Children as heritage-makers in diaspora:

Exploring connections between supplementary schools and the Museum of London



PhD Thesis

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Declaration

I, Orly Orbach, hereby certify that, except when explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Abstract

This thesis explores the concept of latent heritage in migration. It argues that within the context of migration, heritage is often made invisible, ignored or restricted to domestic spaces. Struggling against these processes of effacement, supplementary schools run by parents on a voluntary basis become important semi-public improvisational spaces for preserving histories, transmitting cultural heritage to the next generation and gaining visibility. In this context, children become key figures in the creation of new cultural representations, performances and displays.

The thesis focuses on heritage partnerships between the Museum of London and a selection of supplementary schools set up by migrant parents and run on Saturdays outside the mainstream school week. Based on research with Albanian, Tamil, Iranian and Brazilian supplementary schools, the thesis shows how heritage can be suppressed and re-activated through museum collaborations, and the unique new roles children play in preserving heritage, reconstructing social networks and making new public representations in post-migration contexts.

These child-centred collaborations between a city museum and migrant communities offer new perspectives on heritage temporalities and placemaking in diaspora. The thesis is based on collaborative, multi-sited and multimodal ethnographic research including the use of experimental visual methods and the production of new museum displays.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is an enquiry into latent heritages of children in diaspora. The case study is of a partnership programme between supplementary schools and the Museum of London.

Supplementary schools, also known as Saturday schools, exist in every London neighbourhood and borough. Though barely visible in public culture, there are an estimated of 3,000- 5,000 of them in the Capital. These schools are run independently by parents from immigrant backgrounds who have self-organised in diaspora to produce their own heritage programmes, where children learn about their families' cultures and roots.

In this thesis, I use the term 'latent heritage' to describe how cultural heritages are suppressed or put aside in diaspora, waiting to re-emerge, and how memories in migration resurface and disappear in museums and supplementary schools. This is a study of heritage transmission in transient places, exploring how communities improvise spaces to teach children their cultural heritage, and how museums can respond to migration, examining how places are inhabited, subverted, and evacuated to allow alternative heritages and histories to be transmitted.

This visual ethnography pays attention to how heritages are remembered and deleted in diaspora through cultural representations, in supplementary schools and at the museum. Observing how displays are made, removed and reinserted into the public realm, I ask: what social and material conditions, sites and encounters suppress, accommodate or prompt cultural heritage to reemerge in diaspora?

The partnership between the Museum of London and supplementary schools brings together two very different cultural institutions. The museum is a highly visible, officially recognised public institution housing millions of objects about the history of the city. Supplementary schools, on the other hand, are highly invisible and exist outside what Smith defines as the 'Official Heritage Discourse' which "emphasizes the materiality and innate value of heritage" (Smith 2011:71). They are not currently officially recognised by the state, and their cultural heritage is almost entirely absent from museum displays.

This has not always been the case. Supplementary schools have been fostered and encouraged by the previous government. They now seem anachronistic, no longer in tune with the discourse of the day. They are hardly known about. The theme of latent heritage

therefore also addresses how supplementary schools have been made to disappear, and their ongoing invisible acts of heritage activism that occur on a weekly basis across the city.

For supplementary schools catering for children from immigrant backgrounds, cultural heritage is always on the verge of disappearance not only from the public realm but from children's memories and consciousness. Collaborating with the museum presents new opportunities to materialise their heritage in diaspora and make it tangible for children, and for their cultural heritage publicly recognised as part of the city. This is a study of changing heritage representations and visibilities when the Museum of London, a highly visible public institution, works with supplementary schools that are highly invisible.

The extreme disparity between the status of these two institutions should not obscure some of their shared practices, for instance how they both transmit cultural heritage by conjuring distant landscapes and histories through affective displays and haptic interaction. The study considers how the work of supplementary schools parallels, expands and contradicts curatorial heritage practices at the museum.

This research embarks on two parallel journeys – one that moves across London's diverse supplementary school communities and another that begins and ends at the museum. As befitting of a diasporic study that considers the simultaneity of at least two sites, this research examines the parallel perspectives of museum and supplementary school practitioners to observe how the specificity of these different sites and institutions restrict and enable particular expressions and articulations of cultural heritages in diaspora, and what happens when the two institutions converge.

Research was carried out with Brazilian, Albanian, Tamil Sri-Lankan and Iranian supplementary schools who participated in the museum's programme during my fieldwork between 2018-2020, and with the museum's curators, festival organisers and the community officer who led the partnership. The study observes how experiences of latent heritage translate into each setting at the schools and the museum and manifest in new displays and performances. Working across different parts of London with several schools enabled me both to conduct a comparative study and to consider the particularity of each community and site, drawing connections and finding commonalities in the challenges of running supplementary schools and transmitting heritage in diaspora, whilst seeing collaborations with a city museum from multiple perspectives.

The museum's partnership with London's supplementary schools opens questions about the temporality and authorship of public heritage when these two very different institutions come together. The case studies unpack themes of heritage in migration, the instability of memory and reconstructions of place.

This chapter provides a background to the research. I introduce my theoretical approach, framing supplementary schools as mnemonic communities, explaining my choice to use the word 'migrant' and what I mean by 'post-migration', and the terms 'mnemonic socialization' (Zerubavel 2011), 'multidirectional memory' (Rothberg 2009) and the 'ethics of memory', defined by Margalit in terms of 'thick' and 'thin' relationships (Margalit 2002).

Situating the Museum of London's supplementary school partnership as part of a series of European museum responses to migration, I provide a historical overview of changing curatorial approaches to representing multiculturalism since the 1990s to explain the context out of which the supplementary school partnership emerged, and how the topic of migration subsequently disappeared.

Launched in 2016, the Museum of London Supplementary School Programme was part of a wider move across European museums to work with ethnic minorities and migrant groups, to consolidate their identities and heritage into national museums and public memory.

Historically, museums have been considered sites capable of transforming and improving publics. For most of the nineteenth century, there was an international consensus among cultural decision-makers in the west that the first responsibility of a public museum was to enlighten and improve its visitors morally, socially and politically (O'Neill 2002:25). At the turn of the 20^{tht} Century, museums in Western Europe began responding to new patterns of human migration which have made their cities 'superdiverse' (Vertovec 2010).

The research examines what happens when three different 'sites' of cultural transformation: the museum, migration and childhood, are brought together through a cultural partnership- the Museum of London Supplementary School Programme.

The partnership between the Museum of London and supplementary schools is part of a long line of museum experiments and collaborative projects through which museums attempted to integrate immigrants and make them feel at home in the museum. At the centre of this collaboration are children whose heritage is not included in the national curriculum and not represented at the museum. Within different contexts in which children's cultural

heritage is repressed, ignored or forgotten, supplementary schools provide fascinating insight into the many ways in which cultural identities are perceived and experienced as latent. The last section of this chapter considers children's agency in heritage transmissions and the unusual role they play in representing and performing their cultures at the Museum of London, situating the heritage of childhood within contemporary heritage debates.

This thesis contributes to critical debates asking how European museums can respond to migration, building on a body of literature that critically engages with practices of decolonising museums, reforming curatorial methods by collaborating with source communities (Karp and Lavine 1991, Karp et al 2006, Kreps 2003, Golding 2009, Peers and Brown 2003, Harrison et al 2013, Macdonald 2013).
Museum and migration research has become a distinct field over the last decade, with a reflexive turn in which European museums are rethinking how to represent migration and how to produce collaborative exhibitions with migrant communities. A plethora of publications has emerged, promoting and critically reflecting on collaborative curatorial projects with new and old migrant communities, the majority of which focus on the role of museums in supporting social integration and community cohesion (Grosfoguel et al 2011, Whitehead et al 2012, 2016, Poehls 2011, Johansson and Bevelander 2017, Innocenti 2014, Labadi 2017).

The literature review is focused on museums based in Western European where migration is widely perceived as a social breach or exceptional event (Dahinden 2016). I have left out literature about museums in settler countries like the US, Canada or Australia because despite having strict migration laws, settler countries celebrate human migration as part of their national narrative. The scope of the research is therefore limited to Western European museums that share a specific set of problems when trying to integrate migrants into the national narrative. Whereas in settler countries migration is normalized, in Europe migration is marginalized. This is evident in the way hyphenated identities are part of the colloquial language in settler countries, whereas in Europe transnational roots are widely read as signs of non-belonging. Consequently, settler countries have an established tradition of very visible national immigration museums. For example, the national museum of immigration in Ellis Island, New York describes itself as "a living monument to the story of the American people"[1]. In contrast, the UK's migration museum has existed for less than a decade and takes the form of a pop-up shop. Migration is a topic only recently explored by European museums and remains politically charged and contested.

[1] https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/national-immigration-museum/ accessed 29th December 2021

This thesis makes an original contribution to the fields of museum anthropology, migration and heritage studies in the three following ways:

Firstly, through a multi-sited research. A common claim made by museums is that they can help migrants settle (Lynch 2008:264). Written predominantly from the perspective of museum practitioners who have little time to research 'off-site' with communities, literature about museum collaborations tends to be 'museum-centered', lacking an understanding of the embodied practices of dwelling in diaspora outside their institutions (Clifford 1997:254). Consequently, much of the literature is one-sided, overlooking processes of emplacement already taking place in the city, such as post-migration social integration work undertaken by supplementary school communities.

This multi-sited research offers new insights into how these schools transform and adapt spaces in order to transmit cultural heritage in diaspora. It is a multi-centered museum-and-migration focused study. Research was conducted with supplementary schools outside the museum, following collaborations before, after and alongside museum participation. The ethnography was carried out across the city in sites used by supplementary schools including rented buildings, teachers' homes, neighborhoods and public spaces, observing the spatial and social practices of self-organized communities post-migration. The study observes how they preserve their heritages and create inclusive spaces for children without the aid of museums and despite the absence of state support.

Researching 'multi-locally' gave me insight into the practical challenges each institution faced, the museum trying to accommodate multiple minorities at once, and the schools producing collective representations to fit within the restricted time and space allocated to them. The research moves in two directions, tracing how the museum tries to reach out to London's diverse cultural minorities, and how each group tries to incorporate their heritage into the museum.

Secondly, the thesis highlights how children shape heritage in migration, making an original contribution to the field of museum anthropology by connecting two previously separate areas of museum studies: migration and childhood. The relatively new field of children's heritage in museums explores the role of museums in preserving children's material and intangible heritages from institutional and experiential perspectives, framing childhood as a unique site out of which little material heritage is preserved (Darian-Smith and Pacoe 2013).

My case study brings together these two separate ‘sites’ of transformation -childhood and migration- to consider the new roles children play in heritage preservation in diaspora.

Separately, museum studies of childhood and of migration both address the immateriality of heritage and transient state of being or becoming. One might suppose that bringing these two fields together into a research of children’s heritage in the context of migration may be a study of deep liminality. Surprisingly perhaps, my research describes how children’s transient, intangible and ephemeral heritages can help communities reconnect in diaspora, reconstruct cultural identities and carry collective histories into new spaces. This study examines how children become centers around which new networks are formed in migration, looking at children’s changing roles and agencies in preserving cultural heritage in diaspora, and the memory works they prompt.

A study of the latent heritage of children from migrant backgrounds opens up new questions about heritage temporalities, the duration of memory in diaspora, where it survives, who will preserve it, how long it can last and where it can be housed. These questions are reoriented by the transience of childhood, children’s creative input, and parenthood as an improvised profession.

Foregrounding the roles of children in cultural preservation in diaspora, the research explores intersecting temporalities: the fleeting landscapes of childhood, the ephemeral displays of ethnic minorities in the public sphere, the transient spaces of supplementary schools, and a seemingly permanent museum collection that is about to be rehoused in a new location.

This research observes how heritage at the museum that at first seems immovable and stable can be subverted through children’s heritage, which is extremely ephemeral. Since the supplementary school programme was a child-centred partnership, the case studies are a rare opportunity to discover how new museum representations made by and for children can change the value and visibility of cultural heritage that exists on the periphery of public consciousness.

Thirdly, fieldwork was carried out using participatory visual research methods to gain an insight into the aesthetic practices of each school community and of the museum, their meanings and affect. The purpose of this study is not just to intellectually theorize museum displays, but to participate in the process of making and embodying representations, following from Stuart Hall’s assertion that “identity is constituted, not outside but within

representations" (Hall 1994:236). This is an ethnography of museum representations in the making, observing how some histories are made to look stable, and others suppressed or hidden.

Employing participatory visual research methods, I was able to exchange visions through drafts, discussions and prototypes, some of which never manifested into museum displays, and in some cases to record the memories of museum performances and representations after production, or once they were removed. These methodologies enabled me to gain a deeper insight into the thoughts, intentions and activities surrounding the making of collaborative representations. Methodologies will be discussed further in the next chapter and throughout the thesis.

1.1 The significance of supplementary schools for grounding heritage

Supplementary schools are a fascinating and largely invisible phenomenon in the UK. Based in rented classrooms in state-school buildings, in the backs of community centres, church halls and whatever rooms are available, they teach cultural heritages not included in the national curriculum from the many peripheries of the city. They are discrete institutions, but once you start looking you notice them everywhere. Little attention is paid to these schools in a city as diverse as London, and little research is done into how they sustain heritage internationally with minimal resources. They pop up every Saturday morning or Wednesday afternoon and then disappear for the rest of the week.

The schools play a crucial role in ensuring children practice their mother-tongue, learn their histories and recognize their families' cultures. Taken together they cover vast portions of the world's geography, extending children's cultural knowledge and ensuring they remain connected to the countries their families originate from.

A supplementary school is the dual expression of a community's desire to preserve its cultural heritage in diaspora and integrate children into the city, to develop children's local and transnational identities simultaneously. The schools typically run on weekends and afternoons, in intervals and 'gaps' in state education, since children attend state schools during the week. It is the 'in-betweenness' of supplementary schools, so characteristic of heritage in migration, which distinguishes these institutions from full-time faith, bilingual and international schools. As children attend two schools, they acquire two cultural identities: during weekdays they attend state schools and learn the English national curriculum, and

once a week they attend supplementary school to learn their cultural heritages and languages that are not covered within their weekday curriculum. Here they learn about their parents' home countries and cultures through a broad range of activities that include community languages, geography lessons, myths, folk tales, alternative histories, poetry, songs and other forms of embodied heritage practices such as cultural dance, drama and martial arts. In this way, children practice their mother tongue and pick up their cultural heritage in the intervals between and around mainstream education.

Children inhabit these different thresholds, with one foot in each door, entering and vacating their liminal cultural identities (Back 1996) as they switch back-and-forth between main and supplementary schools. Collectively, supplementary schools present an alternative map of London's 'post'-migrant population, a map that is dynamic and dependent on the willingness of children as much as their parents to participate in the social lives and cultural programmes of supplementary schools.

Though striving for public recognition, supplementary schools are situated at the margins of visibility. Their opening hours fit around mainstream schools, causing no disruption to state education and they make a considerable effort not to disturb the material environments of the classrooms they rent, yet they try to make their cultural heritage visible to children, and subsequently do so through temporary means, removing any displays by the end of a teaching session. Their curricula are diverse. What they have in common is that their cultural identities are unrecognized by the State. The Albanian, Brazilian, Tamil and Iranian supplementary schools in this research have no clear place within the census categories (Bennett 2013:40), and like many supplementary schools cater for a large proportion of UK residents who at present are in this sense 'unclassified'.

Schools are typically intergenerational spaces, run by parents for their children, attracting other immigrant families interested in heritage preservation. They enable cultural integration to occur in two directions. For newly arrived migrant families, these schools are points of arrival that provide social networks and help them integrate into the city. For children brought up in diaspora, supplementary schools provide connections to their cultural heritage and enable them to communicate with their relatives abroad.

The schools provide a home-like environment through embodied heritage and practices: home-language, food, music and other sensorial symbols that evoke parents' places of origin. Many supplementary schools begin informally in parents' kitchens or living rooms and search for larger venues as they grow in size. Once they become more established many

use state-school classrooms to run sessions. Here the classroom becomes an extension of the home. But because premises are impermanent, schools have to pack up at the end of each session, remove their teaching resources and dismantle displays on a weekly basis. Heritage is not put away once but is a reoccurring phenomenon, a practice that is part and parcel of running a supplementary school and preserving heritage in migration. Out of necessarily, supplementary school teachers find quick and creative ways to turn temporary sites into home-like spaces, extending the idea of what a 'home' is, as the following example shows:

Notes from a Brazilian Saturday school. Winter 2019.

Lunch in classroom.

A group of children aged 5 open their packed lunches. I take a few desperate bites of my salad resting on the window sill and listen to their conversation.

my house is made of smelly farts (they laugh loudly at that)
my house is made of people
my house is made of me
my house is made of wheelbarrows and suns
my house is made of unicorns
my house is made of smelly farts (a boy repeats the joke, still funny)
my house is made out of that yoghurt (a boy points to girl's lunch)

my house is made of edible slime
my house is made of bubble-gum (girl from the other table joins in)
my house is made of books
my house is made of dark brick

How lovely and weird. Their house made of food, people, things, jokes. What inspired their conversation is a house-themed group activity they had just completed. On the worn-down carpet, large stretches of masking-tape mark out the outline of a house divided into four rooms: Sala, Baneiro, Cozinha, Quarto[2]. Teachers had prepared little laminated pictures of

[2] living-room, bathroom, kitchen, bedroom

household objects. Children had placed the miniature objects into the correct room: pans, fridge, sofa, table-lamp, bathtub, hairdryer, kettle. Where do they belong?

It's a rented school. We are only here for a short time, and never stick things to the walls, but using masking tape on the carpet only helps clean it, picking up the debris which in any case we will soon hoover.



1.1 House made of masking-tape

The 'masking-tape house' shows how supplementary school practitioners find creative means to convey a sense of place and belonging within the restricted use of rented rooms and borrowed spaces.

Supplementary schools offer new insights into placemaking in contexts of migration, where sites for heritage transmission have to be improvised in temporary spaces. The ‘masking tape house’, a temporary representation of a home that can easily be removed, serves as an example of how supplementary schools remain invisible institutions through which cultural heritage is transmitted to children from migrant backgrounds, whilst playing an essential role in collective acts of placemaking in diaspora, involving children in improvising spaces to ‘house’ their heritage and community.

The plan of a house is an anthropological trope. Bourdieu’s analysis of The Berber House comes to mind, with its system of oppositions that continue to internally sub-divide, signifying male/female, exterior/interior, profane/sacred, light/dark, times of day, wet and dry seasons that are all spatially separated within. The house, according to Bourdieu, is defined by its internal organization or relationship with its outside world. Supplementary schools, by contrast, have multiple insides and outsides. The collaged house on the carpet collapses and merges place-categories: the ‘interiority’ of the supplementary school and the ‘exteriority’ of the rest of the world, the idea of Brazil, the reality of London, the children’s home and the classroom - the plan of the house seems to encompass them all. The classroom is domesticated by parent-teachers who run the supplementary school, making it a place that is both intimate and public. The teachers speaking in Portuguese, the children’s mother tongue, make the space ‘home-like’, but the classroom is also formal, developing children’s academic skills to prepare them for their eventual Portuguese GCSE exams. In this manner, supplementary schools blur categories of formality/familiarity, school/home. The ‘masking tape’ house on the classroom carpet, an enlarged, collective ‘miniature’ house, encapsulated how supplementary schools act as extensions of the home, mediating between the domestic and public sphere: children simultaneously playing ‘house’, learning Portuguese, and placemaking in diaspora.

In Bourdieu’s ‘Berber house’, the place of the threshold represents the moment of transition between the house and the external world, where he argues, opposites are inversed. But the ‘threshold’ of the house on the classroom carpet does not seem to exist, there is no doorway, entrance or exit point. The threshold is the entirety of the house, one place references another, and yet another.

Much like the Elgin marbles simultaneously describe Ancient Greece, British heritage and Bloomsbury, the masking-tape house collapses several sites into one representation: Brazil, the classroom, and the London home the children are raised. These all exist at once on the fuzzy old carpet with the assortment of household pictures and words. When they think of

home, children are able to entertain several possibilities at once, to see one place through the other, Brazil conjured through Portuguese words, describing also their house in London, like a double-exposed photograph or a window reflection that allows you to peer into one place through another.

With borders made of masking tape, the house on the classroom carpet 'glues' this community together in the UK, and keeps children attached to Brazil. The masking-tape house, a sticky representation of a home that bundles materials and meanings together (Keane 2005), serves as an example of how imagined places became entangled with children's immediate surroundings, making the school environment itself meaningful.

No longer singular or fixed, the 'house' that supplementary schools build travels in migration and stretches across home countries, London homes, rented schools, and finally reaches the Museum of London.

The Museum of London becomes a potential site for schools to stabilize their heritage. Yet museums themselves prove to be impermanent sites for heritage preservation when it comes to supplementary school collaborations. The UK has an undocumented history of supplementary school programmes with at least three major museums: Imperial War Museum's 'Journeys of Change' (2007-2016), the British Museum's supplementary schools programme (2007-2016) followed by the Museum of London (2016-2021). Not only do cultural displays tend to vanish from museums, but entire supplementary school programs.

Following the creative interventions of supplementary school and museum practitioners, this research explores how memory endures in diaspora despite the impermanence of place, through insecure premises, temporary displays and improvised collaborations, oscillating between dormancy and latency, invisibility and hypervisibility, cultural assimilation and cultural particularity, belonging and exclusion, institutional amnesia and public recognition. It is the impermanence of place that informs this thesis' questions about heritage preservation post-migration

1.2 Mobile Heritage

This thesis examines two types of heritage institutions that deal with the complexity of place-making and transience, as they set out on a cultural partnership programme.

The first is the Museum of London, which is primarily a museum of place. Established in 1976, the museum tells the social history of the city and houses a large archaeological collection. It is presently situated by the Roman walls that once demarcated the boundaries of the city. The Roman walls have been a key feature of the present museum, as a symbol of English heritage grounded in place. The museum itself, however, is awkwardly placed above a roundabout and is not visible from street level. It feels disconnected from the city and requires visitors to actively seek it in order to find its entrance. External alternations have proved too difficult to implement since the museum is part of an archaeological site that is under conservation, any changes would require an archaeological dig, a lengthy, expensive process. Instead, the museum is preparing to relocate to a new building in West Smithfield, several minutes away from where it is currently situated. The entire museum is being redesigned, and the new museum will be situated directly next to Farrington – a busy train station.



1.2 Banner and signage for the Museum of London, currently above street level at 140 London Wall.



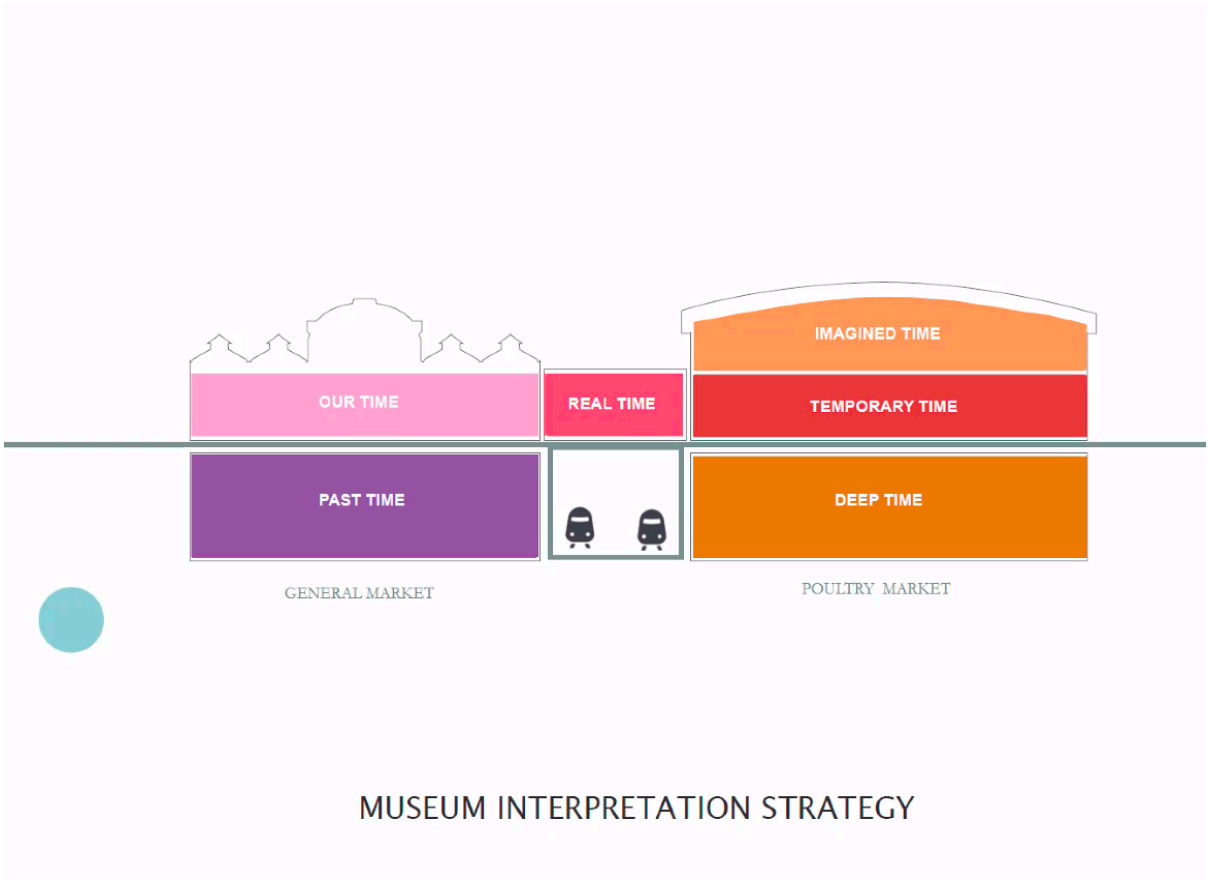
1.3 View of the walkway leading to the current Museum of London at London Wall 2019.

Fast-speed trains will be running through the heart of the new museum. In a virtual tour of the New Museum of London[3] , its architect Asif Khan revealed plans to have a viewing gallery to allow visitors to “show trains coming in and out of London”, turning the live train line into a real-time museum display, making mobility into a permanent spectacle integrated into the core of the building.

[3] ‘Museum, Cities, Cultural Power’ symposium. 25th June 2021.



1.4 New Museum plan, with a train line running through the heart of the building. Slide talk presented by Engagement Team during volunteer induction. Museum of London 2019.



1.5 New Museum plan, with a train line running through the heart of the building.

In its new location, the train station will be the new symbol of London as a dynamic city, replacing the museum's current iconic landmark of the London Wall, originally erected as a defensive wall to guard the city from incomers.

The museum has struggled with 'over-permanence'. Based in an archaeological site, the preservation of material heritage has prevented it from expanding or making significant changes until this pivotal moment when it will relocate to a new site, a move that involves years of planning. In contrast, supplementary schools moves their heritage across the city on a weekly basis. For them, heritage continues to be mobile.

1.3 'Immigrant' as a contested term

I use the term 'immigrant' intentionally, knowing it is an uneasy term. Museums have struggled with this term which has become stigmatizing and laden with negative connotations in the media and in public perception. Yet framing supplementary schools in the context of migration helps specify the particular problem of defining and displaying their cultural heritages in Europe where anti-immigration public sentiments and political discourses prevail.

This research shows how migration is a process that to varying degrees de-ethnicizes different groups who now seek to reclaim their cultural heritage. As fieldwork was conducted during an anti-immigration political climate, the Museum of London approached supplementary schools as British minorities in order to be inclusive and move away from the 'migrant' label, which has become politically loaded. The effect this had was that the museum was no longer able to register or describe migration and as a result was not able to acknowledge the ethnic backgrounds of minorities it seeks to collaborate with.

This research therefore argues for the importance of recognizing supplementary schools in the migration contexts from which they emerge and in which they continue to operate, particularly as this helps explain why they keep moving in and out of public discourses, recognized then forgotten, named and unnamed, acknowledged as a social movement (Andrews 2013) and later sidelined as an 'after-school' provision by the current government.

The very fact that the term ‘immigrant’ has a stigma attached to it is relevant to the main theme of this research- why heritages in migration are made invisible and become latent. A focus on migration sheds light on supplementary schools’ transcultural heritages, and the Museum of London’s struggle to provide spaces for discourse and display about places and memories beyond the city.

The field of migration studies builds on two distinct traditions, the study of the process of migration as geographical movement, and the study of the ethnic communities, transnationalism and diasporas that are the outcomes of migration (Johansson and Bevelander 2017:13). A ‘migrant’ or ‘immigrant’ is not a legal status, but a useful term to understand a social phenomenon, for instance, the experiences of transitioning between countries and cultures. A study of supplementary schools helps illuminate the overlap of labels that ‘transition’ people from being immigrants into a recognized ethnic minority, and sometimes back again to immigrants, in light of changing public attitudes, institutional frameworks and political agendas. In this study, supplementary schools perceive children’s identities as transnational, whereas the museum, keen to work towards integration, perceives them as ethnic minorities. By seeing supplementary schools in the context of migration it becomes possible to observe children’s shrinking and expanding identities as they move between being London’s ethnic minority to a normalized majority in their Saturday school, and how their ethnic identities are negated or made visible through museum displays and performance.

Importantly, experiences of migration were often discussed ‘behind the scenes’ in advisory group meetings, where supplementary schools teachers would share anecdotes about passport applications and recent experiences of border queues. For them, the experiences of migration were part of life, but migration was not a topic publicly addressed by the museum. This is unsurprising since this research took place during the time of the Brexit negotiations.

My research at the Museum of London began at a time when migration and multiculturalism have become taboo subjects. Whereas the previous decade saw a proliferation of programmes and exhibitions about migration across European museums, during my research at the Museum of London displays and discussions around migration seemed to have diminished. Alongside older migrant groups predominantly from British Commonwealth countries and more recent groups that arrived in the UK in the 1990s, there were also European supplementary schools, e.g. Greek and German, whose social and legal position was suddenly put into question. For some being classified as a migrant was sudden, for

others it had been a life-long experience. Brexit and the Windrush Scandal were two significant events that took place during my research, showing how supposedly settled minorities can suddenly be reclassified as 'immigrants' and threatened with deportation, in an unstable political climate where rights can suddenly cease, pointing to how becoming a 'migrant' is an arbitrary social status that can be attributed to minority groups almost at random.

Understandably, during my fieldwork in 2018-2020, the Museum of London was reluctant to address supplementary schools' migratory histories and connections, even though these were meaningful to them. Avoiding the contested topic of migration seemed to stem from the museum's desire to stress that supplementary schools belong in the city. Describing their migratory roots would work against the museum's assimilationist framing of treating everyone as Londoners. On one occasion a young, new curator addressed a supplementary school's heritage as 'Iranian' only to be corrected by the teacher: the school is about Iran *and* here (UK). This moment, described more fully in Chapter 4, explains how supplementary schools promote indeterminant and hybrid cultural identities that encompass 'there and here', which they can only articulate when discourse about migration is permissible. The 'spillage' of place, history and cultural identity is emblematic of how migration extends beyond confined spatial and temporal categories, especially when the heritages of children from immigrant backgrounds are involved.

According to the Migration Observatory, Oxford: "there are no definitions of 'migrant' in law…In some instances, children who are UK-born or UK nationals, but whose parents are foreign-born or foreign-nationals, are included in the migrant population".[4] Likewise, in trying to define migration, Whitehead et al ask: "'is being a migrant an inheritable status of is the child of a migrant not classed as a migrant themselves?' (Whitehead et al 2012:27).

To what extent supplementary school children raised in London are considered 'migrants' is a question not resolved by the museum, the schools or myself as a researcher. Rather, this research shows how the UK phenomenon of supplementary schools further complicates the definition, questioning how far a migration journey can stretch, and when it really ends. [5]

[4] https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/who-counts-as-a-migrant-definitions-and-their-consequences/ accessed 27th November 2021.

[5] In this research I occasionally use the term 'post-migration', by which I do not suggest a migration journey has been concluded, only that events take place after the journey commenced.

Two particular studies have influenced how I theorize migration in this thesis, as an affective site that is inhabited beyond the length of a physical journey. The first is 'The Outside: Migration as Life in Morocco ' by Alice Elliot (2021). Following Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (1999) Elliot shows how migration journeys begin imaginatively as a shared idea of the 'outside', from the vantage point of a 'sending' village in Morocco with a high level of out-migration. Elliot's ethnography describes how migration exists in people's aspirations, expectations, obligations, risks and reputations before they embark on a physical journey, demonstrating that migration is already part of the social lives and everyday interactions of those who have yet to migrate.

The second is '*The Emigrants*' by W.G. Sebald (1996), a vivid diary-like account of four people that continue to be haunted by their experience of exile and their past, sometimes willingly. Whereas Elliot extends migration to the visions and plans of her interlocutors before their physical journey commences, Selband extends the length of a migration journey in the other direction, as the 'shadow' or silent companion that continues to accompany his protagonists throughout their lives.

These two works act as 'bookends' to the way I theorize migration in this research, avoiding an oversimplification of the term 'migrant' or attempts to separate out types of migration, e.g. forced / voluntary, permanent/temporary, or social/political migration, as Whitehead et al have done (2012:29). Instead, my research begins with the understanding such classifications around migration are not clear-cut, and that migrants continue to ask themselves these very same questions for years on end: whether their choices were voluntary or coerced, whether their stay is temporary or permanent, whether their children can inherit their migrant status and memories and whether this is desirable.

1.4 Co-inhabiting histories

With fieldwork conducted across several of London's supplementary schools, this research sets out to extend what Innocenti termed as 'memory institutions' beyond the museum to the works of supplementary schools (Innocenti 2014). Whereas supplementary schools have thus far been conceptualised as sites of resistance and radical pedagogy, as safe spaces and as social movements (Mirza and Reay 2000, Andrews 2013, Hall et al 2002), this research frames supplementary schools as mnemonic communities in migration, working towards the preservation of transnational cultural memories and their translation into new contemporary sites and contexts. This section considers some questions raised by an

understanding of supplementary schools as mnemonic institutions in relation to transcultural and intergenerational memory transmissions.

Children from migrant backgrounds create ambiguous memory spaces surrounded by skepticism, sometimes from their own parents as much as professionals, casting doubt about children's abilities to retain and retrieve memories. Yet the work done by supplementary schools and the Museum of London shows that as well as the uncertainty about children's roles in heritage preservation, there is a great deal of investment and care taken in cultivating their cultural memories created and transmitted at both sites.

The topic of children's heritage 'post'-migration connects two separate topics: memory formation in childhood and memory retention 'post'-migration. These two types of memories 'balance on the edge of the abyss' so to speak: the memories of children and the heritages of their migrant parents, both ethereal and threatening to disappear, memories that exist on the verge of children's consciousness and periphery of public knowledge.

This research observes how these cultural/childhood memories are manifested into museum displays that circulate on the outskirts of public spaces, paying attention to how cultural representations work as mnemonic devices, moving collective memories into the museum as means of converting memories into officially recognized public heritage.

UK supplementary schools and the Museum of London both act as depositors of a group's memory. Their parallel works to preserve, transmit and reconstruct collective memories require some further consideration as to who these collectives are that these memories can be said to belong to (Margalit 2002), particularly as these include children of migrants whose cultural identities are under question.

One way to approach this question is by understanding supplementary schools and museums as 'mnemonic communities' - a term used by Zerubavel to describe the role of others as witnesses whose memories help corroborate our own (Zerubavel 2011:221). Zerubavel describes how memories are not only reinforced, but also blocked by one's mnemonic community, with certain events being prevented from forming into memories (ibid). Through processes that Zerubavel calls 'mnemonic socialization'- our memories are reinforced or repressed within families, schools or institutions. Zerubavel notes that many of our earliest 'memories' are actually recollections of stories we heard from others about our childhood: "in fact, much of what we remember we did not experience personally. We do so as members of particular families, organizations, nations, and other mnemonic communities"

(Zerubavel 2011:224). Zerubavel articulates the doubt surrounding cultural heritage taught in supplementary schools: to what extent do these heritages 'belong' to the children?

This question is further complicated by the partnership programme between the museum and supplementary schools, with further ambiguities as to who belongs to who's history, with children in adult worlds, migrants in the museum, and the museum in their supplementary schools. Here children's memories are twice mediated by two very different heritage institutions, the first addressing their transnational identities and the second focused on the UK, complicating the process of mnemonic socialization.

Rothberg's concept of 'multidirectional memory' reframes these questions. Rothberg developed the concept of multidirectional memory to consider the relationships between different traumatic histories in diaspora and how they intersect in the public sphere, specifically relations between Holocaust remembrance and the legacies of slavery (2009). Instead of a competitive model of memory, Rothberg observed that the boundary of memory in diaspora is not neatly aligned with the boundary of group identity, describing memory as 'multidirectional' and "subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing" (2009:3). Multidirectional memory emphasizes the intercultural dynamic interaction of different historical memories. Most importantly, he rejects the idea that collective memories are a group's possession: 'memories are not owned by groups- nor are groups "owned by memories". Rather the borders of memory and identity are jagged." (Rothberg 2009:5).

In this thesis the concept of multidirectional memory helps describe how cultural heritages are passed sideways and upwards, across cultures, between different supplementary schools, through the museum, bouncing from child to their parent and back, reconfiguring and misaligning how collective memories 'fit' with ethnic identities and place, extending what constitutes, and who can enter a mnemonic community. 'Multidirectional memory' opens new possibilities for understanding how collective memories can transcend ethnic identities in diaspora.

But who should remember whose past?

Like Zerubavel and Rothberg, Margalit addresses the question of 'Who are the "we" who may be obligated to remember', with a focus on the ethics of remembering, posing the profound question: Is there an ethics of memory?, a question he addresses to collectivities and individuals (Margalit 2002). To consider how memory is distributed he differentiates between the ethics and morality of memory, which is "based on a distinction between two

types of human relations: thick and thin ones". For Margalit the memory of morality belongs to thin relations, our relations 'to strangers and the remote', whilst the ethics of memory to 'thick relations', those we deeply care about, families and friends. The obligation to remember the past is not evenly spread because the morality of memory is long on geography and short on memory, encompassing all humanity, whereas the ethics of memory is typically short on geography and long on memory. An exception is the gross crimes against humanity which morality requires us to remember, "when those crimes are an attack on the very notion of shared humanity". Here our obligations to remember extend 'thick' relationships that are usually limited to our immediate circles. Margalit's concept of 'thick' and 'thin' relationships with the past describes our different sense of duty, moral responsibility and orientation towards certain pasts that we prioritized over others. His concept is relevant to supplementary schools who are concerned with cultivating children's thick ethical relationships towards the past, through language learning and acquisition of other forms of embodied heritage.

In families with parents from different or mixed ethnic affinities, the concept of 'thick' and 'thin' relations with the past manifests in their decisions as to which supplementary school their child should attend, i.e. which heritages to priorities. Here we return to a competitive model of collective memories that works against Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, yet also show how in diaspora heritages often travel diagonally down family lines, as children do not inherit their parents' heritage evenly or straightforwardly.

The idea of having thick and thin relations to the past describes museums' work around migration, and their dilemmas as to whose histories they should include, which groups they have a 'thick' relationship with- for instance communities from countries connected by colonial histories, communities that are geographically proximate, countries that have suffered recent humanitarian crises, or the largest minorities that presently inhabit a city?

There is no doubt that collaborative projects with migrant communities are a museum's expression of 'thick' relationships, sometimes in line with government strategies, other times compensating for the lack of a government's action and work against negative public perceptions. The question museums have been asking over the past three decades is whose histories and heritages should they display and how?

1.5 Visualizing migration in museums

The supplementary school programme at the Museum of London emerges out of curatorial changes across European museums, beginning around the 1990s, marking a period of transition in which museums attempted to visualise stories of migration in their cities for the first time.

One of the critical challenges for museum curators was how to represent (cultural, ethnic) differences without further othering already socially- excluded minorities. Beginning with comprehensive exhibitions about migration, early attempts to portray immigrants and ethnic minorities in a positive light were later considered to be enclaving and promoting separateness. Museums moved towards curation that emphasised urban cultural fluidity and hybridity.

Initial curatorial approaches have sought to help immigrants integrate through inclusive museum representations and exhibitions that acknowledge their presence and histories (Merriman 1993, Whitehead et al 2016). This was followed by new models of museum participation involving direct engagement with migrant communities (Innocenti 2014) that eventually relegated the work of cultural heritage differentiation to performances by these groups as substitutes for permanent museum displays (Torres 2011), alongside the emergence of specialist migration museums that depict migration as a universal phenomenon.

In this section, I will discuss these curatorial changes using literature written by museum curators and cite some examples of museum projects to illustrate how migration has been moved around as a concept in museums, at first foregrounded, then 'assimilated' into other displays, and finally 'moved out' of the museum through engagement projects, with curators designating the task of displaying and performing migration made by migrants themselves.

Since around the 1990s, European city museums began to question how to respond to new patterns of migration (Vertovec 2010) and to their own colonial histories (Ross 2016:74). Across Europe, multiculturalism became a museum policy to counter public xenophobia of ethnic minorities and fear of an ambiguous idea of 'the migrant'. Cathy Ross, then curator at the Museum of London, notes that it was not until the 1990s that migration and diversity moved into institutional thinking in a significant way. From the mid-1990s onwards a 'multicultural policy' was developed with exhibitions and education programmes (Ross 2016:215). City museums across Europe began to stage large-scale exhibitions about their

local history of migration in order to normalize the idea of migration in the city and how it is historically rooted.

In 1993 the Museum of London put together a comprehensive exhibition entitled '*The Peopling of London: fifteen thousand years on settlement from overseas*'. The exhibition chronologically traced the separate histories of people from overseas who had settled in London, starting with the earliest human presence in Britain 500,000 BC, where "population comes and goes over time depending on the severity of the Ice Age", proceeded by 25,000BC when Britain was deserted, to 15,000BC when people began to repopulate southern Britain, and ending in the 1960s (Ross 2016:66). The exhibition had a keen sense of mission. Its main message was that cultural diversity in London dates back before the post-war period, that London has always been cosmopolitan which is one of its greatest strengths, and that it was founded by overseas settlers, as was explained in the exhibition's introductory panel (Ross 2016:66). The exhibition attempted to normalize migration by assimilating multiple stories of human movement into the city's narrative.

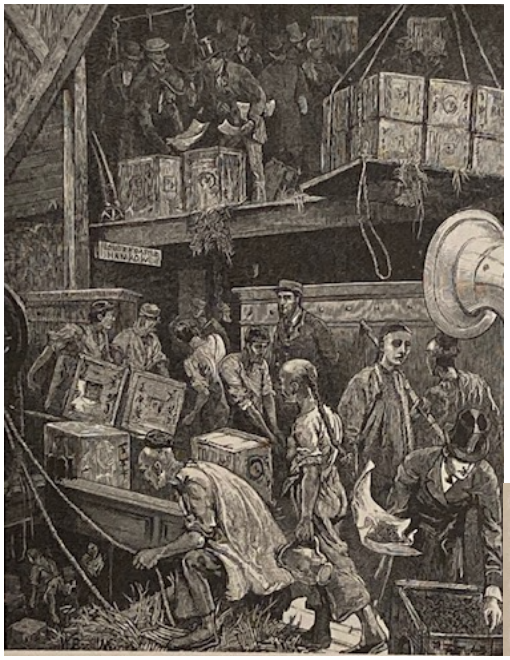
London was not alone. City museums across Western Europe began responding to the challenge of exhibiting migration for the first time by putting on exhibitions with assimilationist titles to promote a singular, broad urban identity that is all-encompassing of a city's many minorities. In 1985 the Amsterdam Museum put together its first large exhibition about the history of immigration in the Netherlands entitled: '(We are) *All Amsterdammers: Immigrants, Descendants and Dutch from 1550'* (translation by de Wildt 2016:212), which according to Annemarie de Wildt, curator of the Amsterdam Museum, implied "that wherever one comes from and whatever one's reason for coming, it is possible for us all to become Amsterdammers" (de Wildt 2016:215). According to de Wildt, '*All Amsterdaamers'*: "compared migrations from the sixteenth until the twentieth century" (de Wildt 2016:215). The exhibition highlighted Amsterdam's long history of migration, celebrating the city as a place of tolerance, promoting an assimilationist model of a singular identity: '*All Amsterdammers'*. Likewise, the following decade in 2010, the Museum of Copenhagen opened a new semi-permanent exhibition called '*Becoming a Copenhagener',* which reflected on "the pervasive mobility characterising the city's history since its earliest beginnings" (Parby 2016:124).

de Wildt notes how the Amsterdam museum along with other Dutch museums, were inspired by British Museums' work around social and ethnic inclusion and participation (2016:216). Museums were learning from one another in their parallel attempts to display migration as means of social integration. There was a double-intent: for the museum to help newcomers

integrate and learn more about their new home town, and for the museum and the city's residents to become more inclusive and tolerant (ibid).

1.6 Classification of ethnicities at the Museum of London

The 'Peopling of London' provides an in-depth view of each community's presence in the city, the circumstances that led to each community's arrival to the UK and their country's connections with Britain such as colonial histories or religious affiliations:



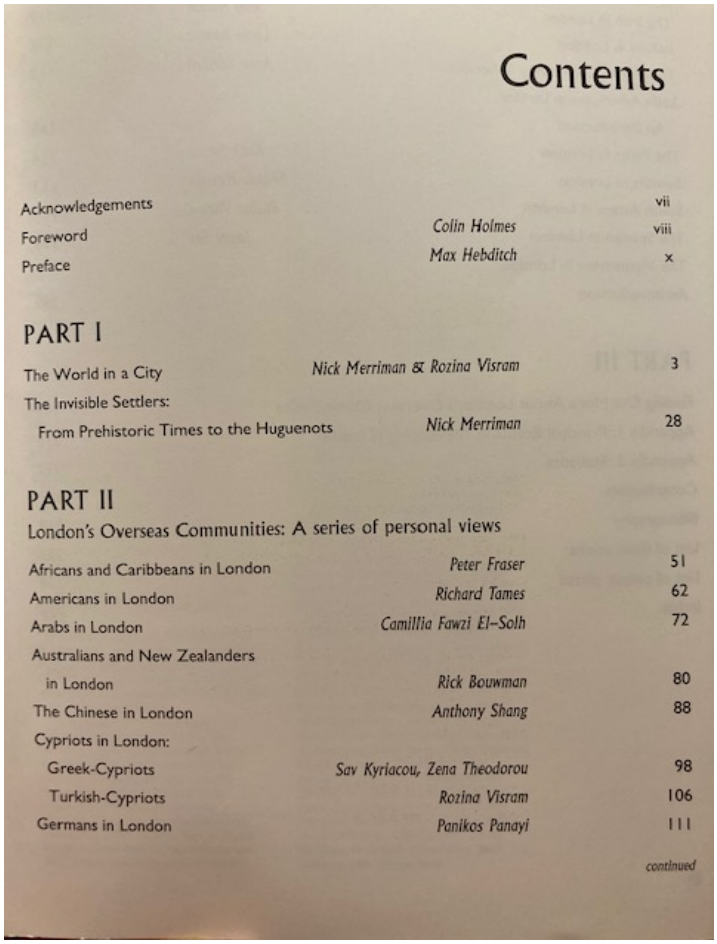
Chinese sailors with a cargo of tea being unloaded from their ship, the *Louden Castle*, recently arrived from Hankow, China, in the East India Docks, 1877



1.6 Chinese sailors with cargo, 1877

1.7 Flemish weaver at work' 15th Century

The messages were of integration and social cohesion, but the exhibition did not shy away from displaying differences. ‘The Peopling of London’ accompanying publication (Merriman 1993) classifies different ethnic groups by allocating each one its own chapter:



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1.8 ‘The Peopling of London’ 1993 - chapter index

This type of curation is typical of the ‘encyclopedic museum’ approach in which expertise is still the domain of the museum as the authoritative institution. Ethnic groups are listed alphabetically, the Irish arrive before the Italians in a catalogue of human diversity that can be leafed through. The museum explicitly visualised difference; each ethnic community was represented as discrete through photographic portraitures and prints that depicted members of the community in their typical domestic, work or neighbourhood settings:



Caribbean-born bus conductor and driver, Crystal Palace, 1962. In the 1950s London Transport organised recruitment drives in the Caribbean

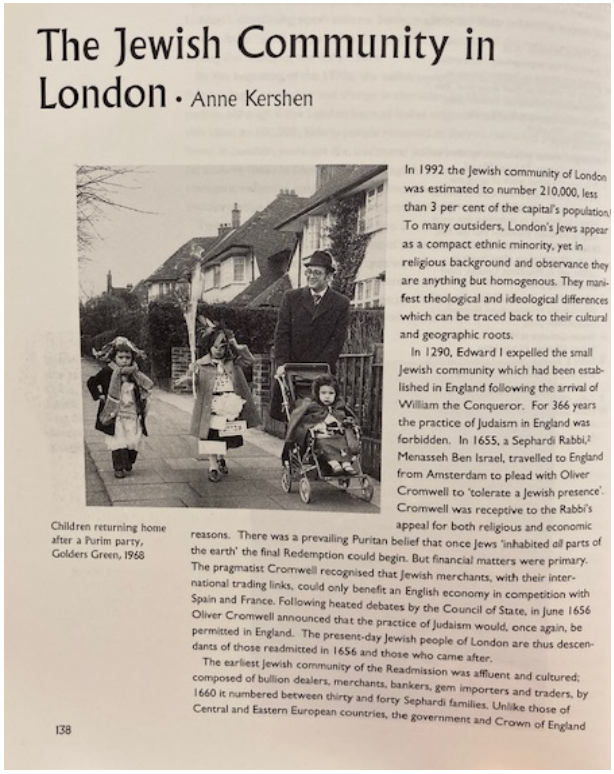
1.9 ‘Caribbean-born bus conductor and driver, Crystal Palace, 1962.



1.10 ‘Lady at the Chinese Community Centre.
Gerrard Street, Soho 1992’.

Above: ‘The Peopling of London’ 1993. Publication of exhibition

The publication of the exhibition reveals the museum's struggle to classify ethnic groups. For instance, the chapter titled 'Cypriots in London' is subdivided into 'Greek-Cypriots' and 'Turkish-Cypriots'. In contrast, Jewish ethnicity 'spills' over 3 chapters, with one chapter specifically about 'The Jewish Community in London' illustrated by a photograph of a Jewish family in Golders Green, but with portraits of Jews featuring in the opening chapters 'Arabs in London' and 'Poles in London'.



The Jewish Community in London · Anne Kershen

Children returning home after a Purim party, Golders Green, 1968

In 1992 the Jewish community of London was estimated to number 210,000, less than 3 per cent of the capital's population. To many outsiders, London's Jews appear as a compact ethnic minority, yet in religious background and observance they are anything but homogenous. They manifest theological and ideological differences which can be traced back to their cultural and geographic roots.

In 1290, Edward I expelled the small Jewish community which had been established in England following the arrival of William the Conqueror. For 366 years the practice of Judaism in England was forbidden. In 1655, a Sephardi Rabbi,[2] Menasseh Ben Israel, travelled to England from Amsterdam to plead with Oliver Cromwell to 'tolerate a Jewish presence'. Cromwell was receptive to the Rabbi's appeal for both religious and economic reasons. There was a prevailing Puritan belief that once Jews 'inhabited all parts of the earth' the final Redemption could begin. But financial matters were primary. The pragmatist Cromwell recognised that Jewish merchants, with their international trading links, could only benefit an English economy in competition with Spain and France. Following heated debates by the Council of State, in June 1656 Oliver Cromwell announced that the practice of Judaism would, once again, be permitted in England. The present-day Jewish people of London are thus descendants of those readmitted in 1656 and those who came after.

The earliest Jewish community of the Readmission was affluent and cultured; composed of bullion dealers, merchants, bankers, gem importers and traders, by 1660 it numbered between thirty and forty Sephardi families. Unlike those of Central and Eastern European countries, the government and Crown of England

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1.11 'The Jewish Community'. From 'The Peopling of London publication 1993.

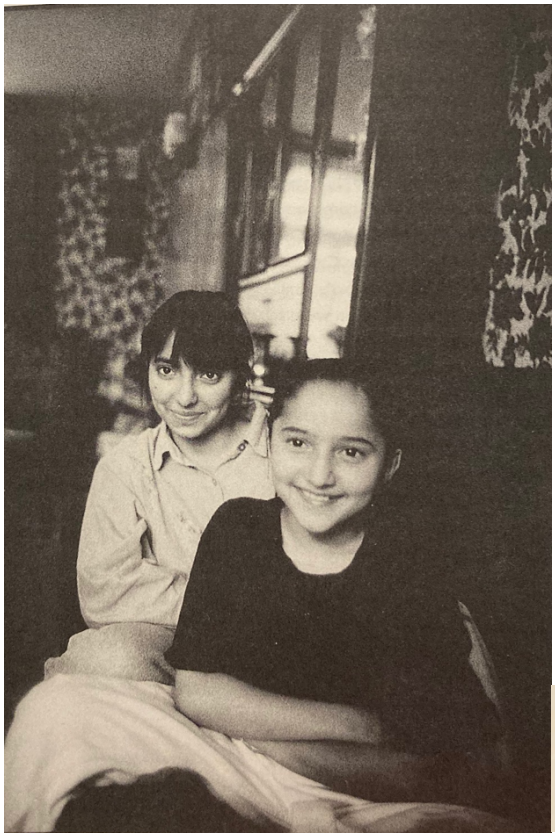




Pages from the 1993 publication ‘The Peopling of London’ showing the museum’s struggle in classifying its residents. Left: 1.12 A Moroccan-Jewish rhubarb and spice seller featured in the chapter ‘Arabs in London’. Right: 1.13 The Fisher family (Jewish) in ‘The Poles in London’.



1.14 Card games in a Greek-Cypriot social centre



Turkish-Cypriot sisters,
Brockley, 1992

1.15 Turish-Cypriot sisters, Brockley, 1992.



1.16 A barber's shop run by a father and son, mid-1980s.

Ethnic hybridity and inter-ethnic divisions were present but not foregrounded since museum curation was still operating under the "old tradition of typological collecting" (Ross 2016:68). A black-and-white photograph entitled: "Turkish-Cypriot Girls, 1992, Brockley" exemplifies this approach. The image shows two smiling girls in a domestic space, the background is out of focus and lacks detail. To me, this image feels deeply intimate, reminiscent of the family album. Yet there is undeniably an implicit assumption in this photograph that ethnicity can be read on the human face.

The exhibition included depictions of ethnicities that were heavily reliant on stereotypes, and even phenotypes to distinguish one group, alongside other portrayals that emphasized a more constructivist model of ethnicity, as a group identity formed through shared human expressions such as languages and cultural practices.

Visitors were presented with an epitome of ethnicities in which one person or situation stood for a whole. Ethnicities were also assigned to job types: the Italian ice-cream seller and street musician, the Cypriot barber, the Jewish tailor, the German baker and the Irish construction worker all features in the exhibition's photographs, prints and texts. Cultural and ethnic differences were visible, openly, unashamedly and oftentimes naively discussed.



Street musician in King William Walk, Greenwich, 1885

1.17 ‘Street musician in King William Walk, Greenwich, 1885. From ‘Italians in London’ in ‘The Peopling of London’ 1993.



1.18 Italian ice-cream seller, Stockwell Street, Greenwich, 1884. From ‘Italians in London’ in ‘The Peopling of London’ 1993.

1.7 Dispersing and Removing Representations

'The Peopling of London' exhibition at the Museum of London was unique and groundbreaking for comprehensively describing London's 'major' minorities, detailing their journeys into the UK and tracing each group's historical roots in the city. Visitor feedback however was not entirely favourable. The exhibition received criticism for underrepresenting London's cultural fluidity and hybridity and the mixing of communities, as visitor feedback pointed out: "The main exhibition is rather too divided by race with separate areas for Italians, Jews, Blacks, etc. This is a confusing and dishonest way of presenting London at any stage of history. You may be working against what you are trying to do'…" (Selwood et al 1996:39 cited Ross 2016:67). Bill Schwarz who co-authored the museum's evaluation of the exhibition reflected that it dissolved into a number of disparate, particularist readings… when the purpose of the exhibition was to reflect on the ways in which a diversity of ethnicities can inhabit the single aspect of London' (Schwarz 1996:8 cited Ross 2016:67). Museum inclusivity was treading the fine line between representing minorities and further excluding them by classifying them as 'other'.

As a result, the Museum of London had a re-think about how to represent diversity. Ross notes that by the next exhibition museum curation moved away from the 'community-by-community' approach (Ross 2016:68). This was part of a wider trend across European museums that became more wary of emphasising differences. de Wildt, curator at the Amsterdam Museum notes: "from 2000 onwards the approach of focusing on discrete groups of migrants was considered somewhat stigmatizing rather than inclusive and not reflecting the superdiversity of the city" (de Wildt 2016:216).

There was a general consensus that museums should not make or defend discrete cultures but rather "help encourage the transcultural or conversational… articulating more fluid and transcultural identity formations than they have previously done" (MacDonald 2013:186) to avoid the danger of 'enclaving', which was seen as the opposite of inclusion and regarded as self-evidently undesirable (Ashworth et al 2007:145).

In 1997 the Museum of London opened '*London Now*' - a semi-permanent gallery which according to Ross moved the focus: "from migration to diversity; from separate community histories to the collective shared experience of a postmodern and messy urban condition. *London Now* reframed difference to be the norm for London. It *ignored the stories of separate communities* in favour of a heavily-designed 'colourful and richly textured mix of

facts, photographs and objects ranging from a 1960s Cortina to a 1990s leaflet about air pollution (Museum of London 1997:10 cited Ross 69, my emphasis).

The shift of focus resulted in a lack of representations of any cultural or ethnic group in particular. Most representations of ethnic minorities from the 1993 ‘Peopling of London’ were removed, presumably put in storage. A few prints, photographs and artefacts were dispersed across the museum, dissolved into other display or incorporated into the permanent Galleries of Modern London in 2006 to ensure the museum no longer represent cultures as enclaves. The museum reflected on this curatorial change of approach:

“ ’The Peopling of London’ marked the institution’s first real engagement with diversity issues. [’The Peopling of London’] concentrated on representing and acknowledging the presence of different ethnic groups in London’s history. It pursues a strategy of seeing each group as separate and celebrating each’s difference from the mainstream, an approach that mirrored London’s multicultural mood at the time… With (The Galleries of Modern London 2006] we want to move our thinking forward even further by presenting diversity as embedded into our heart of London’s mainstream culture and identity. The project is less about representing separate groups and celebrating how they are ‘different’ and ‘other’, as about presenting a new view of London’s mainstream history. The concept of diversity will be present as the centre of London’s culture and identity, rather than an agglomeration of separate ‘different’ cultures on the margins of London’s mainstream identity”.

(Museum of London 2006:5 cited Ross 2016:71).

Cultural minorities are currently no longer depicted as homogenous, representations have been ‘broken up’ in keeping with the idea of contemporary hybrid urban identities, and previous displays from *People of London* are spread across the last gallery. But as de Wildt of the Amsterdam Musuem notes: “specific groups do have an urge to recognize ‘their own story’ in the museum” (de Wildt 2016:224). This applies to London’s supplementary school groups who seek for their cultural identities to be recognized and to be able to trace their histories in the museum.

On entering the Museum of London in 2017, without prior knowledge of these curatorial changes, my first impression was that the human figure was missing from the displays. Ross’ explanation of the museum’s changing strategy helps explain a large display case in the last room entitled ‘Multicultural Londoners’. Here London’s diversity is crammed into a

single case, communities no longer represented through portraiture but food packaging, clothes and printed artefacts.

Like the ‘Peopling of London’ exhibition, these dozen objects represent London’s ‘major’ minorities. What is striking about this display is its lack of direct representations of people. Instead people are represented through ‘things’: their clothes, books and utensils, producing a sense of ghostliness typical of antiquated museums as a result of people substituted by artefacts, the traces of their previous owners and users. Representations have not only dwindled in kind and number, but feel like phantoms, detached objects that speak for communities which were previously fully represented.



1.19 *MULTICULTURAL LONDONDERS* display case. Museum of London 2021

The removal of figurative representation is highly noticeable when compared to the portrait paintings and photography that characterized the ‘Peopling of London’ exhibition, heightening the feeling of latent heritage, the expectation that people are lying under the surface waiting to be re-materialized. Their presences surround the aura of the artefacts. Museum visitors are left to imagine a customer eating soup from the ‘Polystyrene takeaway tub’ from Blooms or the child reading the Polish textbook.

The in-depth descriptions of each ethnic community all but disappeared. Remnants of the exhibition can be found scattered across the very last room in the Galleries of Modern London: a 1960s suitcase with a video about migration tacked behind a 1960s Beatles dress from C&A, a Polish passport in the corner of the room by the Fire Exit.

The daguerreotype photo of an 1850s Moroccan Jewish rhubarb and spice seller previously used in 1993 to describe London’s Arab community is in 2020 part of a series titled ‘*London Labour and London Poor*’ next to the images ‘The Hindoo Tract Seller’, ‘The Mudlark’, and ‘The Wallflower Girl’ in a glass-case labelled 'London Labour and the London Poor’ to describe social class rather than ethnicity:

restrictions of their asylum status.

The earliest wave of immigrants from what is today known as the Arab region are believed to have arrived in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century, perhaps even earlier. As with other immigrant groups, they came from countries which had colonial or other political or economic links with Britain. Yemeni seafarers recruited by the British merchant navy began to settle in areas nearest their source of livelihood, namely London's docklands.[4] By the beginning of the twentieth century, they had established their own distinct community in London's East End, maintaining social links with relatives settled in other British ports such as Cardiff, Liverpool and South Shields. Lodging houses and seamen's cafés provided many Yemenis with a niche which served to reinforce their sense of identity. In the absence of Yemeni women, they were apparently inclined to marry indigenous British women, at least during the earlier settlement phases, but the minority who did inter-marry continued to find themselves as socially marginalised as those who did not. This was partly due to manifestations of racism against them



A rhubarb and spice seller, 1850s. From Mogadore in Morocco, this 73-year-old street seller interviewed by Henry Mayhew called himself an Arab. He was of the Jewish faith, and married a Christian

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1.20 '*Arabs in London'*, Peopling of London publication, 1993.



1.21 '*London Labour and the London Poor*', Galleries of Modern London, Museum of London 2020.

The deliberate disintegration of previous displays of different cultures meant that by the time I began my research, ethnic minority groups were once again under-represented at the museum. There were further measures to ensure groups 'integrate' into the museum; for instance, supplementary schools were asked to divide themselves into a maximum group of 10 when touring the galleries during festivals so as not to overwhelm other visitors. This contrasts with visiting state school classes that are taken round the galleries as a single large group. Supplementary schools that work towards maintaining cohesion as a cultural group, seeking representations of themselves and their pasts, were to disperse when arriving to the museum. They had to find other strategies to gain cultural recognition and have their heritages included in its displays.

1.8 Changing agencies – from oral histories to heritage performances

Many museums began to see themselves as political agents capable of helping immigrants integrate culturally into the city. In their large-scale exhibitions about migration museums actively intervened in social processes, hoping to influence public opinion by showing immigrants in a positive light. For example, the exhibition 'All Amsterdammers' had a "deliberate focus on the contribution of immigrants rather than on problems…in response to emerging voices protesting against multicultural society" (de Wildt 2016:215).

The self-conscious curatorial shift towards interventionist curation models moved beyond gallery representation to actively conducting outreach and running educational programmes for immigrants. From the mid-1990s the Amsterdam Museum offered Dutch language classes to newcomers, an example of how museums took an active role in assisting with integration processes. In the Netherlands and other European countries, museum staff began approaching immigrant and minority communities to develop partnership programmes (de Wildt 2016:215). In the UK, museum supplementary school programmes are one such example.

Following the critique that earlier exhibitions were potentially enclaving minorities, the Museum of London began using an oral-histories approach to foreground individual experiences, stressing commonalities across themes and stories of migration. The Museum of London held a major exhibition entitled '*London Voices'* (2001-2004), which used community experts as freelance interviewers, followed by the oral history-based exhibition *Belonging* (2006) about refugee experiences, presented as a collection of 164 life-story interviews of refugees who had arrived in London since the 1950s (Ross 2016:68-9). The focus became migration as a phenomenon, rather than representations of minority communities.

A further curatorial step was to undo the distinction between migrants/ non-migrants. An example of such a curatorial decision in practice was taken in Berlin by curators Miera and Bluche, who sought to "overcome the dualism of 'us' and 'the others'" (Miera and Bluche 2014:258) and to implement a "multi-perspectivity beyond Group Categories' (Miera and Bluche 2014). In a two-year project conducted for the District Museum of Friedrichshain-

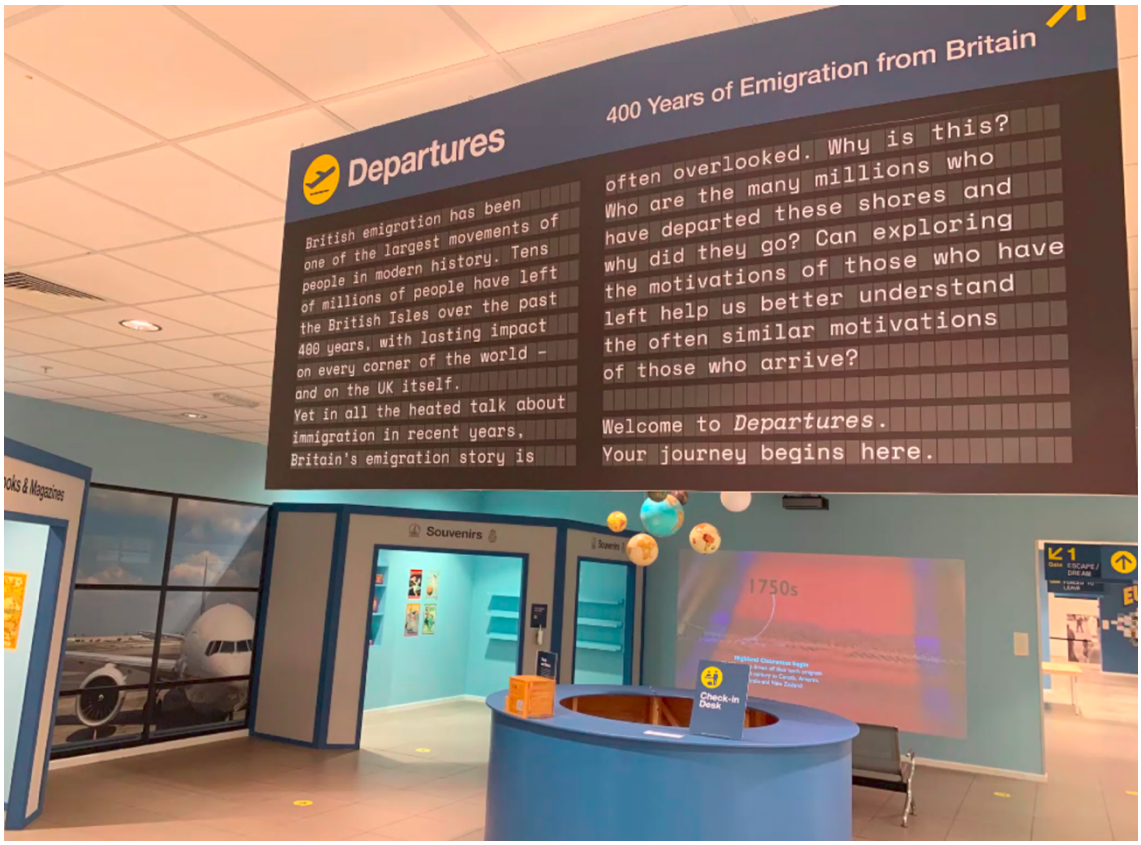
Kreuzberg, Berlin, entitled 'Migration makes History' [6] (2010-2012) they selected migrant and non-migrant interview partners to narrate the city. Their approach was to focus on a city district "as the history of all its inhabitants - as a history of migrants, their descendants, locals and the recently immigrated - as an inclusive and multi-perspective city history". The curators intentionally avoided "the deliberate collection of migrational history" which they describe as having "conceptual disadvantages. The danger of migration-specific collecting lies in the fact that here the history of migration is comprehended as a special history alongside 'general' history" (ibid). The project culminated in a 2012 permanent exhibition of the district museum of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg: "*Local Chats. City - Migration - History: from Hallesches to Frankfurter Tor*"[7] (Miera and Bluche 2014) .

More recent attempts to integrate migrants into the public sphere include the opening of new museums in European cities whose sole focus is migration (Torres 2011). In 2020 the UK's first Migration Museum acquired a permanent residence in a shopping centre in London. The museum sets out to integrate migration into local life from its choice of vicinity- inside Lewisham shopping centre - to its choice of displays. A friend who visited the museum with me in 2021 commented that from the outside the museum's facade looks like a betting shop. A staff member at the front desk agreed, explaining this strategy of looking inconspicuous helps divert footfall into the museum, attracting 'accidental' visitors. This is an extreme example of the museum itself trying to assimilate aesthetically into its environment, like a migrant trying to blend in. Its front-facing display of a selection of footballers not only shows figures of migrants as cultural heroes, but also brings a familiar 'high-street' look to the general public, normalizing migration in every way possible in an attempt to visually 'assimilate' positive representations of migrants into the city, working to "remove the borders between migrants and 'non-migrants' through stories that show migration to be a shared commonality" (Macdonald 2013), and frame migration as a universal human phenomenon.

[6] 'Migration macht Geschichte'
[7] "Ortsgespräche. Stadt - Migration - Geschichte: vom Halleschen zum Frankfurter Tor"



1.22 Facade of Migration Museum, Lewisham Shopping Centre 2021.



1.23 Main gallery styled as an airport lounge. Photo sources from Museum.



1.24 First Gallery. Migration Museum, Lewisham Shopping Centre 2021.

The museum's first gallery is designed after an airport lounge, a familiar space for many, further normalizing the idea of migration, displaying different histories of migration in a single space without foregrounding any cultural heritage in particular.

Torres provides a contrary curatorial approach in her research at the district museum Jugendmuseum Schöneberg, that set up "*Villa Global"* (2002) - an exhibit intended to represent cultural diversity. 'Villa Global' is a small theatrical and social space in the form of a 'house' or 'hostel' consisting of 14 rooms occupied by people of different origins who are residents of the area. The museum chose local people with a "migration background" to participate. Each participant designed their own rooms and freely choose the topics, objects and representational strategies they wanted, making his/her own "installation" (Torres 2011:11).

"*Villa Global"* representation of ethnic groups as separate entities, with rooms entitled: 'Ukraine', 'Iranian/Persian', 'Peruvian', is akin to the 1993 'Peopling of London'. The main curatorial change in '*Villa Global'* is that people with migrant backgrounds were assigned the task of representing their cultural heritage. For Torres this exhibit produced a 'contact zone'

through “the bodily presence of the makers in their own rooms”. Torres’ example describes a change in the mode of museum engagement that moved from participation towards performance, whereby people from migrant backgrounds are invited by museums to ultimately perform as themselves. There are clear disadvantages, as Torres observes, as performing one’s cultural heritage in public can lead to a compartmentalisation of one’s identity, running the risk of overemphasising or even self-exoticising oneself through performance (Torres 2011:12). Torres describes one such example of a woman representing the ‘Turkish room’ who admitted that “the personality she had left in the museum’s room was only one aspect of her; it was her traditional self, through which she lives some aspects of her life. But this image did not wholly describe her being” (Torres 2011:12). Although she was given free rein in how to make the display, the need to emphasise one’s ‘traditional self’ shows how heritages, when performed by migrants, can become exaggerated moments in which they feel they have to over-represent their cultures or else adhere to public expectations of an authentic self, particularly as when these representations are not represented elsewhere.

This is also a reminder that as much as museums have been theorised as forums, arenas and contact zones (Geertz 1997, Cameron 1971), an expectation remains for museums to offer spectacular displays of marvel and curiosity (Bann 2003, Thomas 2016), not just to inform but also to mesmerise and enchant the visitor.

Such heritage projects require a series of embodied practices and interactions, heavily reliant on participants’ voices and actions, in which “exhibits do not end within the doors of the museum, but are also tied to people and to their bodies (Torres 2011:10). These types of engagement projects re-centre the human, reconnecting people in diaspora with their cultural heritages, integrating migrants into the museum in meaningful ways. Yet, in such projects, migrants can be seen as taking the role of ‘living representations’, unintentionally repeating 19th century traditions of putting people on display (Qureshi 2011, Blanchard 2008).

Another example of engagement-turned-performance is the large-scale project ‘Multaka’, meaning ‘Meeting Point’ in Arabic. First launched in Berlin in 2015, ‘‘Multaka: Museum as Meeting Point – Refugees as Guides in Berlin Museums” was a city-wide project in which Syrian and Iraqi refugees were trained to become museum guides, focusing on Berlin’s collection of artefacts from these regions. The project was subsequently piloted in Oxford

between 2017-2019, delivered jointly by the Pitt Rivers Museum and the History of Science Museum. [8]



1.25 Multaka, Berlin. [9]

Whereas previously images of migrant groups were exhibited on gallery walls, in projects such as 'Multaka' museum engagement becomes a highly performative mode of display, requiring human actors, in this case, refugees, to perform heritage. Here "immigrants become performing actors" in which "people" and their "bodies" end up taking a central role in museal representations of migration—either as objects, as actors or…as museum staff and curators (Torres 2011:10).

[8] https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/multaka-oxford-0 accessed 13th December 2021
[9] Image source: https://land-der-ideen.de/projekt/multaka-treffpunkt-museum-gefluechtete-als-guides-in-berliner-museen-273 accessed 13th December 2021

A comparable example is an Amsterdam memory walk in 2013 organized by Surinamese grassroots organisation, which approached curator de Wildt, inviting her to accompany them and indicate the houses along the canal where slave traders formerly lived. Some of her colleagues thought her decision to join the tour was 'a bit too activist', others joked 'but what if they start throwing stones?' The procession involved about 250 people mostly dressed in Surinamese clothing accompanied by a band, which would start drumming louder when a house was indicated as formerly having a resident involved in slavery, attracting a lot of public attention (de Wildt 2015:228).

In such examples, museum participation also involves more public performance on behalf of museum staff, requiring their public presence, direct involvement and actions. Museum officers performing 'public participation' no longer work only in the offices behind the scenes but expose their actions and curatorial decisions. Whereas before museum curators could remain anonymous, they now are in the public spotlight, their actions and presence forming the performative aspect of heritage in migration.

The final example I will cite is when the National Museum on the History of Immigration in Paris was occupied by 500 undocumented workers or *sans-papiers* for four months in 2010-2011, as they tried to obtain residence permits, improve their working conditions and labour rights (Labadi 2018). I suggest the occupation can be read as a whole-museum performance. Museum staff were not directly involved in helping process papers, but the museum provided its largest hall to physically accommodate this occupation (ibid). In this example, the lack of legal representations led to a collapse of distance between museums and migrants. 'Museum engagement', a concept previously used in the UK to refer to how diverse publics engage with museum collections (Gerbich 2018:68), now shifts to the museum and how it engages with social issues and movements.

In the participatory projects cited above, as well as in the Museum of London's supplementary school partnership, there is a lack of clarity about who is curating what- are museums still engaged in curating migration, can immigrants' appropriation of museums for their own social purposes and needs still be seen as museum curation?

The institutional roles of museums are no longer fixed. Once deemed to be authoritative decision-makers, museums now assign the task of self-representation to diasporic communities. Interventionalist modes of curation work both ways, with groups occupying museums or performing their heritages in ways the museum no longer curates or attempts to control.

Torres' example of '*Villa Global*' shows the museum stepping back from its traditional role of typological curation and supposedly giving agency to a selected group of migrants to construct their own representations. For Torres, such embodied displays of migration mean those performing are equipped with more agency over their representations, since: "the distance between represented images and represented persons tends to disappear, which means that the representations can be directly contested anytime" (Torres 2011:11). There is some truth in this, since heritage representations can be changed instantly when performed. But it would be hasty to conclude that migrants today have more agency over museum representations because they have to create them. This does not take into account that these performative modes of engagement are mostly unrecorded and therefore have to be repeated, presenting an opportunity to renew representations, but also a sign that the museum no longer retains or protects these representations. Another overlooked point is that museum performances by migrants can also be contested by museum staff and visitors.

And as Torres describes in her case study, individuals invited by the museum to perform their own cultural heritage can find themselves playing restricted roles when the responsibility of displaying their heritage lies solely in their hands. Cultural representations can end up relying on hyper-visible performances or immigrants playing their 'traditional selves' in order to gain public recognition.
In short, performing representations does not simply equate to empowerment (Phelam 1993:7).

From this perspective, the gradual curatorial handover for groups to produce their own representations can be seen as a mitigation of the museum's ethical responsibility and means of outsourcing risk, since curators can no longer be criticised for 'getting it wrong'. As Torres' example shows, in taking responsibility for representing cultural heritage in diaspora, migrants-turned-performers face the same problems and criticism of heritage compartmentalization, segregation and exoticisation that museums have faced over the past three decades.

Yet, as mentioned above, when participatory museum engagement moves towards performances, museum staff frequently find themselves in the limelight. The delegation to perform heritage is not absolute but only ever partial if the museum is involved.

When considering how collaborative representations are made in such partnerships, the agency of representations can be theorised as 'distributed' (Gell 1998). Gell proposes an

analysis of art that prioritizes action and pays attention to the "practical mediatory role of art objects in the social processes",…placing "all the emphasis on *agency, intention, causation, result,* and *transformation*"(Gell 1998:6). Gell coined the term 'distributed personhood' to refer to how a personhood is distributed beyond body-boundary (Gell 1998:104) through the materials and objects which we imbue with our intentions that have effect in the world, such as the production and circulation of artworks.

His regard of art objects as social agents (Gell 1998:7) is not mystical or supernatural. Rather, it is an understanding that multiple human agents can be present in a single work of art, for instance, the artist, the person depicted in the artwork, the person who commissions it and the curator who displays it (Sansi 2016:428). The artwork contains all their 'agencies', which are sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary (Sansi 2016:428, citing Gell 1998).

The term of 'distributed agency' is my corruption or shorthand that combines Gell's two concepts, that of 'distributed personhood' and 'agency of art', to emphasise a point already made by Gell that an artwork can combine several human agents at once in the social networks through which the artwork travels.

In my research, 'distributed agency' refers to how the agency of people co-producing representations can extend and travel through objects, such as a museum display. Applying the concept of 'distributed agency' to museum representations produced by supplementary schools through the museum partnership programme helps shed light on the complicated ways agency is divided between and moves around the school and museum, and all those involved.

1.9 Children's agency in heritage transmissions

Distributed agency extends to children. With no fixed representations at the museum, children in this research are involved in improvising new representations and cultural forms, filling in the gaps of museum displays.

The role children take in representing their heritages at the museum, be it a school performance or installation, does not bear the same significance of a play or display made by a state school. Here, their community's heritage is at stake. In these unusual

circumstances of producing museum representations in diaspora, the distribution of agency is reconfigured. Production of heritage displays- generally presumed to be about the very deep past – is handed over to children in their early years of memory formation. Children taught their cultural heritage not only enter a mnemonic community in the making but become part of the communal effort to preserve their cultural heritage post-migration.

Whereas one might assume that children are at the receiving end of heritage transmissions, this research shows how they are in fact key actors whose very presence becomes the purpose of entire institutional partnerships. The concept of distributed agency helps conceptualize how cultural heritage is mediated at different points by different actors: supplementary school teachers, museum officers, parents and children. Rothberg's notion of 'multidirectional memory' comes back into play here to consider how children involved in transmissions and displays of heritage move across generations, up as well as down, in unforeseen ways. In their newly assigned role, children become 'powerful agents of memory' (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2011:375) entrusted with the future of their community's heritage in diaspora.

Heritage debates around the role of children in safeguarding indigenous intangible heritage vary vastly from debates about children's heritage in diaspora. For instance, children's performances of *Kastom*-related practices in Vanuatu such as sand-drawing are deemed unquestionably important, proclaimed by UNESCO as a 'masterpiece of oral and intangible heritage' (Alivizatu 2011:91). In contrast, for children whose heritages originate outside the UK, there is no protection or presumed value in their family's cultural heritage, be it the Albanian language or Brazilian square dancing. Instead, the role of children in preserving their heritage is questioned. The reason that heritages in migration are undervalued is not down to the 'authenticity' of intangible heritage; Vanuatu performances have been altered to accommodate a tourist market (Alivizatu 2011:91) in much the same way Albanian museum performances accommodate a British public. I suggest that the indeterminacy of values of these heritages is caused by migration itself, a process that de-contextualizes heritages, disconnecting values from practices, as much as memories from place. In the UK, migration tends to flatten out non-native heritages into a nondescript mass with a disregard for whether a language or intangible practice is dying out or having a global revival.

Officially, the UN's 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* Article 29 "recognizes the right of children to … inculcates respect for their cultural identity, language and values, as well as those of their parents…[and] country of origin" (Logan 2013:31), but this does not translate to local UK contexts in which children's bilingualism and biculturalism is devalued

and undermined (Blackledge 2004), and their cultural heritages are often regarded as a social threat, obstructing assimilation and potentially harbouring dissent. Historically, supplementary schools have always been treated with suspicion (Andrews 2013) with fears of radicalising children, who have largely been regarded as passive or coerced into being enculturated.

My own fieldwork observations point in the opposite direction, suggesting that there is a profound underestimation of children's agency in the participation of preserving their heritage. Supplementary schools make up a significant part of the diasporic population of children and young people interested in their cultural roots. Heritages in diaspora are largely determined by children's willingness or refusal to participate in supplementary school life and in programs such as the Museum of London partnership. During fieldwork, I have seen a five-year-old quit a Brazilian supplementary school after deciding it is not for her, a teenager suffering from stage-fright who was persuaded last minute by her friend to participate in an Iranian supplementary school's first-ever museum performance, and another teenager who decided to switch from an Afghan to an Iranian supplementary school because he was unimpressed with the one he previously attended. These examples acknowledge children as cultural producers (Darian-Smith and Pascoe 2013:9) that play a decisive role in (dis)continuing heritages in diaspora, determining which supplementary schools survive.

This research foregrounds children's agencies in reconstructing their cultural heritages but does not regard children as autonomous or independent cultural agents. Using the concept of 'distributed agency', it is possible to see them as crucial 'nodes' in diasporic networks and the moving and emplacing of memories and cultural knowledge.

As well as their direct involvement in heritage transmission and preservation, for instance, in generating new museum displays, their very presence can govern heritage in migration. The Museum of London's supplementary school programme is a collaboration with migrant groups centred around children brought up in diaspora. The actions of museum staff, teachers and parents are all affected by the belief in the potential of children. The very fact that they are not 'fully formed' and need to be socialized makes children such powerful social agents.

Gell offers two other terms: passive agency (1998:107) and involuntary agency (1998:106). Although these terms are seemingly paradoxical, as Gell acknowledges, they describe situations in which a person has agency over another without intending to. Parenting, for instance, can open up the past in unexpected ways, such as reading or singing to a child. In

this example, children have 'passive' agency: they do not directly carry out any action, but their presence prompts action from adults. The agency is partly in the song itself, and is also in the relationship between parent and child that allows heritage to suddenly resurface.

An example of passive or involuntary agency can be described in an anecdote provided to me by a first-time father. When his wife and he discovered she was pregnant, they began to plan and research how to bring their child bilingually. His remark encapsulates how the anticipation of a child has agency and instigates action. Involuntary and passive agency are terms that equally apply at different times to children, their parents, the museum, its visitors, and according to Gell, the museum displays.

The idea that 'people do not remember in isolation, but only with the help from the memories of others' (Ricoeur 2011:476) is not new to anthropology. What is less explored is how children, whose memories are often not taken seriously because they are not considered 'fully formed' assist in their parents' recollections and motivate parents to remember.

In this study, children's cultural identities that are not 'fully' formed intersect with heritages whose place in diaspora is not yet established. These spaces of uncertainty and change are also places of creativity and love. On visiting one of the Tamil supplementary schools that took part in the museum programme, a parent discussing my research with me handed me a copy of the Thirukkural, citing a quote:

' *The pipe is sweet, the lute is sweet*,' say those who have not heard the prattle of their own children.'

The parent struggled hard to recall it, and at the time mistook the musical instruments, a poetic example of how the presence of children inspires cultural recollections that are not always easy to retrieve. This quote from the Thirukkural, an ancient Tamil text written in verse, describes the affective voices of children as the joy of life and beauty which resonates within a community. Their 'prattle' - not yet formed into speech, is favoured over the sophisticated sounds of the trained musician and is affective and meaningful in itself, somewhat akin to Gell's insistence that agency presides over semiotic communication.

Conclusion

This thesis sits at the intersection of three liminal 'sites' of changing cultural identities – migration, childhood and the museum. The research is concerned with what happens when supplementary schools, which are intergenerational sites of transnational memory, form partnerships with a public museum that does not (yet) represent their cultural identities and heritage. The case study of a supplementary school partnership offers tangible examples of how cultural memories are materialised and forgotten post-migration through museum representations.

