, McGorry & Mohan, 1999). The Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) was led by Tamil minority group members in efforts to reclaim what was affected; their land and rights. They also proposed to formulate a separate state that would be called Tamil Eelam, *Eelam*, derived from what the Tamil population living in Sri Lanka called the island (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011).

This civil war engaged through three decades, and resulted in numerous civilian deaths, indiscriminate shellings, torture, abductions, displacement, and grave harm towards a large

population of the island (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011; Derges, 2012; Kanagaratnam et al., 2012; Steel et al., 1999). It is to be noted that Jaffna, the northern part of Sri Lanka, as well as the eastern region of the island, faced the brunt of violence throughout the duration of war, as these were home to a large number of the minority Tamil population (Derges, 2012). Tamil civilians were the most susceptible to violence and harm coming from both the Sri Lankan Sinhalese Government as well at the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011; Steel et al., 1999).

Throughout the war time period and shortly after, many research studies were brought forward describing the past and current realities of the civil war, and the great impact on the minority Tamil population (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; Derges, 2012; De Vries, 2001; Douglin; 1998; George, 2013; George & Jettner, 2016; Kanagaratnam et al., 2012; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel, Advocat & Russell, 2018; Steel et al., 1999).

To further elaborate on the literature, I will be dividing the literature into three themes: refugee displacement, pre- and post-migration experiences of the Tamil community, and mental health in specific relation to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and trauma. Prior to discussing each of the three themes, it is important to note that though such themes hold as separate entities, they intertwine and play an equivalent role in the overall experience of members of the Tamil diaspora.

Refugee Displacement

One of the numerous repercussions of the civil war on the small island was the isolation of the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka during the war (Derges, 2012). Because of the isolation, many members of the Tamil community found themselves displaced and living in refugee camps within hostile conditions; some even fleeing for their safety to other nations

(Affleck et al., 2018; Amarasingam, 2013; George, 2013; Steel et al., 1999). It is reported that throughout the duration of these wartimes, approximately one million Tamils fled from the island (Beiser et al., 2003). Throughout many decades, and to date, the literature has identified that a number of Tamils have been displaced and have arrived in places such as Australia, India and Canada to claim refugee status (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; George, 2013; George & Jettner, 2016; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018; Steel et al., 1999). However, Canada has become home to the largest population of Tamils living outside of Sri Lanka itself (Affleck et al., 2018; Amarasingam, 2013; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Simich et al., 2008).

A few research studies stemming from varied research methods explored the relationship between Tamil displacement outside of the Canadian context in places such as Australia and Southern India (De Vries, 2001; George, 2013; Ratnamohan, Mares & Silove, 2018; Samuel et al., 2018; Steel et al., 1999). What was concluded was that the Tamil community has experienced three waves of forced migration since 1984 (George, 2009; George & Jettner, 2016). The experiences of displacement for the community within refugee camps further evoked traumas, and members of the Tamil community were fleeing as a result of the war (George, 2009; George & Jettner, 2016). Additionally, the host countries to where the Tamil population was fleeing placed them in a state of uncertainty based on their refugee status and receiving residency (George, 2009; 2013; George & Jettner, 2016). In fact, there is a large number of undocumented Tamil refugees in Canada who are supported by family and friends; these family and friends arrived in Canada prior to the refugees (George, 2013).

Pre- and Post-Migration Experiences of the Tamil Community

Even though many individuals from the Tamil community were able to migrate into host countries, their experiences of war trauma did not disintegrate as they migrated towards a hope for freedom (George, 2013). The relationship between pre- and post-migration challenges faced by this population were extremely apparent in the literature, more specifically in regard to the trauma they experienced during the civil war (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; George, 2013; George & Jettner, 2016; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018; Steel et al., 1999; Weaver, 2005).

Much of the literature surrounding pre- and post-migration experiences examined and identified common factors within the community at large with regard to migration. The majority of the literature centralized the research around the connection between PTSD and pre- and post-migration stressors of the Tamil diaspora (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999). The overlapping factors surrounding mental health stressors involving the diaspora did not directly examine narratives but focused on the overall outcome of experiences as a result of the civil war.

Furthermore, quantitative literature surrounding the theme of pre- and post-migration experiences of the Tamil diaspora centered the research around methods involving the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview for PTSD (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015), the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ), the Post-Migration Living Difficulties Questionnaire (PMLDQ), the Symptoms Checklist-90R (SCL90-R) (George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999) and the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist (De Vries, 2001). The research tools used for the purpose of quantitative research were all westernized assessments and

questionnaires which provided the researchers with specific responses to draw their conclusions of the Tamil diaspora's experiences.

Overall, the quantitative literature that was explored strongly considered the correlations between PTSD, migration stress and Tamil migrants (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999). The studies identified that both PTSD and migration stress could not exist without the other when considering the experiences of the Tamil population, as both these contributors were heavily present within the community both during and after the civil war (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999).

One study in particular, used a two-group, cross-sectional design to explore the relationship between pre-migration and daily stressors which contributed to the psychological distress of the refugees (George & Jettner, 2016). Contrasting the refugee and migration experiences of Tamils migrating to India or Canada, the research identified that post-migration daily stressors heavily impacted the Tamil population (George & Jettner, 2016). This was further stating that in comparison to Tamil refugees in Canada, those who fled to India experienced a far more challenging time as they lacked more when it came to their socio-political rights (George & Jettner, 2016).

Within the literature, the experiences of post-migration within the Tamil diaspora were also attributed to being culturally informed (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; George & Jettner, 2016; Pandalangat, 2011; Steel et al., 1999). For instance, a Tamil man who has now migrated with his family, while renting or living in subsidized housing would face additional daily stressors, such as seeking employment, sending money back home to family, providing for his immediate family, and continuing to navigate life in a new country (Affleck et al., 2018; Pandalangat, 2011). The daily stressors caused by adapting to a new way of living, followed by the tremendous amounts

of stress and trauma of having to flee one's homeland directly impacts the current experiences of migration within the Tamil diaspora.

Mental Health: PTSD & Trauma

Most, if not all the literature discussed the relationship between the Tamil diaspora and mental health, specifically PTSD and trauma (Affleck et al., 2018; Amarasingam, 2013; Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; Douglin, 1998; George, 2009; George, 2013; George & Jettner, 2016; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018; Silove, Steel, McGorry, Miles & Drobny, 2002; Steel et al., 1999). One of the ways in which PTSD, trauma and the overall mental health of Tamil refugees was measured was through the use of diagnostic questionnaires (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999). A majority of the questionnaire results reported a prevalence of PTSD and trauma in the lives of Tamil migrants, further describing that they still carry the negative stigma and trauma of their lived experiences, and that they find difficulty in being able to settle and adapt in countries that they have migrated to (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999).

One research study specifically focused on the perception of masculinity in relation to post-war trauma as experienced by Tamil refugee men in Toronto (Affleck et al., 2018). This study emphasized the discourse surrounding experiences of the men within the community, and analyzed the impacts surrounding their mental health (Affleck et al., 2018). The study also articulated the amount of trauma experienced by Tamil refugee men and indicated that they still carry their experiences with them, but they uphold a brave face for the sake of their family; all while coping with and managing their ongoing psychological distress in order to provide their families with a new life in a new country away from former hardships and trials (Affleck et al., 2018).

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When noting Tamil women within the literature, primarily most of the Tamil women disclosed that spirituality was their way to move forward from their experiences. Their way of coping with their mental health involved being connected to a higher power and upholding a spiritual connection with God; this spiritual connection helped them to make meaning of their purpose and journey in life (Amarasingam, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011). One study in particular considered the relationship between Tamil women, the burden of womanhood, and experiences with intimate partner violence (IPV), and identified how it impacts their overall mental health (Kanagaratnam et al., 2012). This literature also highlighted that Tamil women centralized the significance of spirituality as a way of coping with their experiences and daily stressors (Kanagaratnam et al., 2012).

Additional literature noted that the overall concept of mental health was not a commonly used or understood term within the Tamil community (Douglin, 1998). The Tamil community perceived one's mental health as embodying general "mental worries" that they may come across, for example, with regard to obtaining employment or sustaining an income (Douglin, 1998). The sense of unknowing also was a common theme that arose in the qualitative literature. The Tamil participants who were interviewed noted fear, hardship, and overall difficulty in leaving what they had known as their home and/or leaving or becoming separated from family in order to escape the civil war (Pandalangat, 2011). Members of the Tamil community who were interviewed did not directly associate their lived experiences and psychological distress to mental health. However, their narrative accounts strongly noted the severe repercussions and war trauma they endured, both during their time in fleeing and thereafter when migrating into new countries where they had to adapt to an entirely new way of living (Affleck et al., 2018; De Vries, 2001; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018). The Beiser et al. (2003) article is one of

many that echoes the need for awareness and mental health services for the Tamil diaspora (Beiser et al., 2003).

The examined literature heavily emphasized the need for more holistic resources and services to be made available to the members of the Tamil diaspora (Pandalangat, 2011). The community may not directly correlate the term mental health with their lived experiences, and as a result, many Tamil community members have not sought out help or resources simply due to unawareness of these services or because these services do not exist (Pandalangat, 2011). Further, there is a looming stigma around seeking support from outside mental health services and resources. A number of participant narratives accounted for a sense of fear to disclose to the general community of what they have been living through (Affleck et al., 2018; Douglin, 1998; Samuel et al., 2018).

Many members of the Tamil diaspora had taken independent measures in order to flee for their own and their family's safety. This independence on the part of survivors involved members privately internalizing traumas and daily stressors (Affleck et al., 2018; Pandalangat, 2011). These connotations also stem from the former traumas experienced by members of the diaspora when living through the civil war and thereafter in Sri Lanka (George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011). Adapting to a new way of life has been deemed by many members of the community as the ideal state of good overall health (Pandalangat, 2011).

Knowledge Gaps

It is to be noted that there were a few knowledge gaps within the literature. Firstly, the examined quantitative studies were based within a social order perspective. The social order perspective is a view of social problems as being primarily due to individual or family deficits; while ignoring structural factors such as racism, classism, colonialism, sexism, etc. (Pon, Giwa,

and Razack, 2016). The social order perspective operates to pathologize individuals and populations by eliding social determinants of health such as war and violence. The quantitative studies I reviewed for this literature review contributed to pathologizing the population's experience with PTSD and trauma (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999). For instance, as noted earlier, the studies involved westernized measurement tools that could validate the levels of PTSD and trauma experienced by the community in segments (George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999). Such tools provide statistical significance to the public with numbers but lack the ability to highlight the in-depth, nuanced, and detailed insights into the lived experiences of research participants, which can be garnered through qualitative interviews.

Additionally, the use of questionnaires (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; Steel et al., 1999) involved little to no adaptation or alteration within the questionnaires to directly align with the Tamil community, apart from being translated into Tamil. For example, the most common searches involved quantitative studies that only utilized western models of mental health assessments, which do not align with this population. Additionally, the questionnaires primarily centered around PTSD measurements that are also used with a number of other Euro-American and refugee populations (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015). The PTSD measurement tools were not particularly applicable for the Tamil community that was in question (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015).

