Organizing remembrance: Publicness, commemoration, and counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial

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Abstract

This project responds to the related problematic of neoliberal dehousing and the decline of the public realm. As citizens, our capacity for action and speech is curtailed by neoliberal rationality and the loss of public sites of/for educational exchange. Meanwhile, the commodification of housing and gutting of social assistance has created crisis levels of people living without housing in Canada. These are joint concerns as 1) neoliberal rationality has cemented the idea of the citizen as self-sufficient consumer, rather than collectively responsible political actor, and 2) the phenomenon of dehousing is an attempt to remove from public discourse (and public space) the very citizens subjected to the violence of neoliberal policies. In addition, the very existence of a public realm for citizens to appear in together is being traded for sites of economic consumption and social conformity. This dissertation takes as its point of departure an event known as the Toronto Homeless Memorial. For almost 25 years, the Toronto Homeless Memorial has cultivated an environment that invites the public expression of grief for those who have died without housing. The monthly memorial event declares that *this is not okay* and demands that citizens act together to contest the ongoing violence of preventable death. Drawing on public pedagogy scholarship, political theory, and memory studies, this project asks, how does commemoration generate and reinvigorate the public realm? The account of the Toronto Homeless Memorial here is compiled through an analysis of comprehensive archival data, testimonies from past and present memorial volunteers, and ethnographic observation at the monthly memorial event. It is an attempt to map the historical context, conceptual vocabulary, and pedagogical practices of the Toronto Homeless Memorial. By doing so, this project offers insight into the relationship between commemorative pedagogy and "publicness," the role of the archive in the public pedagogy of housing activists, and the aesthetic practices used to cultivate wonder, care, and action amidst conditions of trauma, mass privatization, and media spectacle in neoliberal times.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to everyone who sat around the table for family dinner at the Oodelally (and for those who were there, at “the Sneeze”). For many, this is in your memory. For others, let us keep *appearing* together.

Acknowledgments

This project would not exist without the patient wisdom and generous insights of my supervisor, Mario Di Paolantonio. From the beginning, he understood at a deep level what I was trying to express. I am grateful.

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I acknowledge the steadfast work and creative organizing of those who have sustained the Toronto Homeless Memorial. Greg Cook and Rayna Slobodian, who were the first to encourage and help orient this project in its fledgling stages. Cathy Crowe and Bob Rose, who have been organizing from what might be called "the beginning." Gigi Grant, for welcoming me and so many others. To Janice Towndrow, for your tireless commitment and thoughtful teaching/preaching practice. Each of these individuals (and so many more) have met brutality and grief with a praxis of hopeful solidarity and peaceful, stubborn contestation. They have continued to imagine a less violent world, striving for the democracy that is ever-in-the-making.

Thank you to the community of scholars who have read my work, encouraged me, and befriended me: Itamar Manoff, Jenna D'Andrea, Holt Stuart-Hitchcox, Tesni Ellis, Estée Fresco, and William Payne.

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I also want to honour the hospitality and beauty of Sanctuary Toronto, a community that has lost many, yet still dances, sings, makes art, and gathers around the table.

And finally, to Rikki-Lee…as the witch says in *Room on the Broom*: "Without you I'd be in that dragon's inside."

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The Problematic

This dissertation has two basic dilemmas that it is trying to address. First, this project is concerned with the crisis of dehousing, a prominent feature of the neoliberal city in the last 30-40 years, and the efforts to make visible this violent, deadly crisis. The assertion here is that this crisis has been muted, made invisible (or improperly visible), by the hegemony of neoliberal rationality. Second, this project focuses on the decline of the public realm and the efforts to re-member this crucial facet of society. This is both an educational project, anchored in a praxis of public pedagogy, and a political project, seeking to nourish contemporary organizing for housing justice. In response to these two, related, core dilemmas, I take as my object of analysis an event known as The Toronto Homeless Memorial. And so, lastly, this project is also deeply concerned with the political and the pedagogical work of memory. It is my (and others) contention that commemorative practice is deeply pedagogical. As such, the central question that guides this dissertation is: how does commemoration generate and reinvigorate the public realm?

The crisis of dehousing is, on its face, a crisis wherein thousands of citizens (in one of the wealthiest nations on the planet) are dying as a result of not having adequate shelter. It is deadly and it is inexcusable. While much has been written and studied about so-called "homelessness," less has been done to map the philosophy and political theory that has underpinned the exacerbation of this crisis. The inception of neoliberal policies has, I argue, led to a distinctly neoliberal *rationality* that has proliferated across North America (and other parts of the world, as well) and perpetuated the crisis while absolving housed citizens of

responsibility for it. This rampant individualism has pathologized political unrest, exchanged care for pity, and been maintained by a media landscape dominated by spectacle and inattention. This lack of sustained attention has been difficult to cultivate as dehousing is an example of "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011a), a crisis that fails to captivate the cultural imagination as it lacks an explosive moment of introduction and involves layers of complexity difficult to map. One of the distinct characteristics of this neoliberal rationality is the transformation of the citizen from *homo politicus*, a political being, capable of operating as such, to *homo oeconomicus*, a human as market actor, reduced to their function as participants in late capitalism (Brown, 2015). This dissolution of humans as political beings has meant a) that those who do not contribute meaningfully (a very subjective and tenuous designation) to the economy are rendered as part of the "exclusion-zone" of late capitalism (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) and b) that these citizens, and others, are no longer equipped to contest such a situation as there is no longer a public realm available to the citizen as political actor.

Which brings me to the second dilemma. And here we see how the second dilemma and the first are intimately related crises. The decline of the public realm has been brought about, similarly, by this very neoliberal rationality that has sought to defund "public things." It is "public things" that afford citizens the opportunity to constellate around them, negotiating their uses and purposes in ways that democratically meet the needs of all (Honig, 2017). Similarly, public spaces have been considered only through the lens of a brutal equation, which was best communicated by memorial organizer Gigi Grant: the question of how to turn land into profit (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). With no public things to gather around and no available (non-commercialized) public space left to appear in, citizens are left adrift in neoliberal times. Political theorist Hannah Arendt (1958) also saw the beginnings of this decline when she wrote about the rise of the social realm—a realm

conditioned by conformity and homogeneity, where citizens avoid agonistic contestation with heterogeneous others in favour of echo chambers of like-minded people. Indeed, her phenomenological account emphasizes that citizens require *spaces* to appear to/with one another. A lack of such spaces for togetherness and plurality gives rise to polarization and the inability to engage in dialogical relationship across political differences. Under such conditions, listening and attending to others are traded for exclusivity, division, and erasure. And these are the very qualities under which thousands have been allowed to die without housing.