This chapter introduces the theme of this research - latent heritage in diaspora - and begins to consider the heritage work carried out by communities in migration who reside in the awkward spaces between hypervisibility and invisibility, memory suppressions and recoveries.

This chapter has shown how European city museums have changed their curatorial approaches in displaying migration. Museums initially sought to integrate migrants into the city through museum representations but became wary of articulating ethnic differences. I have shown how recent attempts to erase differences had the effect of removing earlier representations of migrant communities and their histories from museum displays.

An overview of the changes in museum curation helps to contextualise current approaches and taboos concerning the displays of diasporic heritages and the topic of migration. In the UK a change in public policy influenced the representation of immigrants and their histories in public places. Museums responded with different curatorial attempts to represent immigrants and ethnic minorities. At first, museums set out to acknowledge the different histories and cultures of immigrant communities and incorporate these into the nation's archives and memory through large-scale exhibitions with representations that document their different routes into the city. These openly visualised cultural diversity in figurative displays. Curation that portrayed groups as separate entities was later seen as dangerous, amidst growing fears of cultural segregation and worries of stereotyping groups. Displays of cultural fluidity were favoured, but consequently, there is no longer a sense that the Museum of London recognises the histories and cultures of London's minorities. The figurative representations became embodied by immigrants themselves through museum engagement models that became more heavily performative and ephemeral.

The topic of migration has been moved to smaller specialist migration museums or got relegated to immigrant groups to self-represent. I have argued that as museum engagement shifted towards modes of performance such as oral history recordings, embodied representations, guided tours and interventions, curatorial roles became less clearly defined, with immigrants invited to display and perform their heritages in the museum, and museum officers finding themselves in the public realm as co-performers. Here the agency of representations begins to shift and becomes distributed amongst the many 'performers' of heritage. In the Museum of London's supplementary schools programme agency is distributed to children whose cultural identities and roles are emergent. It is at this point that my research begins.

Chapter 2 : Experimenting with Methods

Chapter Summary

This thesis is a visual ethnography informed by my professional practice as an artist/researcher and personal experiences of migration. This chapter describes my choice of research methods, and how these were adapted in light of changes in museum curation. I reflect on my own positionality, situated knowledge, ethical considerations and logistical factors that have shaped the way research was carried out.

Introduction

This research emerged out of my professional practice as an artist working with museums and communities, and my personal experiences of being a 0.5 migrant, i.e. arriving in the UK as a child.

The research methods I used to conduct fieldwork are informed by my experience of mediating between marginalised groups and major public institutions such as museums, cultural centres and heritage sites. I first conducted ethnographic research in the capacity of an artist working on socially-engaged museum projects, community and youth work. Originally trained in illustration and film, I have been making narrative environments and museum interpretations since 2009, with a portfolio of clients that include national and regional museums: the British Museum, the London Transport Museum, Museums Sheffield, the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood, Museums and Heritage Warwickshire, Tunbridge Wells Museum and Gallery, the Bronte Parsonage Museum, Keats House, the London Metropolitan Archives as well as libraries, council collections and cultural centres. I developed my creative practice as an artist and researcher in the UK at a time when all these institutions were seeking ways to engage with contemporary publics and make their collections relevant to diverse audiences. I was often invited by museums to develop socially-engaged art projects and participatory exhibitions with marginalized communities, migrant and refugee groups, children in care and young people in sheltered accommodation. Working in the intersection between museums and marginalised groups, my role was to make connections between public collections and underrepresented minorities and use

participatory forms of image-making to co-produce interpretations and displays with minorities whose heritages were not yet included in museum collections.

The ‘tool-kit’ I used in this research was developed through these numerous museum commissions which allowed me to learn from different aesthetic traditions, try out different materials and methods to make displays through collaborative processes and to experiment with different means of visualizing stories in public spaces. For example, working on the Wycinanki exhibition at the museum of Tunbridge Wells, I learned the art of Polish papercuts and used this method to tell the life history of a local Polish family, transferring images from the family’s personal archives, postcards and photo albums onto large papercuts. Working on a collaborative public art project commissioned by London Transport Museum, I explored calligraphic and zoomorphic imagery with young people from the Ismaili community centre to make bus shelter posters near their mosque. Leading collaborative museum interpretations and participatory art projects, I would use adaptable, collaborative and ludic research methods in response to the museum brief, the particular community setting and the site where the work would be situated.





2.1 and 2.2 Bus Shelter Poster made with young people from the Ismaili Community Centre. Commissioned by London Transport Museum. 2011.



2.3 '*Growing up in England'*- a family album transferred onto paper-cut. Wycinanki, the Art of Polish Papercuts. Commissioned by Tumbridge Wells Museum and Gallery. 2015.

It was through such a collaborative commission that I first came across the supplementary school programme at the British Museum in 2013. I was one of several artists, storytellers and theatre companies invited by the British Museum to run a participatory event for supplementary schools based on its collection during a weekend festival called 'Sharing Stories'. At the time, the British Museum's supplementary school programme was fully funded and operational. A couple of years later I was invited to a celebration event in what turned out to be a formal way to mark the end of the programme. I had planned to base my PhD research at the British Museum but found the programme had effectively been discontinued. Yet one of its community officers had pitched the idea of a supplementary school partnership to the Museum of London and successfully received full funding from the

Arts Council. Along with the supplementary schools, I relocated my research to this museum.

Participatory printmaking mural inspired by the Islamic Art Collection. Commissioned by the British Museum as part of its Supplementary School Programme. 2013.







2.4, 2.5 and 2.6: Printmaking Mural made with Supplementary Schools at the Great Hall, British Museum, 2013.

This research combines traditional and experimental ethnographic research methods, drawing on my anthropological training, my visual arts practice and my professional experience in producing collaborative museum displays with communities. Working across different sites, I adapted my research methods in response to changing institutional settings and social contexts. These have included participant-observation at the Museum of London and in two supplementary schools for over a year, participant observation in two other supplementary schools conducted over several months, site visits to two additional supplementary schools, nine semi-structured interviews with parents, supplementary school practitioners and museum staff, visits to archive collections and libraries, and participatory

visual research methods that I developed through my socially-engaged arts practice before retraining in social anthropology, such as making museum displays with communities and running narrative-based workshop for children.

2.1 Multi-sited and Para-ethnography

This research was conducted as a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995) in order to gain a better understanding of each supplementary school within the context of its own locality. Conducting multi-sited research enabled me to familiarise myself with the different neighbourhoods where supplementary schools are based and consider how each school setting and surrounding neighborhoods influence the way cultural heritage is transmitted. Spending time in each school, observing lessons and participating in cultural activities gave me an insight into the heritage work taking place within each community. Participating in the quotidian lives of supplementary schools as well as special events, festivities, celebrations and commemorations, I was able to see first-hand a community's private cultural expressions outside the museum and learn how their museum representations are connected to their ongoing heritage programmes. Participating in school plans and preparations of new displays, I observed representations under construction, and the displays and performances that were not made for the museum but kept 'back-stage' or taken to other locations, seeing how cultural representations travel beyond the museum.

In parallel, I conducted fieldwork at the Museum of London organized through a formal placement in the supplementary school programme. Here I assisted the community officer with behind-the-scenes tasks and front-of-house events: sorting out the resource cupboards, logging in evaluation forms, producing fanzines and museum trails for visiting schools, stewarding in festivals and ushering supplementary school groups waiting to perform. Taking part in the day-to-day running of the programme enabled me to gain insight into the practical challenges of this collaborative programme from the museum's perspective: how to sustain long-term relationships, host large-scale events with limited resources, implement changes based on suggestions from the Advisory board and develop the programme despite funding cuts.

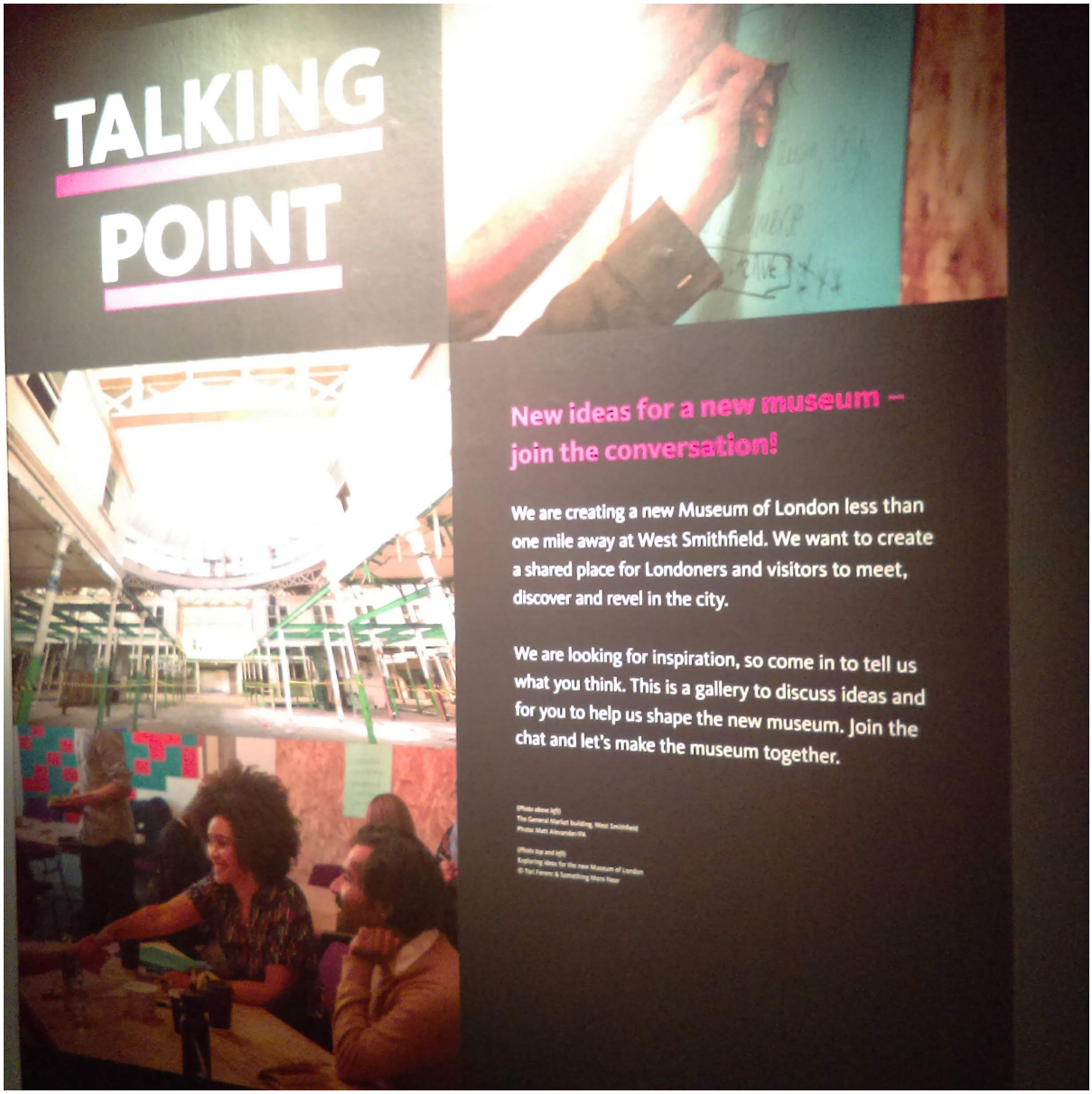
My research intersected with *Talking Points* - the first public engagement project led by the *New Museum* team which tested out different co-curation approaches in preparation for the redesign of the new museum at West Smithfield. This was a highly ambitious research

project combining quantitative and qualitative methods: recording museum visitors' demographics, their interaction with display objects and responses to different labels. Here I found the museum in its deeply reflexive state, reassessing its curatorial practices.

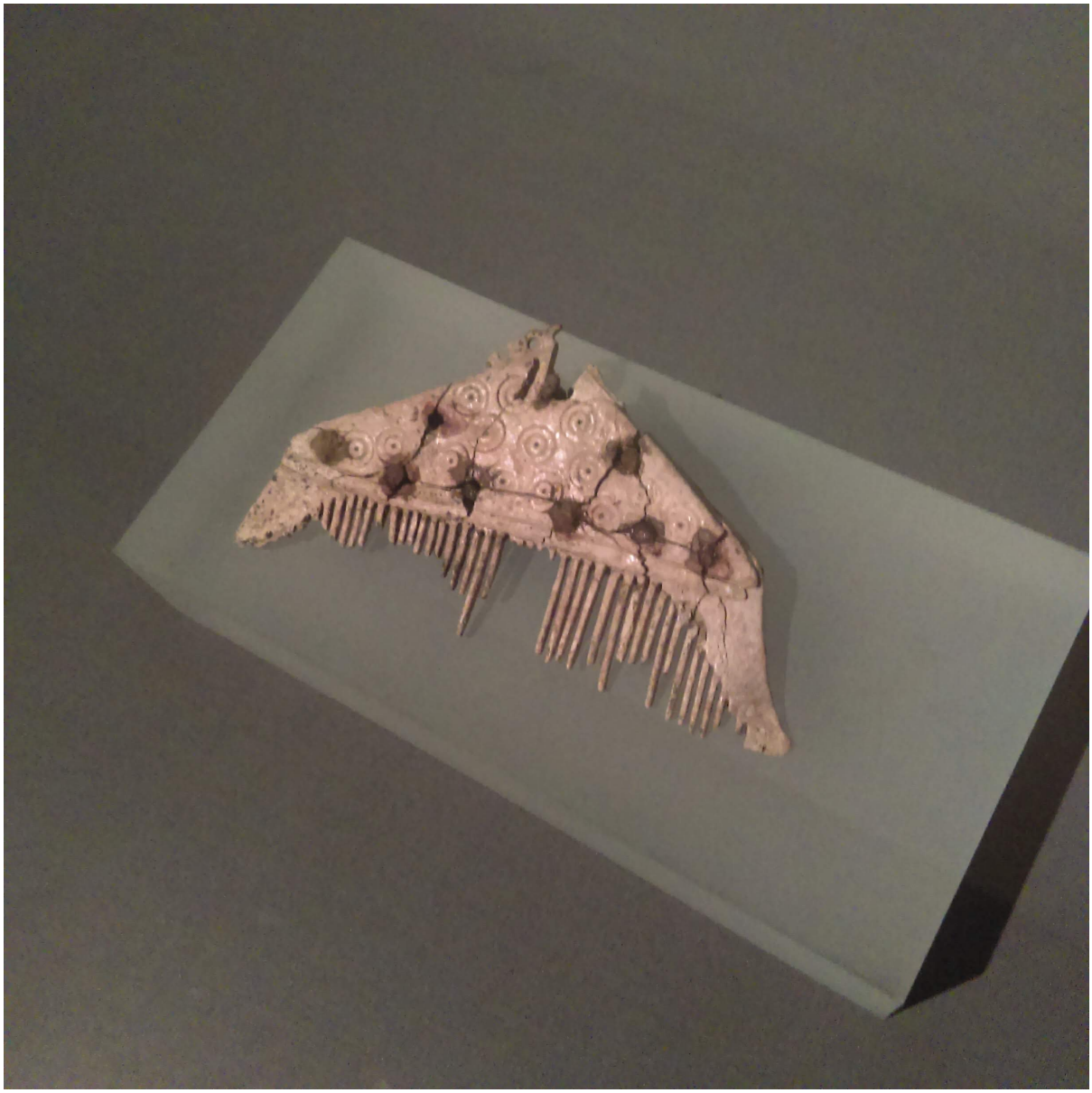
Curators tried out different means of engaging the public with its collection. They tested out four different types of labels which they classified as 'Traditional', 'Sensory', 'Intellect', 'Experience', displaying the same objects but changing their labels every two weeks to measure visitors' response. Traditional labels told basic facts about the object. The 'sensory' labels were more visual and included a photograph of the object in its original social setting. The 'experience' label used the human story as a 'way in'. Towards the end curators became more daring and replaced informational labels with poetic texts written from the objects' point of view. These were highly criticized by visitors who felt the museum failed to supply straightforward data about the objects. In the final weeks, curators laid out all the labels and invited visitors to compare them.



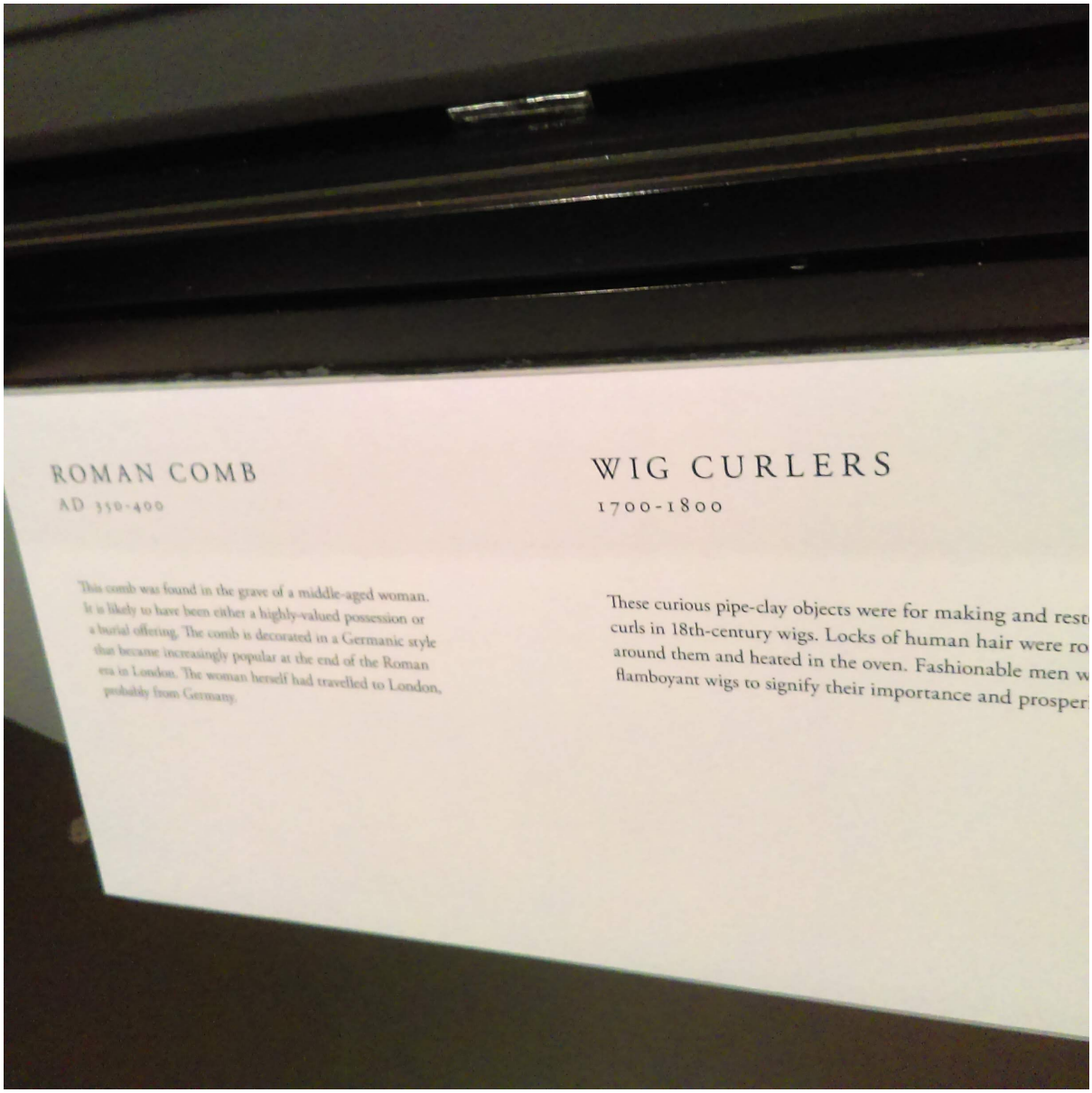
2.7 Peel-able magnetic museum labels. Talking Points. 2020



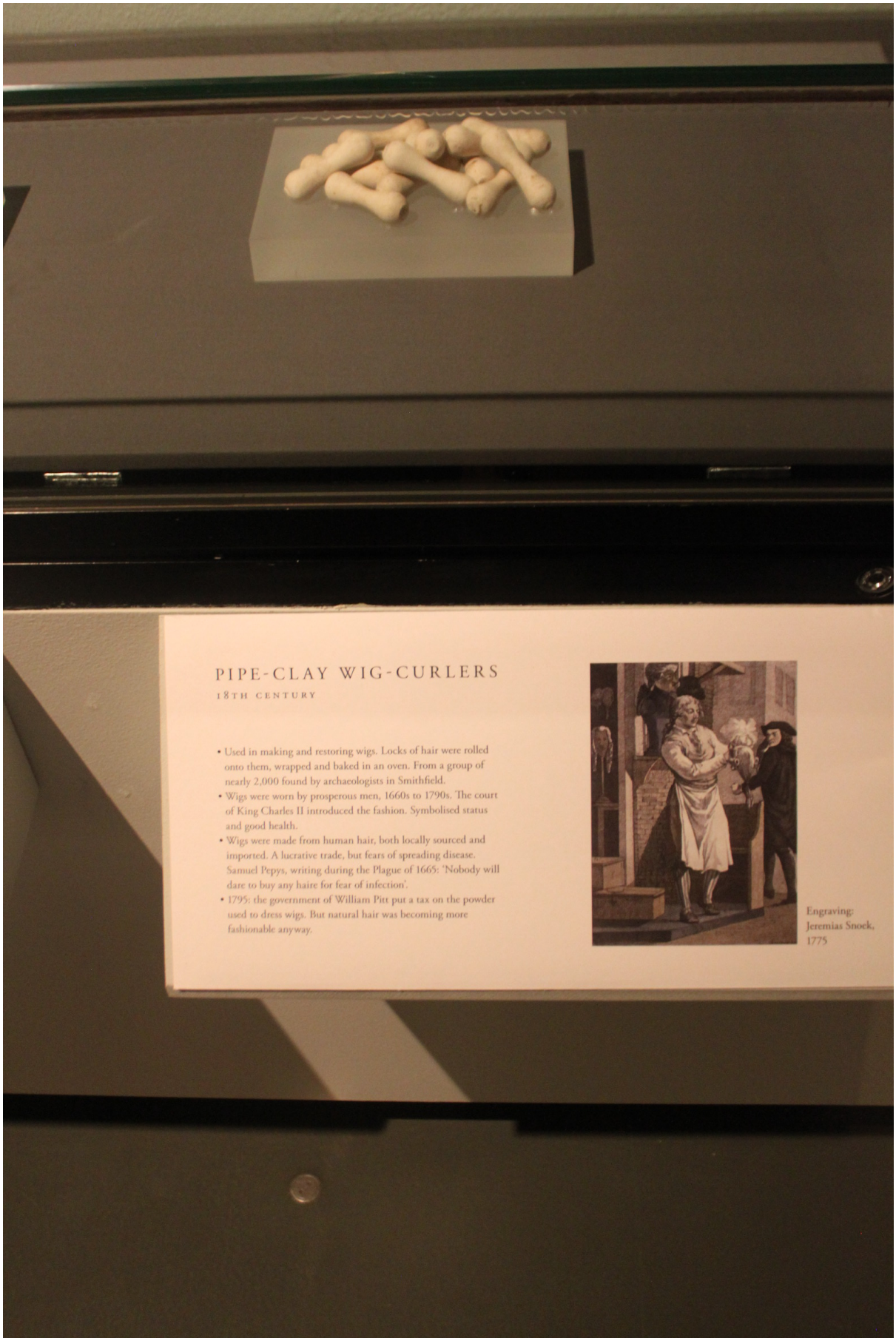
2.8 Talking Points interpretation board. Talking Points. Museum of London Wall. 2020



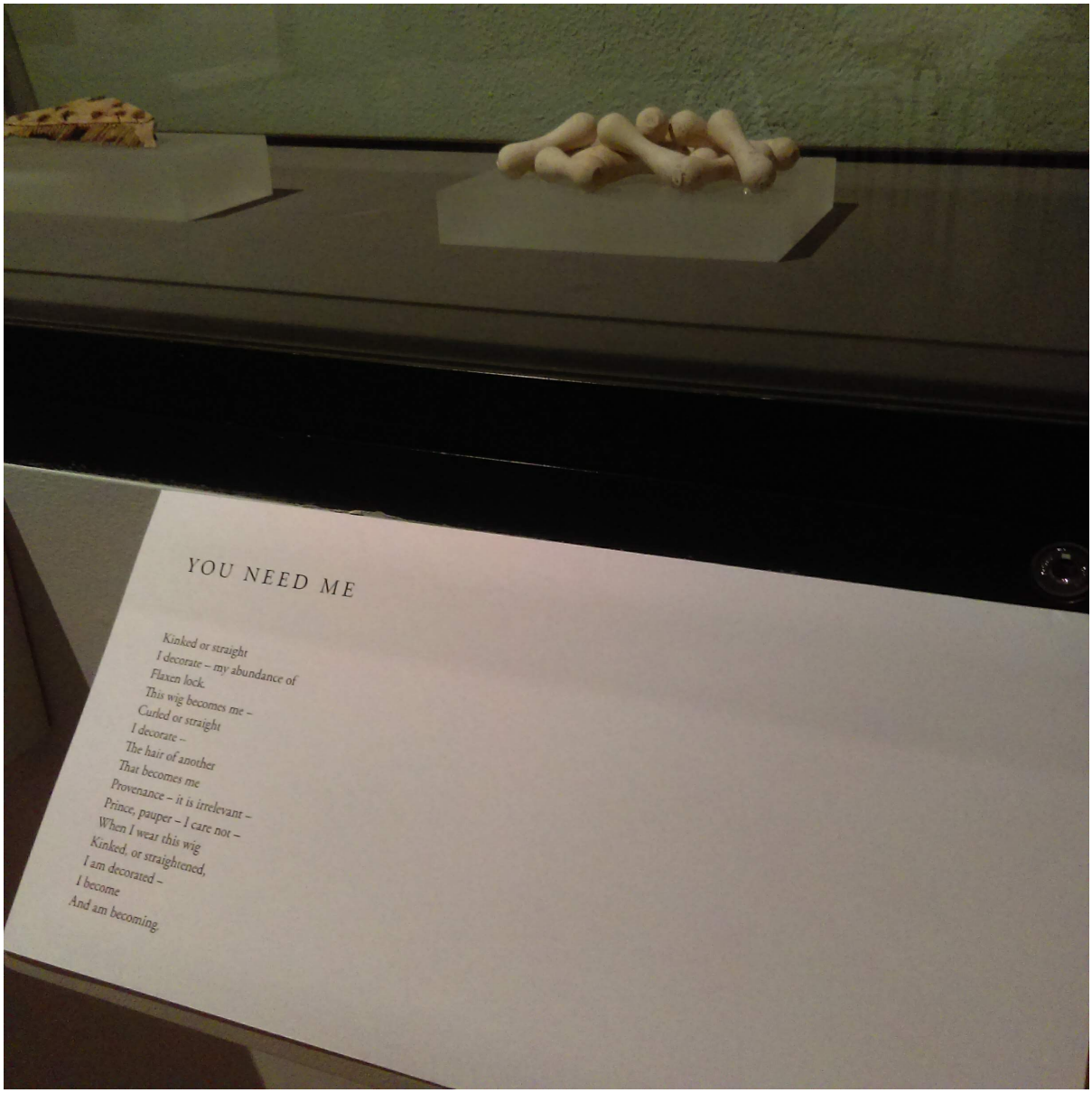
2.9 Roman Comb. Display object in Talking Point.



2.10 ‘Traditional’ labels: Roman Comb and Wig Curler. Talking Point.



2.11 ‘Sensory’ label.

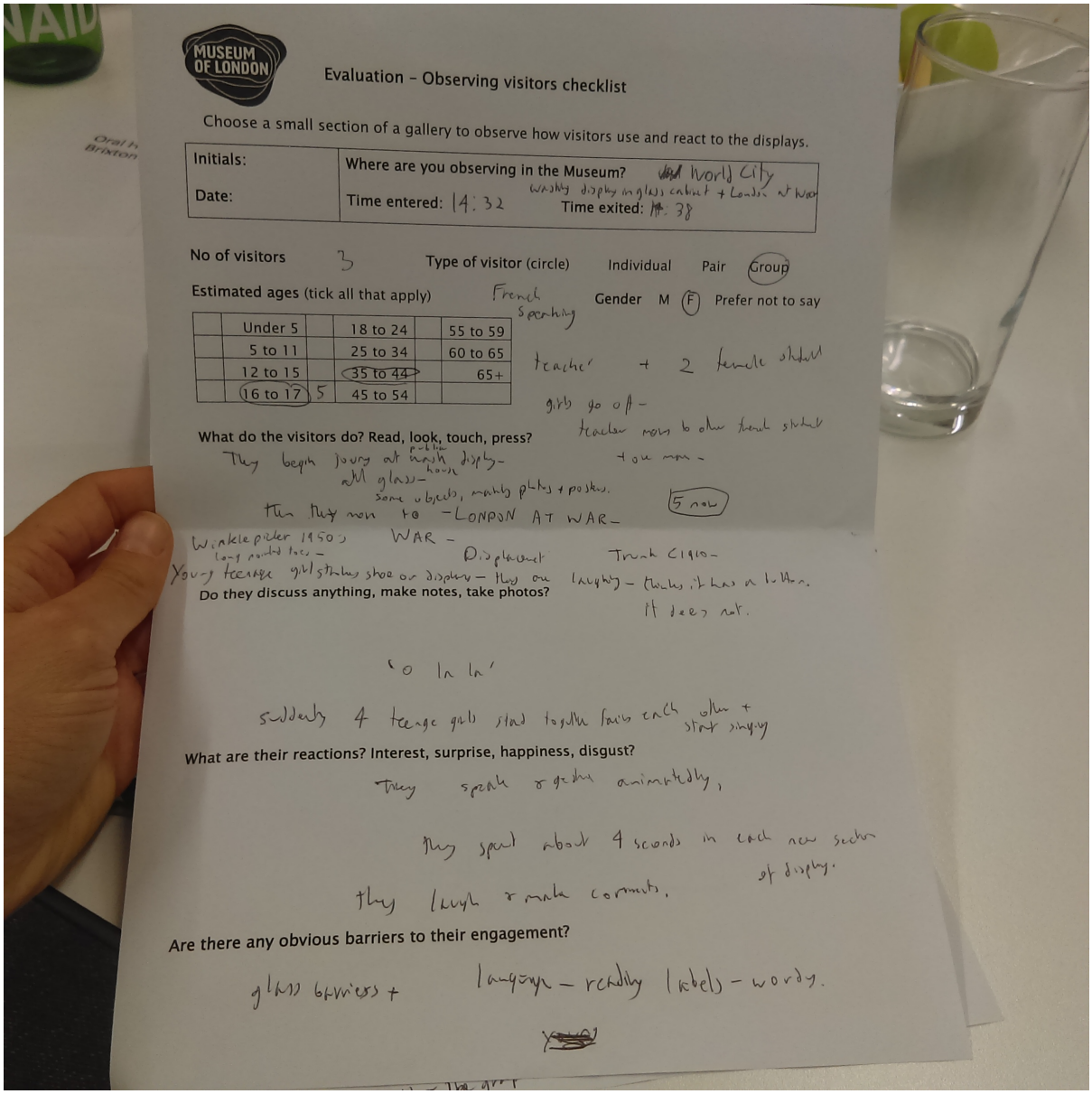


2.12 ‘‘Experiential’ label.

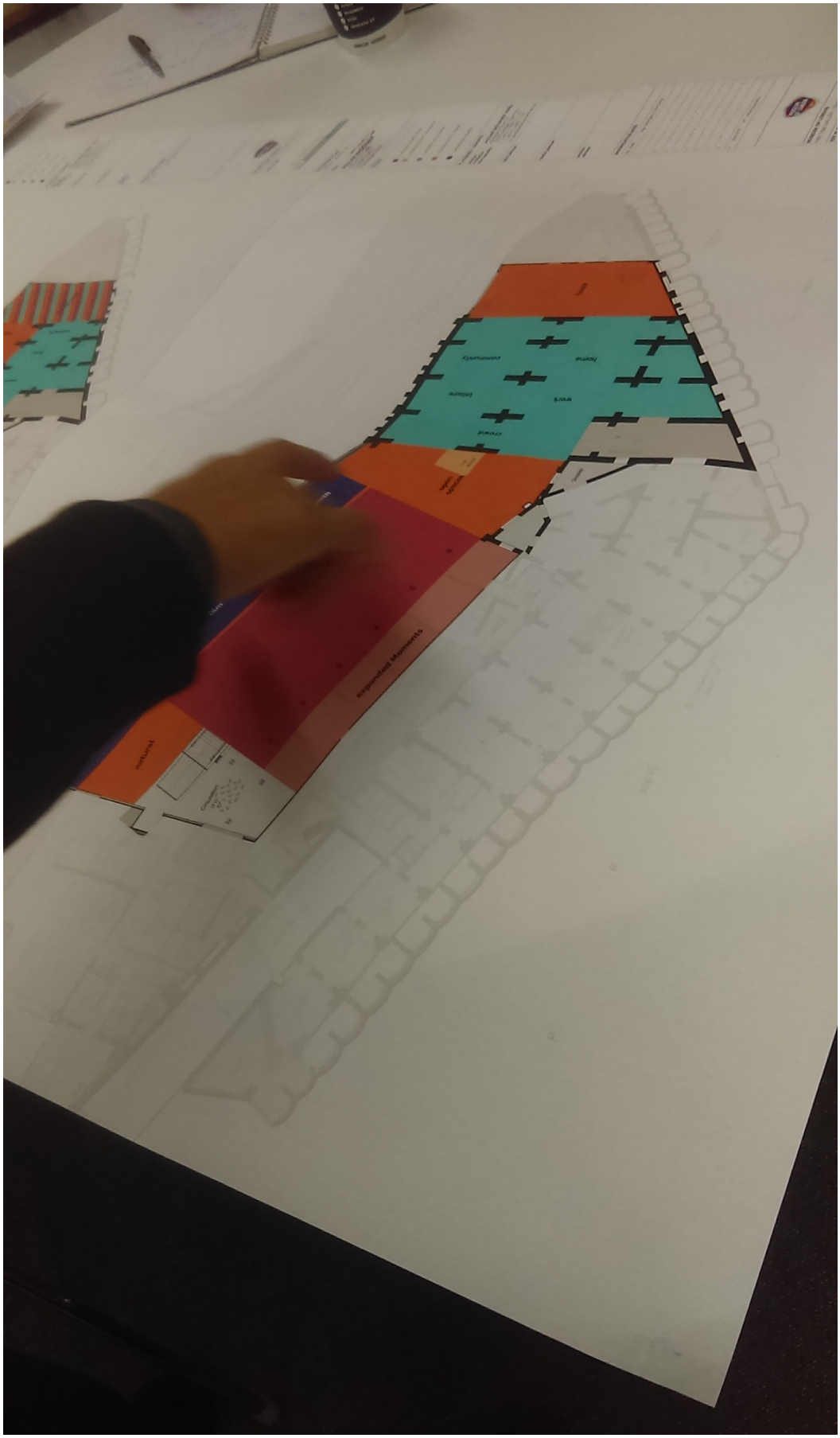
I joined the team of volunteers who recorded and logged daily observations of visitors in the exhibition space, working closely with the head of engagement and audience development. My research interests overlapped but also diverged from this engagement project, an example of ‘para-ethnography’- a form of collaborative research in which the anthropologist carries out their independent investigation alongside and in parallel to their participants, who are researchers in their own right, with each research partner supporting and building on each other’s work (Holmes and Marcus 2008).

Whilst *Talking Points* moves beyond the thematic focus of this thesis, the project extended my understanding of the museum as an institution at a critical moment when it was preparing to relocate and change its curation. By volunteering on *Talking Points* I was able

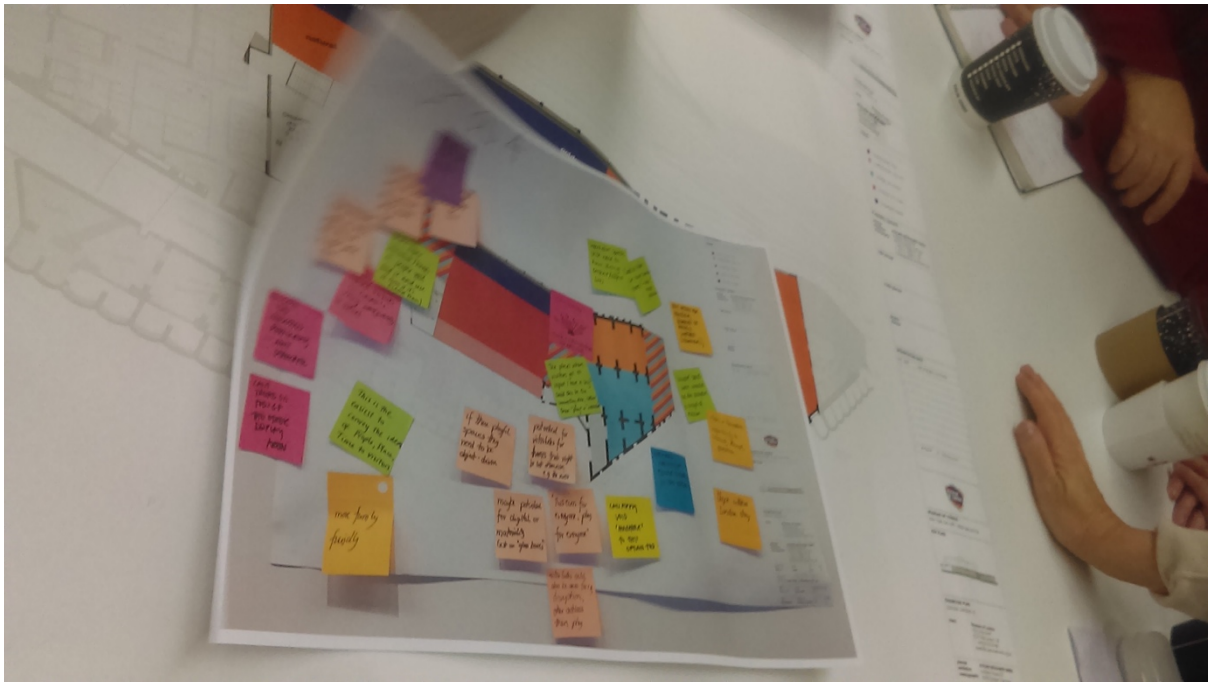
to be part of conversations held backstage and curatorial experiments conducted with the public.



2.13 ‘Observing Visitors’ worksheet. Ethnography collected by me for ‘Talking Points’.



2.14 New Museum draft. Image shared with volunteers during a group meeting.



2.15 New Museum Plan

2.2 Making Collaborative Museum Displays

Making collaborative museum displays was a research method I was familiar with prior to fieldwork. I envisioned making several museum displays during my research, and planned to take the position of a visual apprentice in two or three supplementary schools, using participant-observation to gradually acquire ‘skilled vision’, a term Grasseni uses to describe an 'apprenticeship of the eye’, learning to see from my research participants’ perspectives in order to gain a better understanding of their aesthetic practices, which is for me the purpose of visual anthropology (Grasseni 2004:23). Research in supplementary schools enabled me to see how ‘skilled vision’ is taught and acquired by children and learn about different ways of seeing and inhabiting the same city in an ‘education of attention that starts from childhood’ (Grasseni 2004:22). However, during my fieldwork, only one museum display was produced by a supplementary school, and this was largely initiated by me.

I expected to gradually acquire skilled vision by conducting participant-observation in supplementary schools and helping with smaller displays, envisioning we will make new museum displays at a later stage. Instead, events happened in the reverse order, researching with a Brazilian Saturday School that was about to embark on its first museum

display, entering a museum collaboration at the very start of my fieldwork, and immersing myself in the quotidian life of supplementary schools post-museum partnership.

The museum installation I helped to make was entitled 'The Whispering Forest', using one of the teacher's children's stories as a starting point. It was made by parents, teachers and children in a Brazilian Saturday school, based on the teachers' visions of a forest of Portuguese-speaking storytelling trees. The museum lent us child-friendly microphones with in-built recorders. I worked with the school coordinator to record Brazilian folk tales narrated by children. We extended the project to parents, inviting them to record stories they would want to pass on to their children. One mother and her 5-year-old girl came in as a pair to record a two-part rhyming poem together. Making a museum display was a collaborative research method through which I got to know the school community and Brazilian culture in London and learn its traditional and newly written folk tales. Working closely with the teachers, the process of making a display was a means to discover what different research participants seek from the museum collaboration and how they envision their cultural heritage represented. This display will be described in more detail in chapter 5.

2.3 Drawing as Research Method

My fieldwork coincided with a time the Museum of London's supplementary school programme was moving away from interventionist collaborative art projects, no longer assigning artists to work with communities. Unlike previous years, artists were no longer appointed to facilitate projects and mediate between the Museum of London and supplementary schools. A new community officer that took over the programme at the start of my research saw this model of participatory curation as outdated, and felt the museum should not impose artists or indeed projects on communities.

Changes in curatorial approach meant that less 'co-curated' museum displays were made. Apart from '*the Whispering Forest'*, other supplementary schools museum representations were almost entirely performed by children as school plays, dances, songs and poetry recitals.

Responding to this curatorial change during my fieldwork, I revised my visual research methods accordingly. At first I paid less attention to children's performances because they were short, and I was searching for more concrete and long-lasting examples of heritage displays at the museum. School performances became central to my research once I

realized they have become the only form of heritage representation of these transnational migrant groups at the museum. Alongside taking notes, drawing was my means of responding to the changeable, improvised and transient nature of children's performances.

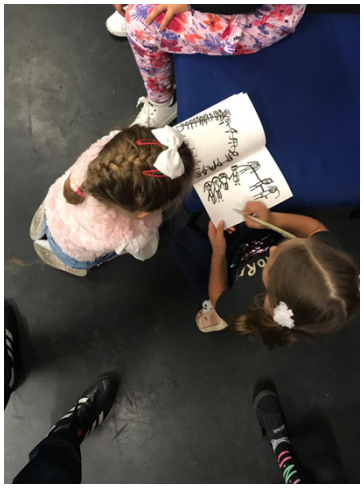
Participant-observation was my main research method throughout fieldwork, but was more suited to research with adults. When adults took part in school performances I willingly joined in, learning the steps of lines, but when plays were performed solely by children I became a spectator and could not participate. As I have discussed elsewhere, drawing performances becomes a way to inhabit the space of the actor through imitation (Orbach 2019). Utilizing my training in illustration, drawing children's plays was my way to embody their performance, closing the distance between actor and spectator. Drawing children's performances was a way for me to bridge this gap between observation and participation, engaging in live-action without physically stepping on stage, with my pen tracing their movements and interactions (Ingold 2011:3). In moments when I handed my sketchbook to children in the museum auditorium and their schools, drawing became a two-way exchange that involved learning through mimicry, with me tracing performances and children copying my actions:



2.16 My drawing of Albanian dancing.



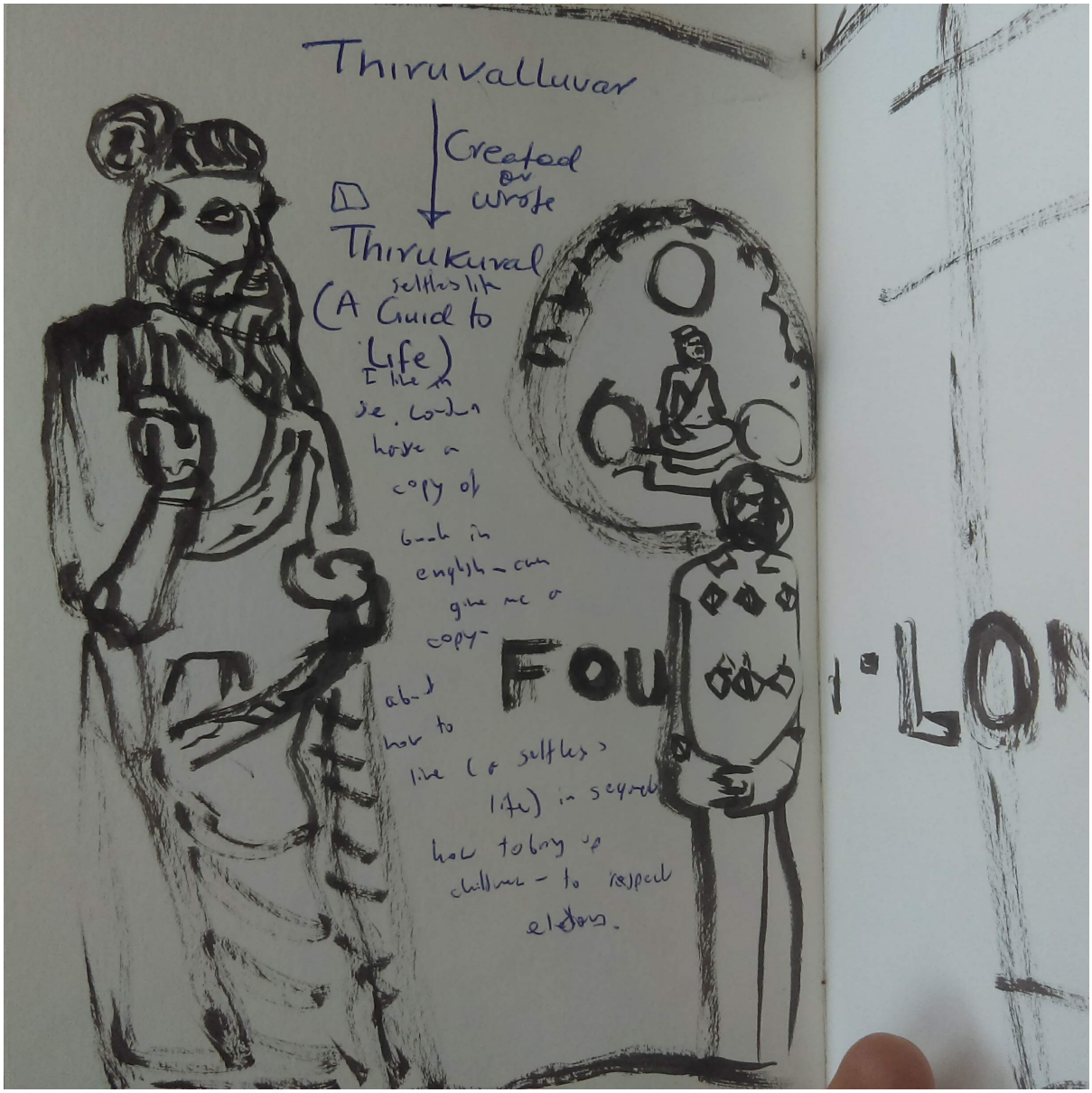
2.17 The next page, where I sketched the stage and an 8-year-old girl drew the dancer. Shared sketchbook in the museum auditorium.





2.18 children drawing Albanian dance in school. 2.19 Collaborative sketchbook in museum auditorium.

Drawing was often a dialogical, open research method. I would hand my sketchbook to children, inviting them to add their observations. Drawing in front of my research participants often became a performative act that invited a response. Sketching in public would attract the attention of adults who would engage me in conversation and write down their comments and references next to my sketches:



2.20 sketch with additional notes in biro pen from an adult research participant.

Drawing proved a versatile medium, allowing me to gain access to children's perspectives and memories, to see teachers' visions for a museum display, and to make new discoveries by studying a scene or ethnographic moment in more detail. It helped me exchange visions with my research participants and move between collaborative research and personal analysis (Geismar 2014). Drawing methods changed as I navigated through different research stages. In the early stages of research, I sketched to immerse myself in people's social worlds, later I sketched scenes in the privacy of my studio as means of withdrawing from fieldwork to visually analyze the data, and finally, the drawings were a way to reconnect with my research participants and presenting ethnographic observations in the public sphere.

Through my drawings I became part of a community of practice with a shared interest in the interpretive aspect of heritage and the creative challenge of making it publicly visible. My fieldwork drawing fitted in with their efforts to transmit and preserve their cultural heritage in diaspora. In this manner drawing was a means of emplacing the ethnographer in the field (Bonanno 2019:48, Hendrickson 2008).

Drawings helped maintain a dialogue with research participants post-fieldwork, receiving comments on my sketches from supplementary school teachers and requests to make a new drawing of a scene I missed out. In this stage I was no longer drawing from direct observation but from film stills during London's first Lockdown, using drawing to reconstruct lost ethnographic moments (Afonso and Ramos 2004, Causey 2017).

A selection of drawings was used in collaborative exhibitions, some organized by my research partners and some by myself. Shpresa Programme, a charity that runs several Albanian supplementary schools and which became a long-term research partner, used my drawings in an on-line exhibition they organized about Albanian Heritage in London entitled 'What would you bring to make a home'[10] for Newham Heritage Month 2020. We continue to work together on on-line platforms beyond the museum. Drawings I made of Albanian school plays became part of the archives of their museum representations, and a resource for the charity to use in the future. Although the charity has its own film footage and photography of these performances, the watercolour sketches I made capture the fluid quality of these fleeting representations, a format that is perhaps better suited to show how heritage is constructed, rather than simply preserved.

Drawing performances became my own intervention in heritage temporalities, prolonging very transient and ephemeral museum representations, enabling them to be circulated in new directions, particularly on digital platforms as exhibitions, and as a resource to be used by the charity in the future. Through drawing I found myself participating in their work of re-locating heritage post-migration. Two digital exhibitions with the Royal Anthropological Institute were initiated by myself as means of sharing research outputs post-fieldwork.

[10] https://www.newhamheritagemonth.org/records/what-would-you-bring-to-make-a-home/







2.21 2.22, 2.23 Drawings of Albanian dancing used in Shpresa's digital exhibition for Newham Heritage Month 2020.

2.4 Children's Workshops as Research Method

Since this research examines how children are involved in institutional collaborations of heritage making in migration, children's contribution to this research was crucial, and particular consideration was given as to what research methods to use. Children are very frank and observant research participants, paying attention to sensorial details, noting what is directly in front of them, and changing conversations when the topic does not interest them (Berger 1972, Tucker 2009, Hoffman 1998). As well as assisting in supplementary school and museum workshops, I designed a series of narrative-based art workshops for children themed around sense of place and cultural identity, using creative methods to invite children to narrate their own experiences and memories. Working with children, I endorsed an approach described by Sinha and Back as 'making methods sociable' (2014), using visual and creative methods in order to foster a two-way dialogue between research participants and myself. Making methods sociable is particularly appropriate when researching with children for whom non-verbal communication such as play and drawing is a more suitable language, but also useful in migration contexts when language is a barrier.

I had presumed there would be opportunities for me to run workshops for children at the museum, but assuming the role of a researcher proved a different experience from being invited to a museum as a freelance artist. As a researcher, my presence felt like an intrusion on a programme that was in a fragile state. The previous supplementary school manager left her post shortly before I began fieldwork. A new programme manager was appointed and had to revive the programme which was put on hold during the spring and summer months of 2018. The programme had suffered severe budget cuts and was undergoing changes in its curatorial approaches discussed in the previous chapter, with artists seldom appointed to work with supplementary schools.

My research began 'off-site' with a Brazilian supplementary school whilst we waited for the museum programme to be restarted. Once it became clear that no more museum displays were planned during the course of my fieldwork, I offered to run themed art workshops for children in three of the supplementary schools I was researching with. Running workshops in supplementary school settings eased the pressure of having the museum as a mediator, and allowed me to research directly with and listen to children, and for the children to share their memories, observations and perspectives with their peers.

I facilitated three different arts and crafts workshops themed around personal memory and cultural identity: a tote-bag making workshop, a T-shirt screen-printing workshop and a drama-and-drawing workshop in which we used children's drawings as backdrops for them to improvise stories and insert themselves into different landscapes. The workshops involved drawing, acting, printmaking, film-making and designing their own T-shirts and decorating Tote bags. The workshop no longer aimed at producing a final product, i.e. museum displays. They therefore generated a different type of engagement, more open-ended and less orientated towards museum-centred goals. I was able to engage in longer conversations, experiment with methods and materials without a perceived outcome in mind, putting aside evaluation forms and other formats through which museums measure impact. The workshop enabled me to learn about children's memories of their parents' home countries, their impressions of their home cultures, and their experiences of state and supplementary schools. It was in these workshops that I learned that children commonly feel connected to their parents' home-countries not through a romanticised idea in diaspora but as tangible places, commonly their grandparents' houses which they visit whenever their parents can afford to make the trip. In a Brazilian Saturday school, when I led a T-shirt design workshop, I learned how children remember their visits in detailed sensorial fragments. Children discussed their first-hand impressions of Brazil, recalling baking with

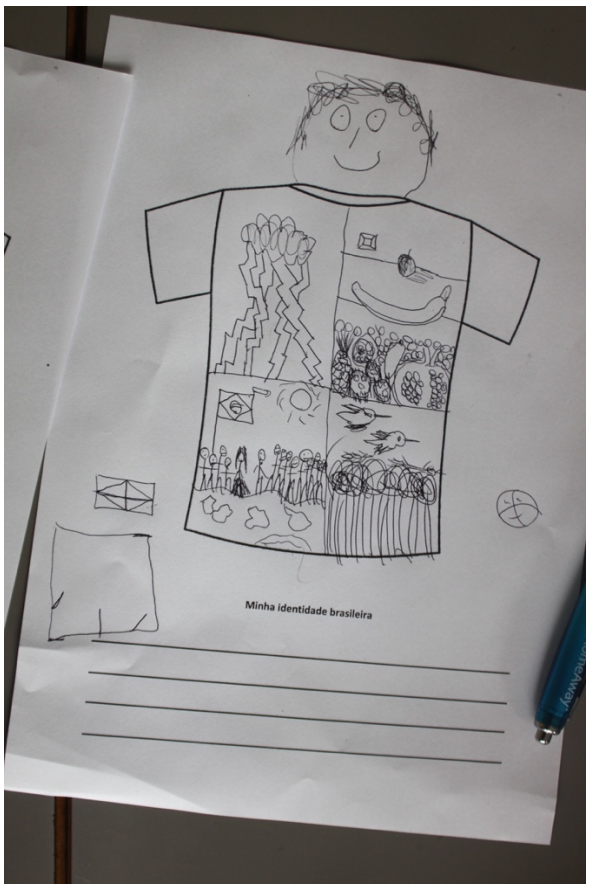
grandparents, having their hair braded, visits to beaches and forests, and the sonic memories of thunderstorms and dogs barking. Dogs in Brazil, they explained, bark much louder than in Britain, they don't stop barking. Children were acute observers of their parents' home countries, making detailed comparisons between the UK and places abroad.



2.24 T-shirt printing in a Brazilian Saturday school



2.25 T-shirt printing workshop



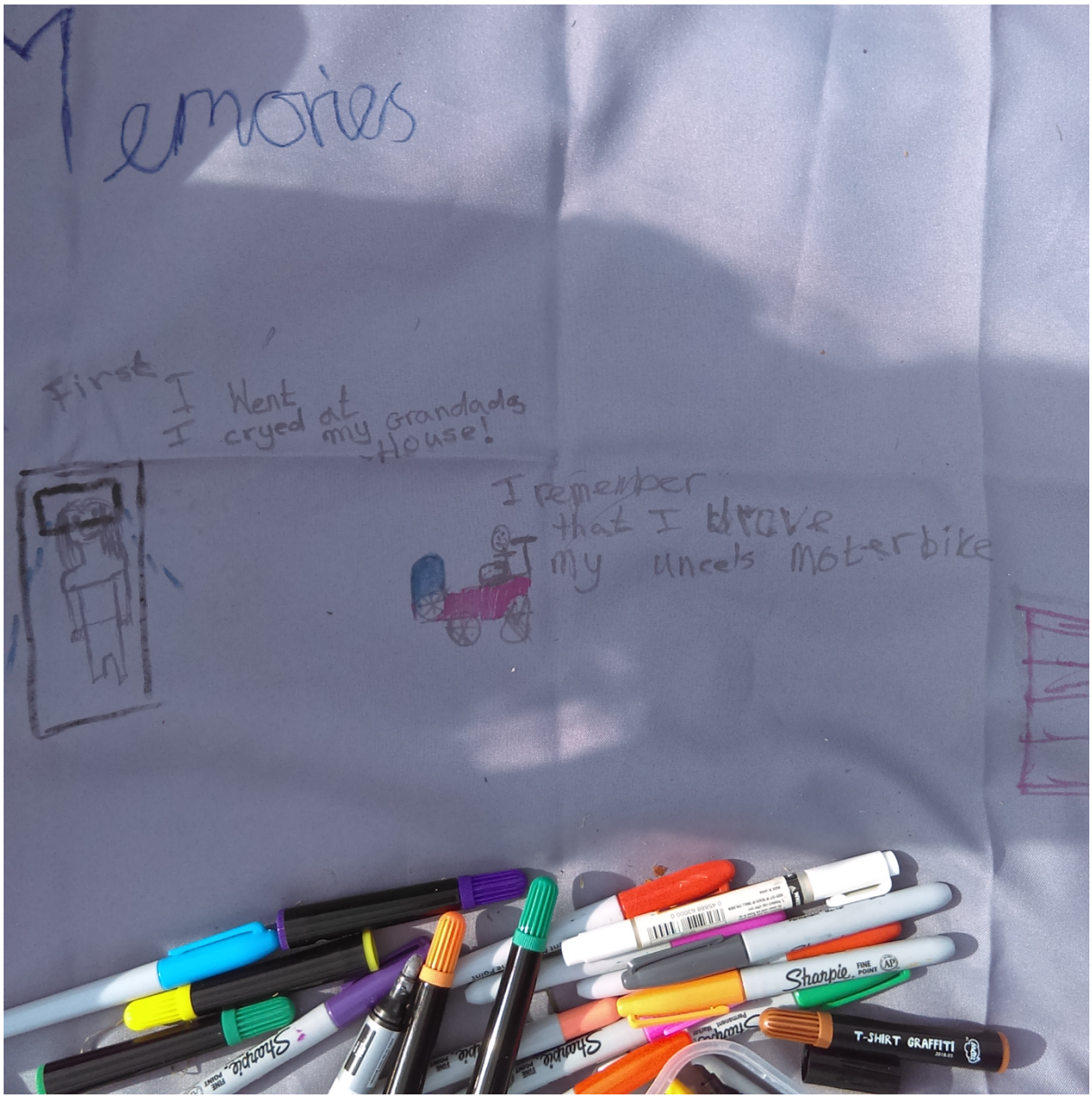


2.26, 2.27 Children designing T-shirts.

Facilitating art workshops in supplementary schools also gave me an insight into the mindset of supplementary school practitioners, making me more appreciative of what running a supplementary school physically and mentally entails: the pressure of setting up and clearing up within the short session, the contingency planning involved given the unpredictable student turn out, the desire to make displays mitigated by the fear of making a stain or leaving a mark, the intensity of wiping down tables afterwards which entails intense scrutiny and attention to detail of one's material surroundings.

As part of my extended research with Tamil communities in London, I run a workshop for the children of members of the British Tamil Forum (BTF). I was invited to run the workshop in a park next to a temple during the Horse-carriage festival. On the day of the festival the local park was transformed into a market with Tamil products and food stands, clothes stalls selling saris and scarves, educational institutes with adverts: "study Dentistry in Europe" and marquees advertising supplementary schools. Children grew bored as their parents talked to MPs and prepared and sold food- hoppers and patties - to raise money for charities in Sri Lanka, children who lost their parents and people needing medical treatment. I had brought along markers pens and a table cloth for children to draw on, but had not formalized a research question in advance. A mother from the BTF suggested that I get children to draw how they imagine Sri Lanka. I stretched out the tablecloth and the children sketched and wrote their memories of their visits to Sri Lanka. They sketched dogs, the neighbours' cows, riding a motorbike with their uncle, water fights and toilets, telling me how horrible they were. One girl didn't know how to use it so her auntie had to demonstrate. The other girl recalled refusing to use the toilet and that her mother had to take her to the bushes. They described how the house is washed: "In Sri Lanka you spray your house with a hose. The house doesn't have doors." They had strong memories of how they were received when they arrived: "When we come to Sri Lanka, everyone comes to me". They recalled banana trees: "You know how they are everywhere?" There is one in front of their house, the *real* house, the house they bought in Sri Lanka. They used the word 'home' interchangeably to refer to Sri Lanka and to Sheffield, where some of the families had come from for the day. Drawing memories of Sri Lanka, one girl sketched her self-portrait, explaining it is of her crying at her grandmother's house. I assumed she cried because this emotional family reunion. She clarified she cried because she was so bored that she wanted to go home, by which she meant her house in England. Workshops moved discussions to make them based on children's actual experiences of migration. With the museum only willing to talk about London, running workshops allowed me to research children' connections to Sri Lanka,

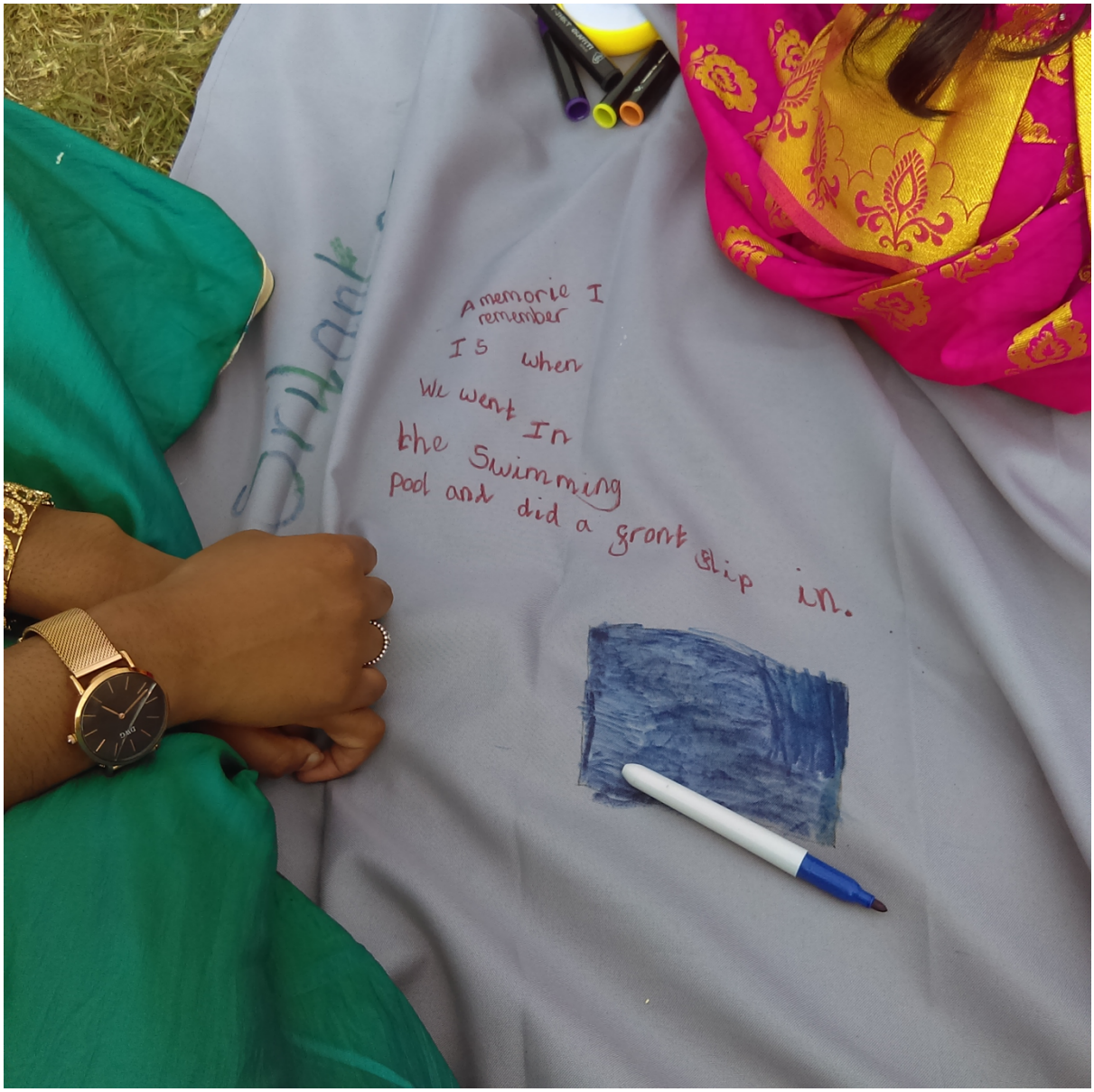
Brazil, Iran, Lithuania and Albania, moving away from any preconceived ideas about what their place-based identities should be. Using themed creative workshops as a research method engaged children in narrating their experiences visually, steering away from word-heavy group discussions.



2.28 ‘Memories of Sri Lanka’. Children’s drawings and writings on tablecloth.

Recalling her memories of Sri Lanka, a five-year-old girl remembered: ‘I sat on my grandma’s lap’. I wrote this memory for her, asking her how old she was at the time. She thought four. When her mother arrived later she verified that the girl was three when she

visited Sri Lanka. Running themed workshops enabled me to listen directly to witness memory formation in its early stages, and how relationships are sustained with grandparents living on different continents. I will not relay all the detailing of all the workshops, but together they have helped me gain an insight into the perspectives of children. I learned how their cultural heritage in migration is mediated through supplementary schools but learned they had formed strong place attachments from the very infrequent and in some cases singular visits to their parents' countries of origin.



2.29 Memories of Sri Lanka'. Children's drawings and writings on tablecloth.

2.5 Language Learning as a Research Method

Children in this research are brought up bilingually. Mother tongue plays an important role in creating a supplementary school's cultural environment. I therefore took private Portuguese language classes with a GCSE teacher from the Brazilian Saturday school, where I conducted long-term research. Language learning itself became a research method: I was able to compare the quiet private lessons I was receiving to supplementary school classes, where language learning is a social activity acquired through songs and games, where Portuguese becomes a familiar soundscape.

Sitting in lessons and not being able to understand the languages, I was occupying the same space as those children less competent in their mother tongues, for whom the visual and sensorial environment become more prominent. I entered a space beyond verbal communication which is familiar to many immigrants, a reminder of what it is like to be new to a country, afraid to speak out in case you 'get it wrong', becoming more silent more often. I did my best to avoid speaking English in order to help maintain the home-language environments supplementary school put so much effort into creating. At the Brazilian school teachers explained to the younger students that I am learning Portuguese and I would silently nod. In the GCSE class, I was brought into the lesson as a prop for students to practice introducing themselves in Portuguese. They took turns to tell me about themselves and their hobbies: 'my name is… and I like to….', to which I mumbled back some words of approval in Portuguese.

Immersing myself in one Brazilian supplementary school, I participated in preparations for performances for cultural celebrations and joined the teachers' choir to perform in the school's 10-year anniversary party. I made a considerable effort to memorize the song, continuing to rehearse the lyrics whilst travelling on the London underground, repeating the chorus: 'é preciso saber viver' [11]. I began hearing London in Portuguese-Brazilian, moving in the same streets but singing to a new tune.

On the day of the celebration things went less smoothly. The teachers arranged themselves on stage in order of height, placing me centerstage. I sang confidently but immediately after a bouquet of flowers was brought to the stage and the entire hall broke into a fast beat Brazilian version of 'Happy Birthday' to celebrate the school's anniversary. I did not know the words to the birthday song. I could not learn it on the spot. Unlike the English version, the

[11] 'It is important to know how to live' (English translation)

lines keep changing within the verse. The rhythm gets faster and faster accompanied by ecstatic clapping and feet stomping. I stood silently on stage in utter embarrassment, unable to sing along.

Researching with other schools, I made no such repeat attempt to join a school choir. I could not speak the languages of the schools I visited, but this was often the topic of conversation, with children teaching me words, discussing their alphabet and translating poems. I was careful to be discrete and not disrupt lessons, picking up basic content or waiting for it to be translated. Children in all schools tended to speak English at breaktimes, and it was then I could enter conversations.

Language learning as a research methods eventually extended to assisting and creatively documenting supplementary school performances, all of which featured mother-tongue, and to co-producing a language-diversity trail at the museum, which involved searching for language-related objects on displays.

2.6 The Jewish Drawer

On a personal level, this research grows out of my own ethical considerations based on experiences as an Israeli Jew living in London, a cultural identity that on many social occasions has been met with negative responses, and my experiences of parenting in migration which open up ethical questioning about children's roles, agency and ability to preserve collective memories. Latent heritage has become a familiar cultural trope amongst many secular and liberal Jewish communities in the UK. One such anecdote is from my own neighbourhood in North London. My children attend a mixed, secular state school. One afternoon, waiting to pick them up in the school playground, I chatted to a mother, her son was about 7 at the time. She is an observant Jew and occasionally attends synagogue but keeps her Jewish identity discrete. Her husband's side of the family experienced the Holocaust in circumstances too horrific to recount here. She told me how her son recently saw a documentary programme on television about the Holocaust. She was surprised by his reaction. He started searching for things he was given from the synagogue to put back in a drawer, thinking these items were now a risk to his life. I joked sympathetically: why, this is the most Jewish thing you can do, the 'Jewish drawers[12]'. We laughed together, then I

[12] 'Man in the drawer' is the title of a short story by Jewish American writer Bernard Malamud about a cab driver who is secretly a writer but is forced to keep his stories in a drawer in Soviet Russia (Litvinoff 1979). The Jewish Drawer also refers to Carol A. Kidron's work on intergenerational trauma of the Holocaust (Kidron 2009).

turned around and noticed a nice American mum from the Midwest who had been standing next to us and had heard everything. She looked aghast. This example of the 'Jewish Drawer' is one of many such anecdotes describing how Jewish heritage is compartmentalized and spatialized in London, and an example of how far jokes about Jewish trauma can extend.

My understanding of Jewish identity in London, how history is transmitted with trepidation, with Jewish stuff 'put away' in drawers, together with public reactions to my Israeli background, is the place of situated knowledge (Haraway 2013:194) from which I conducted this very embodied research. The premise of this research is that latent heritage is a cross-cultural phenomenon. My interest is to consider how these experiences translate into different community settings in the UK. In this sense, this research is not autobiographical, but informed by my experiences of this subject to date, lending myself and my craft for the purpose of enhancing my understanding of how the subject of latent heritage extends beyond my own culture. In the words of Michael Fischer, an "ethnic search is a mirror of the bifocality that has always been part of the anthropological rationale: seeing others against a background of ourselves, and ourselves against a background of others".

The scope of research was limited to supplementary schools participating in the museum programme between 2018-2020. For this reason, I 'put away' my own Jewish heritage during fieldwork. Had a Jewish supplementary school participated during this time, this thesis would likely have been far more autoethnographic. Since none did, this research only draws on autoethnographic experience where it helps to shed new light on the subject, using my own embodied knowledge of latent heritage and experience of being a '0.5 generation' migrant in the UK as a starting point for an enquiry into what latent heritage means for my research participants, how it becomes suppressed and activated in each participating school and at the museum.

2.7 Ethical And Logistical considerations

Working with children, I followed guidelines from my previous training in gallery education and training I received through the Museum of London volunteer induction, as well as guidelines set out by the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Schools (NRCSE), which advice adults not to be left alone in the presence of children. Following these guidelines I chose to restrict research to institutional settings, either at the museum, in supplementary schools, or school-organised trips and events. For instance, when running

workshops in supplementary schools, I ensured a teacher was present in the classroom and I collected anecdotes and artworks but avoided obtaining children's full names or making contact with them outside school. I obtained a new Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) through Clube dos Brasileirinhos, the school I was most closely associated with. I received informed consent to conduct research from each supplementary school I visited. I did not choose which schools to research, but contacted all schools as an independent researcher, emphasising I do not work for the museum. In total I visited six supplementary schools after receiving an invitation, researching with four schools over a longer period.

I gave a great deal of thought as to whether to anonymise or credit individuals and institutions, particularly since they are the co-authors of some of the artworks and displays. Supplementary schools work hard to gain public recognition for the work they do, and it would therefore be somewhat absurd to anonymize these institutions. Having consulted the schools on this matter on several occasions, I have complied with their request to be credited, and have decided to name the main partners in this research. Since it is debatable whether children are able to give informed consent, I have been careful to anonymise them in this thesis.

I have also been careful not to anonymise my own cultural identity, aware it may potentially pose a problem. I always ensured school directors were informed of my ethnic background before visiting their school. As it turns out my ethnicity was not a barrier, but this is something I could not have envisaged. Supplementary schools work towards creating multicultural environments, and although as far as I could tell I was the only person of my ethnicity in every school, I was made very welcome, even if occasionally treated as a novelty. I had not planned on researching my own heritage, but encountered it in every school in the meanings it held for others, and as described in the final chapter, my heritage found me at the Museum of London when co-producing a language trail, resurfacing in Jewish artefacts and Hebrew texts I had not noticed before.

I initially planned on conducting long-term fieldwork with two participating schools, but since only about a dozen schools had produced displays or performances I decided to extend my research and try to visit all supplementary schools at their sites. Out of all the schools I contacted, six responded, and I conducted ethnographic research in an Albanian, Brazilian, Iranian, Lithuanian and two Tamil supplementary schools, and interviewed teachers and directors of other supplementary schools, all of whom I met through the museum programme.

The longest time of my fieldwork was spent in *Clube dos Brasileirinhos*, a large Brazilian supplementary school which I attended every Saturday for a year, taking part in the quotidian life of the school as a volunteer and teaching assistant. Becoming deeply embedded in this school, it was not until visiting the second, third and fourth schools that I realized how many assumptions I had made about what supplementary schools look like. One school had 300 students, another had less than 20. An Albanian school ran English language classes for parents, whilst a Lithuanian school taught children Lithuanian with options in Russian and Spanish classes. Food played an important contribution to the running of schools in different ways, for instance an Iranian school has a community café so parents can sit and socialize, and a Tamil school was sponsored by one family who owned a local Sri Lankan supermarket. The different shapes and forms of supplementary schools unveiled as I continued visiting other sites, proving Fisher's point that "successful cross-cultural comparison requires at least a third case to avoid simplistic better-worse judgments, to foster multiple axes of comparison" (Fischer 1986).

Conducting this multi-sited ethnography proved challenging, as most schools run at the same time on Saturday mornings. Dipping in and out of schools would have been disrupting for them and given me little insight into a school day. I therefore would arrive early to a school and stay until they packed up. Having already committed to doing research in a Brazilian school, I would use any days it was shut to visit a Tamil school on the opposite side of London. I managed to see the four other schools towards the end of fieldwork, two of which had afternoon opening hours but were situated in far off neighbourhoods. Conducting multi-sited research not only gave me an insight into each school setting, but also helped me develop an embodied understanding of how the museum's community officer was stretched across London, running the supplementary school programme singlehandedly, trying to reach out to new communities and maintain contact with those already taking part.

Research felt most embodied when I reached my physical limits- particularly on one occasion when I tried to conduct participant observation with two supplementary schools on the same day. I was invited to two concurrent events on the same afternoon: a visualization session for teachers led by a life coach who is one of the parents at the Brazilian school, and a school play performed as part of a Tamil commemoration event in Trafalgar Square. I was already at the Brazilian Saturday school that morning where the life coach would run the visualization session to help teachers plan their future. I had received the second invitation from the main teacher at the Tamil Saturday school who gave little indication of what the event is, but from her tone I sensed I must come. I declined the invite to visualize the future with the Brazilian teachers, much to my disappointment, and after the last lesson at the

Brazilian school I rushed off across London to meet the Tamil school in what turned out to be May 18th the day of the Mullivaikal commemoration which marks the genocide that took place in Sri Lanka in the final weeks of the war.

Here I faced my own ethical dilemma, having to weigh out the importance of both events, dreaming futures together with one group or remembering another group's past, having to decide which of my own thick and thin relationships to prioritize (Margalit 2002). This was the point at which I have reached the limits of embodied research, and gained direct knowledge of what maintaining multiculturalism means in practice for the museum's community officer: being asked to be physically present in different places at the same time. This also demanded emotional participation, allowing myself to be haunted by different histories, taking on the moods of a place and beginning to unpack the complexity of emotional representations (Beatty 2013) learning through embodied research how emotions travel in diaspora, how they are expressed publicly by different groups and what meanings these hold, and how children are implicitly taught a different manner of emotional communication in each school. At the Brazilian school emotional expressivity was encouraged. Shedding tears in public was considered normal, one or two children would cry on any given school day and be comforted by their teachers. Adults were expected to cry on certain occasions, such as the school's 10 year anniversary, where the school director expressed the importance of this event by crying on stage during her speech in an almost formal way. In contrast, in the Tamil Saturday school I most frequently visited, crying was not something I ever witness, and emotional calmness seemed to be favoured over emotional expressivity.

On that particular Saturday afternoon on May 18th I received an acute lesson about embodied, multi-sited research: I felt emotionally 'out-of-sync' with two communities, leaving a Brazilian school where emotional expressivity is encouraged and I was learning to be less emotionally reserved, and arriving to Trafalgar Square where I broke down in tears in response to a school play about the Mullivaikkal genocide when everyone else seems capable to contain their feelings. Beyond my own ethical considerations, I was learning how the ethical projects of supplementary schools are shaped by different languages of emotion which are not immediately translatable. Multiculturalism itself is an ethical project, grounded in human rights ideals, designed to help build fairer and more inclusive democratic societies to replace earlier uncivil and undemocratic relations of hierarchy and exclusion (Kymlicka 2010:36), but the complexity of cultural diversity and representation is rarely explored beyond the discourse of rights. This research was made as an embodied, multi-sited ethnography carried out across London with different cultural groups, each engaged in its

particular ethical project of preserving and making different emotional memory spaces. The research begins to unravel not only the cultural heritage of participating schools and their ethical obligations towards different histories but also how they remember the past through differently expressed emotions, and the particular ways they channel their emotions through stories, cultural performances and public displays that together make up the complex social landscape of multiculturalism.

Chapter 3: Latent heritage in Migration

Chapter Summary

What does hibernating heritage look like?

In this chapter, I introduce two key theoretical concepts as a framework to understand the political contexts and psychological dimensions of suppressed and latent diasporic heritages: invisibility as a passing strategy in migration (Fortier 2000) and hauntology (Derrida 1993).

Supplementary schools have been removed from public discourse by the Conservative Party, but refuse to disappear and resurface on the stage in museum festivals. In the opening ethnographic example, the latency of heritage emerges as a museum representation in an Albanian lullaby performance by children with their eyes shut, feigning sleep. Using observations from fieldwork that describe how supplementary schools make themselves 'disappear' on a weekly basis, I posit that self-invisibilisation is a shared praxis of running supplementary schools in London in light of changing UK policies and volatile attitudes towards migrants and multiculturalism, where erasure becomes integrated into the habitus of making representations. I consider the concept of 'clearing away' as part of dwelling in diaspora (Lems 2016, after Heidegger 1973) and suggest that the process of reconstructing cultural heritage post-migration is analogous to sieving during an archaeological process, where the value of unearthed objects is not immediately apparent but reassessed over time (Holtorf 2002).

Introduction: Hibernating heritage



3.1 Hibernating Heritage.

A group of primary-school-aged children sing an Albanian lullaby on the Museum of London stage, their eyes closed as if asleep, heads tilted sideways resting on their pressed palms like pillows over their shoulders. One young boy dressed in a Qeleshe and Tirqe[13] rocks a traditional wooden cradle. The others are in red and black clothes matching the colours of the Albanian flag projected on the screen behind them. Historical photographs of Kosovo's founding fathers, war heroes and presidents blend into the flag, surrounding the double-headed eagle, their heads floating above the singing children. The words 'URIME PAVARËSINË KOSOVË'- 'congratulations on Independence Kosovo' - dip in and out of frame.

The children are from a London-based Albanian supplementary school. Their museum performance - singing a lullaby on stage whilst acting as if they are 'asleep' - serves here as an uncanny picture of 'heritage in hibernation'. They smile in mild embarrassment, perhaps at the awkwardness of performing with their eyes shut, feigning sleep whilst singing in the

[13] Traditional Albanian clothing

lime-light to a packed auditorium. Their charming act encapsulates some of the ambiguities around latent heritage in migration. Here children publicly perform deeply intimate, unconscious and affective forms of cultural heritage usually transmitted to newborn babies before they can speak or see - heritage sang in mother tongue. The lullaby, a song designed to send the child to sleep, is now used to activate the heritage of a dispersed, relatively new community.

The mothers that set up the Albanian school arrived in the UK in the late 1990s. In 2020 Kosovo Independence Day was officially celebrated for the first time at the Museum of London; fragmented memories of dispersed communities were brought together into a singular space, reforming a new collectivity of a British-Albanian diaspora, and with them, a lullaby usually sung in the privacy of the home, in a child's bedroom, was instead sung on stage in front of strangers. This performance exemplifies what happens to heritage in migration as it moves not only between political borders across countries but between the private and public realms of home, supplementary school and museum stage, between family spaces and museum audiences. It highlights the unusual and unique roles and spaces children occupy post-migration as their childhood songs, stories and symbols carry the meaning and weight of histories rarely told in the UK. The lullaby captures the liminal state of heritage in diaspora as it moves between dormancy and community activism, unconsciousness and self-reflexivity, invisibility and hypervisibility, to manifest in the museum as a passing spectacle that can be easily overlooked.

This chapter seeks to interrogate the concept of *latent heritage* in multiple diasporic contexts and forms, with particular attention to how heritages in migration are channelled through children in supplementary schools, and then transformed into cultural representations, museum performances and exhibitions. Following a long tradition of visual anthropology's concern with invisible terrains: ghosts, minority groups, undocumented histories, transformative rituals, the research is situated in the liminal spaces between matter and non-matter of representations and their absences, to follow the ways in which heritages are made visible and even spectacular through temporary museum displays and embodied performances, and how these short interventions bring up long-suppressed memories, unrecognised histories and heritages.

Between 2016- 2020 the Museum of London ran a supplementary schools partnership programme, organizing large-scale festivals where dozens of London's supplementary school groups performed their cultural heritage; children speaking, singing and reciting poetry in mother-tongue, dancing and performing myths and stories they learned in schools

set up by London's Albanian, Brazilian, Iranian, Afghan, Tamil, Lithuanian, Chinese and Greek diasporas, amongst others. Groups would briefly take to the stage, one after the other. In 2020 Kosovo Independence day was no longer integrated into an intercultural festival, but celebrated independently by the Albanian community who hired out the museum's auditorium for a majority Albanian-speaking audience. The promise of inter-culturalism that the museum's supplementary schools programme promoted was wearing thin. By 2021 the museum's supplementary schools programme was over. The programme's budget was already halved the previous year, money was moved to support another museum engagement programme as the museum prepared to relocate to a new venue. The supplementary school programme was brought to a halt during the Covid pandemic. Diverse diasporic heritages made visible and audible by multiple supplementary schools would disappear yet again from the museum.

As suggested by the image of young children performing a traditional lullaby with their eyes shut, the term 'latent heritage' describes the unconscious as well as deliberate suppressions of heritage in diaspora which supplementary school communities seek to externalize and make publicly visible.

Following supplementary schools' efforts to externalise heritages that have been kept behind closed doors and bring them into the public sphere, this chapter traces the Museum of London programme as part of a longer history of supplementary school heritage activism, in the contexts of changing partnership projects and government policies. Tracing the semi-visible processes of how schools try to activate the latent heritages of children in diaspora and the contexts in which heritage becomes suppressed post-migration, I examine how the idea of latent cultural heritage is visualized and performed across different participating schools, and how it manifests at the museum.

3.1 Laying low and leaving no trace– heritages' self-erasers

Between the binary choices of cultural assimilation or segregation, supplementary schools offer parents in diaspora a third alternative: transmitting cultural heritage over the weekend or afternoon on an ongoing weekly basis, causing no disruption to their children's mainstream education, allowing them to fully integrate into British culture whilst retaining some connection to their parents' culture and roots. For many children, their cultural heritage remains dormant during weekdays and activated briefly during the weekend. Those who have experienced ethnic violence in the UK or in their home countries are already familiar

with how to maintain a ‘sleeping’ culture, keeping a low profile until circumstances improve, implicitly understanding the logic behind the praxes of self-invisibilization common to supplementary schools.

In its broadest sense, I use the term ‘latent heritage’ to describe a praxis that emerges out of necessity to hide ones heritage when conditions are not favourable. Fortier (2000) describes such acts of self-invisibilization in her study of Italian immigrants in Britain during the Second World War for whom “invisibility was used as a ‘passing’ strategy, and later deemed ‘an undesirable result of assimilation” (2000:23):

“…the intense Italiophobia pervading public discourses during the 1939-45 war years in Britain compelled many to seek to hide their Italianess: avoiding speaking Italian in public, anglicizing their names, or their trade –the façade of Italian delis bearing signs stating: ‘This firm is entirely British’.” (Fortier 2000:23)

For much the same reasons, supplementary school communities are cautious and discrete, aware of the unpredictable climate of xenophobia they need to navigate through, not knowing how welcome they are as (perceived) migrant communities, and for how long.