However, there was only one study which specified and considered the significance in adapting the research directly for the research participants (George & Jettner, 2016). The researchers stated the importance of integrating cultural and linguistic instruments that were in alignment with the Tamil community (George & Jettner, 2016). This is important as the community itself may or may not be attuned to westernized methods of research, and further

providing methods that coincide with the Tamil diaspora is essential to produce authentic research based on the community. Apart from this study, the additional quantitative literature involved voices from various advisory committees of the community, to inform researchers of the relevance of the questionnaires being distributed to the research participants.

Portraying the real, raw experiences of war trauma, PTSD, and current realities of the population through numbers is an effort to further reinforce the biomedical model. The biomedical model is centered solely around biological factors in relation to mental illness or addictions that could impact one's health (Deacon, 2013). Absent from the biomedical model is a consideration of social determinants of health such as poverty, racism, colonialism, sexism, etc. Pertaining to mental health, psychiatry has adopted the biomedical model to serve as forerunner in associating mental disorders with substantiated research, standardized assessments, and pharmacological treatments. Leaving little to no room for consideration of how psychological and social factors such as racism and poverty could contribute to one's mental health or addictions (Deacon, 2013). The biomedical model is fundamental to pharmaceutical corporations and organizations such as the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the American Psychological Association (APA) and exists to further legitimize research within this branch of scientific medicine as it relates to psychiatry (Deacon, 2013).

The researchers involved in producing quantitative literature reinforced the biomedical model, a model which emphasizes non-structural factors that contribute to mental distress among the Tamil community. The overall medical model fails to consider structural factors such as racism, sexism, poverty, colonialism, etc. as social determinants of health. Additionally, the biomedical model is also characterized as a social order perspective, which as mentioned earlier, view social problems as being due to individual or family deficits.

Quantitative literature utilizing this model, ultimately limits the experiences of individuals and instead, speaks solely to the statistical evidence on biological impacts experienced by the community. Thus, literature as such can provide a very linear perspective to the research and to the public. The lived experiences of the community involve a tremendous amount of psychological and societal factors which speak to the results of the quantitative research. However, a lack in highlighting such factors and instead focusing on the biological factors through the use of standardized measurement tools, can result in pathologizing the community.

As previously noted, the quantitative studies utilize positivist research methods to maintain and reproduce a dominant discourse that focuses on the description of Tamil immigrants as suffering from PTSD and trauma. As such, this research emphasizes the psychological impacts experienced by Tamil immigrants. This can either be beneficial or problematic as empirical research can be essential in providing a grander scale of solutions regarding mental health services and resources for communities such as the Tamil community. However, it can seem to be problematic as it may not authentically represent the voices being researched.

Overall, the literature lacked in providing a fuller scope of qualitative perspectives surrounding the experiences associated with the Tamil diaspora. A few of the research studies noted the need for further research to be conducted on this diasporic population using narratives from Tamil participants who could share their experience of migration.

Theory as Reflected in Research

Anti-colonial and anti-sanist theoretical frameworks will be used to guide this research study. Additionally, I will be discussing how the concept of epistemic injustice augments the use of such frameworks (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016).

Why Anti-Colonialism?

As a daughter of parents who migrated from their war-torn country of origin to settle on land that is not their own, I recognize that I occupy and was born within spaces on the stolen land of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. That being said, revealing the ways in which I am situated within a colonial context grants me privilege by way of my identity and material realities associated with settler colonialism, and the access that I have in bringing forward this conversation.

Prior to delving into the anti-colonial framework, it is essential to define colonialism. Hart (2009), asserts that colonialism is a means of dominance and control taken over by a specific worldview in an effort to impact the lives of Indigenous peoples on all levels. Within the context of Canada, the dominant worldview has underpinned processes that have taken control, exploited and interfered with all aspects of Indigenous peoples' way of living (Hart, 2009). This includes, but is not limited to, land ownership, language, spiritual practices, physical and emotional well-being and knowledge (Hart, 2009).

Hart (2009) directly associates three links found between colonization and Indigenous knowledge - exclusion, marginalization, and appropriation. Each link directs us in the way that Indigenous knowledge has been taken up within settler colonialism. Colonialism operates to exalt Eurocentric knowledge as superior over Indigenous knowledge, neglects or devalues the perspectives of Indigenous peoples' ideas or concerns and takes ownership and/or misrepresents

the knowledge and source of Indigenous knowledge in order to gain from the perspectives of others (Hart, 2009).

The significance of gender is also something to consider when discussing colonialism as Indigenous peoples' have experienced gender oppression by way of colonial constructs set in place. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and 2-Spirit people are a prime example of being embedded within the colonial project (Razack, 2016). The colonial violence experienced at the hands of the colonial state, governing institutions and systems, have only recently been brought forward for investigation, inquiry and brought to light in trials regarding the plethora of cases that exist all throughout Canada and abroad (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). This denotes the lack of value and significance placed on bringing forth justice to the Indigenous peoples at large and particularly to women, including those identified as women.

Anti-colonialism resists colonial constructs through social, political, and cultural measures to challenge the existence and overall practice of colonization (Ashcroft et al., 2015; Dei, 2000; Hart, 2009; Smith, 2009 as cited in Pon, Gosine & Phillips, 2011). Through an Indigenous-centered, anti-colonial lens, Hart, Straka & Rowe (2017) highlight that anti-colonialism can exist through both parties involved with regard to colonization: the colonizer and the colonized. "The Indigenous peoples' movement is in this sense pursuing a process of decolonization once removed" (Niezen 2003, as cited in Hart, 2009, p. 31).

Hart (2009) highlights four key aspects that are central to anti-colonialism. Indigenous land claims and governance - in other words, sovereignty is significant as Indigenous peoples not only attribute their connection to their land as being born to it, but also as living in relationship with the territory that they come from (Hart, 2009). Indigenous worldviews and knowledge are important

within this framework as such worldviews and knowledge have not been lost, substituted or replaced in the chaos that was and is colonization. Instead, it has been entrenched in the Indigenous peoples and continues to hold as sustenance for Indigenous peoples and their way of life (Hart, 2009). A central tenet to the core of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge is modelled around the Medicine Wheel (Hart, 2009). The Medicine Wheel emphasizes wholeness; involving all aspects of the self, balance, harmony, and relationships (Hart, 2009).

Indigenous research methods, based on Indigenous knowledge, can also be connected to the core meaning behind the Medicine Wheel, as it involves respect and sharing as this is important in developing relationships (Hart, 2009). An example of a particular Indigenous research method involves the use of sharing circles. Indigenous research methods differ substantially from the way that Eurocentric research is conducted as it considers aspects of the whole self and the significance of sharing, listening, withholding from pushing one's worldviews onto others, and reflecting (Hart, 2009). Anti-colonialism finally emphasizes the importance of spirituality within the Indigenous peoples as it is all encompassing to the way that Indigenous peoples connect with their worldview, knowledge, land, and their way of living (Hart, 2009). Similar to Indigenous worldviews and knowledge, Indigenous spiritual practices have also not been lost or replaced. Spirituality is continued to be practiced and passed on from generation to generation and remains unwavering.

Further, it is important to note that anti-colonialism emphasizes the importance of critical reflexivity (Hart et al., 2017; Pon et al., 2011). It is key to identify the social location one carries into the work that is being conducted in relation to colonialism (Pon et al., 2011). I am a Tamil Eelam-Canadian, heterosexual, able-bodied woman, who has already obtained a Bachelor of Social Work degree and is conducting this research as a milestone project in order to fulfil a Master of Social Work degree. Therefore, I am in a position where I am heavily embedded within colonial

structures, while pursuing an area of research where my community has experienced a great amount of turmoil and hardship. The experiences of the Tamil diaspora are raw and real, and I recognize that I am privileged to even consider researching an ongoing reality and consequences of British colonization within my own community, which I have not lived to speak of myself.

Kathy Absolon (2010) stated that "communities are suffering in the colonial aftermath; hence their heartbeats may be weak. Nevertheless, the heartbeat of a community is in the people, which ought to influence methods of practice" (p. 80). Western colonial constructs individualize the health and well-being of folks; however, an anti-colonial lens looks to the health of the collective community, not solely the individual (Absolon, 2010). The Tamil diaspora has experienced colonial violence, as many have remained silent with their truths to what they endured during the civil war in Sri Lanka out of fear of perception from colonial structures and settings (Affleck et al., 2018; Douglin, 1998; Samuel et al., 2018). Rather than healing as a community, the colonial notion of individualizing health has made an overwhelming presence within the Tamil population in moving forward, all while continuing to grieve in diverse ways and navigate through life (Affleck et al., 2018; Douglin, 1998; Samuel et al., 2018).

Using an anti-colonial lens within the context of this research will help in critiquing and interrogating the ways that colonial structures have hindered and oppressed the Tamil diaspora, both within and outside Sri Lanka, as many members of the Tamil community have migrated into lands such as Turtle Island.

Why Anti-Sanism?

Attributing an anti-sanist framework to this research will allow space for the prevalent underlying oppressions to rise above the surface that exists surrounding the Tamil diaspora originating from the island of Sri Lanka. Sanism has existed for longer than many may presume

and as Guterres (2018) notes, the concept of sanism has integrated its way into the social justice and critical social work realm in recent times. The concept of sanism can be interpreted as "a deeply embedded form of discrimination and oppression affecting those who experience madness, and argues it is a system of thought underpinning the practice of epistemic injustice" (Fabris, 2011; Fricker, 2007; Perlin, 2000, 2003; Russo & Beresford, 2015; Spandler & Carlton, 2009, as cited in LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016, p.61).

Sanism is a term that "is generally credited to Morton Birnbaum, an American doctor and graduate of Columbia Law School" (Ingram, 2011, as cited in Abdillahi, Meerai & Poole, 2017, p.11). In 1958, by influences that stemmed from Black legal scholar, Florence Kennedy, Birnbaum brought forth the argument that mental hospitals in America should provide individuals with sufficient care (Abdillahi et al., 2017).

To elaborate, sanism is also strongly associated with racism and whiteness, and has a vast history in relation to psychiatry (Fernando, 2017). Dating as far back to the Middle Ages, the concept of the 'other' was formulated and it ultimately sanctioned racialized folks into one independent category, apart from European and white populations (Fernando, 2017). As clinical psychiatry emerged, the social constructs surrounding illnesses and diagnoses were not based upon presenting symptoms, but upon race and what white psychiatrists deemed as fitting to the 'other' (Fernando, 2017). Western psychologists were convinced that they alone possessed the knowledge surrounding racialized bodies. However, physicians were instead oppressing and demeaning racialized communities, while simultaneously exercising their colonial power upon them as a result (Fernando, 2017). Racism and whiteness in association to sanism continues to be prevalent in today's day and age, while remaining deep-rooted within many colonized institutional structures.