Finally, such an impasse is ultimately a crisis of memory. We need to remember to ask: what were things like before neoliberal dehousing? In what ways did we used to fund public things? What did public space look like in earlier protest movements? And, most importantly (at least for this project), who is missing? Which citizens have gone unnoticed and misremembered? Why? How might we undertake a practice of remembrance that reanimates our connections—political and relational—with those past others and those who grieve them (Chinnery, 2013)? This means turning a "Nothing" into a "Something" (Crane, 2021)—an event, a loss worthy of commemoration, and a policy landscape capable of being noticed and changed. It also means understanding these past others as "grievable lives" (Butler, 2016). Such a practice of remembrance affords the possibility for affective aesthetic practices to emerge that call attention to the banalities of neoliberal violence in "weird" and "eerie" ways (Fisher, 2017).

The interesting aspect about practices of remembrance are the way in which they, conveniently, given what I have discussed, seek to *gather* people around an object, monument, or an event. The commemorative practice, then, is one that acts as a public thing around which citizens can constellate as they express their grief or honour the dead. Thus, public commemoration *structurally* resists the work of neoliberal rationality, while, in the

case of The Toronto Homeless Memorial, orienting participants to the lives of those who have been disappeared by this very same rationality. It offers participants the possibility of acknowledged grief and a space of appearance, from which to act and speak together. It offers a site for publicness to occur—in the sense that a plurality of heterogeneous others can attend, listen, bear witness, and speak.

The Pedagogical

The term "pedagogy" is heard often in Faculties of Education, but it seems to have many different meanings. It is, most often, understood to be something that occurs somewhere in the process of teaching and learning—and here is the crux of the matter—that occurs at schools. There is a popular conflation between pedagogy and schooling that, while not entirely exclusive of "public pedagogy," tends to determine that the central site of/for learning, teaching, and the opportunities for new things to occur, seems to be at this place we call school. The term emerged from early 20th century German theorists[1] with the intent of emphasizing the *relations* between the student and the teacher (Friesen, 2017).

I take public pedagogy very seriously. It is my contention that the departure points for the pedagogical are also found in the possibilities afforded in the everyday, on the street, and in the public square (including the virtual ones). Arguably, our interactions in "school" are inflected by these broader experiences of collective, dialogical, political, and cultural interaction (Giroux, 2003). Of course, the relationship between school and society is much discussed and is itself the departure point for perhaps a very different dissertation. Suffice to say that I am preoccupied with the kinds of *appearances* and relations that happen outside of schools, and the political, cultural, and spatial parameters that effect the possibilities for such

[1] Many contemporary scholars emphasize the work of Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Martin Heidegger. Norm Friesen (2017) points out the influence of Wilhelm Dilthey and his student, Herman Nohl, who specifically related the influence of the pedagogical relation.

educational work. While Friesen (2017) has argued for the fallibility of the teacher opening up experiences of "interruption" that are integral to educational relations (in schools), philosopher of education Gert Biesta (2012a) introduces a different notion of "interruption"—one oriented around cultivating a space for "publicness" to occur. While The Toronto Homeless Memorial and other "pedagogical" activist projects are communicative, educational events, they do so not merely through activist "leaders" acting in the role of "teacher," but by animating the very conditions through which publicness and relational connection might occur.

My understanding of public pedagogy, then, which will be examined further in Chapter 1, is based largely on Biesta's (2012a) work. Though much has been written on the topic of public pedagogy (Sandlin et al., 2010, 2011), from the influence of the media (Giroux, 2001a), forms of insurgent citizenship (Giroux, 2001b), as a feminist project (Dentith et al., 2014), and more, Biesta offers a perspective on public pedagogy that is distinctly committed to "publicness," antiauthoritarian approaches, and the collective negotiation of meaning brought about by artistic practice and dialogical relationship (Sandlin et al., 2017). Indeed, rather than emphasizing a "regime of learning," Biesta is concerned with generating a capacity for political interruption (Biesta, 2012a; Sandlin et al., 2017). I extend these considerations in a few ways.

First, I argue for the use of public *things* (Honig, 2017) around which "the dialogic intersection" (Sandlin et al., 2017, p. 828) can be stabilized and sustained. Participants must be provided with a *thing* to constellate around. Second, I make the case for commemorative practice and monuments of remembrance as offering such a thing insofar as it/they contest the hollowing out of public space (Marquand, 2004; Mitchell, 1995) while offering a plurality of citizens an affective environment in which to grieve together. And, perhaps obviously, a monument/memorial has a materiality to it, a thingness, required to situate participants.

Third, commemoration is inherently oriented around the past, and past others.[2] As such, it rejects the neoliberal reductionism of education as future-focused and a self-improvement tool (Phillips & Ilcan, 2004; Sandlin et al., 2017). Lastly, I articulate what I describe as an *eerie pedagogy*, following cultural theorist Mark Fisher's (Fisher, 2017) understanding of the weird and the eerie. For Fisher, the eerie is an aesthetic mode concerned with the speculative posture that arises in response to "a *failure of absence* or…a *failure of presence*" (Fisher, 2017, p. 61). The latter—failures of *presence*—are my primary concern. The *eerie pedagogy*[3] is one in which, paradoxically, *disappeared* citizens can animate the very space of appearance that Biesta—following Arendt—calls for.

The "eerie pedagogy" makes possible not only the interruption but helps register the gaps in the sensible (see Chapter 4) that negate the possibility for this interruptive work. By registering the pedagogical interruptions of the zone of non-being, I draw attention not only to the enactment of publicness, but such an enactment by/with those specifically abjected from public space and public consciousness. Such an eerie making-present is felt, palpable, through an "affective aesthetics," oriented around a specific public thing. The eerie pedagogy also recognizes the eeriness of public space reinvigorated—the eerie inhabitation of space used for publicness amidst the decline of the public realm, the eradication of public space, and the hegemony of land as units of capital (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Ruins, a popular convention of an eerie aesthetic, are (re)occupied. And, lastly, "eerie pedagogy," the pedagogical presence of this invisibilized community, is eerie insofar as it is

[2] This is not to suggest that commemorative acts are not also concerned with just futures. Participants at the Toronto Homeless Memorial often invoke Mother Jones's words, "mourn the dead, fight like hell for the living"—indeed, the words were once preserved in graffiti above the monument for a very long time (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

[3] Arguably, Biesta's understanding of pedagogy as "interruption" (Biesta, 2012a) has its own eerie resonances amidst the contemporary cultural obsession with "learnification" (Biesta, 2006; Bingham, 2015) and instrumentalization of education. Education for political vitality is eerie insofar as it should not be present, according to neoliberal rationality. In other words, broadly speaking, eerie pedagogy responds to a failure of presence by resisting obfuscation; it thus is characterized by a failure of absence or disappearance—of people, ways of being together, and necessary political work.

reiterated, again and again, in the monthly reappearance of memorial attendees. Such reiteration—or recuperation—affirms the eerie possibility of (co)existence, citizenship, power (in the Arendtian sense), and a space of appearance for dehoused citizens.

The Memorial Site and Interviewees

The Toronto Homeless Memorial features a simple signpost at the entryway to the Church of the Holy Trinity in downtown Toronto. For nearly 25 years, this signpost has been its only "monument," and, on the second Tuesday of every month, a gathering has occurred in this space. The site is known as Trinity Square, and it is located at the western entrance to Toronto's Eaton Centre. While a more thorough description of the site and the monthly event follows in later chapters, I will take a moment here to introduce the interviewees involved in this project.