3.2 Classrooms to rent. State-school in north London. 2022

The more established, larger supplementary schools typically rent classrooms from state schools through business managers. They are issued insecure contracts and can be asked to leave at a moment’s notice. Such was the case during my fieldwork when one of the

longest-running Arabic supplementary schools was notified by the State school where they had been based for years that they could no longer use its premises. The supplementary school's headteacher was notified in August, shortly before the start of the new autumn term, and had to find a new location for her school with its 300 students without warning. Her anecdote, shared in a museum meeting, is every supplementary school organizer's nightmare. These common conditions of insecurity shed light on why in another long-running Brazilian supplementary school, when I came to help decorate a sports hall for their school Carnival the evening before a school celebration, I found myself hiding in a storage shed with other parents and teachers, warned by the State school caretaker that the State school's headteacher is still in the building, and it's best to stay out of her way. They had a hunch she was changing her mind, and were anxious that she might ask them to cancel their annual party at short notice, or perhaps discontinue renting the building. 'I don't want to leave again'- the supplementary school organizer told me, whose school had to relocate a few years back. Hiding one's identity is part and parcel of their masqued carnival parade in the sports hall, but here hiding was no longer a game, and had turned into reality, 'invisibility' literally used as a 'passing strategy'.

The transactional, indirect relations state schools have with their 'invisible' tenants reproduce spatial insecurities already familiar to many migrant communities. Despite the steep rent of hired classrooms, the premises are never secure, replicating the migrants' experience who regardless of their financial contribution to the UK economy are required to stay out of the way, their legal and social status always in question. During my fieldwork this point 'hit home' with the Windrush Scandal and Brexit.

Fortier's example of Italian immigrants removing their shop signs is remarkably similar to the praxes of teachers in the Brazilian Saturday school where I conducted long-term research. They would remove their school sign from the main gate every Saturday afternoon. In comparison to Fortier's example of Italian immigrants who had to remove their signs because they were regarded as an alien enemy in a war context, UK's supplementary schools foster mixed hybrid, hyphenated identities such as British-Brazilians, British - Iranians, British-Tamils or British-Albanians – identities that are not officially recognized by the State and are instead seen as ambiguous and amorphous 'superdiverse' minorities that exist precariously between public recognition, discrimination and invisibility. Unlike the Second World War Italian immigrants in the UK that removed their signs for long durations, the Brazilian school sign was removed every Saturday afternoon only to be reinstalled the following Saturday morning, as an identity keeps re-emerging, despite not being allocated a permanent space.

The example of turning up to decorate a sports hall but instead hiding in a shed describes the reality of running a supplementary school, where as much time and effort is consumed in making oneself discrete as is invested in creating cultural representations. Although circumstances vary, supplementary school teachers are commonly asked to leave no trace and not to touch anything in the classrooms they rent. For some this means having no access to whiteboards, others are asked not to use the teacher's chair.

Supplementary school praxes of self-invisibilization have three ironic, unintended consequences. The first is that the more material representations supplementary schools create, the more effort is subsequently required to remove them at the end of the school day, and consequently the repeated acts of self-erasure become part and parcel of making representations. In a manner that becomes habitual to those whose heritages are toned down and turn latent in diaspora, teachers have to plan as much for the 'putting away' of displays as their installation. Hence this research that set out to be a visual ethnography about the co-production of new museum representations is equally about the practice of repeated erasures, of leaving without leaving a trace.

Supplementary school teachers have to repeatedly inspect their surroundings to ensure that traces of their presence would not be felt by the mainstream school. This requires them to develop a habitus of removing all traces of their activities. This leads to a second ironic effect: the physical and mental efforts to remain 'invisible' have the unintended consequences of emplacement. By 'emplacement' I share Lems' reading of Heidegger when he argues in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' that emplacement is not about a fixed and stable built environment but about the practices of place-making (Lems 2016). In her study of a Somali refugee in Australia, Lems observes how place-making practices such as community cooking allow her research participant to be actively engaged in her surroundings (Lems 2016:332). Arguably, such active engagement is evident in the clearing away of classrooms – a task undertaken across hundreds of schools in London every weekend, which becomes part of the process of dwelling in diaspora. Lems application of Heidegger's notion of dwelling to contexts of migration, particularly the connection between dwelling and 'ra¨umen' (clearing-away) is a useful way to understand supplementary school practices: "'Clearing-away brings forth the free, the openness for man's settling and dwelling'" (Heidegger 1973:5 cited in Lems 2016:332). Maintaining a supplementary school in rented spaces necessitates such 'clearing-away', paying deep attention to the materiality of the rented classroom or community hall. Hoovering and scrubbing rented rooms makes you familiar with the details and defects of a place- its stains, tears and irregularities. The repeated joke amongst some

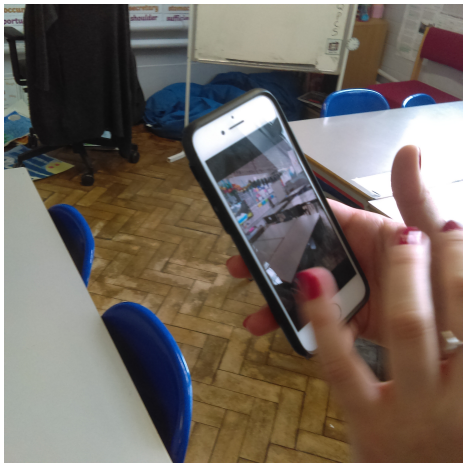
supplementary school teachers is that they double up as the cleaners, leaving the rooms in a better condition than before. Their mobile phones typically accumulate dozens of photographs they have taken of empty classrooms, a visual aide they use to document what the room looked like before they began a lesson in order to ensure everything is put back exactly as they found it. A theory of emplacement emerges from the unlikely source of an ethnography of evacuation.

Thirdly, and perhaps most profoundly, these regular praxes of packing heritage away, repeated on a weekly basis, are followed by the repeated acts of unpacking: bringing back the books in mother-tongue to the classroom, rolling out and unfolding collaged maps and artworks, reinstalling the supplementary school sign on the street-facing gate, taking the carnival box and cultural artefacts out of storage. The inadvertent effect is that these small acts of a school's temporal self-erasure result in each community's identity and presence being reinstated not once but multiple times, before everything is taken down and packed up again. Through these weekly spatial reiterations, the supplementary school is created again, following 6 days of its disappearance. Packing away and setting up a supplementary school every Saturday produces its own rhythm, synchronizing the actions of a community whose joint efforts and will are needed for a school to survive. As much as visually reasserting a community's presence every time the school sign is reinstalled, social bonds are strengthened through these synchronized, repeated actions which take on a powerful ritual element.



3.3 Temporary school sign installed in rented school premises. 3.4 Temporary sign Removed. Processes of self-erasure. Supplementary school sign re-attached with cable tires to the gate of a rented school building every Saturday morning, then taken down and rolled away every Saturday afternoon. 2019





3.5 Teachers making space by moving tables, 3.6 then using photographs of the rented classroom captured on their mobile phones to put the furniture back in place. Processes of self-erasure. Rented school premises: *leave nothing out of place*.

Supplementary school teachers' grounded fears and anxieties about relocation, the knowledge they can be evicted at short notice without time to prepare, the sense you may be asked to leave with no warning, accompanied by the physical moving of tables, packing and lugging classrooms in suitcases, all emulate the experiences and positioning of supplementary school practitioners as perpetual migrants, making provisional worlds in a world they are inhabiting as liminal citizens.

Unbeknownst to many supplementary schools whose projects are very locally situated is that their actions are echoed across hundreds of sites by other communities they have never met across the UK, particularly in London where there are countless supplementary schools set up around the same hours every Saturday morning.

3.2 Ghost Schools

In some respects these experiences of liminality and instability were replicated at the Museum of London, where despite the supplementary schools programme's best intention to be inclusive, there were no permanent display spaces available for exhibiting supplementary schools' cultural heritages. Supplementary schools that approached the museum in the hope that this would ground their cultures and guard their heritages were disappointed to find the

artworks they produced as part of the programme were never intended to be accessioned into its collection. As a result, cultural representations made during my fieldwork were transient, displayed for short durations and could not be stored.

What was unique about the Museum of London during my fieldwork is that it provided a rare space for supplementary school practitioners from different cultures and neighbourhoods to compare their experiences and gain a wider picture of London's supplementary school scene, particularly in the regularly held Advisory Group Meetings. In one such meeting at the museum, I shared a conference paper I was due to present the following day with teachers from several supplementary schools. The paper was called 'Internalising Landscapes', looking at how children in the schools embody their heritage through performance. I suggested that because supplementary schools cannot use classroom walls for displays, more focus is placed on performances and consequently heritage becomes even more embodied. My passing remark about not being able to attach anything to walls prompted a passionate discussion. One Arabic teacher recalled a project with the British Council, who wanted her supplementary school to 'do displays', not understanding how impractical it is to make displays at the site they hire, in the mainstream school, where they are prohibited from touching the space. The project didn't work. To demonstrate to us in the meeting she moved her bottle of water an inch across the table and explained if she did that she would receive a complaint from the state school they are based in: "'We cannot leave a trace".

A Cypriot teacher described how they have the same experience. They are not allowed to use the whiteboard. The mainstream school leaves them messages on the board not to use it. Several school teachers exclaimed: 'How can we teach with no board?'

There was an outpouring of comments from across the table:

'I feel like we are a ghost school.'
'We're still ghosts- we don't exist…..In the UK we are not written somewhere.'
'We pay a fortune- they charge us a fortune for the space …'
'We *are* British! We *are* here!'
'The (mainstream) school gets the credit, not your school!'
'You are not allowed to leave your things here. You only have one Saturday to get rid of your stuff.'

(Notes from Advisory Group meeting May 2019, Museum of London.)

The museum's community officer and myself were taken aback. The term that was repeatedly used was 'ghost school'. One teacher whose supplementary school took place on weekdays after normal school hours recalled how in the classroom she was renting, a mainstream school teacher was talking with another lady whilst she was trying to teach Arabic to young children. She had to explain that she was teaching. There was a *complete disregard*, as if she and the children were not there, the teacher talking whilst her lesson was going on, as if the women didn't see her. She was still outraged as she recalled this story.

The community officer made notes in the advisory group meeting minutes:

"CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL IN A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL BUILDING: Strong consensus from those present about the aforementioned challenges. This topic arose from Orly giving a synopsis of her PhD research linking heritage with 'place'. There followed talk of feeling like a 'ghost school' as you cannot leave any traces of your existence in the classrooms. This is in spite of paying huge fees to use the premises..."

The issue was brought up in a subsequent meeting, which became an impromptu forum where these anecdotes could be shared, in what felt like the first time in decades that these discussions were openly held. On hearing how teachers at the Brazilian Saturday school habitually photograph their classrooms before students arrive, a teacher from a Farsi Saturday school laughed in recognition and got out her phone to show us the accumulation of photos she had taken of the empty classroom that she had not yet got round to deleting. Ethnically and geographically disconnected, London's "ghost schools" were learning to see each other at the museum, with a growing recognition that they are part of a community of practice. As a teacher from a Cypriot supplementary school remarked: "We meet people from different backgrounds. We are in the same situation anyway."

During my fieldwork supplementary schools largely operated as separate entities with limited networks and knowledge of other supplementary schools across the country. This has not always been the case; back in the 1980s supplementary schools formed a social movement led by parents and pedagogic activists to counter the damage of racist institutional practices and policies in State education was having on their children (Andrews 2013). In what became the Black supplementary school movement, parents, teachers and community activists organized very public meetings and large-scale conferences seeking to improve how Black and Asian children were taught and treated in mainstream schools across the country (ibid). Between the late 1990s and 2010 there was a renewed public interest in

supplementary schools from the State. The New Labour government saw the potential of these grass-roots schools in educating children from minority backgrounds. Supplementary schools fitted into the State's investment in community and educational projects and briefly received some support and public recognition for their work.

One of the most peculiar and striking facts about supplementary schools today is that they have become un-named over time, taken off local council lists and intentionally forgotten about.

By the time I began my research in 2018, many supplementary school teachers, students and parents did not know or use the term 'supplementary school'. Nearly all were self-funded, with the exception of one or two inner-city schools that taught the same core subjects as mainstream schools and functioned as homework clubs. Newer supplementary schools formed in the last decade were not aware they are part of the longer history of supplementary schools in the UK. Few supplementary schools retained the long memory of working in solidarity as a social movement that campaigned for equality and educational reform since the 1980s (Andrews 2013). More recent migrant communities did not know their school is referred to as 'supplementary' by outsiders. To their community, schools are often only by their colloquial names, sometimes in mother-tongue, or else by their London location and cultural focus. Whereas in the 1980s supplementary schools united as a social movement, and two decades later were supported by New Labour, in 2018 supplementary school networks that previously existed were largely dissolved. With almost no funds, public projects and policies in place, the possibility of building collaboration or solidarity seemed remote.

The invisibility of supplementary schools in the UK needs to be understood in relation to changing public policies about diversity, sometimes celebrated, sometimes demonized. The latency of heritage in migration here is not only a personal or communal matter, but one that is subject to institutional policies on local and national scales.

One of the key interlocutors of this research is Luljeta Nuzi from Shpresa Programme, the charity that runs the Albanian supplementary school whose students performed the lullaby in this chapter's opening vignette. She recalls first-hand how Newham council, an East London borough that received a large number of Albanian immigrants in a short time, was at first welcoming. She then witnessed a sharp change in the council's approach: the closing down of the Voluntary Sector Consortium (VSC), the end of state schools giving their classrooms for free use to supplementary schools, bilingual services terminated, and bilingual books

taken off library shelves in 2010-2011. She described how suddenly there was no more promotion of bilingualism because 'you had to learn English': "we have witnessed moving from multilingual concept, to getting rid of the qualification for community languages."

A BBC article she sent me dating 2011 titled 'Newham's libraries remove foreign language newspapers' describes how "One of London's most culturally-diverse boroughs has removed foreign language newspapers from its libraries. Sir Robin Wales, elected Labour Mayor of Newham, in east London, said removing the papers would "encourage people to speak and learn English". But a Newham resident has described the move as an "appalling" and "drastic" measure. About 150 languages are spoken in the borough and many residents speak English only as a second language. The council is yet to confirm how many different foreign language newspapers it previously provided but residents say they were previously able to read Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali and Hindi publications in Newham's libraries."[14]

In a famous speech made that same year, on the 5th of February 2011, the then British Prime Minister David Cameron declared that 'State multiculturalism has failed'[15]. Multiculturalism should not be confused with cultural diversity. 20th Century multiculturalism emerged out of the post-war human rights revolution in Europe within the framework of the UN ideology about the human equality of races and peoples (Kymlicka 2010:35). Whereas cultural diversity is an urban fact, multiculturalism is the State's endorsement of diversity through public policy, political discourse and provisions. In the UK, State multiculturalism has been ridden off, seen as part of a New Labour government project that belongs to the first decade of the 21st century. In truth, the history of British multiculturalist ideology runs much deeper, usually traced back to 29 May 1966 when the then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins distinguished sharply between integration and assimilation (Joppke 1999:225). Jenkins argued in favour of 'integration' but insisted that should not mean 'the loss, by immigrants of their own national characteristics and culture' (Banton 1985:71, cited in Hussain and Miller 2006:50).

State multiculturalism came under public attack once it was strongly endorsement by the New Labour government at the turn of the millennium, receiving criticism from the Left and Right, eventually becoming an orphaned political project. The 'wholesale retreat from multiculturalism' across Europe happened gradually in the UK (Vertovec and Wessensdorf 2010). Politicians began avoiding the term in their public speeches. In 2002 Steven Vertovec

[14] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-13352845 accessed august 2021
[15] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994 accessed 30 November 2020

was explicitly told by the head speech-writer for the then British Home Secretary, David Blunkett, that 'the minister will never use "the M-word" again' (Vertovec and Wessensdorf 2010:14). By 2007 when the UK's Commission on Integration and Cohesion was set up, it stated that 'we need to update our language to meet the current climate. We therefore intend to avoid using the term "multiculturalism" in our report because of its "catch all" and confusing quality' (CIC 2007:13 cited in Vertovec and Wessensdorf 2010:14). Initially the word 'multiculturalism' was substituted with the term 'promoting diversity' by the New Labour government (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010:18).

Subsequent Conservative governments discontinued promoting diversity altogether, switching instead to nationalist rhetoric. During my fieldwork between 2018-2020 multiculturalism has effectively been removed from public policy in the UK. The decision to stop promoting multiculturalism has had a felt impact on the population, but the withdrawal of the word 'multiculturalism' from public discourse curtails critique as the public no longer has the language to describe what it is missing. Multiculturalism has become a latent idea that is no longer named.

The 'Death of Multiculturalism' as a government policy has been closely linked to the growth of Islamophobia (Hussain and Miller 2006) and can be understood as part of a reactive post 9/11 climate, with growing fears of minority communities whose bilingual identities were now deemed suspect.

In Newham, local residents witnessed the effects of new government policies as they were put into practice. The closures of services, end of language provisions and removable of multilingual books and papers from public libraries effected not just the recently arrived Albanian community but older migrant communities that have resided in the borough for over half a century. These acts may appear mild compared with book-burning, ethnic cleansing and land expulsion, which some of the groups have experienced, yet they are nevertheless Foucauldian acts in which the State uses its power to remove certain cultures and the very discourse of multiculturalism from the public sphere, in an ideology that suppresses multiculturalism in favour of a more hegemonic monocultural assimilationist state policy that frames difference as an existential threat. They signalled an end of an era where multiculturalism was publicly celebrated and the beginning of neo-nationalist rhetoric that pre-empted Brexit, and with it a more nationalist education in state schools that replaced 'multiculturalism' with 'British Values'.

The ‘disappearance’ of supplementary schools from public discourse and knowledge was brought about by an external push towards the margins in which supplementary schools found their public roles restricted, their efforts to provide multilingual education and their broader cultural curricula and more diverse historical and geographical focuses were no longer in line with the changing government agenda.

Heritage suppression during my fieldwork should therefore be understood in this particular UK socio-political landscape: two decades since the partial recognition of the contribution of supplementary schools to public life, local communities and children’s education, and ten years on since their ‘disappearances’ from public life. As Fortier (2000) notes in her work on Italian migrants in post-war 1950s England, people may choose to put aside their heritage in order to advance their businesses, prosper or find protection and safety in a new country, but these decisions are responsive to a changing political climate, interior motives influenced and guided by external contexts.

3.3 Hauntology as a theoretical framework in museum, migration and postcolonial studies

One way to understand the multiple, parallel, repeated acts of self-erasure undertaken simultaneously by supplementary school every Saturday across the UK’s capital and their reoccurring disappearances from public discourse is by examining Jacques Derrida’s idea of hauntology and how it has since been applied to post-colonial theory and migration studies.

Writing at the time of the collapse of communism, Derrida wrote a conference-address-come-book entitled *Spectres of Marx* (1993), where he introduced the neologism ‘hauntology’ in order to undertakes a ‘spectral’ reading of capitalist ideology. Derrida dedicated the book to Chris Hani, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party who had been recently assassinated. Spectres of Marx is concerned with justice and speaking with ghosts, the book begins by asking how we can learn to live more justly (xviii) and Derrida asserts that it is impossible to think of justice without a principle of some responsibility towards those who are:

“beyond all living present… before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism.”

Derrida is interested in justice concerning those who are not there, of those who are no longer or who are not yet present and living, “, otherwise, he muses, what sense would there be to ask the question “where?” “where tomorrow?” “whither?”

Hauntology proposes that the past is unfinished. Contrary to Henri Bergson’s notion of irretrievable time (1913), it pays attention to how elements of the past persist and disrupt linear time flows. The figure of the ghost is an anomaly that stands outside time and “is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive” (Davis 2005:373) which destabilizes reality.

Hauntology points to moments when ‘the time is out of joint’ - a phrase Derrida has taken from Shakespeare’s Hamlet (Fisher 2012:18). Like the phantom in Hamlet who never makes a full stage appearance yet changes the course of the play, “the metaphor of a specter haunting the present establishes the idea/image of the existence of something ghostly which stands over and outside the present, something which does not belong to time, and is waiting to come” (Hughes 2012:6). Hauntology positions the ghost as a latent force waiting for its return, and is relevant to the study of heritage in diaspora and museums in contexts of migration, where histories are neither settled nor lost, but continue to exist without being publicly acknowledged. Heritages in migration no longer have a fixed place or value, but continue to be felt as a force, the past sensed in the present without being fully incorporated into it. In this research such hauntological specters characterize supplementary school performances, in which children carry deep histories which they briefly perform as spectacles on the museum stage, histories and cultures that despite being made visible continue to be repressed, ignored or just overlooked. No space is allocated for these histories as they continue to hover between hyper-visibility and disappearances.

A simple way to understand hauntology is as a theory of justice when time is out of joint:

“If I am getting ready to speak at length about ghosts, inheritance,
and generations, generations of ghosts… it is in the name of justice. Of
justice where it is not yet, not yet there, where it is no longer” (Derrida 1993:xviii).

Derrida’s notion of hauntology that takes into account those non-present to the question of justice and responsibility towards the past aligns with the supplementary schools in this research who are concerned with deep memory, and with maintaining conversations with the

non-tangible non-present entities of the past as part of an ethical project, as much as a practical one, in order to 'know how to live'. As teachers in the Brazilian supplementary school choir repeated in the chorus during their summer festival: 'É preciso saber viver'- it's necessary to know how to live - echoing Derrida's opening question – 'how does one learn how to live, finally?' (Derrida 1993:xvi), or core questions of how to live otherwise, to live more justly (Derrida 1993: xvii).

Derrida specifies that hauntology is not so much a theory, and it could be better understood as a word play that intersplices the word 'ontology' with the idea of hauntings to outline a new science of 'ghosts', or 'a science of what returns' (Davis 2005:373, Saybaşili 2008:88). In simple terms, 'hauntology' subverts the core meaning of the word 'ontology', infusing ontology with a spirit that exists outside and beyond the present time. This word-play is reminiscent of the story of Abram in Genesis, whom God meets by inserting with the letter 'h' to breathe His divine presence into the name, turning it into Abra*h*am, 'h' being the letter that stands for God in the Hebrew alphabet, which is why 'h' has the power to sacralise that which is secular in Jewish mysticism. Arguably, in choosing the sign of the 'h' to create an ontological intervention , Derrida's own latent Jewish heritage makes itself present. Fusing the word 'ontology' with *h*auntings to coin the term 'hauntology' is not only a theoretical intervention about temporality but also a theological one that fuses certainty with unknowing into a single utterance, to create a theory of immanence. Whereas it is beyond the scope of this research to delve further into Derrida's latent Jewish identity, I briefly mention this to point to how hauntology ties in with an enquiry into latent heritages, as a theory that itself emerges from such a context.

For Derrida, "this being-with specters would also be… a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations (Derrida 1993: xvii). In recent years, Derrida's "rehabilitation of ghosts as a respectable subject of enquiry" (Davis 2005:373) has been used as a theoretical framework in migration and post-colonial studies. In her PhD thesis 'Borders and Ghosts', Nermin Saybaşili uses the idea of hauntology as a strategy for uncovering hidden structures embedded in the realities of displacement and migration. (Saybaşili 2018:13). Looking at migratory hauntings in visual culture , she uses Derrida's notion of the `ghost' as a metaphor to refer to `spectral' realities associated with dislocation and migration, examining what it means to live in border zones and inhospitable cities (Saybaşili 2018:17).

Ibrahim considers hauntology in relation to digital immortality, in how the dead bodies of refugees continue to circulate in the media: "The Internet has a spectral quality where its immateriality produces a Derridean hauntology where figures are neither dead nor alive,

neither present nor invisible, recasting solid foundations and definitions (Derrida 1993 cited in Ibrahim 2018:5).

Fisher locates Hauntology as a pervasive idea in electronic music, popular culture, television and film, for instance Kubrick's the Shining, when a place is 'stained' by time (Fisher 2012:19), a film situated in a hotel that is "an architecture of anachronism" that "looks back to the repressed specters of American history: organized crime, atrocity, and the extermination of native Americans" (Fisher 2012:20), which in this way resembles national museums.

Hesse applies hauntology to his post-colonial critique:

"The disavowal of racism reinforces the apparition of a post-imperial phase of liberal-democracy … racist formations are unsuccessfully concealed and subsequently exposed, the western 'promise of democracy' (Derrida 1993) is compromised by the revelations surrounding the unresolved ethnic antagonisms of its post-colonial conditions"(Hesse 2000:19).

Instead of seeing supplementary schools as an array of dislocated 'ghost schools', the "apparition of post-imperialism" that Hesse describes situates the schools as part of a structure of power relations that continues to 'hide' them, in the "non-resolved racism and imperialism that haunts the present and future" (Hesse 2000:18). Hesse defines the apparition of post-imperialism as "the horizon of unresolved post-colonial condition" that "arose following the apparent demise of the European grand narrative of a progressive modernity. This had conventionalized the western regulation and designation of the 'non-European' other as unquestionably culturally inferior and politically pathological from the sixteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century (Hesse 2000:19).

Such hauntings are part of the fabric of the Museum of London. Staff walk daily past racist, classist and other forms of exclusionary violent imagery and texts that continue to plague the present in the form of paintings, artefacts and museum blurbs in their ongoing paradoxical battle towards improving museum inclusivity whilst surrounded by representations of marginalization. To a large extent, the museum is built as a hauntological complex, trying to keep disturbing and unsettled pasts on show but behind glass whilst these unsettling and unsettled histories lurk in the dimly lit walls of its galleries and pop out unexpectedly as artworks and immersive displays.





3.7 (Left Image) 'The Curds and Whey seller', 1730 -painter anonymous. 3.8 (Right Image) Wellclose prison cell with messages by prisoners carved into its oak walls 1700-1744.

Two such museum hauntings are on display in the 'Life Chances: Prisons and Justice' section in the Expanding City gallery at the time of writing, shown in the two images above. One is an oil painting entitled 'The Curds and Whey seller'. The picture depicts three black men approaching a white, blind woman. The museum blurb explains the three male figures are chimney sweeps, their faces blackened by soot, and goes on to explain they were also known as 'climbing boys', some as young as six[16]. Yet their features and facial hair in the painting suggest they are not children but grown men of African heritage. As suggested by the museum blurb, the three men are stealing from the blind. This is an example of a blurb that cannot acknowledge the history of racism so clearly portrayed in the painting, a blurb that doesn't 'see' the painting, just as the female figure inside the painting cannot see the black 'chimney sweep' who are stealing from her. Using John Berger's technique of simply looking at the picture to see what it says (1972), I would argue that the painting is undeniably about a moment of 'contact' between the male black and white female figures. It describes not only an exchange but the physical touch of the black, bearded man who smiles in disbelief as he approaches the unsuspecting white seated woman who cannot see him. It is about a black man crossing a racial boundary. As if more clues were needed, the characters in the painting are also differentiated by their trade, which aligns with their skin colour: the woman is as white as the milk produce she sells, the men as black as the coal they are supposedly covered in. Arguably, the female whey seller symbolizes nature and the purity of the countryside whilst the 'chimney sweeps' situate the black male figures as part of the

[16] https://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/object/102258.html acccesed 2nd of August 2021

corrupt and contaminating city. In this sense the painting is not only a depiction of race-relations, but contact between city and country. The painting would be better understood in relation to the historical moment in which it was executed- at the height of the British slave trade that had completely changed London's demographics, and on the brink of the industrial revolution. Yet the blurb brushes the painting's content aside, overlooking the history of racism, in social life and its representation, that is so clearly being visually presented in the picture.

The painting is situated a few steps away from the exhibit of an 18th century prison - a small, dimly lit prison cell whose wooden walls are engraved with messages by its former inmates, most of whom were debt insolvents, their carved pleas and instructions just about legible: 'Pray Remember the Poor Debtors', 'All you that on this cast an eye Behold in prison here I lie. Pray bestow your charety [sic] Or with hunger soon I die'[17].

For Gordon, haunting is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely, "when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view" (Gordon 2008:xvi).The painting's figures and prison cell's inscriptions are just such specters of social violence in the manner Gordon defines a haunting, as "one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with (slavery, for instance) or when their oppressive nature is denied (as in free labor or national security)." (Gordon 2008:xvi).

Gordon stresses that "haunting is not the same as being exploited, traumatized, or oppressed, although it usually involves these experiences or is produced by them. What's distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely". What is useful to note here is that unlike Hesse's account of post-colonial conditions which are continually and steadily oppressed, Gordon's understanding of hauntology is its "animated state" , like the figures in the painting as they come into focus for museum visitors passing by, or the transient performances of supplementary school children dressed up in traditional costume, these museum specters that are momentary yet 'repetitive instances' (Ibid) of different heritages that refuse to 'give up the ghost'.

[17] . https://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/object/497829.html accessed 2nd August 2021

According to Gordon, “Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. These specters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view: (Gordon 2008:xvi).Hauntology is therefore a way of seeing (Berger 1972, Gordon 2008), specifically a way of seeing through what others are trying to make invisible, erase and actively look over.

I propose that a Derridean hauntological lens is a useful approach to study museum collections and collaborations, where different pasts are felt to have their own force as histories continue to be negotiated and reinterpret. Rather than perceive these museum hauntings as disturbances of pasts that return uninvited (Byrant 2016) making time appear like a trapping, museum hauntings open up different pasts to show how they are undetermined, and can be juxtaposed and moved around, enabling us to better connect with and visualize suppressed histories, such as histories of colonialism and other forms of oppression, exclusion and inequality (Golding 2009, Golding and Modest 2013, Basu 2017, Joy 2020). Such hauntings are not necessarily possible to resolve, yet they allow us to listen more attentively to how different pasts continue to influence the present. What appears to be an inexplicable ‘throwback’, heritages regarded as a hinderance, requires work to be unpacked. This understanding of hauntology is particularly relevant to heritages in diaspora that continue to be widely regarded as disturbances and histories ‘out-of-place’.

Hauntology sheds light on how supplementary schools, despite collaborations with three major London museums, continue to reside on the periphery of visibility as ‘ghosts schools’, revealing how the structures and frames of multiculturalism are in themselves phantom-like, interrupted and suppressed in political discourses and state school curriculum, only to reemerge in supplementary schools and museums.

Presently, museum multiculturalism operates as part of a gig economy. In the UK the museum is one of the few remaining institutions where supplementary schools can meet and share knowledge, but the museum’s supplementary school programme is subject to short-term funding. The Museum of London’s supplementary schools partnership has previously existed in other museums, large scale collaborative projects were held in the Imperial War Museum and the British Museum in their attempts to engage with London’s minority groups. Each time the programme funding ran out in one museum it re-appeared in another guised as a new partnership, minority heritages remerging in a new museum, but in practice these partnerships were often led by the same community officers working with the same

supplementary schools in a new museum, in an ongoing long-term relationship that staggers through different institutional hurdles, short-term objectives and funding streams.

3.4 Intergenerational Transmissions – hauntology in contexts of parenting in diaspora

Derrida's hauntology builds on the work of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, whose ideas have renewed psychoanalytic theory and therapeutic practice dealing with transgenerational trauma and family secrets (Davis 2005:374). What Abraham and Torok call a *phantom* is the presence of a dead ancestor in the living Ego, still intent on preventing its traumatic and usually shameful secrets from coming to light (ibid). Abraham and Torok were interested in transgenerational communication, particularly the way in which the undisclosed traumas of previous generations might disturb the lives of their descendants *even and especially if they know nothing about their distant causes* (Davis 2005:374 original italics). Abraham and Torok's notion of ghosts are the gaps left in us by the secrets of others (ibid).

Abraham and Torok's notion of the phantom that withholds rather than reveals the family secret is akin to what Michael Fischer terms as 'ethnic anxiety' in his essay "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory" (Fischer 1986). Fischer notes that ethnicity in diaspora is not something that is simply passed on from one generation to the next, taught and learned, but is something dynamic, often unsuccessfully repressed or avoided. Looking at the autobiographical and auto-fictional works of second-generation writers from migrant background including Marita Golden, Maxine Hong Kingston and Michael Arlen, Fischer observes how ethnicity in diaspora has to be discovered and reinvented as something new: "to be ChineseAmerican is not the same thing as being Chinese in America". Interestingly, Fischer argues that parents' suppressed ethnic identities and muted histories can produce 'ethnic anxiety', whereby attempting to spare children knowledge of painful past experiences, parents often create an obsessive void in the child that must be explored and filled in. Their parents' silences become a point of departure to explore repressed ethnicities and hidden histories through creative, indirect and imaginative reconstructions: wordplay, dream works, poetry, jokes. Fisher intentionally draws on the works of writers from different diasporic backgrounds -Chinese, Armenian, Jewish, Hispanic and African heritages - to highlight how the recovery of heritage in diaspora becomes a cross-cultural phenomenon and shared praxis for those whose parents have attempted to suppress the past.

By comparison, this research is about parents who actively seek to share their cultural heritages with their children, and the gaps and silences that produce what Fischer calls

'ethnic anxiety' are caused by public and institutional suppression and/or non-recognition of their diverse ethnicities and histories, which motivate parents to set up supplementary schools. Rather than regard suppressed heritages in purely negative terms, my position is in line with Fischer who stresses how heritage latency can become a resource for creativity, a "more exciting possibility-that there are cultural resources in traditions that can be recovered and reworked into enriching tools for the present." Here the phenomena of suppressed, silenced and absent cultural heritages becomes a driving force and source of creativity found in the encountered gaps in state education, museum displays and popular culture, where communities in diaspora sense their heritages are missing. These gaps, as Fischer suggests, become the spaces and sources of creative reconstruction, which manifest as supplementary schools, their curricula and their museum performances and representations. Whereas Fischer's cross-cultural overview draws on individual writers in their common search for ethnic belonging, my research draws on individual schools to develop an overview of the collective action undertaken by communities in diaspora in their weekly endeavors of trans-local heritage activism.

3.5 Reevaluated heritage in migration

But what is worth keeping anyway?

Holtorf 2002:57

Following from Fischer (1986), I argue that heritage in diaspora is not simply passed on, but reevaluated weekly in supplementary schools where reflexivity becomes routine. In the repeated acts of a school's self-erasures and counteracts of spatial reinscription, cultural heritage transmission and preservation become deeply reflexive practices for supplementary school members. The value of heritage in migration is repeatedly reassessed as teachers pack away and unpack cultural heritages, lug around and reorder classroom resources, remove and reinstall signs, reorganizing their cultural heritage individually and collectively. The practical application and moral meanings of their cultural heritage are often discussed, as well as its relevance to children's lives in the present and potential use in their futures.

A parallel can be drawn between the way supplementary school practitioners sieve through materials and resources as they reevaluate their cultural heritage in diaspora to the sieving process in an archeological dig. Holtorf describes how an excavation process requires the digger to look again at the thing unearthed whose value is not immediately known but

worked out over time. A comparable decision-making process occurs across supplementary schools, where parents and teachers have to look again at their heritages to decide what aspects are worth keeping and what can be discarded in diaspora. (Holtorf 2002:60). As Holtorf describes, not everything in an archaeological dig can be kept, in fact, most of what an archaeologist uncovers ends up on the spoil heap (Johnson, 2001: 76, cited Holtorf 2002:56), and what is kept is routinely revaluated (Ibid). A similar sieving process occurs in diaspora where people dig deep into their past in search of meaning and are limited by resources and space yet liberated by the freedom to construct their own curricula with no government intervention. Arguably, in many respects, they have more agency in shaping how their heritage is taught and a greater degree of freedom in deciding what elements of tradition and what cultural forms to discard or hold on to. Whereas all cultural heritages change and adapt over time, I suggest that in the settings of supplementary schools, these processes of sieving through the past are more intensified and therefore become more pronounced and noticeable for those engaged with these acts of heritage preservation in diaspora. For a researcher entering supplementary school communities as an outsider, it is possible to observe these states of hyper-reflexivity and see what elements of tradition and knowledge of the past retain or increase in value post-migration by looking at what supplementary schools include and drop out from their curricula over time.

Holtoft describes the process of archaeological analysis as a specific form of "clearing" (Holtorf 2002:57) echoing Heidegger's concept of 'ra¨umen' (clearing-away) as integral to dwelling. In this instance I am no longer referring to the repeated acts of clearing away classrooms and vacating buildings that supplementary schools carry out, but the routine decisions supplementary schools make as they undertake the task of preserving heritage in diaspora and transmitting it cross-generationally to their children and cross-culturally at the museum. In these instances certain aspects of a group's cultural heritage are put away for practical reasons- e.g. lack of time , space, resources, and because of preferences of the individuals who run a particular school and their desire to match aspects of their cultural heritage with children's changing interests and needs.

One such example which will be further discussed in Chapter 4 is of a Brazilian Saturday school that initially had a strong focus on school performances: plays featuring famous Brazilian mythical characters, folk dances and songs, at a time when all its students were young children. As the students grew up the teachers decided to prioritise academic language tuition over performance in order to prepare students sitting the Portuguese GCSE exam. It was felt that within the limited hours of the supplementary school day a curriculum could not accommodate both the embodied and academic aspects of Brazilian cultural

heritage. Once the first lot of students passed the Portuguese GCSE with top marks, the decision to cut out performance was overturned and Capoeira was incorporated into the curriculum. In these instances it is the school community that selected which aspects of its cultural heritage to emphasise and what to 'bury' or put aside, often in response to external pressures and expectations as much as internal changing priorities and values. In this case Brazilian heritage was aligned with what is perceived as having value in the UK- the nationally recognized GCSE exam as an accredited qualification, emphasizing the academic aspect of cultural heritage, whilst other forms of embodied knowledge and intangible heritage e.g. samba and capoeira, become latent but reemerged over time as the school curricula changed.

The reflexive decision-making process of what aspects of heritage to emphasize and promote, and what to discard or put away reoccurs again at the museum, when schools try to make their cultural heritage visible, but find certain aspects of their curricula translate more easily, are more suitable for a museum audience or more readable as museum displays. Here they have to reconsider what aspects. This thesis therefore does not present the museum as the ultimate safekeeping house of cultural heritage, but a site through which certain aspects of cultural heritage become latent as others resurface.

The museum becomes a site through which heritages in migration whose values are not yet determined can be altered, increased or at least validated through representations.
As supplementary schools turn to the museum to materialize their cultural heritage, make it public and legitimize it by displaying it in an officially recognized heritage institution, creating museum displays or choreographing museum performances pushes some aspects of cultural heritage into the foreground whilst obscuring other aspects. The children singing an ancient Albanian lullaby on a museum stage could have been given a different song, dance or story to perform. Within the hyper-visible yet limited and restricted space of a museum-as-stage, supplementary schools have to decide what aspects of cultural heritage should be preserved post migration, which stories continue to hold meaning.

The sense that cultural heritage is latent in diaspora is not a secret, it is a topic publicly discussed by supplementary schools leaders and practitioners. Before I personally met Luljeta Nuzi who has become a long-term research collaborator, I attended a public talk she gave about her charity 'Shpresa Programme' which runs a number of Albanian supplementary schools. In her slide presentation, pictured below, she described Albanian heritage in London as an iceberg where only the top can be seen. E.g. language, flags,

whilst the rest of the iceberg is difficult to see: “to understand about our culture as well as our community (one must) …learn more about what we can’t see on the iceberg culture”.

The following chapters examine what lies beneath the surface, how the latency of cultural heritage is visualized, experienced and articulated by participating supplementary school, and at the museum as a stage, forum and storehouse that connects all these separate heritages, schools and geographies in migration.

Iceberg culture



The rest of the iceberg is difficult to see

Beliefs and Assumptions Family Roles
Relationship to Authority Self concept
Core Values Body language Manners
Beauty ideals Interpretations Gender roles
Rules of Conduct Pride Concept of Justice
Nations of Modesty Expectation Personal space Raising children peacefully
Attitudes toward the enviroment

3.9 Presentation slides from talk by Luljeta Nuzi, one of the founders of Shpresa Programme, at the ‘Cultural Diversity, Migration Integration and Youth Action: New Perspectives and Innovative Practices’ conference. University of Westminster 3rd July 2019.

Chapter 4: Portable heritage- carrying histories in migration

Chapter Summary

This chapter questions how the concept of museums as contact zones (Clifford 1997) applies to contexts of 21st Century migration?

Contrary to the Museum of London which lacks cultural artefacts relating to London's diverse ethnic minorities, supplementary schools have an abundance of cultural objects and materials to make heritage tangible for children, but lack permanent spaces to house these objects.

This chapter observes how cultural heritage is carried and preserved by supplementary school teachers and students. It looks at the experiential dimension of carrying heritage in diaspora, the weekly rituals of setting up and packing away supplementary schools, transporting classrooms resources and cultural artefacts in carrier bags and suitcases across the city, the physical preservation of supplementary schools archives, and how heritage preservation without objects is embodied by children, performed in staged plays at the museum and in supplementary schools.

Moving between the London underground, museum festivals and meetings and an Iranian supplementary school, the chapter traces different paths in which archives and histories are inhabited, transported and embodied, and how the preservation of heritage in migration becomes contingent on individual actions and choices.

Introduction

'Contact zone' is a term Clifford adopts from Mary Louise Pratt which she defines as "the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations", often involving conditions of radical inequality (Clifford 1997:192). Clifford used the term to conceptualize museums as contact zones, and the term has become synonymous with inclusionist, collaborative programs, often ignoring the aspects of the asymmetrical power relations which Clifford describes in his original essay (Boast 2011). Writing in 1997, Clifford reviewed several 1990s museum collaborations with indigenous groups to critique the lack of reciprocity on the museum's behalf (Clifford 1997). To cite one example, Clifford describes how the Museum of Mankind, London displayed objects from Highland New Guinea, for whom the indigenous Wahgi people helped amass the collection. Feeling connected to London through this collaboration, they expected a London tour, but the museum funds would only transport their objects and not cover their travel expenses. Objects moved, people stayed.

Places are complicated by the notion of the museum as a 'contact zone', locations connected through artefacts and emerging from representations, as in the example of how objects from Highland New Guinea displayed in London connect continents and create expectations of travel.

Two decades on, at the Museum of London in 2019, the opposite scenario unfolds. Many groups arrived in London of their own accord; some are from former colonies of the British Empire, many are not. Some communities have resided in London since the 1900s; others have arrived in large numbers in 1990. They are all London's cultural minorities, and what they have in common is that for the most part, their cultural heritage is not yet included in the Museum of London, they are not officially recognized in the museum of the city in which they live and work. This is a reversed situation, of migrants without material heritage rather than objects being represented without their makers. The Museum of London, despite a museum of a superdiverse metropolis, does not have objects on display relating to each cultural heritage of London's supplementary schools and the migrant communities they represent.

This chapter considers how the concept of a contact zone applies to a museum which lacks cultural artefacts of the supplementary schools participating in its programme. The problem is akin to what Harrison theorises as 'absent heritage' in relation to acts of iconoclasm to

describe material heritage that has been intentionally removed: the destruction of large monuments, and the fall of political ideologies together with it their statues, walls and buildings (Harrison 2013:182-195). In the case of supplementary schools, absent heritage is not an absolute condition, cultural heritage is continually on the threshold of being lost, to be retrieved and rematerialized. Supplementary schools are in the process of repeatedly salvaging histories and cultures and packing them away again, moving cultural artefacts and resources into and out of rented premises.

In supplementary school research, the problem of re-materialising cultural heritage post-migration has been attributed to a lack of material resources, such as the scarcity of children's books in mother-tongue (Hall et al 2002:413). My fieldwork observations suggest a different problem: although cultural objects and teaching resources are rarer and not readily available, supplementary schools do not lack material culture but storage, display space, permanent venues, and public visibility. The question is about who is willing to store their artefacts or display their histories? These are the pragmatic dimensions of materialising cultural memories in the public sphere and passing them to children growing up in diaspora.

4.1 Histories in carrier bags: the synchronised acts of setting up supplementary schools

Around 9.30 am on a Saturday morning, a year into fieldwork on my way to a museum festival, I got into a lift on the London underground and noticed a young woman carrying lots of bags. She balanced multiple bags on each shoulder, open and filled to the brim. There were bags within bags. I had never seen her before but guessed she was a supplementary school teacher because she was carrying too many things and because she looked like she was in a hurry, heading somewhere on a Saturday morning with a sense of purpose whilst the rest of the city is gradually waking up. Something stuck out of one of her bags. It was a portable whiteboard.

Curious to find out if I was right, I waited until we exited the lift, letting the few other commuters pass by so as to not bring attention to ourselves, and asked her discretely: was she on her way to a supplementary school? She laughed, surprised to be discovered. Yes, she was. She was off to a German supplementary school, just one tube stop. Not all these bags were hers, she was carrying one for another teacher. She recommended the rolled-up whiteboard: You can set it up anywhere, it's a great invention! She held out the bag so I can take a snapshot.

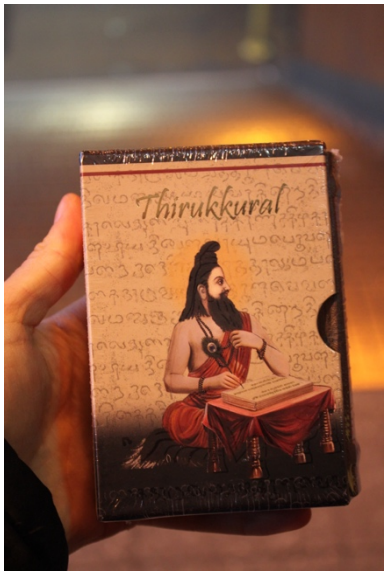
I was able to recognise a complete stranger as a fellow supplementary school practitioner after a year of fieldwork in a Brazilian school, out of which I developed a gradual awareness that across the city teachers from different cultural minorities are all making their way to set up their supplementary school every Saturday morning, carrying their classrooms in bags. Based on her appearance, there was nothing to indicate that the woman on the underground belongs to an ethnic minority group. As it turns out, her background was German. Teachers and parents from different transnational backgrounds all take part in these synchronised acts of lugging classroom resources and cultural artefacts around London in what amounts to an invisible community of practice. Suitcases and bags are unpacked to create temporary sites from which cultural heritage continues to flow in diaspora, then packed away again a few hours later and stored off premises for the rest of the week.





4.1 (Left) German supplementary school teacher carrying classroom resources in bags on London tube. 4.2 (Right) Brazilian supplementary school teacher carrying classroom resources in bags to West London.















Images above: classroom resources carried around London. 4.3 Top: Calendar and Christmas cards, Tamil school in Sydenham. Middle row: 4.4 Left- bilingual edition of the Thirukkural , Tamil school in East Ham. 4.5 Middle centre – 'The Little Prince' in Lithuanian.

4.6 Middle right- Farsi children's book. Bottom row. 4.7 Left: Carnival masks. 4.8 Centre: a toy of a popular cartoon character, Brazilian school. 4.9 Right: watermelons, Iranian school.

Just like the suitcases they are carried in, supplementary schools carry cultural histories and collective memories in material form. Cultural artefacts, craft material and classroom snacks are bundled together in wheelie suitcases and shoulder bags. Some of these objects may seem arbitrary or banal but they are what Frykman describes as 'sensitive symbols', carrying corporeal memories in migration, using the affective potentialities of objects to make the distant past readily available, sometimes through readily-available and ordinary things (Frykman 2016:82).

On a rainy Saturday morning in November, wheeling a heavy suitcase across Brick Lane, a Lithuanian supplementary school teacher carried a dozen hardback copies of *The Little Prince i*n Lithuanian, ordered online and stored in her house. An Albanian teacher carried a miniature souvenir of Shkoker castle along with picture books, postcards and handmade maps of the region. A Tamil supplementary school teacher carried a Tamil calendar produced in London, with auspicious festival times and adverts for local Tamil-owned businesses. An Iranian parent brought in heavy out-of-season watermelons to celebrate the Shab-e Yalda [18] festival at the school. Histories and geographies from across the world are transported by teachers in supermarket and shoulder bags, pulled on wheelie suitcases onto trains and busses, making their way to reach the various destinations where supplementary schools are set up every Saturday morning. The deep histories of distant places are recalled through these objects, books and games purchased during visits to countries of origin, acquired through friends returning to London, stored in teachers' houses or borrowed from colleagues, that continue to circulate around the city.

Löfgren observes how packing is a heavily gendered activity, noting that women, especially wives and mothers, never pack just for their own needs, but also pack for others, anticipating contingencies and care of children (Löfgren 2016:135). This is true for supplementary school teachers, the majority of whom are women, for whom cultural memory becomes their gendered responsibility.

The suitcase on wheels "signals a self-reliant and strong woman, able to take care of her own stuff and life". (Löfgren 2016:136). In supplementary school contexts, the woman

[18] Iranian celebration of winter solstice

dragging the suitcase with classroom resources is not only taking care of her family but her entire community, its cultural memories and heritage post-migration.

4.2 The Hidden Histories of Supplementary Schools

Perhaps it is not surprising that the histories of supplementary schools are not easy to trace, given that they have to habitually remove themselves from rented premises. Each supplementary school carries at least three histories: the first is a history of a region where families come from, the second is the community's history in diaspora, its arrival stories and journeys of migration to the UK, the third is the history of a supplementary school as an institution, which is also the history of one or more local neighbourhoods, depending on how many premises the school has relocated to since it opened.

The fourth is the opaque history of supplementary schools in the UK, a history that begins without an archive. According to McLean, supplementary schools were first established in the UK during the 1800s by Russian settlers (McLean 1985, cited in Simon 2018:26). Walker traces the existence of supplementary schools to the mid-1800s when a sizable Italian community was established in Clerkenwell, London where the first Italian school was established in 1837 (Walker 1982 cited in Issa 2009:20). In East London, a community school was set up to teach children of the Chinese Dockers (Issa 2009:20). Other supplementary school communities likely existed but records were either poorly kept or did not survive since these were informal institutions operating at the periphery of British society, met with little State interest or interference.

Between the 1950s and 1970s supplementary schooling experienced a significant increase (McLean 1985 cited in Simon 2018:26). In the 1950s the first Greek-Cypriot and Ukrainian supplementary schools were set up. In 1959 the first Turkish supplementary school was set up to promote 'mother tongue teaching and preservation of the Turkish culture (Issa 2009, Minty et al. 2008). Black supplementary schools were set up after the second wave of migration from the Caribbean that peaked from 1955 to 1962 (Andrews 2013:3).

Black supplementary schools were exceptional in that they formed a very public-facing social movement in response to deep institutional racism in state education that was extremely damaging to their children. Parents, educationalists and cultural activists formed what became known as the Black Supplementary Schools Movement (1968-1975), one of its key figures was poet, publisher and educational activist John La Rose who in 1966 co-

founded *New Beacon Books,* Britain's first black publisher and bookshop, and co-organised the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books from 1982 to 1995 (Harris et al 2005, La Rose 2014).

This was the first occasion in which supplementary schools became united and created their own networks. Schools that were typically started by parents in kitchens and living rooms for a handful of children grew in size and moved into larger venues to share resources. For instance in 1969 John La Rose set up the George Padmore supplementary school, named in honour of the Trinidadian intellectual and activist George Padmore (1903-1959) for his two sons and two of their friends [19].

1969 was the same year that a confidential report issued by Haringey council proposed 'banding' - a method used to stream students, supposedly according to their academic ability but in practice based on prejudiced beliefs that children of West Indian backgrounds will have lower IQs. Titled 'Haringey Comprehensive Schools', the report was written by Alderman Alfred Doulton, Headmaster of Highgate School. It stated that:

"On a rough calculation about half the immigrants will be West Indians at 7 out of 11 schools, the significance of this being the general recognition that their I.Q.s work out below their English contemporaries. Thus academic standards will be lower in schools where they form a larger group." [20]

The leaked Doulton report evidenced the deep racism already experienced by West Indian children in state schools, a high proportion of whom had been grossly mislabelled as 'educationally subnormal' due to cultural biases (Andrews 2013:5) and were already sent off to Educationally Subnormal Schools (ESN). Emergency School Programmes were set up to remove West Indian Children who had been wrongly placed in ESN schools to Black Supplementary Schools [21].

Haringey's 'banding' proposals were met with widespread opposition, Black supplementary schools became more public-facing, holding mass demonstrations across London. For this reason, Black supplementary schools were more publicly visible and organised as a social

[19] The Black Education Movement (Early Period), 1965-1988 https://catalogue.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/records/BEM accessed 31st March 2022
[20] ('Haringey Comprehensive Schools' Section 5 Jan 13 Jan 1969) ibid
[21] The Black Education Movement (Early Period), 1965-1988 https://catalogue.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/records/BEM accessed 31st March 2022

movement, holding regular meetings, leading public discussions and maintaining dialogue between supplementary schools, state schools and local councils. Black was used as a political term, i.e. Black Consciousness, uniting parents and educational activists of African, Caribbean and Asian heritage who shared the same experiences of racism and exclusion. For Black people, writes Asante, the basis of their identity was never biological or phenotypical but instead historical, cultural, and experiential (Asante, 2003 cited in Andrews 2013:25). It is worth noting that racism was directed at people who were considered non-white also due to discrimination against their dialects, as Andrews notes: “African Caribbean children at the time were using colloquial Caribbean dialects such as Patois. Their language was rejected by the schools.” (ibid)



4.10 Anti-banding Campaign in Haringey c.1969 [22]

[22] The Black Education Movement (Early Period), 1965-1988 https://catalogue.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/records/BEM accessed 31st March 2022



4.11 George Padmore Institute [23]

Today there are two sites in the UK that physically preserve substantial archives and records of supplementary schools. The first is the George Padmore Institute, founded in 1991 by John La Rose and other political and pedagogic activists, situated under the New Beacon Bookshop. The George Padmore Institute archives material relating to the black community of Caribbean, African and Asian descent in Britain and continental Europe [24]. Its archivist sent me a complete catalogue for the Black Education Movement (BEM), including the Black Supplementary School Movement (BSSM) records. The catalogue details the physical conditions of each archived item:

'Transfer of yellow dye from flyers to surrounding pages…'
'mouldy: In conservation…'
'Some documents have been water damaged…'.

These details show the precarious conditions these materials have been previously exposed to and the current care and attention that has gone into preserving what is mostly printed and handwritten documents of meetings notes, campaign posters, letters to councils etc.

Besides the George Padmore Institute, the second institute to hold public records of supplementary schools in the UK is the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Schools (NRCSE), a national strategic and support organisation for community-led supplementary schools and the wider supplementary education sector across England. The

[23] https://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/archive accessed 31st March 2022

[24] https://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org.

NRCSE maintains a list of supplementary schools in England and offers them a nationally recognised quality-assurance accreditation, including training in financial management and safeguarding. It has recently overseen 490 supplementary schools complete their quality mark training. The process requires teachers to collate their lesson plans, photos and meeting minutes into a 'portfolio of evidence' in order to receive accreditation. Through this process, schools are incentivised to document and archive their work. The NRCSE works on a 'meta-level, increasing supplementary schools' visibility as a sector whilst supporting individual schools in evidencing their work.

The NRCSE was instrumental in making supplementary schools visible during the New Labour years in the 2000s. During this period, the NRCSE was known as the Resource Unit for supplementary and mother-tongue schools, operating as part of a larger organisation called 'Contin-you' –"the darling of the Labour party" according to the NRCSE's chief executive. In 1999 it comiled the first list of supplementary schools in England. When *Contin-you* was dissolved and its funding ceased, the Resource Unit became an independent charity, reopened as the NRCSE. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) has supported the establishment of NRCSE as an independent charity in 2007 (Evans & Gillan-Thomas 2015), which now receives its core funds from the John Lyon's Charity [25].

4.3 A visit to the NRCSE

On a visit to the NRCSE office in Holloway Road, I met Pascale Vassie, the executive director. She introduced me to the small team and noted their cultural backgrounds of staff: she is Huguenot, two are Turkish, one used to be the head of a long running Black supplementary school, one speaks Farsi. She pointed out that as well as their official role and professional expertise: law, IT, education, accounting, each brings in different cultural knowledge that between them covers a vast span. She joked: "I get two for the price of 1." A staff member joked back: "No one else would have me."

The NRCSE defines supplementary education as 'out-of-school learning'. I asked Pascale what differentiates supplementary *schools* from supplementary *education*?

Her answer: "All of it is supplementary education, but a school is not 2 or 3 children. A class is ten or more. Children are there at the same *time* (i.e. not a private lesson). It's a school if it

[25] http://jlc.london/jlc-extra/capacity-building/national-resource-centre-for-supplementary-education-nrcse/ accessed 1st December 2020

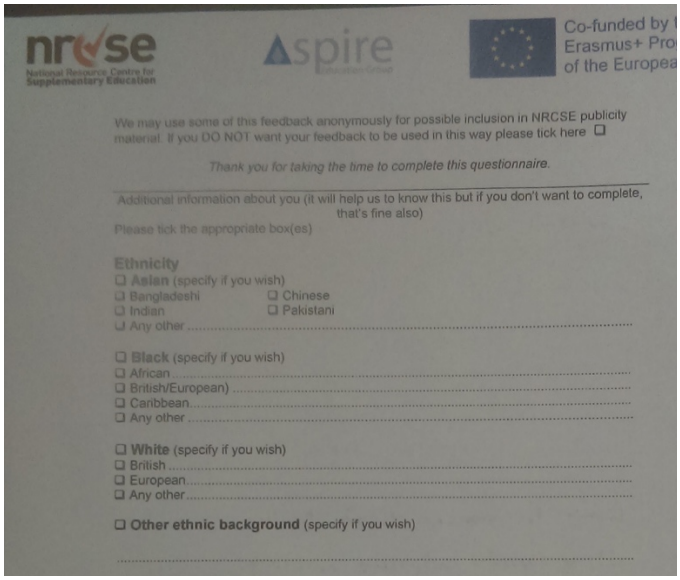
sees itself as a school…We wouldn't include a Sunday school if parents are in the service and the children colour-in in the back room. The children's work has to be programmed, progress documented. A mother-and-toddler club is not a supplementary school."

I asked her where the term 'supplementary school' come from?

Pascale: "The term 'supplementary schools' , or supplementary education, came from Caribbean educationalists in the 1980 and 90s who saw their children were being short-changed. They didn't have another language in their home. English *was* their language. They *spoke* English and the fact they were not achieving (was a) flaw in the education system, *not* in the children. And that's remained the case".

Pascale is a passionate and well-versed speaker. She has been publicly advocating supplementary schools for years. She knows some schools favour the term 'complementary schools', but gave this analogy: "Food supplement is like iron- like something your diet is deficient in. Complementary is like fine wine or steak. What these schools provide is an *essential supplement* to education that the community-led nature to education is *crucial*. It's *not* a nice add on, it's essential!"

Pascale describes some of the ways children from cultural minority backgrounds are invisiblised, for instance in census forms, where the Polish community that has been in the UK since the end of the Second World War now has three generations that cant tick a box, and the Turkish community putting down 'White British' on census forms, their mainstream school not knowing what percentage of children are of Turkish origins. The NRCSE uses a different form to the gov.uk census, reconfiguring the order of ethnicity boxes. Placing Asian and Black first, the form reverses the order in which ethnicities appear, contrasting with the Museum of London's ethnicity forms which begin with three white categories - White-British, White-Irish, White-Other, followed by four 'Mixed-White' boxes:



nrcse National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education

Aspire Education Group

Co-funded by t
Erasmus+ Pro
of the Europea

We may use some of this feedback anonymously for possible inclusion in NRCSE publicity material. If you DO NOT want your feedback to be used in this way please tick here ☐

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Additional information about you (it will help us to know this but if you don't want to complete, that's fine also)

Please tick the appropriate box(es)

Ethnicity

☐ **Asian** (specify if you wish)
☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Chinese
☐ Indian ☐ Pakistani
☐ Any other .....

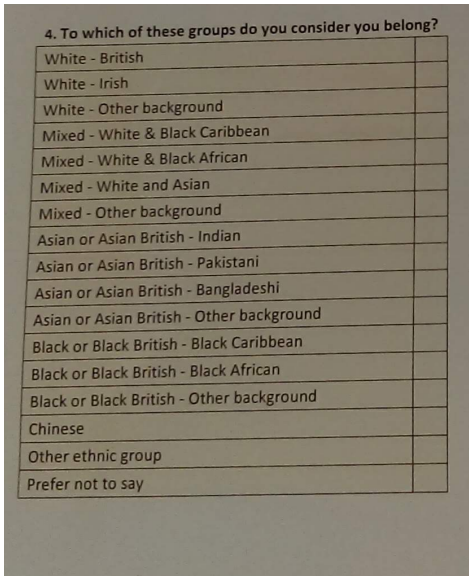
☐ **Black** (specify if you wish)
☐ African .....
☐ British/European) .....
☐ Caribbean .....
☐ Any other .....

☐ **White** (specify if you wish)
☐ British .....
☐ European .....
☐ Any other .....

☐ **Other ethnic background** (specify if you wish)

.....

4.12 NRCSE ethnicity form



4. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

White - British	
White - Irish	
White - Other background	
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	
Mixed - White & Black African	
Mixed - White and Asian	
Mixed - Other background	
Asian or Asian British - Indian	
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	
Asian or Asian British - Other background	
Black or Black British - Black Caribbean	
Black or Black British - Black African	
Black or Black British - Other background	
Chinese	
Other ethnic group	
Prefer not to say	

4.13 Museum of London ethnicity form

Pascale advocates for wider public recognition of supplementary schools' contribution to society, as essential provisions that help children develop their sense of pride in their cultural identities. Working against an educational system that normalises monolingualism, Pascale passionately promotes bilingualism and the right of the child to learn their mother tongue.

For decades Pascale has been reaching out to schools, making connections and setting up partnerships, compiling lists and data-basis, trying to help supplementary schools function as a recognised sector.

On the bookshelves in the NRCSE office are paper copies of the first 'Directory of Supplementary and Mother-tongue classes' – the Resource's Centre's first attempt to consolidate hundreds of disparate supplementary schools into a comprehensive list. Published in 1999, the first edition lists 1000 schools and clubs. In a second edition published a year later, the numbers have doubled, listing 2000 schools. In 2012 the Directory had over 2,500 supplementary schools (Evans and Gillan-Thomas 2015:10). The more recent estimation is between 3,000-5,000 supplementary schools, according to a report published by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (Evans and Gillan-Thomas 2015:3). Yet despite the apparent growth of supplementary schools in London and the UK, in 2020 there is almost no trace of supplementary schools on council lists. On Gov.uk they are vaguely classified as out-of-school provisions rather than educational institutions in their own right. The government department of education and Skills (DfES) that funded the first and revised Directories no longer exists, itself broken into other departments in 2007.

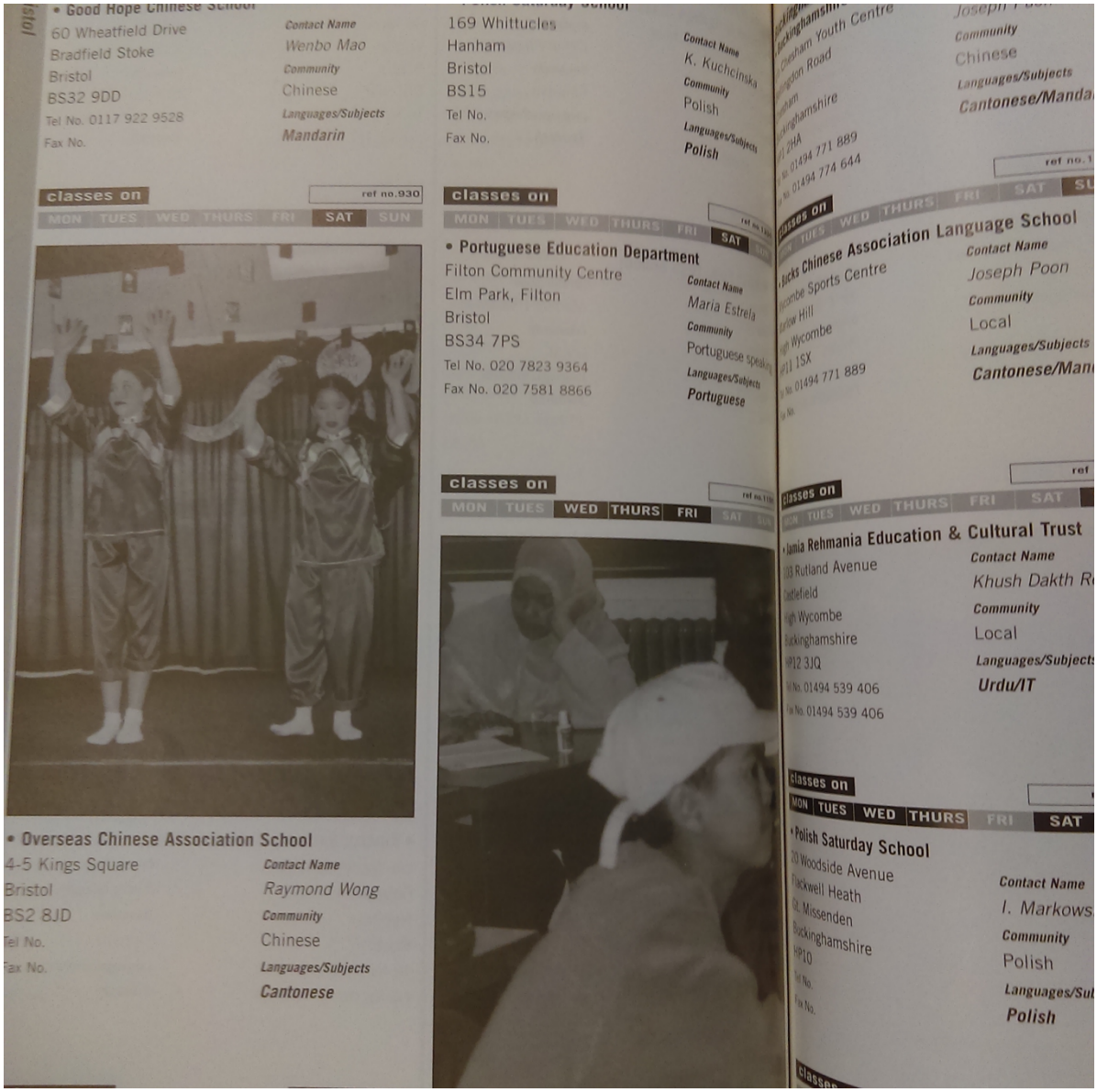
The first lists were compiled before mobile phones were in use. Many supplementary school organisers must have given their home landlines. Identifying and contacting school leaders must have taken a great deal of work. The listed schools chose to be registered; they were under no obligation to do so. Many other schools likely have existed that were not successfully contacted or decided not to be included.

The directories categorised schools into sections according to their Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England, rather than the cultural heritage they teach. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) funded and used the directories showing the previous government's interest and involvement in supplementary schools. On the back of the Directory's 2nd edition, the blurb notes that the 1st edition rapidly went out of print due to its success and that:

"This new Directory will, like its predecessor, play an important role in raising the profile of the Supplementary and Mother Tongue Projects and in bringing to public attention the extent and range of provisions available in the community." [26]

Leafing through the Directory, one gets a sense of the breadth of the diversity of supplementary schools in England, the hundreds upon hundreds of community and mother-tongue schools, disparate cultural minority groups living in the same neighbourhood. A single page representing a segment of a London borough lists two Armenian schools, a Chinese school, a Yoruba/Benin school, an Iranian/Farsi school, and an Urdu school. On a section about Bristol are a Mandarin school, a Cantonese school, two other schools that teach Cantonese and Mandarin, two Polish schools, a Portuguese school, and a school teaching Urdu and IT, the latter school typical in its diverse, mixed curriculum that makes the schools hard to qualify for outsiders. Photographs in the directory illustrate how cultural heritage teaching tends to have two main strands: language learning and performances, children are pictured seated with open textbooks or else performing on stage.

[26] 1999 Supplementary School Directory published by the Resource Unit



4.14 Directory of Supplementary and Mother-tongue classes. First edition. NRCSE.

Much effort has been invested in compiling these disparate institutions into a single list. Schools had to summarize its curriculum and what community it caters for in a word or two, for instance:

Community: Turkish
Languages /Subjects: Turkish/ English/Maths

Community: Asian
Languages /Subjects: Gujarati

Community: Turkish

Languages / Subjects: Turkish

Community: Somali
Language/Subject: Somali, Mathematics, Science

Community: Greek
Languages / Subjects: Greek

Community: Local
Languages / Subjects: Yoruba/Benin

Community: Local
Languages / Subjects: Armenian /History

When supplementary schools were endorsed by New Labour, the Resource Unit run its own publication called 'the Bullet!n':


quality and excellence • school news • funding
useful resources • training courses and procedures

the Bullet!n

Autumn 2006 Issue 4

the Resource Unit for supplementary and mother-tongue schools

Adonis hails sector success

Schools minister promises continued support for supplementary schools

A major part of our work at the Resource Unit is raising the profile of supplementary and mother-tongue schools. While much has been done to communicate the purpose and impact of these schools, we are, like many of you who work in or with the sector, always conscious of the need to do more. You can imagine, then, how thrilled we were to be able to help organise an evening reception for supplementary schools hosted by Lord Adonis, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools (pictured right, with the director of the Resource Unit, Paul Morrish).

The purpose of the April event, also attended by ambassadors and high commissioners, was to 'acknowledge the vital contribution that supplementary schools make to the education of children and young people'. Lord Adonis's encouraging address also outlined existing opportunities for supplementary schools to be supported. His article on page 3, in which he voices his support for the 5,000-strong supplementary school movement, reveals how the minister would like to see the sector strengthened.

Lord Adonis said: 'The excellent Supplementary Schools Resource Unit is looking to develop an independent trust to support supplementary schools nationally. I look forward to discussing this idea with Paul Morrish.'

Quality and excellence

The Resource Unit's annual conference

BOOK NOW!

A unique opportunity to learn about key quality initiatives and how the sector's services can be strengthened at a practical level.

This second annual conference will be relevant to stakeholders in the supplementary education sector, the voluntary sector, the fields of minority achievement, extended schools and community languages

4.15 *the Bullet!n*. Issue 4. 2006.

Pascale keeps an archive of these publications that show how MPs like Lord Adonis were heavily supportive of the supplementary school sector. Pascale called these years a ‘Golden Era’. It was short-lived. The Department of Education and Paul Hamlyn agreed to fund the Resource Centre for three and then six years. Then funding came to an end. Paradoxically to its name, *ContinYou* was a short-term project. When funding ran out, everyone got ready to close down and move on. The offices were being cleared out. Pascale started taking the publications, directories and brochures out of the office. They were not seen as worth anything at the time, no-one questioned her actions. Pascale had the foresight to preserve the archives and records, pointing out: “We maintained the list,” referring to the supplementary school directories that are now available online.

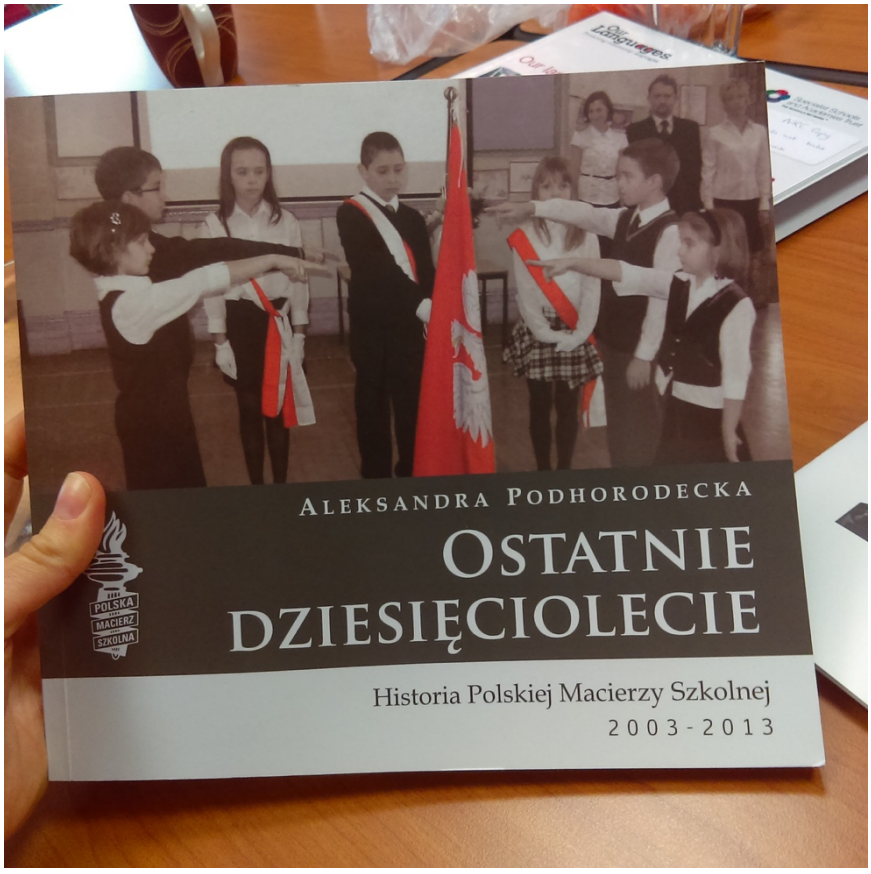
In 2012 Pascale moved the intellectual property of the Resource Centre, separating it from ContinYou. She described how she “jumped ship” and “took the NRSCE with me because everything was closing down.” The Resource Centre turned into the NRCSE, established as a Registered charity in 2013. She had kept all the archives. She gestured to the two large, functional bookshelves, the salvaged library full of materials about supplementary schools that she had singlehandedly saved from the skip, with pedagogic books about the politics of preserving mother-tongue, textbooks designed for teachers and colourful supplementary school catalogues.



4.16 Salvaged books, NRCSE library

Post-conference publications with titles such as: ‘Developing Community Cohesion in Schools: National one-day conference 2008’ show the scale of interest in the last decade and how historically supplementary schools in the UK held large, widely attended public events and saw themselves as a shared community of practice.

There are teachers’ textbooks: ‘Scheme for Work for Mother Tongue Teaching for pupils 5-11’ produced by London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 2003, evidencing how local councils were once involved in the sector. Colourful supplementary school prospectuses with titles such as: ‘Ostatnie Dziesieciolecie – Historia Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej -2003-2013’, show how supplementary schools try to archive their own institutional histories:



4.17 Polish supplementary school prospectus

Pascale reflected on the fate of supplementary schools under the successive government, following multiculturalism’s ‘Golden Era’: “The National Resource Centre was funded between 2006-12. It had some respect from the Department of Education, seen as part of school improvement, to be respected by mainstream. Education of Black Asian and Minority Backgrounds. After that I think (it has) totally gone out of the window for the department of

Education. ‘Developing community cohesion in schools’- gone out of the window. There were lots of ways with different government agendas that supplementary schools fitted in. Now not.”

The survival of this unique and rare library is a testament to Pascale’s own efforts to archive supplementary schools’ work and presence in England. As I browsed through the various books on the large shelf by the office entrance, Pascale went to fetch more books that she keeps on a low shelf under her desk in the far corner of the office. Her surprised colleagues remarked they were not aware of these. These are precious to her, she explained, she can’t have them by the door in case they go missing. Her statement is somewhat ironic, having shared her story of how she took it upon herself to remove these materials out of the office a decade earlier to preserve them. The deeper irony is of course that the organisation that campaigns for supplementary schools’ visibility had itself come so close to disappearing, along with all its directories, resources, books, documents and archives. Pascale’s work mirrors that of so many supplementary schools that struggle to survive, preserving their archive with nowhere to house it, lacking a permanent premise or secure status, physically lugging cultural heritage around.

Listening to Pascale’s account of the history of the NRCSE, how they no longer fit within the current government’s agenda but once did, it becomes clear why so much of the research conducted in supplementary schools seems to date to the 2000s, carried out under New Labour when supplementary schools were being brought into public attention. Research publication topics from this decade include: how to support language teachers in supplementary schools (Minty et al 2008, Issa 2009), students’ perspectives about their cultural identity in Chinese complementary schools (Archer, Francis and Mau 2010), women’s roles as community activists in Black supplementary schools (Mirza and Reay 2000) and students’ negotiation of national identities in a research carried out in eight supplementary schools in four UK cities (Blackledge and Creese 2009). An exceptional research project carried out in this decade, unique in the scale and breadth of its undertaking and its applicable use, is ‘Our Languages: Partnerships in Language and Culture’ (2006) a large collaborative project between Goldsmiths University education department and supplementary schools. Within growing State recognition of community languages, the research directly supported supplementary schools’ teaching by introducing five standardised curriculum guides in Chinese, Tamil, Punjabi, Arabic and Urdu.



4.18 Curriculum guides developed by supplementary schools together with Goldsmiths University.

These languages were introduced as GCSE syllabus into British education at staggered times. The curriculum guides give them a visual consistency in the layout of the books, a turning point when the government directly invested and promoted 'community languages'. The curriculum guide quotes the DfES s in their introduction 'Rational and links to government policy', emphasising how supplementary schools fit with New Labour's citizenship agenda:

"Languages for all: Languages for life. Drawing on the skills and expertise of those who speak community languages will promote citizenship and complement the Government's broader work on the promotion of social cohesion. 2002 quote from the DfES."

Research carried out by Hall et al. notes Europe's changing responses towards diversity in education (Hall et al 2002). This comparative study observes that in the mid 1970s there was growing recognition and support for mother-tongue education and cultural heritage provisions. In England in the mid-1970s, despite the lack of national policy guidelines, bilingual education was endorsed by state schools who provided mother tongue teaching support and inclusion of some minority languages into the modem languages curriculum, e.g. Bengali, Urdu and Punjabi (Hall et al 2002:401).

By the mid-1980s the New Right attack on education challenged the place of multicultural and bilingual education in schools (ibid). Strides taken towards supporting bilingualism and cultural diversity in education were reversed in the 1990s with a return to a more overtly

assimilationist model for ethnic minority groups. It is against this backdrop that supplementary schools in England should be understood (Hall et al 2002:402).

The two subsequent decades saw the process repeated. Hall et al's 2002 research was published when New Labour showed renewed interest in supplementary schools as part of its policy of celebrating multiculturalism, making them sites worthy of research and investment. In the following decade- 2010-2020 - the Conservative government reversed educational policies once again. In 2011 David Cameron, then Prime Minister, made a speech where he criticised 'the doctrine of state multiculturalism': "we've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values" [27]. 'Our values' turned out to be five 'Fundamental British Values' - Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect, Tolerance and Individual Liberty- written by the Home Office and introduced three years later into State education as mandatory topics. The government's introduction of the compulsory teaching of 'British Values' was felt by state school headteachers to be quite Orwellian and received a great deal of criticism: for being introduced very suddenly, for disregarding British history and contemporary politics, for demanding students to accept these values as unquestionable and absolute truths, and perhaps most significantly, Fundemental British Values were coined up by the Home Office as a security intervention to combat terrorism, and state teachers sensed they had nothing to do directly with the education of children, as they were not designed to develop children's learning skills, their critical or analytical thinking [28] . Importantly, the concept of multiculturalism was deliberately scrapped and replaced with the term 'tolerance'. The celebration of cultural diversity was over.

Under the previous government's multiculturalism agenda state school buildings were used free-of-charge by community groups running supplementary schools as part of New Labour's Extended Schools programme (2006). Today state schools are often run as private businesses, renting their sites to supplementary schools for high fees. With contracts negotiated by finance managers acting on the state school's behalf, one school never sees the other. They occupy the building at different times and never meet. In the past supplementary schools could build relationships and mainstream schools, as indicated in the 2012 *Bullet!n.* Today discussions of students' educational needs rarely occur, and curricular exchange seems unlikely. Mainstream and supplementary schools work as entirely separate

[27] https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference accessed 3rd Dec 2020

[28] http://www.insted.co.uk/british-values.pdf accessed 30 November 2020

institutions, the latter acting as the invisible schools that occupy the buildings during the former's closing hours.

celebrations • partnerships • campaigns • funding

the Bullet!n

Summer 2012 Issue 21

The National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education

Make languages count

The accreditation of home languages has been given a boost in Sheffield by the award of three years' funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to the Home Language Accreditation Project (HoLA). The relationship between supplementary and mainstream schools is key to this project, which aims to support bilingual children and young people in gaining national accreditation in their mother tongues.

What is HoLA doing?

HoLA is building on the work done by the national Our Languages project, which identified the need for large-scale strategic approaches to support community languages and accreditation. HoLA is Sheffield's city-wide response to this need.

Who is delivering HoLA?

Delivery of the project is being led by King Edward VII School (a mainstream comprehensive school), along with Languages Sheffield (a voluntary organisation that supports the learning and maintenance of all languages), the Sheffield Children's University and the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) at Sheffield City Council.

What does HoLA aim to do?

Over the next three years, HoLA aims to help nearly 200 bilingual students gain accreditation in their home languages at either GCSE or A Level, or via Asset Languages.

Asset Languages are particularly relevant for primary-aged pupils, who can take skills tests from a very young age, and for languages such as Somali, where a GCSE is not yet available.



Who took part in the pilot?

The HoLA pilot project took place between July and September last year in Sheffield.

Five supplementary schools took part:

- Sheffield Chinese School
- Sheffield Korean School
- Russian School Club OK
- Sheffield Star Mandarin School
- Arabic Community Language School.

What was the role of Sheffield Children's University?

Sheffield Children's University is part of the national Children's University scheme, which recognises the involvement of children in out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) activity through the presentation of certificates.

It focuses on rewarding participation, raising aspirations and encouraging engagement with learning.

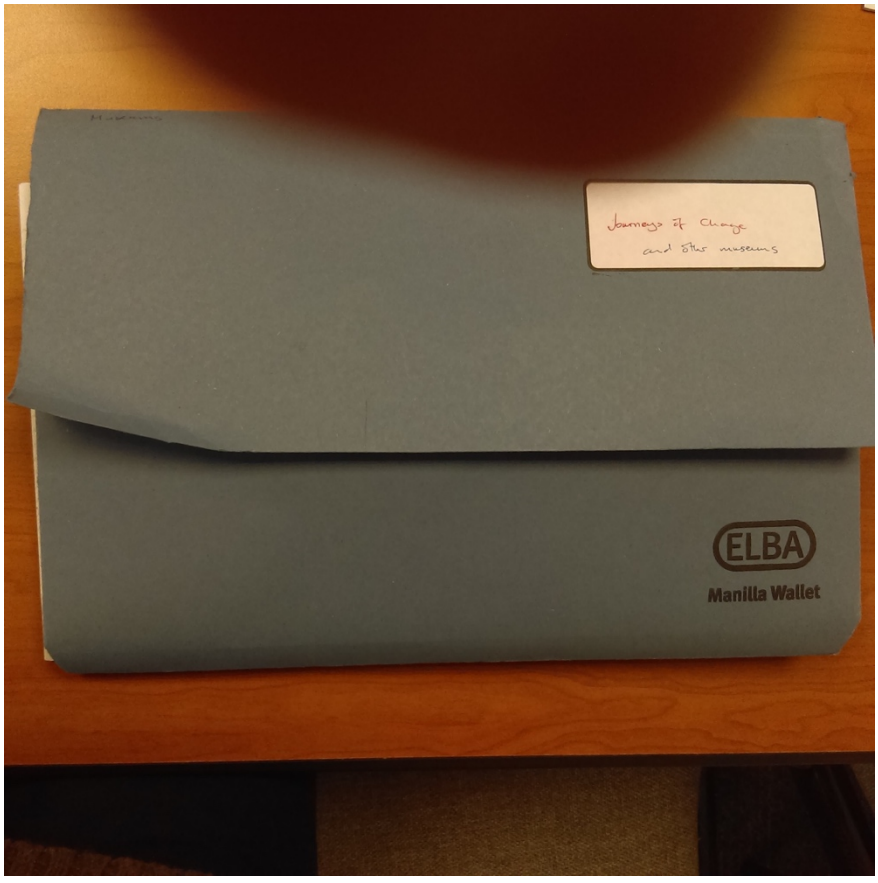
Participation was recorded using Sheffield Children's University database, with the information collated and quality assured via Languages Sheffield.

Continued on page 2

4.19 *the Bullet!n.* Issue 21. 2012

Supplementary schools were taken off the agenda under the Conservative government. The number of languages that qualified for exams was reduced. In 2016 a change in GCSE and A-Level language exam specifications was introduced that resulted in many exam boards deciding to withdraw their GCSE and A level exams in 'small-entry languages' [29]. For Albanian supplementary schools, this meant they lost their crowd-funded campaign for the Albanian language to be taught as a GCSE. As a consequence, heritage languages not being taught as exams means that as children get older they have less incentive to continue practising reading and writing in their home language and attending the schools. Supplementary schools that cannot provide students with publicly-recognisable qualifications such as GCSEs cannot support young people with their UCAS applications for university degrees, and tend to have a high dropout rate as children move into their teens. In 2020 it is possible to look back at half a century of changing government agendas, to see how these have influenced supplementary schools from being highly visible to their current state of obscurity.