Anti-sanism moves towards resisting the pre-existing sanist constructs that exist around Mad identified individuals and madness. The disability model has created pathways for anti-sanism practice and conversations to formulate as it centers around the difficulties experienced by those who are Mad identified and how the realities of their westernized model of "conditions" correlate with the pathologizing, underlying power relations and sanist tendencies that exist (Poole, Jivraj, Arslanian, Bellows, Chiasson, Hakimy, Pasini & Reid, 2012). Underlying power relations also play a role in how social location, race, gender, etc., impacts the way particular bodies or communities are taken up within the Mad community. In this regard, power can be noted as *who* holds the power and *to whom* exactly such intersections are directly associated with sanist connotations that can be made towards them (Poole et al., 2012).

For close to three decades, the Tamil diaspora has been pathologized through the use of western research surrounding their experiences as a result of the civil war in Sri Lanka. The community has been noted as one which has experienced severe psychological distress as a result of what they have witnessed and/or lost from their homeland (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2003; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018). Research that has been formulated surrounding the community presents factual evidence that substantiates the fact that the community has experienced multiple forms of violence as a result of war.

Why Epistemic Injustice?

Communicating narratives of the lived realities of those who identify as Mad have been discredited and unaccounted for, for quite some time. However, there is a heightened importance of bringing stories to light as a means of resisting the westernized psychiatric structures that exist (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016). Critical reflexivity is imperative in moving away from epistemic

injustice and moving towards epistemic, testimonial justice (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016). Epistemic or testimonial justice is moving towards reflective consciousness, *hearing out* the knowledge existent within the Mad community and shifting towards a better understanding in correcting pre-existing prejudiced belief systems (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016). This can again be credited to proponents of anti-colonialism in relation Indigenous knowledge and worldview (Hart, 2009).

In order to practice this authentically, "a critically reflexive hearer attempts to become aware of how the "relation between [her] social identity and that of the speaker is impacting on the intelligibility to her of what [the speaker] is saying and how she is saying it" (Fricker, 2007, p.169, as cited in LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016, p.73). There is a significance in hearing the experiences and knowledges of the participants as social justice can be created through research by "seeking, including, listening, and being open to speakers' interpretations, and viewing these as important contributors to knowledge generation" (Carel & Kidd, 2014; Fricker, 2007, as cited in LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016, p.73). This form of knowledge generation is also credited to Indigenous proponents of anti-colonialism as it was mentioned previously within the anti-colonial framework section.

Bearing this in mind, my intentions are to make use of this suggestion provided by LeBlanc & Kinsella (2016), through holding space for the knowledge of the participants to center in the knowledge production of this research. The hope of using such frameworks/concepts as discussed above, is to bring forward the larger scope of knowledge that is apparent within the Tamil community. This will ultimately help to highlight the all-encompassing, structural and systemic factors that have contributed to the repercussions experienced by the community as a result of the civil war.

Highlighting Narratives as Methodology

A narrative methodology was used for the purpose of this study to highlight the narratives of the Tamil community originating from the island of Sri Lanka. This methodology will best speak to the raw and real experiences of the community and will help in centering the focus around a smaller number of people (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the narrative approach to inquiry will help bring forward the ability for individuals to truly make meaning of their realities (Creswell, 2013).

I intentionally selected this methodology, as previously noted, because there has been a large body of research produced around the Tamil diaspora which has been quantitative and further projected the community's realities on a factual basis (Beiser et al., 2011; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; George & Jettner, 2016; Steel et al., 1999). Utilizing this narrative methodology creates space for the community to share in their experiences by way of resisting colonial structures and sanist connotations that exist around the community, in turn making room for narratives of the Tamil community in relation to an anti-sanist lens. This will contribute to the knowledge of experiences within the Tamil community to be heard and recognized (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016).

Once having narrowed down the basis of methodology and purpose of research, I obtained approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Ryerson University. The key questions surrounding my research include: 1) What are the perspectives and experiences of grief (vastly defined) within the Tamil community living in Toronto or the GTA? and 2) How has epistemic injustice played a role in the way that the narratives of the Tamil community have been portrayed or taken up by broader society? As mentioned earlier, narratives help to bring forward the unique stories of individuals in relation to a broader concept of experience (Creswell, 2013). The general questions being posed can provide different routes of narratives, based on the participants and their

relations to the civil war in Sri Lanka, migration and adapting to living in the Global North. My hope is that my study will contribute to this body of literature as it will provide a variety of positionings surrounding a reality that has impacted many in the Tamil community.

The primary sources of data for this Major Research Paper (MRP) included participants who identify as Tamil and who have migrated from the island of Sri Lanka. Three participants were selected based on being 18 years or older, currently living in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Additionally, participants who identify as Tamil should be able to speak and understand English (English should be either their first or second language). I provided this criterion because it would be better suited to the purpose of this research to communicate with participants in English, though I myself speak and understand both English and Tamil. The way that questions and responses may be addressed in Tamil may be inaccurately translated into English and vice versa. Additionally, there may be certain words or concepts in either language that do not share an identical translation or meaning behind them.

Following approval from the REB, I intended to recruit participants online, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Email and phone scripts were both pre-approved by the REB prior to recruiting potential participants based on their interest. Both scripts provided an outline of the overall intention and process of this research. The process of recruitment involved reaching out to family and friends online by way of email as the pandemic limited access to recruitment within the community and sites where Tamil community members would be potentially present. If individuals followed up by contacting me either by email or Ryerson University phone number, expressing interest, I elaborated on the purpose of research with them in order for them to decide if they would like to be involved. If they confirmed their interest, both a written and verbal consent were gained prior to starting the interview.

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Participants were notified that all participation information would solely be kept confidential, and when the findings of this study are released, all identifying information would be specifically removed from transcripts. Additionally, pseudonyms (fake names) were utilized in the place of the participant's names to ensure confidentiality. Participants were also notified that if they chose to withdraw, all their personal data which was collected for the research study would be destroyed and not used within the research paper (May 1, 2020). Participants were also informed that no personal or identifying information would be included in the completed research paper. Additionally, all data that involved the participants would only be made accessible to myself and would be stored securely in password protected files and destroyed following the completion and submission of the final paper to Ryerson University.

The semi-structured online or telephone interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, and both were password protected. Following transcription and verification, the participants were notified that all raw audio-files would be destroyed by myself. All other relevant material regarding the research would also be permanently deleted following final submission of the Major Research Paper to Ryerson University.

Within the consent form, participants were also informed that their participation in this study was completely voluntary. If any question made them uncomfortable, they could choose to skip the question. They could also stop participating at any time and if they choose to stop participating, then they could also choose to exclude their data from the research study (unless this occurred after June 1, 2020). Participants were also advised that the final findings of the study would be made accessible to them via a link to the Ryerson University Library and Archives (RULA) digital repository to access the study findings as expected in August 2020.

When preparing for data collection, the initial plan was to connect with participants on a one-on-one basis in an agreed upon public space, while considering visual and aural privacy for approximately a 1-1.5-hour long interview. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was instead conducted over the phone or online, as per REB recommendations.

The data that was collected for the purpose of this research was centered around semi-structured interview questions such as the following:

1. Can you tell me about your experience when first arriving in Canada?

2. What were some challenges you experienced when starting your new life in Canada?

3. How do you feel your body, soul, spirit and mind has been impacted by the transition of coming to Canada based on your reason to do so?

4. Are you able to communicate how this transition impacted you to your family, friends, community? If yes, can you tell me more about that? If no, can you tell more about this?

5. How do you feel about your experiences of leaving, dealing with the new changes which may impact you in many ways (physically, mentally, emotionally, practically, financially, etc.)?

6. Do you feel still closely connected to your Mother Tongue, the Tamil culture, ways of life, while living here in Canada? If yes, can you tell me more about that? If no, can you tell me more about that?

7. How do you feel Tamils are perceived by society? What might be contributing factors to these perceptions of Tamils living in Canada?

The semi-structured interview questions listed above were a few of the overall questions that were asked to each participant. They were prepared with the intention of allocating enough space for participants to open-endedly respond based upon their lived realities. Further, enhancing their opportunity to make meaning of their experiences through semi-structured interview questions that provides them the platform to respond (Creswell, 2013).

Participant transcripts were transcribed verbatim and coded with the intention of being critically reflexive and cognizant of the ways that I as a researcher, and a member of the Tamil community, am implicit within formulating the knowledge obtained by the participants into a research study.

Limitations to this study include the small sample size that will be used at the time of research. For the time allotted to complete this research study, it is ideal to have a smaller number of participants. However, it draws forward limitations to the research as the views of three participants cannot be generalized to the larger community of Tamil Canadians in the Greater Toronto Area. Perhaps future research could consider a potential focus group with members of the Tamil community to open up a larger sphere of conversation surrounding similar topics. Additionally, in relation to my own social location and identifying as Tamil, there may potentially be bias towards my own interpretation of the compiled data.

The use of the narrative methodology within this body of research will help to further support and bring to light the narratives existent within the Tamil community (Creswell, 2013). Placing emphasis on the voices of members of the Tamil community is incredibly important as it can bring to the forefront a variety of perspectives of the deeply embedded history of members of the Tamil community.

A Trio of Unexpected Departures

The following results capture only a snapshot of experiences that exist within the broader Tamil community that currently reside in Toronto and the GTA in regard to their experiences of fleeing war-torn Sri Lanka. For the purpose of this research study, three individuals were interviewed and were each given pseudonyms to uphold their privacy.

Though the narratives and experiences of each participant differed substantially and were each unique in nature, there were a few common themes that emerged from each of their histories that interconnected the three: trauma, grief, discomfort in adapting to a new way of living, the efforts to overcome barriers and resilience.

The three participants: Bala, Selvi and Rajah, all fled Sri Lanka due to the civil war during the years of heightened violence between the late 1980s to early 1990s, with the intention to arrive directly onto Canadian soil. Bala fled to Canada at the age of 17, Selvi was 30 and Rajah was 50 years old. The differences in age alone, bring forth different perspectives and outlooks towards life, fleeing from war and finally coming to Canada.

Trauma

All participants had very close encounters with the military; Whether it was the LTTE, the Sinhalese government, or the Indian army, during the brief time they arrived on the island during the war. Bala was in high school at the time and describes the repercussions the war had in relation to his education and village:

> "There was discrimination against Tamils in Sri Lanka at that time, it was very high. My school was locked down because it was part of the war zone at the time...so, the school was displaced to a temporary kind of tent, so we could not continue our education. They displaced us…from my native village to another place because our village became part of the war zone. It was very mentally distracting...because it wasn't safe at all. At the time,

we had to live in the bunker because of the overnight shells and fire from the helicopters, warplanes…stuff like that."

It can be perceived that the "mental distraction" Bala experienced can speak to the trauma and toll that it took on him mentally, regarding what he had to see, hear and come to know at a young age in his homeland. When asked if Bala still feels the emotions that relate to the "mental distraction," he stated:

> "I don't think I still have those things, but I did have it at that time. But it was kind of a fear in the back of my mind, but eventually, it faded out...probably because of the environment here and with life you just kind of move on...so it faded away. And personally, I kept it to myself."