To offer a comprehensive portrait of the memorial and how it has changed over time, I sought to collaborate with past and present volunteer organizers who have been involved in shaping this commemorative event. Research ethics[4] required me to establish that I was working with a "vulnerable" population, as some organizers have themselves experienced dehousing. While I don't think that it is necessary or worthwhile to share the details of people's experiences with dehousing, given how we are conditioned (in neoliberal times) toward either pity or stigma (neither of which are productive sentiments), I mention this to emphasize that housing activism has long been conducted by both housed and dehoused citizens—it is not a movement merely advocating *for* dehoused individuals, but has a long history of being thoughtfully mobilized *by* victims of neoliberal policies.

[4] Ethics forms and approvals can be found in Appendix A.

I am deeply indebted to Cathy Crowe, Bob Rose, Greg Cook, Janice Towndrow, Rayna Slobodian, and Gigi Grant[5] who engaged in interviews with me. All are publicly known figures in housing activism in Canada. Their years of commitment, critical thinking, and creativity have made the memorial what it is today. It is my deep hope that this dissertation has managed to do justice to the conversations we were able to have and the insights that each of them contributed to this project. While it is difficult to distil their organizing efforts to specified sets of years, given that they each remain committed in various ways to this work, it is fair to say that each of them represents different "eras" of the memorial's existence.

Cathy Crowe and Bob Rose both have been organizing for the right to adequate housing for longer than I have been alive. They have both contributed to documentaries, articles, teaching, public events, and several books. They provide insight into what I would call the "early years" of the memorial's existence, in addition to the many years of vigils and memorial events that pre-date the memorial in its current form. Greg Cook[6] and Janice Towndrow are part of a community of people who managed the research and planning necessary to sustain the memorial at the end of "the TDRC years" (1998-2012).[7] At this point, the memorial had to carry on despite the end of an era of housing activism that featured fully funded positions and office space as a result of the TDRC's nationally recognized efforts and the dedicated leadership of people like Cathy Crowe, Bob Rose, Steve Lane, James Kagoshima, Melvin Tipping, Michael Shapcott, David Hulchanksi, Beric German, and many more.[8] Through the countless hours spent building a network—and in constant

[5] All of whom have waived anonymity and have asked to be named in this project. This is in keeping with my research ethics clearance.
[6] Greg Cook remains an integral part of organizing the memorial today.
[7] The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC), in conjunction with the Church of the Holy Trinity, was behind the efforts to initiate the memorial in Trinity Square in 2000. More details on the history of the TDRC are found throughout this dissertation but see Chapter 5 for details on their inception.
[8] For a more comprehensive list, see Cathy Crowe's book, *Dying for a home* (2007).

communication across this complicated network of shelters, drop-ins, etc.—Cook, Towndrow, and several others sustained the profound work of this grassroots commemorative effort. This has been, in part, thanks to the partnership of organizations like Sanctuary Toronto and Toronto Urban Native Ministries, who have freed up their staff to prioritize the work of the memorial. Finally, Rayna Slobodian and Gigi Grant have been part of a more recent effort to reshape and enrich the capacity of this commemorative event. Slobodian is responsible for the development of the most recent iteration of an online memorial page, which regularly updates the names read aloud at the memorial—along with a history and much of the memorial's recorded poetry preserved here as well. Grant has been responsible for encouraging an increasingly diverse community involved in the core elements of planning and facilitating the memorial event (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). And several of these organizers have recently been involved in a book project, edited by Cathy Crowe and Greg Cook, aimed at illuminating the City's response to dehoused people amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Cook & Crowe, 2022).

Theoretical Framework and *Theorizing with*

This work carries with it an Arendtian commitment to the public realm. Hannah Arendt (1958) warned of the dissolution of the public and private realm into what she called the social realm—a realm given to factionalism and devoid of the essential character of plurality. Modern society, according to Arendt, is losing its capacity to provide spaces for freedom to appear—for heterogeneous groups of people to gather and assert their unique singularity, to listen and be heard, and to usher in new ways of organizing and thinking about their world. Instead, politics is characterized by increasingly homogeneous thinking, polarization, conformism, and repetition. Indeed, the word "democracy" has been distilled down to merely representative government, as we simultaneously lose the very public spaces

required for plural voices to appear together (Cavarero & Gervase, 2021). I will be using the idea of a public realm for a few important reasons. The idea of "publics," while important (Savage, 2013), risks relativizing those publics and strays from the Arendtian idea of plurality. My intention is to highlight the gathering together of people around common objects—following Hannah Arendt and political theorist Bonnie Honig—in a way that allows for contestations and the agonism associated with democratic forms of dialogue. Indeed, in Fisher's (2009) estimation, given the hyper-individualism of late capitalism, an Arendtian understanding of togetherness is the necessary antidote, rather than cultivating distinct, siloed publics. While this Arendtian logic clearly inflects upon this project in a significant way, I also draw on several other political theorists and educational philosophers that extend, or even critique, Arendt's work. Such thinkers include Gert Biesta, Jacques Rancière, Bonnie Honig, Adriana Cavarero, Ann Chinnery, Judith Butler, and others.

In addition to the scholars that I draw on in order to make sense of The Toronto Homeless Memorial, I also make a point of attending to contemporary artists, poets, and musicians who offer weird and/or eerie (Fisher, 2017) resonances with this project. The memorial itself features a vast community of artists and poets, and they too, are cited throughout this dissertation. Methodologically, I engage in an iterative process that covers the contextual and conceptual ground from archive to interviews, from artists to theorists, from personal experience to historical context, and everywhere in between. The writing process intentionally weaves these varied accounts together to emphasize that I am indeed *theorizing with* the organizers and poets of the Toronto Homeless Memorial. It is my hope that, at times, their voices lead, while at others, I offer insights by putting their words and experiences in conversation with my own, and that of the scholars I cite.

Aside from the political significance mentioned above, there is an even more obvious pedagogical bent to the memorial. It is one that seeks to remember specific people—

citizens—who have died because of a lack of housing. For many involved, it is deeply relational and personal. The event finds itself up against an ever-worsening crisis of dehousing, and mobilizes a grammar of non-violence, of political resistance, and of activist solidarity, committed to honouring the dead, fighting for the living, and generating an archive—or counter-archive[9]—of/for the uniquely beautiful individuals who have been lost, and those who gather to remember them. In keeping with these purposes, this project also seeks to study the artistic and archival practices that have appeared out of this commemorative-pedagogical commitment. It is a memorial committed to making public the policy landscape that has created this crisis, making known the unique individuals who have been killed by such a violent policy landscape, and preserving the ongoing creative interventions mobilized amidst such precariousness.