4.4 A brief history of supplementary schools' collaborations with museums



4.20 Museum collaborations folder. NRCSE

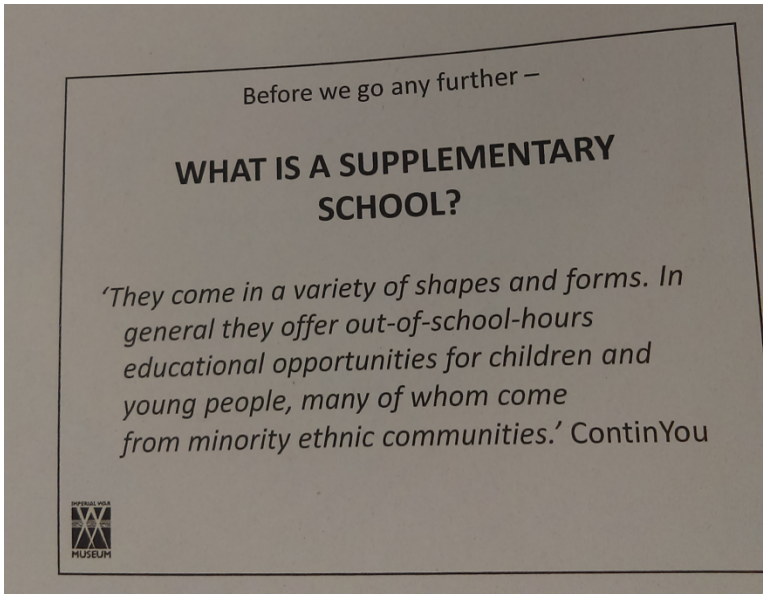
[29] https://www.all-languages.org.uk/news/withdrawal-of-gcse-and-a-level-exams-in-small-entry-languages/ 1 December 2020

Pascale fetched a slim document wallet for me labelled: '*Journeys of Change* and other museums'. This folder is likely the only material archive that evidences the history of supplementary school collaborations with museums. It consists of a handful of printouts, museum leaflets and meeting minutes from which it is possible to see how the supplementary schools programme existed in various forms before its latest reincarnation in the Museum of London.

First was 'Journeys of Change', a 4-year project that ran between 2006-2010, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sports. The project linked three museums - the Imperial War Museum, Hackney Museum and Brent Museum and Archives- to 12 supplementary schools, eventually including the British Museum that remained peripheral to the project. A Programme Advisory Group was established, and appears to have consisted of officers from other museums, rather than supplementary school representatives. Meeting minutes from 2009 show staff from the London Transport Museum, the Cumming Museum and the Jewish Museum attended such a meeting to learn about the successes and challenges of these collaborations.

An article published in 'the Bullit!n' shows how the museums reached out to schools to cover subjects relevant to their curriculum: Black history, Sikh history, citizenship, literacy and mother tongue languages, each museum organizing a range of creative activities and workshops using its object collection. At the Imperial War Museum, a classroom resource about Somali history was created.

Officers from these different museums were not expected to know what supplementary schools are. The NRCSE, then part of ContinYou, made an information sheet to inform them.



4.21 Handout prepared by ContinYou for museum staff

In 2007 the British Museum piloted its own programme, reaching out to supplementary schools in its borough. By 2008 the British Museum established its supplementary schools programme, realizing they are potentially a great target audience. This time around the museum advisory group consisted of teachers and community leaders from many different supplementary schools. At its height, the programme ran large scale events hosting hundreds of supplementary school children, sometimes in a single day. By 2016 funding for the programme at the British Museum run out. During my fieldwork between 2018-2020 the British Museum still occasionally reached out to supplementary schools but had no dedicated staff members or funding to organize large scale events or long-term partnerships.

As the programme at the British Museum came to a close, one of its officers put in a funding bid and managed successfully to reestablish the programme at the Museum of London, where several advisory members relocated to, along with their schools. A couple of supplementary school directors and teachers that are now part of the Advisory Group at the Museum of London were there from the start, at the Imperial War Museum, or further down the line, supporting the British Museum programme. From the handful of museum printouts and flyers it is possible to see overlaps of dates, and track the names of museum officers who moved between institutions, leaving one museum in order to reestablished the programme in another.

The continued sense of frustration that previous museum collaborations are not adequately documented is shared by the Museum of London's community officers as much as supplementary school representatives. Every time the programme relocates to a different

museum everything begins again rather than building on work that had already happened, like a newly arrived immigrant whose history and qualifications are not recognized. Museums all share institutional amnesia about their supplementary school programmes, which become highly profiled and then forgotten.

In 2020 there was almost no network that connects supplementary schools. The only institution where the programme was active at the time of writing was the Museum of London. The museum was exceptional in hosting several supplementary schools at once in festivals, maintaining a strong partnership with heads and teachers through its Advisory Group, and conducting offsite outreach sessions for supplementary schools.

4.5 Performing absent heritage

Clifford's much-cited essay 'museums as contact zones' (1997) already began to address questions of heritage and displacement: 'Where is my land? I am not going to see my village again…' Tlingit representatives invited to help curators interpret objects in a museum collection instead talked about fishing rights. They exchanged orations of histories through stories and songs, often leaving the objects untouched (Clifford 1997:189). The essay shows the fluid movement between material heritage and performance, museum objects triggering memories and prompting performances.

In the Museum of London, however, collaborations centered around performance in the absence of representational objects. During museum festivals, children materialized their cultural heritage through performances. Unlike Clifford's opening vignette where Tlingit performances were inspired by the meaning and presence of cultural artefacts, the Museum of London's lack of representative objects means that children *are* the cultural representation of their communities.

In one example (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7), a Sri Lankan Tamil supplementary school performed a play about the importance of preserving the Tamil language. Children dressed as ancient Tamil poets, philosophers and modern-day publishers, recited and translated Tamil verses in a scripted bilingual play. Some wore artificial beards, some had three white lines painted horizontally across their forehead to represent divinities. Taking turns, each child stepped forward as their character, addressing the bewildered audience: 'Do you know who I am?'

In these types of school performances, cultural heritage is no longer preserved in museum objects but is entirely reliant on children's oration. What is strikingly different from the examples cited in Clifford's essay is that instead of a group of prominent elders, the museum as 'contact zone' consists of children, often dressed as sages, in wigs and synthetic beards, pretending to be elders. The children, themselves apprentices, are brought forward to represent their cultural heritage.

Material heritage is sometimes 'smuggled' into the museum during school plays, children perform in cultural or national dress, with authentic artefacts used as props or part of the set design. In the same performances space in a different museum festival, children from an Albanian supplementary school dressed in traditional costumes gathered around a low, heavy wooden rocking cradle from Albania, heritage made tangible. The cradle, used as a stage prop, was 'dressed' with traditional fabrics. Like the cradle, children were dressed in floral kerchiefs, waistcoats and other traditional attire, material heritage temporarily put on public display.



4.22 Traditional Albanian rocking cradle brought to the museum by parents.

Supplementary school plays function as a threshold through which histories new to the museum are orated, changing which stories and pasts have public representation. The museum becomes a site where immigrant communities can temporarily display their archives and records, cultural objects and histories through supplementary school performances, but only for the duration of a play or song.

4.6 Museums as 'contact zone' in migration contexts

The supplementary school programme emerges from two separate strands of collaborative exhibition-making. The first strand is collaborative curating with source communities, a paradigm developed in the early 1990s (Phillips 2003: 157) in which museums work with groups that are expected to represent a single cultural identity, typically indigenous groups. Although Peers and Brown stress that the term 'source communities' applies to "every cultural group from whom museums have collected: local people, diaspora and immigrant communities" (2003:2), this model of collaborative curation does not address the complexity of approaching children of immigrants who are often from mixed ethnic backgrounds, whose families may have experienced serial migration, acquired several languages and have multiple place-attachments. For diasporic source communities, cultural identities are hybrid, fluid and contested and no longer neatly align with singular place-based identities. This presents a problem for museums that spatialise and segment cultural heritages through topological curation, since supplementary schools cannot be easily categorised in spatial terms as territorialised communities.

The second strand of the museum's supplementary schools programme can be traced to the socially-engaged arts (Jackson 2011, Thomson 2012 cited Sansi 2015:13). In the UK, the socially-engaged arts can be understood as a rebranding of the 1980s community arts, but repurposed by cultural institutions. The term 'socially engaged arts' was popular in the early years of the 21st century, utilised by museums, galleries, councils and regeneration programmes across the UK, hiring freelance artists like myself to work with groups deemed as socially excluded or hard to reach in efforts to make the arts more publicly accessible and to reach out to new audiences. In this paradigm, supplementary schools no longer represent source communities but minority groups that fall under the term BAME - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

The museum frames supplementary schools as London's BAME minorities. The programme was funded through Arts Council England, where supplementary schools were described as BAME. In reality, few groups neatly fall into the BAME category. The Albanian, Iranian, Lithuanian, Greek-Cypriot and Brazilian Saturday schools that work with the museum struggle to find which box to tick on their ethnicity forms and could be described as London's invisible migrant communities. The Brazilian teachers all sigh when they have to fill in these ethnicity forms. 'I hate these things', the director says.

From the perspectives of many supplementary school members, they are not ethnic minorities but transnational communities, their cultural identities stretching beyond London the UK. The different institutional framings expand and contract children's cultural and ethnic identities. Through the museum's programme and its inclusivity policies that rely on BAME ethnicity forms, children's identities are shrunk to become London's minorities. In supplementary schools their identities are extended; they are transnational migrants again. This is also true of children who fit into the BAME boxes, for instance in supplementary schools such as the African Community School children's cultural heritages extend beyond London, where they are no longer the city's minority but part of a whole other continent, whereas the museum regards them as Black British.

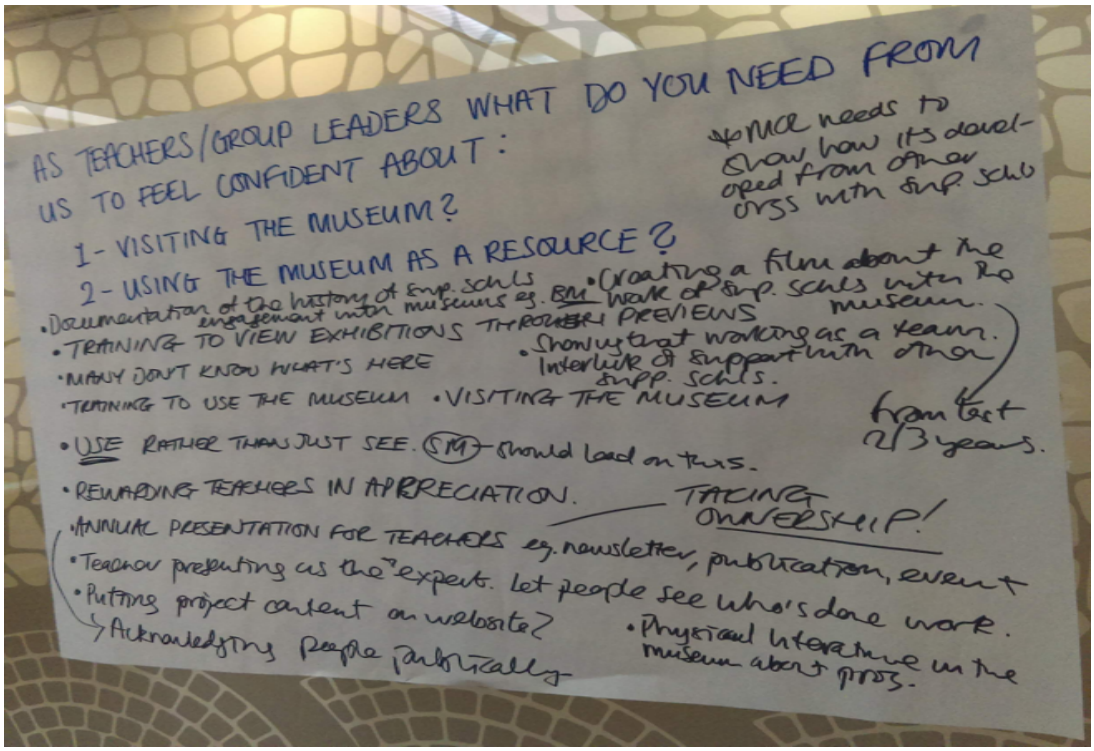
The Museum of London's 2018-2023 strategic plan lists supplementary schools amongst its key target audience, under its aim to: 'Engage every school child' and 'deepen their identities as Londoners'. Perhaps for this reason, museum officers often hesitate about how to address and describe supplementary schools, which makes it difficult for the museum to represent them. During my fieldwork, museum officers would use carefully-worded phrases to avoid hinting that children have transnational identities in case this suggests the children are not from London. As museum staff repeatedly stressed, the museum's focus is on London. Representation are not extend to social histories that lie beyond the city's boundaries. Out of the museum's sensitivity and its desire to be inclusive, because of funding categories that define ethnicities as British BAME minorities, and also because the museum struggles to conceptualise how to embrace subject matter beyond the city boundaries, children's London connections were highlighted, but their transnational identities were obscured.

Supplementary school leaders themselves would often struggle to define their institutions to others. In museum meetings during introductions, they would give very brief explanations of their schools, specifying the language and culture they teach, unable to unpack the complexity of what the schools were trying to do, how they mediate between cultures and ensure children feel like they are part of their community and also belong to Britain.

The Advisory Group at the Museum of London consists of a dozen supplementary school organizers and practitioners from different cultures that meet regularly to help the community officer develop the programme.

In one meeting, the community officer led an open consultation with supplementary school advisors. She asked them what the museum can do to raise their confidence to visit and to

use it as a resource. The first answer - ‘documentation of the history of supplementary schools engagement with museums’ - came from a long standing member of the Advisory board. There was a feeling of frustration that none of their work is documented and that their ongoing collaborations and presence in the museum is not visible. Some have known each other for years, and were part of the advisory group when the programme run at the British Museum. In parallel to the histories they teach at the schools not being recognized, it felt as if they are always starting from scratch.



4.23 Photograph of recording responses on flip-chart paper. Advisory Group Meeting. 2019.

Other responses followed: “MoL (Museum of London) needs to show how it’s developed from other organisations with supplementary schools,” “Creating a film about the work of supplementary schools with the museum, from last 2/3 years”. Teachers asked if they could donate objects to the museum to represent their cultural heritages, but the community officer explained that it was not that straightforward.

In the next meeting she invited a new curator to attend, hoping he would demystify the process of accessioning new objects. He was recently appointed to lead a new collaborative collecting project, responding to gaps in the collection, and was looking to collaborate with supplementary schools. This was the first time he met the advisory group.

I arrived early to the meeting and sat next to the librarian from an Iranian-Farsi school. We know each other well from previous meetings and joke around with ease. The young curator in comparison looked nervous and serious, new to the job, unfamiliar with the group. A woman came in and sat opposite us. She asks the librarian which school she is from. Iran, the teacher replies and returns the question: What school she is from? Harrow.

The new curator was here. Whilst we were waiting for the meeting to begin, the Iranian teacher asked him about collaborative curating project. He explained it is a new type of collecting project, how to collect 'objects', which could mean films, oral histories. She asked him: "Persian carpets, the history of Persian carpets, would that be something for the project?"

He answered: "I do Dub culture. So it doesn't fit in with the theme. But the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum have very good collections of Persian carpets."

He was unaware that the schools had already turned to different museums as the programme was moved around, how the programme at the British Museum was brought to an end. He had not meant to turn her away but was offering practical advice. For him, as a professional curator, the city museums are a constellation (Macdonald 2016). If one museum happens to have Persian carpets, that would be her best bet. He explained to her that she should look at the collection a museum has. She bit her lip and just uttered a low sound: Hmm Hmm.

Once the others arrived we begun the meeting with the community officer making apologies for absences, announcing: "We are in a new financial year. With it comes new challenges". She told of us of a previous Advisory Group member whose school had lost their funding, with this she lost her job: "If anyone hears of supplementary school work in South West London, she is looking for a job. Here in the supplementary schools programme, we are looking out for each other." This announcement is every supplementary school's worst fear.
I asked what school it was?
A Somali school, the community officer replied.

We made short introductions. Present were an Italian teacher from Italian Consulate, the director and a senior teacher from a Brazilian school, a charity worker, an NRCSE representative, a teacher that runs two Greek-Cypriot schools, the librarian who this time introduces her school as Farsi rather than Iranian, and a new face: a teacher from OYA

(Organisation of Young Africans) which is predominantly an African-based school for African descendants, that has been running for 19 years, teaching core subjects but also culturally, to help students gain a greater understanding of themselves and their history. The curator was last to introduces himself. “I have worked in many of the countries you are from,” he told the group as he looked round the table, naming a Brazilian artist to the Brazilian school director that did not seem too impressed, and telling the Italian teacher he had worked in Milan in his previous job with the British Council.

Everyone held their breath as he revealed the big community-engagement project he was working on, for which there were plans to work with a maximum of 3 supplementary schools: a music project about the history of dub. There was a scramble as everyone tried to figure out how their schools might be included in this project. Teachers and leaders mentally scanned their group’s cultural history to consider how their cultural heritage intersects with or is influenced by African histories. For OYA school this was straightforward, the teacher and the curator had a long chat across the table. The others listened in and then joined, each trying to make cultural connections between the Dub project and their curriculum, which felt as forced as the connections the curator had tried to make when introducing himself. The Brazilian teachers talked about Afro-Brazilian music, samba, reggae. The Italian teacher asked the curator if he knows of pizzica. It’s south of Italy. Pi-zzi-ca. The curator stressed how far Dub has influenced music genres. The Iranian teacher spoke easily, with a hint of existential cynicism: “And Iranian and Arabic? I am in minority.” Acknowledging the limitations of the project’s focus, the curator admitted: “ I don’t want to say it’s in everyone’s country. I don’t know about dub/reggae culture in Iran.”

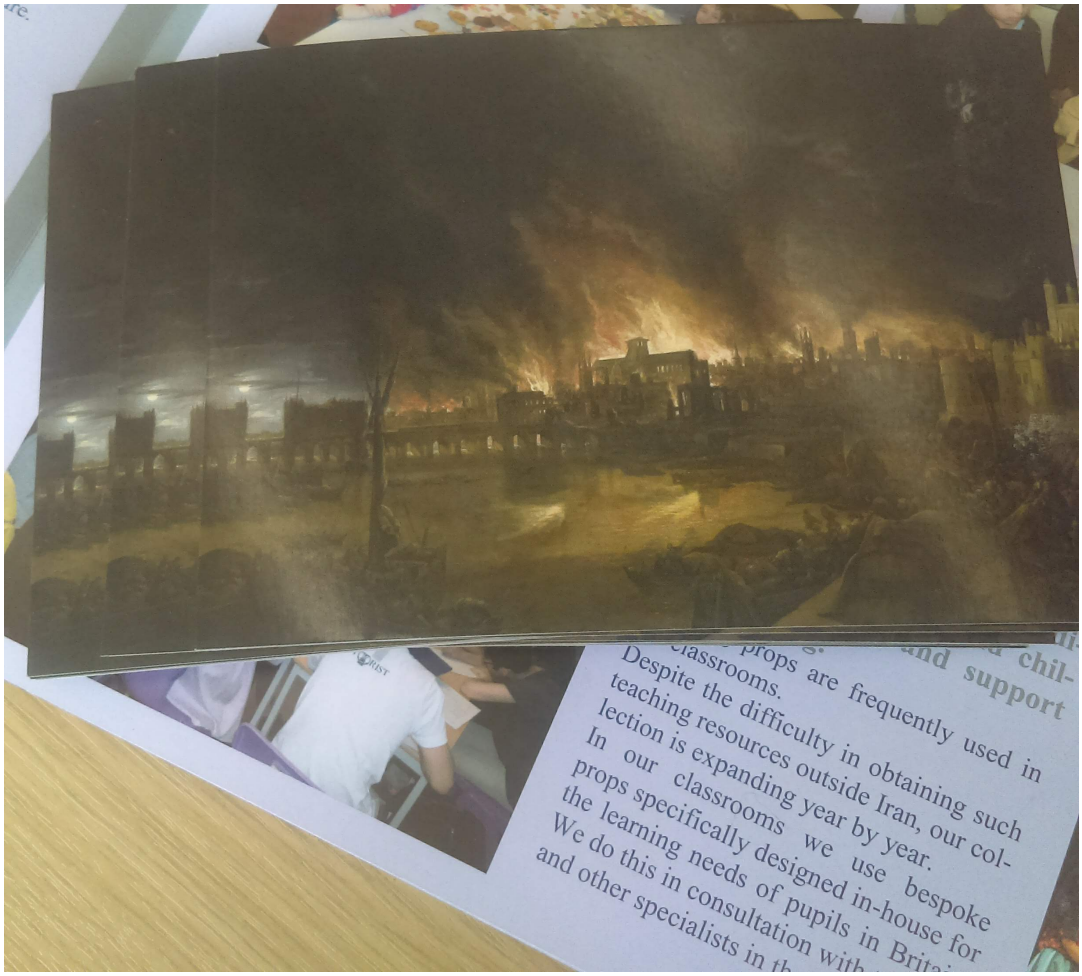
The Iranian teacher explained she and her school are not in Iran! It’s a mixture of Iranian culture and the other, students “marry, go to school, with everyone.” The subjects covered can be about “over there *or* here”, meaning Iran *or* London. She wanted the curator to understand her school is not just about studying Iranian cultural, it is about London too. They are also Londoners, she and the children.

The curator was unaware that upstairs above the mezzanine floor where our meeting was held, on a desk in the museum offices was a large pile of postcards used in a museum outreach session about the Great Fire of London conducted in the Iranian school. The session was held in English, teaching children of Iranian heritage about London’s social history. The postcards showed the reproduction of the ‘Great Fire of London’, one of the museum’s most famous paintings. On the back of each postcard was a comment written by

a child saying what they have learned in the session which I had transcribed so it can be included in the project evaluation:

“that it started in a bakery”
“everyone died ☺ ”
“put out UR fire!”

The pile of postcards rested on top of an open Iranian supplementary school prospectus, which read: “Despite the difficulty in obtaining such teaching resources outside Iran, our collection is expanding year by year. In our classroom we use bespoke props specifically designed in-house for the learning needs of pupils in Britain”. This clarifies the problem, which is not to do with a lack of cultural artefacts in the UK but their absence in the museum of the city.



4.24 ‘The Great Fire of London’ postcards used in museum outreach session in an Iranian Saturday school, with the school’s prospectus beneath, detailing the difficulty in obtaining teaching resources outside Iran.

The two examples above – the teachers’ attempts to connect with the Dub project, and the outreach session about the Great Fire of London at the Iranian supplementary school – show how supplementary schools in their desire to be included in the museum programme accommodate other social histories. Their willingness to adapt their curriculum and inability to participate in the Dub project highlights how the majority of schools currently do not easily fit into the narrow framing of inclusivity through the category of BAME, where language and cultural diversity are not promoted higher up the institutional chain by the government and its education department.

The examples also serve to show how social histories move between institutions. Yet, whereas the museum can extend English history materially, for example, through the circulation of postcards commemorating the Great Fire of London at the Iranian school, supplementary schools’ social histories remain immaterial at the museum.

Institutional framings and funding have affected the records and histories of supplementary schools and their museum collaborations. These have included changing government policies, the relocation of the programme across different museums, the current ‘fit’ of the programme with the Museum of London’s strategic aims, and the instrumental role the advisory group and the NRCSE play in maintaining the running of the programme and promoting increased visibility and records of the schools.

4.7 Carrying new histories in migration - Children changing their cultural heritage

I was invited to visit the Iranian school on the day the Farsi GCSE and A-Level graduation ceremony was held. It is one of the longest-running Iranian supplementary schools in the UK, based in a large secondary school on Saturday afternoons. The headteacher showing me around explained that, unlike most Saturday schools, this school runs in the afternoons to accommodate children with multiple backgrounds who attend other supplementary schools in the morning. As an example, she proudly pointed out a boy after he passed by in the corridor who attends a Chinese Supplementary school in the mornings before arriving here. Diverse ethnicities are a sign of a supplementary school’s success, showing its

popularity in its ability to attract students from different ethnic backgrounds who could have chosen another school.

She told me she had some criticism of the London Museum which she was happy for me to pass on: “The museums are about British values. It doesn’t work with all the supplementary schools. We are teaching them our cultural values, not British values. When I go to the Museum of London there is nothing Iranian. Parents say ‘why are you taking them there, they can do that with the mainstream schools. This criticism is for all the London museums, they are all focused on teaching British Values. As British-Iranians, they have to be proud of their bicultural identity.”

In a spacious auditorium, a teenage boy practised the santoor on the stage before families arrived. He told me he was rehearsing ‘the song they usually sing in assembly but haven’t sung it for a while. It’s the old national (Iranian) anthem, before the revolution’. Classes filed in single rows practised walking onto the stage to rehearse the ceremony, choreographed by the drama teacher who instructed them on how to enter and leave. Holding on to thin air, they pretended to collect their certificates which at this point were still imaginary.

The school teaches Farsi as a community language, Iranian culture and history. It has been running for over 30 years, and is unique in having 3rd generation students whose grandparents attended when young. One staff member joked that they teach more Iranian heritage here than in Iran. Teachers attribute its long-running success to the school being non-religious and non-political. During the certificate assembly when we all stood and sang the old pre-revolution Iranian anthem, I was unsure what this means in practice.

In the assembly hall I sat next to a 15-year-old boy. He is Afghan *not* Iranian, he quietly told me with a smile as if revealing a secret. It was his first day here, he had just started the GCSE class. The boy watched the commotion building up around us, quietly amused. He was not sure why his class was brought into the auditorium. We watched the ceremony unfold, bonded by our newness to the school. No one seemed to question our identities and we both enjoyed being able to pass off as Iranian. He was born here in the UK, his parents speak Farsi. He has also taken up Russian GCSE. He likes Russian so has found a private Russian teacher. He is fluent in Russian but less confident in Farsi, he can speak and read but not write. I was impressed and asked him if he knows Russian from home, or has lived in Russia? His parents speak Russian, they used to live in Russia for years before he was born. But they don’t speak it with him. In his house the adults speak Russian, the children speak Farsi.

Our conversation was interrupted by the soundtrack of a trumpet recording playing a victory song to accompany the film projection on stage, of graduation caps flying high into the air in slow motion. A teacher nearby joked with me: “That is our national anthem for our school”. The ceremony begun. The Headteacher on stage introduced three eminent guests: a BBC journalist of Persian heritage, the executive director from the NRCSE and a musician. The headteacher asked the speaker if they “don’t mind to make the event in English today”, because they have non-Farsi speaking guests. Some speakers deliberately ignored this request, addressing the room entirely in Farsi after a short apology in English. Between speeches and claps I asked the new boy how he found the school, was it word of mouth, friends? No, he researched on the internet. He used to go to an Afghan Saturday school but it wasn’t very good, they didn’t do anything, they would just stay in one room. He wasn’t impressed with that school. He added - it’s not just him, everyone he knows, his friends, all left this Afghan school. I asked a question along the lines of ‘but did they do other cultural things beyond language, like dance or music?’ He replied: ‘We still do that in weddings and parties’.

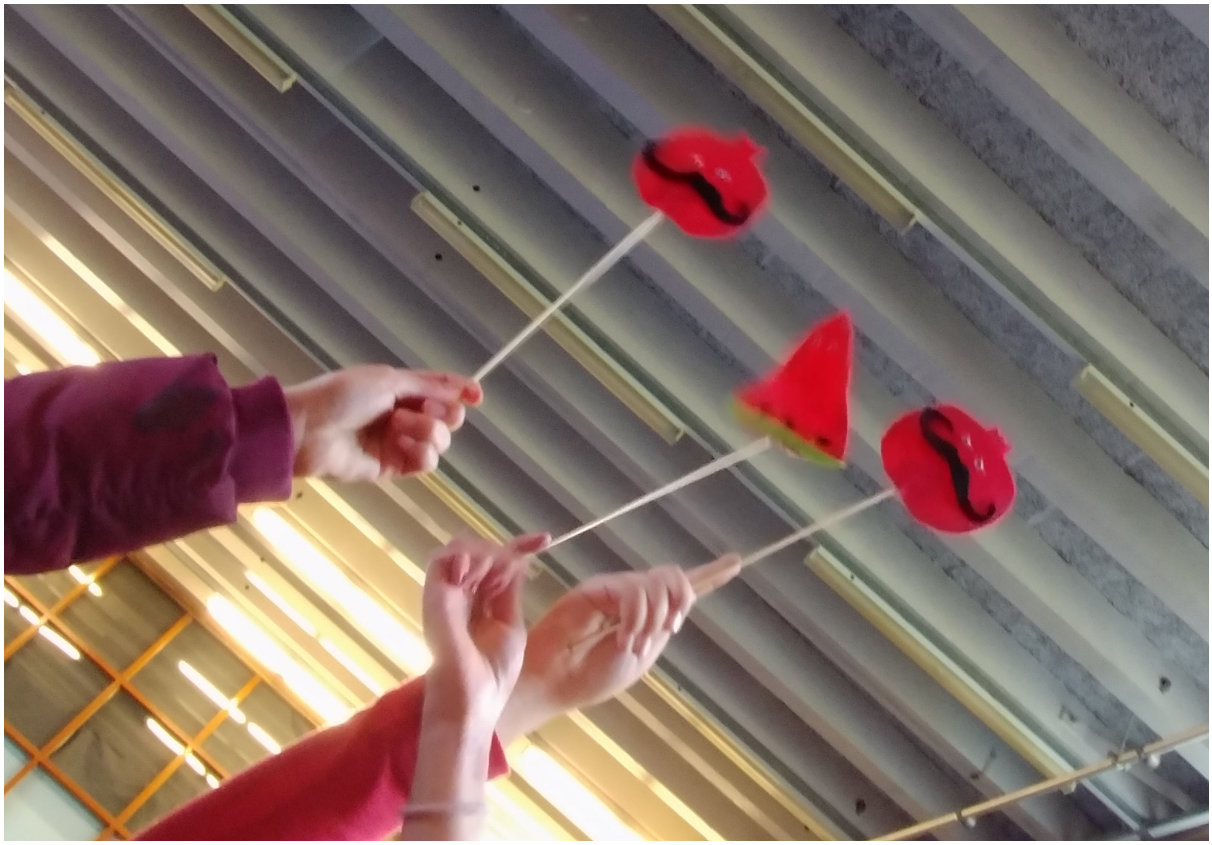
Although rehearsed, the ceremony was largely improvised. To begin the headteacher announced that ‘today we won’t be singing the anthem as usual’, instructing everyone to stand and only listen to it being played. On stage, a teenage boy began to play the anthem on the Santoor, a haunting instrument whose every note continues to reverberate in the hall as the tune moves forward. We stood up. I was a little tired and distractedly tapped my feet to the tune, forgetting it is a National Anthem, then noticed the teenage girl behind me looking at me in amazement. I quickly reconfigured my body language, modelling posture on a man in front of me who stood poised, arms held behind his back, one hand held in the other.

The room was full of parents and grandparents. A few seconds in some parents began to passionately sing their old National Anthem few seconds in, as if they couldn’t resist, despite the headteacher’s instructions. Soon everyone was singing. I curiously stole a glance at the new boy standing next to me. I couldn’t tell if he knew the song. He was no longer smiling. Afterwards I asked him quietly if he knows the lyrics. ‘No, I was just lip singing’, he confessed. I complimented him, saying it looked like he did. The teacher on my other side told me: “It is an emotional moment”.

For the new student this was also an emotional moment, albeit for different reasons. On his first day in class he blended in, but the singing of the national anthem caught him out. Until

this point he was in control of his education, finding teachers and moving schools. Now he found himself in the front rows of a packed room where everyone was standing and singing a new national anthem. Having chosen this school for academic reasons, he will now have to navigate this cultural landscape as he inherits a new heritage and takes on the national history that comes with the school. The boy entering this new school and allowing a new collective memory to become his own captures what Rothberg terms as 'multidirectional memory' to describe how histories travels sideways in diaspora (2009). This example highlights how children's choices change the course of memory in diaspora and the routes in travels, in his decision to exit one ethnicity and inhabit another (Back 1996).

On the Shab-e Yalda festival, the Persian celebration of Winter Solstice, I arrived to the school to assist with stage design. Instead found myself helping two mothers scoop out watermelons for the school's 300 children, sprinkling each one with pomegranate seeds. The festival marks the longest night of the year and is traditionally celebrated by staying up all night, or until the last guest leaves, telling spooky and enchanting stories in order to stay awake. In a whole-school assembly, children performed plays and dances, reciting poetry about strange hungry fairies and waving 'flags' of watermelon slices and pomegranates with curled moustaches into the air.



4.25 Watermelon and pomegranate 'flags'



4.26 Watermelon and Pomegranate. Preparation of festive snacks.



4.27 Moving tables with watermelon snacks

In their supplementary school, plays were no longer a museum representation but part of the community's celebration. They were means for children to embody their cultural heritage and remember their nation's older rituals. The watermelons that have been transported across

London now acquired significance. Rearranging the room, two mothers picked up the table and moved it, balancing dozens of pomegranate sprinkled watermelon scoops.

Conclusion

This chapter revisited Clifford's notion of museums as contact zones to consider what they mean in new contexts of migration in the UK, and to think about supplementary schools as contact zones of their own making. In supplementary schools, cultures are contested, temporal and emergent (Clifford, 1986:19) which contrast with the singular cultural identities museums traditionally expected of source communities in collaborative curation, and the fixed ethnic identities they are currently required to fit into inclusive museum projects.

The Museum of London currently struggles to accommodate transnational cultures that do not fit into a BAME classification framework. Its collaborative collecting project themed around Dub culture shows how supplementary schools try to fit their heritages into the museum programme which officially defines them as BAME (Black and Asian minority ethnic groups). Here, most supplementary schools failed to fit into the narrow institutional framing of inclusivity. Outside the museum partnership programme where cultural objects are absent, heritage continues to circulate in material artefacts and embodied practices by supplementary school teachers and children, carried across the city and performed in the museum.

At the Museum of London, the cultural heritage of supplementary schools was almost entirely performed by children and remains immaterial. Likewise, supplementary school collaborations with museums are not officially recorded and remain outside their institutional memory. Histories of supplementary schools in the UK become more embodied, preserved by a handful of dedicated individuals in the NRCSE and the George Padmore Institute who compile and maintain their lists and archives, supplementary school teachers who lug around cultural materials and resources in suitcases, and the students who learn languages, memorise lines and perform their heritage at the museum.

In these post-migration contexts, heritage becomes more reliant on children's embodied practices and actions. Consequently, children have more agency in the continuation or termination of heritage in diaspora. Examples of students' decisions to quit or switch supplementary school and their willingness to perform plays at the museum show how collective memories are contingent on children. Les Back has described how young people

inhabit and vacate ethnicities through language, music and cultural symbols in everyday interactions, in what often amounts to code-switching (1996). In supplementary schools, children and young people can acquire new histories by switching supplementary schools. This is demonstrated in the example of a teenage boy that chose to transfer from an Afghan Saturday school and is now taking on Iranian diasporic history and cultural identity, an 'incidental heritage'- entering a supplementary school for language lessons and leaving with a new ethnicity.

In his anecdote, the boy described how this particular Afghan school was quite small, and that he was not alone in choosing to leave it, his friends did as well. The survival of any supplementary school is to a great extent determined by how popular it is with its students, who together determine its success and longevity, and subsequently, the survival of collective memories and longevity of heritage in diaspora. In these ways, children's choices and actions can change the course of heritage, determining which paths it can travel post migration.

Supplementary schools complicate how heritage is acquired in migration. The complex cultural identity of the new student in an Iranian supplementary school whose parents are originally from Afghanistan and lived in Russia prior to his birth shows how place-based identities of children raised in the UK are gathered through 'serial migration'. The boy inherits languages and cultures of places his parents travelled through and picked up along their way. As this example shows, the journey of gaining a national identity does not necessarily end in the 'host country', but can extend when navigating through the different supplementary schools.

In contrast with the museum, supplementary schools are aware of the complexity of ethnicity in migration and find flexible ways by which to accommodate students from diverse and mixed ethnic backgrounds. When seeking to collaborate with the museum, supplementary schools search for ways to further accommodate heritages from beyond their curriculum to form partnerships, as seen in the advisory group meetings.

Supplementary school environments play an essential role in mediating children's cultural heritage, but children largely determine their existence; whether they like the space, the particular teacher, whether they make friends and enjoy how cultural heritage is taught. The teenage boy chose to enrol in the new school out of his own volition. Elsewhere I observed children as young as five can already take the decision to opt out of a school after attending a few sessions. They sense these schools are not compulsory like state school education. In

this way, histories are multidirectional in migration (Rothberg 2009). Heritage is no longer knowledge that travels down the generations, but determined and preserved by children, reinterpreted and performed in their school plays, and spoken 'back' to the older generation. With children shaping their communities' cultural heritage, supplementary schools are new 'contact zones' that open dynamic processes of preserving, exchanging and carrying histories in migration.

Chapter 5. Growing roots in migration

Chapter Summary

In supplementary schools set up to help children retrieve their 'cultural roots' in diaspora, children's heritage is considered natural but requires human intervention. This chapter examines how tree symbolism and iconography are used in a Brazilian supplementary school to help children locate their cultural roots. Following the making process of a collaborative museum display entitled the 'Whispering Forest', the chapter examines how 'Portuguese-talking trees' become secondary agents (Gell 1998, Sansi 2015) when representations are relocated from school to the museum.

Children's latent heritage takes on its most iconic form, as seeds planted underground waiting to emerge. Place-based identities and spatial metaphors of rootedness are complicated by migration and the practicalities of planting in the school. In a collection of ethnographic moments and anecdotes where people perform plants, trees substitute persons and art substitutes both, I explore how these nature metaphors are used to explain cultural heritage in migration and what these travelling trees can tell us about place-based identities in motion.

The museum has its own history of displaying people and plants from Brazil. Comparing tree displays made by the school with a Brazilian tree sample in the permanent museum's collection, I consider how nature becomes cultural at the museum and school, and children's liminal, latent identities situated between the two.

The chapter also addresses my dual role as an anthropologist and artist, mediating between the museum and the school and between these two roles, which at times felt incompatible. I describe the different sets of expectations about making the display, detailing the improvisational nature of the collaboration and the challenges of growing trees in diaspora.

Introduction

In an early years classroom, a dozen children aged four and five were singing along with their teacher. The song is called 'Alecrim Dourado' [30], or 'The Golden Rosemary', the teacher told me, the plant was brought across the sea from Portugal to Brazil and relates to the history of travel:

Alecrim, alecrim dourado	Golden rosemary, rosemary
Que nasceu no campo	That grew in the field
E nao foi semeado	And wasn't sown
Foi meu amo__or	It was my lo__ove
Quem me disse assim	Who told me
Que a flor do campo e' o alecrim	The flower of the field is the rosemary.
Alecrim cheiroso	Fragrant rosemary
que se esvoaçou mas além brotou	that flew/fluttered but also sprouted

[30]To hear the song search 'Alecrim Dourado', or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7Fb3myaz9g accessed 13th February 2022

On the table the children's freshly painted artworks were laid to dry: green T-shirts with designs of the rosemary plant, still wet with blobs of yellow and green paint, matching the colours of the Brazilian flag. The children would later wear these T-shirts in a school celebration when performing the Golden Rosemary song to their parents.



5.1 Children's T-shirts with Rosemary paintings

A teacher explained to me that the song Alercrim Dourado is about "…a plant growing in the nature freely, so rosemary is called field flower. We didn't have rosemary in Brazil, it came from Europe brought by Portuguese in ancient times. The Golden Rosemary, a famous Brazilian song has its origins in a Portuguese song…a plant that 'is born in the hills without being sown', like sung in the lyrics". She sent me an animated video clip from You Tube of the song showing children rolled away by the wind, along with the plant.

Like seeds migrating across the field without being sown into the ground, human migration is seen as natural and ancient. The song, like the plant that moved across the ocean from Europe to Brazil, is now being sung back in Europe. The children sway like the rosemary plant in the wind.

The plant 'growing in the nature freely', 'born without being sown' describes a sub-category of 'wild' or 'natural' plants as opposed to 'cultivated' plants. This sub-category dismantles categories of indigenous-versus-exotic, more commonly used to classify plants (Von

Hellermann 2016). Instead, 'natural' or 'wild' plants fly to new locations, whereas 'cultivated' plants stay where they have been placed[31].

Migratory plants - on children's painted T-shirts and in their performance – unsettle any straightforward notions of 'being from Brazil', a country with a long history of migration where ethnicities are mixed and plants travel between continents. Whereas researchers have described supplementary schools as sites of resistance (Andrews 2013, Mirza and Reay 2000), emphasising the political work they do to counter cultural hegemony, another way of understanding supplementary schools are as sites of cultural continuity amidst change, where place-based identities are less rigid, and migration is portrayed as natural.

5.1 Trees as a theory of place in motion

The vitality and presence of trees make them powerful as symbols that continue to grow (Rival 1998:1-2,17, De Boeck 1998). Building on Victor Turner's study of miyoomb trees planted as *living shrines* (Turner 1967:10) in his study of Luunda tree symbolism, De Boeck notes the 'paradox of trees' as symbols that "convey a meaning of rootedness, of immobility" and "simultaneously convey the idea of a central nexus, combining notions of immobility with images of interconnection, knotting and hence mobility" (De Boeck 1998:25-26). This extends into a notion of place understood both in terms of fixity and rootedness, and "movement through space….as centuries-long Luunda history of migration and conquest exemplifies" (De Boeck 1998:25-26). This manifests in tree-planting practices through which "locality can be moved through space, recreated or repeated in different spaces, by planting new trees and creating or 'growing' memory, history and belonging (Boeck 1998:26).

Boeck notes that tree metaphors are already a theory of place. In the Brazilian supplementary school the complexity of a tree-as-metaphor can accommodate supposedly paradoxical ideas about rootedness and migration, sometimes trees are 'deterritorialized' as temporary displays and moving representations, and on other occasions the real presence of a tree, seeds and earth is sought.

For a long time Deleuze's rhizome has become a central concept in how anthropologists theorise place in relation to movement, flows, connectivity and non-linear relations, where: "Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very

[31] The term 'without being sown' refers to 'growing wild'. The song was likely about passionate wild love. Today it is a children's nursery rhyme, in some version the words 'my love' are replaced with 'baby-chick'.

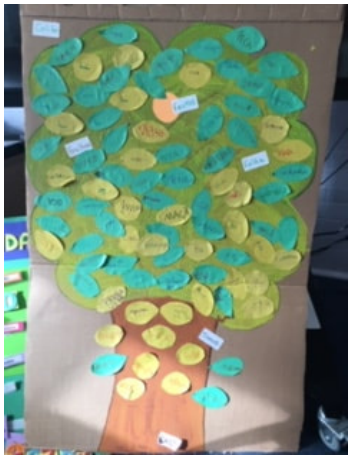
different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order" (Deleuze 1993:29 cited in Emily Martin 1997:137). Another key work within migration studies is Stuart Hall's essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', where he suggests a return to the beginning can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of the symbolic, of representation (Hall 1994:236). Citing Lacan, Hall favours 'routes over roots, since a real, physical return to origins is not possible, and so the journey towards creativity must begin' (ibid).

For Brazilian families in London, some of whom experience migration as serial or continuous, symbolic rhizomes don't suffice. The search for actual roots and trees is felt particularly in supplementary schools where physicality and tactility are central, and children are given a piece of earth to plant in, and a seed to hold in one's hand. This study is therefore about the search for real roots and the presence of trees within the materiality of metaphor.

5.2 Learning through trees

Tree motifs feature extensively in the Brazilian school. They pop up in different classroom work as means of teaching Brazilian heritage that tie in with culturally specific themes of identity, environment and belonging and as universal symbols of personal growth and potential. As cultural representation trees accommodate a plurality of meaning that can be appropriate for different teaching purposes: as genealogical trees to explore roots, in language lessons to identify tree parts in Portuguese and in class topics about the environment to describe the Brazilian landscape. Profoundly, trees work as a metaphor to describe some children's latent knowledge of Portuguese, as their mother-tongue which they hesitate to speak, like a seed that lies dormant, waiting for the right conditions to sprout.

Trees feature in art as classroom displays, in science sessions about saving the rainforest and in storytelling sessions about mythical trees. The folk-tale of Curupira, a child-spirit that dwells in the forests and protects trees from wood-cutters, makes a regular appearance in school plays every year or two.



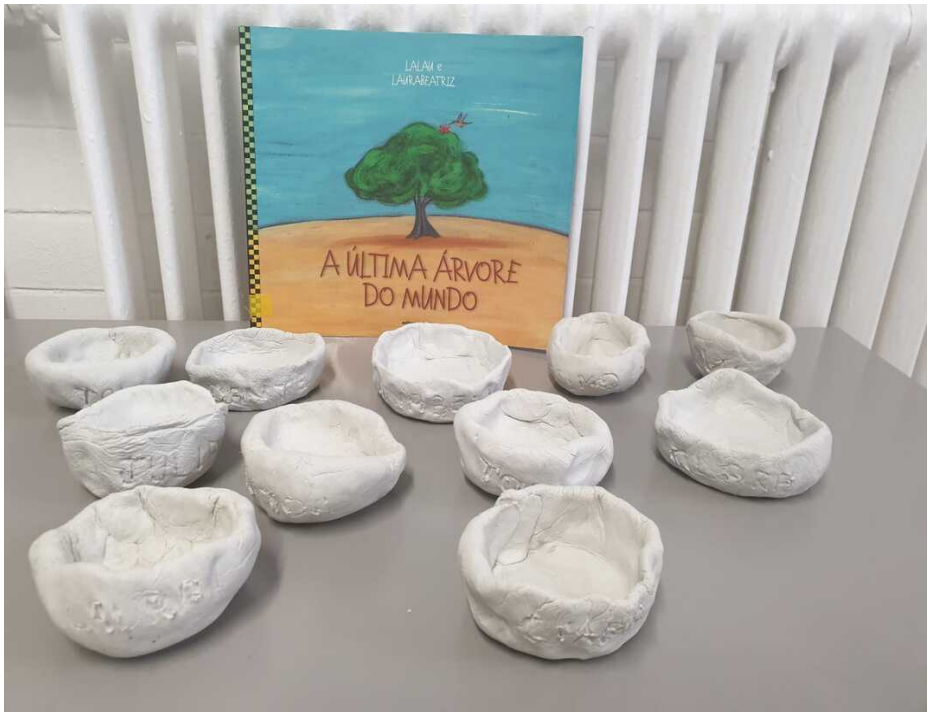


5.2 and 5.3 Tree displays in class





5.4 (left) Tree made of children's handprints 5.5 (Right) Tree class display with children's names on leaves



5.6 Book titled ‘A Ultima Arvore Do Mundo’ (the last tree in the world) used in science session

5.3 Temporary and distant trees



5.7 Tree on parcel paper

This large sketch of a tree on parcel paper was thrown away when staff reorganized their school's rented cupboard, along with other classroom displays from the previous year. The display was made with children who were learning to identify tree parts in Portuguese - Tronco, Raizes, Folhas, Flores, Frutos, Galhos (trunk, roots, leaves, flowers, fruits, twigs). The annual lifecycle of trees as artworks mark the end of a school year and a new autumn term, where the next lot of children will be welcomed through 'fresh' displays.

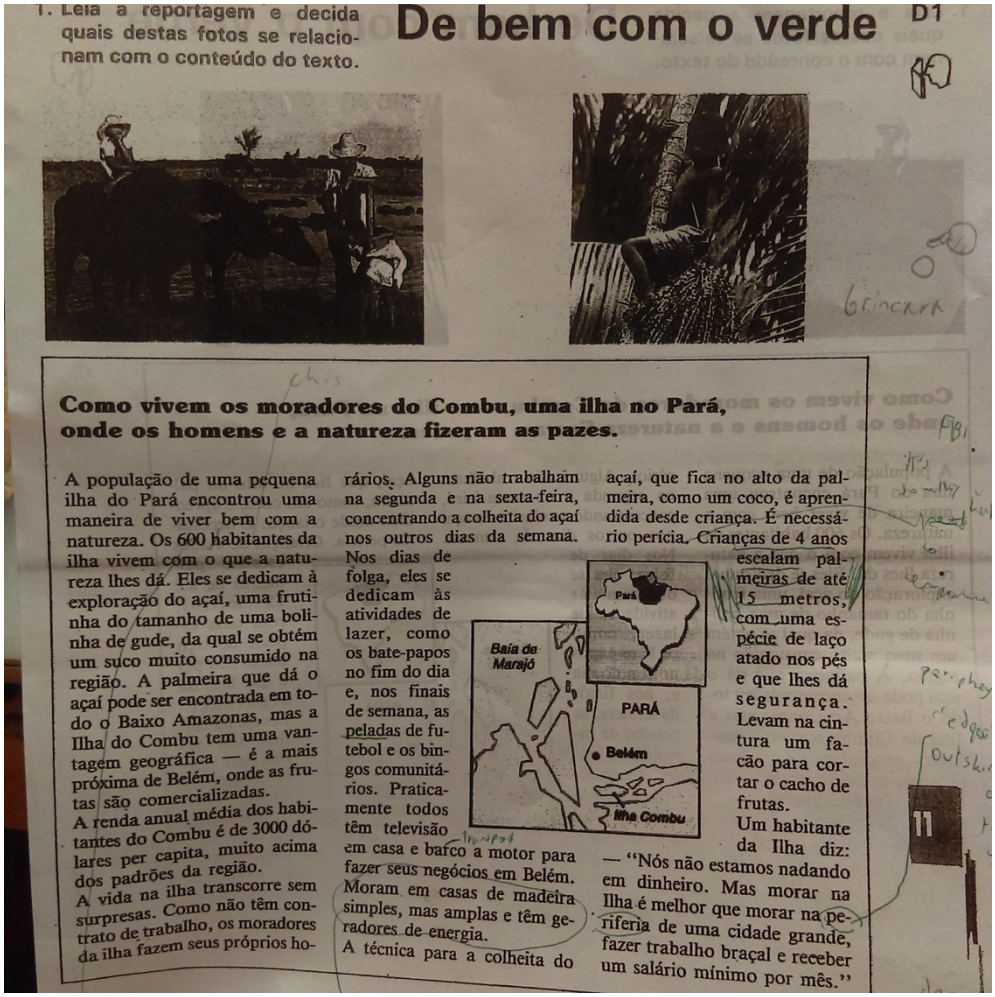
Unread children's magazines were also recycled, the lyrics of *the Golden Rosemary* printed at the back of one issue with a picture of a spindly girl looking admiringly at the plant, hugging one of its flowers:



5.8 'Golden Rosemary' printed on the back of a children's science magazine.

In a classroom further down the hall, children aged 12-13 watched their teacher write on the whiteboard: 'deforestation - and the cutting and removal of the trees and plants of a forest'[32], the lesson is about tree conservation used as means of preserving their Portuguese language.

In the oldest class trees were used to teach children aged 14-15 about economic realities in Brazil. They read aloud from an article that describes how the residents of Combu in Pará and nature 'made peace', where children as young as four climb 15 meters high trees to hack clusters of fruit. The image of Brazil as a bountiful forest was soon complicated for the young students, as the article concluded with a quote from one of its residents: '…living on the island is better than living on the outskirts of a big city, doing manual work and receiving minimum salary for months'. Students learn the children are not climbing trees to play, but as an alternative to manual labour.



1. Leia a reportagem e decida quais destas fotos se relacionam com o conteúdo do texto.

De bem com o verde

D1

Como vivem os moradores do Combu, uma ilha no Pará, onde os homens e a natureza fizeram as pazes.

A população de uma pequena ilha do Pará encontrou uma maneira de viver bem com a natureza. Os 600 habitantes da ilha vivem com o que a natureza lhes dá. Eles se dedicam à exploração do açaí, uma frutinha do tamanho de uma bolinha de gude, da qual se obtém um suco muito consumido na região. A palmeira que dá o açaí pode ser encontrada em todo o Baixo Amazonas, mas a Ilha do Combu tem uma vantagem geográfica — é a mais próxima de Belém, onde as frutas são comercializadas.

A renda anual média dos habitantes do Combu é de 3000 dólares per capita, muito acima dos padrões da região.

A vida na ilha transcorre sem surpresas. Como não têm contrato de trabalho, os moradores da ilha fazem seus próprios horários. Alguns não trabalham na segunda e na sexta-feira, concentrando a colheita do açaí nos outros dias da semana. Nos dias de folga, eles se dedicam às atividades de lazer, como os bate-papos no fim do dia e, nos finais de semana, as peladas de futebol e os bingos comunitários. Praticamente todos têm televisão em casa e barco a motor para fazer seus negócios em Belém. Moram em casas de madeira simples, mas amplas e têm geradores de energia.

A técnica para a colheita do açaí, que fica no alto da palmeira, como um coco, é aprendida desde criança. É necessário perícia. Crianças de 4 anos escalam palmeiras de até 15 metros, com uma espécie de laço atado nos pés e que lhes dá segurança. Levam na cintura um facão para cortar o cacho de frutas.

Um habitante da Ilha diz: — "Nós não estamos nadando em dinheiro. Mas morar na Ilha é melhor que morar na periferia de uma cidade grande, fazer trabalho braçal e receber um salário mínimo por mês."

5.9 'De bem com o verde' ('of well with the green')

[32] 'desmatamento -e o corte e retirado das arvores e plantas de uma Floresta'

Trees feature prominently- as classroom displays, geological trees, and representations of brazil. They stand for many things at once, the development of a child as a budding seedling, a symbol of nature, of roots and identity, and to discuss environmental devastation and economic insecurity.

Trees 're-materialised' in cardboard displays, on whiteboards and in newspaper articles. Younger children make leaf-collages and trees made of handprints. As they move up the school, children are presented with more complex and nuanced images of Brazil, distant, ephemeral and 'deciduous' classroom displays that reference Brazilian forests cut down, and trees being climbed by children whose parents are too poor to work in the city, describe economic struggles and ecological devastation in Brazil.

5.4 Planting in the school

In preparation for a storytelling session for children aged 4-5, a teacher cut out little cards titled 'story plants' (Fábrica de Histórias') with the quote 'you reap what you sow'. She taped a 'typical Brazilian Bean' for each child to take home and plant, explaining: "Beans with rice is a staple food in Brazil, it's what we eat, although I don't eat it anymore because I am here now. This bean grows fast," she offered: "Take one home and plant with your kid". Growing plants is quite a common early-years activity, but the plants here symbolized Brazilian identity, what you eat that makes you Brazilian, or at least what you are supposed to eat. This planting activity is comparable with Anne Jepson's study of gardening in Cyprus (2006), where growing produce from their homelands in their new location becomes a way to re-root memory through material connections with 'back home' , as means of metaphorically "putting down new roots in a new place" (Macdonald 2013:14).

On the windowsill of a classroom, children from the weekday school had planted seeds that were sprouting from plastic water bottles filled with earth, catching the sun. In another classroom, their family tree diagrams dangled from the ceiling. Clearly, trees are ubiquitous symbols in classroom displays. The big difference was that for the weekday children, the plants where permanently situated on the windowsills and their family tree pictures hang in the classroom for long durations, whereas Brazilian school teachers would find ways to move tree displays about, bring them to class and take them home. The beans were like the children, typically Brazilian, even though they happen to be in the UK.



5.10 Plants on the window-sill grown by the weekday school



5.11 Brazilian Beans distributed to children

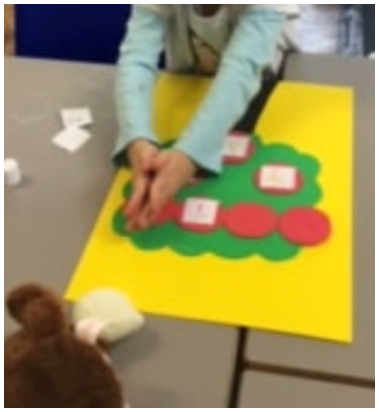


5.12 Cress sprouts brought back to school instead of beans

The teacher who made the cards brought in a plastic cup filled with earth the following week. Inside it something was sprouting. Her Brazilian bean had failed to grow, so at the last minute she decided to go for a safe alternative and use mustard seeds instead, knowing that they sprout overnight. Plant substitution occurred in the week-long gaps between school sessions to make successful growth plausible.

As noted by Macdonald, roots and planting are commonplace metaphors used in nostalgic and diasporic discourse to highlight cultural, historical and political situatedness, but the fertility of these metaphorical affordances depend on actual capacities to garden in exile (Macdonald 2013:15). In the case of the supplementary school environment where the capacity to plant is limited, teachers became more reliant on metaphorical and imaginative acts.

5.5 Family Trees and Heritage bifurcations



5.13 Foam-card family trees

In an end-of-year celebration party in early December 2018, young children were handed back their artworks titled 'Minha Arvore Genealogica' (my genealogical trees) made of colourful foam sheets, beautifully ribbon-wrapped in a typical Brazilian fashion to look like gifts. A proud father told me it took his son a long time to make his. We studied the child's carefully sketched thumbnail pencil drawings of his family members glued inside the cloud-shaped treetops: two English grandparents, two Brazilian grandparents. The Brazilian grandma stood by a low house. The granddad was next to a very tall building. Thinking the grandparents are possibly separated I asked: Is this his grandfather's house? No, the boy explained, that's the hospital where he works. The father was surprised his son remembered

his grandfather's work-place in Brazil. The portraits in the tree are like a miniature reconstruction of a family album, Brazil recalled through hazy memories and gentle pencil drawings of the child. Family tree displays accommodate rootedness and movement: the tree as container of family members who live continents apart.

His father praised the school. His wife is from Brazil, he is English but has lived in Brazil for many years. When they moved to England they felt…he pauses then explains: "there is a beautiful word in Brazil – 'afastado', it means 'removed' ". He demonstrates how to use the word in a Portuguese sentence: 'I felt removed, we felt removed'. Coming to England they felt 'afastado': "like being in a party and not knowing anyone. It's the afastado". Coming to this school, "it's not just the language, it's the cultural experience". They feel at home here. The mainstream school really lets them take over the space so it feels like it is theirs. In another Brazilian supplementary school they used to send their children, they weren't allowed to touch anything and were told 'don't use these toilets', 'stay in the centre and don't disturb anything around'. The previous school was always worried. This one uses the entire space.

The father's description of how he feels at home points to how supplementary school can act like an extended family. Unlike mainstream schools that are attended by children, supplementary schools cater to the whole community, parents and sometimes grandparents, as points of entry for new and returning migrants, helping this English dad grow roots back in the UK.

The father is English, the mother is Brazilian of Japanese heritage, their child is of mixed heritage, like many students and staff members in this school. One of the school's co-founders is half-French, the other's husband is Brazilian but of Italian heritage. Migration is normalised, with a sensibility that Brazil itself was built on migration.

One of the school's founders told me about the decision to have a secular curriculum, in contrast to her own catholic upbringing. In winter this school has an 'end-of-year' party, rather than a Christmas party, and children's songs make no reference to God. At a time when Brazil is becoming more religious with an increase in charismatic churches, the decision to have a non-religious Brazilian school in Britain is an example of diasporic affordances that provide the freedom to reassess one's cultural heritage, each school breaking it up into components and deciding which cultural elements to preserve and which ones to put aside. In this way supplementary schools have some autonomy about what aspects of their own cultural heritage become 'latent', and heritage bifurcates not only

through parental intermarriages but through the curricular subjects selected by each supplementary school.

Having a secular curriculum opens the school to local Muslim-Brazilian families in the neighborhood. One Brazilian teacher agrees with the school director's decision to keep the curriculum religion-free but for entirely different reasons: she is a practicing Muslim, for her faith is a deeply personal matter that belongs to the realm of the family and the home, rather than a subject to be taught in school. The school's decision to have a non-religious curriculum fits with her values, unlike a neighbouring Brazilian Saturday school that is attached to the Catholic church.

Her 14-year-old son in the school's top class made an identity poster for his homework assignment, explaining his heritage: one of his grandparents is British, another is Spanish, another is Lebanese, and another is German-Brazilian, originally from Germany and migrated to Brazil. His (second-generation) Brazilian mother originally wanted to emigrate from Brazil to the United States but her middle name sounds Arabic and it was after 9/11. Worried they weren't letting people in with Arabic names, she decided to come to the UK instead. Listening to this student, it is easy to imagine a different scenario in which he would be speaking to me in an American accent, rather than a British one, the US was his mother's first choice.

The bifurcation of heritage in migration takes many turns and splits: externally through introductions of new migration policies that restrict travel, in supplementary schools through their choice of curricula, through intermarriage between parents from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and internally, through parental choices made within the household that determine which heritage a child of mixed-heritage takes up. Connections with family members abroad and obligations to remember different pasts are not always evenly spread in mixed households.

Interviewing a Brazilian father whose five year old daughter recently began attending the school, we discussed how these kinds of choices are made. His wife is French, and like many couples from different backgrounds, they decided to bring up their child multilingually using the popular 'One Person One Language' method (OPOL): his wife speaks to their child solely in French, he speaks solely in Portuguese. I asked him why they decided to send their child to a Brazilian rather than French Saturday school. He explained French is easier to learn: "There is a *lot* of French exchange here".

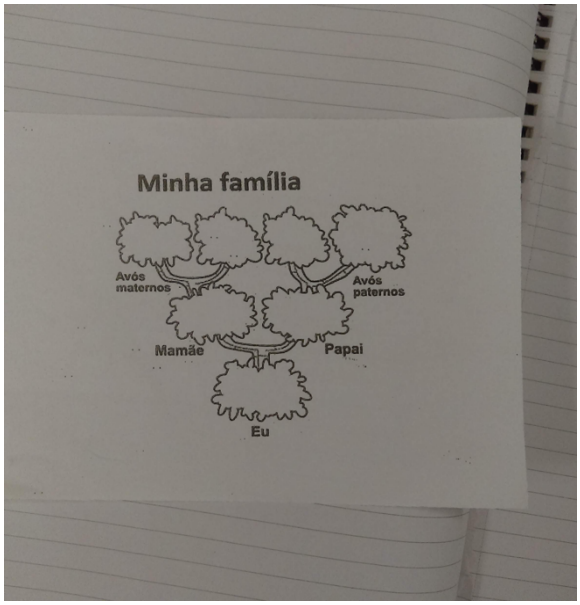
Me: “Is that partly why (their child) doesn’t have to commit to going to a Saturday school to learn French?”
Dad: “Not really. We want to but unfortunately, they all happen on Saturday.”
Me (laughing): “So you have to make decisions?”
Dad: “Make decision. And Portuguese would be the weakest link. Because I am also the one who was working outside of the house for now, my wife was staying before more time than I was, so in a sense the Portuguese is behind our two languages, and we are trying to catch up”.

He learnt French, his wife made efforts to learn Portuguese. Yet even in a mutually supportive multilingual environment, his anecdotes reveals how cultures can implicitly be in competition with one another, with one parent feeling another language dominates and their own language is ‘left behind’.

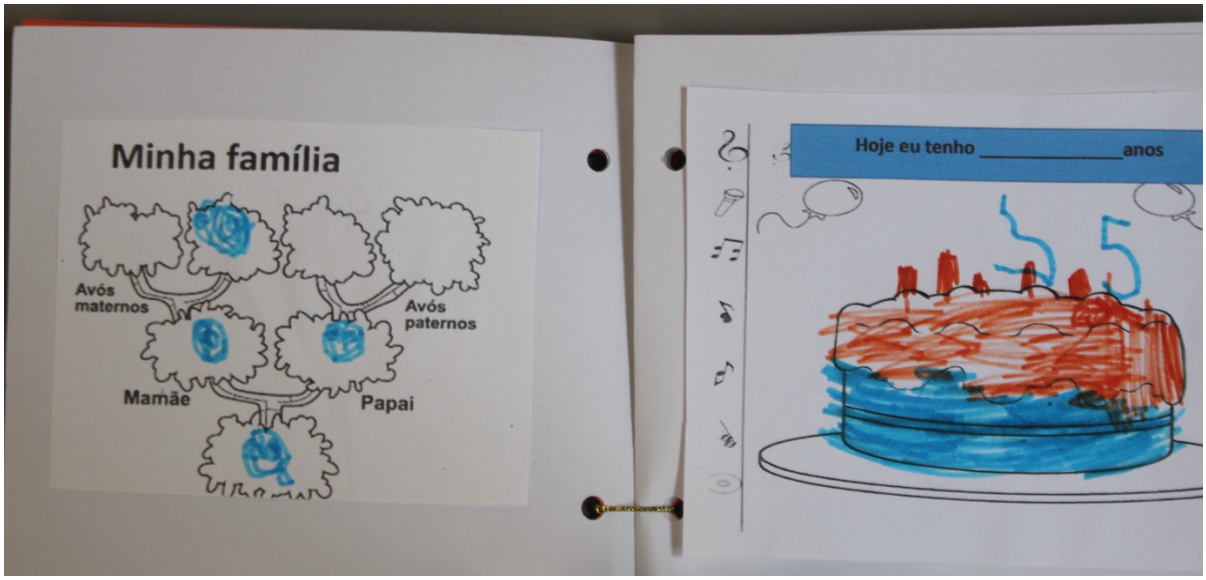
He also described a more extreme example of the loss of heritage-language within an ethnically-mixed household, his Brazilian female friend whose child does not attend the school. Her husband jealously forbids her to speak Portuguese with their children because he doesn’t understand what they are saying and is afraid she might talk behind his back. This is an exceptional case, the dad reassured me. This anecdote describes overt suppression of a mother’s cultural heritage being transmitted within a household, pointing to other forms of suppressions, likely more subtle ones in which one parent’s heritage dominates and another is deleted gradually over time.

As five-year-old children from the younger classes sketch their soft portraits of their family members in felt tip pens on seven leaves, their family tree pictures connect continents and contain their relatives that in real life are spread far apart.

Read chronologically, it is possible to see how in each generation cultural heritage has splintered as grandparents and parents migrated, changing languages and countries.
Yet family tree diagrams give a sense of symmetry and coherence, positioning the child safely at the centre, as the stalk that holds the family tree together, out of which different branches grow, as if the child begot their parents who begot the grandparents. From the child’s perspective history is read in reverse, as if all the branches were destined to lead to their eventual arrival, whereas in reality each family tree describes a different story of multiple heritage bifurcations, the nodes where heritage, in the form of a child’s mother-tongue, ethnic or national identity, could easily have become French, Lebanese, Italian or American.



5.14 ‘Minha familia’. Worksheet for five-year-olds.



5.15 Family tree drawn by a 5 year old student.

In one such family-tree assignment that has been filled in the child’s parents with family photographs, the child appears at the top of the tree as a baby held in their grandparent’s arms in Brazil, then across the page as a toddler on another grandparent’s lap, and again lower down as their present 5-year-old self in London, as if the same child keeps hopping from branch to branch over time.

5.6 School genealogies

Within the school there are real and 'imagined' genealogies, many teachers are the students' parents and grandparents, some staff members are related. In one staff meeting I discovered a senior teacher looking after the school coordinator' son is her mother-in-law. They all live together- child, parents and grandparents, the two mothers both work in the school. They laughed that I did not make that connection. Could I not see the resemblance?

Families of resemblances extend beyond biology. Staff nickname a little boy from the school 'little ___ (name of teacher)' because he looks remarkably like her. There are familiar faces and expressions, supplementary schools as places for reimagining roots.

Self-recognition through others help create the feeling of being at home. Many supplementary schools strive towards this feeling by constructing a home-like space through the senses: spoken language, familiar food, music, manner. These constructed markers of ethnicity and culture can be 'floating signifiers' of identity. In contrast there is something immediate, unmediated, and natural about visible resemblances in supplementary school where one's looks are normalized (Mirza and Reay 2000, Archer and Francis 2005).

Visible familiarity is something to be acknowledged alongside the other project supplementary schools are engaged in, of diversity and inclusivity (Hall et al 2002). How diversity looks and how it is approached varies across schools. In this Brazilian Saturday school visible difference is openly discussed in positive terms. During my fieldwork when 'identity' was the class topic, young children were encouraged to recognize and describe their visible uniqueness, taught to be proud of their individual features. Physical differences in hair, eye etc. were discussed frankly and taught on an intimate scale with tenderness, through self-portraits, a game where you look in the mirror and 'you will discover something special', and handmade books titled 'I am special' with young children writing mini-biographies.

5.7 How the school grew

Catering for the Brazilian diaspora in West London, the Saturday school was set up by two mothers for their then young children. A new class was added as the children grew, and a new teacher recruited, keeping the established classes running. Beginning with 6 students in its first year, the school has expanded to around 130 children 10 years later, during my fieldwork, having emerged organically around the children and growing along with them. This origin story is typical of the medium-sized supplementary schools in the UK that begin with two or three families.

As the children grew, the curriculum grew around them. Performances have been a valued part of the curriculum from the start, but it was in the school's early days that matched the children's young age when a lot of sweat was spent in organizing school performances which occurred every three months. When the oldest children reached their teens, the GCSE Portuguese exam was incorporated into the syllabus and performances had to take a backstage, heritage tailored towards the children's changing needs. The school had to meet expectations that its students, of Brazilian heritage, should receive top grades in the Portuguese exam. In reality, language proficiency does not come naturally and requires a lot of work, children attend English schools during the week and many are from families with only one Portuguese-speaking parent so language competence greatly varies from student to student. School plays were reduced to occur annually, although in practice language classes often incorporate performance, and are often interrupted by a rehearsal for an upcoming Brazilian celebration. Without a fixed value of cultural heritage in diaspora, the school officially prioritizes language learning, as an accredited academic skill for which its students receive recognized qualifications, but the curriculum continues to gravitate towards intangible heritage taught through performance, including school plays, festivals, community dances and capoeira which are felt as intrinsic aspects of Brazilian culture, but are harder to qualify. These two strands of cultural heritage separate and merge on different occasions, sometimes competing, children missing language lesson to rehearse for Carnival, sometimes complementary, children learning language through song.

On my first visit the school director was keen to accommodate my research and have me as a volunteer, but thought the school would be of little interest to a visual researcher. By the time I began fieldwork, the curriculum was revised to officially reincorporate performance in a third hour of an extended school day, offering three creative options: storytelling, theatre and capoeira.

5.8 Museum Collaboration

The extended creative curriculum coincided with the Museum of London inviting supplementary schools to participate in an Arts Awards scheme, an accrediting programme for schools and community organizations encouraging institutions to develop and document children's creative works. In this unexpected way, the school began to channel its performance curriculum towards an externally recognized qualification.

No one knew what the museum collaboration would entail. I assumed it would require some exchange that would culminate in a museum display made by the school. The school coordinator had expressed an interest in creating a large museum display that celebrates the children's Brazilian-ity, or Brazilian-ness, joking about whether there is such a word. Much like the school that promotes British-Brazilian hyphenated identities, words have to be invented for these new kinds of belonging.

When I learned the museum was organizing a family festival entitled 'Myths and Legends', I informed the school of an opportunity to take part. In a meeting between staff and the museum, suggestions of performing carnival or capoeira were briefly considered, then quickly rejected. Familiar questions raised in teachers' planning meetings about what should be the focus of the curriculum were now being addressed about the forthcoming museum performance or display. The museum invited the school to have its carnival parade in the galleries, but one teacher strongly objected, pointing out the carnival parade would be over in five minutes, the display should be something more substantial. There were practical issues: the festival fell on half-term, and there was no guarantee of a good turnout, many families are away. Importantly, carnival was described as a private event for parents. With only five school sessions to prepare something, the theatre group would not be ready, the drama teacher was still in Brazil.

Knowing a teacher from the storytelling team writes stories inspired by Brazilian folk tradition, I suggested they use one of her stories as a starting point for the museum display, to have her story pass down the school, beginning with the older classes, working its way down to the early years, using different forms of expression, sound-recordings, writing, drawing. We would then exhibit all of these outputs together to show how a story travels through the school, reinterpreted at different stages, like a game she plays called 'pass the message'. With my suggestion, the storytelling team became responsible for creating the museum display. The teacher presented a magical story about books that grow on trees, but needed children to whisper stories for the trees to grow, preferably in Portuguese.

5.9 'Rapidly Growing' Storytelling Trees

Teachers decided this story would be the running theme for the five sessions leading to the museum festival. The sessions would teach the children how to construct their own stories

and make their own books. The storytelling team were all in agreement: someone is to dress up as a tree. They nominated the teacher who wrote the story. She would stand in the middle of the circle as the tree and the children would whisper stories to the roots to make tree grows. In the last session the 'tree' would give back their book from its flowers and there would be a ceremony.

One teacher suggested bringing in a classroom tree, and each week replace it with a bigger one, so it looks like the tree has rapidly grown in three stages. She offered to bring in the small and medium trees to class, we would have to find the third tree. The week-long gaps between sessions would be put to use, the young children would easily believe in the rapid growth of the plant.

The museum had allocated us a two meters² wall space and offered to help us install. They were waiting for technical instruction but the school had not decided on the display yet. The teachers had a clear idea of what the museum display would be: a tree with books! A forest, the children's written stories growing in the trees, pages as leaves and in the background, tinted green. They all turn to me: 'this is where you come in'. I was only meant to facilitate the project, expecting the artwork was meant to be generated by the school. I was not Brazilian, and was here to learn about their culture and aesthetic expressions. Being a trained artist, to them it was clear I should lead the display. I made a few rough mock-ups for the wall display, very uncomfortable with my role as an artist. The school coordinator did not like the ink drawings (Illustrations 5.16 and 5.17), commenting that the people look like zombies. She preferred a very simple design I made from brown envelopes (Illustration 5.18), with layered cut outs of tree shapes, with texts inserted in the hollow of the trees.



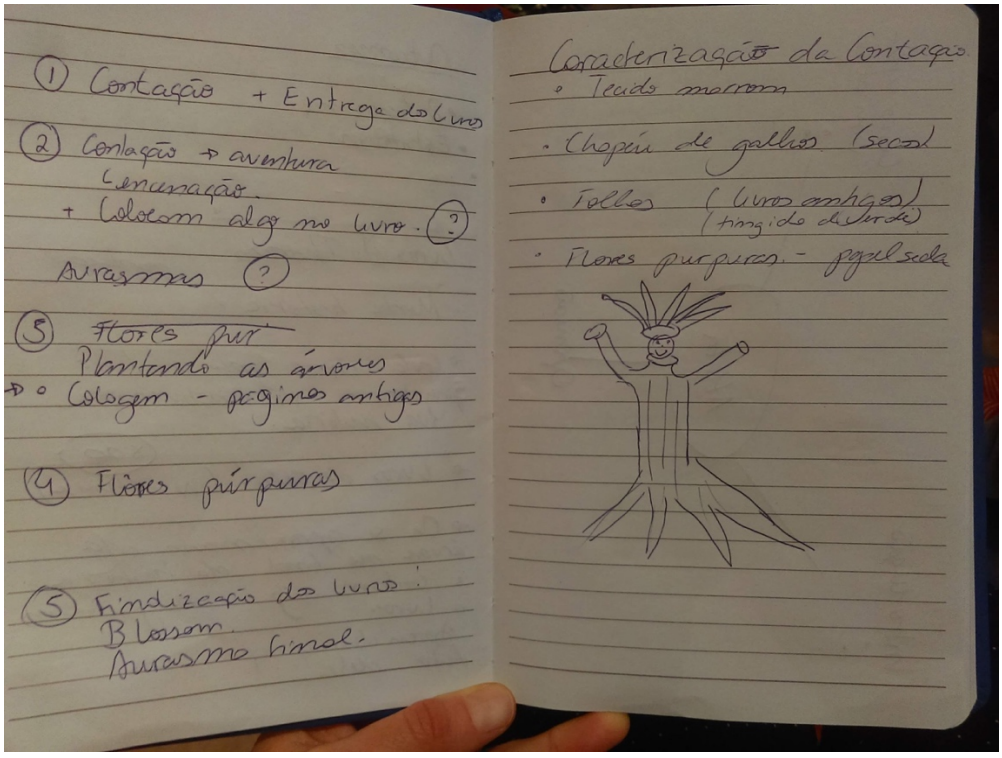
5.16 'The Whispering Forest', ink on paper



5.17 'The Whispering Forest', ink on paper



5.18 ‘The Whispering Forest’- collage from envelopes



5.19 School coordinator’s plan to dress as a tree

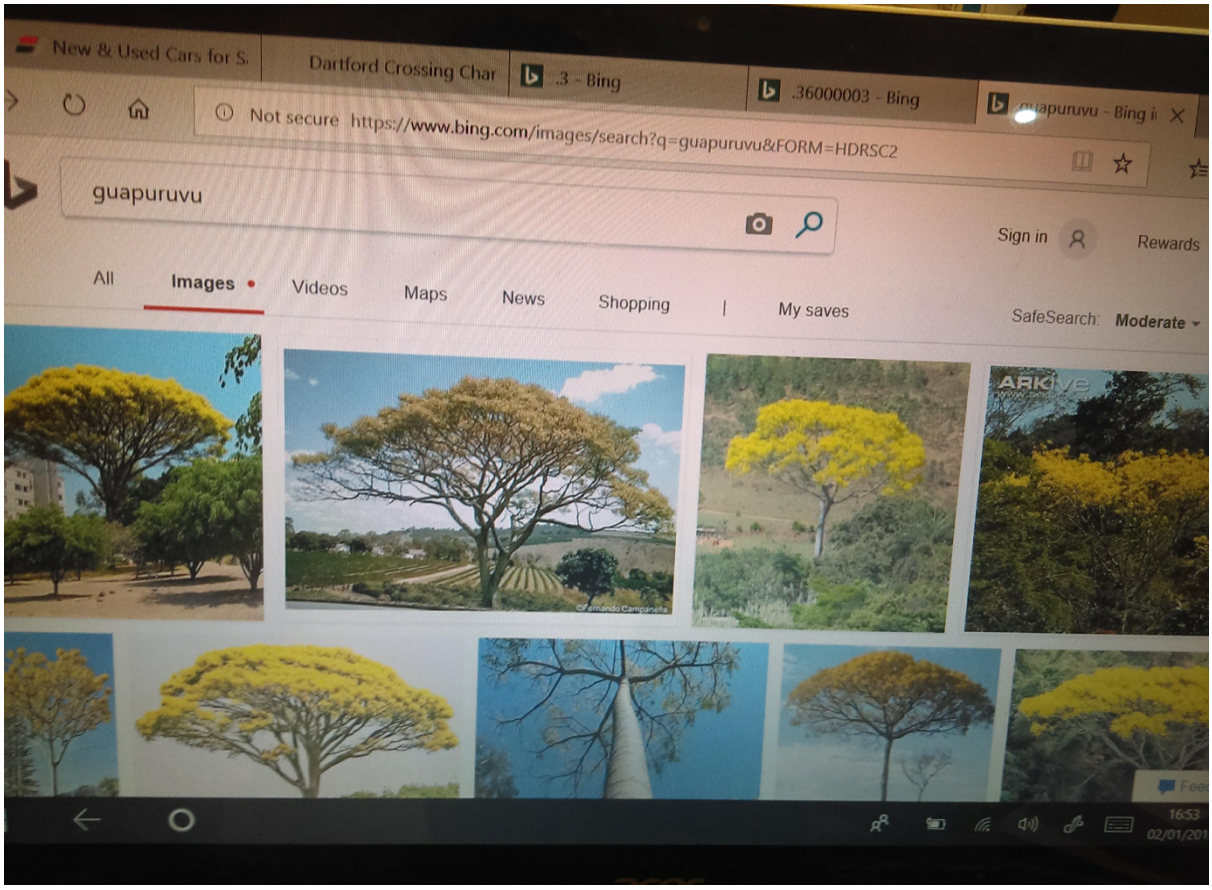
I noticed the coordinator had a charming sketch in her notebook, a ‘self-portrait-as-tree’ (Illustration 5.19). This was a much better starting point. I asked whether the final museum display should perhaps resemble this sketch, as a single tree growing books? Teachers unanimously objected, it should be a forest, with at least 5-6 trees, and lots of books. I asked whether it is important what tree it is, i.e. a Brazilian tree? A particular tree?

They had not considered this before, and enthusiastically replied: yes! Because it would add another layer of meaning.

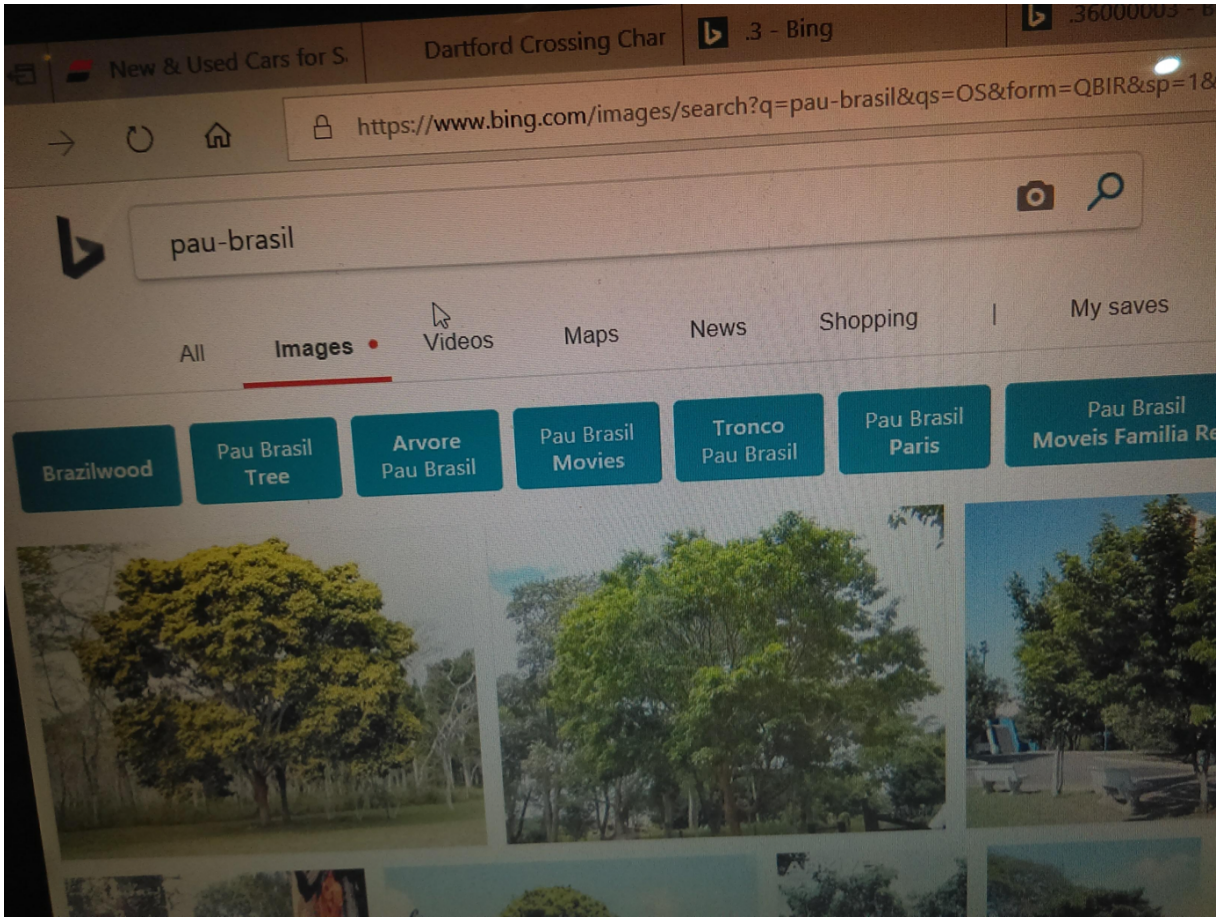
Which ones? I asked.

One of the teachers was brought forward to answer this, as she is a tree specialist. She even planted a tree in Brazil when a teacher's son was born in England, and gave the new mother the coordinates. In the town where the teacher comes from, everyone has a tree planted when they are born.

The teacher specialising in trees wrote down some species - Guapuruvu - and she showed me on Google Images. She explained that this and other types of Brazilian trees grow very rapidly, clarifying that 'growing trees rapidly' is not just a classroom activity I imagined teachers are using to 'cheat time', but a real natural phenomenon. She thought of Pau-brasil as a second option. At the sight of this particular tree everyone sighed with happiness as if saying' yes'. The school director commented: It's a very typical Brazilian tree.



5.20 'Guapuruvu', Native Brazilian trees



5.21 ‘Pau brasil’. Native Brazilian tree

I was not keen on any of these options. Both species have wide tree-tops, and I could not imagine how we would squeeze 5-6 trees into a 2 by 2 meter wall-based display.