Bala's statement denotes that he carried with him the emotions related to his "mental distraction" for a limited time as it faded throughout the course of his life in Canada.

Selvi also went on to describe the distress that both she and her family experienced when her brother was taken by the LTTE. She stated:

> "When my brother went outside during the wartime from our home, the Tigers took him. Then they were using a closed army camp and the people gave information immediately to my family. Our mom was crying and fell on the road...people were supporting my mother. Then the 'Tigers people' brought our brother immediately. My family decided for my brother to not stay in our country because of the Sri Lankan war. This was a very dangerous problem that my family faced."

Rajah explains that he experienced troubles in Sri Lanka, as it was negatively affecting his role as an employee with a recognized transport board on the island. He stated:

> "I was working in the area of the Ceylon Transport Board; they gave me an area manager post...Mannar, Mullaitivu, Killinochi and Vavuniya. All the different areas that I was given to do inspections. While working is when I had a lot of problems with the government as well as those opposing the government. They [The Sinhalese government] took me to the forest, they questioned me, they wanted gas without any payment. Then when I came back to the office, the army [LTTE] took me and asked me, "Why did you go there? What is your problem?" Then the Indian army came...the same thing happened."

The experiences of Selvi and Rajah highlight the distress and difficulty they experienced in having to interact with the LTTE, Sinhalese, and Indian army through either a family member or directly. Selvi and Rajah highlighted how much of a problem it was to have to speak to or lose something at the hands of the government army or the opposing army. It seems that these horrible experiences created a heightened sense of fear, anxiety, and trauma for all three participants; a trauma which they cannot unsee or silence from their minds.

As a result of Selvi's experience, she indicated that it was only after her brother was taken and returned back that, "My family decided for my brother to not stay in our country because of the Sri Lankan war." Rajah was placed in a position where he was being directly targeted by all sets of armies based on his working role within the Ceylon Transport Board. For example, Rajah continuously faced persecution and questioning from different sets of armies. This oppression included the army taking him to be questioned in a secluded forest. Rajah went on to note: "At the time, my brother was here [Canada] and I was explaining to him. He asked me to come over here and helped me to come over here. That's why I came here...to escape the violence."

Rajah was aware of the potential risk in remaining in Sri Lanka, as he had to consider his working position and the influence that it had within the context of all three armies. It can be perceived that Rajah was prompted to take the offer of his brother as he considered what could have occurred, had he chosen to remain on the island.

The participants each described their experiences with the opposing or governing forces at hand as hindering and problematic to their way of living out their lives in Sri Lanka. As a result, the narratives that were shared shed light on the realities of direct trauma experienced by each participant; which ultimately prompted them in making a conscious decision to flee to Canada for their safety.

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Grief

As mentioned earlier in the research, grief was vastly defined as losing more than just a loved one, but losing connection to land, culture, etc. Fleeing Sri Lanka in order to ensure each of the participant's safety, also involved them having to leave behind family members, friends, land, property and many other aspects of their lives in order to begin new lives here in Canada.

Rajah was 50 years old when he arrived in Canada and arrived in 1992, with the help of his brother. Prior to arriving in Canada, Rajah had an extensive work history in Sri Lanka as previously mentioned with the Ceylon Transport Board. He stated:

> "I got employed when I was 25 years old back home [Sri Lanka]. I was known as an accounts clerk...accounting. I was studying accounting at the technical college in Kokuvil. Then, they hired me, and they asked me whether I would like to go to the government department or the CTB [Ceylon Transport Board]. Those days the CTB was a higher salary job, so I joined CTB and worked as an accounts clerk. At the beginning, we were checking...those days...conductors were only issued the tickets only per passenger. So, we'll have to check the box to see if they were paying the amount. Thereafter, I started as an accounts clerk to prepare pay sheets...salary, wages for the drivers, conductors and staff. Then after that from 1971 and onwards, I was promoted to many positions."

From Rajah's working history, he had highlighted an extraordinary number of positions and promotions while working with the Ceylon Transport Board. Rajah also described arriving in Canada on his own, leaving his wife and two children behind. Rajah stated:

> "While I was working, I had a heart attack. So, I was unable to go to work. Then, I was in the hospital and my cardiologist advised me to go for surgery. So, I told her until my family comes, then I will come for surgery, she said okay. Then I sponsored my wife and children, one boy and one girl in 1995, they came over here. After I went and had the operation."

This statement highlights that navigating a new way of life without Rajah's wife and children could be a potentially large loss for Rajah. Additionally, Rajah left his family in an effort to ensure his

safety and he delayed his health matters in Canada until he was able to have his immediate family present with him.

Selvi also indicated that she arrived in Canada alone. However, prior to her journey to Canada, her family moved to the major city of Colombo, following the traumatic experiences that Selvi's family endured. She stated:

> "My family moved to Colombo...my mother and I, from Jaffna. And then my mother quickly decided "okay, I will find out a way to get you married," because of the bad situation. So, I came in 1994 to Canada, at 30 years old and my husband sponsored me."

When Selvi arrived in Canada, she indicated the number of differences she found between her homeland and Canada:

> "My spirit was feeling scared. Asking myself, "what is this?" "How do I manage in this country and my future life?" Canada at that time was very hard for me to manage all that I had to handle. My spirit was scared all the time. That time I thought I could go back home again in the future...that's what I was thinking. That I would not stay too long here."

Selvi described that she felt "scared" once arriving in Canada. Selvi's statement addresses the big step Selvi took in order to flee, as her mother also felt it was no longer safe for her to remain in Sri Lanka. Selvi stated, "I am the eldest child in my family...my mother was very upset when I came to Canada in 1994, she was very upset in the airport, my sister too." Selvi anticipated that her stay in Canada would be shorter than what it panned out to be, as she mentioned: "That time I thought I could go back home again in the future...that's what I was thinking. That I would not stay too long here." The anticipation that Selvi felt in desiring to be back in Sri Lanka with her family, depicts her longing and emotional connection towards missing her roots and particularly being close to her family as a whole.

Similarly, Bala also grieved the disconnection to his family but particularly missed the connection he had to Sri Lanka and the areas on the island where he was brought up. Bala stated:

"When we migrated, I had my immediate family back in Sri Lanka at that time. So, it was very difficult to...stay away from the family. It's also hard about the country, where I have grown and been raised…and my childhood. I had to go away from my childhood, my friends, my school, my house, those kinds of attachments; even today, I kind of started to search for…look for those things...and try to find my old friends. When I was able to visit Sri Lanka recently, I went to those places that I missed...so that's kind of like existing in the back of my mind, it's always there. When I have the opportunity, I go back to those places. Even though I don't really have any connections at the time, I do go and visit those places. For example, the temple I used to go to, the library I used to go to, the old school that I went to, so I go there, to feel that...connection."

Bala's statement notes the difficulty he had in order to separate and "stay away from the family." Bala, Selvi and Rajah were all placed in positions which required them to take a leap of faith in order to journey to a new place, although it meant leaving much behind. Bala's nostalgia, similar to that of Rajah and Selvi's as well (to varying degrees), highlights the longing that exists for being in direct connection and relationship with the land, specific places and people.

Discomfort in Adapting to a New Way of Living

As Bala, Selvi, and Rajah described, grief also comes with a discomfort in adapting to new surroundings and navigating life in a country that all participants were aware of but not entirely exposed to until they arrived.

Selvi highlighted her experiences in adapting to a new climate. She stated:

"When I came to Canada, my body was very cold because I came at the end of November of 1994, during the winter. At the time, it was very cold and there was a lot of snow. I couldn't walk on the streets because of the snow. Everything was hard for me: shopping, carrying things in the snow and in the cold. Sometimes it was chilly, I couldn't see other people because of the heavy snow."

Selvi outlined the repercussions she experienced as she adapted to a season that she was unaware of prior to fleeing Sri Lanka. Selvi further elaborated on expressing difficulty with adapting to a new lifestyle in Canada, far different than the one she had in Sri Lanka:

"Here I was in a small apartment, but back home I lived in a big house. I was always calling my family, my mother, telling her about my situation, living in a bachelor room, my husband is off at work, I am alone. I am very scared here. I felt bored at the time that I just came to Canada. I was living inside my apartment only watching TV and listening to the radio. It was not enough for me, so I would always call my mother to vent because I didn't like it here - I came here and I never knew my husband, everything was new. My old lifestyle was different, and this new lifestyle was very different. Different villages, my husband and I. Different personalities, different thinking."

Selvi's account not only highlights the difficulty she experienced in adapting to the climate but also in adjusting to her living situation and marriage. As Selvi noted, "my old lifestyle was different, and this new lifestyle was very different." This point aligns with the vast differences that each participant had to adapt to based on what they left behind in Sri Lanka.

When asked about the difficulty he may have experienced in navigating his way through Canada, Rajah stated: "At the beginning, I felt it. But then once I was here and started learning, God helped me, and I am very satisfied." Rajah's statement demonstrates that despite the difficulty he encountered once directly arriving, he began to adapt to a new-found way of living and felt that "God helped him."

Overcoming Barriers

Despite all the hardships they faced prior to fleeing to Canada for their safety, Bala, Selvi and Rajah demonstrate how they have continued to face barriers that hindered them in various ways. However, the participants were all able to overcome the obstacles that were set before them.

As previously noted, Rajah arrived in Canada as a 50-year-old experienced accounts clerk, among many other roles that he fulfilled during his life spent in Sri Lanka. However, once he arrived in Canada he initially faced barriers surrounding the English language. Rajah stated:

"When I came here, I stayed with my brother and attended English class. When I was learning English, I had a lot of problems with the language...pronunciation, British English pronunciation...so I was helping out my other students...they were younger to me and they

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were passing, and I was unable to pass. My teacher told me that "your English is British English...we don't understand what you're saying." Thereafter, after two years I learned Canadian English."

Rajah described his ability to communicate in "British English." However, he explains his difficulty with pronunciation, but worked his way throughout two years until he was able to learn "Canadian English." Similar to Rajah, Bala also experienced barriers to learning English. Bala stated:

"Language was a huge barrier. I did not know anything other than the alphabet of the language. When I went to high school, I was placed into ESL classes because of my language barrier. That was a huge thing I had to overcome. And then my school teachers were very supportive at that time, so that was a reason that I was able to succeed in my academics."

Bala's experience of language barriers in Canada differed from Rajah's experience, as Bala only knew the English alphabet prior to arriving. However, Bala indicated that the support from his schoolteachers enabled him to excel in his academics.

Bala, Rajah, and Selvi shared how they were able to overcome challenges and barriers in relation to work and education. For example, Selvi stated:

"I went to ESL classes when I got here and school. After I developed my education and two years later, I continued to learn at an adult school in downtown Toronto. Finally, I went to George Brown College for pre-apprenticeship training and became involved in a childcare training course. Then I used that for knowledge as well...and went around my area to do daycare work. I am also a community worker too."

