

Pain and Relief Come of Themselves: A Digital, Multimodal, Fictocritical Archive

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Abstract: Archival logic locates coherence in objectivity and completeness, but archival research— especially for multiply-marginalized BIPOC—is haunted by the question: “Who is inventing me, for what purpose, with what intentions?” (Miranda, 2013, p. 14). Our collective history is littered with razed libraries, book depots, universities, cemeteries, temples, and memorials, eroding our trust in the permanence of formal, institutional, centralized archives. In composing an archive that records remembrance, resistance, resilience, and adaptability from the ephemera of Eelam Tamil diasporic-disabled life in the U.S., I attempt to resist the violent erasure and rewriting of Eelam Tamil history and culture and of my disabled self-knowledge and oracular instinct. This archive contains a selection of quotidian cultural and medical objects and photographs that my family and I instinctively conserved—potentially for how they precipitate thought, feeling, and memory and provide opportunities for remembering the past and forging hopeful futurities. These objects map my thoughts, feelings, and associations about cultural identity, collective trauma, chronic pain, and radical possibility. The attendant parables attempt to recover a culturally specific past through culturally specific storytelling, without demystifying their inclusions and juxtapositions, flattening affect, or insisting on empirically verifiable truth. This archive is designed from below, meant to be read, felt, and deciphered from below, in solidarity with the familial archivists, oral historians, chronically ill patients, and other culture workers who must extensively self-document and for whom archiving is an expression of resistance and resilience. In creating and reinscribing archives of the painfully specific and universal, lies hope.

Keywords: [disability studies](#), [rhetorics of chronic pain](#), [intergenerational trauma](#), [archives of displacement](#), [South Asian parables](#), [fictocriticism](#)

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“Pain and Relief Come of Themselves: A Digital, Multimodal, Fictocritical Archive” is a digital, multimodal text that can be accessed at the following link: <https://visforvali.github.io/peitho-archive/entrance.html>

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