5.10 Teacher as a tree

Preparing for the first storytelling session, the teacher made her costume whilst talking about bringing up children in migration. She was thinking perhaps to migrate to Portugal in the future, as it’s linguistically closest to Brazil. She brought in a long piece of brown fabric to make into her tree costume and knew what she wanted to do. I held up the fabric whilst she made a small hole in the middle to poke her head through, and wore it like a loose tunic. Then we tore the edges of the fabric into long strips, these would be her roots, she explained. She wanted the roots long enough so they reach across room.

In class the children sat in a circle. She put on the tunic and stood up majestically like a tree, scrunching each strip into a ball, throwing them each a root to hold on to. The children held

the fabric as she told them her story about the whispering forest. She kneeled down, her roots tautly stretched across the classroom, extending to each child.

Towards the end of the story she tore a page from a Brazilian magazine, rolled the paper into stick, and planted it into pot, trying to jab it in. It did not work as she had anticipated, the earth I got was too stony, and so she dug a little and carefully planted it into the pot. She handed one boy a watering-can and he watered the book-plant. Everyone watched, intrigued by the realness of the water poured into the pot from which the printed page in Portuguese stuck out, like a magic act.

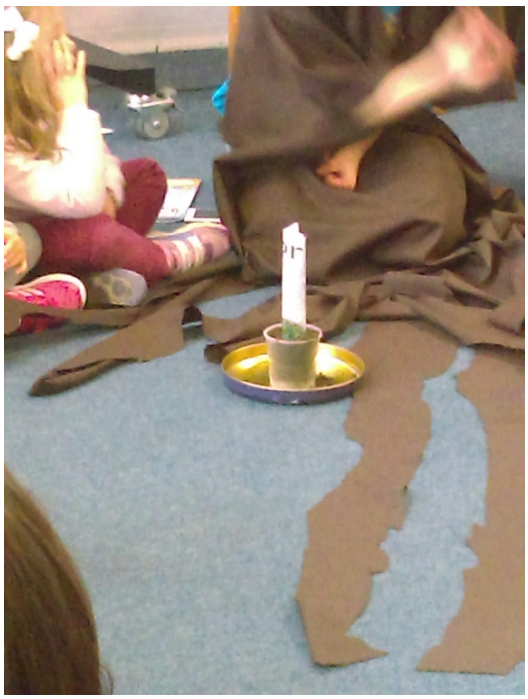
After engaging the children in a conversation about their favorite stories, the teacher took out a pack of colourful balloons, on each written in marker 'Era uma vez…' (once upon a time). Each child was handed a balloon with a bean to put inside. The children were joyous. The whole room was filled with children throwing their balloons around that made a noise because of the bean inside. Teachers went around asking individual children" "what is your story?" and gathered in to listen.

Soon it was circle time, parents arrived to pick up the children who left with a balloon and bean in one hand, bean-card in the other.

In this storytelling session the teacher literally offered the children her roots to hold into. In one of the photographs, which I sketched below, the teacher dressed as tree looks like she is levitating, the children are holding her down, otherwise she may float away. This image illuminates how it is not only the children whose roots are preserved in migration, but that these children help their adults living in diaspora maintain their rootedness and stay connected.



5.22 Teacher dressed as tree, children holding on to the roots.



5.23 Planting Portuguese text in a pot.



5.24 Plant pot with Portuguese page as twig.

In the game of balloons with texts, seeds were floating around in the air again, much like 'The Golden Rosemary' song, although this time with Brazilian beans in the UK.

After the first session teachers planned what to do next. I tried to discuss the museum display, thinking we would spend the next four sessions progressively making it in class. The coordinator pointed out: “I think we are talking about different things, you are talking about a final display, we are talking about what we will do with them next week”.

She talked about doing things step by step - next week we will try out Dictaphone recordings and use cards to prompts children to make up stories. I agreed and liked her attitude, but was unclear about when and how we will make the display for the museum.

She explained: “For us it is more important they get the story, next week we have to see what they understood. If they don’t think there are trees in the story we have failed, we tell the story again”. The teachers talked about having to test things out. They were expecting these children would be able to write, but they couldn’t and were much younger than teachers had anticipated. The idea of making books was impractical. Instead the display would incorporate sound-recordings of the children orating stories in Portuguese which the talking trees will tell.

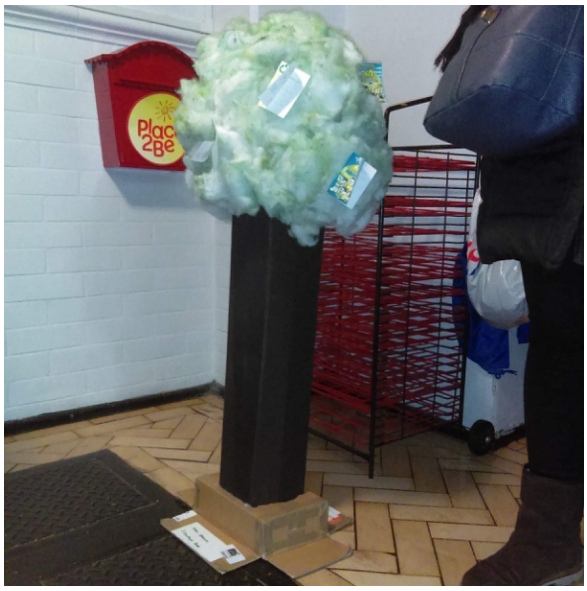
Here the analogy of trees became a way of working with children, that, much like stories need to emerge organically, slowly, gradually. The tree became a metaphor for a method of working.

I asked teachers if the museum display is about a real tree, a mythical tree, or the two combined? I mentioned the museum has three objects relating to Brazilian trees, one is a banana tree. Two of the teachers respond immediately, almost synchronously: ‘No. Banana tree is not suitable. No banana tree- they don’t fit story’. They seemed to have a shared archetypal vision of a tree: a happy tree in full bloom with lots of little books inside the tree top.

The teacher designated as the ‘arty’ one said: ‘I have a solution for you. Use green cotton wool, children will stick it with PVA to tree tops, then we stick book covers with hot gun. We can get normal cotton wool, and dab in green paint’.

She had come up with other solutions, but I was talking about a museum display, whereas she seemed to be talking about children’s classroom activities. I had extensive experience

making museum displays, and was not interested in a simple solution but something that would look good. One Saturday she turned up with a tree made of cardboard and cotton wool to the morning staff meeting, like the one she described previously. The stem was still box-shaped. She had stuck colour-print outs of book covers- Walt Disney adaptations of Brothers Grimm fairytales, as miniature books in the treetop. The school director subtly questioned me: is this for the museum or classroom? I did not know. I became anxious, feeling I am letting down the school director and museum community officer for whom I was responsible.



5.25 Classroom tree display in a staff meeting



5.26 and 5.27 Classroom tree display in a staff meeting (close up)

I was facing a growing dilemma, how much should I intervene in the display? The museum officer was in agreement with me it should emerge from the school, but teachers had no experience of making displays for museums. I was worried the cotton-wool tree was not good enough for a museum display, but unable to work out whether I should apply or let go of my own aesthetic judgement.

In the following sessions the same story was repeated and extended. A teacher brought in her husband who can make bird calls, and children made nests to take home. Nothing was being made for the museum.

The job of making the display was not yet taken up by any one. I was hoping to observe, document, assist and learn from the process, but because of my background in the visual arts was assigned the task of leading the display. I felt a sense of conflicting duties towards the school director who had entrusted me to help make a museum display worthy of exhibiting, and towards the museum community officer who trusted me not to dominate the project, expecting the content to emerge from the school.

The cotton-wool tree looked like a classroom display rather than a well-crafted object, but this was perhaps more authentic. After all, teachers were not professional craftspeople and could not be expected to make complicated objects. With vast experience in participatory arts, I assumed the children would be directly involved in making the display, but this idea only occurred to staff much later, who were in the habit of making a lot of displays for the children, particularly costumes and props for school plays and festivals.

I was happy to help ‘facilitate’ the project by telling the school about the festival, organizing a site-visit and working through practicalities, but felt it was not my place to make the display. I was conducting fieldwork in the school in order to learn from their visions and aesthetic sensibilities, and hoped they would eventually take the lead.

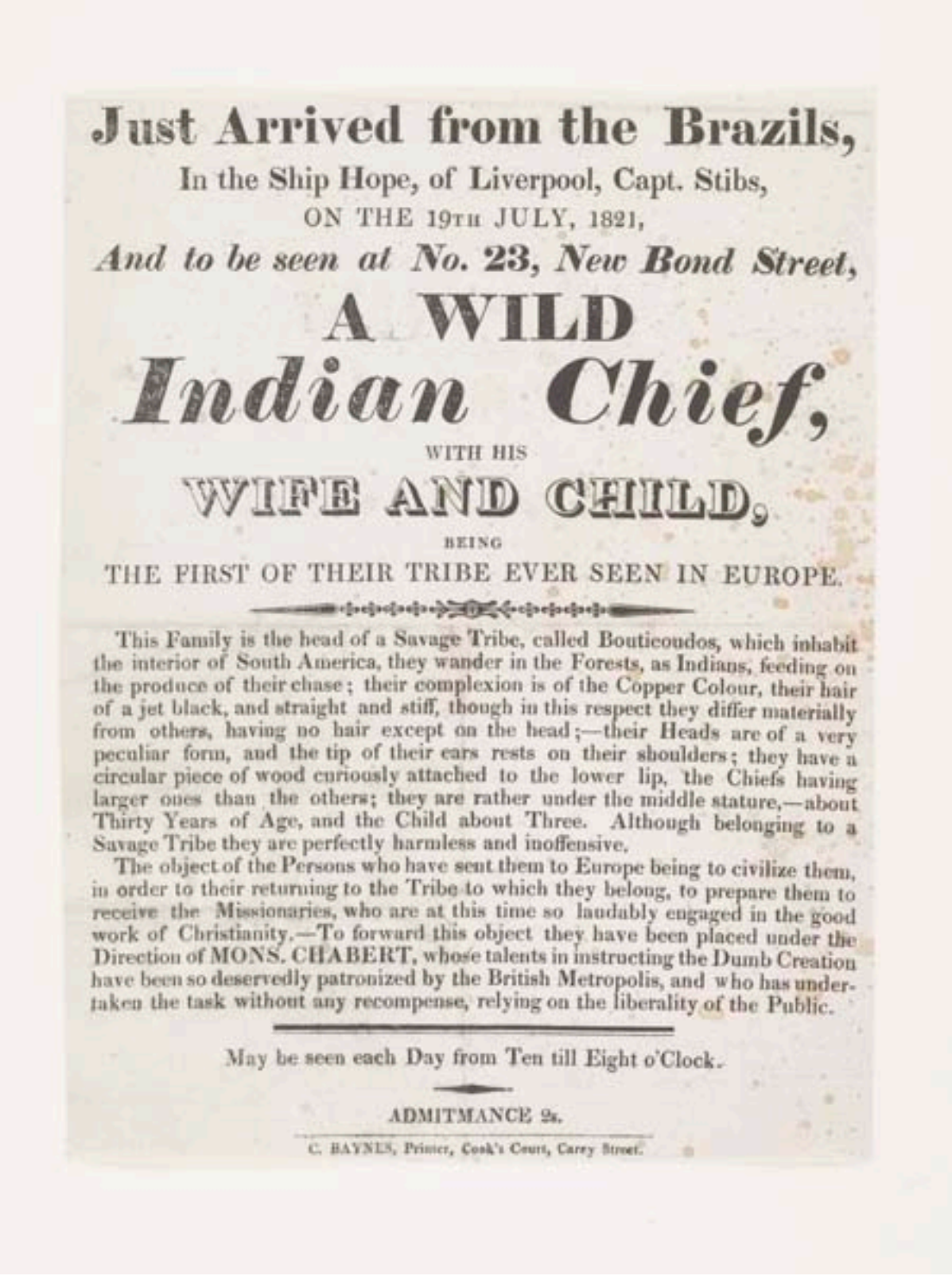
5.11 Collaborations sans objects

Based on my previous experiences of museum collaboration with communities that usually relate to objects and collections, I expected the school would make a display that either referenced or reinterpred objects in the museum’s collection, thereby making connections

between Brazilian heritage and the museum. I searched the museum collection on-line, planning to print images out to bring to class, should a school trip prove too hard to organize.

All the museum objects from Brazil were about plants, except for one. There was a 1927 photograph of Brazilian bananas 'discharged' from a steamer at the Royal Albert Docks, another photograph with no image, just a blurb: 'Tractor being loaded for export 1969', 'loose sample of jaborandi leaves, 1900, in store', and a sample block of coconut palm wood imported from Brazil to the London Docks dated around 1900-1935.

The non-plant related object was a flyer printed in 1821, advertising a living display of a Brazilian family. Beautifully typeset, the flyer announces: 'Just Arrived from the Brazils, In the Ship Hope, of Liverpool, Capt Stibs, on the 19th July 1821, And to be seen at No 23. New Bond Street, *A Wild Indian Chief with his WIFE AND CHILD being the first of their tribe ever seen in Europe'*. The flyer unpacks the latent heritage of museums, implicated in the historic practice of 'human zoos', of displaying people as natural specimens and exotic objects of curiosity (Blanchard 2008). The flyer tells an older story of human migration as colonial conversion, the purpose of transporting the family to Europe was 'to civilize them and prepare them to receive the Missionaries', the chief and his family uprooted, moved around as touring exhibits, used as objects of commodity- two shillings a ticket, 'civilized', and if all went to the plan specified in the flyer, sent back to Brazil.



Just Arrived from the Brazils,

In the Ship Hope, of Liverpool, Capt. Stibs,

ON THE 19TH JULY, 1821,

And to be seen at No. 23, New Bond Street,

A WILD

Indian Chief,

WITH HIS

WIFE AND CHILD,

BEING

THE FIRST OF THEIR TRIBE EVER SEEN IN EUROPE.

This Family is the head of a Savage Tribe, called Bouticoudos, which inhabit the interior of South America, they wander in the Forests, as Indians, feeding on the produce of their chase; their complexion is of the Copper Colour, their hair of a jet black, and straight and stiff, though in this respect they differ materially from others, having no hair except on the head;—their Heads are of a very peculiar form, and the tip of their ears rests on their shoulders; they have a circular piece of wood curiously attached to the lower lip, the Chiefs having larger ones than the others; they are rather under the middle stature,—about Thirty Years of Age, and the Child about Three. Although belonging to a Savage Tribe they are perfectly harmless and inoffensive.

The object of the Persons who have sent them to Europe being to civilize them, in order to their returning to the Tribe to which they belong, to prepare them to receive the Missionaries, who are at this time so laudably engaged in the good work of Christianity.—To forward this object they have been placed under the Direction of MONS. CHABERT, whose talents in instructing the Dumb Creation have been so deservedly patronized by the British Metropolis, and who has undertaken the task without any recompense, relying on the liberality of the Public.

May be seen each Day from Ten till Eight o'Clock.

ADMITMANCE 2s.

C. BAYNES, Printer, Cook's Court, Carey Street.

5.28 Flyer, 'A Wild Indian Chief with his wife and child from Brazil being the first of their tribe ever seen in Europe' 1821. Museum of London collection (Id number 2012.1/4).

The flyer's content was too offensive for a project involving young children, and so plants seemed the most viable option. The woodblock sample was the only object on display, shown at the Museum of London Docks where the 'Myths and Legends' festival would be held, in a gallery called 'Warehouse of the World', in a glass case called 'Sampling'.



5.29 Coconut palm wood sample block

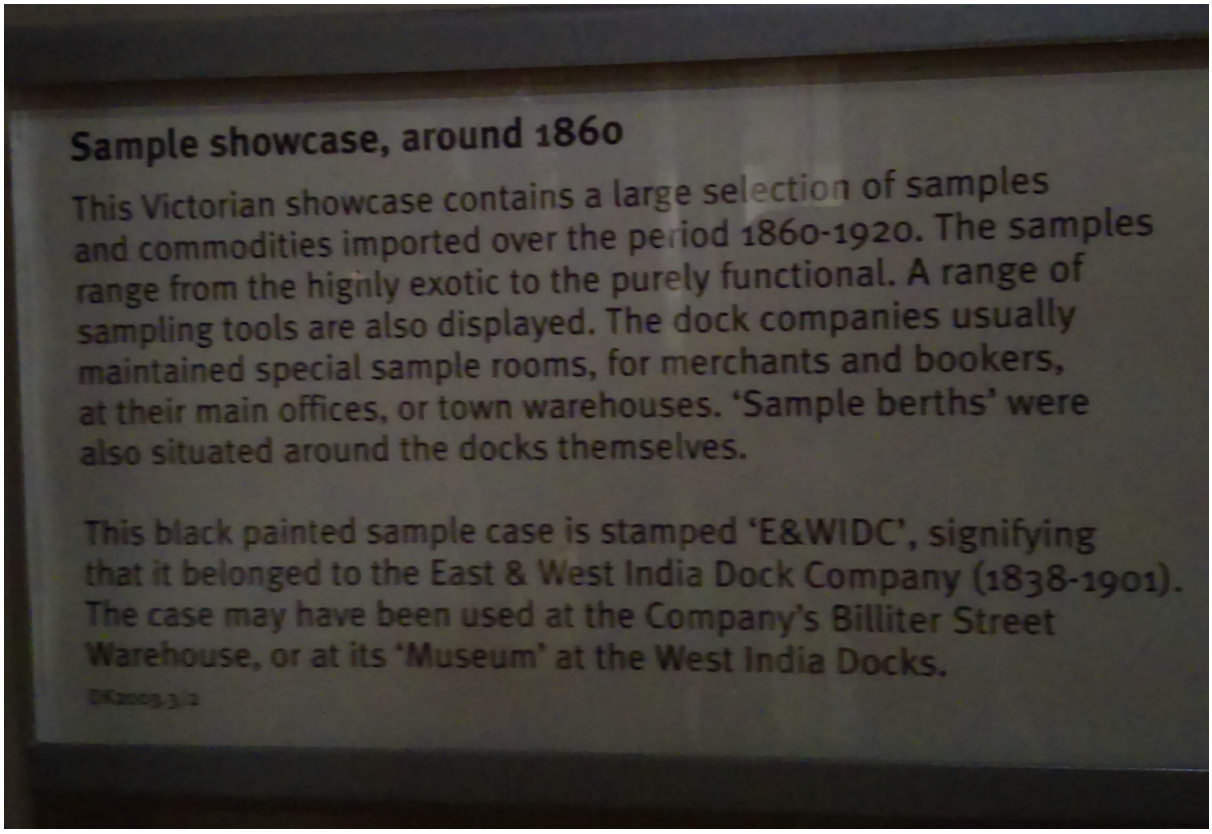
The Brazilian tree segment rests amongst many other natural materials taken from different continents in a 'sampling case'- a large wooden Victorian glass vitrine that belonged to the (British) East and West India Dock Company, used by the 'Sample Offices' when they checked the quality of materials to see if they were good for trading. A blurb explains: "Goods from all over the world arrived at the dock warehouses. Foremen compared these with examples in their sampling cabinets to decide if they were happy with the quality of the goods."

The blurb notes that samples and commodities imported between 1860-1920 range 'from the highly exotic to the purely functional'. Behind the thick glass are animal and plant samples with handwritten labels attached: 'Walrus tusk, North America'…. 'Tusk of Tame Elephant'…. 'Part of elephant tusk, showing disease from shot. W. Coast of Africa…', corked bottles of various sizes filled with different beans, seeds and spices: 'Blackeye beans, Portugal… Wild Mace (Spice), East Indies….'





5.30 Sample Showcase 5.31. Walrus and Tame Elephant Tusks, in Sample Showcase



5.32 Sampling case blurb

The Brazilian tree section sits amongst other wood block samples from different continents: 'Cajoba wood… Porte Kiev…'all brought in to have their value verified and consistency tested:



5.33 Wood blocks in the sampling collection



5.34 Sampling interpretation board

The sampling display-case was ‘inherited’ along with the building when it was converted into a museum in 2003. Before that it was a built as a warehouse, the largest of its kind at the time, as part of the expansion of the West India Docks in 1802 when London was the world’s busiest port”[33].

The Museum of London purchased the warehouse, keeping much of the fabric of the original building intact and using the objects it housed to tell the history of the Docks, such as the Sampling case. The objects inside the sampling case had already gone through the process of selection and scrutiny that predate museum collecting, the warehouse was where materials of the world were reorganized and contained, prevented from rotting before the museum took over this task.

Each object in the sampling case describes a relationship between England and the rest of the world, laying bare the material extraction, human exploitation and financial profiteering involved in the process of their acquisition. The inherent violence in acquiring the materials is apparent in the objects and their labels, the tusk of an elephant ‘diseased’ due to gunshot, and the photographs of a room with piles of elephant tusks. Such displays emphasize the uneven power relations inherent in ‘contact zones’ (Clifford 1997) and put into question the merits of being ‘collected’:

[33] https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands/permanent-galleries retrieved 9th November 2020



5.35 ‘part of elephant’s tusk, showing disease from shot. W. coast of Africa’. Sampling case.



5.36 ‘Weighting and checking ivory on the London docks, 1930. Elephant tusks, here being loaded into a London warehouse, were just one of the thousands of rare cargoes imported by the docks. PLA collection, retrived 23.11.2020 of museum website.

Displayed amongst the broken horns of shot elephants and bottles of spices, the tree as an object does not have a great presence, but gets lost amongst the histories of materials removed, processed and relabeled. The majesty of the original tree, regenerative, vertical, grounded, is lost. De Boeck’s contemplation on the powerful, paradoxical representation of tree as grounded yet moving does not carry into the museum (1998:25-26), where the tree is neither grounded nor moving. It is chopped up and cannot grow. It is without roots, a floating entity amongst other samples. It has lost its form.

The objects inside the sampling display case are liminal, half ‘raw’, not fully fashioned into a commodity, their value, material consistency and financial worth yet to be determined. The display shows a frozen moment in the transformation of these objects from ‘natural materials; to ‘cultural artefacts’. Nature is on its way to being commodified, materials from different continents made portable and displayable as samples, on their way to becoming artefacts. Brazilian wood was brought in to see whether it might be used as a substitute for the more traditional hardwoods in the furniture industry’ [34]. In the same manner, the ‘wild Indian chief and his wife and child’ were brought to England to undergo a journey from ‘nature’ into ‘civilization’, their residual image captured in the flyer now stored at the museum, built on a warehouse, built on the Docks which itself is an artificial lake used to regulate, control and transform nature into culture.

Supplementary school children can also be regarded by adults as ‘raw material’ (Montgomery 2000:16). Recent work in the anthropology of childhood emphasizes children’s agency (ibid) but in practice they are developmental beings and museums, mainstream and supplementary schools are all involved in enculturating them. The term ‘civilization’ is rarely used, tainted by its colonial meaning, and in mainstream schools there is a compulsory syllabus about five newly written ‘British Values’ taught under the theme of ‘citizenship’. The values have little to do with the histories of British pillage and plunder on display at the museum and what was devalued as a consequence, such as indigenous cultures whose representatives were brought to Europe and sent back so they can spread the erasure of their own practices and ways of life.

[34] Object search on www.museumoflondon.org.uk

The community officer had previously worked at the British Museum with its extensive world collection and was used to finding objects connected with different cultures as starting points for collaborative projects. She was keen for me to find a way to make connections with the collection or the building itself, and explained it is always easier to use the museum as starting point, to find something in the collection and find a link - 'If objects had eyes, what would they have seen and heard' - that is how she tries to get children to think about the collection.

As well as the wood sample, she wanted to show me the Rio destination Board in the 'No 1 Warehouse', the gallery that describes the original use of the building: to house, weigh and sample cargo. On display are the weighing scales, barrels, sacks, trolleys, hooks ropes. Hanging from the wooden beams are 'destination boards', painted signs of countries, coastal cities and former British colonies, under which dockers used to pile up goods in the order of a ship's travel route. These include a RIO sign painted in large letters. 'Britain was doing enormous trade with Brazil at the time', she remarked, pointing that the sign evidences the long history of Britain's presence in Brazil even though it was not officially a former colony. This museum collection had not lent itself easily to engaging children with their cultural heritages. We were getting used to the idea of a different kind of museum collaboration with communities, working around and without objects from the collection.

5.12 Finding a plot at the museum

Several weeks before the festival, I arranged to meet the community officer together with the school coordinator to work out where the tree display could be installed.

The Brazilian supplementary school coordinator was pleasantly surprised by the nice ambience of the museum, having never been to this site before. Historically this was a site where dockers worked under terrible conditions, but the building has changed use. The tactile wood and brick architecture, low ceilings, shelter from the windy riverfront, smell of the café on the ground floor and armchairs by the entrance make it feel like a cosy, warm and homely space. The coordinator was delighted to learn the foyer was one of the spots

available for the school display and imagined installing a cardboard forest across the entire foyer. The museum officer explained the space needs to be reserved for people who have disabilities. I tried to gesture toward the wall, knowing it is what the community officer had in mind. The community officer explained that the foyer is just for a 2D display. I mentioned how they both had similar ideas about a 2D self-standing display, asking the school coordinator to redraw what she sketched previously, but instead she asked if we can have a cardboard forest. I explained to the museum officer we imagined five or six trees when planning a mural. The officer was flexible and agreed on a maximum of three self-standing 3D trees staggered in height, one knee-high, one around 160 cm, and another the height of a tall person. The coordinator wanted to display them as a forest, the museum officer suggested to spread them out in a few spots, offering another space on the first floor that the coordinator liked.

During our conversation it turned out that the school coordinator planned for the trees to speak entirely in Portuguese. The museum officer sounded disappointed, she had hoped for translation, gently suggesting: 'It would be nice for visitors to understand some of the stories'. I asked if one tree should speak in English, the other two in Portuguese? The school coordinator agreed- half and half, and offered to write out some of the translations. The museum officer explained that for an installation blurbs usually have around fifty words, people are not expected to sit and read. Now it was the school coordinator's turn to be disappointed, surprised at this small word count. She asked: Would the blurb be about the project, or the school itself? The community officer gave her an example: 'the artwork on the ground floor is by…' In the course of this meeting the school had managed to rapidly grow its display from a mural into three sculptures, but with condensed content and stories cut short.

We agreed with the communitiy officer that the installation would be called *The Whispering Forest*, and the museum provided us with child-friendly sound recorders. The community officer had to dash off and I took the school coordinator to see two Brazilian objects on display. We entered the war gallery where a siren continuously plays in the background quite loudly. I mentioned we are in the war gallery and my companion walked straight back out.

She asked me - which is your favourite museum?
I no longer knew. Knowing her science background I guessed she likes natural history museums?
Yes.

I told her I like this museum more than the Museum of London Wall.
I think she heard 'war' because she responded: 'I don't like war museums, Europe is obsessed with them, so many. In Brazil we don't have one war museum'. She was happy about that. I never thought about Europe's museums this way before. For me war-themed museums were very normal, 'natural'.

In passing, she mention they had a school trip to the Museum of London Wall, and parents hated visiting the museum. I asked her about this, thinking it was something about the displays. She explained: '…it's cause we make them go there. The first times we told them it would be the Portuguese lesson but in the museum, so they had to bring their child there, we made them all come, all together. They said 'we come here lots of times with our kids, they don't need to go (on the Saturday). The parents want the kids to go to the school and to the Portuguese lessons. The third time…

Me: Third time? You've done this three times?

School coordinator: Yes, the third time we decided to just give them the tickets so they can go by themselves. No one went. Not even us, ha ha. We couldn't go, we were busy (her and other staff).

They had overestimated how many parents and children would come, the school director got 100 museum tickets that they gave out. I took this as a warning, since I would soon have to introduce the museum project to the parents, and asked: So I should make sure we say they don't have to come.
Yes.

She ran a session for her class at the museum a few years back, using a map on display to ask the children to name as many countries as they could in Portuguese. It was clear that the museum could not be easily used as an extension of their classroom. There was not only the logistical problem of organising a school trip within a very short supplementary school day, but complaints from many parents who want the school to teach their children Brazilian cultural heritage, which is not on display at the museum, making it hard to justify museum trips, let alone a long-term collaboration. This time may be different, as we were to create our own display. We just needed to convince parents and get them on our side.

5.13 *The Whispering Forest* – museum display

The collaborative process of making the display was gradual and clumsy, but non-hierchical. Teachers had different tastes and aesthetic sensibilities but were very accomondating to one another. Friendships were much more valued than any display. The teacher that offered her story made it clear she did not want to push forward her ideas and took a clear backstep so her vision did not to dominate. Teachers were used to working together and none of the staff including the head teacher felt her idea should matter more than anyone else's. They set up a WhatsApp group to share pictures of tree displays. In practical terms it meant it was hard to move things along when it came to making decisions about the final display.

Teachers were used to making polyvocal works for carnival, school plays and handmade books. Having to narrow down our ideas to a single display describes the problem of musuem reduction, as one teacher expressed: "If we show capoeira and say this is Brazilian culture it's not true, and if we show a story and say it is Brazilian culture it is also not true because Brazilian culture is not one thing. It's too narrow". How can they shows different aspects of Brazilian culture in a singular object?

The polyvocality of the work came out in the stories we collected in the voice-recordings. In class we recorded children telling their favourite stories. Some chose fairy-tales about princesses, one chose to retell the teacher's story to her delight. We opened the project to parents, inviting them to record stories they would like to pass on to their children. Two mothers chose the famous Brazilian folktales of Curupira and Saci. Curupira is a young sprite that inhabits the forests of North Brazil. His feet are back-to-front and he creates misleading tracks that point the wrong way to disorientate hunters and woodcutters so they get lost in the forest. The story of Saci emerged in the South East during the slavery period in Brazil. He is an invisible young black boy born from a plant that takes the form of a twister or wind, causing havoc in the countryside, spilling milk buckets, leaving the fence open and troubling farmers. These enchanting stories have become national folktales that embalm memories of colonialism and slavery, the first expressed through taboos about trespassing into forests, the second explains 'bad luck' in farms, as cultivated land that stand in opposition to natural forests.

We made the recordings in an empty classroom. Afterwards, the two mothers lingered longer to avoid bumping into their children in the corridor. Their boys are in the same class, have the same names, and are best friends, one mother laughed. Whilst they waited I consulted them about their vision for the display, asking if they want to draw anything?

‘No. I am a lawyer,’ one replied.

Now that the forest was no longer going to be 2D there were important practical issues to work out. I had concerns around health-and-safety, in case the display is knocked over. The director’s husband offered to make a structure with whatever plans the teacher came up with, but no one was willing to take the lead.

As the festival date approached, the school director was getting stressed that the sculptures might not be made in time. In a local café after school teachers continued to share more images of tree displays they found on-line . Some teachers liked a tree sculptured out of balloons, it was festive and within the spirit of the school but the idea was soon ruled out because they wanted something more enduring. Many possibilities were raised, the school director’s mobile-phone was being passed around, her husband on the other end waiting for instruction on what structure he should build, talking intermittently to me, the art teacher and the director. The long phone conversation continued out of the cafe and into a side street where teachers park their cars. The art teacher got in the school director’s car to make the tree structures.

They ended up building two ginormous trees, much bigger than previously discussed with the museum. The school director’s husband sewed sausage-shaped sandbags to weigh the base of each tree, combined his building experience and needle craft skills. The long flexible sandbags were concealed under a piece of artificial grass the school director had purchased, after searching for materials in many DIY shops. She continued to consult me via WhatsApp on material choice, sending me photos of different fabrics, very used to working in response to people and moving forward as a group.

The school director’s final touch was to add faces to the stems, thinking it would appeal to children. On the morning of the festival she and her husband arrived early to fluff up the treetops, circling around them so they looked good from all angles. This further humanised the trees, each tree standing patiently whilst its hair was being shaped.




5.37 and 5.38 Tree sculptures in museum resource room.

The museum officer asked her where she got the tree's facial features, searching for a sign of authenticity in the material. 'Amazon', the school director replied frankly, meaning the website as opposed to the Brazilian rainforest.

The festival begun around midday and staff headed towards the museum restaurant waiting for more families to arrive. They ordered food and talked about many things. At some point teachers reminisced about their large houses back in Brazil, one recalled living by the beach. They made jokes about their small and cold homes in London. In response, the school director contributed a story about a mum that came to the UK, she and her husband had a very settled life in Brazil but decided to move to the UK once their children turned 18 so their children would go to university here, to avoid Brazilian university strikes. Once they moved here, the girl got a boyfriend and went off to live in Germany. The mother cried and begged her daughter but she was not to be dissuaded- 'no no no, I'm not doing that'. The boyfriend doesn't do anything. The mum and dad helped her move their things, of course. They had such a stable life in Brazil. You never know how things will turn out. She concludes: "You can plan your *own* life, you can't plan your children's."

Her story had a moral: children, like branches, move in unforeseen directions - you cannot control how they grow. The parents gave up their comfortable life in Brazil to move to the UK with a clear plan, derailed by their daughter's romantic encounter and decision to move countries. This story contrasts with a more personal story about the school director's family. She had moved to London in the 90s and fell in love with it, deciding to stay put and bring up her children as Brazilian-British. When her own daughter, who is the inspiration for the

school, turned fifteen, she secretly arranged a trip to Brazil to celebrate her all-important Brazilian fifteenth birthday party. The director told me, clearly proud and still surprised, about how her daughter with the help of her grandma and extended family had organized the entire party in Brazil without her knowledge, including the venue and the dress which the grandma offered to knit. Only once all was arranged the girl revealed the plan to the director, saying: 'you are welcome to come mum, but you will have to get your own ticket'. These two contrasting anecdotes, one about serial migration, the other about a journey of return, both point towards the unforeseen routes children take up contrary to their parents' plans.

In the museum's galleries the two trees were separated, each one on a different floor, not quite a forest as envisaged. Yet within the space of the museum they really stood out. Once they were installed they were decorated with paper-flowers made by children from the storytelling group. One of the teachers called over her teenage son who was sitting in the lounge listening to his headphones, instructing him to bring the bag with flowers and help plant them in the artificial grass strip around the tree. His mother had worked in the school for a long time, the boy had spent a substantial part of his childhood growing up there. Few teenagers are reincorporated back into supplementary schools as staff members or volunteers, and for now his cultural heritage has a physical site he regularly revisits in the weekly classes. Once he takes the Portuguese GCSE exam there would be little reason for him to attend the school, no more trees to plant, real or artificial. His mother had called him over not because the job required it, but because she wanted him to take part, to keep planting together.

Several hours later a young child from the storytelling sessions plucked the paper flowers out of the display. Both her parents were with her, her dad asking: "which flower did you make?" She picked a yellow one. Her mother told me: "She was very proud, she really wanted to come today to see this". The couple let their girl take the flower home. I moved the remaining flowers to even out the gap.

Other visitors including the families that help make the tree were more uncertain about how interactive the display was meant to be. Some parents stopped their children from being too physical. Children were less hesitant, cuddling the display, circling, pushing and stroking it, and showing what the community officer termed 'physical love'. The trees were rarely alone.

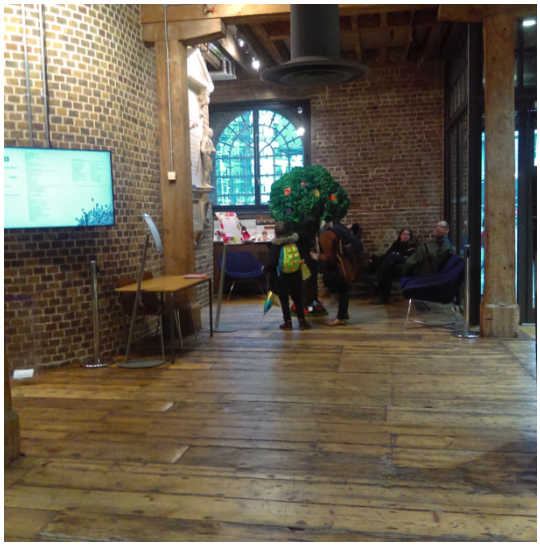


5.39 Girl hugging tree sculpture

One of the mothers whose voice was recorded recounting a story was near the display as I watched her son go up to the tree and hug it. At the time she seemed embarrassed and self-critical, saying to me: 'I can recognize my own voice.' Later the mother described to me her son's reaction to the talking tree display: he was listening to the story being read out, and when he recognized her voice he hugged the tree. She seemed very moved by this. Yet it must have been very strange for a young child to go to a museum and suddenly find a speaking tree with a face and his mother's voice inside, reading his familiar Brazilian bedtime story.

The museum for a brief time became 'homely' to many children, like the school. The tree was approachable, tactile, soft and could be hugged, much like their Brazilian teachers. Here diasporic cultural heritage moved between the domestic space of the home, the supplementary school as a hybrid space of familial and formal education , and the museum as a public institution which was temporarily made homely when the tree display contained familiar voices, stories and language.

Towards the end of the day teachers, parents and children were called over to gather by the tree in the foyer for a group photo. From a distance I saw a mum and boy listening to it. Once we approached the mum asked me in Portuguese if I am Brazilian. I pointed to the others - they are Brazilian, trying to get the school director's attention in case a new family was thinking of joining. The school coordinator soon came over and I left them to chat. The mum turned out to be Brazilian with Japanese heritage. She was very taken with the speaking tree, saying to her son- 'Curupira' and 'Saci', they know these stories!



5.40 Brazilian museum visitors

After the festival it became clear there was no plan of where to store the trees. The community officer wanted to display them in another museum festival at the Wall in several months but had planned to send them back to the school in the meantime. The school had thought that the trees would be kept by the museum, a common expectation of schools that believe the museum will indefinitely hold artworks and displays in their stores. When the community officer suggested to strip the trees down so the materials could be reused, the school director asked for them to be sent back to the school. The thought of destroying the trees was unbearable.

The trees were couriered between the school director's home, exhibited in festivals on two museum sites, and squashed into the storage cupboards in the rented school museum's resource room, and used in other storytelling classes. At some point two older children carried the trees across the school playground, as if the trees had not grown roots, but legs.



5.41 Student carrying the tree across the school playground

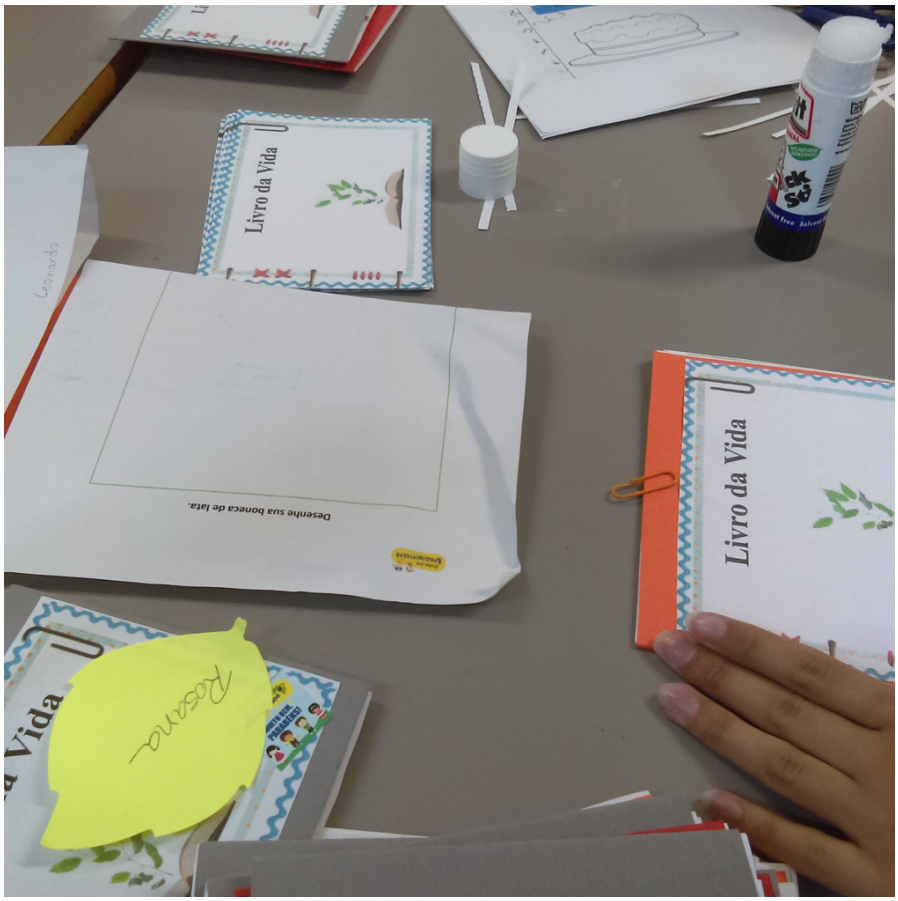
5.14 Books of Life

The plan for children to grow books materialized later in the year, after the museum project. The idea that was ‘planted’ in the winter term by the teacher was taken up in the spring term by her mother-in-law who taught the same group in their morning classes. Over several weeks she helped the five-year-old children make their own biographical book about who they are and where they come from. She handprinted the front covers titled ‘Livro da Vida’ (Book of Life) with an image of an open book from which a young sapling emerged.

The young teacher’s ‘story plant’ cards turned into ‘books of life’ sprouting lots of stories. The single cards transformed into books with multiple pages, and books-as-trees became symbols of transgenerational continuity (Rival 1998:xxiii) between the two teachers, one continued the work of the other, the daughter-in-law gave children little booklets with Brazilian beans to sow, the second helped grow each child’s stories. Here the tree returned to its most basic and universal symbol – a sign of life, potential and growth.



5.42 Young teacher's 'story plant' cards with Brazilian beans, winter term. Trees as symbols of transgenerational continuity.



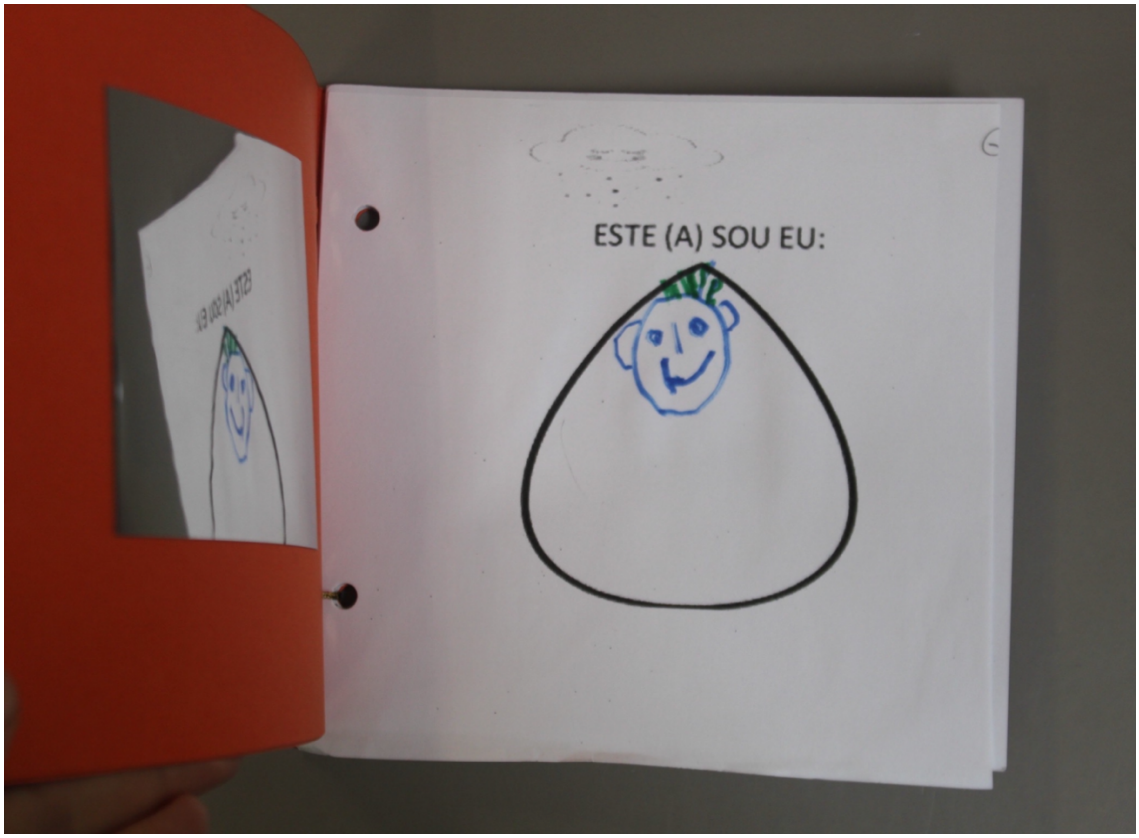
5.43 'Books of Life' created by her mother-in-law the following spring.

The ‘books of life’ travelled between home and school, co-created by children, their parents and classroom teachers. On the inside of the front cover is a mirror for the child to see themselves. On the adjacent page is the child’s self-portrait: ‘ESTE (A) SOU EU:’ (this is me). Each small book is a biography of a child containing their origin stories, how their parents met, the meaning of the child’s name, a drawing of their house, and their family tree.

Here and in the storytelling performances, people substitute plants. Elsewhere in classroom and museum displays trees have stood in for people. In many of these representations humans and plants merged together: human faces growing inside family trees, teachers performing of a growing tree that extends its branches to the children, and talking tree displays at the museum that continue to travel between its galleries, the rented storage cupboard at the school and teacher’s houses. Amongst all these substitutions, only one tree was firmly planted in the ground, back in Brazil.



5.44 Front cover. ‘Book of Life’. Made by teacher.



5.45 Page from ‘Book of Life’. Made by student.

Conclusion: Trees-Humans-Art

This chapter examined how tree representations made at the school and museum address questions around the ‘nature’ of heritage transmission in migration, where children’s cultural identities are seen as latent and waiting to emerge. Growing trees in diaspora can be understood as a metaphor, standing in for a community’s desire to grow new cultural identities, in this case Brazilian-British.

The UK government currently does not actively encourage nor deny children from migrant backgrounds the right to learn their mother tongue or other aspects of their cultural heritage, roots and histories, making the UK a perfect environment to ‘grow your own’ supplementary school. Yet cultural heritage does not have a ‘natural’ place in diaspora and requires multiple interventions. Supplementary schools are one such intervention, through which families make spaces where languages and stories can continue to flow. The museum collaboration was an additional intervention taken on to enhance the school’s work and reputation, and give presence to the Brazilian-British community.

In the school, symbolic and iconographic uses of tree representations were set against the practical task of planting with children in migration, to make cultural heritage in the form of trees a tangible experience. The process of rematerializing trees as a museum display revealed the mismatch of expectations and desires between supplementary schools, myself as a visual researcher and the museum. Inadvertently the museum collaboration intervened with teachers' ongoing collaborative storytelling and book-creation with children in order to develop their cultural roots. 'Story Plant' cards distributed before the museum installation continued to develop into 'books of life' afterwards in the classroom.

The tension became acute between 'performing' and 'growing' trees with children as a learning practice, and transplanting trees in the museum to make Brazilian cultural heritage in London visible and fix it in place. Working with the museum provided a temporary venue for children to access their cultural heritage in diaspora, but the trees could not grow roots and remained mobile.

Yet migration is not seen as unnatural by the school. There is an understanding of migration as a reoccurring phenomenon, sometimes generational, as journeys parents and their ancestors have undertaken, and journeys their children may take, moving further afield or returning to Brazil. Trees in cultural imagining also speak to the migration from the forests to the cities, in a desire to connect back to a more wholesome self, surrounded by trees.

Through acts of substitution between tree-person-art, the school worked towards producing such images of wholesomeness, in a mirroring between nature and culture.
Substitutions of trees, humans and art acted as imitations where one stands for the other, allowing heritage to move easily between categories of nature and culture.

Representation of trees fabricated by the school for the museum can simultaneously be described as cultural artefact and living organism, particularly in the process of making the artwork which staff felt had to be natural and organic, as a project with its own 'life form' (Sansi 2015, Rival 1998:2).

The museum carries its own 'latent heritage' in its collection. As a preserver of historical objects, the museum retains artefacts evidencing how people were brought in as 'natural' human exhibits in order to make them 'civilized'.

Although race was not mentioned at the school, physical differences were openly discussed and being ‘brown’ was normalized. At the museum as a ‘white’ space, the brownness of personified trees stood out. Here there is always the danger that the trees, as substitutes for ‘brown people’ can be reduced to representations of the ‘natural’ against the ‘cultural’, as was the case when they were re-displayed in a second festival at the Museum of London Wall. Placed by a mural from the summer exhibition called ‘Beasts of London’, cultural representations were unintentionally pushed back into a ‘natural’ display.



5.46. ‘Whispering Forest’ trees moved to the Museum of London Wall

At the Museum of London, natural objects cannot retain their regenerative power. A chopped down tree sample can no longer reproduce. In contrast, ‘cultural’ or fabricated objects such as the school’s tree display can extend the Brazilian community’s presence, helping it ‘grow’, as inalienable possession – objects that are circulated and displayed to extend people’s personhood (Weiner 1992), and artworks that enable a ‘distributed personhood’ that act as their makers’ “secondary agents” (Gell 1998).

Such ideas contradict Belting’s theory that the image is ‘the *presence of an absence*” (Belting 2011:12). Belting’s theory of the image addresses the purpose of making museum displays, to stand in place of what is no longer there. Giving body to the human voice that

was made immaterial through recordings, trees replaced humans, and art replaced trees. Tree-as-artwork stood in for people, the community, missing cultural heritage and the absent, living trees.



5.47 Tree in two parts, outside the Brazilian supplementary school's rented storage cupboard

During the course of their existence, these trees took on a human form. At first this was for practical reasons, children were too young to produce books and so voice recordings were given a 'body' for the display. The personification of the trees was intended for the children when the school director added facial features to their trunks. It was only when the trees were threatened with being taken apart, on the suggestion of the museum officer who wanted them to be stripped down and the materials used for other craft activities, that it

became apparent that they had acquired some personhood. In the school's storage cupboard, they retain their person-like presence when they are made to face the wall or are caught mid-transport without their canopy.

Like many cultural minorities in London, the school strongly sought for its heritage to be included at the museum. This occurred very briefly. Yet the museum was not an end point for the tree display which had a virtual afterlife, continuing to circulate in the school's social media networks in the school newsletter and Facebook page. The school was unable to grow roots in the museum, but was able to extend its reputation, and possibly attract a new family. As such, the museum is often a node in supplementary schools' work towards cultural preservation and in circulating representations.

Yet the ethereality of images circulating online and trees as museum displays are no substitutes for 'the living presence of a tree', especially in the education and nurturing of young children (Rival 1998:17). As environmental activist Angie Zelter notes, trees are not only meaningful for what they represent, but also in themselves, as 'a source of actual and sensual involvement with the world' (Fernandez cited in Rival 1998:17).

Tree representations accommodate for the dual meaning of plants- as symbols of movement and of stability. Whilst the concepts of rhizomes and routes continue to influence studies of diaspora (Deleuze 1993, Hall 1994) in practice roots remain important for families at the Brazilian Saturday school, as does the specificity of location. As noted earlier, the only actual tree planted in the course of my research was in Brazil, its exact coordinates were recorded.

The custom of planting a tree when a baby is born, particularly when performed remotely on behalf of a teacher by someone visiting Brazil, shows how natural trees can also be seen as 'inalienable possession' that extend personhood (Weiner 1992), acting as "secondary agents" to the newborn child brought up abroad (Gell 1998).

In the song of the Golden Rosemary, cultures and people are not viewed as spatially fixed, and migration is seen as natural. This however does not solve the physical and practical problem of how to help children grow roots in migration. Brazil, although physically remote and expensive to visit, still remains the place for growing roots, following a local tradition of planting a new tree at the birth of a baby. Here the planting activity was an act of double substitution, the seedling substituting the child's presence, the teacher with her newborn in

the UK being substituted by another teacher planting the tree on her behalf on a visit to Brazil.

The planted tree in Brazil can be understood as the child's alterego (Giambelli 1998), firmly rooting identity in the ground. Here the tree symbol is most obviously connected with rootedness and personhood in the production of social space (De Boeck 1998:25), despite its remoteness.

The tree planted in Brazil can be understood in terms of remittances, the practices of supporting the economy of one's home country by sending back money, often towards construction activities of migrants who build their 'future home' in countries of origin (Pistrick 2015:36). In this case the contribution is not financial, but directed towards nature, where trees are remittances that continue to grow.

Chapter 6. Ludic Heritage : the migration of play and museum integration

Chapter Summary

This chapter examines how play becomes a form of latent heritage in migration, and a new type of contact zone in a museum lacking representative objects.

In the previous chapter heritage was materialized in a sound installation emanating from trees which gave physical presence to voices and stories from the Brazilian community. In this chapter cultural representations move away from representative objects, towards embodied heritage performed by children in Albanian supplementary school plays.

For Victor Turner play is a "liminal or liminoid mode, essentially interstitial, betwixt-and-between all standard taxonomic nodes" (1987:168). This chapter explores the inherent paradoxes in the materialization of children's plays which are malleable, adaptable, elusive and keep evolving, as cultural artefacts that are meant to preserve heritage and are turned into temporary museum representations. The chapter is concerned with how the liminality of play moves taxonomies, in particular how Albanian heritage previously considered to belong outside the city is integrated into the Museum of London through supplementary school plays.

The chapter begins with school plays performed at the museum and concludes with my collaborations with the school and community outside the museum, where I reflect on my own attempts to fix play in film in a mixed-media workshop and record it through drawing for a digital exhibition.



6.1 Girl singing on stage. Kosovo Independence Day, Museum of London 2022

Introduction. Play as an unstable contact zone

In Clifford's essay 'Museums as Contact Zones' (1997), power relations between museums and their collaborators are reworked through performance, shifting agency from museum collections to the people they represent, through songs, speech acts and even sculpture demonstrations. In my fieldwork agencies shift further towards performance when communities re-narrate their histories which are not on display in the museum, and instead are told through children's plays.

The Museum of London's supplementary schools programme organizes festivals where children are invited to perform in their mother tongue. It is during these festivals that the cultural heritages not present in the collection are performed through supplementary schools plays, as intangible heritage that make up for the lack of representational objects in the museum (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2015:227). Play becomes a point of intersection between adult and children's worlds, the museum and minority communities, and imagination, memory and reality.

Play as a new kind of liminal 'contact zone' in heritage collaboration subverts and reverses roles (Taylor 2003), shifting agencies between the different actors: excluded cultures are positioned centerstage, silenced communities have their voice amplified, and most notable, cultural knowledge is not demonstrated by experts but performed by young children who become narrators of their community. What is extraordinary about these moments is that a small act, a song, dance or recital lasting less than a few minutes, has impact on whether a heritage or historical event is remembered or forgotten in diaspora.

Admittedly, I was originally after more stable cultural artefacts than children's performances, which I initially considered trivial because of their short duration. Through long-term research it became apparent that children's plays are a reoccurring phenomenon at the museum, and significant events for supplementary schools. Children would arrive at the museum spectacularly dressed in traditional costumes to recite poems or sing songs, presenting cultures beyond the museum collection in quick succession, making extraordinary interventions in the otherwise silent galleries, interrupting the chronological flow of displays in unexpected expressions of cultural memories, almost like a mirage. There was something perplexing about how these little acts were at once cute and clumsy, children singing out of tune, moving out of sync, yet at the same time utterly serious. Even the simplest acts became emotionally loaded as parents witnessed their cultural heritage presented in public by their children. The moments were especially acute for groups whose home countries have experienced war or violence, songs expressing attachment to places families cannot return. Here the term 'contact zone', originally used to refer to groups of people from different cultural backgrounds that have been historically separated, also refers to the historical separateness of children who inhabit different timescapes than their parents. Play, as a contact zone, opens up new timeflows as it restructures time, histories seeping into school performances, and children's actions shaping the future of their parent's heritage.



6.2 Children singing Albanian Lullabies, The Languages of London', Museum of London. 2019. Sketch from direct observation

6.1 Albanian lullabies

In a museum festival called 'The Languages of London', celebrating Mother-Tongue day 2019, several community performances were lined up in one afternoon. Children from an Albanian supplementary school had prepared a performance through the museum's Arts Awards programme, learning traditional lullabies. They were splendidly dressed in traditional clothes, puffy-sleeved white shirts, floral scarves, and embroidered waistcoats with gold

linings. Their teacher introduced them on stage as: “Heritage champions’, this is the name that best befits the group…these young people are the champions of the future, they are passing the knowledge!” The teacher added: “the day coincides with a day that is very dear to us…it is the 17th of February, a day of Independence of the State of Kosovo.”

Gathered round a wooden rocking cradle brought from Albania, young children gazed at their teacher, copying her moves, arms folded rocking imaginary babies, swaying from side to side, singing lullabies (kenget e djepit):

Nani nanino
Nani kush te tund
bukuroshe e nanes
nanes ne katund
Nani nanino

Powerfully nostalgic, these old songs sung by children evidence cultural continuity despite displacement. Children represent the ‘regenerative capacity’ of their community (Nandy 1984 cited in Mack and Newberry 2020:84), songs as signs of the group’s survival post-migration. Their performance merged the rocking wooden cradle and rhythms of an ancient song with an 11-year old celebration of Kosovo Independence day, not previously celebrated at the museum, in a newly created museum festival that would not be repeated the following year. By attaching the ancient lullabies to Kosovo Independence Day, the national celebration seemed to have a longer history.

Children’s performances were succeeded by professional Albanian musicians playing Lahutas. Besa Berberi, a famous singer had flown in especially, her song was about an Albanian lady who “sacrificed herself for her land, for her motherland”. She sang unaccompanied, the audience listened intently and the room became fragile, emotions heightened. The song was powerful in its melancholy, the singer skillfully made her voice echo in its closing verse. Without understanding the Albanian lyrics, the community officer commented later on how it gave her goose-bumps. Meanwhile, children that earlier performed the cradle songs now played and chatted on the floor at the back of the room. They played loudly, concealed by the rows of chairs, unaware that their voices travel. They soon received severe looks and one ‘shush’ from the adults. A boy dragging a chair on the floor was equally reproached. A young Albanian mother in the audience with baby on her lap improvised a rattle out of an empty water bottle to keep her child entertained during the commemoration. An older woman sat in front turned around to give her a stern look of

disapproval. The young woman smiled sheepishly, embarrassed, and looked around for moral support.

In an overlap of calendars marking different celebrations, Kosovo Independence Day was sandwiched between other supplementary school plays, a new history 'slipped' into the museum through children's play. Yet the spaces children occupy in the museum as much as in commemorative events are not clearly defined, as was the case in the festival where their presence and play was met with mixed responses, at times cherished, and other times seen as a nuisance.

The examples above begin to unpack how migrants who are turned into people out of time and without a history in a new country (Fabian 1983, Wolf 1997) produce new sites of memory and heritage configurations through children's plays. Conversely, the examples also show how migration changes the spaces children occupy in preserving heritage which alters the course and meaning of their play. The liminality of play allows role reversals in these new contact zones (Turner 1969, Clifford 1997), a minority group placed centerstage, transnational events turned into local heritage. On stage children pretended to be parents lulling imaginary babies to sleep, off-stage they had led a new community into the Museum of London, many parents visiting for the first time to watch their children perform.

The museum would not have considered inviting this community to celebrate its Independence Day were it not for the children performing in the festival. On other occasions, heritages such as these are considered beyond the museum's remit, as I was told by a senior engagement museum officer, since they are not about London. In acts of make-believe, school plays reevaluate what heritages can be included in the museum and what 'counts' as London cultures. In these plays, cultural preservation is placed in children's hands as they carve out new spaces and timescapes for their communities post-migration.

6.2 Relocating Play

Anthropologists have described how play can be used in ethnographic research as an open mode of enquiry (Schwartzman 1978, Gorfain 1986). In this chapter I seek to readdress some of the assumptions that we all play in the same way, or for the same purpose. Paying attention to changing contexts, settings and framing of play (Bateson 1972, Goffman 1956, Schechner 2006), I consider how children's play is complicated by migration and again by museum collaboration. I use the term 'play' as a *mode* rather than type of action defined by context, setting and framing (Schwartzman 1978, Goffman:1956, Leach 2013:2, Bateson

1972), to observe how play alters as it is relocated, initially through migration, and then from supplementary school classroom to museum stage, where play turns into cultural representation. This definition of play includes children's make-belief games, staged school plays and institutional acts of improvisation such as inventing new museum festivals.

Play meant different things for the multiple actors involved in the collaboration between the museum, the Albanian supplementary school and me as a researcher. For migrant parents in a new country, play often functions as a form of latent heritage through which memories of their own childhood and home countries come flooding back when playing with their children. In this context, play becomes a path for cultural transmission between generations, part of children's 'mnemonic socialization' , a term Zerubavel uses to describe how as members of particular families, organizations, nations, and other *mnemonic communities*, we acquire memories we did not personally experience (Zerubavel 2011:224). Mnemonic socialization can include difficult histories and collective memories transmitted through play. Outside the home, children can become self-conscious of their parents' minority languages and identities, picking up on differences, sensing dominant language ideologies and the statuses ascribed to minorities, becoming self-conscious of their parents speaking non-English languages in public spaces, learning about the latency of cultural heritage from personal experience (Blackledge 2004).

In supplementary schools play is used as a pedagogic tool to enliven lessons and transmit cultural knowledge to children through games and school plays. Play becomes formalized in the school's staged performances as personal rites-of-passage for children to demonstrate their language competence and cultural knowledge to parents. Children's plays afford cultural continuity and are often important part of festivals and community events, bringing a dispersed community together.

Play is part of the Albanian school's story of origin. In a public speech during a community event, an ex-student of the school described how children's play brought a group of mothers together, leading them to eventually set up the school. His mum had arrived in the UK in 1999 when she was 32 and he was 4. Although highly educated back home, her qualifications were not recognized in the UK. She did not know anyone and did not speak any English:

"She was here alone with two young children… One thing that I remember from my childhood is that my mum loved taking my sister and me to the park, to play on the swings, to go on the slides, and she'd take us every opportunity she could. Me and my sister would

go and play and sometimes we'd run into other children, and we'd run back to mum, and we'd be like 'mum, mum, that boy, that girl, they speak Albanian as well!' And then slowly slowly my mum would go introduce herself to the mother, the parents of that child, and then before you know it there were five or six families who back in 2000 would meet in the park at the same time almost every single day, you know, not phones, no methods of communication, the kids would play, the mothers would sit and they'd talk."

Children's lack of inhibition enabled the mothers to find each other and create a small network. The children socialized the adults, but then play brought stability and regularity. Watching their children play, the mothers would turn up and sit together, developing friendships and supporting each other over the years to come. The school was set up in 2005 and has been running for 15 years from the same location. It is a success story, like its former student, now a lawyer, who has grown up along with the school. He returns to give inspirational speeches, recalling the school's early days, which were also the days of his early childhood as a first generation migrant raised by a single mum together with a supplementary school community.

Like many supplementary schools, the Albanian school curriculum has a strong focus on embodied heritage which includes school performances. When the museum invited supplementary schools to take part in a scheme called Arts Awards, the school signed up, and children learned traditional lullabies in preparation for a museum performance for the museum. In these changing settings, school plays become museum representations.

Museums have an awkward relationship with children's play. They often have a strict code of conduct and 'do not touch' display cases. At the Museum of London toys are displayed in a glass cabinet called 'playtime', an outmoded approach to curating children's histories (Pascoe 2013:216). Play is generally zoned, controlled and thematically directed towards the museum's collection. The museum uses play as a way of broadening its audience and diversifying its programme as part of its strategic aims of inclusivity. For the museum, play appears safer in miniature form: unmovable dolls houses and toy behind glass (Stewart 1984, Pascoe 2013). Supplementary school plays appear to fit within the framing of the miniature exhibit (Stewart 1984, Darian-Smith and Pascoe 2013:8) performed by children, as minors of minority groups. But it is during school plays that the museum loses control over content and finds itself part of a wider transnational network of heritage making, commemorations, and contested histories that slip into the museum through a children's song or dance.

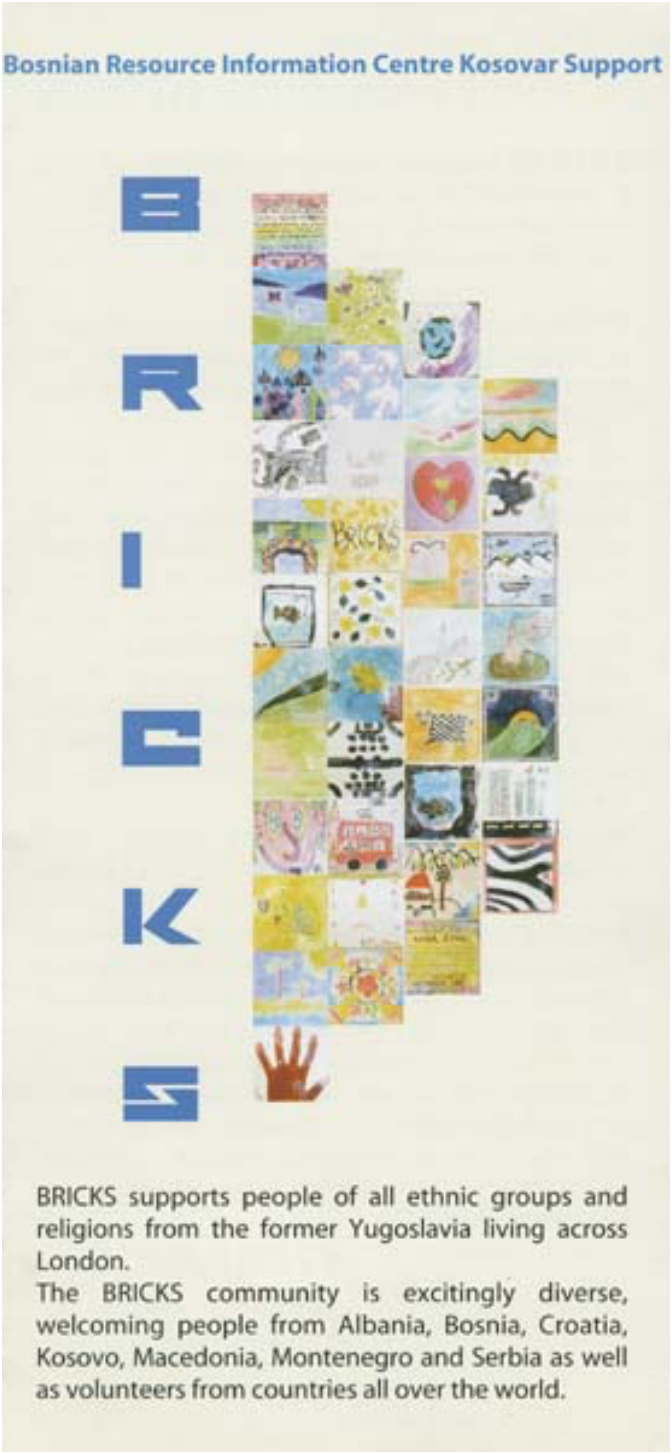
For children performing at the museum, plays are personal rites-of-passage (Schechner and Appel 1989) that can be a thrilling and frightening experiences, instilling a sense of deep pride in some and stage-fright in others. Typical of any school plays, there are often one or two children who refuse to go on stage, or occasionally a young child that cries and is taken off stage. Yet children's plays at the museum are different from an ordinary school play, as these carry a cultural heritage that is not officially recognized into a public institution through which children's transnational identities are acknowledged.

Play is at once embodied heritage, personal rites of passage, public display, pedagogic method, museum engagement, collaborative institutional experiment and a representation of an invisible community. The improvisational nature of heritage in migration contrasts with heritage at the museum which is all too fixed, pre-planned, and where materials and schedules are harder to shift. It is in the museum and supplementary schools partnership programme that calendars are reconfigured, summoning different histories into the present, the museum more prepared to improvise, and a migrant community able to materialize its heritage.

6.3 Reconstructing Heritage

The museum has few objects linked with the cultural minority groups it works with, and those objects they do have in the collection often refer to traumatic histories. The community officer reflected that this makes museum connections with community groups very tenuous, and in relation to the collaboration with the Albanian school, she commented: "there is nothing, except what they bring. The only object the museum has is about conflict from the 90s".

The single object she was referring to is in store rather than on display. It is a leaflet entitled 'BRICKS'. The acronym stands for 'Bosnian Resource Information Centre and Kosovar Support', BRICKS as the image of rebuilding communities. The museum blurb explains that BRICKS was founded in 1993 "to meet the needs of people escaping to London from the war in Bosnia", and "supports people of all ethnic groups and religions from the former Yugoslavia living across London. The BRICKS community is excitingly diverse, welcoming people from Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia".



6.3 BRICKS 2005-2006. Museum of London collection.

The Albanian supplementary school collaborating with the museum during my research is part of an organization called Shpresa based in Newham, set up to support the Albanian-speaking community as an information center. Shpresa, meaning 'hope' in Albanian, organises foodbanks, playgroups, and adult English classes, as well as a couple of supplementary schools.

The Albanian school I engaged with is held in an East London suburb where it has been running for the past 15 years. The school is exceptional for managing to secure three classrooms rent-free from a state school, having proven its value to the local community, as it provides invaluable services , helping local Albanian-speaking families integrate, offering English language classes for parents, and providing their children with regular learning activities outside school hours. The Museum of London considers it a flagship school, and has developed a long term partnership with the charity through a previous collaborative project with young people.

Although members of the supplementary school had knowledge of the artefact in the museum, the play chosen to be performed at the museum during my fieldwork was called 'The Legend of the Wall', about Rozafe castle, also known as Shkodër Castle, where children moved bricks on stage, pretending to rebuild a collapsed castle.

The metaphor of bricks and walls used by both charities evoke the idea of rebuilding communities and reconstructing heritage. Aptly, the play was performed at the London Wall shortly before the museum would relocate to a new venue. The Roman wall which for so long defined the museum as grounded in place and fixed in materiality would soon be replaced by Farrington train station as its new site of heritage.



6.4 Sketch of Rozafe castle, performed at the Museum of London

6.4 Rozafe Castle

On my first visit to the school children were told the story of Rozafe castle as part of a geography lesson about Shkoder where the castle stands. Some were already familiar with the story. “This legend is famous. From Ancient Times,” the teacher explained to me. She had brought in a miniature souvenir of Rozafe castle and two different pictures books of the story.

As in any supplementary school, the day is very short. Cultural heritage, as much as it deals with the long past, is condensed. Because of time constraints, supplementary schools have to be selective in what they teach children. This hones into sharp focus the cultural symbols and stories that continue to matter and resonate within the community. From the start, it was clear the story of Rozafe castle was being retold for a reason. The story’s iconic image is of a ghostly female figure emerging from the castle, half her body is missing, the other half holds a baby.





6.5 (left) Rozafe, souvenir from Shkoder castle. 6.6 (right) Illustration of Rozafe in picture book.

The story begins with three brothers who rebuild a castle every morning, but it keeps collapsing during the night. There is a prophetic moment when they meet an old man: he reluctantly tells them the castle won’t stand unless there is a woman inside, but they mustn’t

tell their wives. That evening two brothers break the promise and warn their wives not to come to the castle the following day. Only the youngest brother keeps his word.

The next day, the mother of the three men asks their brides: who will bring food to the castle? The first makes an excuse, she is ill. The second can't come, she has to visit her parents. The wife of the youngest brother agrees to come. When she arrives at the castle she discovers the sacrifice asked of her, to be buried in the walls so that the castle will stand. She agrees: 'I will go inside. But I need to keep my right arm, so I can hold my baby. My right breast, so I can feed my baby, my right leg, so I can rock the cradle, and my right eye, so I can see my baby.'

Told as a magical folk tale, the story relates to a real phenomenon: a stream runs through Rozafe castle, turning white as the water mixes with cement. The pale water is said to be Rozafe's breastmilk leaking from the castle wall. The story destabilises oppositional categories of interiority and exteriority, nature and built environment, blurring the boundaries between flesh and stone, life and death.

Rozafe collapses spatial categories of inside/outside: the woman resides within the walls and also outside the castle. Half her body is missing, yet her presence is doubled, she lives in two places at one, inhabiting a border-zone. The woman in the fable can be understood as an embodiment of Albania. She is split in half, much like Albania with half its population living outside its borders (Pistrick 2015:30). A half absent body – a half absent population. She is divided by her obligation to bring cooked food to the castle whilst breastfeeding her baby who remains outside, supporting the foundation of the castle (Albania), whilst holding her child (the nation in diaspora), sustaining both, much like the Albanian diaspora that sustains the country from abroad through remittances (ibid).

Rozafe captures the emotional experience of diaspora, where part of you always remains in the place you left behind, and the sense of loss, longing. For many, the story relates to the physical separation from loved ones, children raised abroad, or parents left behind.

Since the early 1990s Albania has become the most deserted country in southeast Europe (Pistrick 2015:30). Yet although the Albanian community is relatively new in the UK, Albania has a deep cultural memory of out migration, and collective sense of loss, a felt absence and visible omnipresence of its missing population due to outmigration which is not openly discussed, but expressed through music, closely linked with songs of lament (Pistrick 2015:32). The story of Rozafe is arguably another such form of expression.

Importantly, the baby is held outside the castle/country, yet remains connected to the country through the mother, much like how parents connect children to the countries they come from through supplementary schools.

The story captures the essence of UK supplementary schools as liminal zones, and how they teach children about walls and borders. Next door in the adjacent classroom, the children's parents were taking English classes, behind the wall but in close proximity. Heritage flows in both directions, parents become more integrated into English culture, children become more integrated into their parents' culture. In the same lesson children were handed back their artworks from the previous week, coloured-in printouts of Mother Teresa. 'Did you know she was Albanian?' the teacher asked me. A hand-drawn map of Albania was tacked on the Whiteboard, she pointed to where Mother Terresa's parents are from, just beyond the Albanian border where the map becomes empty. "Before 1911 this area was Albanian. She is from Shkoder."



6.7 Handmade map



6.8 Children's artworks of Mother Teressa

The children, like Mother Teressa, were born beyond a border which also moved. These are minor lessons in transnational existence that, like Rozafe, defy the singularity of place and stability of borders.

Yet as much as Rozafe is an iconic portrayal of diaspora, the story is rooted in place – Shkoder castle - a famous landmark which many children recall visiting. In this respect the story is strongly linked with Albania and contains a sacred narrative about rebuilding the nation.

6.5 School play

The legend of Rozafe Castle was first performed at the museum during a supplementary schools festival. An earthquake had hit Albania the previous week, and a short, improvised commemoration was inserted into the museum festival between community performances. The children had prepared a different play, but the school decided to switch stories in light of the earthquake, choosing the legend of Rozafe in way of commemoration, the metaphor of rebuilding a castle that keeps threatening to fall apart speaking to the aftermath of

devastation. Here children's improvised plays collided with adults improvising in response to real life events, heritage becoming contingent.

Before the play began a young woman reassured the audience that legends, dancing and singing will soon commence but first – her voice became fragile - if we could all stand up for a minute's silence in light of the earthquake: "…because our brothers and sisters are going through a really tough situation, and we want to let them know that we are there, even though we are really far like miles away, so I would please, all of you to stand, and have a silence for one minute for all this painful situation that our country is going through."

A room full of supplementary schools with little knowledge of the country stood in silence thinking of Albania. The speaker's sentiments - 'our brothers and sisters' seemed to address us all, the responsibility to remember extended across communities (Margalit 2002) testing how far memories can travel (Erll 2011), whether they can be passed transculturally, as well as intergenerationally in migration (Rothberg and Yildiz 2014). This commemorative moment brought several supplementary schools into a single collectivity, producing a new, albeit temporary mnemonic community *(*Zerubavel 2011).

The play that proceeded, however, was entirely in Albanian, beginning with an introductory video about Rozafe castle playing on the museum projector. A folding cardboard castle was installed on stage like a concertina. The same rocking-cradle from the previous festival was brought up on stage. Children took positions, girls stood by the cradle, boys set to work by the foot of the castle with real hammer and shovels, reconstructing a heritage site on stage.



6.9 Rebuilding the castle

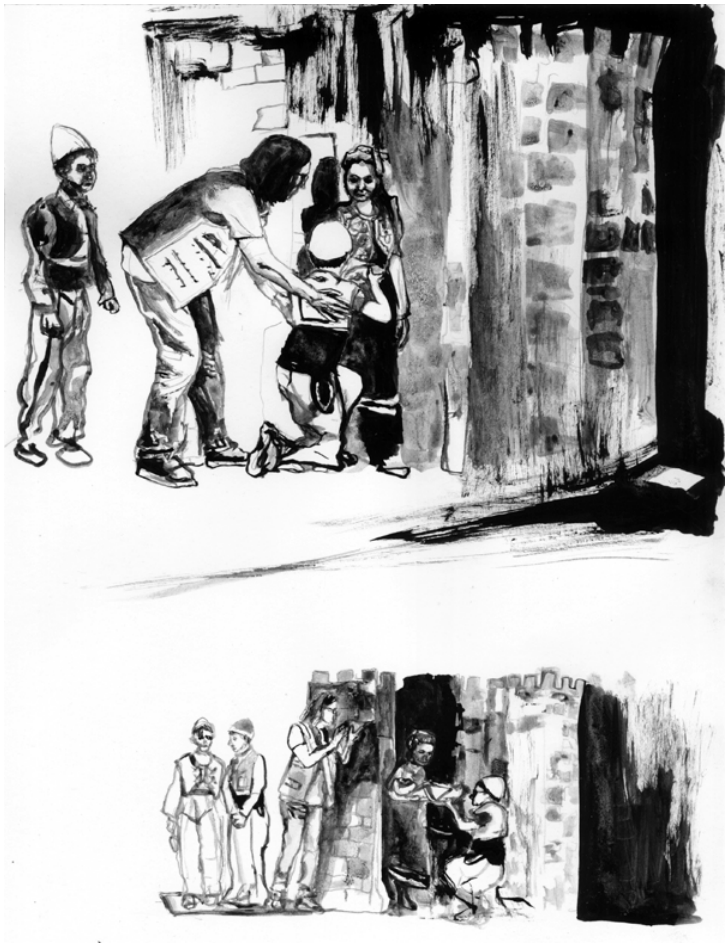


6.10 The old man, played by a 14-year-old boy, reluctantly disclosed the secret, knowing of the sacrifice that would have to be made to stabilize the castle.



6.11 Rozafe caught between cradle and castle

The lullaby learned for the previous festival was incorporated into the play, this time the girls gathered by the cradle singing to Rozafe's baby. In the penultimate scene Rozafe headed towards the castle as the girls by the cradle began to sing. She stood awkwardly with nothing to do, one leg facing forward, her torso turned back as the girls sung a second verse and boys busied themselves pretending to build. Caught between cradle and castle in liminal inaction and anticipation, she became a living embodiment of diasporic heritage, ready to move forward but gazing back, listening to an old lullaby sung without her.



6.12 Closing tableau reworked

In the closing scene no-one knew where to stand. It was hard to visualise the story's spatial paradox. Rozafe stepped behind the castle and momentarily disappeared from view, reemerging between the cardboard folds. The boy carried the baby doll across the stage, crouched by the foot of the castle, raising the doll to Rozafe, his back facing the audience, blocking them both from view. The teacher quickly emerged from behind the set and moved him across in a live reworking of the final tableau: mum, dad and baby reunited. The teacher was with the children as the audience began to clap, finding herself included as an accidental character in the final tableaux. She quickly moved away and clapped along with the audience.

6.6 Reinterpreting cultural heritage on stage

School plays do not display cultural competence but the very act of cultural transmission (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989). As such, they are not complete cultural artefacts but cultures-in-the-making, preserved through play. The reconfiguration of the closing tableaux on stage

is emblematic of heritage in migration, still finding how to position itself, even in its closing scene remained open for revision. The improvisational aspect of open play is important as a pedagogic method for supplementary school institutions, where heritage content is quickly adapted to accommodate the telling of the past in response to changing events in the home-country, whilst fitting with the museum context of a family festival. This school quickly changed what play the children would perform in light of the earthquake in Albania, and continued to improvise how the story unfolds on stage. The stage was not only used as a place to display cultural representations, but became an imagined construction site, children literally reconstructing a heritage site that keeps breaking and requires their input.

Heritage improvisations occurred on institutional and personal scales: the teacher remained with the children throughout the play, the story rehearsed as a staged lesson, the museum auditorium turned into a public classroom in a festival that was itself invented by community officers for the purpose of bringing in supplementary schools.

Children were sometimes immersed in play, acting with their backs to the audience, their attention turned towards carrying out an action, with little comprehension of the effect it produces on audience who seem spatially remote. Having to build a castle, they would face the castle, working within a different spatial and temporal perception (Schwartzman 1978:25) responding to the reality of the play.

Play meets reality in the story of Rozafe, children pretend to rebuild a heritage site on stage, their roles in reconstructing heritage in diaspora both fictional and real, influencing the social life of a migrant group, introducing a new culture into a national museum, connecting a dispersed community in a London. Here heritage crosses over from intense presence to have impact on the futurity of their histories in a new country.

Supplementary school plays often get caught up in world events, heritage contingent with uncertainties, working through multiple temporalities. In this case a timeless legend redirected heritage towards a recent event, expressing the Albanian diaspora's sentiments of loss and hope following the earthquake, and like the woman that connects impossible spaces, the urge to reach out despite physical separation.

Unlike the moment of silence that proceeded it, the play was performed entirely in mother-tongue. A mother from a Tamil school who was sitting next to me in the audience thought the play was about a baby being born. To her the children appeared to be playing 'house'. The meaning of the play remained opaque to the majority non-Albanian audience who saw

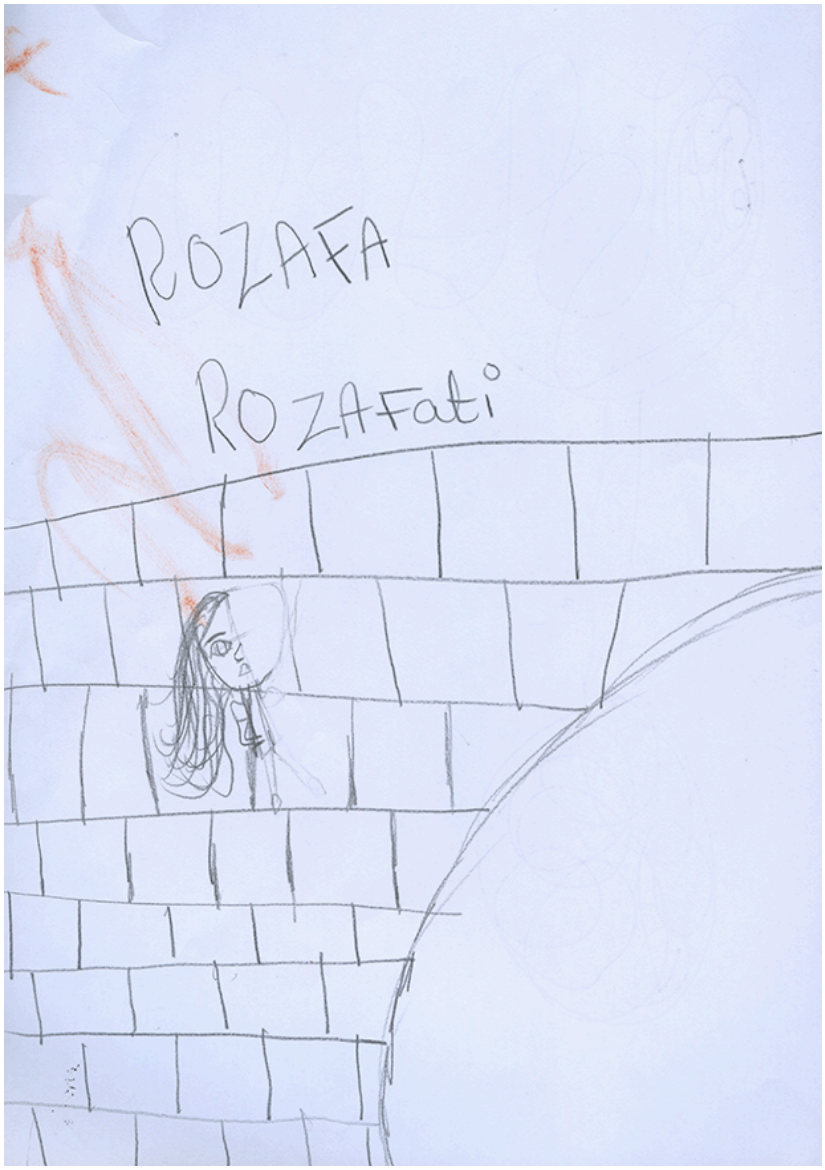
them building bricks and moving a doll around. Here is an underestimation of the play's meaning and children's roles within it. Dressed up in adult costumes with real tools and props, children not only played adult characters, but took on the 'off-stage' role of presenting their culture in public, as mediators, interpreters and representatives of their community.