Selvi's statement highlights her strong will as she furthered and built on the knowledge that she was gaining and worked extremely hard to do so. Selvi's statement also aligns with Bala and Rajah; that despite the many barriers that were in place, including navigating adapting to life in Canada, they overcame these challenges.

As previously stated, Rajah experienced a health barrier when he had a heart attack in Canada. Once his family arrived as he had hoped, he moved forward with the surgery as recommended by his physician. He stated:

> "After the operation, I went back to work once again. They said, "You just had a bypass operation." So, they said no, they cannot hire me and so I went for the welfare option. After welfare, I was transferred to ODSP. Then I started giving tuition [tutoring lessons] to kids in my area...until 2016, from 1996-2016. After I left it, I started helping other people, to go as an interpreter for various reasons: immigration office, lawyers, doctors, so that's what I'm doing now."

Rajah's statement presents the various ways that he utilized his knowledge from former work experiences in both Sri Lanka and Canada and adapting to Canada and put it towards providing tutoring support to children in his neighborhood. He did this for close to two decades, while also serving as a bridge or an interpreter for those he knew in the community who needed interpretation services.

Apart from work and education serving as the main barriers that the participants encountered, Selvi highlighted that she also experienced racism, and this was a large barrier once she arrived in Canada. She stated:

> "There was a lot of racism, based on my colour of skin, my pronunciation of words. I would be asked "When did you come to Canada?" Sometimes people laugh and ask, "where are you from?" and it affected me a lot...with my work, my future, my life. It was very hard trying to fit into this country."

Selvi's description of the racism she encountered showcases the impact that it had on her, as she articulated in the following: "it affected me a lot...with my work, my future, my life." Despite the progress Selvi made from attending ESL to becoming a community worker, among many other roles, Selvi's statement demonstrates that the racism she directly experienced, deeply impacted her overall perspective on her life and "fitting in" within Canadian society.

In relation to race and identifying as Tamil, when the participants were asked how their knowledge and experiences were perceived by the Canadian public, they responded in a few different ways. In relation to race and knowledge, Selvi stated:

"The people think that the Tigers are no good. That's why in my understanding people say Tamils are bad people because they cause problems and people get scared. Sinhalese people called us Tigers and made it big. I go outside, people see me and say, "Oh you're a Tiger, you're a Tiger." If people ask me, I explain to them "Oh no no, Tigers are normal, but the Sri Lankan government did not give appropriate support to the Tamil community and that's what started the fight...please don't misunderstand that Tamil people are no good and are bad people. They are not Tigers and bad because they killed many people…" When I went to ESL class, the teachers actually asked me about this. They were concerned and asked about the situation going on in my country and why it was happening. They were also saying that my people were Tigers and our leader Prabhakaran was a Tiger. But I said that it is normal because they [the government] are clever. The government had tried to cover things and put blame on other communities. Many people think that Sri Lankan people are at fault, but they are innocent people...only the people who were fighting were causing trouble. All because the Sri Lankan government did not give our people support that we needed. They only gave support to the Sinhalese people but not to the Tamil people...that's why the Tigers went to fight."

Selvi's narrative highlights the nature of underlying and generalized connotations that members of the Canadian public have toward the Tamil population. Bala, Rajah, and Selvi agreed on the importance of taking the time to address, speak to, and share about what they have come to know and have experienced due to the war. Selvi's statements clarify her efforts in defending the Tamil community and educating Canadians around the history of Tamil people in Sri Lanka. She continued to explain that "the [Sinhalese] government had tried to cover things and put blame on other communities" in order to justify the oppression of Tamil people. Selvi was also making a request that "people don't misunderstand that Tamil people are no good and are bad people."

Bala went onto discuss the messaging and narrative that is presented via varying media outlets and stated:

"They did not really have the actual facts. There was a lack of communication; they did not gather the information from the right people. I do believe that, even though they were able to say that the Tamils were a minority in Sri Lanka. But the media…when they tried to get the information about the Tamils, they kind of go and try to get it from government officials, which is not really the right way. I think information gathering should be done locally - within the Tamil community, rather than abroad or the government officials of Sri Lanka."

Bala, like Selvi, tries to inform those he comes in contact with about the truths surrounding the Tamil community. It can be perceived that information being put out to the public surrounding the Tamil community, as Bala stated, are primarily from "government officials." This can be bridged alongside Selvi's prior statement, "But I said that it is normal because they [the government] are clever. The government had tried to cover things and put blame on other communities." Selvi's statement reinforces that the government has presented the experiences and stories of the Tamil people to the public in a way that has covered many underlying issues that the government was responsible for.

Resilience

The participants presented their experiences in very open and honest ways, which showcased their resilience in overcoming obstacles and surviving their trials and tribulations, despite what setbacks they faced.

In fleeing to Canada to ensure his safety, Rajah left behind his immediate family and a secure line of work. Despite the many barriers he faced as was stated earlier, including his heart attack, he remained diligent and continues to serve in his community. Rajah stated:

"I owe my happiness to God; this is a gift from God. I am very happy about my life. I help everyone, I know they are okay, so I am okay. I have done my duty as a human...that's it."

It can be perceived that Rajah is grateful for being able to arrive in Canada and experience life here. Rajah's sentiment around owing his "happiness to God," indicates his immense amount of

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belief on a spiritual level and his certainty that it has contributed to the reason that he has reached this current state of life.

Bala's goals and aspirations since he was young were fulfilled as he came to Canada. He stated:

> "My dreams and goals while I was in Sri Lanka did not change when I got to Canada. Back home, I wanted to succeed in education and have a better financial life. Mainly, I would say the education, from when I was a child, I wanted to become an engineer. Knowing the fact of what was going on in Sri Lanka, I would not be able to achieve my goals at the time. But when I got to Canada, I was able to achieve those goals and dreams."

Bala's statement points to how he was fully aware of the obstacles he faced while living in Sri Lanka, and how it ultimately did not hinder him from achieving "those goals and dreams" in Canada.

Selvi described her journey in Canada as experiencing a multitude of worries and concerns, even to the extent of initially desiring to return back home to Sri Lanka. However, Selvi remained diligent and engaged in learning and furthering her education in order to build herself up. She stated:

> "I tried to work very hard and I believe that I will make it to the top of my field because of it. I work hard for myself. Every person is different and for me, I know if I work hard, I know I will make it to the top and reach my goals. I can manage my own self. I know myself, that I am not using someone else's money. My life, my hand, you know? No one supported me, I supported myself. I work hard to build my knowledge and strong future. We are lucky here and I am very happy with where I am right now."

Selvi's statement demonstrates how despite what she has endured, she had a strong conviction that she will be able to survive and succeed no matter the circumstance. All participants had echoed this particular conviction or determination. No matter what odds they faced throughout the course of their journeys, they believed strongly in something bigger that would be out there for them.

The perspectives around the unexpected departures brought forward by Selvi, Bala and Rajah speak to the variety of experiences that exist within the community as a result of the civil war in Sri Lanka and arriving in Canada. Each participant arrived at different ages and stages of life, while ultimately making the same decision to begin their journey in the same exact country. The stories of each participant depicted their trials, setbacks but also the strength that each of them carried while navigating incredibly new and foreign pathways as a means of safety and survival.

Connections Made Between the Three

A thematic analysis was utilized for the purpose of analysis based on the participants' experiences with grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice. The use of a thematic analysis brought forth five core themes: trauma, grief, discomfort in adapting to a new way of living, the efforts to overcome barriers and resilience.

Bala, Rajah, and Selvi shared their direct experiences of the war in Sri Lanka and described what they witnessed first-hand prior to fleeing from their native island. Bala mentioned the "mental distraction" he felt as his high school experience was halted due to the ongoing warfare, displacement, and lockdowns at the time. This "mental distraction" speaks to the literature surrounding the immense amount of psychological distress that has heavily impacted the Tamil community as a result of war trauma (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2003; Beiser et al., 2015; De Vries, 2001; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018). Bala additionally stated the discrimination against the Tamil community, which led to the outbreak of war. Though he did not elaborate further, this point can allude to literature that discussed the impacts of colonialism and the discrimination, exclusion, state control, and many other limitations that were enforced upon the Tamil community (Affleck et al., 2018; Beiser et al., 2011).

Such experiences of the Tamil community are directly linked to the legacy of the modern colonial project, white supremacy and settler colonialism (Pon et al., 2016). Bala's statement speaks to the remnants of White supremacy left behind in Sri Lanka, due to the nation being formerly colonized by the British (Beiser et al., 2011). As the impacts of the modern colonial project resulted in a multitude of repercussions the Tamil community faced while in Sri Lanka, it has continued to play out even as they arrived in Canada with intentions to escape the very discrimination, exclusion and state control they dealt with while living in their homeland.

Bala had also indicated that he moved on from his thoughts of what he experienced in Sri Lanka during the war as life progressed and he kept his experiences and feelings to himself throughout the course of his life. This perspective can be associated with the literature surrounding the stigma that exists within the Tamil diaspora. Bala's statement pointed to literature that highlighted the ways in which limiting disclosure of direct experiences was prevalent in the community, out of fear of perception from the broader Tamil community (Affleck et al., 2018; Douglin, 1998; Samuel et al., 2018). The experiences around disclosing experiences in potential links to mental health and distress can be linked to sanism, racism, and psychiatry.

As previously mentioned, psychiatry is incredibly westernized and carries its roots in alignment with racism and whiteness (Fernando, 2017). Sanism carries strong ties in association to racism and whiteness. It exists to position racialized bodies as being "less than" and categorizes them as the 'other,' in order to separate them from the dominant European and white populations (Fernando, 2017). The stigma that this has resulted in throughout the course of many years, has placed racialized bodies, like Bala, in a state of feeling the need to contain and conceal their experiences as a means to avoid judgement and move forward to fit in with broader settler colonial society.

Through the responses of select participants, it can be perceived that participants held back from identifying the ways their trauma had affected them. For example, Bala highlighted that he consciously chose to forget about his experiences over time. This intention of his demonstrates that in order to move forward, links to trauma were suppressed within his own consciousness. In this case, Bala could have subconsciously done so to limit access to what occurred in his past and heal and cope from his trauma without seeking out external support. Additionally, the literature emphasized how western constructs individualized the health and well-being of individuals

(Absolon, 2010). This can also be connected to the ways that participants indicated keeping their experiences to themselves.

The discrimination that Bala disclosed surrounding the pre-context of the civil war in Sri Lanka can be associated to this perception as well, as the experiences and realities of the war experienced by the Tamil community required many to flee in fear of experiencing more harm from state forces and officials in Sri Lanka. As previously noted within the literature, once Sri Lanka had gained independence in 1948 from British colonial rule over the island, the majority Sinhalese-Buddhist government had passed policies and legislation that heavily impacted the Tamil population (Beiser et al., 2011). Laws concerning the Sinhala language holding precedence over the Tamil language, while limiting access to speaking Tamil and engaging in cultural practices would have entirely contributed to discriminatory perceptions, as stated by Bala. Since the government had stripped the Tamil community of many of their rights, it can become evident as to ways that discrimination could have arose towards the members of the Tamil community residing in Sri Lanka at the time, which ultimately resulted in the civil war in 1983 (Kanagaratnam et al., 2012; Steel et al., 1999).