This work thus maps the archive of the memorial itself. Though the Toronto Homeless Memorial in its current state began in 2000, it is part of an older context and tradition of commemorative activism that dates to 1989, in the form of the Rupert Memorial (see Chapter 2). Additionally, it is part of a broader tradition of commemorative activism from/concerning the 1970/80s and post-dictatorship Latin American context (the violent Chilean coup of 1973—and subsequent years of dictatorial rule—and the Argentinian

[9] There are many ways to understand and interpret the term "counter-archive." As it sounds, it is often associated with "anti-archival" work that positions buried or silenced historical accounts *against* dominant, hegemonic ones. Counter-archives often have a different location—the "community-based" archive—but they also can also exhibit a different *materiality*. While a simple definition of a "counter-archive" would acknowledge archival material that exists outside of mainstream institutional or state archive settings, there are also particular curatorial practices and artifacts often associated with a "counter-archive." Such practices and evidence have been described as "archives of feeling" that document the always-present gaps in traumatic histories and necessitate new ways of offering testimony (Cvetkovich, 2003, 2011). Such archives often include the presence of everyday objects, personal items, and other *weird* forms of documentation beyond the conventional formats found in institutional archives (buttons and t-shirts, say, in contrast to "official" reports). In the case of this dissertation, I argue that the grassroots/community-based archive (such as the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network's website) is not the only site of/for "counter-archive." Rather, the state archive can be filled with material that draws attention to the silences, absences, and incompletions that exist in the archive (see chapter 2). An important element of counter-archival practice is "archive activism" (Cvetkovich, 2011, p. 32; Juhasz, 2006, p. 320) that seeks to free up the preserved material in creative exhibitions, installations, and other moments of appearance that "bring the archive to life" (Cvetkovich, 2011, p. 32).

military dictatorship from 1976-83, as examples), in which the public mobilized around commemorative events to 1) honour the memory of the disappeared, 2) while also seeking to repair the public realm from the riddling effects of this state-induced crime (Hite, 2013). I offer a history that draws on the archive and an analysis of the archival practices themselves that have preserved and sustained this ongoing memory work. Leaning on interviews conducted with memorial organizers, I attempt to establish a conceptual vocabulary of/for the Toronto Homeless Memorial. At the same time, I recognize that such a project is always incomplete and in-process—such a vocabulary is ever-evolving, and my own analysis will, hopefully, participate in an ongoing history of housing activism and commemorative pedagogy aimed at grieving the lost and repairing our democratic commitments to publicness—and, of course, to our neighbours.

"That which cannot be said"

Though explicitly addressed in Chapter 2, there is, throughout this dissertation, an attempt to let the archive speak. I draw heavily on archival material from the TDRC archive and other material that explores the thinking and the historical context behind the memorial. While I do engage with several theorists who help animate the unique grammar of the memorial, I also approach memorial organizers and archival material as theoretically rich and conceptually significant. As with any archival research, one must come to terms with that which *does not* appear in the archives. And, as someone intending to add my own account to the memorial's archives, I had to constantly make decisions about what stories and testimonies I would include—and conversely, which accounts I would leave out. I want to be very clear that this was not a matter of space; it was not because things did not fit the word count, nor was it an attempt to *erase* narratives or accounts that did not align with my portrayal of this commemorative project. On the contrary, there were testimonies I did not

include out of respect for the storyteller; I felt an ethical responsibility to acknowledge when this—an academic dissertation—was not the right forum for certain stories.

Cultural anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler (2009) outlines three barriers in the process of "attending to that which is 'not written'" (p. 3). There are things that have not been written because they were deemed apparent to the community, things unwritten because they could not be articulated, and things unrecorded because they "could not be said" (Stoler, 2009, p. 3). While in Stoler's account "that which could not be said" is a reference to the imperial common sense that governed and censored additions to the archive, I adopt an ethic of care that offers a new meaning to "that which cannot be said." In conducting interviews, reflecting on personal narratives of which I am intimately familiar, and in engaging in archival research, I have sought to identify "that which cannot be said" in this public forum as it is too painful, too "close," or not my story to tell. There have been several instances where I have decided (or have been asked) to withdraw an account (or a particular detail) from this dissertation. In each case, I have tried to do justice to the storyteller, their intentions, and the pedagogical and ethical work of such exclusions. It has been always complicated, and I cannot be sure I have always made the correct choice, but my respect for the people and the testimonies involved in this process has, continually, surmounted other considerations. Despite having ethics approval to work with organizers and observe this public event, I do not claim ownership over the forms of witnessing that occur here. Using my own discretion has become an important part of this project; when in doubt, I avoided dealing with what "could not be said," or, more accurately, what could not be repeated in *this context*. This ethical witnessing project undertaken here is therefore intentionally incomplete. It lacks at least some of the affective moments of oral testimony. It cannot capture the tears or the visceral weight of grief. But, perhaps, amidst these gaps, the reader may come to sense what is "not written." It is my hope, in fact, that this work might engender the kind of sensibility that orients the

reader toward such gaps, such fissures, and where they might appear around us in our day to day lives. The unwritten testimonies call out to each of us; there are local injustices that require our attention, that we might gather together and engender ways to sense, to listen, and to stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016).

Methodology

I come to this project as a witness. In paying attention to the ways thing appear, reappear, and call into question certain banalities (Hite, 2013), I adopt the posture of researcher-as-witness. Following education and memory studies scholars Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert's (1997) understanding of witnessing, this project features the enunciation of trauma, while being impelled to act in the world in a manner that "re-presents" the work of the memorial to/for the public (Simon & Eppert, 1997). In other words, my methodology is premised on the intention to "bear (carry)…and thus transport and translate" (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 178) the weight of trauma, the creative interventions, and the words and ideas of the organizers with whom I am in conversation. It has also been my intention to go about this, perhaps unconventionally, with the widest possible angle approach to the socio-political and philosophical perspectives that might lend this project generative vitality. I have sought to integrate political theorists, philosophers, education scholars, poets, musicians, and activists as part of a constellation that could help me bear and translate the vision, context, and testimony of the Toronto Homeless Memorial.

Though I adopted a three-pronged ethnographic approach to assist in gathering the "thickest" dataset possible, my methodology is influenced by an Arendtian-inspired "thinking what we are doing," rather than a positivistic mining of social science data. Rather than look for trends in large social or cultural structures, I am examining a particular political experience. Thus, this dissertation is rich in social and political thought, without being

informed by sociological/anthropological inquiry. In other words, the ethnographic components of this project have allowed me to theorize *with* research participants, while being alert to "that which cannot be said." My Arendtian commitment to "publicness" is also evident in the public figures I interviewed—and in their shared desire to be publicly acknowledged in this project. I should also emphasize that *theorizing with* them does not make this "Participatory Action Research." I take full responsibility for the words written here and the attempts made to make sense of this complex commemorative project. What is true, is that rather than attempt to prove a particular hypothesis concerning the memorial and its cultural or political effects, this project is generating a conceptual vocabulary to try to understand and come to terms with commemorative pedagogy and its relationship to publicness. It is also injecting historicity into the dehousing crisis and its ongoing effects. And lastly, it is offering insight into the archival work of activists, while contributing to the activist-archive itself through the preservation of stories and a broader historical narrative. On this last point, the reader will note that the chapters themselves, while providing theoretical commentary, also feature a commitment to historical storytelling (Yardley, 2008a)—they weave together the story of a memorial that finds its genesis in the late 1980s and remains, to this day, a necessary feature in the housing activism across Canada.