The polysemic story accommodates multiple interpretations, often relating to age and gender. The teenage boy who played the 'old man' told me the moral of the story is about keeping promises, identifying with the young brother in the story. A teenage girl thought it was about the power of love able to hold something so strong, identifying with Rozafe. A father told me the story has a happy ending because ""*although some life was lost, the castle survived. Although some life was lost, the country survived*", using 'castle' and 'country' interchangeably. An exhausted mother returning from the museum's changing room with her baby explained the story is about a mother still leaking breast-milk, separated too soon from her child. Her explanation highlights the drama of the tale- the mother-baby separation – which in migration describes the separation of a community from a motherland.

The story's ending is about the blurring of boundaries between mother and her dependent: her body parts become autonomous, leg, breast, eye and hand now belong to her baby. Her private body becomes public, shared, divided, and her child - the most interior part of herself - now remains external. In a similar vein, the museum partnership confuses public and private spaces. A class taken out of school, a story usually told behind classroom walls becomes a public heritage performance as it changes settings and contexts. The children's play and its 'pretend' castle was brought into the heart of the museum, a story about a collapsing castle redrawing heritage boundaries, reassessing what culture the museum includes and excludes in its displays and retellings.

Despite the quick turnaround of supplementary school performances, this school managed to include the castle as set design, re-materialising a heritage site on stage. The painted castle made heritage tangible, a haptic experience for the children. Importantly, it literally attached a background to children who are usually seen 'without' backgrounds.

Profoundly, the play ended with a different closing scene: Rozafa is typically portrayed as a lone half-present half-absent ghostly figure, as the child's sketch below shows. In the play the closing scene was of a reunited family. The boy returned to hold the baby with Rozafa. The boy was also given substantial caring duties during the play, often carrying the doll, suggesting a new space being carved out for men within the story, a reimaging of their role in the family.



6.13 Child's drawing of Rozafa

6.7 Kosovo Independence Day 2020



6.14 Children getting ready to perform. Kosovo Independence Day. Museum of London, 2020.

Unlike the previous year, in 2020 no museum festival was scheduled around the time of Kosovo Independence Day. This time round the Albanian-speaking community self-organised, hiring the museum auditorium to hold a day-long event, which included celebrations, commemorations, a roundtable discussion about fostering Albanian children, a survivor's testimony, folk music and not least children's performances.

The tale of Rozafe was performed again. The concertina castle that had returned to the supplementary school made its way back to the museum stage. There were other Albanian supplementary schools performing various acts: traditional dances, nursery rhymes, lullabies. A little girl, too young to sing along, was brought forward to rock the cradle. Children's performances covered the whole range of speech acts, nursery rhymes with children quacking on stage, the audience laughing, older students memorized longer scripts, and various interjections of silences – children waiting to say their lines, learning to hold a minute's silence and listening to survivors on stage, sometimes lost for words. Learning a language is about understanding its silences.

In comparison to the previous year where Kosovo Independence Day was briefly mentioned between other performances, in 2020 the Albanian community was at home in the museum, not waiting to be invited, organizing its own event. This was evident in children's clothes,

some wore traditional costume, others dressed casually in jeans and T-shirts, no longer having to represent Albanian heritage to an outside audience. Children's acts were more wide-ranging and less selective, lullabies, pop tunes, nursery rhymes included a song game about a cat. Children's presence on stage remained central to the event, and what sounded to me like a banal choice of songs, often performed out of tune and off key, were very moving and meaningful to those present.



6.15 Children whispering on Stage, Museum of London 2020.



6.16 Young girl rocking cradle, Kosovo Independence Day. Museum of London 2020

6.8 Collaborations beyond the museum

In this final section I draw on my collaboration with the Albanian community in London through two different interventions: film sketches produced during a mixed media workshop at the school, and the co-creation of content for a digital exhibition with parents and teachers who run the charity 'Shpresa programme'.

6.8a Film Sketches

After the first performance of Rozafe at the museum, I offered to run a film workshop at the school to record rehearsals of Rozafe castle to capture the story from children's perspectives.

In a workshop technique I developed in previous heritage projects with children, I used a projector connected to a live camera feed to superimpose children on top of their drawings in real-time, to 'transport' them, so to speak, so they reappear inside their own drawings, acting in the backdrops they created. A second camera was directed towards the wall where their

actions were being projected, this camera used by the children to film each other acting inside the drawing.

My plan was to use this footage to intersplice children's drawings and rehearsals with recordings of museum performances into a film montage. I wanted to capture the materiality of the classroom to show how intangible heritage is incorporated into the built environment in supplementary schools, which become liminal heritage-scapes for children to inhabit (Darian-Smith and Pascoe 2013:2). My intention was to combine children's drawings with the rehearsal to capture the bricolage of play (Turner 1987:168) which mixes together remote locations - English school and Albanian castle mixed with children drawings and acting.

I entered the school as a researcher working in a very different temporal world to the one they inhabit, interested in children's mythmaking but treating their ever-evolving performances as a readymade museum artefact, trying to fix their play in film. Ultimately, I failed to achieve what I planned, not due to the children's lack of interest, but because of local weather warnings of a storm instructing people to stay at home, which meant that half of Rozafe's cast was absent. My workshop could not have been more poorly timed. Once I arrived I learned that a museum event was planned for Kosovo Independence Day the following week. My disappointment was incomparable to the teachers' stress - this was the last time they could rehearse. This was a slice of the reality of running a supplementary school, where time is so compressed that if one class is missed, the teacher does not see the students for 13 consecutive days. Contact time to deliver curriculum, and on this day, rehearse young children for public performances in a major community event is extremely restricted.

With the support of the drama teacher, I worked across the whole school, beginning each workshop with blank sheets of paper, letting children sketch the backdrop they wanted to perform in, and then filming them acting inside their drawings. It made little sense to stick to the story of Rozafe as some children were unfamiliar with it, and so I opened up the theme to be about time-travel. Each session began with blank pieces of paper, children sketched the backdrops they wanted to act in and then improvised scenes. Younger children were assisted by the drama teacher, older children worked more independently, some acting, taking the roles of directors and narrators, others holdings the camera. Having put the poetics of Rozafe aside, I was able to pay attention to the reality of children's heritage from their perspective in the multiplicity of myths and stories they wanted to tell: some sketched a football stadium to act out a football game, younger children drew the Gruffalo and

pretended to be monsters, ancient pyramids appeared alongside a reenactment of the battle of Skanderbeg, children pointing out that all of this is their heritage.

During these workshops, national emblems and icons of belonging manifested in different forms: rehearsed drawings of the Albanian flag, re-enactments of recent international football matches, and evocations of historical foundation myths, Rozafe complicating the idea of belonging, promoting yet unsettling national identity.

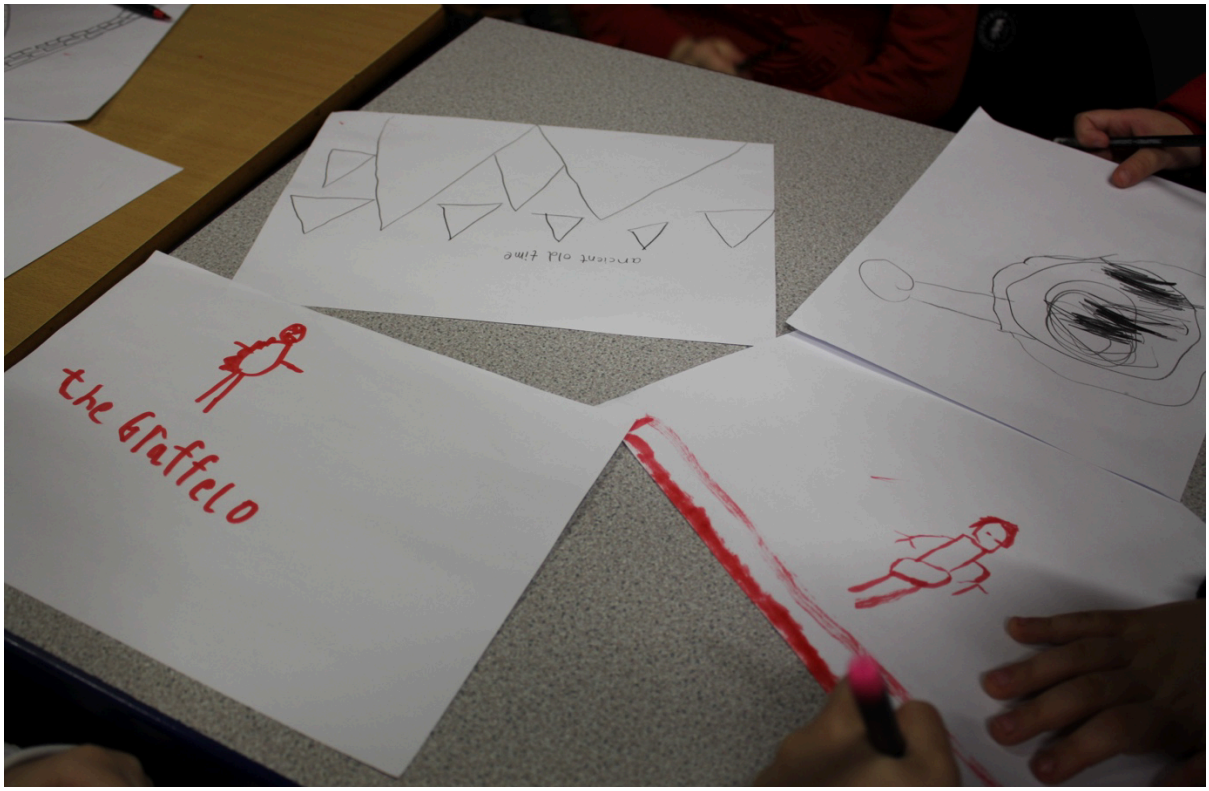
Based on their research in Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati and Turkish supplementary schools in the UK, Blackledge and Creese describe how explicit links were made between children learning a heritage language and the fostering of the national identities of their parents' home countries. They argue that in these supplementary schools stories of loss and sacrifice, poignant martyrdoms, assassinations, executions and holocausts were used instrumentally to teach children about national belonging to their parent's country of origin (Blackledge and Creese 2009:453). In my research, Rozafe, Skanderbeg and Mother Teresa fit this genre of stories of self-sacrifice, except that what is particular in these three heroic mythical, historic and religious national figures is that they were born outside, worked and belong beyond the country's borders: Skanderbeg was born in Turkey, Mother Teresa was born in North Macedonia and famously travelled the globe, and Rozafe mythically inhabits the imaginary 'border' of a wall, living inside and outside a castle. The portrayal of heroic figures like Mother Teresa and Skanderbeg who are born outside Albania's current borders yet considered national emblems is remarkably different from the national figures cited in Blackledge and Creese's suggestion that supplementary schools teach long-distance nationalism. In each school I visited, there is a continuous focus on transnationalism, and cultural belongings that link children to at least two places, one being the UK. In language-based schools that are spoken in more than one country, multinationalism and transnationalism are ever more prevalent. Such is the case in the Albanian supplementary school that caters for the transnational Albanian speaking-community, Albanian being the official language of two countries, co-official language of a third, and a minority language in several other countries. The school celebrates national Albanian myths and Kosovo Independence day, with changing displays of flags to mark different occasions. The amalgamation of commemorations, narratives and references move heritage beyond a single nation, complicating the idea that one language can represent a single country.

In my attempt to create a singular representation I was 'thinking' like a museum, where complex cultures are reduced to representative objects to fit with the limited viewing time

expected of visitors (O'Neill 2002) in a time trap where the complexity of social life is summarised in a quote, anecdote or symbolic object that becomes extracted from social life (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991). Children's plays, by contrast, are contingent representations that exist within the social life of a community that keeps morphing in time.



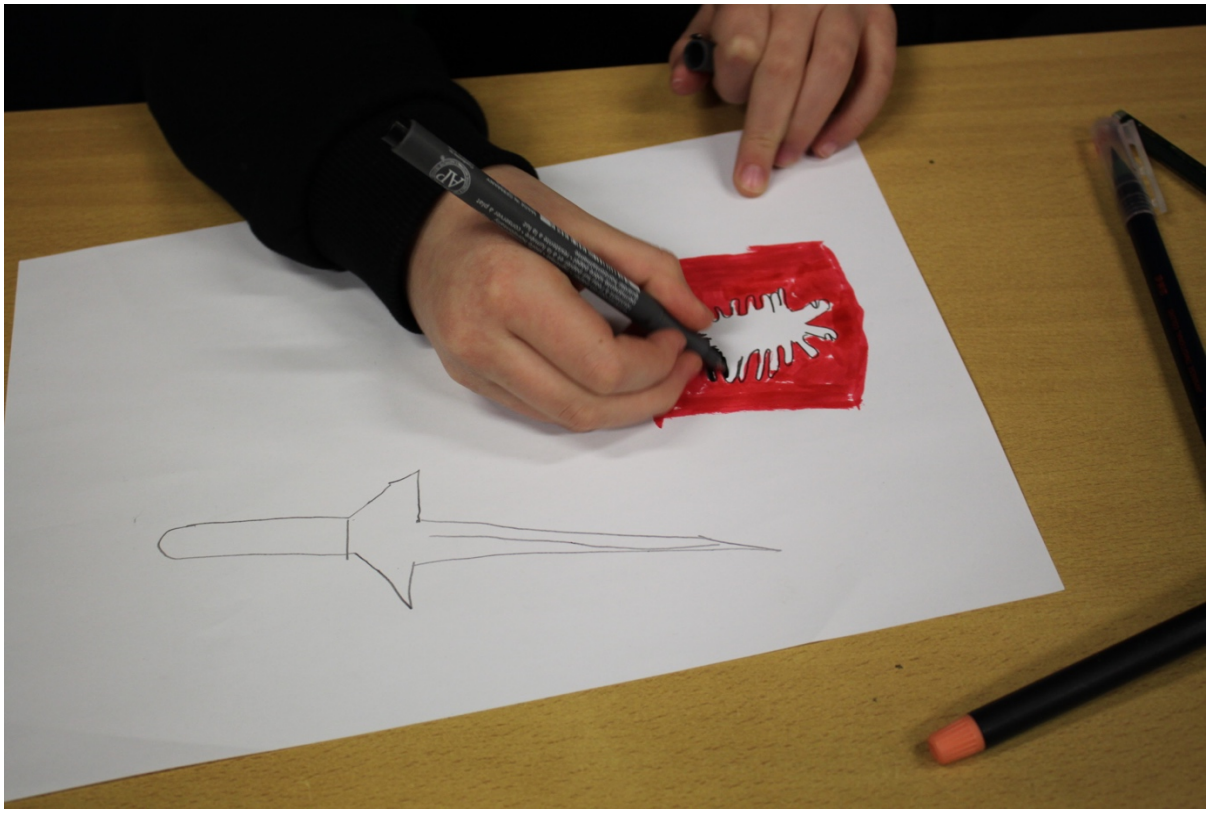
6.17 Younger children 'playing' imaginary football game. Drawing and Drama workshop.



6.18 'The Gruffalo', 'Ancient Old Times'. Younger children drawing backdrops for stories to act in. Drawing and Drama workshop.



6.19 ‘The Gruffalo’. Younger children acting inside their sketches. Drawing and Drama workshop.



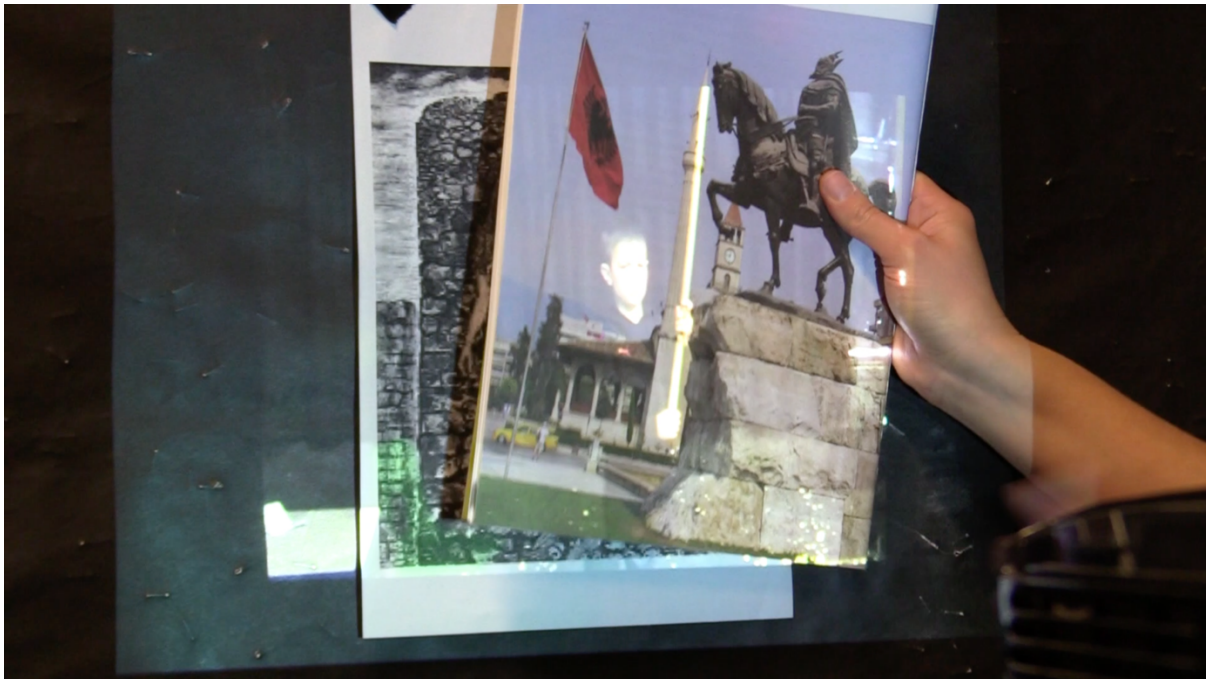
6.20 ‘Skenderberg’ – older children drawings backdrops of Albanian flag and sword. Drama and Drawing workshop.



6.21 ‘Skenderberg Part 1’ – older children acting inside their drawings, reenacting a founding story of a mythical hero defending Albania from the Ottomans. Drama and Drawing workshop.



6.22 ‘Skenderberg Part 2’- sword fight. Children acting inside their sketches. Drama and Drawing workshop.



6.23 ‘Skenderberg’– closing scene. Children acting inside their text book. Drama and Drawing workshop.

6.8b Drawing from film

Another collaboration was initiated by Shpresa during London’s first lockdown. In my studio I had sketched from paused film stills of museum performances and was able to make new observations and notice interactions I missed during the fleeting performances by drawing retrospectively.

Through the drawings I picked up on how often the boy in the lead character is holding Rozafe’s baby on stage. This contrasts with traditional depictions of Rozafe portrayed alone, holding the baby. In the school production the boy was included in the closing scene, holding up the baby towards her. As Turner notes, the liminality of play is characterized by the presence of ambiguous ideas often including gender reversals, (Turner 1989:11). The school play straying from traditional depictions of gender roles, the boy often given the doll to hold, lull and carry across the stage, playing a dad spending more time with the baby. Rozafe was also not portrayed in her traditional role, emerging out of the castle to display female fluidity, but standing very still, her back like the wall, her power in her endurance. The school play highlighted how the boys had failed to build, and instead Rozafe in her stillness stabilized the castle. Despite the fixed storyline, heritage reworked gender roles through

performance. Implicitly, gender roles had been reversed, the woman building the castle, the man holding the baby.



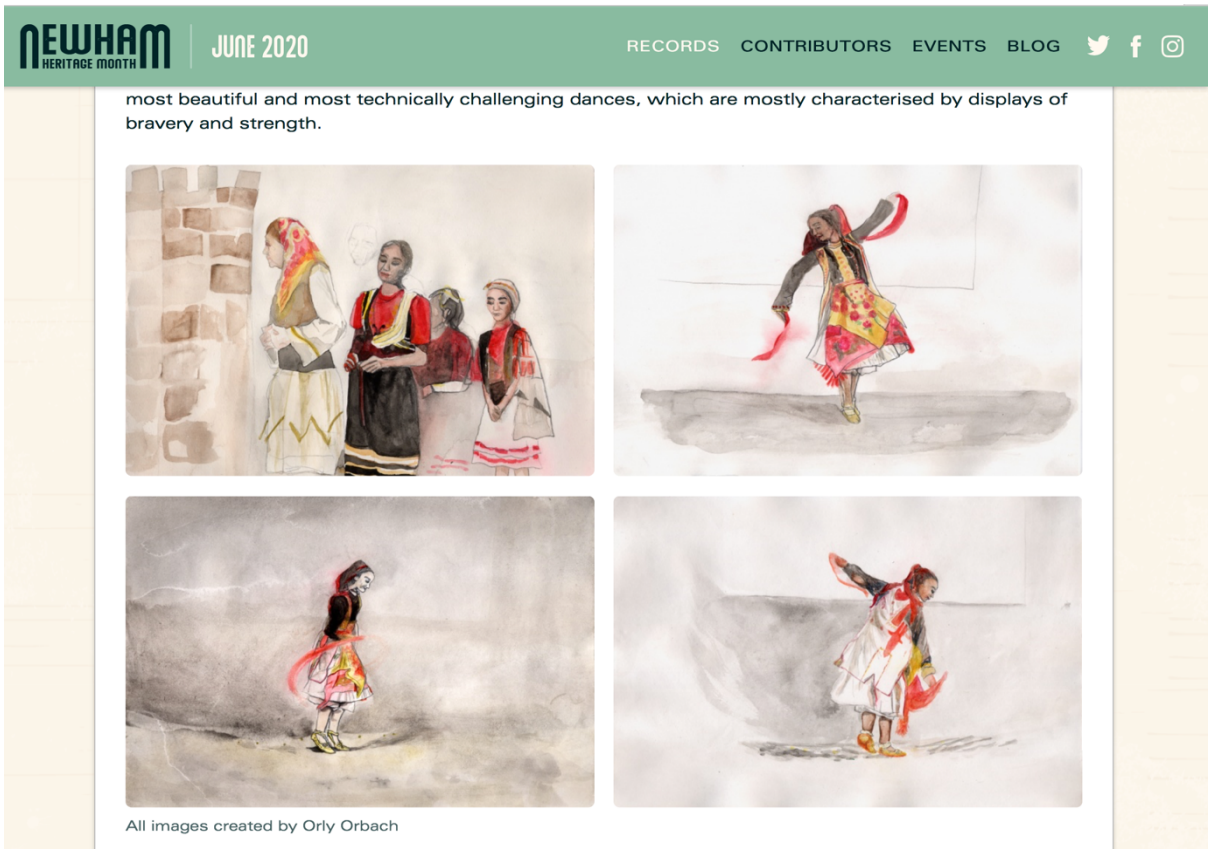
6.24 Boy receiving doll



6.25 Boy receiving doll

My visual research was incorporated into ‘Newham Heritage Month’ - a digital exhibition organized by Shpresa in partnership with their local council. The charity sorted through sound clips of lullabies, dance footage, photographs of traditional recipes, musical instruments, costumes and my drawings of school performances, reorganizing the material into clear taxonomies to present Albanian culture in a London borough.

Albanian Lullabies were given their own separate section, no longer attached to a story or commemoration, but significant in their own right. Sketches of Rozafa Castle were exhibited together with Albanian dance, as both symbolise resilience, endurance, bravery and strength.



6.26 Newham Heritage Month. On-line exhibition. June 2020.

Conclusion: Heritage in migration as a site of play

This chapter has shown how children's play has the potential to reconfigure time, place and identities. In this sense, their play has magical consequences, children's make belief acts impacting communities and institutions, the liminal power of play destabilising categories of cultural and spatial belonging/ nonbelonging.

In this chapter I have shown ways in which play, as a latent form of malleable heritage in migration, can mobilise a community, transfer cultural knowledge and transform institutions. The story of Rozafe castle kept resurfacing, performed as a school play at the museum in two performances. It marked very different events: in 2019 it was used to commemorate the earthquake in Albania, and in 2020 as part of Kosovo Independence Day celebrations, showing the versatility of the play and its polysemic meanings.

Children's plays are adaptable cultural representations of a community searching for new ways to articulate itself in diaspora. The chapter has followed how short lullabies became incorporated into longer school plays that were later incorporated into large community

performances celebrations and commemorations, small children's acts amassing in size and meaning. The digital platform offered by Newham's council enabled the community to reconfigure its heritage into new assemblages (Byrne 2013), breaking up children's performances into independent, stand-alone components of heritage, that no longer has to stand for something, or in place of something at the museum. Here adults were at play, incorporating children's performances into larger public presentations, then breaking them back down again into separate performance units, like building blocks stacked up and taken apart.

Histories in diaspora that become 'placeless' and have no site where they can be told require a great deal of community effort and action to create new 'sites of memory' (Winter 1998), which for the Albanian supplementary school became the museum. Adults improvised alongside children, responding to new circumstances, when heritage transmissions were strongly contingent on unforeseen events at home and abroad that could not be preplanned. Children's plays brought a new community into the museum as a new site in which a dispersed community could gather post-migration, and hold its ceremonies and commemorations.

Observing Albanian supplementary school plays over the course of a year, and comparing how Kosovo Independence Day was marked in two successive years, it is possible to see how collaborations initiated through children's plays brought a history into the museum in gradual steps: initially this history was considered out of place, then made to synchronize with the museum festival programme, and a year on existed in the museum independently, the community organizing its own event. This is perhaps not what the museum had envisaged as inclusivity, but evidence of integration in practice, the community adapting the museum into to a new site of heritage where the Albanian-speaking community can return to mark important historical events.

The liminality of plays transforms roles and statuses (Turner 1969, Goffman 1956) and become a new, unstable contact zone at the museum (Clifford 1997), changing relationships between immigrants and museums, adults and children, families and the general public. Children become the voice of their community, cultural representations are created by novices instead of experts (Mack and Newberry 2020:84), a minority group's heritage is placed center-stage, the museum transcends beyond its heritage remit.

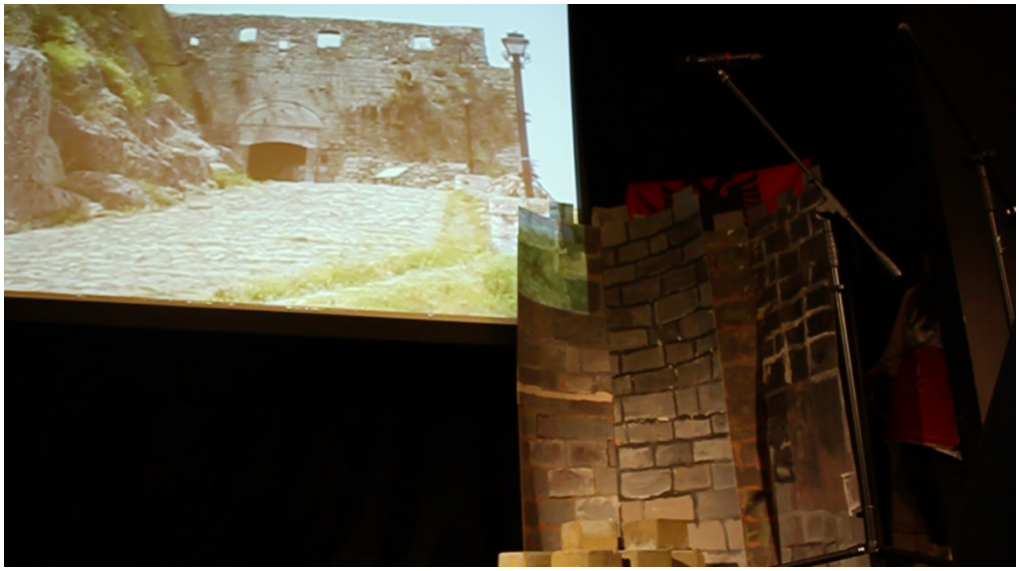
For children, school plays are personal rites of passage in which they display their cultural knowledge in front of their parents and a public audience (Schechner and Appel 1989). These moments are also institutional rites-of-passage, the museum reconfiguring its heritage programme, a minority community incorporating its history into an officially recognised heritage institution. In this final reversal of roles, a national museum and migrant group are being socialized by children through school plays.

The chapter described how people carve out new spaces to tell their histories, when the past is experienced as essential parts of themselves which may otherwise disappear. Observing heritage reconstruction in diaspora, I suggest people are not only using histories strategically (Bryant 2016) but out of an ethics of memory towards a certain past (Margalit 2002). For the Albanian-speaking community in this research the past has been silenced and now finds new forms of expression in supplementary schools and their plays. Certain stories and histories seem to have their own agency, such as Rozafa, as a story that seems to have its own volition and wants to be told. The story can carry difficult histories forward, such as the war that preceded Kosovo Independence Day, and recent histories, such as a week-old earthquake. I therefore suggest that in school plays that become unstable and destabilizing contact zones in the museum, agencies are distributed across human actors as much as histories (Bennett 2013). What is particularly interesting in this case is that integration or inclusivity was not one-sided, as is often assumed by institutions and dominant cultures, with a minority being asked to assimilate into a majority and leave their pasts, cultures and languages behind. Instead, the Albanian-speaking community invited an audience to join their commemorations, a one-minute silence, and the 2019 celebration of Kosovo Independence, working towards integrating the British public into its collective memories.

Finally, a focus on children's play brought to focus the discrepancies between how heritage is preserved by the museum and by supplementary schools, particularly a play about reconstructing walls. The Museum of London's current address is 150 London Wall. It is situated by the Roman wall, an archaeological site that is one of its current defining features, making it appear rooted in place. In contrast, Rozafa's concertina castle was made of pieces of folding cardboard, easy to transport to the museum and then packed away, as a light portable evocation of the heritage site of Shkoder. Here heritage expanded and contracted like a concertina within the museum. Like the Brazilian tree sculptures in the previous chapter, Shkoder's walls made repeat journeys between museum and supplementary school, as a segment of cultural heritage in migration with no place to attach itself to.

The different types of walls exemplify how at the museum heritage is already materialized, whereas for supplementary schools it is still in motion. Supplementary schools improvise out of necessity, teachers create cultural artefacts, books and resources quickly and often, and are ready to adapt their heritage to fit with new sites and contexts beyond the school such as museum festivals. The museum is less able to improvise, its primary role is to preserve material artefacts, and its curatorial program planned months and years in advance, requiring approval at different stages of decision-making. The ability to improvise highlights the 'heaviness' of material heritage at the museum i.e. the stone walls, in contrast to the 'lightness' of heritage in transport.

Working across these sites, I tried to capture school plays and substantiate the ethereal, transient nature of culture in migration into something tangible and visible as part of my 'research findings'. Drawing was a way to mediate between intangible and material heritage. When my drawings were imcorporated into the Newham Council website, they captured the making of heritage in motion and offered an afterlife to performances usually characterised by their ephemeral nature. Here drawing was both a research method and product of research, and our collaboration was not instantaneous but evolving, a visual correspondence between the school's creative reconstructions of heritage on a museum stage, my reconstructions of their performances on paper, and their repurposing of my drawings.



6.27 Rozafe castle on museum stage. Museum of London 2020.

Chapter 7: Play, Heritage, Protest.

Chapter Summary

How do children carry difficult and contested histories in migration?
What is their responsibility towards the past? What is their community's responsibility to protect them from forgetting their histories, and protect them from inheriting trauma?

This chapter explores how children embody their heritage through museum performances in contexts of heritage affected by trauma and war and examines how children's play is complicated by politics and becomes a form of protest and resistance.

Introduction

Supplementary schools are spaces that hold memories post-migration, where children become part of mnemonic communities and help preserve their heritage in a new country, as seen from the example of the activities of the Albanian supplementary school in the previous chapter.

This chapter is about a community whose heritage is suppressed in their country of origin. Consequently, more responsibility is placed on communities in diaspora to hold their nation's history, a freedom not afforded back home. Here children's agency in reviving their community's heritage in diaspora becomes increased. The school is Tamil, run by families from Sri Lanka who experienced the civil war and campaign for human rights.

Tamil rich cultural heritage carries a recent history of conflict and trauma. The questions brought forward by these circumstances are what happens when children's play is situated in spaces of difficult, contested, traumatic or dissonant heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, Harrison 2013:192, Macdonald 2010).

Recent literature has reconsidered children's agency in heritage preservation, repositioning children as cultural producers (Darian-Smith and Pascao 2013:9). Such heritage discourses describe children's involvement in positive terms, stressing the importance of children taking ownership of their heritage if it is to survive, for instance in the example of UNESCO seeking to involve young people in identifying and managing their own heritage (Darian-Smith and Pascao 2013:3). Children's participation in heritage preservation is commended.

The question is whether children's involvement in heritage preservation is still viewed positively when their heritage is caught up in histories of violence and war. Is it still important for them to actively participate in preserving a heritage of trauma in the same way UNESCO advocates for children's involvement in material, environmental and intangible heritage preservation? How are children's roles in heritage preservation to be understood in these difficult contexts?

The chapter examines the museum and community's dilemmas about how to respond to this question, in cultural expressions as well as silences and omissions on both parts, paying attention to children's experiential dimension of embodying heritage caught up in conflict, the debates and discussions that surround it and the cultural forms that carry these memories in migration. Amongst different types of silences, I introduce the term *Shibboleth* as antithetical

to latent heritage- in moments of total exposure when a heritage cannot be hidden or put away.

The chapter begins with a heritage collaboration that never took off between the museum and a supposedly 'hard to reach' supplementary school, when a school play performed in a festival was felt to be too 'scripted' by some museum officers. The awkwardness with which the play was received becomes a starting point for exploring heritage incongruities between the two institutions, with different ideologies around childhood- as carefree or as imbued with moral responsibility - and begins to unravel deeper questions about the role of children in heritage preservation and the limits to museum inclusivity.

In what becomes a multi-sited ethnography, the chapter explores the latency of heritage in relation to place: how different sites suppress and accommodate cultural memories and practices. Following school performances into five venues, the chapter observes how cultural heritage is adapted and compartmentalized to suit each venue, and how it transforms these different sites.

I begin with a description of a performance given by children from a Tamil supplementary school at the Languages of London Festival at the museum.

7.1 Museum Performance in the Languages of London festival

Museum of London Docklands
Saturday 3rd November 2018

The room was full. An expectant audience of museum visitors sat patiently, curiously awaiting to see what the museum had listed as 'community performances'. The designated stage area was still empty. There was a commotion from the back of the room, shuffle of costumes, excited chatter. Fifteen children and young teenagers dressed as Tamil scholars huddled together for several group photos. There was a sense of joy from the back of the room, the group seemed in no hurry to begin.

The children formed into two rows in order of height and came skipping onto the designated stage area in slow, deliberate steps. The younger children first. The older children that followed were more skilled in this particular skip. They crossed the audience in a flash of

bright colourful costumes. Some wore artificial beards, some had three white lines painted across their foreheads. Faint sounds of bells attached to the costumes jingled and blended with the sound-recording of a slow drum which was soon switched off.

Once they reached the stage the children arranged themselves in two diagonal lines, facing the audience like an open book, and stood quite still. There was no song or dance as expected of community performances, but clear and deliberate rehearsed speech. Two teenage girls played 'narrators', taking turns to address us in Tamil, then English:

Children: "Tamil Language Drama"

Narrator: "We believe that Tamil is not only a language. It is representing our life. Culture. It is our life! It is our culture!"

The group in unison: "IT IS OUR LIFE, IT IS OUR CULTURE."

Narrator: "We believe that this is a time to remember our Tamil scholars, who revived and reformed our Tamil language throughout the difficult periods."

She gestured towards a boy wearing a long wig partly tied in a bun: "This is Thiruvalluvar, an ancient poet and philosopher in Tamil history. No one could learn the Tamil language without acknowledging his work and name. He is the author of Thirukural, a collection of couplets on ethical, political, economic matters and love."

One at a time, a child would step forward as their character: 'do you know who I am?'

We did not.
Each child introduced their character's name and their contribution to the Tamil language:

A teenage boy: "Nana Druru. I am Druru. An ancient poet and philosopher of Tamil history. No one can learn the Tamil language without acknowledging my work and name. I am dead, but I am still living, now forever."

A younger girl addressed the audience in Tamil. The narrator translated: "Do you know who she is?... She is Yo oh we pati. The first female poet and author in Tamil literacy. She wrote nursery rhymes with morals in each verse."

A boy: "Anger should be reduced slash controlled. Respecting elders. Don't stop doing charity work. Do not eat before giving to those who are hungry. Do not give up hope, self-confidence. The joy of the learned. Learn flawlessly. Ancient poet 4th century."

A teenage boy with deeper voice: "I devoted my life to the works of editing and publishing the some of the oldest works of classical Tamil poetry and grammar. Without me there is not Tamil literary."

Another boy, maybe 13: "I am Supromanyolviev, a Tamil poet. Here is one of my poems.
A spark of fire which I did see
In a forest true where I had stove
Burnt in ash was the forest
With a faint intensity
Something that is spark or ablaze"

The closing lines were delivered in Tamil then English: "Even though we have everything we feel like we are missing something."

"One thing," the girl held her hand, index finger raised, whilst her friend spoke in Tamil: "…just one thing missing…Tamil is spoken across many continents and in many countries, yet Tamil language does not have a mother land."

The first narrator spoke in Tamil, the group repeated her lines in unison.

Second narrator: "We will never let our Tamil language to die."

Everyone: "We will never let our Tamil language to die."

The smallest girl who looked quite serious, possibly experiencing stage-fright, thanked the bemused audience who began clapping hesitantly, unsure if the play was over.

The performance took place in front of a mixed audience in a busy family festival called *The Languages of London* held at the Museum of London. The play received mixed reactions. Four East Asian women exchanged knowing smiles with me as if to say 'how sweet'. They got up to leave the room as soon as they could, having politely stayed for the duration of a children's play. This was clearly not for them, and they were keen not to be stuck here for another one. Sat in the audience were a large group of women from an Albanian

supplementary school who in a few months' time would bring their own students to sing lullabies in this very room. They had possibly come to inspect the venue.

Sat near the front row was a white English father who brought his two young daughters along in order to expose them to Tamil culture. Their mother, who was not with them today, is Tamil but does not speak the language. She grew up in an area where there was not any Tamil community or Tamil schools and at the times when there was a lot of prejudice. Choosing his words carefully, the father hinted that his wife's parents were more interested in assimilating their daughter into English culture, and as a consequence she missed out on her home language and culture. The father's search for opportunities to teach his own daughters about their Tamil heritage is an example of how heritage in migration is not just passed down but travels in multiple directions, in this case through intermarriage, moving 'diagonally' upwards from child to parents, a father learning about Tamil heritage because of his daughters.

Some museum officers were uneasy, a comment passed around was that the play felt 'too scripted'. This is very peculiar criticism, alluding to a different expectation of what a school performance is meant to look like. Research into museum audiences has argued that exhibitions appear to be spaces where children have considerable autonomy within family groups, choosing where to go, what to pay attention to and how much time to spend in different areas (Beaumont and Sterry 2005 cited Darian-Smith and Pascoe 2013:5). Such is the case at the Museum of London where family visits are designed to be exploratory rather than prescriptive. As inscribed by a poster hanging in the staff corridor entitled 'Kids First Families', there are set expectations that family visits will be child-led, as a pedagogic model of museum education but also to ensure children enjoy their visits and return.



7.1 Lego poster in museum offices

There were omissions from both the museum and the school. The emphatic proclamation ‘we will never let our Tamil language to die’ sounded like an act of resistance but without any mention of what is threatening the language’s survival. It could have been referring to the State suppression of Tamil language and culture in Sri Lanka where the children’s families come from, but also the gradual decline of Tamil language in diaspora. Sri Lanka itself was never mentioned. This omission only made the play feel more loaded, as if something was hidden in the script, an imminent danger alluded to but not fully articulated.

The museum never openly objected to the script, only to the play being too ‘scripted’. It seemed the museum had an issue with a play in which children no longer appeared to be

playing but protesting. Their performance was not clumsy as expected of a school production, but delivered with utter clarity, making the role of children appear more serious. There was an ambiguity about children's roles. They were acting too convincingly like adults. Were they pretending to be adults, or actually taking on adult roles?

The play's closing lines, spoken in unison: 'We will never let our language to die' felt radical, like a public pledge or declaration, as did the lines about Tamil having no mother-land. For the museum, this play felt dangerously political and jarred with the general easy tone of the family festival.

The content of the play was similar in its sentiment to an Afghan supplementary school choir performance from a previous museum festival in which children sung about missing their motherland. The difference was that in this school play the children were not singing but speaking, and in English, their speech was directed to us as witnesses, as if calling upon the audience to act.

None of the museum staff openly admitted that it was dangerous for them to host a performance that is political in nature, as this can make the museum appear to side with one group. At the time of my research the museum was having internal reviews of how (a)political it should be, and these questions were unresolved when I commenced fieldwork.

My reaction was somewhat different. I was captivated by the performance. I had listened attentively but had not managed to note down the many references and vivid poetry extracts. I felt enchanted by this school that dresses their children as ancient philosophers. This was not ordinary entertainment, but a play with multiple moral messages. I was keen to visit this school to find out more about the play's references and their heritage in more depth, and asked the community officer about their further collaborations.

The community officer was happy for me to visit the school as a way of maintaining contact, but considered their collaboration with the museum officially over. A previous officer had told her this school was 'hard-to-reach', not responsive to emails and 'more focused on their own thing'. The community officer explained this school was not likely to come back. Like many schools, it approached the museum as a stage. They had completed what they set out to do now that the play was over.

I followed the school backstage, and soon discovered the entire script was written by one mother. This school was exceptional in its bilingual performance, translating the entire script.

Supplementary school plays often remain untranslated since the museum is a rare site for children to perform in their mother-tongue. Yet despite the effort put into making this play accessible for an English-speaking audience, it was not received by the museum as intended and sat awkwardly within the festival programme.

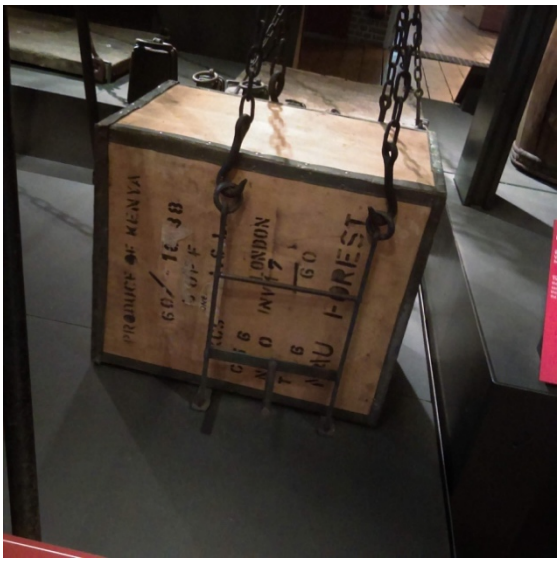
It is telling that this school participated in a museum festival when no community officer was in place. The school responded to an invite from the festival team and prepared its play without any museum support. The museum had invited this school as part of its 2018-2023 strategic aims- 'to engage every schoolchild', supplementary schools included, but now found itself politically engaged in ways it had not envisaged.

In a British context museum '*engagement*' simply means making collections more accessible to a wider audience (Gerbich 2018, Golding 2009).This specific meaning of 'museum engagement' emerged in the UK in the 1990s when museums had come under government scrutiny (Macdonald 2002:32 cited Gerbich 2018). It is part of a policy of museum inclusivity that tends to steer away from divisive politics. In practice this can mean turning a blind eye to ethnic conflicts that have caused a community to flee their country of origin and set up Saturday schools in the UK, such as Sri Lankan Tamils with whom the UK is particularly implicated in their history.

The building in which community performances took place was previously a docking warehouse. The colonial heritage of the museum is deeply imbedded into the fabric of the building and the preserved content from when it used to be a warehouse. Remnants of Tamil heritage are hidden deep within this history in the form of handwritten labels on glass jars packed with coffee beans from Ceylon[35], displayed next to cocoa beans from the Gold Coast. Previously goods imported from around the world would be measured and sampled here. Today it is cultural heritages that are on display, unpacked, exchanged, compared, and re-evaluated.

[35] Ceylon is the former name of Sri Lanka when under British rule





Left: 7.2 Museum Engagement- ‘Take the smell test’ boxes with spices, wood, tobacco and tar, related to sampled brought by the East India Company. Warehouse of the World. Right: 7.3 Weighing scales. ‘No 1 Warehouse’ gallery. Museum of London Docklands.



7.4 Jars of coffee beans from Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Sampling Case. 'Warehouse of the World' Gallery. Museum of London Docklands

After their performance the school separated out into small groups to explore the museum. I bumped into one group looking for the galleries. New to the museum, I was almost as lost as them. I asked what they were interested in, and unsure what to show them I led them to *sailortown*, an 1840s reconstruction of an East London alleyway, with wooden shop window displays, low lighting and creaky doors, thinking this immersive display would appeal to children. A girl commented it was spooky. A figure approached us through the shadows. It was a storyteller inviting us to join her session about robbers and pickpockets that would soon commence. The group could not stay, and had to head back to meet the others.

We got lost on route to *sailortown* and walked through the museum's 'difficult' histories, displays about corporeal punishment, slavery, *'Docklands at War'* and '*No. 1 Warehouse'*, with pictures of slave ships, echoes of sirens and a disturbing doorway of elephant tusks, an amalgamation of different histories of violence sweeping past us.

The Museum of London does not shy away from 'difficult' heritage (Harrison 2013) or heritage of violence (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, González-Ruibal and Hall 2015). On a different day I was given a tour of the Docklands museum which ended with a detailed description of a gibbet cage in which corpses of caught pirates would be left to rot as a means of deterring those considering a life of crime. The museum host described how these human cages would be hung high for all to see, and that in what was then a deeply Christian culture where people believed in spirits, children would dare each other to rattle these cages with sticks, disturbing the dead, from which the phrase 'rattle one's cage' originates. These details were delivered dramatically but with tongue-in-cheek humour. The gibbet cage is an example of how British culture changed, where once child's play took place around public corpses, and today histories are more sanitised to make children's worlds safe.

One major incongruity between the museum and this particular Tamil school is the different temporalities in which their heritages are perceived to reside. For the museum difficult heritage seems to belong to the past and is therefore deemed safe. This notion also relates to a western pedagogic model that understands children's play as counter or opposite to reality, where "in play, we are practising life…we experience deep emotions and the reality of relationships in play, but at the back of our minds, we known we are safe. We can escape-stop the game – when we want to" (Leach 2013:2). Play, like heritage is perceived as existing in the past. Play can therefore bring heritage temporarily back to life by storytellers' vivid depictions of Victorian robbers and pickpockets or the gallows. When their play ends, this heritage is put away and safely stored.

For this Tamil Sri Lankan supplementary school group, their heritage is not in the past, but embodied, and exists very much in the present. As alluded to in their play, it is a heritage which in every way is unsafe, and has no 'storage' space or place which guards it within the museum, the UK, or a designated 'mother land' to protect it.

7.2 Suppressed heritages and Shibboleths

School plays in this chapter allude to heritage suppression in Sri Lanka and sometimes directly reenact memories of the conflict. To understand the context of these plays it is necessary to consider how Tamil heritage was made latent in Sri Lanka, how Shibboleths were created and why certain histories persist to haunt the present.

I use the term 'Shibboleth' to describe the opposite conditions of latent heritage, as moments when people cannot conceal their ethnic, cultural or religious affiliations and cannot keep their heritages hidden, despite their best efforts. The inability to hide one's cultural roots contrasts with code-switching, a linguistic term used to describe how speakers alternate between two or more languages (Myers-Scotton 1998) which extends to different accents, manners and dialects. Shibboleth describes the inability to code-switch, where a person's ethnic background, language and cultural-religious practices are exposed.

The word 'Shibboleth' means 'oat' in Hebrew and refers to a story from the Book of Judges in which a group of men from one ethnic group tries to flee across the river Jordan and are stopped by their enemies. The men have a dialect that does not include a 'sh' sound. Each of the men trying to cross the river is made to utter the word 'Shibboleth', but as soon as he speaks, he mispronounces it, giving himself away and is executed by his captors. A Shibboleth, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is 'a word used as a test for detecting people from another district or country by their pronunciation; a word or sound very difficult for foreigners to pronounce correctly[36]. The 'Sh' in Shibboleth sounds like the hushed voices of people unable to keep their linguistic differences unnoticed in the face of imminent danger. In modern usage, 'Shibboleth' has come to mean a secret code or password known only to a few, without the original violence described in the story. The conflict in Sri Lanka echoes the earlier meaning of Shibboleth. What shibboleths describe in the story were forced speech acts in which people were made to pronounce a word, unable to hide their ethnic non-belonging in their voice, thus exposing their identities - differences deleted through an ancient act of genocide, thousands of years before the term 'genocide' was invented by Lemkin, describing the latency of violence towards difference.

Shibboleths loomed for decades after the island state of Sri Lanka, previously Ceylon, gained independence. Sri Lanka is composed of two main ethno-national groups: Sinhalese, who are mainly Buddhist and make up 75% of the state's 19 million inhabitants, and Tamils,

[36] Martin Herbert referencing Doris Salcedo's Shibboleth at Tate Modern

who are mainly Hindu and make up 18% (Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004:658), and Christian, Muslim and other minorities. Previously colonized by the Portuguese and the Dutch, the island was most recently a British Colony. Sri Lanka's anti-colonial struggle against British rule was shared by Sinhalese, Tamil, and smaller ethnic groups (Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004:658), but following Independence in 1948, the State adopted a Sinhalization strategy (Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004:658), and Tamils were marginalized and rejected in the postcolonial nation building project (Seoighe 2016:363). The 1956 'Sinhala-Only Act' facilitated institutional discrimination against Tamils in education, public service employment and interaction with the majority Sinhala community (DeVotta 2005 cited in Seoighe 2016:363). Deepening state oppression was met with intensifying resistance by Tamil separatist groups (Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004:657) until in 1983 the Tamil separatist group LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) killed 13 Sinhalese soldiers.

In retaliation Sinhalese mobs organised pogroms, attacking and killing hundreds of Tamil civilians, looting Tamil homes and businesses, pouring petrol and setting people on fire trapped in vehicles in what became known as Black July. A 26 year civil war ensued sending hundreds of thousands of Tamils into exile and radicalising those who stayed behind [37].

Frances Bulathsinghala who has since become a news correspondent was a child during Black July, travelling in a school van with four Tamil female teachers, and remembers how these teachers shook in fear trying hard to look nondescript, having removed their pottus - the red dot on the forehead that would give away their Hindu-Tamil ethnic identity [38].

With streets ablaze Bulathsinghala vividly recalls their driver driving through flames, nearly losing his nerve every time mobs asked them to halt and demanded if there were any Tamils in the van: "Several times along the way, the driver was asked for petrol. Thankfully, this petrol being used to burn people alive I did not see, as my mother forced me and the other children travelling in that vehicle to 'sleep' " [39]. Bulathsinghala gives a poignant example of latent heritage in times of violence, of children protected by being instructed to pretend to sleep whilst their van is driven through a pogrom towards safety, in the process witnessing the terrified Tamil teachers that had removed their cultural markers so they cannot be identified. These images are deeply absorbed, yet children had to remain passive, in this

[37] www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23402727 23rd July 2013, accessed 3rd February 2021
[38] *Shadows of Black July and post-war reconciliation*. Financial Times. http://www.ft.lk/opinion/Shadows-of-Black-July--and-post-war-reconciliation/14-659955 accessed 4th February 2021
[39] *Shadows of Black July and post-war reconciliation*. Financial Times. http://www.ft.lk/opinion/Shadows-of-Black-July--and-post-war-reconciliation/14-659955 accessed 4th February 2021

case immobile, until cultural difference was safe again to display, this time acquiring new meaning, associated with people who perished in Sri Lanka over the next three decades. Outwardly, heritage markers were temporarily removed and later recovered, inwardly traumatic histories were suppressed, and continue to be to this day by official accounts of the war in Sri Lanka.

For me Black July hauntingly resembles Kristallnacht in Nazi Germany with the images of broken-glassed shop fronts of Tamil-owned businesses. There are deeper comparisons to be made - Sinhalese mobs set out to target Tamil civilians, but were unable to discriminate between Tamils and non-Tamils purely on outward appearance, much as the Nazis could not distinguish between German Jews and non-Jews. Whereas Nazis forced Jews to wear yellow stars in order to 'externalise' their identities and later exterminate them, Tamil Hindu women removed their pottus to look inconspicuous in order to survive. These small details marked difference that determined the right to remain alive.

During several days of pogroms some Sinhalese families hid their Tamil neighbours in their houses whilst Sinhalese mobs rooted out Tamils by showing them objects and demanding to know the Sinhala word - a direct act of Shibboleth as language tests were used to expose ethnicities and determine the fate of a human life [40].

The actions of violent mobs during Black July made visible the more subtle long term legislative acts and institutional practices of Sinhalese Shibboleths, which now manifested in the street and turned to matter, in words and objects, pronunciations and the naming of things.

In this dangerous space of contested heritage, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities were suppressed temporarily by individuals, like the self-removal of pottus during Black July, whilst histories and material evidence of war have become permanently suppressed by the State, in the physical destruction of sites such as LTTE monuments and graveyards buried under concrete Sri Lankan army camps (Seoighe 2016).

Set up in the UK by first-generation refugee parents, Sri-Lankan Tamil supplementary schools emerge from these sites of contested history and suppressed heritage. Memories forced to 'sleep' in one continent flourish in supplementary schools as a source of creative recollection, which become manifest in supplementary school plays.

[40] https://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/tag/chandragupta-amarasinghe/

7.3 The continuation of play

A few weeks after their museum performance I visited their school, finding the group of children and teenagers jumping and twisting in their morning Tamil street dance class. Two rows of children copied a young professional street dance instructor, the whole room moving in synchrony. The museum festival organisers would likely have preferred this lively choreography than their language drama school play which children performed standing quite still.

Based in the back room of a community hall, this school has about 15 students aged 7-15 years old. All study, dance and rehearse plays together in a single room. It is one of dozens of independently run Tamil supplementary schools in South East London.

In 2012 this school was based in a school building but had to temporarily close when funding ran out, at which point they relocated to this hall. One family who owns a local Sri Lankan supermarket covers the rent. The school charges no fees and operates at little cost, run entirely by volunteers, three mothers of students and a niece. One mother singlehandedly runs the drama class, writing scripts and choreographing plays.

After street dance children arranged the room and sat down for a Tamil language class, opening textbooks full of colourful illustrations with cultural references to Tamil festivals, stories, clothes and food. Children treated these with great care, copying exercises into their notebooks so that the textbooks could be passed on. Older students used printouts of Cambridge exam papers, Tamil having recently been introduced as a GCSE in the UK.

To my surprise, children were still rehearsing the same play they had just performed at the museum. Was the museum performance just a rehearsal?

Children rehearsed this play three times in an easy, relaxed atmosphere. An older boy ‘floss’-danced, another boy recited his lines in a way that made the whole room burst out laughing. There were jokes and giggles. Observing rehearsals I became aware the play’s emphasis on oration relates to a cultural form which places importance on teaching the voice to dance. The teacher demonstrated how to do this, reaching high ‘notes’ when asking a question.

The play was now called ‘Tamil moli’, rehearsed for a different occasion: ‘Thai Pongol’, the Tamil Harvest festival that would take place the following month. The teacher invited me to

the festival: there would be sweet rice pudding, I could bring my children. The date was not yet known, nor the venue.

7.4 Play in a Temple

On a cold day in mid-January I arrived by bus and walked down a very long winding road. Unfamiliar with this remote suburb on the outskirts of East London, I was only given a post-code. Nothing came up on my on-line search. This felt like a leap of faith. I had no idea what I was looking for – another community centre? A hall? A house? I passed by a row of quaint cottages, one with a very welcoming door sign, and considered knocking to enquire whether this might be the venue.

I kept walking down this long road quite empty of pedestrians. The one or two that passed by from the opposite direction had not noticed anything. I kept walking.

Eventually it appeared. A gate of a driveway draped with large bunches of small ripe bananas from Sri Lanka. I walked down the long, curving driveway which had been turned into an outdoor gallery with banners featuring larger-than-life portraits of the Tamil scholars, poets, philosophers and publishers whom the children had enacted at the museum, language heritage personified. Historical periods were made timeless by the images: photographs of modern-day language activists have been layered with symbols, tainted with special effects, treated like paintings and displayed alongside painted figures of mythological heroes and ancient scholars that preceded the invention of photography. The portraits were displayed for one day and would be packed up by sunset, rolled up and kept in storage until the following year.



7.5 Temple carpark with Tamil heroes of literature



7.6 Milk overflowing from pot. Thai Pongol.



7.7 Cooking circles in carpark. Thai Pongol.

The temple's carpark was transformed into an outdoor cooking area. There was something magical about how a mundane carpark was suddenly filled with life and colour, cars replaced by large cooking pots, the rising smoke of burning eucalyptus, the ground covered with fresh ingredients laid out inside large banana leaves, clementine, almonds, coconuts, large milk bottles, some sand and water bottles for safety. The white floor markings of the parking bay were now used to demarcate the thirty-nine cooking spaces reserved for families and community groups, each stirring their own rice puddings over open fires. Pairs of shoes were left on the outer edges of each cooking circle, many people stood in their socks on the cold tarmac, treating the ground as a holy place. The temple's outdoor speakers played a wind instrument that sounded like a small wounded elephant.

Searching for the school, I wandered into the temple. A teacher-parent saw me across the hall and guided me to a back room with numerous small sinks and two large refrigerators. Here I found the children mid-rehearsal, continuing to practice their lines:

'but there is one thing missing ….. Tamil has no motherland'.

'we will never let our language to die'

As I got ready to clap, a father clasped his hands in prayer. This is a place of reverence and the festival was an auspicious calendar day. Their museum play was now a sacred play.

The teacher invited me to join them in the carpark by a cooking pot reserved for their school group. Twelve children, six parents and myself gathered around the pot for several hours to make the festive rice-pudding, waiting for the milk to froth up. The pudding took a very long time to cook over the open fire. One teenager reflected: "In Sri Lanka it's hot now", imagining or remembering that the cooking commenced much sooner. "In Sri Lanka it is always hot", replied his friend. After several hours the children grew hungry but none considered eating the fresh ingredients on the ground, this was ceremonial food. A young child exclaimed in hope: 'There is KFC!', but corrected by her sister: she had misread the SKC ghee packaging. Towards late afternoon one child disappeared inside the temple and returned with a bag of samosas to share out.

The wind blew smoke in our eyes, dancing around in different directions. I took a step back. A boy was asked to invite me to stand closer to the pot, quietly explaining: 'everyone wants you to see'. He explained the meaning of the festival: "We have to watch the pot, so when the milk pours over we say 'Pongi" that means 'pouring', which is the name of the festival. It

is to thank the sun. Then we all take part in cooking together, and we all eat together". In the school production he played a famous poet, and proudly recited his lines to me in Tamil and English. A teenage girl who plays the narrator admitted she felt terrified of performing. I tried to reassure her: they are great and had already performed at the museum. Children played and joked, drifted off and came back, relaxed, happy, tired, bored, hungry. Eventually the milk boiled over and we all called out: 'Pongalo Pongal'. Our pudding was the last to boil over. We carried it across the carpark for the priest to bless amongst the other pots. A teenage boy joked to his friend: "Dude, I now think it's a tasting competition". A teenage girl was amazed by the pudding turning pink: "It was just milk, now it's this colour". A prayer was uttered, the pudding distributed.

Festival attendees travelled from far and wide. A man who 'secretly' donated the 40 cooking pots to the temple arrived from the Tamil Nadu region of South India. Inside the temple there had been political, religious and cultural performances, including a long speech by a famous Tamil language activist who was greatly admired.

We entered the temple as evening fell, to take part in what the teacher termed as 'cultural performances' by children: dance, recitals, comedy, and their school's play about language heritage. 390 chairs were arranged in the vast hall. The plays were professionally recorded, with large lights on tripods installed between the stage and seats. Children from our school were more nervous than in the museum, some jumbled their lines. They seemed dwarfed by the massive stage, distanced from the audience in the large hall. The play begun differently, the two narrators opening with: 'welcome, and thank the sun' bringing their hands together in prayer.

Afterwards a teenage boy reflected their museum performance was better. I suggested it might be because they were tired, after a long day. The boy agreed: "Yes, but also the huge lights. The room was huge, and the room at the Museum of London was much smaller." I had expected this performance would be more relaxed, imagining this is a familiar setting, but the group rarely visits this temple.

As evening fell, dressed in their winter-coats and ready to go home, ten of the children continued rehearsing their lines in the temple's kitchen. They practiced the entire play twice more:

"Here is one of my poems. In the forest of high trees burned in ash was the forest- A spark of fire which I did see…"

“I am dead but still living now for ever”

“Without me there is no Tamil history”

Why were they still rehearsing?

“We will be performing in Parliament on Tuesday”, the drama teacher explained. A room was booked to perform to politicians, MPs, at 6pm, she will email me details:
“You are very clever for following us, thank you for coming”, she hugged me.

As we left I congratulated a teenage narrator about her upcoming performance at the Houses of Parliament: “Wow, amazing venue.” Nonplussed, she told me they performed there last year, it is a very small room.

7.5 Play in the Houses of Parliament





7.8 Commonwealth Party Association Room. Houses of Parliament.
7.9 Library shelf. CPA Room. Houses of Parliament.

The small room in the Houses of Parliament turned out to be Commonwealth Party Association (CPA) Room. To one side a bookcase with crumbling book covers: ‘Pakistan,

Year Book, 1908', 'Fifty Years of Indian Parliament', 'Treasured Islands', 'Pioneer Peasant Colonization in Ceylon'. On the other wall a large map. A senior Tamil gentleman noted it, laughing: "It's the commonwealth map." His friend remarked: "Soon this commonwealth will disappear".



7.10 Commonwealth Map, CPA Room.

The event was a celebration of Thai Pongal 2019 organised by the BTF (British Tamils Forum) and And All Party Parliamentary Group For Tamils (APGFT). The room was rearranged, leather chairs pushed back against the wall, a replica Pongal display set up in one corner, cooking pot over faux fire, red cushions for flames, smart-candles, cotton wool balls bubbling over the brim instead of frothy milk. In the opposite corner were campaign banners calling for an international investigation into war crimes. In one banner the red cross in the Union Jack fades into the red sari of a mother holding up photographs of the missing, emphasising they are part of Britain. The group is here because they are British citizens, but also as part of Britain's former colonies and part of its own suppressed history. The community's presence in the CPA Room is a reminder of Britain's involvement in Sri Lanka, a moral debt owed out of which a 'thick' relationship is sustained between the UK and its citizens of Tamil heritage. The children will arrive in traditional Tamil dress to perform their bilingual play as Tamil British citizens.



7.11 Campaign banners calling for an international independent investigation. Left: A layered photograph situating the Tamil protests in London. Right: banner with photograph of Mullivaikkal in the last weeks of war. CPA room.



7.12 Thai Pongol display of cooking pot

The room soon filled with families sat in the centre of the room on the soft green carpet, chairs reserved for older members and visiting MPs. Display objects were squeezed into the small room, photographs of war devastation a couple of steps away from the Harvest festival display. Likewise, celebration and commemoration were squeezed into one event: live performances by children dressed in spectacular costumes, festive greetings, spicy food and milky tea, intersected with political speeches by members of parliament about their lobbying for an investigation into war crimes in Sri Lanka. The tone of the event would likely have begun on a serious note with adults speeches, to end with joyful children's cultural performances as it had in the temple, but the evening could not progress in this manner because Members of Parliament, busy with the 'no-deal' Brexit votes next door, would briefly pop in to make quick speeches at random times. Children's performances were sometimes put on hold when an MP would arrive to make a speech and pose for press photos. The mood kept alternating from serious commemoration to jovial celebration and back again as each MP would suddenly arrive, sometimes inviting us to observe another moment's silence which was interjected between paused children's performances.

This highly sensorial, compacted event describes a type of heritage compression that frequently occurs in diaspora, when a group's heritage has to fit into a restricted space with limited time to express, remember and transmit the different aspects of its culture and history. The event containing both commemorative and celebratory elements, and the

proximity of political and festive display objects are akin to what Keane refers to as 'bundling' to describe the openness of things. 'Bundling' is a term Keane uses to consider how the material qualities of objects can shape their semiotic meanings in unexpected ways: "the qualities bundled together in any object will shift in their relative salience, value, utility, and relevance across contexts" (Keane 2005:188). In this case, the object in question is Tamil post-war heritage in diaspora, which accumulates new meaning in the mixing of a joyful harvest celebration with the seriousness of commemoration. Here different aspects of Tamil heritage have become 'bundled' over the course of time, as evidenced in the children's play which mixes ancient poetry and public protests. In such contexts children's dance and play preserve traditional art forms, oratory practices and knowledge of language which have come under threat and consequently become loaded, and cannot be disentangled from their political significance.

A teenage girl from our school group noted that last year's room was a little bigger. A BTF organiser explained a bigger room was available but they chose this one because it has a kitchen attached. Cooking was an important part of the festival, traditional Tamil food was distributed to visiting members of parliament in take-away trays, the Tamil community hosting MPs in their own venue.

Despite the formality of the venue, people felt at home here. Children were already familiar with the building, the community rearranged and decorated the room, preparing food in the kitchen, and boiling communal tea in a pan. The school play felt like a relaxed performance, children delivered their lines at ease, receiving much laughter, as if performing to their parents in their own living rooms. When a boy called out: "Do you know who I am?" A dad heckled back: "Yes, you are Thiruvaluvar", another dad giggled, in pantomime fashion. Other Tamil supplementary schools performed traditional dances.

The domestication of the Houses of Parliament, the use of the kitchen, the ease and informality of the school play all indicate how political activism and campaigning have become habitual and normalized for this community.



7.13 Food prepared in kitchen.

At the end of the evening, standing in the main entrance hall of the Houses of Parliament, I asked the same 14-year-old boy who had been displeased with their previous performance, how do you feel like this one went today?
Boy- Feels like, awesome.
Me (agreeing)- It was awesome, wasn't it.
Boy (gestures at the space)- Being in the parliament, the building.
Me- What was different today?
Boy – There was just like less space.
Me- It felt more cosy?
Boy- Mhmm (yes)

From a child's perspective, it seems that this smaller room filled with families huddled together on the carpet felt a more comfortable space to perform in compared with the temple's enormous hall. Here, at the Houses of Parliament they were surrounded by their families who interacted with them, whereas in the temple the audience was seated much further back and children could not read their reaction or be encouraged by them. To me their performance in the temple had felt much more nervous whilst the Houses of Parliament play felt more joyous. Rather than priests or politicians, it felt that it was the presence of their parents that was most important. Having performed the same play in three very different institutions: a museum, temple and the Houses of Parliament, children did not seem to distinguish or demarcate these sites as cultural, religious, and political, but rather paid attention to the sensorial surroundings and what it was like to perform in each space.

As everyone was getting ready to leave, their teacher asked me if I could gather some feedback for their play. I managed to conduct two interviews.

A young woman remarked that the play "brings back memories from when I was a little kid, like they were". She had attended Tamil school for 15 years. This school started with 6 children in a tiny office room where her dad and his friends taught them Tamil culture, language and identity. Now the school has 400 students. Her response to the play was:

"I think it was amazing cause those children, they were obviously born and raised in London but for them to speak fluent Tamil, the Tamil they were using is Ancient Tamil, not many Tamil people can speak now, so that's amazing, for them to even remember the Tamil scholars from around the world, like, from thousands and thousands of years ago, it means a lot…"

An older gentleman who is a member of the British Tamil Forum complemented the play' technique of having children 'doing different scholars', which helps retain people's focus when different actors come in. He also commended the play for summarising readings from these philosophers in a few words: "so they get a feel for what this is all about, and it gives an opportunity for *them* if *they* are interested to read more about it".

I remarked how varied performances were, there are quite a few different school performances, dance, music, oration.

He explained the intentions are "'two fold', sharing with the other people about what our culture is, what our arts is about, at the same time, giving the opportunity *for* the children, who have taken the time to learn it, this is an opportunity for them to perform in front of people, otherwise what is the point of learning? So whatever opportunities we can give, we need to encourage these guys."

His comment reveals how school plays are not only a pedagogic tool for children, but the community's means of acknowledging their achievement, which would otherwise go unrecognised.

I also met an activist in her late 70s who did not stick around for the school performances. She did not send her children to a Tamil supplementary school when they were young and was critical of parents who 'don't even want to talk about what is going on in Sri Lanka with their children' and care only about immediate problems. Her energy is focused on Sri Lanka and how it might achieve long-term peace and reconciliation. In her long years of campaigning outside the House of Parliament, people would pass her by and be surprised, saying 'I have been to Sri Lanka and wasn't aware there is a war on.' She had come for a

specific purpose, to find an MP to whom she could personally deliver a letter she had written. She showed me the printed images of Sri Lankan Victory Monuments she had brought with her to the Houses of Parliament. There was something remarkable about these flimsy, folded pieces of paper that contained heavy monuments weighed with war symbolism. For her they evidenced the continuation of Sri Lanka's under-documented State oppression.

The first image of Puthukkudiyiruppu Victory Monument is a statue of a man holding up a Kalashnikov, installed in an area where the Sri Lankan army had killed many Tamil civilians as they tried to flee. At the end of the war people put down their weapons, she pointed out, why is he still holding his weapon up?

She later told me this monument was installed in an area where Tamil families once used to fish: "not big fishing, the sort of place you would go and catch one or two fish with your family to cook". After the LTTE (Tamil) was defeated it became military-controlled. Now it is only accessible to curious Sinhalese tourists who are brought by busses and escorted to a war museum, built to the left of this monument, which portrays a very partial history of the war, from the perspective of its victors (Seoighe 2016). Tamil families had to cross this shallow water, she met a woman and her daughter whose husband and daughter were just behind them –but never came out.

Post-war Victory Monuments celebrate the triumph of the Sinhalese army, inscribing Sinhalese history onto former Tamil landscape, and erasing material traces of the Tamil experiences of war (ibid). I was confused by the second monument she found deeply offensive: a bullet-ridden cement wall. Tor me the artwork looked like a sculpture by British artist Rachel Whiteread. She had to translate the message of this monument, it is the state saying to them 'we will kill you – we will trample you', a wall from the war placed as a warning for those considering resistance, as a reminder that they will be crushed. This monument is protected by two soldiers at all times. They guard it, if they won't people would throw stones at it. It is on the A9, on a main Road leading to Kandy. People are shown the South of Sri Lanka, then flown over to Jaffna, visiting war-affected areas. They have not seen these statues.



7.14. Puthukkudiyiruppu Victory Monument – unveiled 09 December 2009. Photograph taken from printouts of heritage activist met at the Houses of Parliament.

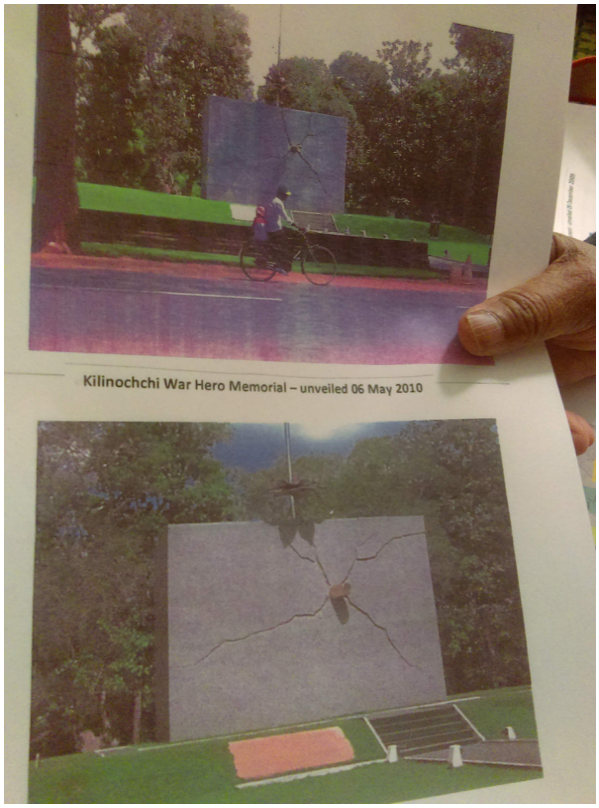


7.15 Puthukkudiyiruppu Victory Monument. Close Up. Sourced from web[41]

[41] https://www.army.lk/si/node/38687 accessed 9th January 2022

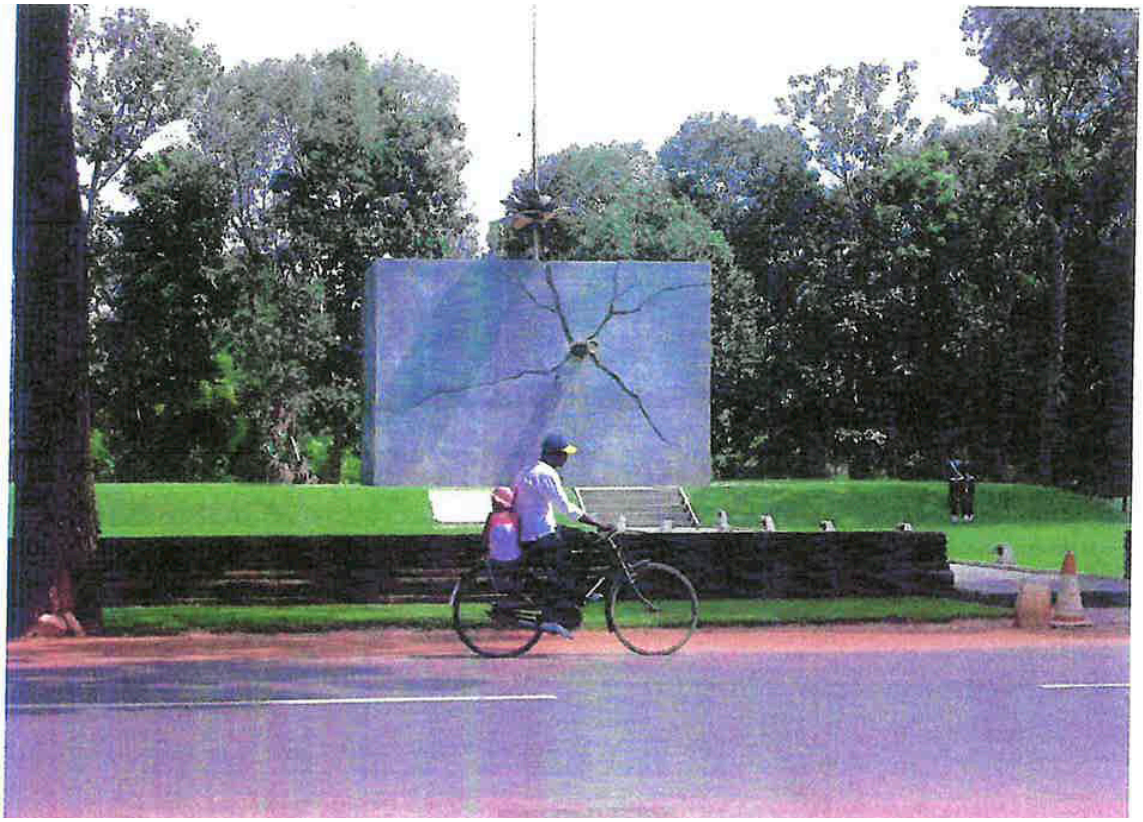


7.16 Unveiling of Puthukkudiyiruppu Victory Monument. Close Up. Sourced from web[42]

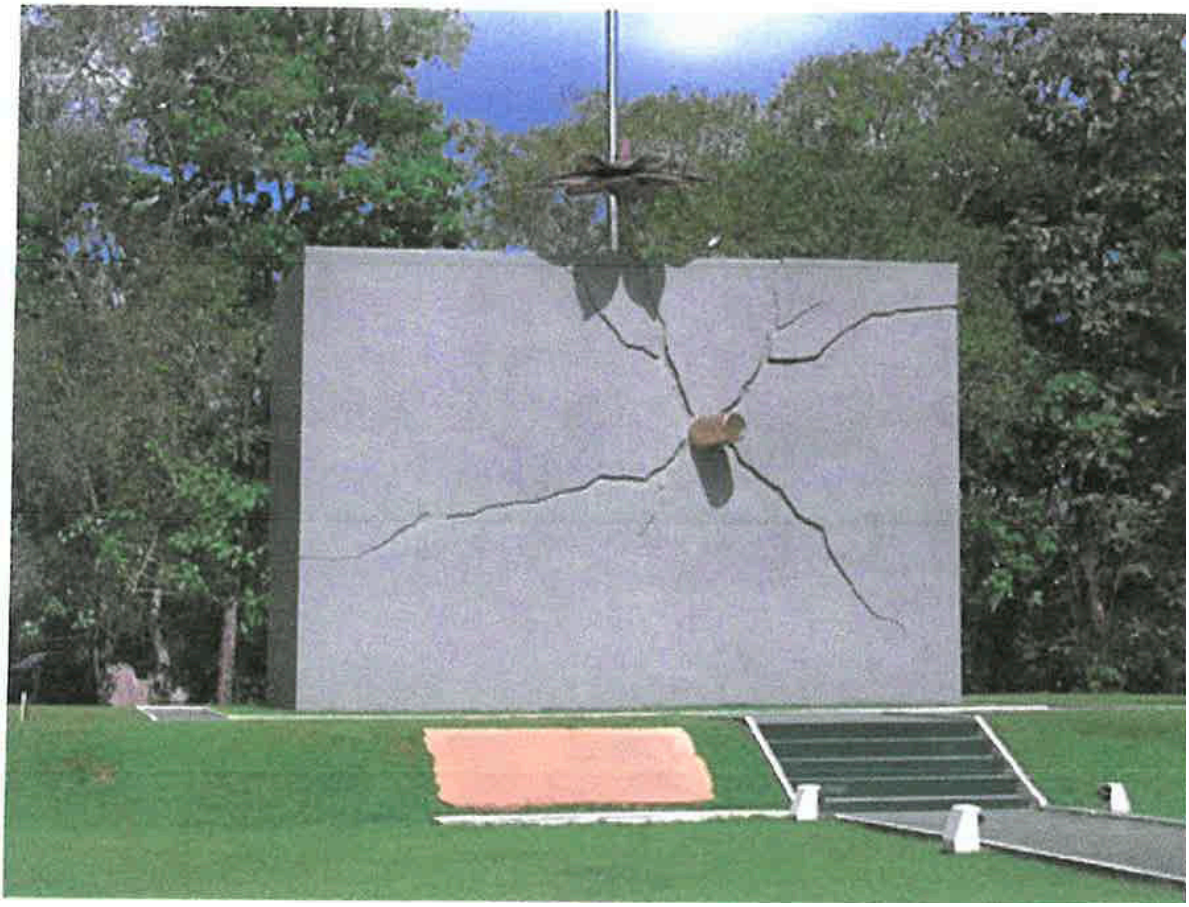


7.17 Kilinochchi War Hero Memorial – unveiled 06 May 2010. Photo of printouts held by heritage activist met at the Houses of Parliament

[42] https://www.army.lk/si/node/38687 accessed 9th January 2022



7.18 Kilinochchi War Hero Memorial – unveiled 06 May 2010



7.19 Kilinochchi War Hero Memorial

7.6 Multi-sited Heritage

Learning that the museum is just one of several venues where children perform plays, my museum-centred research was 'derailed'. The succession of school performances showed how the community was connected to multiple sites across London. Yet it is the supplementary school, despite its short opening hours, insecure premises and lack of funding, that acts as the consistent center from which children can continue to practice their cultural heritage.

The play was repeated with minute variations when performed in different sites and to different audiences. To me the play seemed to become sacred at the temple with the new opening line praising the sun, where clapping was replaced by the quiet clasping of hands against one's chest. Parents, however, regarded the plays as the 'cultural part' of a religious festival. Likewise, at the Houses of Parliament, children's plays and dances felt like the 'cultural', lighter element of the evening against adults' serious political speeches.

The children's touring play shows some cultural heritages cannot be separated from politics. This school play was caught up in politics because their heritage was. The museum may aspire to remain 'apolitical' but was connected to the Houses of Parliament's events in ways it did not envisage. Culture, religion and politics may in principle be separated out into different sites, but the porosity of play spills beyond the walls of each building. For this school, the museum, temple and Houses of Parliament are interconnected in the same way that their faith, politics and cultural heritage intersect.

The tone of the same school play changed in each venue. At the temple children were overwhelmed by the stage and performed in utter seriousness. By comparison, the play performed at the Houses of Parliament became the comedic part of the evening, receiving much laughter. At the museum, the play was considered too formal and serious by staff compared to other community performances that were more physical and musical.
It was at the museum when performed as part of an intercultural festival that the play's meaning was most misunderstood, museum officers surprised at the political overtone of the play, expecting a song and dance.

7.7 Mullivaikkal 10th Annual commemoration day, Trafalgar Square

Up until this point the school play never explicitly mentioned the conflict in Sri Lanka. The school's next performance was part of a public commemoration of the Mullivaikkal genocide, May 18th. This play directly referenced the conflict albeit through an aestheticized form, in symbolic gestures and speech acts.

Whilst celebrated as 'Victory Day' in Sri Lanka, the 18th of May is observed as Remembrance Day by the Tamil diaspora, marking the Mullivaikkal genocide in which the Sri Lankan army repeatedly shelled Tamil civilians trapped in a designated No Fire Zone, killing tens of thousands.

Public commemorations of the Mullivaikkal genocide are currently banned in Sri Lanka, and it is in diaspora that transnational Tamil communities gather to commemorate the day with testimonies from survivors, political speeches, temporary displays and performances. On a rainy Saturday afternoon on the 18th of May, 2019, a commemoration took place in London's Trafalgar Square and included performances from Tamil supplementary schools.



7.20 Makeshift memorial. 10th Mullivaikkal Memorial Day Trafalgar Square, 18th May 2019

The site chosen for the commemoration was Trafalgar Square, a public symbol of the right to protest in the UK. The Mayor's office describes Trafalgar Square as "a centre of national democracy and protest", where "rallies and demonstrations are frequently held at weekends on different political, religious and general issues", and communities "given access to such causes"[43]. The square marking Nelson's victory of the Napoleonic wars is no longer a single 'site of memory' (Winter 1998) and has become inscribed with other histories through multiple commemorations and public protests.

In this event latent heritage is prominently linked to the affordances of places and what different sites prohibit and permit. Collective memories of trauma suppressed at home, where tighter security and the closure of schools in Tamil populated areas of North and East Sri Lanka ensure that such public commemorations cannot be held. Meanwhile dotted around in different countries- Germany, Switzerland, UK, Canada - diasporic gatherings permit public expressions of grief, outrage and calls for the international community's recognition of the genocide, denied at home.

Jeyapal (2013) observes how during the escalation of violence in Sri Lanka in 2009, as the Tamil diaspora around the world organized protests, Canadian media condemned Tamil protests in Toronto as dangerous and unlawful, questioning their legitimacy as Canadian citizens. Rather than succeed in bringing public attention to the conflict in Sri Lanka, the protests attracted hostility to Tamil-Canadians as racialized bodies occupying spaces where they do not "belong", the media portraying Tamil people as trespassers and 'bodies-out-of-place', evidencing a precarious structure of belonging (Puwar 2004, Jeyapal 2013).

A young man in his early twenties told me he encounter similar attitudes in UK at the time. He recalled with emotional vividness the 2009 protests he attended with his uncle in London: "I was very young at this point, I was not aware. It was a very communal space. A part of it felt like you are going on a day out. Part of it was violence- Sri Lankan nationalists that would come along and harass us. There was grief- women grieving. Some asylum-seekers were there because they have to show they are politically active so they can't get sent back home. My right-wing friend (said) 'you guys are blocking the Olympic Marbles' , and 'this is your problem, not our problem. He failed to see the connection, of the British Arms Trade".

[43] https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/our-building-and-squares/trafalgar-square accessed 16th January 2021

As a child he had attended Tamil supplementary school but had left. He had found it boring. He also rejected Hinduism. He feels more connected to his Tamil heritage through politics, which began earlier in his life when accompanying his uncle to Trafalgar Square. As the youngest of three, his two older brothers grew up in a poorer neighbourhood known for gang crime. By the time he was born his parents had made enough money to move out to a wealthier, whiter neighbourhood, and he went to private school, the only boy of his background. He reflected on the difference between children like himself, "brought up with this background of this horror" against some of his Tamil friends whose "parents didn't want to share traumatic experiences with them, it wasn't talked about, and they are either coming to Tamil politics from a very Western perspective, trying to have a balanced argument, that kind of thing…When I was in year 7, I gave a speech on Black July (to his class-mates in an English grammar school). The response from my class was of real horror and disgust, Why did you not warn us you are going to put up these images?' I was so normalised".

His classmates' reaction echoes the museum's sentiments, describing a very salient set of questions when it comes to teaching children histories of violence: Should children be incorporated into the politics of their people, or remain apolitical until a later age? Does teaching children about their families' experiences of war traumatize or radicalize them? And conversely, does keeping them ignorant of these affective memories make them indifferent to these histories? He knows young people from his background who were taught these histories later on in life, and describes how they approach the conflict rationally as an intellectual problem, but lack an embodied, emotive understanding. An underlying assumption on the museum's part is that children begin life as apolitical and should be kept away from histories of violence until they are mature enough and ready, but this is clearly not the starting point of children from backgrounds whose heritage is already politicized.