All participants discussed the many repercussions, separation and grief that came along with having to flee Sri Lanka and adapting to a new way of living, in order to protect their safety. Such repercussions were also discussed in the qualitative literature which highlighted the difficulties in adapting to a new country as a member of the Tamil diaspora (Affleck et al., 2018; De Vries, 2001; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Samuel et al., 2018).

Grief, in addition to aligning oneself to new belief systems when coming to a new country, can be associated directly with the impacts of colonialism within or towards a community. For example, one participant [Rajah] held to an understanding of this when he referenced "British

English" prior to coming to Canada. The English language that he was familiar with and accustomed to was disregarded, all the while he was told by an English teacher to learn "Canadian English" in favor of his knowledge of "British English," because of his mispronunciation of certain words. He was expected to un-learn his "British English" language in order to assimilate to the ways of Canadian living. This participant picked up his interpretation of what he noted as "British English" in Sri Lanka, as the island was formerly colonized by the British. This again ties into the relations between colonialism and assimilation that existed in particular communities (Hart, 2009). In Rajah's case, he was expected to learn one form of English, in order to come to another country, and was expected to unlearn what he had come to know and assimilate to the current country he was within. This experience notes the perpetual cycle of colonialism and how deep-rooted systems have existed to further distance communities from their own knowledge, beliefs, values, and liberties, in order to "fit in" to the mold that has been created by colonial structures and state control.

Selvi described her experience with racism as she began her life in Canada and highlighted the perceptions that certain members of the Canadian public had around her identity of being Tamil. She stated that she was often referred to as a "Tiger," and this alluded to the negative connotation of the Tamil community being named "Tamil Tigers." The reference that stemmed from the public's perception of the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam during and after the war.

Selvi's feelings towards having to explain her truths to those who spewed racial remarks at her can be associated with literature surrounding racism (Hart, 2009). Selvi's experiences stem beyond her experiences of individualized racism, and instead implicates larger structural factors that exist when considering white supremacy, racism, and settler colonialism. The impacts of settler colonialism and white supremacy stem as far back in Canada with its festering wound of

colonizing Indigenous communities as well as its involvement in the enslavement of Black people in Canada (Pon et al., 2016). The structural factors that overarch the experiences as endured by Selvi, display the reality of how far Canada moved forward in projecting the modern colonial project while simultaneously promoting multiculturalism as a cornerstone of the nation (Pon et al., 2016).

The perspectives and knowledge that the public had when compared to the lived experiences and knowledge this participant held regarding her community, were entirely different. Selvi had kept and preserved her knowledge of her community and experience in order to speak to those who felt differently or held a misrepresented idea of the Tamil community. This speaks to anti-colonialism and the ways in which Indigenous communities have not let go of their knowledge and belief systems; instead, they use it as a way to educate and preserve their histories (Hart, 2009).

Spirituality was another topic of discussion brought forward by Rajah. He described owing his happiness to God and gave thanks for being where he is today based on his spirituality. This point surrounding Rajah's experiences with spirituality links to the literature on anti-colonialism. Anti-colonialism discusses the significance of spirituality within an Indigenous community, as well as preservation of spiritual practices as a means of being connected to one's everyday living and whole self (Hart, 2009). This can be relayed back to Rajah's perspective of putting trust in something higher than himself (Hart, 2009).

Participants of this study described the various ways in which they felt that the broader public and media outlets generally perceived the Tamil community. Selvi described her interactions with individuals such as ESL teachers, who felt particularly curious about her community and the war that was taking place back in Sri Lanka at the time. The perspective of her ESL teachers and their curiosity surrounding the LTTE leader and his contributions to the war,

speak to the preconceived understandings that existed in the broader Canadian context regarding the civil war in Sri Lanka. Selvi spoke the truth of her circumstances and personal experiences, and from what she described, she was later understood by those that had prior preconceived judgments about her and their community as a result of her speaking out.

On a broader scale, Bala described a method in moving forward towards epistemic justice through the portrayal of the Tamil community in the media. He suggested that media outlets and public sectors need to connect locally within the context of Toronto and GTA, in order to attain accurate facts surrounding the Tamil community. As the literature notes, moving towards epistemic or testimonial justice requires critical listening and reflecting consciously on the knowledge that exists within the Mad community (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016). Specific to the Tamil community, Bala noted the importance of connecting with the community at hand; the Tamil community, as they share collectively in their direct experience and knowledge of their issues. This can also be correlated to proponents of anti-colonialism, which signify a need to bring forward Indigenous knowledge and worldviews in order for broader communities and the public to gather a better understanding (Hart, 2009).

Prior to conducting the research, I made a conscious decision of incorporating LeBlanc and Kinsella's (2016) suggestion through holding space for the knowledge of the participants to center this body of work. Through analysis, I have come to see how even though I identify as Tamil, my prior attained knowledge or experiences surrounding my community, could not amount to what I have learnt, and unlearned now, through conducting this research. Directly connecting to participants through listening to the participant's lived experience throughout the course of over three decades of living in Canada, has positioned me to be far more cognizant of the significance of preserving and upholding knowledge of individuals and their respective communities. This

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again, speaks to anti-colonialism and the preservation of Indigenous knowledge and histories, which continue to be discussed and brought forward and to light in various ways (Hart, 2009).

Unpacking Implications

The thematic analysis of findings from Bala, Selvi, and Rajah's narratives brought forward many relations to higher-level concepts concerning settlerhood, settler colonialism, racism, white supremacy, sexism, and epistemic injustice. Using the interviews of Bala, Selvi, and Rajah, this section will identify how such concepts have become blatantly apparent and will present the dangers and implications involved.

Through the sharing of her personal experiences with racism, Selvi disclosed encounters with non-Tamil members of the Canadian public, whereby she would communicate her lived experiences to them when questioned about her identity. The racial epithets experienced by Selvi go beyond the realm of individualized racism to larger structural factors of white supremacy and settler colonialism that fuels individualized racist acts.

Canada as a nation rests upon the foundation of being a White colonized space (Pon et al., 2016). The nation's deeply embedded history of colonization of Indigenous communities as well as the enslavement of Black people speaks volumes to the harmful impacts posed by a settler society; since it was formulated on a colonial relationship by way of White supremacy (Pon et al., 2016). Throughout the course of history, Canada was noted for welcoming people from various nations and backgrounds who would eventually call Canada home. As a result, many Tamils fled during the civil war outbreak, and Canada is now home to the largest population of Tamils residing outside of Sri Lanka (Affleck et al., 2018; Amarasingam, 2013; Douglin, 1998; George, 2013; Pandalangat, 2011; Simich et al., 2008). Though multiculturalism has been praised in Canada, and the nation has been recognized as a key pillar of welcoming in the masses, it is imperative to mention that this perspective is situated within a White settler society that continues to actively engage in institutional and structural racism (Pon et al., 2016).

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It was apparent through Selvi's narrative, that although she fled to Canada for safety and refuge, she encountered and wrestled with setbacks revolving around her identity and having to be understood and heard by those living in Canada. Selvi's narrative can also be understood from a perspective of critical race feminism which highlights the impacts of sexism and racism based on an interlocking of social relations as experienced by women of color (Pon et al., 2016).

The overarching premise of settler colonialism and white supremacy contributed to individualized racist acts, which were also experienced by Rajah. For example, Rajah described his difficulty in learning the "Canadian standard" of the English language, even though he was already familiar with "British English" which he learned originally from a colonized setting while back home in Sri Lanka. Rajah was told by his ESL teacher here in Canada that "Your English is British English, we don't understand what you're saying." This statement carries a racial undertone, as it can be presumed that Rajah was by no means understood by his teacher unless he learned the Canadian English language, to which only then could he be understood. The underpinnings of such a racial undertone speak to the ways that colonialism further demands that racialized bodies assimilate to the ways of living established by European settlerhood in order to function within such a colonial space.

The common use of the terms "Tiger" or "Tamil Tiger" mentioned in Selvi's experiences speak to the concept of racial "other-ing" (Pon et al., 2011). This term is heavily affiliated with the rooted nature of White supremacy, which ultimately views the racial other as being a dangerous threat to the functioning and embodiment of a settler nation such as Canada (Pon et al., 2011). Explicit discourses surrounding sexism and racism also tie into this concept of othering as many non-white immigrant women were limited in entry into the country many years ago (Pon et al., 2011). Selvi's experiences of being titled as a "Tiger" by those she met in Toronto constructs

Tamils as the dangerous "racial other." The underlying significance as to how the discourse of "Tamil Tigers" exists speaks to a long-standing trope of white supremacy in settler societies such as in Canada (Pon et al., 2016). Popular discourses in Canadian society which are supported by media portrayal socially construct the Tamil population as a "danger" to society and a threat to the overall betterment and function of the nation (Pon et al., 2016). Those that came into contact with Selvi could have potentially been exposed to such influences and preconceived notions, which fueled their racist acts towards her and her identity.

As mentioned earlier, epistemic injustice, a term coined by Miranda Fricker, was used to situate this body of research in relation to the Tamil community. Epistemic injustice looks at the injustices done against someone regarding the scope of knowledge that they possess (Fricker, 2007). More specifically, Fricker (2007) broke down epistemic justice into two types of injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. For the purpose of this analysis, testimonial injustice will be utilized. Testimonial injustice considers how "the speaker suffers a testimonial injustice just if prejudice on the hearer's part causes him to give the speaker less credibility than he would otherwise have given" (Fricker, 2007, p.4). In line with this concept, the wealth of knowledge and experiences possessed by the Tamil community have in many ways been unjustly disregarded, devalued, and marginalized. This was outlined through Selvi's experiences in which those listening to her narrative subsequently labeled her as being a "Tiger." The individuals who Selvi shared her experiences with, engaged in epistemic injustice by placing their preconceived judgments on what *they* knew of the Tamil community onto her. This meant that these individuals did not grant Selvi the credibility that she rightfully deserved by being a Tamil woman with lived experiences (Fricker, 2007). Her knowledge of her own history and trials in fleeing war-torn Sri Lanka were discredited based on the individual's pre-existing perceptions of the Tamil community

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and their contribution to Canada. This epistemic injustice perpetuates the long-standing history of white supremacy and settlerhood in Canada that otherizes racialized people (Pon et al., 2016).