My ethnographic components included the use of semi-structured interviews, ethnographic observation, and archival research. From 2021-2023, I attended the monthly memorial. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its associated influence on my ethics clearance, I was thankfully able to attend the gathering during the pandemic via the livestream, which organizers initiated in response to the pandemic lockdowns. Observing the memorial event allowed me to better understand the routines, practices, and aesthetic commitments of the monthly event (Gracy, 2004). Examining the spatial, temporal, and aesthetic registers at play during the memorial event was essential in mapping the way things

appear. Given that the public realm actually requires literal space(s) for appearance (Arendt, 1958; Mitchell, 1995), it was important to analyse the ways the memorial adopts, confronts, and resists the corporate architecture of Toronto's Eaton Centre. While neoliberalism has led to the loss—through commercialization and privatization—of public space (Honig, 2013, 2017; Marquand, 2004; Mitchell, 1995), the memorial has found ways to interrupt these processes by activating its cultural practices on the doorstep of one of the central bastions of capitalist enterprise.

Over the course of these same years, I engaged in archival research using the memorial website, its associated Facebook page (where the livestreams were posted), and, most significantly, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee's files that have been preserved at the City of Toronto Archives. The TDRC files include thousands of documents, many of which relate to the commemorative efforts leading up to and including the Toronto Homeless Memorial. The recording of ongoing cultural practices, including dozens of articles, videos, petitions, public banners, and artworks, constitute an "archive in the making" (Stoler, 2018, p. 55), insofar as new additions (this project included) are ever being added to the memorial website. Given that the Toronto Homeless Memorial, as of the COVID-19 pandemic, was videotaped and posted online, there is now even more material to extend the ongoing archival contributions. In this stage, I examined how the memorial inhabits space on the media (and physical) landscape, while also offering an archival ethnography (Gracy, 2004) of the work of the memorial. This "archival ethnographical" approach meant that I constantly paid attention not only to the contents of the archive, but how they were being curated and the cultural practices associated with this curatorial project.[10]

[10] This was complicated by the fact that most organizers did not see themselves as "archivists" (Crowe, personal communication, February 2, 2022; Slobodian, personal communication, February 1, 2022). Thus, the term "activist-archivist" that I apply to certain memorial organizers is most assuredly my own label, given their years of preserving and sharing the documentation of this crisis.

I perceive the organizers of the memorial as keepers of "a radical archive of emotion" (Salvio, 2017, p. 59), which, as Paula Salvio relates, encapsulates more than traditional archives can possibly contain. Archival ethnography encourages the analysis of the people and processes involved in forms of record creation and record keeping, in order to understand the sociocultural (Gracy, 2004) and political (J. M. Schwartz & Cook, 2002) dimensions of this work. Karen Gracy (2004) emphasizes the importance of learning about the archival environment, which includes "the cultural perspective of those responsible for the creation, collection, care, and use of records" (p. 337). In addition, my research is intended to further the archival work of the memorial—it is a rendering of, and contribution to, the process, thinking, and dialogical practices that constitute the memorial as artifice, in the Arendtian sense (Arendt, 1958).[11] As a result of this commitment to an archival ethnography, my approach necessitated conducting interviews with memorial organizers—including those involved in curating this activist-archive. The interviews themselves are an attempt to record a more extensive oral history and conceptual vocabulary to help contribute to this ever-dynamic archive.

It is worthwhile to interject here to punctuate this methodological choice: why conduct interviews and not an oral history? While my interviews help extend the oral history of the memorial, they are not, methodologically speaking, oral history (see Abrams, 2016).[12] The first reason is that I did not set out to write a history of the memorial; my initial and central purpose has been to explain what the memorial is, generating a conceptual vocabulary and drawing attention to its political and educational situation. Secondly, while an oral

[11] In keeping with "that which cannot be said," Ann Laura Stoler (2018) notes that conducting this "improvisational" (Stoler, 2018, p. 52) archival work relies on oral testimony, which can involve "specificities…too painful to rehearse" (Stoler, 2018, p. 53)—or, in my estimation, too painful to *repeat*.

[12] Oral history is preoccupied with "both the act of recording and the record that is produced" (Abrams, 2016, p. 2). As methodology, it prioritizes a recalling of a past account to preserve (and later interpret) personal testimony in the form of a transcribed text. While oral history is uniquely focused on the past, my project is focused on the present (and past and future) participation in a commemorative event—strangely, though commemoration itself (and certainly aspects of this project) is decidedly concerned with the past, the *interview* offers me a chance to bring the interviewee along (into the present) as co-theorist and interlocutor.

historian seeks to collect new material—additional accounts—to be recorded and submitted to the archive, this project was full of material that "could not be said." Some of it was redacted in the telling, while, in other cases, my work as researcher required constant judgment calls concerning what details were mine to share, and what must be withheld. Given my consideration of the interviewee as co-theorist, the interview, as method, offered a *dialogical* connection with each participant. Rather than offering prompts, starting a recorder, and pressing "go," I was keen to map the terrain of the memorial in conversation, letting stories unfold, but not *demanding* stories. In that sense, some of the interviews "felt" more like oral history than others; more often, they felt like rigorous analysis, from the macro-level political-philosophical to the small-scale analysis of housing policy, and everywhere in-between. Each interview, of course, contained some of everything—through the personal and the political, the radically affective and the analytical, we collectively arrived at an understanding of what was going on, historically, politically, and pedagogically.

I conducted six semi-structured interviews between January and March of 2022. Each interview lasted up to an hour or more and though based on the same set of questions, were ultimately open-ended conversations that meandered through relevant topics and ideas. In some cases, there were brief follow-up emails with organizers for clarification.[13] As a result of the pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually, recorded, and transcribed entirely manually by me. The repetitious listening involved in transcription allowed me another opportunity to sit with these significant conversations. Each interviewee is someone that I hold immense respect for; each interview was as thought-provoking as it was sad. There were powerful memories, raw emotions, and deep, shared grief. I am deeply indebted to each of

[13] The epistolary address of the email was, of course, in stark contrast to the affective nature of the dialogues I have described above. While email correspondence has helped to fill in "gaps" missing from my account, it was the sonic and contingent quality of these various conversations that will stay with me. It is, also, very much my intent to "continue the conversation" in whatever way that looks with each of the interviewees involved in this project. Such conversations are never concluded or conclusive—for it is in and through the dialogical that truly emancipatory anti-oppressive pedagogy is continually built (Frank, 2004; Freire & Ramos, 1984).

these individuals for offering their time and energy to this project. In particular, Cathy Crowe is largely responsible[14] for the preservation of TDRC documents at the City of Toronto Archives—she invited me to access these files as, at the start of this process, they were still held in the archives as accessible "by donor permission."[15] I was continually in disbelief at the amount of work (very much in the Arendtian sense) involved in organizing and preserving over 15 years of written communications, audio recordings, photographs, newspaper clippings, academic studies, speeches, and more. Much of this dissertation could not have been written without the tireless work of Cathy Crowe and others who made this information accessible in this way. In addition, I am indebted to the early conversations I had with Greg Cook and Rayna Slobodian, who encouraged this project from its earliest germinal stages—they suggested a project encompassing the philosophy, history, and politics of the memorial, which is what I hope has emerged here.