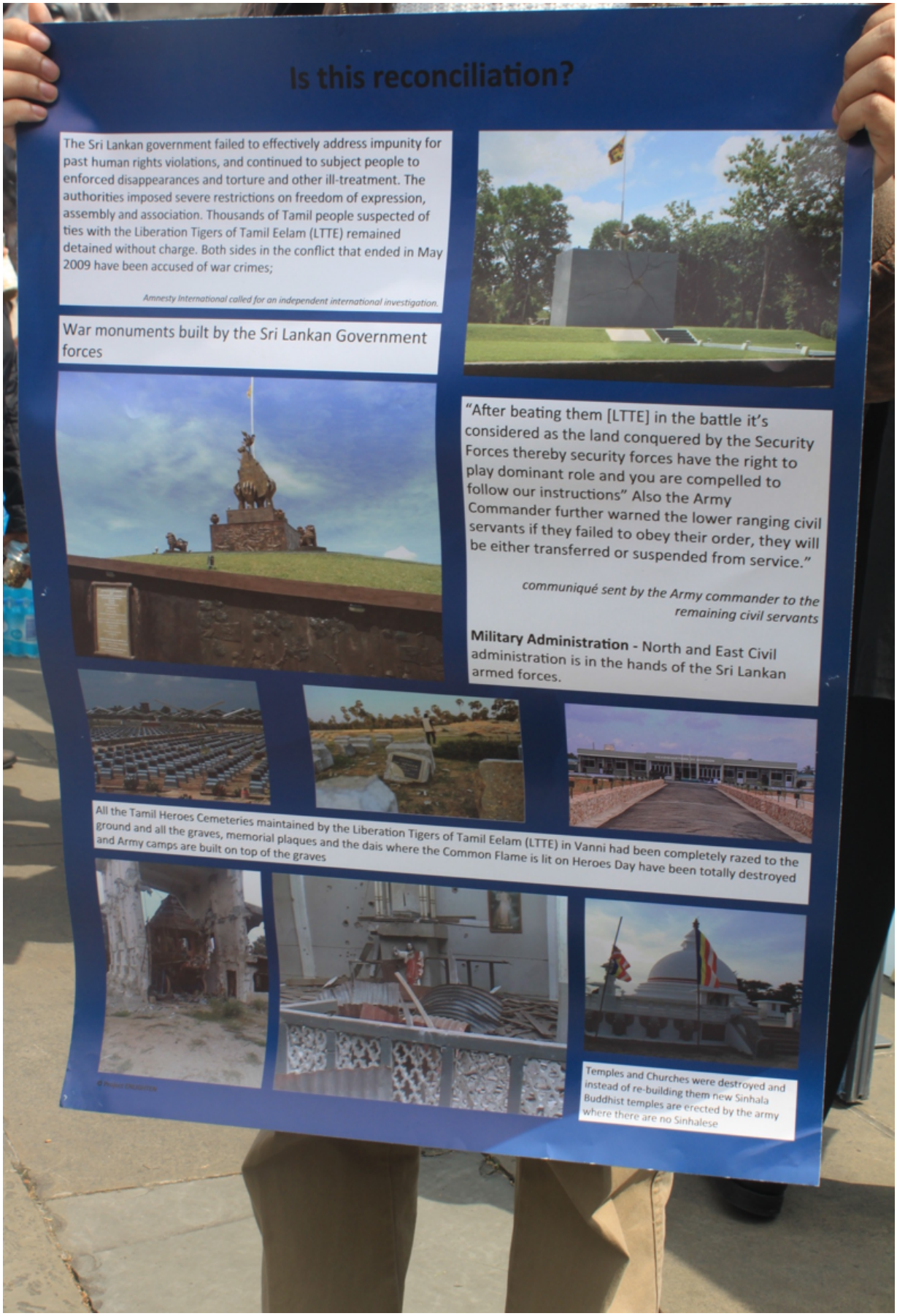
As described by the young man's experiences of protesting, and by Jeyapal's article that he pointed me to, the international community failed to intervene in time and their response to public protests sometimes had adverse effects. After 10 years' experience of public protests the Tamil diaspora are careful about how to communicate, where to protest and what speech acts to employ. From this context the children's museum play about Tamil language with its emphasis on clarity of oration can be better understood. Children were not being 'dramatic' or 'over-emotional', but standing still whilst projecting their voices, practicing to be heard.

A decade after the event, the 10-year commemoration of the Mullivaikkal genocide was held in several sites across the UK. I joined the school to watch their performance in Trafalgar Square. Today only the older students were present, teenagers aged 12-15.

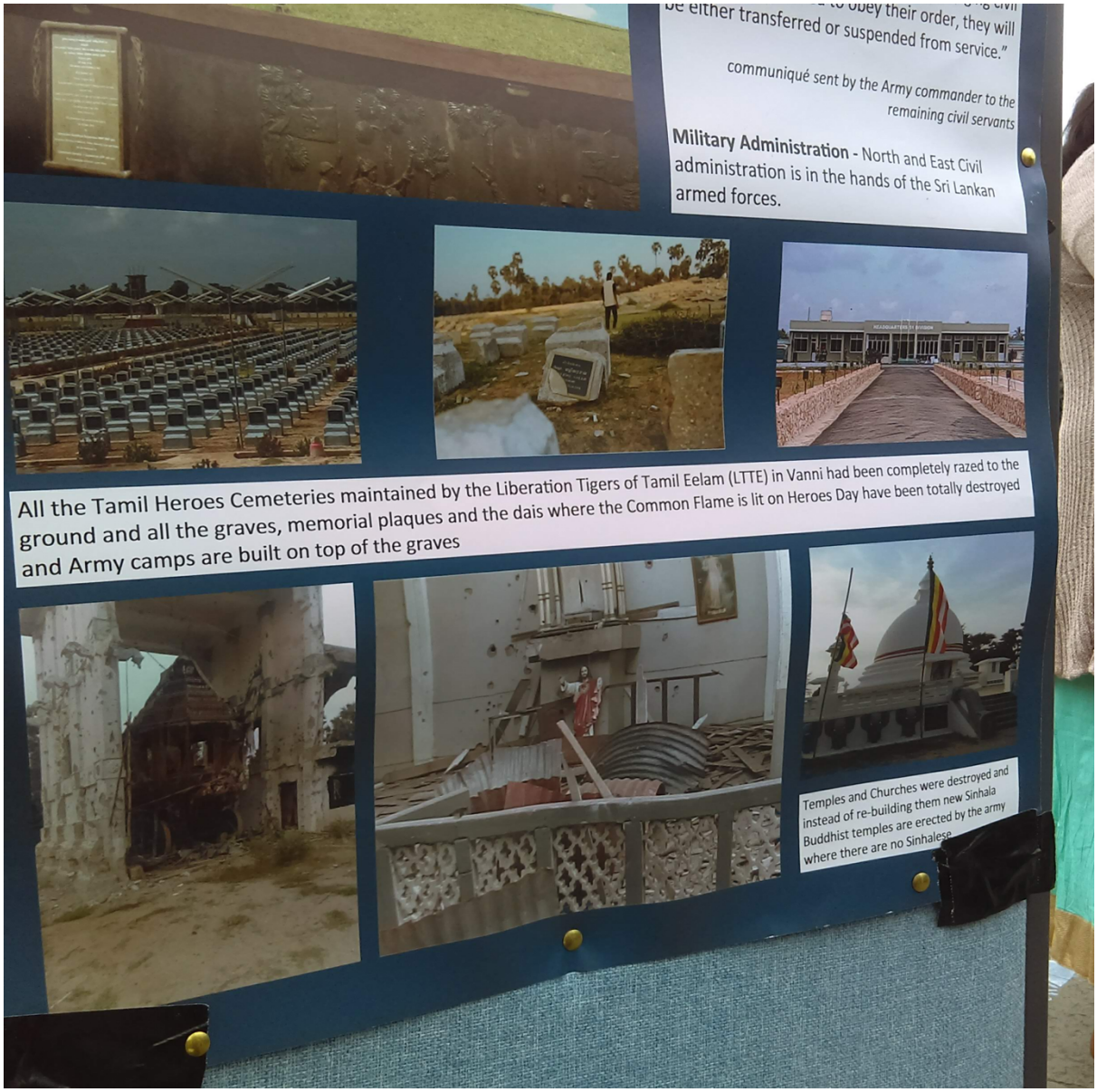
Throughout the long, wet afternoon, during heavy speeches detailing experiences of genocide and the stillness of a two-minute commemorative silence, tourists continued to climb up the lion statues, oblivious to the commemoration taking place a couple of meters below their feet. The crowd that gathered at the lower half of Trafalgar Square was mainly Tamil, joined by Members of Parliament, their representatives and members of the press.

I arrived before the school as volunteers in their early 20s carried notice-boards to set up a temporary exhibition to the west of Nelson's Column. This make-shift display was small but overwhelming, cramming as many facts and figures into a few panels for the day. Printouts pinned and gaffe-taped to cardboard detailed Sri Lanka continued erasing of its Tamil population and culture: maps showing landgrabs, photos evidencing physical erasures of places of worship and sites of memory- the destruction of Tamil graveyards and temples, military army camps built on top of Tamil cemeteries - and more graphic photographs of humiliated and tortured men's bodies, a famous image of a mother holding a war-wounded baby.

One young volunteer carrying a display-board titled 'Is this reconciliation?' was stopped and questioned by a skeptical English man passing by, who found this history improbable, thinking that being a Buddhist country Sri Lanka must be non-violent. The young man patiently and amicably responded, discussing Militant Buddhism and ethical tourism. The two became engaged in a long debate, all the while the young man continued to hold up the exhibition panel in the style of a sandwich board man, clutching it in his hands, close to his chest:



7.21 'Is this reconciliation?' – exhibition board



7.22 'Is this reconciliation?' – temporary exhibition panel



7.23 Temporary memorial, Mullivaikkal commemoration, Trafalgar Square, London 2019.

A make-shift shrine was erected, a long queue formed, flowers picked up from one table, their petals placed by memorial photographs of individual portraits of the missing.

The children arrived straight from Saturday school to perform a new play, dressed in black, with red scarves, carrying bouquets of dyed flowers.

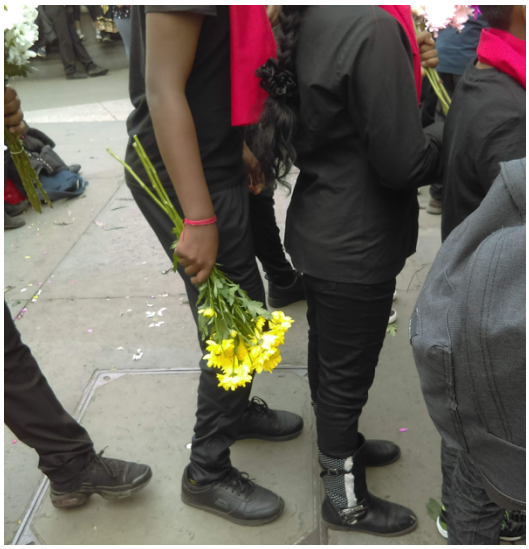
On stage the commemoration begun: “We would like you to join us in remembering all those who were unlawfully and brutally murdered by the Sri Lankan state.” Following the two-minute silence were long speeches as children played ‘tag’ near the temporary exhibition. Someone discussed the history of the term ‘genocide’, mentioning Lemkin, the Armenian genocide, Darfur. Another man on stage addressed parents: “Don’t let your children forget their language, their culture, their tradition. We will carry on fighting until there is justice.”

“The culture of impunity on the island exists,” said a woman on stage.

One of the older children from our group said to his friends: “I have been standing here for 2 hours”.

A man on stage was “Here to represent the Labour party, but especially Jeremy Corbyn..” He talked about the atrocities in Sri Lanka: “…killings, rapes and torture, and appropriation of Tamil Land.”

A boy holding a commemorative bouquet tricked a girl to hold it for a second, then refused to take it back. This became a game, the boy seeing who he can pass on the responsibility of holding his bouquet. The girl warned the next child: “Don’t take it, he will give it to you forever.”





Children waiting to perform. Left: 7.24 holding bouquet. Right: 7.25 boy dressed as ‘World’

When it was their turn to perform, the children entered the fenced-off stage area, placing bouquets by the temporary memorial, then stepped on stage in socks, leaving their shoes on the ground below. Centerstage stood a boy wearing a large cardboard cut-out of the world. The other children, dressed in black with long red scarfs around their necks, stood in two rows on either side of him. The boy gazed into the distance through cardboard binocular, calling out loud and clear: “Perfect. Yeah! Everything is perfect.”

He wore large, opaque sunglasses. When he took off the binoculars he was still faceless, representing a blind world or possibly a tourist.

A teenage boy approaches him, crouched on bended knee, taking his red scarf off his neck and holding it up for the World to see:

“*Help us, please!”* the boy pleaded to the World.

"*Help the Tamil Genocide*" exclaimed a teenage girl, joining the boy, showing her red scarf. Other children rushed one by one, on bended knee, calling:
"*Please!*"
"Help!"
"*Please!"*
"*Help!"*

But the 'World' did not hear them. They return to their formations. At different intervals a child would approach the 'World' with a placard and read it out:
"*Help for environment!"* One child exclaimed.
"*Delivered."* The 'World' quickly responded.

New causes were introduced: '*help for humanity*!', '*help for woman's rights*!' and '*help for animal rights!*', to each the world responded affirmatively: '*delivered'*.

Intermittently, the children plead with the World to help the Tamil people, gathering one by one by the boy's feet, calling out together, holding their red scarves in their clasped hands like flows of pouring blood. Now the whole group pleaded with the world, kneeling and calling, rhythmically, in unison:
"Please Help Please Help Please Help!"

The 'World' ignored them and continue to gaze into the distance. They called out for the last time: 'help us, please!', the whole group repeating the phrase in unison: 'help us, please' over and over as they finally lay on the floor en masse, as if falling down dead.

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

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

The 'world' walked back without care, stepping over the corpses.

The group got up and began the second part of the performance, directly addressed the audience, each child speaking one line:
'A full ten years have passed'
'A full ten years have passed'
'We still do not know why we have lost our loved ones!'

'We still do not know why we have lost our loved ones!'
'We still do not know why we have lost our loved ones!'
'We still do not know where our relatives are!'
'we still do not know where our relatives are.'
'we still do not know where our relatives are.'
' We still do not know why we have lost our shelters!'
' We still do not know why we have lost our shelters'
'We still do not know why we have lost our shelters'
'We still do not know why, the world leaders let us down'

The whole group spoke together: '*We still do not know why, the world leaders let us down.'*

One boy: *we still do not know (-pause-) who would listen to our story.*
Young girl: *we still do not know who would listen to our story.*
Teenage girl: *we still (---long pause----) do not know (second pause) who would listen to our story.*

Teenage boy: *Ten years back we were begging all the world leaders to stop this genocide, but nothing happened!*
Teenage girl: *Ten years back we were begging all the world leaders to stop this genocide, but nothing happened!*
Together: *But nothing happened!*
Teenage boy: *Still, we have not received the justice for this!*
Twelve-year-old girl: *Still, we have not received the justice for this!*

Do you think, the world leaders did not know about this?

Girl: *Clearly, they did know.*
Another Girl: *Clearly, they did know.*
Another Girl: *Justice delayed, justice denied.*
Teenage boy: *Justice delayed, justice denied.*
Older teenage boy, holding one arm up: *Justice delayed, justice denied*.
The rest join in: *Justice delayed, justice denied.*

The play ended with a collective public speech act, each child stepping forward to speak up. Each sentence was repeated by different children, children emphasized different words in the sentence to highlight the meaning in a new way.

By the end of the play I found myself crying uncontrollably. I was deeply embarrassed not to be as composed as those around me, but I just could not stop crying. Fieldwork exhaustion mixed with the emotive sensorial surroundings - a piercing high pitched song that proceeded the school performance, my physical proximity to the shrine, and my earlier anxiety when children played beside the temporary exhibition that they might be exposed to graphic photographs of war, and my desperate and futile desire to protect children from knowledge of violence. Their performance reminded me of Holocaust imagery, and my deep unease about children being exposed to difficult histories, alongside a sad acceptance that this is already part of their heritage. I stayed away from the group and watched the next act to gain time to recover my composure.

The act that followed was a highly codified dance form, possibly Kathak. Women moved to very fast percussion beats: hand and head turns, feet pointing up, legs apart, knees low, eyes wide, pupils directed sharply to one side. Being moved to tears by the previous play, I watched the dance distractedly thinking it was intended to lighten the mood. Unable to comprehend its codified meaning, I failed to notice the subtle change in the crowd's mood.

During this event I met a member of the BTF who was one of the organizers. In his late 50s, he told me he had little interest in dance, but reflected: "I am not really into it, but I became really emotional. I never thought that a dance or drama could do that. They have done very well bringing that many people emotion...they performed this dance to tell people what really happened. Drama and mixed dance." He commented that most of the audience had tears in their eyes triggered by this dance. One man had told him: 'I left Sri Lanka in the 70s and had no idea of war. But the dance brought it close to home.'

His own emotional reaction to the dance seemed to have surprised him. I was oblivious that the dance carried any meaning in relation to the genocide, and responded emotionally only to the language-based plays. This example highlights the incommensurable gap in intercultural communication, not just a linguistic gap but the non-translatable communication of different embodied traditions and the memories they hold (Taylor 2003, Zarrilli 1989). The dance was an affective form of transmitting traumatic knowledge and moving people to tears. I was not the only one crying during the commemoration, as I had previously

imagined, but I cried at the wrong time, not emotionally attuned or able to respond to the dance in the intended way.

7.8 Tamil Street Dance

Visiting the school in the summer term I found children rehearsing for a very different performance, a street dance competition organized by the Tamil diaspora to be held in a large West End auditorium. In a class of pure celebration, children had fun learning new moves to music the teacher called ‘jungle’ which mixes Tamil tunes with Aretha Franklyn remix of ‘rescue me’.

Children danced in unison: neck thrusts, rotating shoulders, hip wiggles, high kicks, sideways slides. The biggest boy, as usual, lost his balance when in ‘pray squatting’ position and fell backwards, very close to the youngest boy, much smaller and skinnier, who had to be ‘rescued’. The instructor changed their positions so no one could get crushed. The room had no mirrors. Children watched the instructor and copied each other to learn the moves, developing their spatial awareness as they moved quickly and changed direction.

The school group was too small in number to enter the competition so the instructor decided to combine them with another Tamil supplementary school in the borough and enter the dance competition as one group. The two groups had been rehearsing separately. Preparing a new dance formation, the instructor positioned them in clusters and asked them to leave spaces for the other group:

“Someone will be there, someone will be there,” he gestured to the spaces between the children, asking of them to imagining the other Tamil school they have not yet met. Poetically, the children danced ‘with’ their invisible partners, imagining the other children as part of their dance formation, diasporic connections as embodied acts of faith.

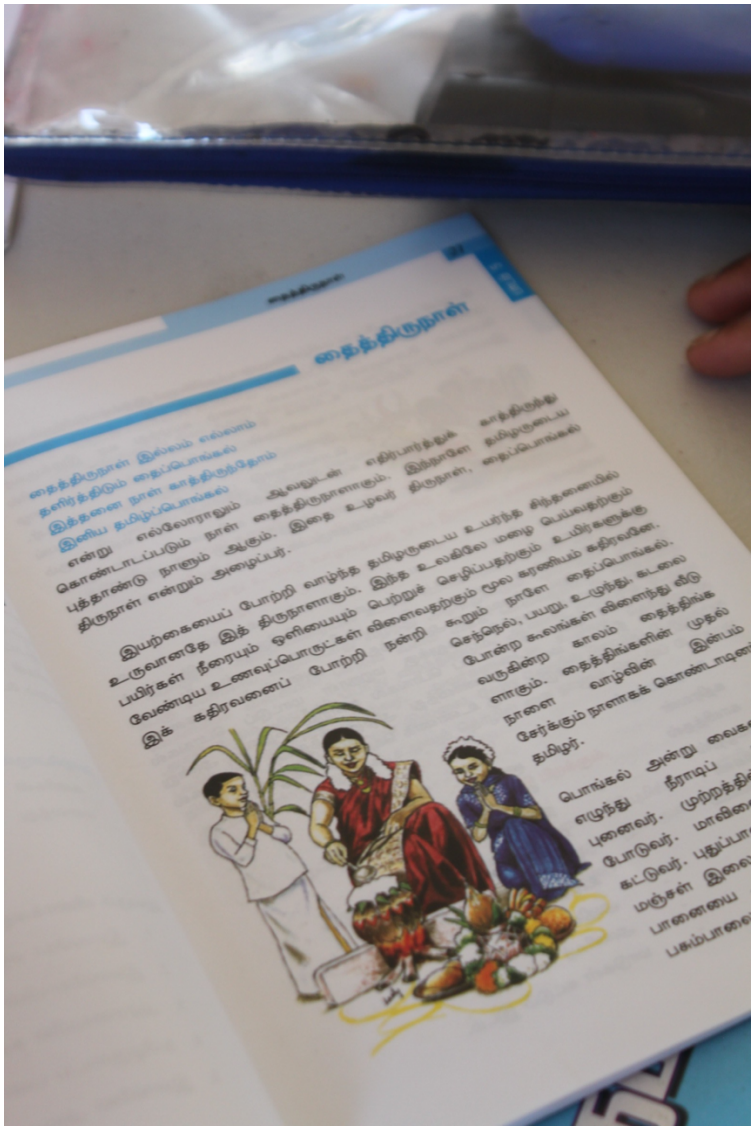
In the live performance the two schools formed a group of about 50 children dancing in synchrony. I had missed the actual performance but was shown a recording of it on a mother’s mobile phone. The dance event had brought hundreds of people of Tamil heritage together who filled an impressive looking large West End auditorium to watch their children. Dance entries were upbeat, exuberant. Dozens of Tamil schools took part, a new form of Tamil cultural heritage immerging out of a young generation.

The evening was hosted by presenters who spoke in Tamil. At one point a presenter addressed a group of children sat on stage for a group photo. The presenter stood behind a little boy sat on the edge and asked him a question in Tamil. He looked into the distance and did not pay attention. She repeated her instructions, he seemed to be ignoring her. Realizing he does not understand Tamil, she switched to English: 'you can get up now, it's fine'. He reacted. The audience laughed as she made a little joke. This incident shows the fragmentation of heritage in diaspora, children participating in this event could dance, but not all understood Tamil, an example of the bifurcation of heritage in migration. Here the loss of cultural heritage is that of language survival in diaspora.

7.9 Last Visit

On a hot summer's day I visited the school for the last time. During the language class I sat at the back of a long table to be out of the way, but a mother and daughter sat on either side, and I found myself caught in an intimate conversation. The girl, aged 12, asked her mum a series of questions. Her mum explained in English: "Tamil New Year is in April."
The girl repeated that as 'New Year in Sri Lanka'. The mum explained- not *all* Sri Lanka- there are also Muslims, Singhalese, other people. Singhalese people also celebrate New Year in April. The girl immediately asked: Why do Singhalese people have a war with us? Why does Sri Lanka have a war with India? With Singhalese?
Mum replied decisively: "leave it leave it."
The mum smiled at me, explaining: "too big". She tried to redirect her daughter's attention back towards her textbook.

This loaded moment leaves many questions unanswered. I could not tell if the mother did not address the topic of war directly because the subject is deemed too heavy or taboo, or because I was present, or more simply because this was not the right time. Perhaps the war could be explained later, perhaps at home, but they were here to study Tamil language, not to get caught up in politics and history. For me, the question of how parents are to transmit traumatic conflict to the younger generation was all too familiar. How do you explain the horrors of war and genocide to children without traumatising them or making them lose faith in humanity? In school plays, memories travel often without words, in re-enactments, commemorations, dance and dramatized, slow contemplation of conflict.



7.26 Tamil textbook with illustration of Thai Pongol

7.10 Shibboleths in the Museum of London

Back at the Museum of London, I headed to the café with a storyteller from Sri Lanka, after assisting her in a supplementary school festival at the museum. She is a professional storyteller employed by many museums and has a repertoire of folk tales from around the world, although is keen to emphasise her Sri-Lankan heritage. Her session today was placed in the Roman galleries, and her stories fitted around the collection. She does not 'look' Sri Lankan, is light-skinned and possibly of mixed heritage. She was keen to describe Sri Lanka as multicultural, with many languages and festivals, so many that you get time off work for 4 New Years. I assumed Thai Pongal is one of them. I described the festival to the

storyteller and discover she has never heard of it. She asks me to repeat the word, sounding a bit suspicious: “Did you say Pongo? Anything like that sounds Tamil. They are probably Hindu. They immigrated.” The storyteller explained Tamils are not indigenous to the country and came from India, a view that denies Tamils are Sri Lankan. I asked about the Tamil New Year.

No. Sinhalese, Chinese, Christian and Muslim. These were the four New Year festivals she meant. Her smile dropped, her tone more serious.

Our respective ‘Shibboleths’ were unfolding, me being asked to repeat a word that gave away my affiliation with a Tamil school, and the storyteller’s lack of knowledge of this word gradually revealing her deep-rooted rejection of Tamil heritage. In what was meant to be an inclusive, neutral space, we found the limits of museum multiculturalism within this conversation.

Conclusion

Examining play as a form of latent heritage in migration, the previous chapter’s relatively trouble-free example of children singing Albanian lullabies with their eyes shut was here developed into contexts of ‘difficult’ heritage, where children are directed to pretend to sleep in order to escape ethnic attacks on Tamils during the civil war in Sri Lanka.

This chapter presented fragmented, conflicted and multiple perspectives on children’s new role in preserving cultural heritage in migration in contexts of trauma, when a ‘dissonant’ or ‘difficult’ heritage (Harrison 2013, Macdonald 2010) becomes part of children’s play.

The bifurcations of heritage that occur in migration were particularly exemplified in this case study, where the complex richness of this group’s heritage whose expressions include dance, language, public oration, religious practice and political resistance were distributed across different sites in the city. These examples show how latent heritage, when strongly suppressed in one location, is strongly expressed in another: what cannot be commemorated in Sri Lanka becomes a staged event in Trafalgar Square.

Here heritage becomes multi-sited, compartmentalised in diaspora and reconnected through children’s play. The plays were adapted to fit with the different venues: a dance-off in London’s West End, a political play in Trafalgar Square, and what the school regarded as a cultural play in a museum, temple and the Houses of Parliament. A play that felt politically

charged in the museum was received with laughter Houses of Parliament, the same script interpreted as political, pedagogic, sacred, comic by different audiences.

For children, play became a process of discovering different parts of London whilst recovering their cultural heritage. Travelling to very distant locations from their school and neighbourhood, children became familiar with London through school plays, each space affording a different expression of Tamil culture and another opportunity for a community to come together, and for children to explore, produce and inhabit a very different city.

Children noticed the different locations as actors, responding to how it feels to perform in a venue, whether the room is too small or stage too big. They explored different sites of London in socks, in a more immediate, felt, sensorial connection to place, a geography based on touching the ground under your feet. In this very embodied way, children are connected to many sites across London.

This case-study serves to support my argument made in the introductory chapter, that city museums seeking to help migrants integrate need to consider the vast breadth of work carried out by supplementary schools, paying attention to how they move and dwell in a city. This chapter has shown how a heritage is preserved and reconstructed without museums. The museum, although a desired venue, is one of many sites of performance in this school's ongoing heritage work. It was chosen by the school to articulate a particular kind of practice, that of public oration. The museum is seen as a component of the school's heritage-production, and becomes a new site of memory, alongside Sri Lanka, Trafalgar Square, Whitehall, temples, auditoriums and the rented community hall in East London. Heritage suppressed in one locality - North East Sri Lanka - remerges, splits, and reconnects multiple places in London. The museum is one of many newly formed 'sites of memory' (Winter 1998) and becomes connected to other political, religious and cultural institutions across the city.

Children's play is already entangled with politics, as is the museum, unable to remain neutral. During my fieldwork there were internal discussion within the museum about whether it should be more political in its engagement and curation. Unbeknownst to the museum, it is already a part of Tamil heritage revival, a search for lost cultural identity, and heritage contestations, as evidenced by this touring school play and the example of the father who brought his two daughters to the museum festival to see the play 'Tamil Language Drama' as a means of reconnecting them with their mother's roots, and a

storyteller from the same country of origin who expressed a contrary ideological position that denies Tamil history in Sri Lanka.

The following year a different Tamil supplementary school that has no connections to Sri Lanka performed in a museum festival, with drums, dances and costumes with long peacock feathers. Another little boy was dressed as Thiruvalluvar, wearing a similar wig to the one used by the previous school. The performance was much more raucous and spectacular, as expected in a museum festival.

With different expectations about children and play, museum officers were particularly critical of the 'scriptedness' of the play 'Tamil Language Drama'. For the museum dance is seen as non-political and therefore a 'safer' form of cultural heritage to showcase. However, the affective dance performed in Trafalgar Square is an example of how dance can carry memories of collective trauma and describe experience of war which brought a community to tears. My own inability to decipher the meaning of this dance describes the limits of cross-cultural translation. In the same manner, the museum misrecognised another form of Tamil cultural heritage- public oration - which in part relates to the group's history of public protests, but is also part of a sacred tradition of children performing scripted Tamil temple plays and inhabiting ancient characters, encapsulating the value the community places on preserving Tamil language in oral and written form.

As well as describing the limits of cultural translation in a museum festival and role of the museum as facilitator of intercultural dialogue, this chapter has also pointed to the boundaries of museum multiculturalism, where subtle acts of Shibboleths are ever-present despite the museum's best efforts to stir away from divisive politics. This includes a 'Shibboleth' that revealed my affiliations to a Tamil Sri Lankan school and another museum practitioner's conflictual relationship to this group and its history.

'Shibboleths' are interruptions amongst the many different silences this chapter describes- commemorative silences, omissions in the museum, non-verbal dances, the staged school performance in which the silent 'world' does not respond to cries for help, and a suspended conversation when a mother does not answer her daughter's questions about the war.

The last example of a mother stopping a conversation in its tracks conveys a dilemma faced by many diasporic communities with difficult histories: whether to protect their children from a heritage of violence and trauma, or whether 'sanitizing' it is an act of self-deletion of a community's history.

The museum's policy is that they do not introduce traumatic topics to children under the age of 14. This policy does not take into consideration groups whose children may already be exposed to trauma which is part of their community's cultural memory.

For many families, heritage preservation becomes more pressing in diaspora in response to conflict. In the school where I conducted research, children are given the shared responsibility of remembering their community's suffering and struggles, which is also seen as the community's way to protect its children through education. Yet for other families, the conflict may become the reason to move away from their communities and disconnect their children from their heritage. During my research I encountered adults in their 20s and 40s of Tamil Sri Lankan heritage that felt their parents have distanced them from their community.

For children and young people occupying the space 'in between', living in both Tamil and English cultures, their challenging role is not only of remembrance but of cultural translation. The young man in his 20s described the difficulties of sharing his heritage with his English class-mates when he was in Year 7, how giving a talk about Black July was met with negative reactions and the accusation that he was traumatizing them.

By compassion, the supplementary school plays in this chapter show how a community exposes children to a heritage of trauma indirectly, allowing collective memories to be articulated through aestheticized performances when ordinary language fails.

Chapter 8: Curating in the meantime: Trails as museum tactics

Chapter Summary

The Museum of London is on the move. Its entire collection will be rehoused in West Smithfield several years in the future. In the meantime, at 150 London Wall, museum practitioners work around outmoded interpretations and immovable displays. Unable to revamp the permanent galleries, they find themselves in the same situation as supplementary school practitioners, not permitted to attach displays to walls, remove or relabel any objects.

What do you do with heritage that can't be changed, and museum displays that refuse to budge?

This chapter examines the making of a new museum trail as a form of alternative curation in the liminal space of a museum waiting to be revamped. Using de Certeau's concept of 'tactics' I show how museum trails, seemingly innocuous and disposable artefacts, become temporal interventions that divert visitors' journeys and attentions, mediating between old displays and new audiences, transforming the way the permanent galleries are seen without altering the displays, and playing with the latent potential of a museum collection. From an institutional perspective, the trail mediates between public policies and supplementary schools, promoting multiculturalism without directly making reference to it at a time when it is no longer endorsed by the state.

Connecting supplementary schools with the museum collection, the trail's topic – Multilingual London – explores language diversity in museum displays. Searching for objects to include in the trail became a means of listening to the museum's acoustic environments.

The content was developed by the community officer and myself, with assistance from museum attendants, following a consultation with teachers. Making the trail became a mobile participatory research method that enabled me to see the museum from their different vantage points, becoming aware of our 'blindspots' and exchanging our fields of vision.

Introduction

The 'final act' of this thesis is about the community officer's attempt, and my own efforts to link the permanent museum collection with diverse heritages taught in supplementary schools. So far, the museum collection has been largely ignored in collaborations with supplementary schools, since it contains few or no artefacts representative of their cultural heritage, or else material deemed too offensive or unsuitable for young audiences. Instead, supplementary schools created new museum displays. In these emerging partnerships, the schools and museum seemed to somehow 'miss' each other, each presenting its heritage in the other's site: the museum running an outreach workshop for an Iranian school about the Great Fire of London, an Albanian school setting up a cardboard castle to temporarily install Shkoder on the museum stage. The collection was altogether left out.

Acknowledging the very transient nature of their displays and performances, the community officer hoped to deepen relationships between the museum and supplementary schools by connecting their heritage to the permanent collection. She had already looked into accessioning new objects linked to their cultures, but this was a slow process full of hurdles. Whereas heritage in migration mostly manifests in ephemeral and transient displays (Torres 2011, Johansson and Bevelander 2017:17) heritage in the museum felt 'stuck'. She was working between different temporalities: changing audiences and new cultures whose displays were all too ephemeral, and a permanent collection she could not physically move or alter, and its outdated narratives, displays and interpretations that refused to budge. Searching for a different route to connect supplementary schools with the existing collection, she set out to make a new trail about Multilingual London based on the permanent display at the London Wall. The trail was specifically for supplementary schools visiting the museum, the majority of whom teach mother-tongue. Its aim was to give teachers the confidence to explore galleries on self-directed tours and use the collection as a learning resource. It was designed for children aged 7-11 (Key Stage 2).

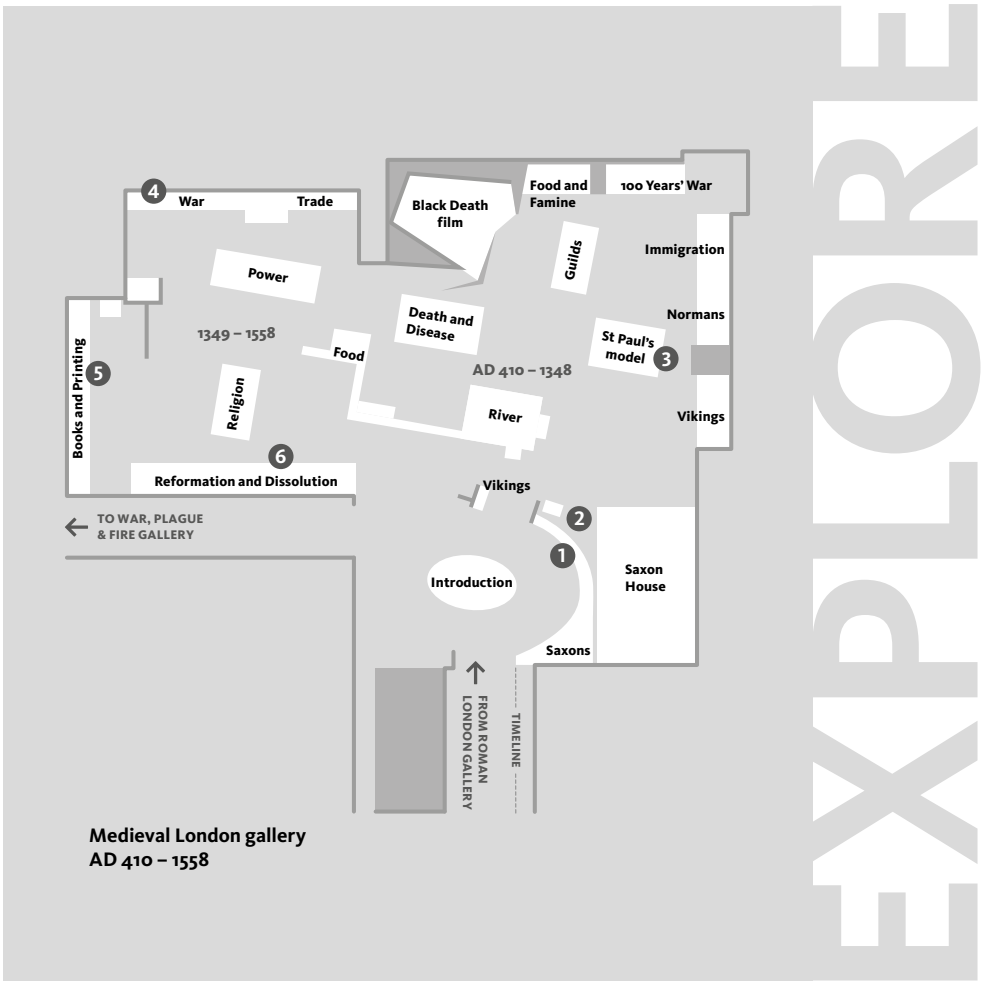
The museum's search engine could not be used to locate relevant objects, the digital artefacts told us little about how the objects would have looked in situ and whether they were in fact still on display. Making the trail necessitated someone to physically search the galleries for relevant content. As a visual researcher, I was invited to help. My own research at the museum intersected with the community officer's search for objects for the trail. She asked me to locate two objects from every room that 'show the linguistic diversity throughout London'. Based on my findings, this chapter offers an alternative tour of the museum focused

on spaces and objects that evidence multilingual London and the presence of minority languages.

8.1 Trails as museum tactics – turning heads and changing footfall

Museums prompt particular kinds of looking practices. For Duncan (1995:10) museums are carefully marked off ritual spaces reserved for a special quality of attention. Alpers (1991) argues that what museums are good for is to elicit this heightened, focused way of seeing. On entering a museum, visitors are encouraged to scrutinise displays in ways they may not be accustomed or required to in daily life. These kinds of attentive looking practices can be described as 'an education of attention' (Gibson 1979:254 cited in Ingold 2013:2) which does not come naturally but is acquired through cultural cues (Duncan 1995).

Museum practitioners have different tactics to train the public to 'see' a collection. Museum trails are one such tactic, instructing visitors to look for clues, read captions and examine objects in more detail. Whereas museum maps fast-track visitors towards the highlighted treasures in their collections and arguably standardize visitors' experiences (Candlin 2016:124), museum trails intervene with the paths they would usually be expected to take. Trails make use of the labyrinthian layouts of museums, allowing visitors to venture into less explored spaces or themes. Visitors can become physically disorientated and temporarily lost, constructing their own paths of meaning (Basu 2007). Choosing to pick up a trail from the information desk sets visitors on a series of tasks to perform, a reassuring guide for those uncertain of how to behave in a museum. Trails are particularly popular with younger audiences, motivating children to progress forward in what might otherwise feel like an endless walk through vast spaces, pacing their journey and letting them test their orienteering skills by turning the galleries into an immersive game of treasure hunt.



Use the gallery plan and pictures to FIND and DISCUSS the objects in this trail. Read text panels and captions for further information. Encourage enquiry and extend ideas by further questioning. The objects do not need to be seen in number order. We suggest different pupils are given different starting points, in order to spread pupils across the gallery.

Extension Activities

- LOOK around and CHOOSE your favourite object. What can you find out about it?
- Bring pencils and sketch pads to draw and make notes about your discoveries.

MUSEUM OF LONDON

Medieval London
Gallery trail

8.1 an old museum trail sourced from the museum website.

For staff, museum trails are very practical interventions that can change how visitors encounter objects and the meanings they draw from displays. Trails enable museum officers working with fixed histories, unmovable display cases and slow institutional processes to redirect how a collection unfolds in time. The trail is a curatorial 'tactic' that changes how visitors encounter artefacts, mediating between long histories, static displays and new audiences.

Compared with the lengthy planning process of changing a permanent collection, museum trails are quick interventions through which displays can be manipulated without being physically altered. They are the "clever tricks of the "weak" within the order established by the "strong" (de Certeau 1988:40), a way for community officers to change how the space is used and interpreted.

According to De Certeau, tactics are different to strategies: 'tactic is an art of the weak', for instance, engagement officers who have no power to alter curation, whereas strategies belong to the 'strong', e.g. institutions, businesses (1988:37-8). Strategies focus on altering place because they can. Tactics, on the other hand, concentrate on temporal interventions:

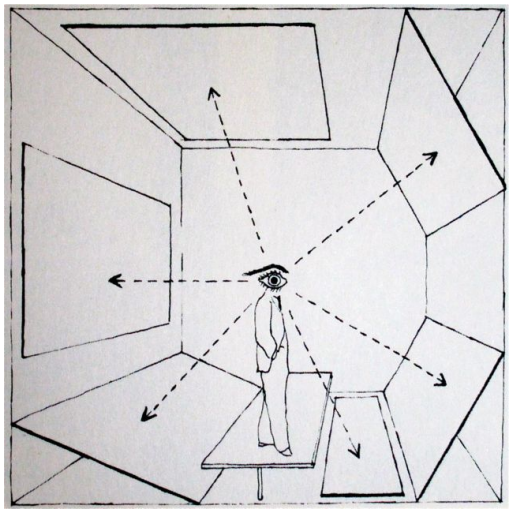
"Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time – to the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favourable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogenous rhythms, etc. (de Certeau 1988:38)

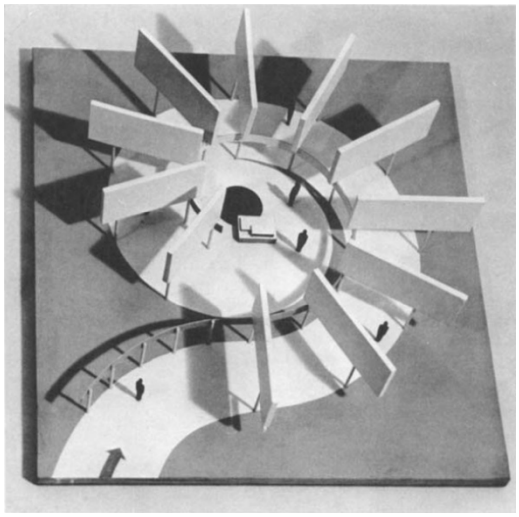
Tactics pin their hopes "on a clever *utilization of time*" (de Certeau 1988:39). For officers unable to change what's on display, trails are a way of playing with the latency of a museum collection. Trails are subtle means of directing visitors' attention and controlling their movement in the museum. They are designed to spotlight objects from the collection but can also be used to divert attention and obscure parts of the display, tampering with how visitors interact with objects.

For the community officer, a new trail was a means to make connections between supplementary schools whose histories and cultures are mostly absent from the museum and a collection she could not alter.

Cleverly designed trails can gather disparate objects and diverse visitors. The community officer's choice of theme - Multilingual London - would bring together people from different cultures and objects from different time periods. Such themed museum trails can reorganize galleries, 'group' objects that would otherwise be thematically and spatially disconnected. Importantly, nothing changes in the actual display, but the same objects are appropriated to tell a different story, eliciting new meanings.

The trail rearranges how visitors 'discovered' a collection the audiences it attracts. Producing a new museum trail is a means of curating the interactions between visitors and displays. The term 'field-of-vision' is useful to consider here - a design concept introduced by Herbert Bayer to curate dynamic encounters between gallery visitors and displays. Bayer's experimental designs foregrounded visitors' moving fields of vision (Bouquet 2012:136), redirecting their physical journeys in galleries by playing with spatial arrangements, e.g. how display boards are tilted, how they divide the gallery, their relationship to the dynamic visitors' bodies in space.





8.2 'Diagram of Extended Vision' 1935, 8.3 'Model for an Exhibition' 1936 Herbert Bayer [44]

Bayer's 'field of vision' consider what visitors notice and what they overlook. It offers a different way to think about heritage temporalities, leaving aside questions of what objects

[44] herbert bayer: the extended field of vision. Published by Olga Shpilko on Centre for Experimental Museuology: https://redmuseum.church/en/bayer-extended-field-of-vision accessed 16th March 2022

are accessioned into a permanent collection, focusing instead on what visitors see when they arrive to a museum and how they encounter what's on display. Bayer's dynamic, spatial reading of exhibitions is a useful tool to conceptualize museum trails as interventions to consider how objects and histories come into view. Mediating between moving publics and fixed exhibits, museum trails manage people's attention and direct their gaze, taking into consideration their blind spots, i.e. how far their vantage points extends. Building on existing curation, trails become a way of changing fields of vision by providing a set of tasks, prompts and questions that change visitors' flows and paths.

Searching the collection for language diversity, I wandered through the galleries several times: alone, accompanied by museum attendants, the community officer and supplementary school practitioners, seeing the galleries through their different registers. What they noticed and what they missed was directly linked to the roles they inhabit in the museum. Using Bayer's design concept of 'extended fields of vision' as an ethnographic research tool, making the trail became means of seeing the museum from their different perspectives.

8.2 Uncertain soundscapes and sonic breaches

Language is a latent form of heritage in migration, a portable heritage that transverses borders and can easily be 'switched' on and off, put away and rematerialize as vocal expressions and museum artefacts. Making the trail about Multilingual London was a chance to look for language diversity on display but also to listen to the sounds and voices in the museum.

The raucous chatter of state school groups and echoes of clinking ceramic cups from the café are familiar sound at the Museum of London, as are French school groups visiting from across the Channel. Museums do not sound like they used to. Whereas glass-cases send out clear messages to visitors not to touch displays, there are no rules that govern what vocal expressions are permitted in the galleries. What might be considered a 'sonic breach' - a voice or language out of place in the museum?

During supplementary school weekend festivals children performed in their home languages, instantly transforming the public galleries into intimate places. Given microphones, children found their mother-tongue suddenly amplified. In these performances the volume of diverse languages is dialed up, making up for the lack of language diversity during the rest of the year.

Alongside supplementary schools, professional storytellers bring diverse voices and expressions to the museum. In one festival a Tunisian-French storyteller told Turkish tales about Nasreddine Joha in the Medieval galleries' Saxon house. Her session was attended mostly by children from an Arabic supplementary school, joined by an English family and American tourists. At the end of her session, she got up to dance and ululated loudly in a high pitch:

LLLLALLLLALLA!!!!

Her call resonated through the silent galleries, reverberating through the long empty rows of glass cases. A few of us joined in. Ululating is an example of an affective form of intangible heritage that is non-translatable, cuttings through rational discussions of identity politics into subconscious spaces of memory, encounter and recollection.

Her ululation was scheduled as part of a supplementary schools' weekend festival. She deliberately chose the Saxon House for her session, feeling that her stories make up for the lack of Middle Eastern representations in the Medieval galleries. The ululation spoke for their absent voices. Hers was a planned sonic breach, uttering a call associated with the Middle East and Africa in a reconstructed Saxon House about English heritage.



8.4 Storyteller in the 'Saxon House'

Festivals transform the museum for short durations, an example of the latency of language diversity that resurfaces through the efforts of festival organizers, freelance practitioners and supplementary schools. For instance, in *The Languages of London* weekend festival the museum promoted language diversity through numerous hands-on activities and

demonstrations: visitors made Emoji-Hama beads, tried their hands in Chinese and Hebrew Calligraphy, performed poems in Patois and made Bangladeshi street food whilst learning Bengali phrases. There was a *Little Fiesta* Spanish music workshop for under 5s, British Sign Language sessions for babies and a graffiti artist letting visitors spray-paint the word 'hello' in different languages onto cardboard. Throughout the festival storytellers and workshop facilitators repeated the message: more than 300 languages are spoken in London today!





8.5 Emoji Hama beads 8.6 Chinese calligraphy. Craft activities. Languages of London Festival. Museum of London 2019





8.7 Makaton demonstrations and 8.8 Graffiti workshops. Languages of London Festival. Museum of London 2019

Once the performances end, craft activities packed away and graffiti signs dumped in the skip, what language diversity remains on display?

The 'Multilingual London' trail was built these transient activities, but had to be based on permanent displays that supplementary schools could access at any time. Without organizing another big budget temporary event, the trail would subtly show diversity on display on a permanent basis, as a downloadable digital pack supplementary schools could access independently. For this reason, I had to research what language diversity is permanently on display, differentiating between ephemeral artworks, loan objects and temporary exhibitions and the permanent features of the museum.

The trail begins to unpack where different languages are placed in the museum and what voices have the power of oration. The museum's entrance already suggests whom the museum is speaking for, who is it addressing (Weidman 2014, Appardurai 1988:17, Rodman 2003:205).

The façade is covered with laminated 'welcome' messages in dozens of different languages. Language diversity dwindles by the time visitors reach the information desk. Here they would find museum maps printed in five languages: English, French, Italian, German and Spanish, a vast reduction from world to western European languages, despite the diversity of languages museum visitors speak. Museum maps are not printed in Mandarin, the second most spoken language in the world, nor Polish, the second most spoken language in the UK in 2011, implicitly suggesting the museum currently 'speaks' only to its Western European audiences.





8.9 Museum Façade



8.10 Museum maps. Foyer.

Presently, public policy does not promote language diversity. At the turn of the millennium minority languages were supported by the New Labour government as part of its multiculturalism strategy. A change of government in 2011 saw a wholesale retreat from multiculturalism that included the removal of many minority language services and resources from the public sphere [45]. Current State policies promote a language ideology that equates British national identity with the English language (Blackledge 2004:71). Working towards a monoglot society, such policies are intended to suppress minority languages from being

[45] see chapter 3

taught. Whereas before language diversity was considered a cultural asset, today it is framed as a public threat.

At a time when bilingualism is stigmatized in the UK, a public museum trail promoting language diversity can be seen as a 'sonic breach'. From this perspective, highlighting language diversity in the collection was a meaningful intervention, turning the museum into a place where supplementary schools can teach mother-tongue in public.

The connection between having a place and having a voice is highlighted in Rodman's research into multivocality in Vanuatu (2003). Rodman describes how people who lack political power, property and social status have to 'lower' their voice as to not draw attention to themselves. In her example it is widowed women who are careful not to 'talk' too much, keeping a low profile out of fear of eviction as they have no right to remain on their husband's land (Rodman 2003:216). In my research, it is the diverse voices of supplementary school practitioners that are insecure due to their unstable status. The majority are women from immigrant backgrounds, many of whom are single mothers. As in Rodman's study, their reduction of voice is linked to the gendered and political social status they occupy as women, immigrants and minority UK citizens, but here the 'voice' also refers to their home language: whether they are able to speak in mother-tongue in public places and how they organize their communities through their shared interest of keeping their languages alive.

These women's voices switch status as they move between institutions, mediating between supplementary schools and the museum. Within their neighbourhoods, they are highly respected for preserving the knowledge of community languages and organising supplementary schools, the immersive linguistic environments that help communities 'speak' in their own tongue. At the museum, these women's voices and home languages are no longer recognized.

8.3 Multiculturalism by any other name….

The trail was made in a 'post-multiculturalism' era, over a decade after it ceased to be endorsed by the State. Yet multiculturalism informs the museum's engagement work with diverse cultural minorities and is the rationale behind the supplementary school programme.

Multiculturalism was briefly and intensely introduced as public policy by the New Labour government in 1997. By the mid-2000, multiculturalism was already removed from political rhetoric (Vertovec and Wessensdorf 2010). The term 'Multiculturalism' was phased out and replaced with the phrase 'promoting diversity' (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010:18). For instance, in 2005 the Home Office published: 'Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society', instructing:

"We also expect museums, galleries and community cultural programs to play an increased role in promoting an understanding of, and celebrating, the diverse elements of our local and national identity…"[46]

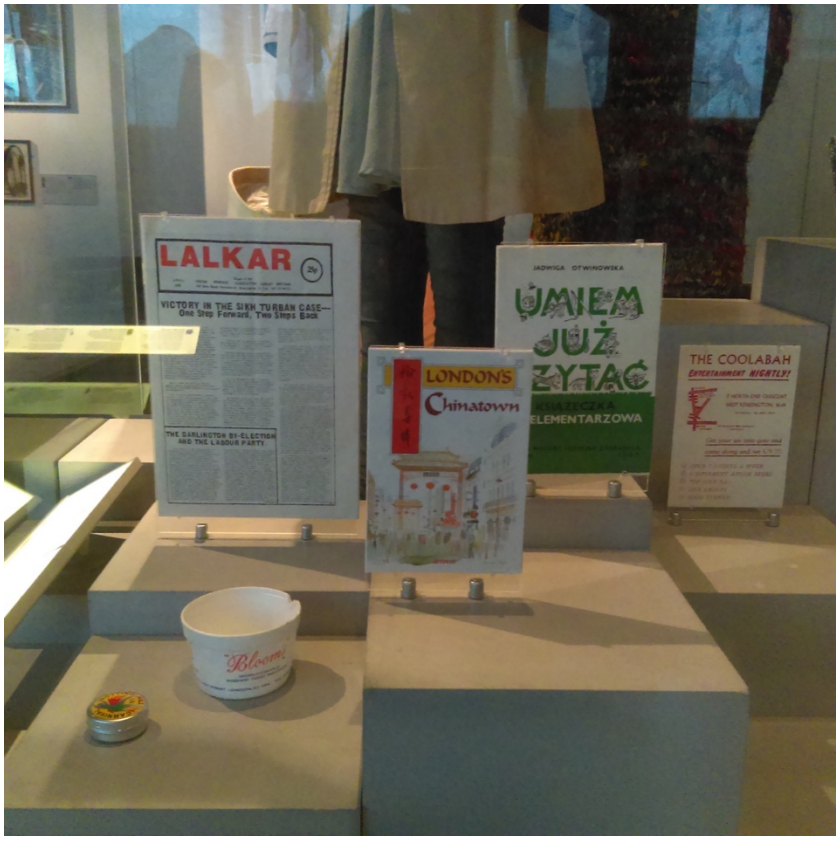
This expectation to promote and celebrate diversity persists in the museum, which finds itself at odds with the present government's nationalistic agenda, a decade after multiculturalism has been written off as State policy and publicly declared a failed project [47]. From an institutional perspective, the trail works around public policy, allowing the museum's own latent heritage of multiculturalism to resurface.

At the end of the 'World Galleries' is a display case called 'Multicultural Londoners'. In it are artefacts, clothes, food packaging and printed material that preserves remnants of 'turn-of-the-millennium' multiculturalism: a 'Blooms' soup, a tobacco tin purchased from Notting Hill Carnival, a guidebook about Chinatown, a newssheet published by the Indian Workers Association of Great Britain with the heading: 'Victory in the Sikh Turban Case', a Polish textbook, a pair of Turkish boots and two dresses from a project called 'What Muslims Wear'.

Multiculturalism has become part of the museum's latent heritage, displayed but not mentioned. It was introduced as a museum strategy in the mid-1990s (Ross 2016:215), and is still 'preserved' in its programme, but the term is no longer used. The trail encounters the museum's own latent heritage of multiculturalism, an institutional policy that is still practiced but cannot be named.

[46] 'Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society' (Home Office 2005:12 cited Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010:21)

[47] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994 accessed 14th March 2022



8.11 ‘Multicultural Londoners’ display case. Museum of London 2021

Two objects in the display speak to this thesis’ topic of how heritage in diaspora can easily become disposable or transient. The first is the polystyrene soup tub from *Blooms*, a famous Jewish restaurant opened in Brick Lane by Morris Bloom, a Lithuanian Jewish immigrant. It is striking that an object ready for the rubbish bin has instead made its way to the display case. The disposable food packaging with its distinct *Blooms* logo represents the Jewish East End community, but inadvertently also describes how easily heritage in diaspora can disappear: the Jewish population in Brick Lane has significantly dwindled, most of their synagogues closed, and the restaurant long since shut down.



8.12 Food Packaging. 1994

The second object, a dress collected through the 'What Muslims Wear' project (2014) - presents a different problem of temporality. The previous garment in the 'Multicultural Londoners' case received criticism for displaying outmoded representations of Islamic fashion. Donated to the museum in 2000 by the Asian Women's Advisory Service, it was seen as a group's self-representation at the time. It is described as:

'A black, synthetic, fabric face-covering, with Velcro fastening at centre back. Part of the traditional religious dress hijaab worn by Arabic Muslim women.'

The garment quickly became non-representational of diverse contemporary Islamic fashion. 'What Muslims Wear' was a collaborative collecting project set up to rectify this. Two dresses now replace the 2000 outfit, which is now kept in store.



8.13 Hijaab face mask and headscarf 2000.



8.14 ‘Multicultural Londoners’ display-case 2000.



8.15 ‘What Muslims Wear’. 2014

The Islamic dresses and Blooms packaging are examples of how display cases struggle to keep up with dynamic social processes and changing cultural symbols outside museums. Permanent displays quickly fall out of step with the cultural minorities they represent, lagging behind or else presenting a community that barely exists.

Very close to the ‘Multicultural Londoners’ display is a memorial dedicated to the 52 UK residents of 18 different nationalities that were killed in 2005 in the 7/7 bombings, the UK’s

first Islamic suicide attack on London commuters. The proximity of the 'Multicultural Londoners' case to the memorial creates tension. Read together these two displays simultaneously warn and celebrated diversity in Britain: the first advocates multiculturalism, the second can be read as an inversed display, a warning about homegrown terrorism, and to multiculturalism's critics, a proof of its failure.



8.16 'London Remembers' – 7/7 memorial. Museum of London.

The ambiguous message about diversity and migration in the World Galleries' displays is repeated across the museum. At the entrance to the Roman Galleries a faux red graffiti on the wall reads: '*Romans Go Home*!' - a joke taken from Monty Python's 'Life of Brian' that would confuse those unfamiliar with the film. The interpretation board in the Medieval Galleries' '*Language, Ethnicity and Migration'* cabinet begins: "*Incomers. Every race of mankind comes to that city; every race brings its own vices*".

The trail was part of a larger task – to make London's diverse minorities feel at home in the museum. How were we meant to welcome children from migrant backgrounds and ethnic minorities into the museum, and make them feel safe and welcome here?



8.17 Entrance of the Roman Galleries

8.4 Blind spots and Extended Fields of Vision

The first object I hoped to include in the trail is a signpost by the museum entrance. I noticed it when I first came to the museum. It is a metal pole with different streets signs including a neon sign in Chinese.

I tried to identify the street sign but it lacked a label. Disappointingly, it was not a 'proper' museum object but the equivalent of a stage-prop. This means it is not accessioned, the museum can dispose of it as it would any other decoration. I approached a couple of museum attendants stationed near the entrance in search of more information. Attendants have specialized knowledge of the collection, occasionally acting as museum guides.

The attendants were confused by my question about the Chinese sign. They have never seen it. It became apparent that they cannot see it from where they are positioned. This was the first ‘blind spot’ encounter during the trail. The more experienced attendant who had worked at the museum for three years was curious. He left his post and walked a few steps closer to the entrance, inspecting the sign from the visitor’s perspective for the first time. “I’ve never been to this side of it” he said, astonished, adding after a few seconds of close inspection: “It would be clearer if it was lit”.

Museum attendants use a separate staff entrance discretely situated on the other side of the hall. They arrive at the museum before it opens to the public, and therefore tend not to see the museum façade. This example shows how people’s roles in the museum bare a direct relation to their fields of vision.



8.18 Signpost. Attendants’ field of vision. Museum of London entrance, 2020



8.19 Signpost. Visitors' field of vision. Museum of London entrance, 2020.

Pointing the Chinese neon sign to the community officer, I mentioned it was a shame we cannot include it in our trail because it is not a 'proper' object. She enlightened me: we can include props, even the welcome signs on the façade. That's what's different about a museum trail, it's all about what's here when you visit!

In this manner museum trails work beyond collections, they can blend in museum objects with any 'props' and features of the building, blurring the line between what is officially 'collected' and what is not. Our task seemed somewhat simpler now: all the languages on the museum façade would be part of the trail.

The community officer had envisioned the trail running through the entire museum. In practice this was impossible, there were no objects about language diversity in the Prehistoric Galleries, and the War, Plague and Fire Galleries had a single artefact in French: 'Pomme d'ambre' .

Consequently, the trail 'reordered' galleries according to their relevance to the Multilingual London theme: we 'dropped' the prehistoric galleries and the Great Fire of London rooms, two of the biggest attractions, whilst the less-visited Medieval galleries became central, since they contained several language artefacts that emphasize London's multilingual history.

I had previously passed swiftly through the Medieval galleries as they are a little stuffy and did not grab my attention. Searching for content for the trail, the galleries suddenly appeared filled with treasure: a beautiful collection of pilgrim badges with Latin texts, fragments of gilded Arabic lettering on broken glass, a large tombstone with runic inscriptions carved onto one edge.





8.20 Tombstone with Runic inscription.8.21 Pilgrim badge with Latin inscription. 14th Century.



8.22 ‘Wonders of the East’. Fragments of glass with gilded Arabic lettering.

I turned to an attendant nearby, asking whether there are more examples of language diversity besides the objects with Latin, Runic and Arabic inscriptions. She was delighted and became very animated, admitting she loves being asked questions like that. She had worked in these galleries for six years, this is her passion. She had two additional objects in mind. Enthusiastically she pointed me towards the Listening Post, a two-seater bench with an interactive sound display. This object is likely the largest blind spot for visitors. I had failed to notice it on numerous occasions, mistaking it for the museum’s sound system, assuming it is use for broadcast announcements from the front desk.



8.23 The Listening Post



8.24 Close-up. The Listening Post.

The ‘Listening Post’ has a row of seven large buttons, visible only from one side, each plays a voice-recording of a language spoken in Medieval London: Old English, Old Norse, Middle English, Hebrew, Medieval German, Anglo-Norman and Latin. She leafed through a box with laminated printouts of the transcriptions, sighing in relief: “They are all here, they sometimes go missing”.

She went in search of the other artefact and left me to try out the buttons. There was something bizarre about this nondescript object that stores these rare dormant recordings of human voices, waiting to be activated.

I was almost alone in the galleries. A tired-looking teenager mistook the Listening Post for an ordinary bench. She sat down to rest whilst her mum wandered around the room. I pressed the Hebrew button. The voice recording of a cantor came on quite loud, cutting through the silent room. Instinctively I searched for a dial to lower the volume but it was set at this volume. I had to remind myself it was not my voice speaking. The prayer was unfamiliar to me but I could understand the words. The man’s voice sounded delicate. I was deeply touched to hear Hebrew. It felt strange to have my language as an exhibit. The teenager’s reaction was remarkably different; as soon as the prayer came on she immediately got up and walked away looking annoyed, as if her peace was disturbed.

At the base of the Listening Post are seven very small caricatures, each representing one of the seven languages speakers. Presumably the Jew is the figure holding an open book symbolising the Old Testament[48].

[48] The open book was a badge Jews were forced to wear in Medieval England to publicly identify themselves, a precursor to the yellow star.



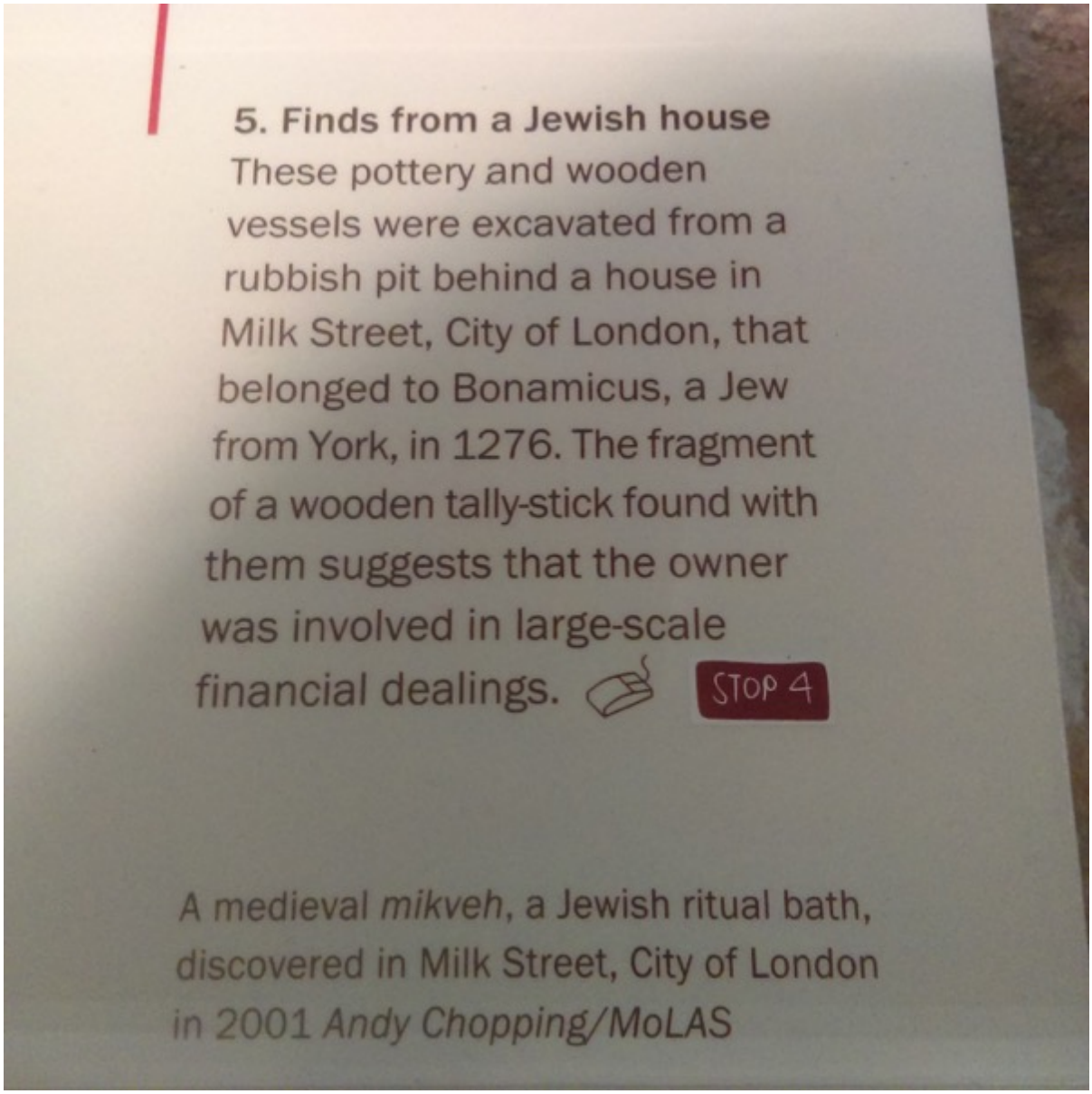
8.25 Detail. The Listening Post.

A cabinet entitled *Language, Ethnicity and Migration* has an array of objects excavated from a rubbish pit under the caption 'Finds from a Jewish House'- pottery and wooden vessels that belonged to Bonamicus, a Jew from York in 1276. The date and place are meaningful for those familiar with Medieval English history: 1290 AD marks the expulsion of Jews from England, and York was the site of one of the worst anti-Semitic massacres of the Middle Ages in 1190, in which the city's entire Jewish community was trapped by an angry mob inside the tower of York castle, with many members choosing the commit suicide rather than be murdered or forcibly baptised by the attackers. [49]



8.26 'Finds from a Jewish House'. Medieval Galleries.

[49] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/cliffords-tower-york/history-and-stories/massacre-of-the-jews/ accessed 27th January 2022



8.27 Blurb with traces of a previous museum trail, not in current use.

I spotted tiny symbols of a computer mouse and ‘stop’ signs in the caption. The cabinet was once part of an interactive trail. I was encountering my own Jewish heritage whilst discovering a discontinued trail. The loss of Jewish artefacts reclaimed from a rubbish pit was repeated in the removed museum trail that once brought these objects to public attention, the objects repeatedly forgotten. Like the *Blooms* polystyrene soup container in the ‘Multicultural Londoners’ case, these salvaged objects describe the ephemerality of heritage in diaspora at the periphery of public memory, on the verge of being skipped.

The cabinet includes a small photo of a medieval *mikveh*[50] discovered in the same street in 2001: a few broken stone steps and an archaeologist in high Viz scraping its surface. The hollow shape was enough to set my imagination to reconstruct a scene: the company of silent women moving slowly through opaque water, tiny fragments of lights dancing on the surface. Another object entitled 'Sabbath Lamp' conjured in my mind a warm picture of a family gathered round a table, unaware their life in this city was to end abruptly. The objects were presented like disjointed pieces of a puzzle, the caption 'Sabbath Lamp' ended with a question-mark, as if to convey the uncertain presence of Jews in England, and their abandoned, buried belongings.

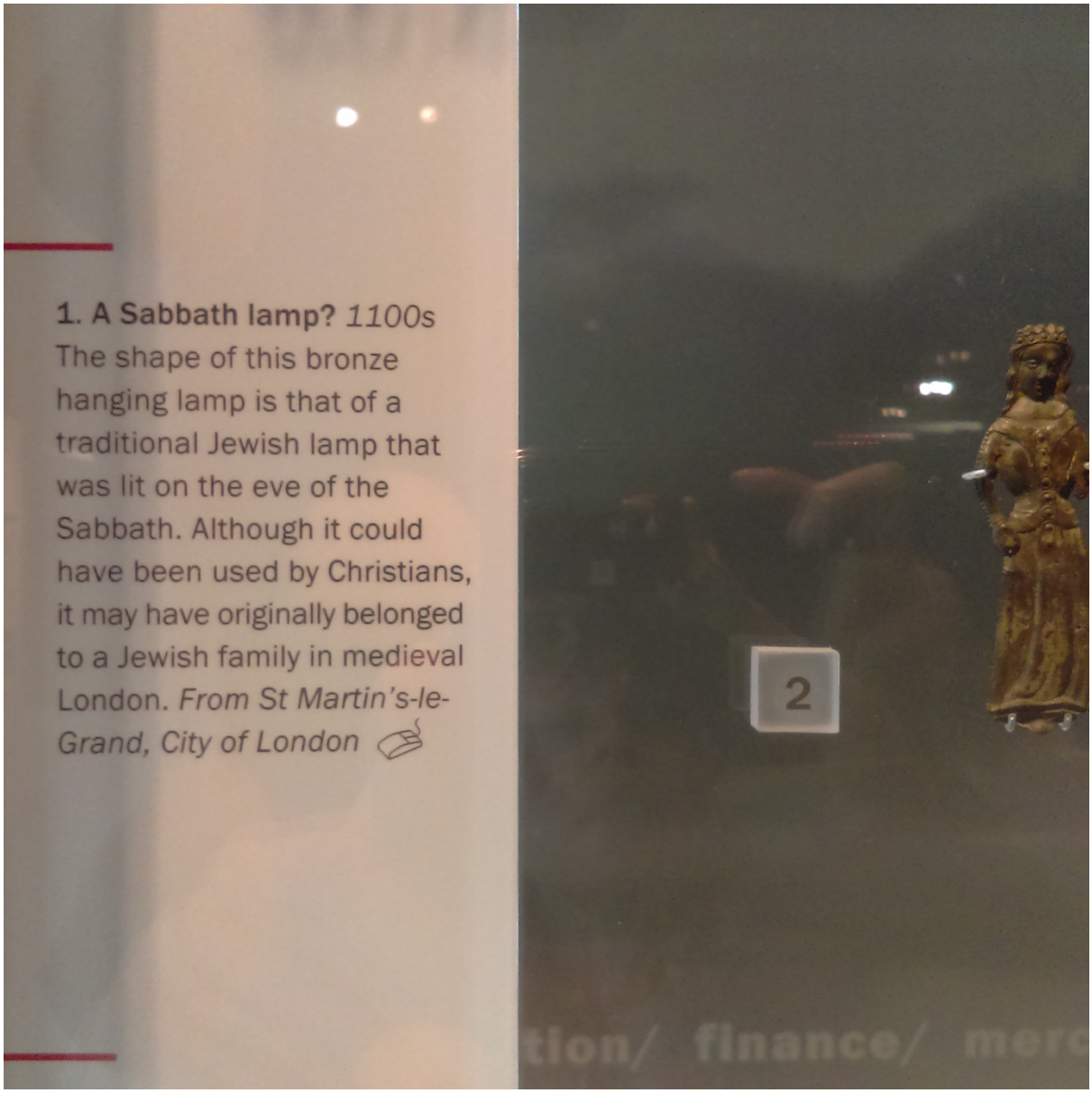


8.28 Medieval *mikveh* discovered in Milk Street. MoL photograph.

[50] a Jewish ritual bath

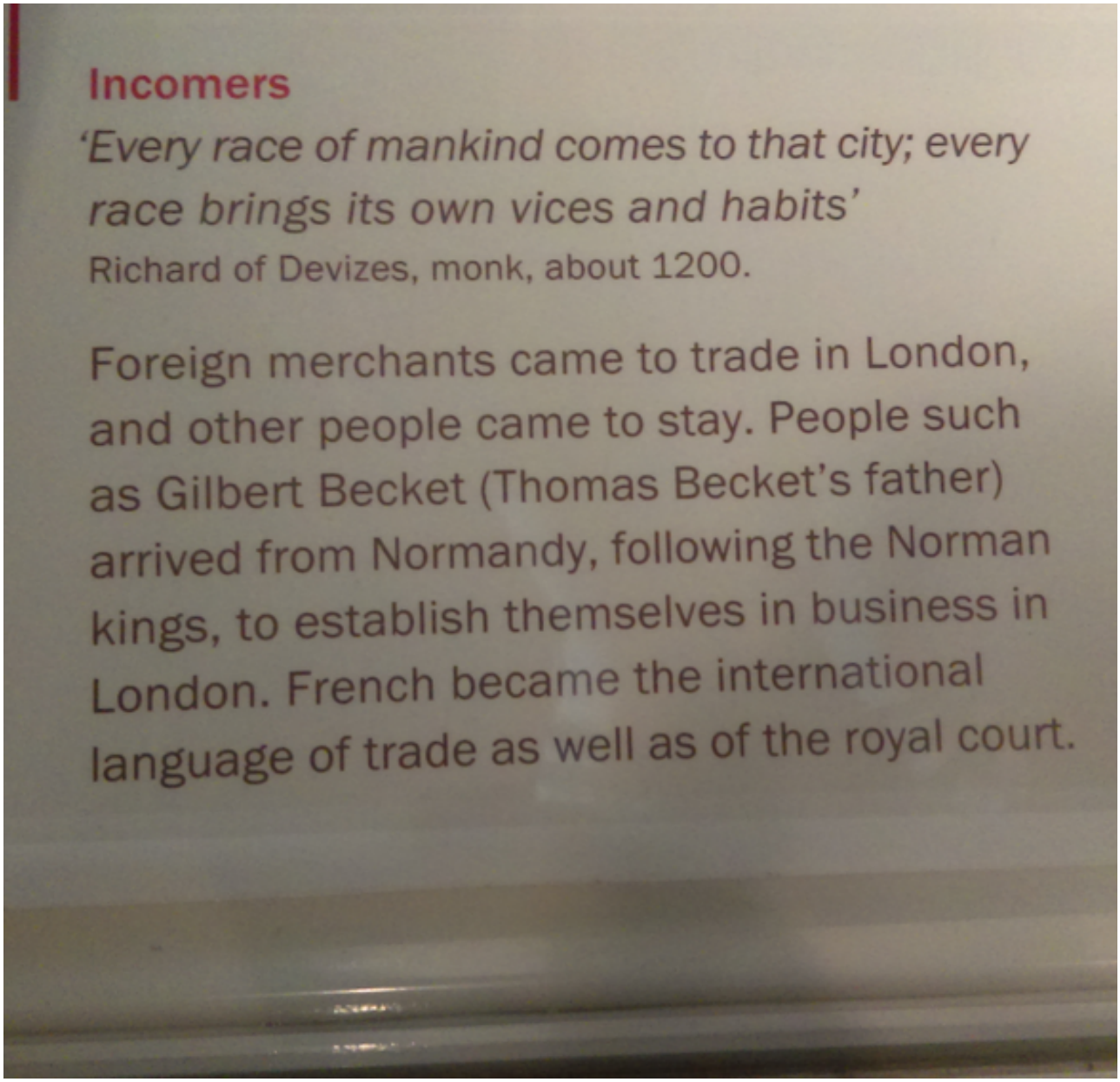


8.29 ‘A Sabbath lamp?’



8.30 'A Sabbath lamp?' blurb.

This history still felt suppressed, as if the objects were not able to fully articulate something important they were trying to signal. I was delighted by the caption that describes how French became the language of trade and the Royal Court in England, a useful fact to incorporate into the trail, dispelling the myth that English was always the dominant language in these lands. Yet I was struck by the strange curatorial choice to use a xenophobic quote by Richard of Devizes in the opening caption: *Incomers 'Every race of mankind comes to that city; every race brings its own vices…*



8.31 Interpretation board with quote by the chronicler Richard of Devizes.

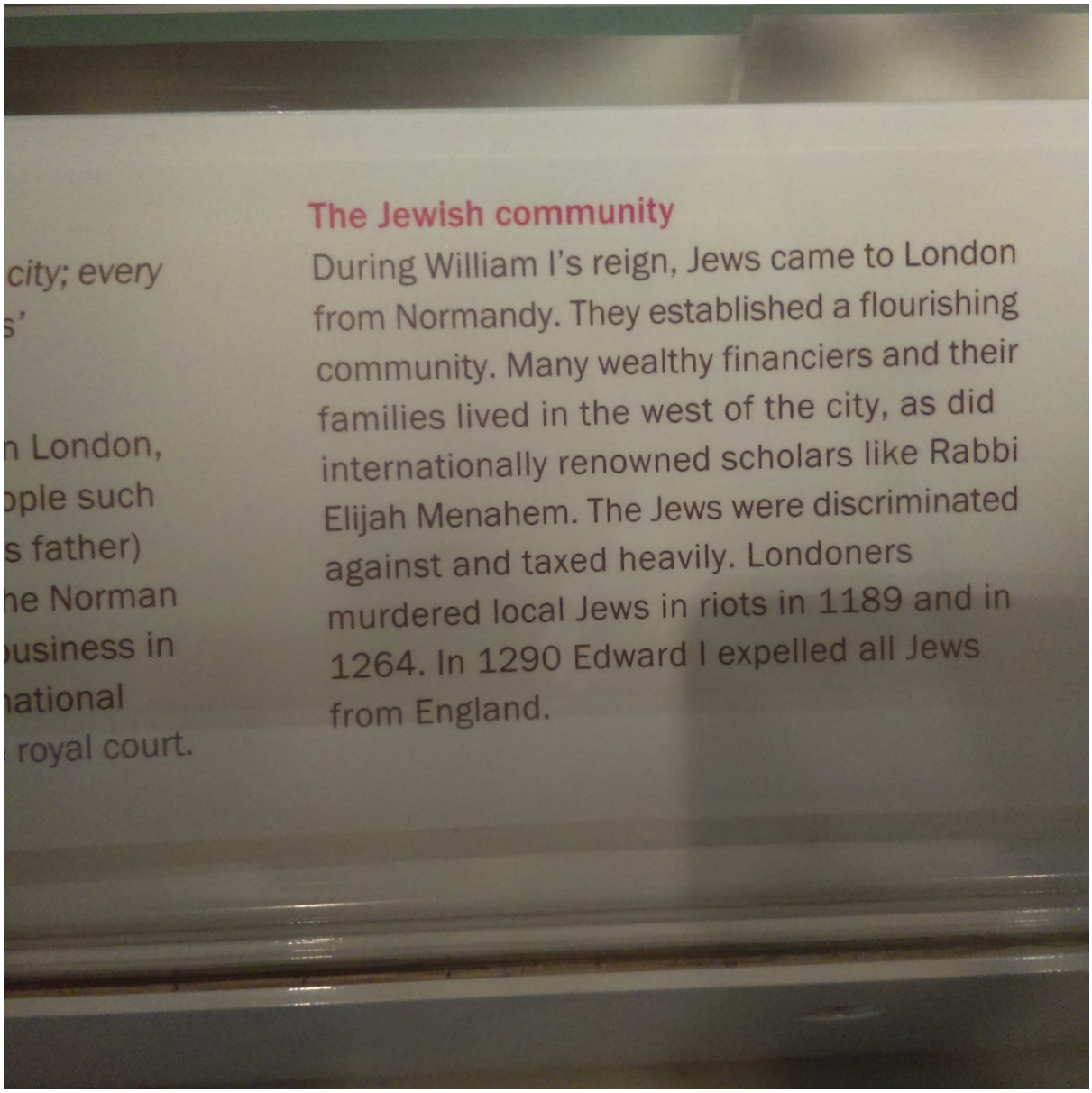
Unfamiliar with Richard of Devizes, a quick on-line search revealed that he was the first person to coin the word 'holocaust' to describe the mass murder of the Jews of London:

"Now in the year of our Lord's incarnation 1189, Richard…. was consecrated king of the English ….On the very day of the coronation, about that solemn hour in which the Son was immolated to the Father, a sacrifice of the Jews to their father, the Devil, was commenced in the city of London, and so long was the duration of this famous mystery that the holocaust could scarcely be accomplished the ensuing day. The other cities and towns

of the kingdom emulated the faith of the Londoners, and with a like devotion dispatched their bloodsuckers with blood to hell."

Richard of Devizes used the word 'Holocaust' to refer to the 'whole' (*holos*) 'burnt' (*kaustos*)" sacrificial offering to a god. This information is not included in the blurb. There is something chilling that a monk who saw Jews as bloodsuckers and described their massacre with such glee was chosen to narrate the recovered Jewish artefacts. It is deeply unsettling to have your history narrated by those who wish your people dead. Why was his voice selected to speak for these absent Jews?

Jewish history has a strong albeit ghostly presence in the Medieval galleries. Against a wall are silent objects, discarded and recovered, at the centre is a Jewish prayer waiting to be heard. More than the displays, it was the omissions and blank spaces around the artefacts that rekindled my interest in Jewish heritage, what was half-buried and half-said. I had not come to the museum in search of my own identity, yet unwittingly found myself on my own parallel journey of a Jewish heritage trail.



8.32 Interpretation board: 'The Jewish Community'.

The attendant returned, pleased she had found what she was after. She led me to a display case with books. "Most of it is in Latin and Middle English, but this one is Greek. Unfortunately it's closed," she pointed to a book in the corner whose heavily stained cover curved inwards. The pages were solidly stacked like a brick. We took turns to bend down by the side of the case to peak into it.



8.33 'Greek grammar 1598'



8.34 'Greek grammar 1598' side shot.

She explained this part of the gallery used to be more interactive, with computers that have since been removed. Hence the mouse signs of the obsolete trail.

The next gallery '*Expanding City 1670-1850'* begins to describe the world beyond England but almost entirely from a colonial perspective. In a large cabinet entitled EMPIRE is an 1830s 'Chop book' used by English dockers to identify stamps on tea chests and an East India Company chest with scrolled up documents in Farsi and Urdu.



8.35 Chop book





8.36 and 8.37 Trunk with handwritten documents in Farsi and Urdu. Source: Museum of London website.

On the nearby wall is *'EnTWINed'* (2009) - a painting the museum commissioned after it purchased two 19th Century paintings by Henry Nelson O'Neil's: 'Eastward Ho!' (1857) and 'Home Again' (1858). O'Neil's paintings depict British soldiers parting from their families as they embark on a boat to fight in the First Indian War of Independence, and their return from battle, wounded, struggling to step off the boat. At the time the paintings were controversial for showing the negative local impact of war. Today the paintings are controversial for portraying India's first War of Independence from a colonial viewpoint. For this reason, the museum

commissioned two London-born Sikh artists known as the Singh Twins to respond to these paintings from an Indian Perspective.