The perspective shared by Bala indicated his outlook of the media and the public, and how they have perceived the Tamil community. This also speaks to epistemic injustice and the racial othering of the Tamil community (Fricker, 2007; Pon et al., 2016). As Selvi stated, the Tamil community has been labeled as "Tiger" or "Tamil Tigers," and Bala attributes such connotations as stemming from outlets such as the media. He stated, "The media…when they tried to get information about the Tamils, they kind of go and try to get it from government officials, which is not the right way." When such information has not been directly elicited from members of the Tamil community and instead is being released by the Sinhalese state which has primarily harmed the Tamil community, the image the public receives may not authentically represent the Tamil population. The *hearer,* as Miranda Fricker notes, is the state; the Sinhalese government who has unjustly disregarded the experiences of the Tamil population, as well as the Canadian public which retains such information surrounding the community (Fricker, 2007). The information and overall image painted around the community ultimately limits the Tamil diaspora from being heard because they are labeled as "Tamil Tigers."

The implications presented through the experiences of Bala, Selvi and Rajah, showcase the apparent reality of settler colonialism, white supremacy and the modern colonial project which has affected many members of the Tamil community who now reside in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area. The experiences of the three, speak to the ways that they have been perceived and taken up within broader Canadian society and how it has been historically linked to colonialism and the concept of the 'racial other' which has been evidently set apart from the existent western, Eurocentric agenda that has been a underlying driving force within Canada for many centuries.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Three members of Tamil community residing in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) brought forward their experiences and shared what they endured during and after the civil war that occurred in Sri Lanka from 1983-2009. Participant narratives brought about five themes for the purpose of a thematic analysis: trauma, grief, discomfort in adapting to a new way of living, the efforts to overcome barriers and resilience. The participants' stories spoke to the extent of living through war, arriving in Canada, navigating life, grief, cultural and practical changes within a new nation. Participants also shared their reflections on how non-Tamil members of the Canadian public have negative perceptions of the Tamil population.

Areas for future research

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, research methods had to shift from in person interviews to over the phone or online. As the researcher, I feel that this could have impacted the responses and interactions between myself and the research participants as virtual/phone connections may not have allocated enough space to build connections to one another through the interviews and process of conducting research.

There is limited literature surrounding direct, qualitative experiences of the Tamil community and their experiences with relation to the civil war. While progressing forward, there remains a grave need for literature surrounding the Tamil community to be brought to light. This particular study involved interviews with two males and one female. Future research could look at interviewing more women in an effort to gain increased knowledge surrounding gender and its impacts on their lived experiences. It is also important for research studies that examine the experiences of Tamil members of the LGBTQ community. Future research could also look into

the local Tamil community's perspectives surrounding the impacts of colonization on the emergence of war in Sri Lanka.

As mentioned previously, this body of work only covered the narratives and experiences of three members of the Tamil community. The three perspectives which were highlighted throughout this research cannot be generalized to the experiences of the broader Tamil community. Moving forward, researchers may want to consider utilizing focus groups as a way to engage with more members of the Tamil community and to put them in conversation with each other.

Though there are a number of existing qualitative research studies conducted surrounding the Tamil community, there needs to be an increase in order to highlight the many deep-seeded narratives behind members of the community. Future research can look towards emphasizing the significance around qualitative literature as a means to bring forward narratives of members of local Tamil communities that exist within Toronto, the GTA and beyond.

Final Thoughts

The findings of the research presented various outlooks towards the direct experiences of three Tamil participants from Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Each perspective brought forth a bounty of knowledge surrounding experiences of war in Sri Lanka, fleeing to Canada, navigating a new way of living, and their newly formed perceptions of racism and how their experiences have been viewed by others who are not Tamil. Throughout the findings, there were both negative and positive responses. There were a few contradictions as participants did not allude to any direct association of mental distress or sanism, whereas this was discussed within the literature. Another contradiction was around some participants feeling less overwhelmed with their perspectives around grieving what they left behind in Sri Lanka, in comparison to others.

Through listening to the trio of perspectives, I found it interesting that they were in no way comparable to that of my own or my family's experiences. As the researcher, I was made aware of and exposed to many harsh realities that I was not formerly aware of, which has shifted my perspective greatly to what members of my community have had to and continue to live through today. The experiences discussed by the participants reflected honest accounts of their experiences and brought forward alternative perspectives as well.

The purpose of the research study was to explore the experiences of how the Tamil community related to grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice. The objective of the research was to bring forward the various narratives within the Tamil community surrounding the relationship to loss on a grander scale and the ways in which their knowledge has been taken up by broader society. The outcome of this was ultimately achieved.

Even through writing this Major Research Paper, I have come to note the relevance of this topic today. I have come across ways that the Tamil community's experiences are being brought forward in both positive and negative ways. On May 18, 2020, a second reading at Queen's Park was passed for the provincial government's Bill 104 entitled the "Tamil Genocide Education Week Act, 2019" (Brampton Guardian, 2020). Two days, later, Peel District School Board made a statement via Twitter acknowledging Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day and later revoked their statement on June fourth, claiming that it raised concerns to select members of the local Sinhalese community (PeelSchools, 2020).

In response to the statement that was revoked by the Peel District School Board, many Tamil community members took to Instagram and began a "I am Tamil and genocide is a part of my identity" campaign which began trending and brought attention to the harsh realities of the civil war on a public social forum (Tamil Guardian, 2020). As a result, on June 17th, Director of

Education, Peter Joshua, for the Peel District School Board released an open letter to the public and apologized to the Tamil community and stood by the school board's initial statement recognizing the Tamil genocide (Tamil Guardian, 2020). Both matters, which occurred in a span of over just a few weeks, speaks to the heightened need of narratives and lived experiences of the Tamil community to be brought to light in an effort to educate and inform the public.

The realities of any given population, and specifically the Tamil community as it pertains to this research, cannot be generalized by any means. This research is only one piece of the larger puzzle of histories, knowledge, and experiences that encompass the entire Tamil population at hand. With the current concerns and changes that have only recently occurred, there lies great pressure towards bringing forward more representation of the many more stories that have yet to be brought to light from within the Tamil community. Doing so, cannot only bring about transformative change and awareness to the broader public but also connect and unify the broader Tamil community in solidarity and building on the knowledge that is already existent within the population.

Unexpected Departures: Experiences of Grief and Epistemic Injustice

within the Tamil Community

Research Conducted by Faith Sundaralingam, MSW Student, Ryerson University

Looking for Participants!

Have you migrated from Sri Lanka, identify as Tamil, and would like to share your experience?

As a participant, you will be asked to connect for an interview via telephone or online. **As per the REB protocol regarding COVID-19, the researcher will be changing data collection methods from in-person interviews to telephone or online interviews. The researcher may be recording the telephone interviews using a password protected smartphone/cell phone, pending consent given to the researcher to do so by the participant.** In this interview, you can share your personal experiences of grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice as a member of the Tamil community. Epistemic injustice involves knowledge that is misunderstood or miscommunicated by the larger society. Your participation will involve a 1-1.5-hour interview. You will receive a copy of the research following its completion to see if it represents your experiences accurately.

Purpose: To explore the Tamil community's experiences with migrating from Sri Lanka and how it relates to grief (vastly defined). Also, to hear the experiences of how the knowledge around these topics have been taken up within the community and in society.

Participants:
- Three Tamil adults currently living in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Please note that this study will be in English. Participants must be able to speak and understand English (either English is their first or additional language)

Compensation: Each participant will receive a $10 Tim Horton's e-gift card

Dissemination: The final Major Research Paper will be made accessible to the participants with a link to the RULA digital repository to access the study findings as expected in **August 2020.**

For more information please contact:
Faith Sundaralingam, MSW Student
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Email: faith.sundaralingam@ryerson.ca
Phone: 416-979-5000 ext. 2986
OR
Research Supervisor: Gordon Pon, Associate Professor, School of Social Work at Ryerson University, Toronto
Email: g2pon@ryerson.ca
Phone: 416-979-5000 ext. 4786.

This study has been approved by the Ryerson Research Ethics Board [REB 2019-477] and is being conducted by a graduate student as a requirement for program completion. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact:

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
rebchair@ryerson.ca

Ryerson University

RE: Recruitment of potential participants for a qualitative research

Unexpected Departures: Experiences of grief and epistemic injustice within the Tamil community

My name is Faith Sundaralingam and I am currently completing a Master of Social Work degree at Ryerson University. I am in the process of recruiting participants for a small study exploring the experiences of the Tamil community of Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in relation to grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice.

This research is to fulfill my Master of Social Work degree and is being supervised by Gordon Pon, Associate Professor, School of Social Work at Ryerson University, Toronto, g2pon@ryerson.ca, 416-979-5000 ext. 4786.

There has been very little research found on the experiences of the Tamil community who have deep experiences of grief and epistemic injustice as it relates to migrating to a new country and fleeing their war-torn homeland. This study will give participants an opportunity to share the stories and experiences of such realties that have the opportunity to make an impact and contribute to the knowledge in research that currently exists around the Tamil community.

The eligibility criteria include:
● Three Tamil adults, ages 18 and older, who have migrated from Sri Lanka and are currently living in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

All participants who choose to take part in this study will be asked to share their personal experiences through a 1-1.5 hour interview. The interview will be conducted by the researcher, Faith Sundaralingam, and will be audio-recorded. Participants may decline to answer questions they do not want to answer. As per the REB protocol regarding COVID-19, the researcher will be changing data collection methods from in-person interviews to telephone or online interviews. The researcher may be recording the telephone interviews using a password protected smartphone/cell phone, pending consent given to the researcher to do so by the participant. Please note that this study will be in English. Participants must be able to speak and understand English (either English is their first or additional language).

Confidentiality of all participants is of upmost importance and no names or identifying information will be published or shared in any way. Instead, the researcher will be assigning pseudonyms (fake names) to conceal the participant's identity unless the participant prefers their name on the research paper.

The final Major Research Paper will be made accessible to the participants with a link to the RULA digital repository to access the study findings as expected in **August 2020.**

Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants can choose to end their involvement with the study at any time, without consequence.

To show appreciation for the participant's time, they will receive a reimbursement of a $10 Tim Horton's e-gift card.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board [REB 2019-477]. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact:

> Research Ethics Board
> c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
> Ryerson University
> 350 Victoria Street
> Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
> 416-979-5042
> rebchair@ryerson.ca

If you are interested in more information about the study or would like to volunteer, please reply to this email (faith.sundaralingam@ryerson.ca) or 416-979-5000 ext. 2986. (Please leave a message and I will contact you as soon as possible).

Warm Regards,
Faith Sundaralingam
Master of Social Work Student, Ryerson University

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Confidentiality of all participants is of upmost importance and no names or identifying information will be published or shared in any way. Instead, the researcher will be assigning pseudonyms (fake names) to conceal the participant's identity unless the participant prefers their name on the research paper.

The final Major Research Paper will be made accessible to the participants with a link to the RULA digital repository to access the study findings as expected in **August 2020.**

Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants can choose to end their involvement with the study at any time, without consequence.

To show appreciation for the participant's time, they will receive a reimbursement of a $10 Tim Horton's e-gift card.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board [REB 2019-477]. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact:

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">
Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
rebchair@ryerson.ca
</div>

If you are interested in more information about the study or would like to volunteer, please let me know. Thank you.

APPENDIX D

Unexpected Departures: Experiences of Grief and Epistemic Injustice within the Tamil Community

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to be involved with this research study, I greatly appreciate it. Before we get started, do you have any questions regarding the consent form?