With countless pages of notes from the memorial and the archive, along with transcriptions from the interviews and copies of archival material, I set about an iterative process of making sense of this "data." While I did initially code interview transcripts in an effort to pay attention to dominant themes that emerged (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), I found I was constantly returning to the original interviews during the writing process in an effort to stay "in conversation" with them. Each time I circled back to the interviews, I felt I was better able to engage in an ethical manner, developing a theoretical montage made possible by the weaving together of narrative, history, and theoretical considerations (Yardley, 2008b). Artist and multi-media essayist Ainslie Yardley emphasizes the need for narrative in research that delves into "the artefacts of memory" (Yardley, 2008a, para. 18), while cohering the work of story-gathering and interpretation through a "narrative ethic" that sets

[14] Along with David Hulchanski and others from the TDRC.
[15] It was during this project that the 10-year "hold" expired, and they became entirely publicly accessible.

the “boundaries” (para. 23) of what is told and what is withheld—"that which cannot be said.” Indeed, this theoretical montage also required a constant return to the archival material as well. Thus, the writing process occurred through a counter-archival sensibility that was an attempt to tell “as full a story as possible” (J. M. Schwartz & Cook, 2002, p. 18).

Figure 1. TDRC Files: Only a fraction of the material.

Approaching the Chapters

In the following section, I will explain how each chapter employs theory to work with the interviews, the archival material, and reveal the historical context out of which the Toronto Homeless Memorial emerged. Each chapter returns to the central theme of commemorative practice amidst the decline of the public realm. They differently engage in the reinvigoration of publicness, the threats of neoliberal rationality, the atmosphere of the memorial itself, and the conceptual vocabulary that animates this important political work.

In **Chapter 1**, *The pedagogy of grief: Neoliberalism, Dehousing, and The Toronto Homeless Memorial*, I begin by articulating how the memorial encourages plurality and a space of appearance for those abjected from a certain version of the public sphere. Here, the scholarly contributions that most heavily inflect upon this project are introduced—including Hannah Arendt, Bonnie Honig, Jacques Rancière, Ann Chinnery, and Gert Biesta. The

memorial enacts a spatial practice that confronts the privatization of public lands and the alienation of certain citizens from these lands. Drawing on Gert Biesta (2012a), I explain how the memorial constitutes the kind of public pedagogy that itself "enacts a concern for 'publicness'" (p. 684). In addition, this chapter notes the ways the event sustains political solidarity amongst disparate groups of activists, while reminding participants of their responsibility for and proximity to the spirits of the past.

Chapter 2, entitled *The memorial archive: Counter-archival practice, counter-archival thinking, and the refusal to disappear*, directly addresses the memorial's archival material and the curation of that material. I propose that the activist-archivist is a major player within the public pedagogy of housing activists. In contrast to treating the archive as a colonial apparatus, housing activists have recovered the archive as a potential site of/for insurgent, pedagogical address. I draw on scholars of memory studies and education, including Roger Simon, Mario Di Paolantonio, and Ann Chinnery, among others, to help me explore this argument. Elaborating on the concept of public pedagogy, I reveal the ways the conventional state archive has been used by housing activists to counter hegemonic narratives, while embedding their own forms of contestation. Thus, the archive becomes a context for enacting publicness—insofar as an archive is, itself, a public thing—and a medium for the communication of alternative accounts—a pedagogy *for* the public, according to Biesta (2012a). Thus, the TDRC files are an example of counter-archival work that encourages publicness itself—the ever-fraught terrain upon which citizens grapple with the material laying a claim on our attention (and as is especially the case with archives, the historical actors who achieve immortality (Arendt, 1958) through permanent preservation). This chapter also introduces the historical context of the late 1980s and the 1990s, including the Rupert Hotel Coalition, the "Freezing Deaths" inquest, and the murder of Edmond Yu.

Each of these significant moments signal both the shift into a neoliberal ordering of society and the resulting forms of activism that would respond to such violence.

Chapter 3, *The neoliberal turn in Toronto*, traces a political history of Toronto, focusing mostly on the late 1990s. This period saw the rise of neoliberal policies that led to the devastation of public housing, but it also featured notable examples of neoliberal rationality attempting to squash forms of publicness, the political work of citizens, and the democratic accountability of state actors. Drawing on archival material and other historical accounts, this chapter helps to situate the central problematic driving this project, which is the loss of publicness, the crisis of dehousing, and the pedagogical efforts to contest such processes. This chapter foregrounds the disappearance of public things and the rise of *homo oeconomicus* within neoliberal rationality as observed through the reshaping of civic institutions like City Hall. The ruptures in the realm of the political that occurred in this short period are a case study in neoliberal "mega" government, which, while promising the end of "big government," gave rise to a political elite that listened less to citizens and failed to acknowledge their failures. To cut government spending, this new political regime forced the amalgamation of six lower-tier municipalities into what we now know as Toronto, while manufacturing untenable social and political conditions for the most marginalized citizens within the "megacity." Drawing heavily on the TDRC files, this chapter also traces the account of Dusty Fiske, Bonnie Briggs, and the "We Are You" Memorial Project, which pre-dated the Toronto Homeless Memorial as it exists today. These accounts overlap with this broader neoliberal turn in ways that provide a case study of the curtailing of publicness in Toronto.

Chapter 4, *An atmosphere of listening and wonder: The paradoxical quality of appearing from the exclusion-zone,* examines a response to the political and educational impasse posed by the historical context revealed in Chapter 3. First, I offer a detailed material

description of the memorial as it exists today. Then, drawing on philosophy of education scholars, the TDRC archive, and interviews with memorial volunteers, I make a case for the ways this event responds to this political malaise through the cultivation of a felicitous atmosphere wherein citizens can utter words, listen, and be recognized. In the context of public pedagogy, just as in the conventional classroom (Bingham et al., 2010), I argue that this involves "refusing the refusals" that preserve the ruling power relations. I borrow from writer/musician Jonathan Meiburg's image of a "chrysalis" as this kind of zone of non-appearance. The writhing body within the chrysalis has not been afforded the necessary ingredients for a political life—one in which they can appear. They are, in the words of Rancière, relegated to the status of a noisemaker (one can imagine the muffled speech from within the chrysalis). An atmosphere of "listening" and "wonder" grants ontological status and *metamorphizes* the noisemaker into a speaking subject, whose words matter. Working with philosophers Judith Butler and Ann Chinnery, I note how, at the same time, such an atmosphere extends the possibility for others to speak of their past-others, extending ontological affirmation in cross-temporal relations of care. In other words, at the Toronto Homeless Memorial, it is also the dead that speak, resist erasure, and are welcomed in an atmosphere of listening and wonder. Both the living and the dead are, one might say, emancipated from the chrysalis.