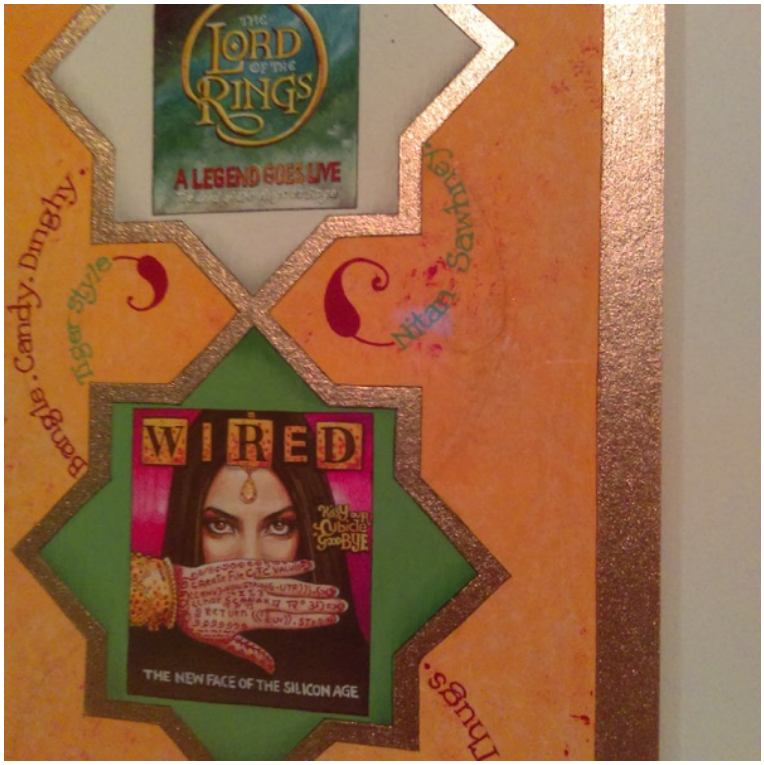


8.38 ‘Eastward Ho!’ 1857, and 8.39 ‘Home again’ 1858. By Henry Nelson O’Neil.



8.40 EnTWINed by the Singh Twins. Museum of London 2009

The Singh Twins replaced British Soldiers with famous figures from India and the Asian diaspora. The densely packed pantheon of historical characters and celebrities re-peoples British history with Indian heroes. Words with Indian roots incorporated in the English language spiral in the margins: ‘Juggernaut’, ‘Shampoo’, ‘Pajamas’ ‘candy’, ‘dinghy’. The artwork remaps the English language, making the journey of words visible.



8.41 EnTWINed by the Singh Twins. Detail.

Texts criticising post 9/11 discourses and George W. Bush's 'War on Terrorism' have been hand-painted as captions inside the frame. The artwork openly articulates the politics that the museum cannot. The artists have knowingly incorporated the text into the painting, ensuring their self-produced captions are inseparable from the artwork. In contrast to scrolled up documents in an East India Company case where texts are kept hidden, words spill out of this painting's margins. Unlike the Arabic, Greek and Hebrews displays where words are broken, curled up in closed books, or dormant voice-recordings waiting to be activated, the painted words are openly and permanently visible.

Nearby a mother with a strong middle-class English accent instructed her daughters: "And you've got to *find* a picture called '*Home Again*', a painted picture…4 numbers….so you got the 8 and the 5, so write 1858." They were on the 'Beasts of London' trail, the museum's blockbuster exhibition they have come to see, but were searching for Henry Nelson O'Neil's painting. She was confused, she was given the trail upstairs, they told her its 'Beasts of London', but luckily she looked, and it is in fact all over the museum.

She showed me the trail. It had a colourful picture of the 'Beasts of London' and what seem to be a series of unrelated tasks. It appears that because the exhibition drew in large audiences, this museum trail was designed to keep families circulating in the galleries to

avoid a crowd forming outside. The content seemed to be selected at random, the tasks had little to do with the exhibition's subject. The girls pencilled the numbers of the painting's production date and moved on to the next room without pausing to look at the picture.

Such trails are museum tactics designed to make families move around, keep children busy and give them a sense of purpose and achievement. The mother was proud she worked out the route. This example shows visitors' willingness to be guided, the trust they put in museums to direct their gaze. In this case, the museum trail was an act of misdirection, designed to disperse visitors, misleading them away from the exhibition they have come to see.

The community officer came from her office to see what I found. She was interested in objects that cannot be translated into English. She already had two objects in mind: a Sari dress and Mah-jong game in the People's City gallery.





8.42 Mah-jong game 1930

8.43 Wedding dress of Sari fabric 1931

I slightly misunderstood the task and had searched for textual objects. I showed her the Greek grammar book and mentioned it would appeal to Greek-Cypriot schools. She emphasised that objects should be of interest to all supplementary schools. Having spent many months in supplementary school spaces, I was looking for their individual home languages. The community officer wanted to convey a meta-picture of London as a transforming space where multiple languages are spoken. She was after displays that could

elicit discussions about language diversity: “What would those objects be called in their own language? Cultural connections!” The trail had to be adaptable to different schools, objects used a basis for a discussion or activity, for teachers to “spark thought tangents” and make links between the collection to their culture.

I showed her the quote about French being the language spoken in English Medieval courts, pointing out the problematic opening quote: ‘Incomers. every race brings its own vices’. She was unperturbed, confident that she can direct their attention elsewhere: if she brings teachers here she won’t highlight it. I was surprised she was interested in the Mikveh. She explained that’s the sort of thing she was after – objects whose names cannot be translated. She really liked that there was no word for this object in English. Her reaction to the ‘Listening Post’ was one of bewilderment, she quietly exclaimed: “I never noticed this”.

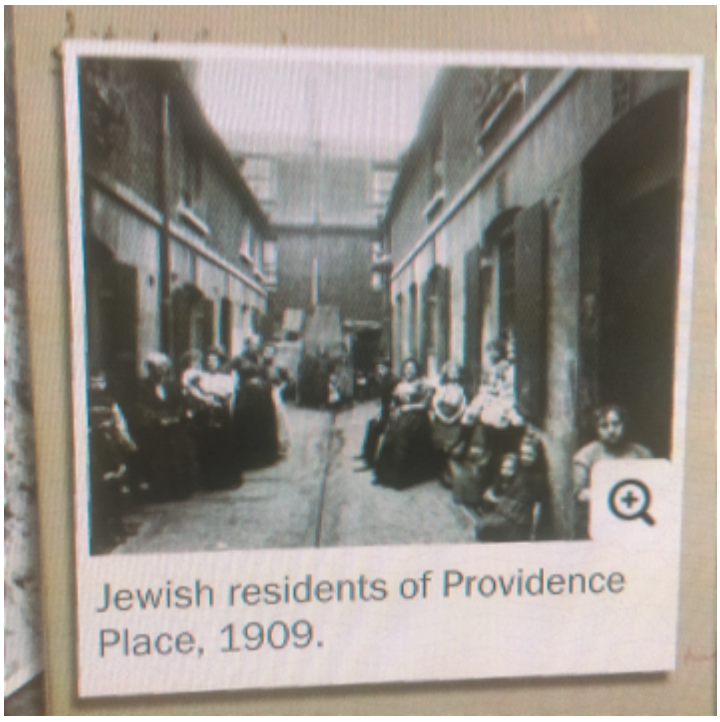
A father and daughter approached us to ask a question. I guessed they were Israeli from the dad’s accent, manner and look. I addressed him in Hebrew and he responded. I showed him the Listening Post and mentioned the Mikveh to him. He joked to me in Hebrew: “Before we got kicked out”. I laughed back. I quickly switched back to English and said ‘welcome’. Usually restrained, the community officer looked visibly annoyed. I was unsure whether she disapproved of me addressing the visitor in Hebrew because it lacked professionalism. Perhaps I had re-enacted a model of enclaved multiculturalism the museum was keen to move away from. More likely she was stressed because she was pressed for time and I was chatting leisurely with a stranger in the middle of our meeting.

In the following gallery she was quite taken with the painting EnTWINed’. This is exactly what she was after, words that refuse to be translated. The significance of this was, these words exemplified social integration without giving up one’s cultural identity. She read out some words, surprised to find they had Indian roots: “Doolally, is to go a bit crazy”.

In the next gallery I entered a small room wallpapered with Charles Booth’s 1889 poverty map of London. I browsed through the digitised archives displayed on an interactive screen.



8.44 Charles Booth's 1889 poverty map.



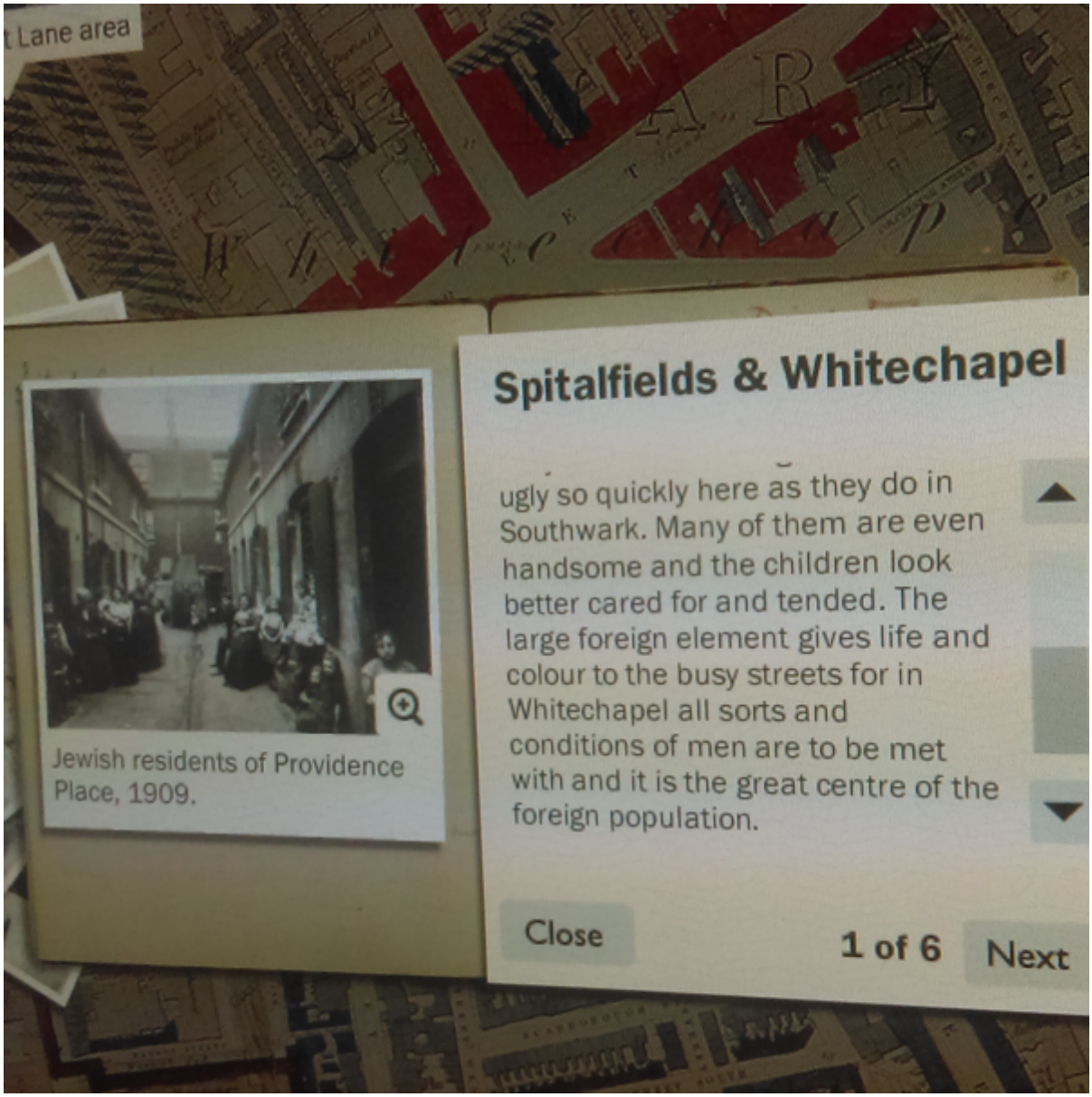
8.45 Charles Booth's 1889 poverty map. Detail of display.

Touching the screen I randomly landed in Spitalfields and Whitechapel. A photo captioned 'Jewish residents of Providence Place, 1909' popped up. I found myself back on a Jewish heritage trail. The diary describes Jews living in east London slums, commenting on their appearance: "they do not seem to grow old and ugly so quickly here as they do in Southwark. Many of them are even handsome and the children look better cared for…". For

social reformer Charles Booth, mapping poverty was a moral endeavour. These remarks show how poverty and ethnicity have historically been conflated in Britain, where multiculturalism emerged as an aesthetic as well as ethical project.



8.46 Jewish residents of Providence Place 1909. Interactive display. Museum of London.



8.47 Jewish residents of Providence Place 1909. Interactive display. Museum of London.



8.48 Jewish residents, Providence Place 1909.

This archive offers a contrary meaning to public representation before it came to be equated with power: unlike women from higher social ranks whose social lives were kept private, the photographer was able to access these women because poverty had made their lives public. The picture is beautiful but haunting. Smiling or staring directly into the camera, these women have little control over their appearance. They try to stand with straight posture but are pregnant or carrying children. The men are mostly missing, likely at work, leaving the women and children to be captured by the intruding surveyor like a defenseless village.

Wandering further, I bent down to look into a low glass case in the narrow space by the Fire Exit. Some Hebrew letters caught my attention in a greeting card. I was familiar with the phrase, meaning: 'May you (plural) be written for a Good Year'[51] - the words Jewish people greet each other in the auspicious days before Yom Kippur [52]. The card was made by the Fisher Family (1919-1926). Underneath the text is their photograph, a couple holding hands

[51] *Leshana Tova Tikatevu VeTechatemu*
[52] Day of Atonement

framed by the message ‘happy new year’ in Yiddish/Hebrew, Russian and English. The image was taken as a studio photograph, the texts surrounding the couple were changeable studio props. The couple, Juda and Malka Fisher, were Jewish emigres from Poland. In the museum cabinet they are surrounded by wine bottles from their Kosher distillery, peeling labels with Hebrew text that give a sense of homely, humble celebration. Nearby is a Polish passport (Paszport) issued to Malka Fisher in 1926 in London, who was called Fiszer at the time before anglicising her name.

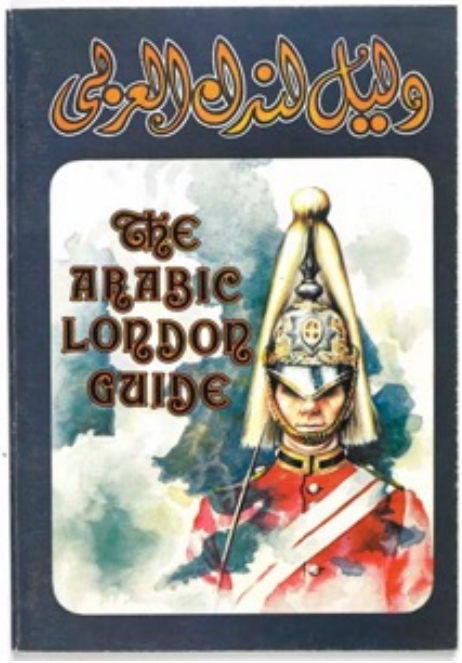


8.49 Jewish New Year’s Card. 1891-1910

Up to this point fragments of Jewish history paint a very depressing picture, following their expulsion and their unwelcomed return. In contrast to the unflattering group portrait of Jewish families living in abject poverty in East London’s slums, the image of the Fisher Family is the first self-constructed representation in the museum’s Jewish trail. The couple dressed up for the studio photograph, able to negotiate how they are seen and the message they wish to circulate about themselves. The New Year’s greeting card sends an optimistic message of hope.

This image is a fragile history of survival and success, a sign of some stability of their lifestyle, the couple running their family-owned business, financially stable. For me, this is the point in the museum where the Jewish community regain its dignity, demonstrated by their ability to produce their own representations. There is no explanation in the trail about why the greeting card includes Russian text rather than Polish, what brought the couple here or how far these greeting cards were circulated to reach their families outside the UK.

Showing the card to the Community Officer, she was impressed I had managed to spot something so tucked away. Awkwardly placed on a very low shelf in a far corner, it requires visitors to bend down. Another 'out-of-the-way' object I found was a 1976 copy of 'The Arabic Guide to London', tacked behind a suitcase and film called 'immigration' in a display-case called 'Swinging Londoners: 1950s-1970s':



8.50 The Arabic London Guide 1976

The community officer was very happy with the guidebook. She spotted another guidebook in German I had missed. This time my own 'blindspot' was due to my shorter stature, I had to stand very near the glass and tilt my head. Would the teachers find these objects? The community officer reassured me it would not be a problem, the trail would guide them, they would know what to look for.

We reached the final display case: 'Multicultural Londoners'. I had selected a 1967 Polish textbook with bold graphics 'Umiem Juz Zytac' [53]. This is the closest thing to a supplementary school artefact on display: "for the children of Polish migrants who were learning their parents' native language". Although there is no mention of Polish supplementary schools, some of the longest running in the UK, the book is a testament of their existence.

The community officer had hoped to include the Islamic dress, thinking it be would have a specific word that resists translation, like the Sari. She was doubly disappointed to find the dress had no specific name, and that its designer, a student, was only credited by her first name, rendering her anonymous.

8.5 Multiculturalism on the Mezzanine Floor

Meeting with supplementary school organizers were always held on the Mezzanine Floor, halfway up between the ground floor galleries and first floor offices. Reminiscent of Floor 7 ½ in the film 'Being John Malkovich', visitors who stray into this floor feel ill-at-ease, unsure whether they are still in the museum. It has no objects on display but floor graphics resembling an underground map that eventually lead you to four learning rooms at the end of a long, angulated corridor.



8.51 Corridor. Mezzanine floor.



8.52 Learning Room. Mezzanine floor.

[53] 'I can read now'

Equipped with modular furniture and partition doors, the rooms are multifunctional and therefore kept bare. It is here that the supplementary school advisory group meetings have been held since the partnership programme began.

Regular members of the advisory board are at home on this floor. Meetings are held in the late afternoon when the museum is about to close, to accommodate those who work full time elsewhere, juggling supplementary school teaching outside their working week. They head straight to the Learning Rooms, helping themselves to tea and biscuits. The community officer waits by the main entrance to welcome any new advisory group members, who would otherwise get lost were they to make their own way.

Between two Learning Rooms is a large glass cabinet displaying a collaborative artwork entitled ‘Sharing Cultures’ (2016), produced by a previous community officer when the Supplementary Schools programme was first launched at the Museum of London. Through an open call, three artists were commissioned to work with three supplementary schools to explore themes of identity and make links between the museum collection and their own heritage, resulting in a tryptic. The left section is a collage made by a Greek-Cypriot school inspired by the Roman Tiles in the collection. Symbols children designed reference Cyprus and the UK: Spurs football team, a London bus, a Cypriot sun. The middle section, made by an Arabic supplementary school, consists of tiles inscribed with Arabic calligraphy. Next to it is a painting made by a Hebrew supplementary school, layered with smudged monoprints, a blurry aesthetics evoking the aura of faded memories and recovered archives.



8.53 Sharing Cultures. Artwork by three supplementary schools. 2016



8.54 Sharing Cultures. Arabic calligraphy on glass. The Peace School. 2016





8.55 Tiles by Southgate Greek school. 8.56 Monoprints by Orot school. Sharing Cultures.

This tryptic is an example of the museum's heavy framing of fabricated multiculturalism from the previous decade. Placing a Hebrew next to an Arabic school paints a picture of multicultural conviviality, the heavily inked monoprints with Jewish iconography next to the lighter Arabic calligraphy. In reality the schools barely met. The director of the Arabic supplementary school had fond memories of making the artwork which she was deeply proud of. She did not remember which other schools were involved, vaguely recalling: 'a Greek school and some other school'. The close proximity of the paintings does not reflect the schools' relationships which were never formed.

The current community officer advocated for interculturalism, aware of the shortcomings of previous multicultural endeavors. Supplementary school leaders were also disappointed, as they were given the impression these artworks are now part of the museum's collection. In a recent Advisory meeting, they discovered the paintings have never been accessioned. Despite being on display since the start of the Supplementary school programme, the paintings are as ephemeral as the programme.

Discovering this for the first time during an advisory group meeting, a school director pointed out that people looking for Arabic calligraphy would not know these artworks are here. Hanging by the Learning Rooms, the artworks are neither 'public facing' nor 'back-of-house', but somewhere in between, capturing how supplementary schools have become part of the 'spirit' of the Mezzanine floor, engaged but not included.

Like the artworks hovering above the galleries and below the offices, the Learning Rooms feels like a permanently transient space. Sarah Bryne observes that this kind of 'dislocated study room model' is becoming common practice across museum engagement, noting the Pitt Rivers and Horniman as examples of how museums keep their partners in separate, neutral spaces away from their collection (2013). The community officer observed how regular supplementary school advisory members are at home here, as they make their way up to the Mezzanine Floor independently and help themselves to refreshments. She pointed this out to them in a meeting, describing how this is a tangible example of one of the program's key aims: 'developing belonging and ownership'. What does it mean to feel at home in the Mezzanine floor of a museum?

The community officer invited supplementary school teachers to test out the language diversity trail, still in draft form. The session was meant as a group consultation, but also an opportunity to train teachers to use the trail.

The session began in our usual meeting place on the Mezzanine floor. Today would be the first time our meeting extended into the galleries to look at the collection together.

The community officer showed me the tasks she had designed. The trail's tone was warm, confident and celebratory. It began by asking children to greet each other in different languages and ended with the question 'how do you celebrate new year?'. I mentioned how positive the trail is considering the difficult displays we encountered. She looked at me meaningfully and simply said: "you have no idea".

She took me by surprise calling out triumphantly 'Welcome to the museum' in Swahili to demonstrate the next task. I was startled. Her words burst loudly like a new song. Her voice was so expressive when speaking in Swahili. She would not repeat this emphatic greeting once the teachers were here, returning to a more formal manner in their presence.

Still in draft form, the trail comprised of 5 double-sided A4 pages which I was speedily stapling together as people began to arrive, heads and teachers of London's German, Cypriot-Greek, Czech, Guajarati and two different Iranian-Farsi supplementary schools and the director of a language programme from the Italian consulate.

One school director has been running supplementary schools for thirty years, teaching the Gujarati language on Sundays and Mondays. Her schools run across the country, in London, Birmingham, Leicester, Ashton, Crawly, Reading and several other locations. There are currently 23 branches. There will be 29 by the end of the year. She invited me to the Diwali festival at one of her schools by White Marble Temple in East London: 'We are expecting 12,000 people – there will a mountain of food to all the Gods'.

The librarian from the UK's oldest and biggest Farsi language school greeted me warmly. She comes to all the Advisory Group Meetings. She invited me to visit her school during Nowruz- the New Year's festival and spoke with the community officer about the possibility of organising the festival at the museum.

A young Cypriot-Greek teacher arrived. She usually has a sunny disposition. "How are the schools?" I asked her. Still smiling, she said: 'Surviving'. They have recently lost quite a few teachers who decided to leave the UK because of uncertainties surrounding Brexit. Her school has a long history in the UK and worked with the British Museum before the programme migrated here. Today its future felt very uncertain.

A director from a smaller Iranian school said she was here to get new ideas. A teacher from a German Saturday school in Greenwich spoke emotionally about how this museum was the first she visited with her daughter, then five, who could not speak English at the time. There were two teacher from a Czech Saturday School in Highbury and Islington, celebrating 10 years since its opening, which is also the length of time one had worked at the school. She apologised to the community officer that her school would not be performing their legend of 'Our famous knight and heraldic sign' here - they chose a different museum to perform in. "I abandoned you", she confessed to the community officer guiltily, explaining the challenge was in organising a day trip to this museum – there are no green spaces nearby for them to run around in break, this is a "challenging museum because of that. We want to link British culture, English culture with our language". She emphasised the Museum of London is the place to make that link, since "our kids living here, been born here".

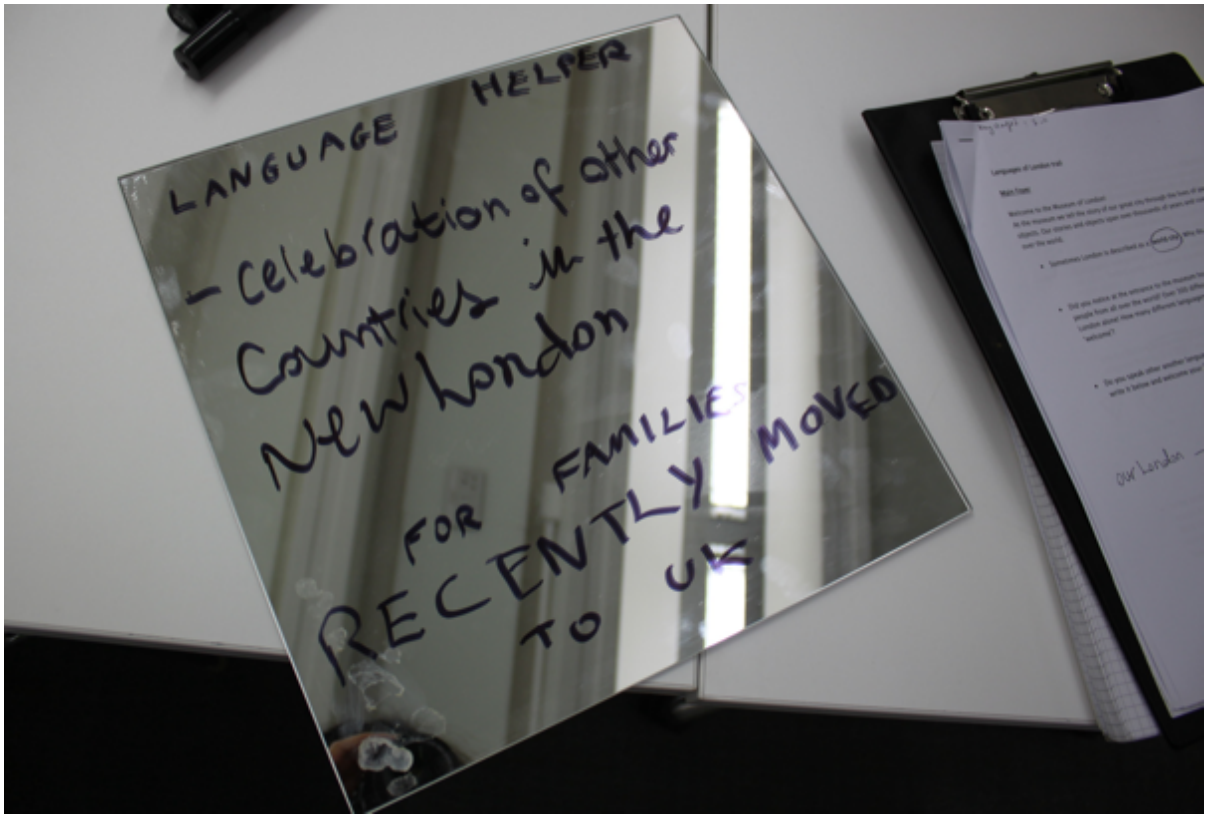
The Italian teacher had only been in the UK for two weeks, having spent three years working in Ethiopia through the Italian consulate. She was not here on behalf of a supplementary school, but as an organizer of the Italian language programme run by the Italian consulate, offering Italian lessons to mainstream schools. She was very confused about what supplementary schools are for the entire meeting. Afterwards, she asked me to explain.

The community officer introduced the trail with a strange, prophetic understatement: “I’m not always going to be there (to meet groups) so it’s a self-directed resource.”

She let me lead an icebreaker, asking teachers to imagine an event or something they would want to see in the museum. I discovered teachers were not informed about upcoming changes to the Museum of London. The community officer had to update them about the museum’s relocation, cautious not to raise their expectation about how much impact our group can have about its new design.

I handed teachers mirror tiles and permanent markers, an activity I hoped we would carry out in the galleries, but which was confined to the learning rooms due to time restrictions. We worked in pairs. I talked with a teacher from the newer Iranian school. She described how for her group language is a barrier in museum visits. Taking young children and elders to the museum, she would act as translator for both, finding it hard to take it all in and translate on the spot. She commented on how children enjoyed the interactive displays whilst older people stood around in confusion, adding: “*Museums are not part of what people do in Iran, unfortunately. Too much stuff about war… Children don’t want to go to the museum because it’s not popular in my country….”*

I wrote her words on our mirror: “*language helper for families recently moved to UK*”. She added: “*Celebration of other countries in the New London*”.



8.57 Mirror exercise

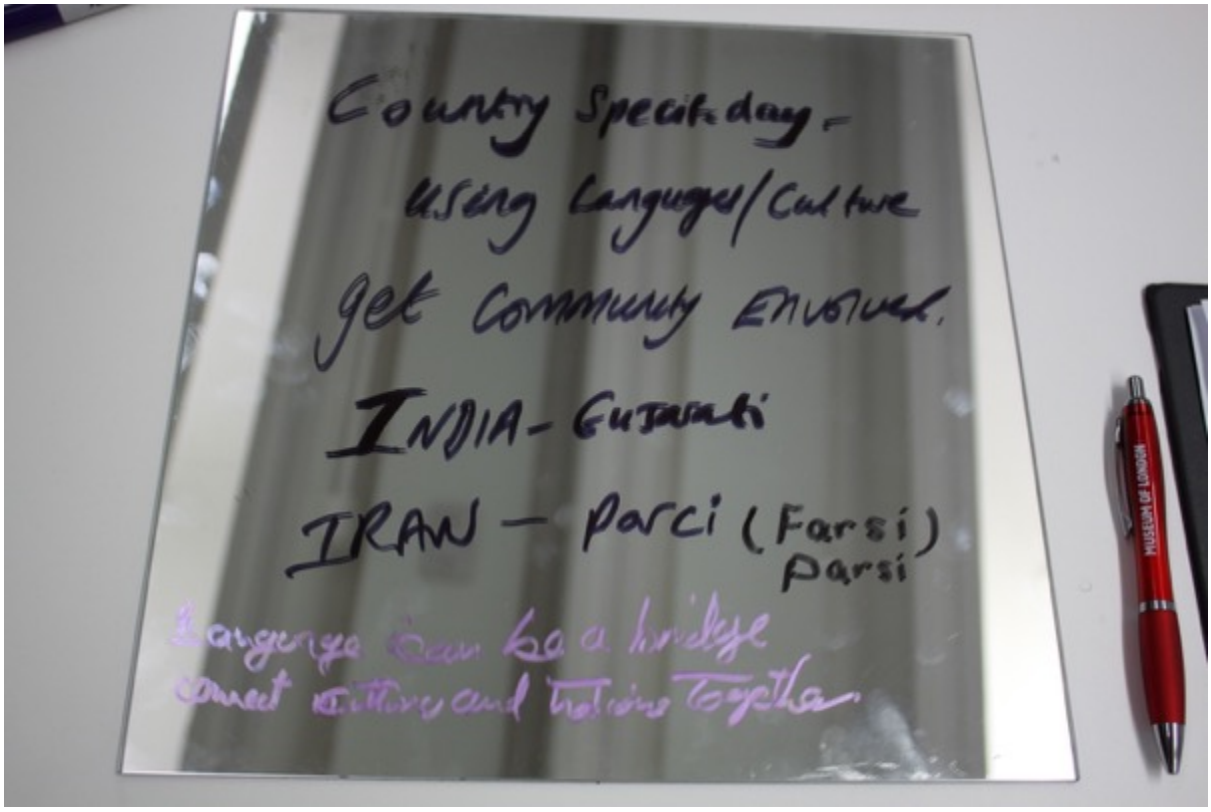
Sat across from us, the Farsi teacher from the larger school had been talking with the Guajarati teacher about the Zoroastrians who had to escape from Iran to India, and the Jász who are heavily persecuted. Today there was more discussion about domination and violence than in previous meetings. Multiculturalism was not framed as a local project, with an understanding that diversity in London is directly linked to global problems. They viewed multiculturalism from an international rather than regional perspective, with a deep appreciation of what can happen when it is not practiced.

Sharing their ideas, the Gujarati and Farsi described a *"Country specific day".* The Gujarati teacher reminded us that each country is complex: "India has 20-30 languages, 30-40 cultures just in India". The Iranian teacher suggested to celebrate countries from the same regions in one event: "Get two countries to do it, if they are nearby."

Teachers liked the idea of 'country-specific days' and tried to accommodate each other's cultures:

The Farsi teacher: "Czech Day".

Czech teacher: “It could be a Slavonic (day).”
Gujarati teacher: “We could get 3 or 4 countries, at the new place”.



8.58 Mirror exercise

8.6 Testing the Trail

We headed to the museum foyer to test out the trail. Ten women originally from Cyprus, Iran and Romania, India, Germany, Tanzania, Israel, Italy and the Czech Republic gathered in a circle. The community officer introduced the first task, signaling towards the museum facade:

Did you notice at the entrance to the museum how happy we are to welcome people from all over the world? Over 300 different languages are spoken in London alone! How many different languages can you recognize saying ‘welcome’?

“I recognize my language” the Italian teacher called out. Teachers stepped outside the museum to search the signs. The Czech teachers giggled when they found the ‘welcome’

sign in their language. I asked them what is funny, they explained it is misspelt. They translated the joke which lost its punchline in English, an apostrophe slanting in the wrong angle. They read it out to me, exaggerating the length of the vowel, giggling together.



8.59 Welcome signs on museum entrance

The next task was performative, to welcome children in other languages:

“Do you speak another language? How do you say ‘welcome’? You can write it below and welcome your friend to the Museum of London

_____”

The next stop was a large wall map of the Roman Empire:

….the Romans ruled large parts of Europe, western Asia and north Africa and called it the Roman Empire….. The names of the countries are mainly in Latin or Greek. Using your geography skills can you work out the present day names of countries below?

Germania Superior – G _ _ _ _ _ _

Lusitania - P_ _ _ _ _ _ _ and S _ _ _ N

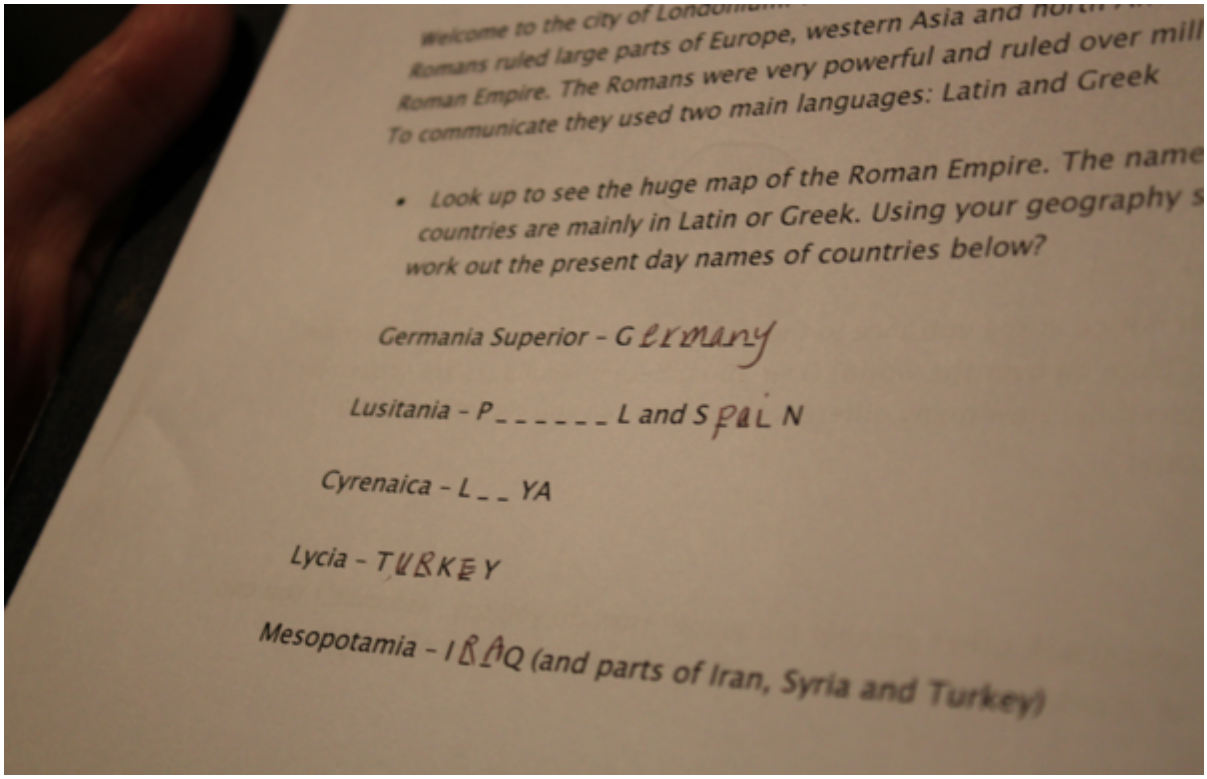
Cyrenaica - L _ _ YA

Lycia – T _ _ K _ Y

Mesopotamia - I _ _ Q (and parts of Iran, Syrian and Turkey)



8.60 Map of Roman Empire



8.61 Teacher filling in the missing words

Moving towards the quiet Medieval galleries, a teacher looked around curiously. She remarked to me in a loud whisper: “I haven’t come here, never.” I assumed she meant the Medieval galleries. She clarified: she has never been to the museum galleries, this was her first time. This was a somewhat shocking revelation. She has been regularly attending the Advisory Group meetings for some years. In all her repeat visit she had not set foot in the galleries until today. Her ‘blind spot’ stretched across the museum’s entire collection on the ground and lower ground floors, telling how supplementary school teachers’ fields-of-vision can be confined to the Mezzanine floor.

Reaching the Medieval galleries the community officer presented the Listening Post: “Through trade, lots of new languages were being spoken in London”.

As teachers inspected the Listening Post, I felt a tinge of anticipation, waiting for their reaction as if I was on display.

We stood by the Arabic lettering on glass. The Cypriot teacher suggested this could be a drawing activity, to copy the calligraphy. The Gujarati teacher suggested it could be a dot-to-dot activity.

We headed to the closed Greek book. “It’s a bit frustrating”, the community officer admitted. Here we were joined by another Italian teacher who arrived straight from the airport.

In the ‘Expanding City’ we gathered round a large interactive map of the British Empire. The community officer gave a talk: “Asia, Africa and South America…‘Age of sail and steam’… At the height of the British Empire Britain ruled approximately a third of the world.” It was clear she felt passionate about this. She admitted that she was not sure how political to be here.

She showed them the painting by the Singh Twins, explaining how it’s about connections between India and Britain. She read out the words with Indian roots:

“*Part of English today, not originally English words”.* The painting received a strong positive reaction from the group.

The Indian teacher was clearly moved but remained very composed and quietly commented “*That’s interesting*”.

The community officer said affirmingly: “*Yes, that’s fascinating*”.

The Iranian teacher considered how she might ‘ask questions to the children in *my* language.’

The community officer nodded, it is exactly what she had in mind. She read from the trail:

“ This beautiful painting contains lots of information about Indian culture and its impact on the world. Especially Britain and the English language. There are lots of words in Hindi, Urdu and Bengali that we use today in the English language. Can you find words in the painting from the following definitions?

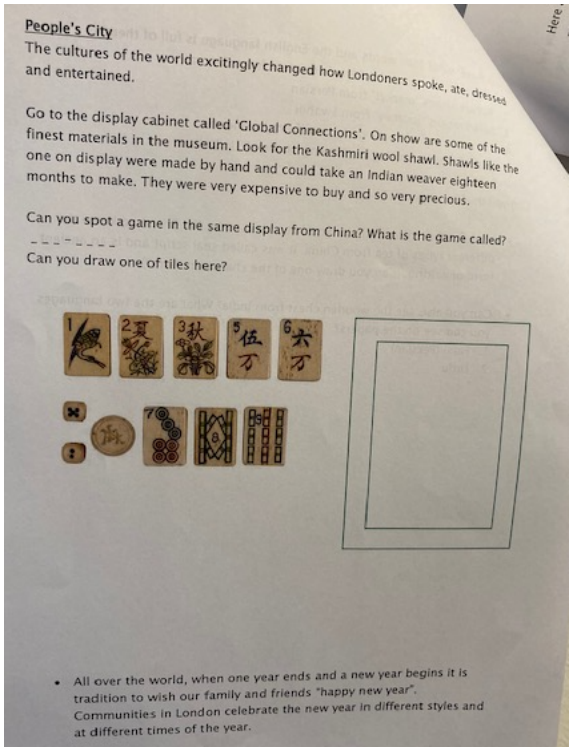
Cotton trousers that you wear to bed?
A soapy liquid you use to wash your hair?
A small boat which can be used on rivers?
A very long truck you can see on the motorway?
A house that has no upstairs or downstairs, just one level?

We call these words loan words and the English language is full of them!

Kindergarten means 'children's garden' from German
Bazaar means 'market' from Persian
Safari means 'journey' from Swahili
Karaoke means 'empty orchestra' from Japanese
Graffiti means 'writing or drawing on the wall' in Italian

Can you think of anymore?"

The Indian teacher lingered longer by the painting to take photos on her phone.


People's City

The cultures of the world excitingly changed how Londoners spoke, ate, dressed and entertained.

Go to the display cabinet called 'Global Connections'. On show are some of the finest materials in the museum. Look for the Kashmiri wool shawl. Shawls like the one on display were made by hand and could take an Indian weaver eighteen months to make. They were very expensive to buy and so very precious.

Can you spot a game in the same display from China? What is the game called?

Can you draw one of tiles here?

- All over the world, when one year ends and a new year begins it is tradition to wish our family and friends "happy new year". Communities in London celebrate the new year in different styles and at different times of the year.

8.62 Language diversity trail

We moved to the Mah-jong game in the next gallery. The community officer gave an example of what the teachers could ask children: "*Are there games within your culture that are important*?"

Teachers responded enthusiastically: games are *international*! Cricket, dominos.

The community officer: *collective*.

The next item on the trail was the Jewish greeting card. As we got closer, the community officer looked uneasy and suggested we can skip it, telling the teachers almost apologetically: “I should say, not everything has to be included, what you want to focus on.”

I felt a tinge of pain. Aware of sensitivities around exclusions, I knew some minorities would feel uncomfortable or threatened by the Hebrew/Yiddish text. By including one group, others would feel excluded. No longer behind glass or pictured as a painting, multiculturalism was much harder to perform in practice. We were skirting the boundaries of multiculturalism, and it became clear the museum could not welcome everyone at once.

Sensing she was about to skip over the display in the corner and move the group on, I was overcome by an urge to speak up. I said something to the group about how the card is interesting because it shows three languages. The group went over to have a look. I felt like I had managed to salvage the card and all it holds from being discarded. I was suddenly involved in preserving the Jewish heritage that I had put off for my entire research, participating in the small repeated acts of its deletion and recovery.

The trail here reads:

“ *Communities in London celebrate the new year in different styles and at different times of the year. Here an Anglo-Jewish couple are wishing family and friends a happy new year in Russian, Yiddish and English*.

Chinese, Korean, Japanese and other East Asian communities celebrate the new year according to the cycle of the moon. Nowruz which is the Persian New Year is celebrated by peoples from Iran, Afghanistan and Albania”.

How do you celebrate the new year? Can you say “Happy New Year” in another language?”

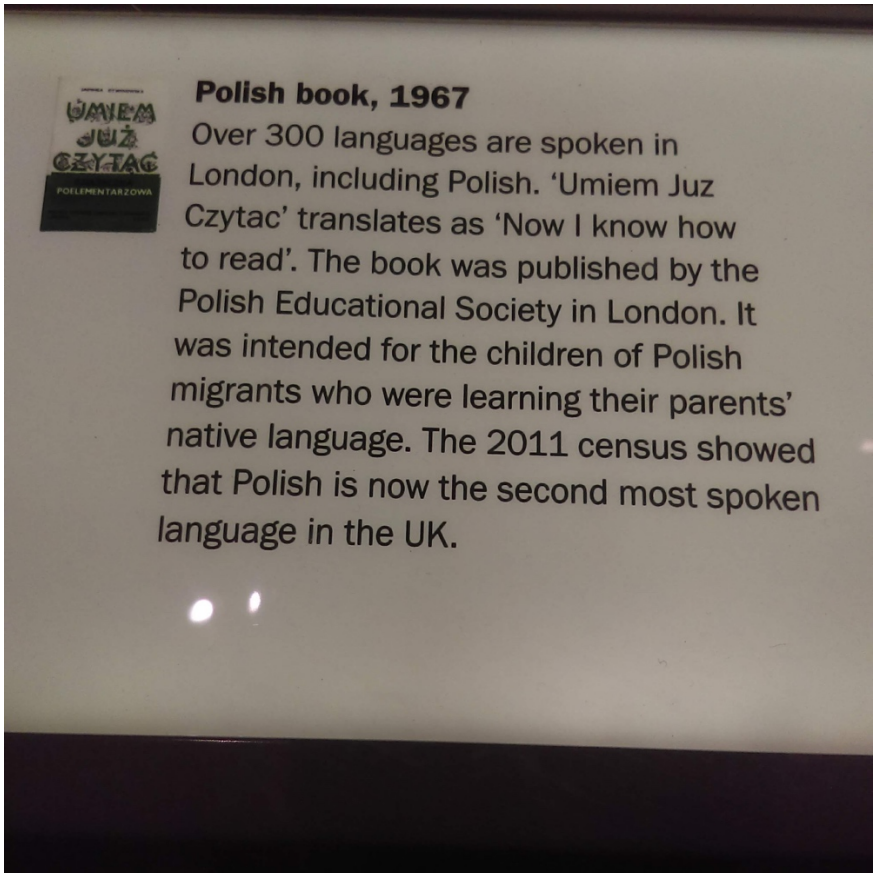
The tasks accompanying the card’s message make it relevant other schools, and less specifically Jewish. In World City the community officer repeated the quote that over 300 langauges are spoken in London. She showed teachers the London guide books: “German, Italian and Arabic, which I chose to feature here.”

By the Multicultural Londoners case, the final stop, she told the teachers: “Polish supplementary schools are one of the oldest in this country. The largest school in Brent. So you are not alone. There are about 2000-3000 supplementary schools in London.”

One teacher gasped: “wow”.



8.63 Teacher photographing ‘Multicultural Londoners’ case



8.64 Polish book blurb.

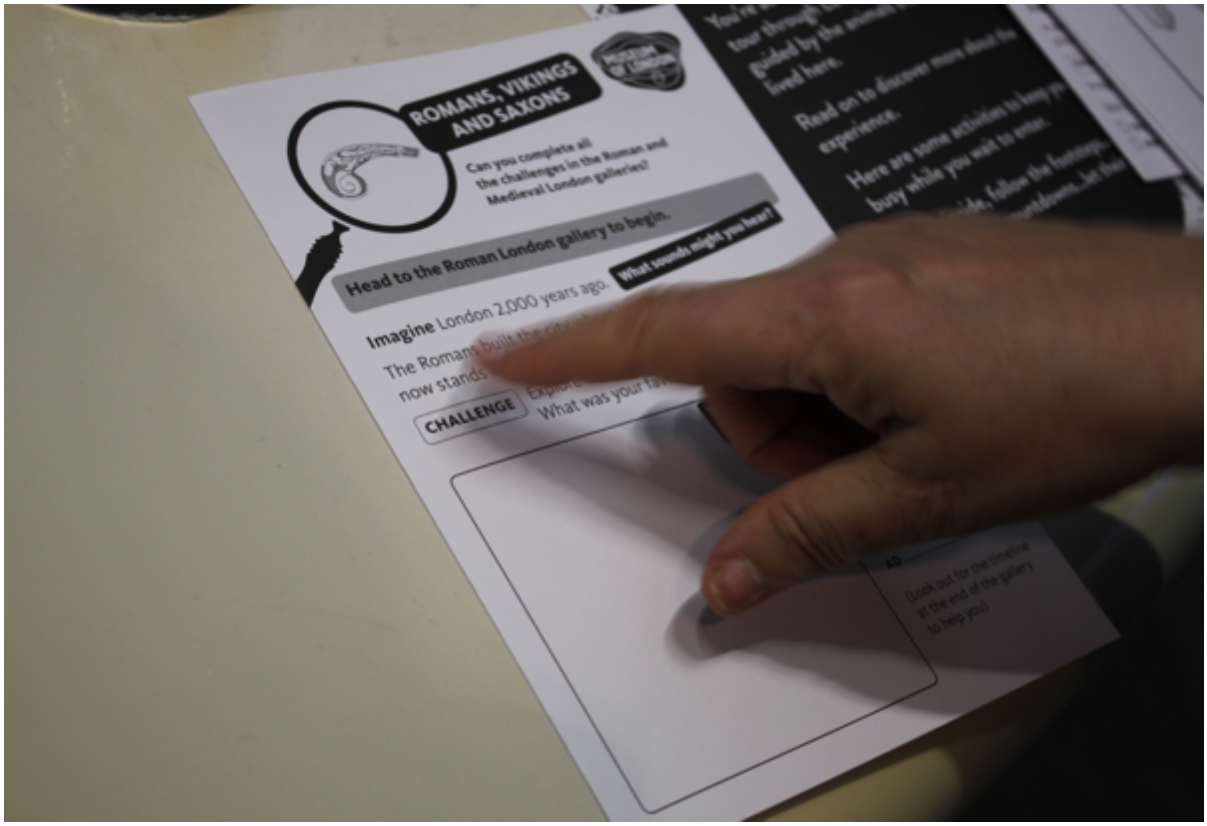
The community officer referenced grandparents, why it might be important to learn their language, be it Gaelic or Welsh, an attempt to localise linguistic diversity by emphasising regional British languages. She concluded on a positive note: “We are all here, and that’s what makes it such a wonderful city.” Her closing remarks made me suddenly overcome with a deep appreciation of being part of this group. It felt like a special moment, a sort of heightened sense of presence that we are all here. We returned to the Mezzanine floor to conclude the meeting.

8.7 At home in the museum?

Afterwards, the Italian teacher stayed behind and invited me to visit the Roman Galleries with her. She first stopped by the information desk recalling a museum trail about the Roman Galleries. She was disappointed to find it was no longer there. She settled instead for a ‘Romans, Vikings and Saxons’ trail.



8.65 Italian teacher searching for museum trail



8.66 ‘Romans, Vikings and Saxons’ museum trail


8.67 Romans Wall. View from Roman Galleries. Museum of London

We walked past a long stretch of window that overlooks the Roman walls that once defines the boundaries of the city. From her perspective, London can be seen as a Roman construction, the entire city's history is a component of her heritage.

Her Italian heritage has shaped her professional career and enabled her to travel the world, taking posts in different countries through the Italian consulate's language programme. Posts are temporary, only for 5-6 years. She teaches children from different countries who have Italian as their mother-tongue. Presently she was helping to integrate three children born in Milan whose parents are Ghanaian. She said if you ask these children where they are from, they say Italy, and that their parents wanted to strengthen their children's Italian language, to keep it going. She was familiar with the museum collection, having visited the Roman galleries before, 3 times by herself and 3 times with children.

Her Roman heritage is well represented in the museum, a rare example of being from a minority culture whose heritage is well persevered and displayed, since the heritage of this minority group – Italians in England - is the same one used to define English heritage. We spiralled our way into a reconstructed Roman kitchen. She leafed through a Roman cookbook, asking me is there is a copy in the gift shop? How different it must be to have your culture celebrated and included in the national curriculum, to feel at home in the museum.



8.68 Roman food. Roman Galleries. Museum of London

The materiality of Roman artefacts in Britain means that it is necessarily inscribed into British history and is seen as part of British identity. Roman British history forms a core part of the National Curriculum and plays a major role in the English national imaginary, in comparison to other minority cultures in London. As suggested by the Italian teacher's question about finding a Roman cook book in the gift shop, hers would appear to be a 'safe' minority cultural heritage to have in the UK, one that can be navigated with relative ease and confidence, and even a sense of assuredness. Yet, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, this has not always been the case. After the Second World War, Italians in the UK, regarded then as aliens, were doing their best to blend in, changing their shop fronts to 'British-owned' in order to appear inconspicuous (Fortier 2000). The racism Italians had experienced in this post-war period is almost unimaginable today, where London has an abundance of Italian-themed restaurants. The lesson here is about the precarious conditions of minority cultural heritages, whose status can change abruptly, being celebrated in one instant, and contested in the next.



8.69 Reconstruction of Roman Kitchen. Roman Galleries. Museum of London

Conclusion

This chapter returns to the question introduced at the start of the thesis: how can museums make migrants feel at home, supporting processes of placemaking and social integration?

The chapter examined how a language diversity trail was used to make the museum habitable. Given the impossible task of changing displays within the capacity of her role, the community officer used what De Certeau describes as 'tactics', temporarily subverting the structures that one is given and cannot permanently alter (xix). Finding herself facing the seemingly impossible task of welcoming ethnic minority groups into a museum burdened with colonial and anti-Semitic histories, and interpretation boards strewn with implicit xenophobic messages, she created a new language diversity trail that turned the museum from a hostile into a welcoming environment.

The trail was a community officer's magical act of transforming deadening histories into potential points for discussion, subverting displays and circumnavigating heritage obstructive to museum engagement to pave a new path that connects supplementary school heritages with British history.

The theme of Multilingual London stressed that the UK's different minority language speakers are part of a larger community of practice, mother-tongue preservation being a value supplementary schools share. The trail brought together supplementary school leaders from different communities and boroughs into a single place to co-produce a new 'script' for the museum. In a political climate where bilingualism in public spaces has been devalued and demonized, a language diversity trail is a bold museum intervention. It re-attaches value to community languages no longer supported or recognized by the State. It validates diverse cultures by evidencing the many languages spoken in London throughout the ages. It subverts the use of the museum into a public space where minorities are encouraged to teach their home language.

Waiting for the museum to be redesigned, trails are temporary interventions in the 'meantime' space of heritage curation. They allow displays to be manipulated without being physically altered. Instead of changing representations, they curate encounters and interactions with and around the collection.

Designed to highlight objects, museum trails can remove displays and whole galleries from the limelight, rerouting the museum by directing visitors' paths and attention. When museum

displays cannot be changed, trails can be used to readjust the dormancy and latency of objects by changing visitors' movements and gaze. Such tactics of playing with the latency of a museum collection are practical means for curators to navigate through heritage that is all too fixed in place, and histories that seem closed off to new interpretations.

If the heart of the museum is imagined as its storeroom where its permanent collection is kept (Bryne 2013), trails are the veins and arteries that run through the museum, controlling flows, bringing audiences to less-visited corners, changing footfall and pace when necessary.

Trails can be used to distract visitors as much as help focus their attention, slow them down, and speed them along, an intervention in viewers' temporal engagements with heritage. They are designed for a variety of reasons: to activate latent histories hidden in a museum display, connect with contemporary issues or particular audiences. Trail as a pedagogic tool can be deeply political. In our case, the trail illuminated the history of London as a multilingual city, a counternarrative to current dominant language ideologies about British identity. Trails can equally be designed to divert visitors' attention and distract them from what they seek. Such was the 'Beasts of London' trail that not only redirected families away from the exhibition they had come to see but distanced them emotionally from displays, for instance guiding children to look at a painting's date but not its iconography, completely bypassing the meaning of O'Neil's painting, a history lesson without a story.

The language trail, on the other hand, connected fragments of histories and broken artefacts into a coherent narrative, gathering objects from across different traditions and time periods.

Making a collaborative trail opened up new possibilities of cross-cultural dialogue, one of the primary purposes of city museums. Yet a focus on language diversity also brought attention to the limits of cultural translation, in 'non-translatable' objects that retain their original name and cultural meaning: Sari, Mikveh, Mah-Jomg, and objects that perhaps refuse to be named and resist classification, such as the 'What Muslims Wear' outfits.

Searching for content for the trail, I stumbled across other trails: a crowd-controlling trail with arbitrary tasks designed to subvert footfalls, a discontinued Roman trail and traces of a redundant interactive-technology trail. These temporary museum trails parallel how heritage resurfaces in diaspora, in impermanent displays, museum programmes and supplementary school spaces.

Encountering fragments of Jewish heritage on display, I found myself on my own Hebrew heritage trail, tracking artefacts dispersed across the museum, joining the dots, like a path of breadcrumbs leading home. This parallel personal trail shows how latent heritage can be activated involuntarily through museum displays. This experience describes the unplanned personal encounters with one's heritage that can occur at the museum. Having one's heritage represented in a crass careless way is an experience likely to be shared by many visitors from minority backgrounds. This personal experience was accompanied by the knowledge that at some point someone had put a great deal of care into collecting and archiving these objects, and that these objects were at some point included in a museum trail with a great deal of thought of how to bring this history into public attention.

I had tried to put my heritage aside in order to conduct this research and consider the museum collaboration from multiple viewpoints. I had not expected to find myself defending Jewish artefacts. It was not so much the negative representations of Jewish heritage, but the repeated encounters of my own heritage on the verge of disappearance that triggered a strong emotional reaction, and forced me to consider how my Jewish identity intersects with multiculturalism at the museum.

My decision to put my own heritage aside throughout the research describes the position of many heritage professionals who negotiate between their personal identities and roles in museums. The community officer had also put her Tanzanian heritage on hold on a daily basis whilst accommodating other minorities. Making the trail allowed our respective latent heritages to 'come out'. The community officer greeted me in Swahili 'behind-the-scenes' and included a single Swahili word in the trail.

For me, the 'Multilingual London' trail was an opportunity to listen to different voices in the museum and the spaces that activate latent heritage in diaspora. For instance, in the silent Medieval galleries the human voice is met by its own echo, soliciting emotive vocal responses- Jewish prayers and Middle-Eastern ululations. The loud, bustling gallery by the café is the site designated for school performances. Making the trail also allowed me to listen to the museum as an institution and observe how it continues to carry the legacy of multiculturalism, a term that went out of use but which is the basis of its partnership with London's ethnic minorities. The trail promoted cultural diversity and facilitated intercultural dialogue without uttering the 'M' word, preserving the latent heritage of British multiculturalism.

For the community officer, the trail was used to stabilize relationships between London's ethnic minorities and the museum by linking their cultures to the main galleries.

For supplementary school leaders- the majority of whom are women from immigrant backgrounds the trail carved a new space to speak in their own language at the museum (Orford and Becker 2001:292).

For the visual researcher, what is intriguing about the trail is that it allows people to see beyond their peripheral vision. Trails are an intervention in perception. Objects not in one's immediate vantage point became an active search. Prompted by hints and puzzles, trails are self-led museum tours that make visitors feel they discover objects by themselves.

Observing how trails shift perspective and reorder curation, I used Bayer's extended field of vision as an ethnographic method to study participants' different viewpoints. The trail was made using traditional collaborative methods in which roles are clearly defined, devised by the community officer, incorporating my findings, feedback from supplementary school leaders and some assistance from museum attendants. During the collaboration, however, we seamlessly switch roles, changing who is acting as 'museum guide'. Having previously shadowed the community officer, I was leading her through the galleries to show her potential objects for the trail. In the medieval galleries I was guided by a museum attendant, but became a guide for the front-of-house staff, showing them the facade from a reversed perspective. A group of supplementary school leaders were guided on our provisional trail, but the Italian teacher was my tour guide in the Roman galleries.

Research with different participants enabled me to see the museum from several perspectives. Here Bayer's 'field-of-vision' extends beyond the concept of the generic visitor to consider the degree to which people's roles in museums determine their viewpoints and blind spot. I was able to observe the gaps between staff and project collaborators' fields of vision. These gaps in their fields of vision were produced by the places they occupied in the museum, which were largely determined by the specific tasks they were designated, which in turn often resulted in fixed fields of vision.

One example of a fixed field of vision is that of the front-of-house staff who only saw the back of the museum façade. Another example is of a supplementary school teacher who has frequented the museum for years but has never visited the galleries, whose picture of the museum extended only as far as the Mezzanine floor.

Clearly, this has implications for museum collaborations with minorities, where different fields of vision often clash, or never converge. In a collaboration involving many partners, the community officer occupies a rare position, working offsite to conduct outreach work with minority groups whilst spending time behind the scenes in the museum offices to develop the programme. She therefore has a unique position of holding multiple perspectives, moving between different fields of vision. Yet she works alone in this museum partnership, running the programme single-handedly, a typical and perhaps the most ironic aspect of many institutional collaborations.

Museum trails point to the tensions between prescribed heritage and its rewritings. The popularity to trails are telling of visitors' willingness to be guided. The public's desire to be told what to see and how to look in a museum might be surprising, considering the effort curators put into moving away from models of the 'encyclopaedic museum' towards collaborations with communities and incorporation of their expertise. Perhaps the trail is a perfect metaphor for museums in the 21st century, no longer seeking to fill in the missing gaps in its collection alone, more reliant on visitors to bring in their own diverse viewpoints and supplement the museum with their knowledge. Trails allow for the skimming over of much of the museum displays because the visitor is invited not to be a tourist only interested in the highlights of a collection, or flaneur who strolls without direction, but to instead act as an explorer and pay deep attention to the details on display and meanings they can yield.

The community officer turned the deficiencies in displays into a trail, gaps in the collection into a word game. Missing words puzzles on changing maps and join-the-dots activities tracing broken calligraphy, absences turned into spaces for supplementary schools to fill in. Built on the aesthetics of the fragment, she has shown how museums, like post-war British bomb sites turned into playgrounds, can be converted into sites of play.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

This thesis has explored how children's heritage can be suppressed and reactivated in diaspora through museum collaborations with supplementary schools. New heritage partnerships brought together three liminal or transitional 'sites': childhood, migration and a city museum. Separately, each of these liminal sites can be described as potentially transformative and therefore as having the capacity to bring about socio-cultural change. The research observed what happens when these three sites of cultural transformation converge, and how they reconfigure one another in unexpected ways.

The research set out to make an original contribution to the fields of museum and migration studies in the following three ways: firstly, by foregrounding children's agency in heritage preservation in diaspora, secondly, through the use of participatory visual research methods, and thirdly by conducting a multi-sited research that explores the heritage work of supplementary school communities and situates the museum collaborations within this broader framework. The following sections will consider each of these areas respectively.

9.1 Children, temporality and multidirectional heritage.

This research makes an original contribution to the field of museum and migration studies by shedding light on how children from transnational immigrant backgrounds can determine and shape public heritage. In the field of critical museology, museums have been theorized as public institutions capable of transforming society, playing a meaningful civic role in combatting social exclusion (Sandell 2002, Ashworth et al 2007). Since the 1990s, in response to changing populations and public policies, Western European museums have experimented with the means by which they can help migrants integrate into their cities. A new body of literature emerged, documenting, comparing and analyzing the proliferation of collaborative curating projects and exhibition experiments themed around migration and cultural integration, and the openings of new specialist migration museums. Children, however, remained on the periphery of most of these projects, although a separate field of study about museums, children and childhood has recently emerged (Darian-Smith and Pascoe 2013).

In this thesis I have argued that transnational children brought up in the UK play a unique and often underestimated role in heritage preservation in diaspora, where their agency

increases. I have observed how children's play can connect families, establish new social networks and rebuild communities in diaspora.

I have also considered children as 'passive agents' (Gell 1998:107) where even the anticipation of children's presence produces a great deal of planning and heritage work carried out both by parents in diaspora and museum professionals. Becoming a parent in diaspora has been identified by some of my research participants as a critical turning point in their lives: whereas beforehand they enjoyed inhabiting 'neutral' or anonymous cosmopolitan identities, once they became parents they suddenly found themselves actively seeking out or setting up supplementary schools as means to reconnect their children with their cultural heritage in London. Likewise at the museum, the anticipation of children originated a great deal of work undertaken by community officers and festival organizers, e.g. new museum trails and family festivals. Parenting in migration, like curating for children from transnational backgrounds, became a space for heritage improvisations. In these situations, children can be understood as 'passive agents', inspiring heritage networks and structures to be built around them.

As child-centred institutions, supplementary schools are improvised spaces where children's home cultures become re-activated in the dormant intervals in-between state education. Their heritage programmes are highly adaptive, improvising to accommodate children's needs and interests, whilst responding to external opportunities and constraints. Collaborations with the Museum of London offered these schools new sites in which to adapt their cultural heritage.

Collaborations with children moved the museum as well as migrant communities into uncharted territories. The museum hosted communities whose histories and cultures festival organizers often knew little about. Additionally, children's live performances moved cultural heritage into spaces of unknowing, adults letting children mediate between histories and the present, between transnational heritage and new localities, and between the home and officially recognized public heritage spaces.

Child's play was transformed as it became a space for collective remembering and recollections in diaspora, but also a site through which heritage could be reconstructed. As a result of migration, elements of children's play became more loaded with extra significance, and moments in their staged plays at the museum became more serious and heavy. Yet children also brought a light touch to heritage, which when incorporated with their play became more malleable. Children's play made their community's heritage more easily

adaptable to the new setting of the museum, and their performances mediated between difficult pasts, serious commemorations and family-friendly museum festivals.

Importantly, what counts as public heritage was reworked at the museum, where transnational cultural heritages became localized. The museum was an outlet through which children's new hybrid cultural identities, e.g. as Brazilian-Londoners or British Tamils, were displayed and performed. Children were orators of otherwise unrecognized cultural heritages, changing what a city museum regards as the heritages of London, and what cultural histories are expressed in the public sphere.

This thesis has also described how children, having more agency in preserving heritage in diaspora, subsequently have more agency to determine whether and which heritage discontinues, for example, by refusing to practice home languages, choosing, changing or dropping out of supplementary schools. Given their increased agency, young children co-determine which transnational heritage becomes localized or comes to a halt, influencing which supplementary schools survive and which ones shut down, shaping the changing landscape of London's cultural diversity. To a great extent, children also determine the cultural spaces their parents inhabit, as their attendance of supplementary school enables or prevents their parents and other close relatives, e.g. grandparents and younger siblings, to maintain their quotidian cultural practices and connections on a weekly basis.

Drawing on Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory (2009), this research has highlighted how children can change the course of heritage in diaspora, in the settings of supplementary schools. Whereas traditionally children are perceived as the subjects of enculturation, and cultural heritage is widely presumed to be passed downwards through the generations, this research has demonstrated how children's agency redirects heritage in migration, allowing it to travel sideways, upwards, across and between different supplementary schools, and in this partnership, from the schools to the museum.

Supplementary schools are spaces of code-switching and cultural translation, where children become expert translators from an early age. Children inhabiting two or more cultures gain new roles as cultural mediators and interpreters. Through children, heritage moves sideways between state and supplementary schools, and heritage can also travel upwards from child to parent, particularly when the museum was involved.

Because children are widely permitted to play and socialize more freely, they can break implicit social rules and act as the pulling force that brings together an otherwise dispersed

community, forming social networks in migration that adults alone cannot. This point has great significance for future research about children's heritage in migration, and in understanding how communities find points of entry to create social networks in a new country.

The partnership between the Museum of London and supplementary schools is itself part of a long line of transient museum projects and exhibitions that emerged over the past two decades in response to migration, which have typically been ephemeral and situated in pop-up spaces (Torres 2011, Johansson and Bevelander 2017:17). Rather than a singular event, the research outlined the many ways heritage becomes repeatedly suppressed and recovered in diaspora, in changing government policies and museum programmes as much as in short festivals and the activities of supplementary schools, where cultural representations are temporarily displayed and then removed, carried by teachers and embodied by children.

Heritage partnerships between the museum and supplementary schools brought different temporalities into play: the fleeting landscapes of childhood, long histories, a new country, a seemingly static museum collection, impermanent rented spaces and the ephemeral displays and performances.

In the course of these heritage partnerships, this research has seen several 'firsts': a Brazilian school created its first museum display, a Tamil school performed a newly-written play about the preservation of Tamil language and culture, and in 2019 the Albanian community in London celebrated Kosovo Independence Day in the museum for the first time. For many children, this was their first experience of performing their cultural heritage in public, and for their parents, their first time visiting the museum and witnessing their children speak to a general audience in their home language.

What is interesting to note is that children's socialization into their mnemonic communities, of which their museum performances were a part, coincided with moments in history in which their communities are trying to gain public recognition in the UK, and to integrate their cultural heritage into public memory. The Brazilian, Albanian and Tamil communities in this study arrived in significant numbers in the UK in the late 1990s and early 2000s. They set up their supplementary schools in different parts of London around the same time. This research captures representations of their cultural heritage still in infancy. In these case studies, children's early memories are developing alongside their community's struggle to

relocate its heritage in the UK. Here multiple temporalities collapse into one: new memories for children and museum visitors overlap with long histories of communities in diaspora.

Out of practical necessity, cultural heritage was made into portable displays and embodied performances. Yet because heritage remained mobile and transient, it was also adaptable to changing contexts and circumstances. Cultural celebrations usually kept to supplementary school sports halls could be 'squeezed' into museum festival programmes when presented as ephemeral displays and performances. Importantly, what might be considered a fleeting community performance for festival organizers and museum audiences can leave a powerful impression on the formative memories of children in their new centre-stage roles.

Another interesting consequence of supplementary school collaborations with the Museum of London is that they brought heritage usually confined to the home into the museum. Here the intersection of the heritage of childhood and heritages in migration transformed the museum into a more culturally inclusive, but also a more *homely* institution.

Community officers struggled with the seemingly paradoxical task of making migrant groups and cultural minorities feel welcome in museums, despite the violent histories on display, xenophobic quotes and captions. Their collaborations with supplementary schools, however, brought in forms of heritage usually associated with children and the home: plays, songs, poems, lullabies, folktales and nursery rhymes performed by children in Albanian, Tamil and other languages, and a sound installation made by children and parents from a Brazilian Saturday school that captured their voices. These and other forms of intangible children's heritage sustain collective memories and identities in diaspora whilst domesticating the museum.

The question of how to 'domesticate' the museum is especially important in contexts of migration and integration. Collaborating with parents and children from migrant backgrounds is one way to make museums more fit for purpose when designing projects aimed to promote intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and inclusivity. Taking seriously the role of children and heritage practices of the home has further implications for museums seeking to curate future projects that facilitate placemaking in diaspora, and to recover their quotidian human connections (Joy 2020:15).

9.2 Researching multimodality

This thesis also set out to make an original contribution to the field of museum and migration in its use of participatory, visual and multimodal research methods. The purpose of using these creative methods was three-fold: 1. in order to gain insight into the aesthetic and curatorial practices and visions of supplementary schools and the museum 2. as means of making the research process engaging and fun for children, and 3. to make the research outputs more relevant to and useable by my research partners in the future.

Since multimodal methods were employed by the schools and the museum, these were often suitable research methods by which to conduct participant observation and document how different heritages are performed, visualized and inhabited. Supplementary schools produced new plays, wrote scripts and made installations, and museum officers set up new festivals and devised new trails. Assisting with these, multimodal research methods allowed me to participate in these improvised acts and capture some of these activities through visual means, e.g. drawing and photography. The result is a layered creative process of a visual artist following school presentations over the course of a couple of years, observing how Kosovo Independence Day is integrated into the Museum of London through songs and dances, how the idea of a Brazilian forest is materialized in different settings, and how cultural memories resurface in different sites, taken apart, put back together, staged and put in storage.

For supplementary schools, heritage without a permanent place is repeatedly packed away. Portable heritage displays are symptomatic of the permanent state of liminality that supplementary schools inhabit. This requires the physical transportation of cultural artefacts, books and teaching resources that continue to be packed and unpacked across the city every Saturday. Yet the way heritage is unpacked can be readjusted in response to new sites and situations.

In supplementary schools, parents and teachers become theatre producers of children's plays, translators of ancient poems, costume makers and community artists. Responding to the lack of available teaching materials, they make their own picture books, handmade maps, portable displays, games and other classroom resources. Through the partnership program, the museum became more multimodal, especially during supplementary school festivals, with cultural content conveyed through multiple mediums and platforms: films, performances, festivals, food workshops and so forth, challenging how cultural knowledge can be transferred, what spaces are available for creativity and chance events, how heritage

is controlled and curated, and what counts as cultural knowledge in the first place. Multimodal research was first and foremost a means of responding to these creative forms of heritage transmission, working beyond texts to participate in the informal and official curation practices in the schools and the museum.

Based on my experience as an artist and workshop facilitator, I had envisaged using participatory visual methods to co-produce new museum displays, through which I hoped to better understand how a group wanted their cultural heritage to be represented in the public sphere, and how images of collectivities are created. The sound installation 'The Whispering Forest' was successful in this endeavour. Making this installation with the school gave me the opportunity to ask different members of a Brazilian community in London how they wanted their heritage to be visualized, working cross-generationally with children, parents and teachers. Participatory methods used to co-design the installation allowed me to research how collaborative museum representations are constructed 'off-stage', and to experience the complexity of horizontal collaborations without a single curator, where everyone is invited to co-design a display.

I had hoped to make several museum displays with different schools. Due to changes in curation and budget cuts, only one physical display was made by a supplementary school during my fieldwork. The museum's supplementary schools programme was already under a lot of strain, with only one person in role whose time was already stretched, and the museum itself proved quite a slow-paced institution to collaborate with, where plans take a long time to be approved and scheduled. For these reasons, I offered to run creative workshops for children in their supplementary schools rather than in the museum, where I liaised directly with teachers to fit around their schedule and lessons. Once participatory methods were no longer geared towards making museum displays, this took the pressure off final outcomes, making the research more practice-based and open-ended, allowing room for unfinished ideas, surprises and unexpected responses.

9.2a Creative children's workshops in supplementary schools

Participatory visual methods were especially useful when working with children in institutional contexts. Following child protection guidelines, I had made a deliberate decision to keep my research limited to the institutional settings of the museum and supplementary

schools [54]. Since I did not follow the lives of individual children outside these settings, this research is therefore less about individual children and their social lives, and more focused on the role they play within these institutional collaborations, and their agency in shaping heritage within these contexts.

Since my research was bound to institutions, participatory visual methods proved an effective way to let children directly narrate their experiences without mediation from the museum or their teachers. Using themed art activities, such as T-shirt printing or Tote-bag designs, inviting children to illustrate their memories and visualise their heritage meant conversations were centred around the drawings and artworks children produced, avoiding the formality of a semi-structured interview, and allowing children to talk about what they thought was interesting or important.

Creative workshops produced a relaxing, focused yet 'chatty' environment where children often came up with interesting anecdotes, jokes and observations. Their unmediated and unreserved responses brought in an element of fun to the research process, and the openness of the workshops allowed them to reorient the topic to subjects and stories they care about.

9.2b Multimodal methods as a means of sharing research

Using multimodal methods was a means of sharing the research with the communities I worked with during and after fieldwork. Drawing was a particularly useful tool to creatively reinterpret children's plays and to document their movement and action with sensitivity. Sketches of school rehearsals and staged museum performances prolonged ephemeral performances and gave them new materiality. Once my sketches were digitized, they moved the research in unexpected directions, circulated by supplementary schools in newsletters and digital exhibitions.

In these instances, the multimodal element of my research was co-authored, with community organisers taking charge of the content and employing it for their own ends: to promote their schools and their heritage locally, to initiate further collaborations with their local councils, and to celebrate their achievement with the wider community through pictorial means.

[54] I was careful not to be left alone with a child, and that teachers or adult volunteers were always present, in compliance with the child protection training I received as a professional artist-educator working with galleries and museums, and following child-protection guidelines from the NRCSE and volunteer training I received during my fieldwork at the Museum of London.

Using multimodal research methods was therefore not only suitable as a medium of responding to intangible heritage practices and working with children, but making parts of the research usable for my participants' causes and interests.

9.3 A multi-sited ethnography about latent heritage in migration

Another way in which this research set out to make an original contribution to the field of museum and migration studies was by conducting a multi-sited ethnography. A problem I have identified in museum and migration research is that it tends to be restricted to the museum premises, based on collaborative projects in which migrant groups are typically brought into the museum. Such research is more focused on the museum as a site of cultural production, with a display or curatorial approach seen as the final outcome. Consequently, such research does not consider the heritage work already carried out by communities across the city.

A series of problems may follow. Without an understanding of how and why supplementary schools are run, museums may find them hard to contact, or consider them 'out-of-reach'. Museums might invite them to make artworks they have no logistical way of putting away or moving around, not appreciating the challenges these schools face in making cultural representations without storage or display space in non-permanent buildings. Museums working with communities in diaspora can also underestimate why heritage, cultural identities of the collective memories of children continue to matter so much post-migration. The integration and citizenship-based projects museums offer that only emphasize the UK identities of trans-national children can inadvertently become another source of heritage suppression. By centering around a narrow idea of British identity they tend to ignore the cultures and histories of groups they are trying to reach out to.

The research set out to unpack the idea of heritage as latent in migration by exploring how this operates in different cultural settings and circumstances. Conducting a multi-sited ethnography outside the museum, I was able to consider how the idea of latent heritage in diaspora manifests in different supplementary schools, e.g. as an image of a seed hidden underground waiting for the right conditions in which to grow, as a child's latent knowledge of their mother-tongue waiting to come out, and as children's games, songs and stories that contain cultural references and meanings that can be transmitted intergenerationally through play, which become more loaded with significance when a community's heritage and traditions are suppressed in their country of origin. I observed how suppressed or invisible

cultural heritages staged at the Museum of London continue to be rehearsed in supplementary schools, to either return to the museum on later occasions, or else find outlets and audiences elsewhere in other venues, occasions and institutions in the city.

No longer merely a metaphor, the research then explored how the latency of heritage is experienced in different London settings. Here the research considered how heritage in migration can become multi-sited. This was especially evident in the example of a Tamil-Sri Lankan school whose plays were performed in very different venues across London. In this example I considered how heritage affected by trauma splits and becomes compartmentalized in diaspora: children's street dance performed in one venue, their language performance in another, their history in yet another, moving between the West End, the Houses of Parliament and the Museum of London. The splitting of heritage also occurs within communities, with examples of some parents who chose to move to the countryside or to more affluent neighbourhoods which do not have a Tamil presence, thereby leaving their past behind. Had I stuck solely to researching supplementary school displays and performances taking place within the museum, it would not have been possible to access the dilemma and divergent approaches parents take in how, when and whether to preserve a heritage of trauma and transmit it to their children.

Despite the challenges of teaching children contested and difficult histories, one of the key findings of this research points to the endurance of cultural heritage in diaspora, and how cultural memories and histories persist even when they are disregarded by the museum or state, and when they have no physical site from which to be collectively transmitted. This multi-sited ethnography has enabled me to observe the many ways in which migrant communities are actively transforming the city, preserving their heritage and bringing up bilingual and bicultural children. Researching with Albanian, Tamil, Brazilian, Iranian and other schools, I learned how they help newly arrived migrants integrate into the city, whilst enabling children born in the UK to connect with their cultural heritage and sustain relationships with friends and family from their parents' country of origin.

9.4 Between multiculturalism and decolonization

The supplementary school programme emerged from the logic of museum multiculturalism, a legacy from the previous Labour government. Whilst multiculturalism has become suppressed as an ideology in public policy, the research has shown how it can be

reactivated through careful museum curation and programming. Museum festivals and trails created 'accidental' encounters between communities and objects, discretely promoting cultural diversity and intercultural learning at a time when these are no longer on the government's agenda.

In the UK, national museums -the Imperial War Museum, the British Museum and others- formed their supplementary school programmes in an era when multiculturalism was a popular ideology. Museums initiated these collaborative projects with migrants and minorities in order to be more socially inclusive as institutions, and also in order to reframe how migration and cultural diversity are presented to a general audience, as a positive and integral part of British social life. Today that discourse has shifted. During fieldwork and at the time of writing (2018-2022) the current British government no longer promotes multiculturalism in public policy. In the meantime, perhaps not coincidentally, there has been growing public unrest, global campaigns and local protests to decolonise education and public heritage, such as Rhodes must fall in Cape Town and Oxford universities (Kwoba *et al* 2018), and museum detox [55] in the UK. Multiculturalism has been replaced by the decolonisation agenda, which is now becoming a key priority for museums.

Working between different ideologies, demands and expectations, museums in England have had to fit around changing public policies, often mediating between the governments and grassroots social movements. Just like supplementary schools that mediate between heritage taught in state schools and heritage confined to domestic spaces, UK museums operating in a post-Brexit era have had to respond to the resurfacing of nationalist and at times explicitly xenophobic sentiments on the one hand, and on the other hand, respond to growing discontent from diverse minority groups whose heritage and histories are still largely absent in the public sphere.

Perhaps surprisingly, this research points to how museums have much more in common with supplementary schools than first imagined, using subtle tactics to promote multiculturalism, mediating between different publics and political ideologies, all the while persisting with their collaborations with minority groups in less than favourable circumstances. Whilst previous research on Museums and Migrations may have overestimated the agency of museums to bring about social change, this research has demonstrated museums' partial agency in advocating multiculturalism and valuing cultural

[55] www.museumdetox.org accessed 12th May 2022

diversity, highlighting their dependence on culturally diverse communities, such as supplementary schools, to carry out this work.

Considering the long histories of supplementary schools in the UK, I suggest that as much as they are expressions of people's desires to preserve their heritages post-migration, they are also an expression of British attitudes towards cultural diversity. Neither suppressed nor supported, supplementary schools have been preserving their communities' cultural heritage for over two centuries with considerable freedom, finding their own creative means to survive. The very large margins in their estimated number, between 2000-5000 supplementary schools, indicates how they continue to be overlooked and under-researched.

Whilst publicly, and quite spectacularly, public statues linked with the slave-trade have been taken down by protestors and activists in 2020, and subsequently removed or relabelled by museums in order to rewrite public heritage, supplementary schools have been working behind-the-scenes to preserve histories, cultures and languages, placing value on heritage that is mostly unrecognized. These quieter forms of heritage activism carried out by supplementary schools have a strong effect in decolonising public heritage and education.

In their more subtle ways, supplementary school communities have been working to decolonise institutions for decades. Their decolonizing effects are felt in the Museum of London in the languages, cultures and heritages they introduce. They bring in more diverse heritages and audiences into museum spaces, decolonizing museums in a very tangible way, with children participating in raising the profile of their heritage in the public sphere. Although for the most part their work and museum collaborations are unrecorded, they have a felt impact on children's cultural knowledge and identities, subtly transforming the landscape of London's cultural diversity.

9.5 The transformative capacity of supplementary schools

In the museum and elsewhere across the city, spaces for transmitting diverse cultural heritages and creating intercultural dialogue are not readily available but have to be improvised. Within supplementary schools, there is a strong element of bricolage, making creative uses of the materials and resources at hand to recall and convey distant environments in the UK. As a concept developed by Levi-Strauss (1966) bricolage refers to the artful construction of drawing on what is at hand, using improvisational strategies that

rely on an intimate knowledge of resources and possibilities (du Plessis and Durden 2011:111). Using bricolage as a creative, practical means of temporary transforming environments, supplementary school communities become intimately familiar with the buildings they rent through weekly acts of setting up and putting things away, paying detailed attention to their material surroundings. Sometimes these culminate in surrealist acts, a rented Victorian school building in North London chosen to convey a Brazilian environment, with a Brazilian forest performed by the team of teachers. Perhaps nothing is more surreal than a child suddenly recognising their mother's voice coming out of a talking tree in a museum display.

Through multi-sited research I was able to observe the parallel efforts of supplementary school practitioners and museum officers to transform inhospitable sites into habitable spaces in order to transmit cultural heritage to children, drawing on the latency of heritage in languages, plays, stories, objects and museum trails.

At a time when multiculturalism dropped out of public policy and State education, the museum provided a rare opportunity for children to perform their heritage in public, and a unique forum through which conversations between supplementary school practitioners were held behind the scenes. The museum proved to be a key institution that acted as a basis for this multi-sited, multi-cultural research. Although the research was conducted in the 'pre-Brexit' years when there was great sensitivity around the topics of migration and multiculturalism, the museum continued to be a platform from which these themes can be explored by myself and participating groups.

This research contributes to ongoing contemporary debates in migration and integration studies regarding how museums can approach communities in diaspora and represent their heritage. At the Museum of London, curation has for the most part moved away from displaying the separate histories and cultural heritage of migrant communities, emphasizing instead cultural mixing and assimilation. Yet, as this research has shown, supplementary schools that do not neatly fit into BAME boxes are actively searching for their transnational cultural heritages to be recognized. This is evident in supplementary school children arriving to the museum dressed in distinct cultural outfits to orate, sing and recite in mother-tongue on the museum stage.

In the first supplementary school festival I attended at the Museum of London in 2017, following short, consecutive children's performances by four different supplementary schools in the photography gallery, two boys who have never met wandered off to watch a museum

display. One was from a Chinese supplementary school, the other from an Afghan school. Still dressed in their traditional outfits in which they arrived at the museum and performed, they were now socializing in an improvised interaction, as children often do.

Such post-performance interactions where children are still dressed in their cultural costumes, holding on to and representing their backgrounds, but also freely moving around the museum, show how children can at once maintain and mediate between cultures. They are here formally as young cultural representatives, but their interactions cannot help but be informal at the best of times, during and after performances.



9.1 Boys dressed in Afghan and Chinese traditional costumes. Museum of London 2017.

This small example shows how cultures flow more freely through children, who at the museum represent their heritage but also take in impressions of displays, meet each other and inquisitively wandering around the gallery, ‘straying’ from one supplementary school to

another. It is also an example of how small events and encounters can make a big difference. Children's presence changes how cultural representations travel in the museum not just through their formal plays, but through children's informalities, their casualness, and their ability to switch between cultures with relative ease.

During such festivals and through children's presence, supplementary school families found ways to domesticate the museum through mother-tongue performances, displays of Portuguese talking trees with parents' voices reading bedtime stories and children singing Albanian lullabies that made the museum feel suddenly deeply intimate, the museum as an extension of the home.

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