I would like for you to know that this interview will take about 1-1.5-hour. I want to reassure you that all information you share with me is confidential and all identifying information will be removed from your transcript and a pseudonym (fake name) will be used if you are quoted in any way throughout the research. However, there is only one condition, by law, where I would have to breach confidentiality. That is in the case where you disclose that you are at risk to harm yourself, harm others or disclose if a child is experiencing abuse and/or neglect. Do you have any questions?

You may ask to stop recording or take a break at any point during the interview. If at any point you feel unsettled or change your mind about participating in the study, you can terminate the interview. Do you understand what I mentioned around the duty to report? Do you have any questions before we begin?

Central Research Question:

What are the experiences of the Tamil community in relation to grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice?

Opening Questions:

1. Can you tell me a little about your experiences with migrating to Canada? Do you still have family that are living in Sri Lanka?

2. How old were you when you arrived in Canada? What made you decide to come to Canada?

Experience of Migrating to Canada:

1. Can you tell me about your experience when first arriving to Canada?
   Potential Probing Questions
   - Did you have any family currently living in Canada when you arrived?
   - What did you know about Canada before you arrived? Did you know English?
   - If you still have family living in Sri Lanka, how did you feel about leaving your family to move to Canada?

2. What were your dreams and goals when living in Sri Lanka and how did they change when coming to Canada?
   - What were some challenges you experienced when starting your new life in Canada?
   - What were some positives once starting your new life in Canada?

Context Question:
1. Did you feel that you had to let go of a lot in order to come to Canada? Can you tell me more about that?
   Potential Probing Question:
   - What do you miss the most about your native home?
   - Do you feel that you would have had more opportunities in Sri Lanka in comparison to Canada?

General Question (Probing for Further Context – Grief (vastly defined) and Epistemic Injustice:

Thank you for your responses this far, I want to remind you that you may skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable in answering at any time. You may just say "pass," and I will completely understand. May I go onto the next question?

1. How do you feel your body, soul, spirit and mind has been impacted by the transition of coming to Canada based on your reason to do so?
   Potential Probing Question:
   - Are you able to communicate how this transition impacted you to your family, friends, community? If yes, can you tell me more about that? If no, can you tell more about this?
   - If you do communicate with family still living in Sri Lanka, how does it impact you?
   Potential Probing Question:
   - Do you feel happy with the decision you made to come to Canada or do you wish to be back with them? Why?

2. How do you feel about your experiences of leaving, dealing with the new changes which may impact you in many ways (physically, mentally, emotionally, practically, financially, etc.)?

3. Do you feel still closely connected to your Mother Tongue, the Tamil culture, ways of life, while living here in Canada? If yes, can you tell me more about that? If no, can you tell me more about that?

4. When you reflect on your experiences of migrating to Canada, do you feel any grief or loss in any way? If yes, can you tell me more about this?

5. How do you feel Tamils are perceived by society? What might be contributing factors to these perceptions of Tamils living in Canada?
   Potential Probing Question:
   - Do you feel that when you share in your experiences to the broader community, you are being heard?
   - Do you feel that you are still able to share in your experiences and have them be received the same way that you have shared them? If yes, how has this been? If no, why?

6. Do you feel that the broader Canadian public, research, news stories, etc. accurately represents the histories and experiences of the Tamil community? If yes, how so? If no, why and what do you feel needs to be done to do so authentically?

Concluding Remarks

Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to share your experiences with me. Is there anything else you would like to share with me? Do you have any questions?

Ryerson University
Consent Agreement

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

UNEXPECTED DEPARTURES: EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF AND EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE WITHIN THE TAMIL COMMUNITY

INVESTIGATORS:

This research study is being conducted by Faith Sundaralingam (Master of Social Work Candidate) and will be supervised by Dr. Gordon Pon (Associate Professor), from the School of Social Work at Ryerson University.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Faith Sundaralingam at faith.sundaralingam@ryerson.ca, 416-979-5000 ext. 2986.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this research is to examine and identify what conversations regarding grief (vastly defined), look like within the community, in the context of Toronto, and explore the relationship between the Tamil population and epistemic injustice that has existed within the course of the last few decades. Epistemic injustice involves knowledge that is misunderstood or miscommunicated by the larger society. This study will require 3 adults, ages 18 or older, who have direct experiences in migrating from Sri Lanka and now reside in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This research is being completed to fulfill the Major Research Paper (MRP) requirement of the researcher's Master of Social Work degree (expected completion of program: August 2020).

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY INCLUDES:

- Three Tamil adults, ages 18 or older, currently living in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Please note that this study will be in English. Participants must be able to speak and understand English (either English is their first or additional language)

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO:

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

April 2020:
- Connect with the researcher over the phone or online, review the consent form together and participate in a 1-1.5-hour interview with the researcher, which will be audio-recorded, discussing and/or sharing your experiences with grief and epistemic injustice as a member of the Tamil community. *Please Note:* The researcher may be recording the telephone interviews using a password protected smartphone/cell phone, pending consent given to the researcher to do so by the participant

You will be asked a series of questions such as:

- How old were you when you arrived in Canada? What made you decide to come to Canada?
- When you reflect on your experiences of migrating to Canada, do you feel any grief or loss in any way? If yes, can you tell me more about this?

Once the audio-recording of the interviews have been transcribed, you will be able to edit or take out selected pieces of your respective transcript if you choose to do so. You will be given three days to edit your transcriptions. However, after **June 1, 2020**, participants will no longer be able to make changes as the Major Research Paper will be in its final stage of completion.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

A potential benefit for participants is that they may bring light to their lived experiences, which has the potential to create meaningful knowledge production regarding a topic that has not yet been explored within the participant's community.

I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:

You may experience potential risks within this study, however they are very low. A few examples of potential low risks include:

- **Psychological risk (e.g. feeling anxious, upset or uncomfortable):** There may be potential psychological risk through sharing in emotionally difficult lived experiences. You may also experience discomfort due the length of time in the interview.

- o **How will the risk be managed minimized or mitigated?:** In order to minimize such risks, you are encouraged to only share information that you feel comfortable to disclose; you can skip questions, stop the interview, withdraw or take a break at any point during the interview process. After the interview, I will check-in with you, as well as provide you with a list of community resources at the time of the interview. I will also advise you that you can contact me at any time for more information about accessing services and support.

- ● **Personal identity being revealed (e.g. participant being identified either directly or inadvertently):** There may be a potential risk that personal identity may be revealed if identifying information has not been removed from the final research paper.
  - o **How will the risk be managed minimized or mitigated?:** All information will solely be kept confidential, and when reporting study findings, all identifying information will be specifically removed from transcripts and pseudonyms (fake names) will be utilized in the place of the participant's names to ensure confidentiality. No personal information of identity will be included in the completed research paper. All data will be stored securely in password protected files and destroyed after the final paper has been submitted to Ryerson University.

- ● **Legal risk (e.g. required by law, to report reasonable suspicions of risk of harm or child abuse and/or neglect during the research process):** The researcher has an ethical responsibility to report suspected or disclosed harm to self or harm to others – the duty to report. While participants share in their lived and current experiences regarding migration, grief (vastly defined) and epistemic injustice, participants may disclose harm to themselves or to others.
  - o **How will the risk be managed minimized or mitigated?:** Confidentiality and duty to report have been discussed within this consent form, to ensure that participants are aware and understand what the duty to report consists of. Participants will also be reminded of the limitations of confidentiality (duty of report) prior to interview. Participants will be reminded that they can decide whether or not to answer questions if they choose not to and withdraw from the study at any time.

- ● **Dual-role risk (e.g. risk related to already-existing relationships between researcher and participants):** There may be a potential dual-role risk if there are participants that the researcher knows and has an existing relationship with.
  - o **How will the risk be managed minimized or mitigated?:** Participants will be reminded during first contact, during questions regarding the study, prior to signing the consent form, prior to and following the interview with the participant, and again when they are asked to review and edit the transcript and draft of the research paper about their voluntary participation and that

withdrawing from the study will not impact their pre-existing relationship with the researcher.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All information will solely be kept confidential, and when reporting study findings, all identifying information will be specifically removed from transcripts and pseudonyms (fake names) will be utilized in the place of the participant's names to ensure confidentiality.

If you choose to withdraw, all your data collected for the study will be deleted and not utilized within the research paper. However, after June 1, 2020, the participant's data will not be removed because it will have been integrated into the overall analysis.

DATA STORAGE

No personal information of identity will be included in the completed research paper. All data will be with the principal investigator, stored securely in password protected files and destroyed after the final paper has been submitted to Ryerson University.

The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed, both will be password protected. Following transcription and verification, all raw audio-files will be destroyed by the principal investigator. All other relevant material regarding the research will be deleted following final submission of the Major Research Paper to Ryerson University (approximately August 2020). The principal investigator will be the only individual with access to the password protected materials.

DISSEMINATION:

The final Major Research Paper will be made accessible to the participants with a link to the RULA digital repository to access the study findings as expected in **August 2020.**

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION:

You will receive a $10 Tim Horton's e-gift card for their involvement in the research study.

If you decide to stop participating at any time, you will still be given the incentive of a $10 Tim Horton's e-gift card.

COSTS TO PARTICIPATION:

There are no costs to participation involved in this research study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. You may stop participating at any time and you will still be given the incentives and reimbursements described above. If you choose to stop participating, you may also choose to not have your data included in the study. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University or the investigator, Faith Sundaralingam involved in the research.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact.
Faith Sundaralingam
Master of Social Work Student – Ryerson University
Faith.sundaralingam@ryerson.ca
416-979-5000 ext. 2986

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board [REB 2019-477]. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact:

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
rebchair@ryerson.ca

EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF AND EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE WITHIN THE TAMIL COMMUNITY

CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:

        Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to participate in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

        You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

_____

Name of Participant (please print)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

        Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about being audio-recorded. Your interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed, both will be password protected. All relevant material regarding the research will be deleted following final submission of the Major Research Paper to Ryerson University (approximately August 2020). You will additionally be provided with the option to review and edit your transcript and the draft research paper to ensure that you are comfortable that the information does not identify you to potential readers.

        You are able to make any changes necessary up until **June 1, 2020**. You have been given a copy of this agreement. You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

        I agree to be audio-recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be stored and destroyed.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

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during the 26 years of civil war in Sri Lanka and the hundreds of thousands of people displaced,

disappeared and killed. The comment was not intended to be taken as commentary on separatism

or the politics of a sovereign nation. Additionally, while the aim is to demonstrate solidarity with

our Tamil community on a day of remembrance and mourning, the content is not critical of the

peaceful and beloved local Sinhalese community, many of whom were victims themselves of a

brutal war. On the 11th Anniversary of the end of the armed conflict, we wish both of these

communities continued peace and healing. We will consult with our community to find language

that best represents and balances perspectives. This work will be undertaken as part of the

board's Days of Significance Calendar, which will be done by the Equity department in

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