While Chapter 4 establishes the ways in which housing activists are at work creating opportunities for listening, **Chapter 5**, *On the media and the framing of bad news good*, reveals the alienating neoliberal order that interferes with how such work is perceived. These democratic, productive utterances—these opportunities for listening and learning—are confronted with a disaster industry of media spectacle and a society with a severely diminished capacity for paying attention. I take up a central concern of memorial organizers: that for "good" political outcomes, the memorial has had to rely on media spectacles

concerning tragic events. This concern has allowed me to explore some of the dilemmas at the core of this project: what role do aesthetics play in interrupting neoliberal logic? How is public pedagogy being developed through the Toronto Homeless Memorial? How do creative/artistic interventions inform Toronto's housing activism, as well as influence scholarly and popular understandings of "homelessness"? How do the affective capacities of memorialization (and the memorial's associated counter-archive) precipitate new ways of thinking and feeling? Dehousing is a situation of temporal disconnect where the speed of media output is not in keeping with the slow unravelling of the crisis. Good pedagogical *opportunities*—that is, a forum in which people appear together—are often a response to traumatic media narratives. While the media acted as a "filter" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a) for activists, public attention—and thus, *attendance* (at the memorial or other rallies)—was at risk of being mobilized through the spectacle of bad news.

In response to the phenomenon of what I term "bad news good," I draw on scholar of historical consciousness Susan Crane's conceptualizing of "Nothing" and Mark Fisher's (2017) notion of "the weird and the eerie" alongside several examples from the housing activism related to the memorial. I argue that the weird interruption—that which shocks the audience into re-examining the understandings of the world we have taken for granted (Fisher, 2017)—is central to the pedagogy *for* the public within housing activism. Organizers have also found several ways to orient the public to notice what I call the hegemony of nothingness. The manner of not-seeing the violence of dehousing—the "negative hallucination" (Fisher, 2017, p. 75)—is confronted through the eerie mode that invites a curiosity about what has been missing. This occurs through the poets—and other aesthetic interventions—of the memorial, and through what Gigi Grant calls "ceremony becoming the political force." When weird/eerie modes attune us to the hegemony of nothingness, we are

made alert to the disappearances, to the obfuscation of loss, while resisting the tendency to exploit that loss by surrendering to "bad news good."

In **Chapter 6**, *Dehousing and the conceptual vocabulary of war*, I explain how housing activism has long been characterized by a commitment to non-violence. I begin by tracing the historical context of the term "dehousing." This chapter then orients itself around the notion of "dehousing" as significant to the Toronto Homeless Memorial and TDRC's operative discourses. While I use this word frequently throughout this dissertation, here I pause to emphasize the origins of this word "dehousing" itself and what it tells us about the crisis, and our capacity to respond. I am also paying attention here to what this word tells us about the ethical and ontological commitments of housing activists themselves. The use of "dehousing," and the broader conceptual vocabulary of war, is a way to express this crisis as the result of active government participation, specific political choices, and related to a historical context of violent dispossession of civilian life. The "war on the poor" has been just as much about the deaths in the "exclusion-zone" as the marginalization of their dissenting voices. Further, housing activists, in gesturing to a context of dehousing and war, establish themselves in non-violent opposition to *all* acts of war, whether domestic or international. This commitment to non-violence, I argue, is not a by-product of observing people die without housing. Rather, non-violent participation is an essential characteristic of housing activism, given the way it is manifested in peaceful protest, their opposition to war *everywhere*, and the coalitions built across activist movements with a commitment to peace. While the deaths of friends and family members incited action by highlighting the urgency of the crisis, housing activists largely operated from an ethical commitment to non-violence and an ontological framework that viewed each civilian life as inherently valuable and grievable.

While the connections between militarism and neoliberal dehousing are complex, I argue that there is an eerie quality to the undertheorized relationships between the politics of

global military expansion and domestic housing policy. If we can no longer afford social housing, then why is military spending ever-increasing? What does this say about our society? If there is indeed a "war on the poor," then what does this mean for the underclass? If the "exclusion-zone" is to be conceptualized as "enemy citizens," then is there even a point in discussions of public pedagogy? Are we passed the point of negotiation? I argue that the conceptual grammar of dehousing has the capacity to awaken us to the urgency of reinvigorating a democratic public sensibility, one that responds—insofar as there is still a response-ability—to hyper-militarism with public things (including, obviously, a commitment to public housing). The concept need not lure us into surrendering to a class war mentality, which forecloses the possibilities for dialogue and negotiation, but rather such a concept should weigh upon us and force us to *change* our toxic ways of living (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). Indeed, we might follow the example of housing activists who themselves have rejected war in all its forms, even as neoliberal capitalism seems to ever-desire to wage war with the underclass. As urged in Chapter 5, let us not be spectators to this arrangement, but rather bear witness to (and participate in) the non-violent opposition of citizens to dehousing and war in all its myriad forms. Such participation should indeed be public and thus, pedagogical.

The Toronto Homeless Memorial is a simple event, convening in front of a simple monument, which takes stock of the intersecting crises of dehousing and the decline of the public realm. It takes note of a historical moment where Nothing is happening, and bears witness to Something—and somebodies—worthy of paying attention to. It is a reminder to remember—to account for the historical context in which we find ourselves, to make sense of our past, and to reanimate the memory of those who have died. By cultivating a space of appearance in such a context, such a commemorative practice facilitates appearance amidst erasure, grief amidst silence, and the capacity for those without speech (or capable only of

being heard as noisemakers) to articulately, and affectively, interrupt the rationality we are collectively subjected to in neoliberal times.

Chapter 1

The pedagogy of grief: Neoliberalism, dehousing, and the Toronto Homeless Memorial

Introduction

In this chapter we will explore first the context of neoliberal dehousing which led to the emergence of commemorative activist projects across Ontario. I then turn to how I am taking up the concept of publicness. I begin with my central topic of consideration: how do public memorials generate and reinvigorate the public realm? I understand the public memorial as both a public thing and as an aesthetic object, which unveils new ways of thinking and responding to the crisis. To provide evidence of these theoretical linkages and claims, I communicate the various ways the Toronto Homeless Memorial plays a sustaining role in/for housing activists and dehoused citizens. The memorial preserves Trinity Square as the last space of publicness in Toronto, it cultivates togetherness through object-mediated relations, it enhances activist solidarity by providing an outlet for grief that sustains plurality, and it animates the spirits of the past that continue to offer testimony through the plural assembly in attendance there.

Context

In the 1980s and 90s, the introduction of neoliberal policies meant that federally funded housing initiatives in the US and Canada were cut or downloaded onto local governments. Canada's national housing program was scrapped and social assistance rates in Ontario were decimated. At the same time, cities began to be re-engineered for/by the elite (Busà, 2017; Stein, 2019), who sought to financialize housing and privatize spaces where citizens could congregate. Public spaces were redesigned with the goal of making spaces for consumer capitalism rather than civic engagement (Honig, 2017; Low & Smith, 2013). All of

this (and more) is part of a devastating trend that David Hulchanski (2010; 2000), over twenty years ago, called "dehousing."

As public housing and social assistance were gutted, there were drastic increases of people in situations of precarity (Butler, 2006). By the late 90s in Canada, people working or living close to the realities of dehousing were witnessing overcrowded shelters, worsening public health concerns (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee & German, 2000), hundreds of newly dehoused citizens, and dozens of preventable deaths every year (Briggs, 1999a; Crowe, 1998; de Villa, 2018; Hwang, 2000; Hwang et al., 2009). In response, activists began to hold candlelit vigils and marches to City Hall for those dying on the streets (Homes Not Bombs, 2004; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 2005c; Vincent & Boyle, 1997). Grassroots memorials were developed in response to particularly violent deaths, such as the OCAP Death Watch (Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, 1997), the Coalition Against Racist Police Violence (Coalition Against Racist Police Violence, 1997a), the Homeless Memorial Committee (Hall, 1997), The Annual Homeless Memorial (*The Annual Homeless Memorial 1999*, 1999), and the Rupert Hotel Coalition (The Rupert Hotel Coalition, 1999).

Every month since October 27, 2000 (Gulliver, 2000),[16] the Toronto Homeless Memorial has taken place in Trinity Square, in downtown Toronto, in the shadow of Toronto's Eaton Centre. At noon, on the second Tuesday of every month, a gathering—of anywhere from 25 to 150+ people—commemorates those who have died without housing in Toronto. Poems are read, songs are sung, and various artworks are shared. The event always returns to a structure wherein the new names being added to the memorial are read aloud, followed by a moment of silence. Anyone who knew the individuals are invited to come forward to share a story or some form of public testimony. A small monument, in the form of

[16] Some archival accounts suggest that March 6, 2001 was the first official monthly memorial (Crowe, 2001a; 'Deaths of Homeless Marked', 2001; Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, 2018).

a signpost, is the only permanent indication of this ongoing commemorative practice. The monument has featured several designs over the years. Until recently, it always contained the ever-growing list of those who had died. Now however, the number of names exceeds the space available. Attendees are now pointed to the memorial's online archive, where the list of names continues to grow (Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, 2020).

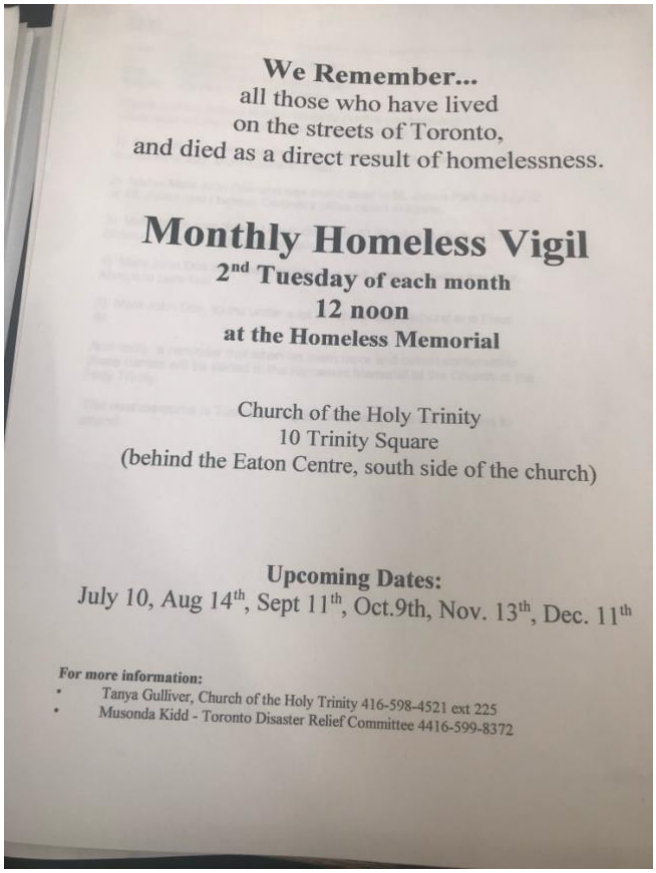

Figure 2. Monthly Homeless Vigil promotional material.

The Public, Public Pedagogy, and Public Things

The phrase 'public pedagogy,' in the sense of this project, is the pedagogical work done in public, for the public, but also, as Gert Biesta (2012a) suggests, for publicness itself. I argue that commemorative practice enacts a pedagogy of grief that can sustain publicness. In other words, in gathering and tarrying with grief together around an object, individuals are given an opportunity for collective care. But this collective care is not merely an inward-looking form of care, but rather functions as care for and revivification of the public realm—a

space for acting and speaking together. Commemorative practice is thus also an invitation to remember and preserve the work of acting and speaking human beings.

Hannah Arendt (1958) stressed the importance of emerging from the private realm into the "harsh light" of the public—into sites for deliberation and agonistic contestation, where we speak and act and cultivate the conditions for remembrance. She warned of a society at-risk of dissolving private and public into the social realm—a posture of mass-thinking or conformism; a site devoid of individuality and given to political tribalism. For Arendt, the significance of the public realm was that it was a site of togetherness, where distinct beings could act, speak, and listen to the voices of others in a plurality. Bonnie Honig (2013, 2017) takes up Arendt's notion of publicness and emphasizes the need for a plurality to gather around an object—or a "public thing." Honig suggests that, under neoliberalism, the loss of public things has weakened our capacity to gather as we require things to gather around. Arendt uses the metaphor of the table, which orients and stabilizes the togetherness of those who gather around it. The Toronto Homeless Memorial demonstrates, as I will argue in this chapter, that public things are not dead. They are, at least in this context, "spectacularly precarious" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022), to borrow a phrase from organizer Bob Rose. The memorial demonstrates the role of commemorative practice as an object around which people can gather in plurality. Commemorative practice fosters a togetherness that can indeed revivify the lost world of the public realm. The Toronto Homeless Memorial does this by recuperating bodies who have been disappeared from public view. It is, as organizer Gigi Grant calls it, a "refus[al] to disappear" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022).

I propose that we understand the Toronto Homeless Memorial—and public memorials in general—as aesthetic objects and consequently as a public thing (Honig, 2017) that distinct individuals can gather around in plurality. Hannah Arendt (1958) conceptualized the public

realm as a space of appearance for acting and speaking beings to reveal themselves in all their uniqueness. People require things that have what Arendt calls a "stabilizing" (p. 182) role in their capacity to [quote] "[lie] between people…and bind them together" (p. 182). Following Arendt, Bonnie Honig (2017) argues for public things that orient and stabilize our capacity for togetherness. She writes that such public things give people a thing "to deliberate about, constellate around, or agonistically contest" (p. 5). If a memorial is both public thing and a practice of remembrance, it is because it affords citizens both the tangible—the "thing" as meeting place, ongoing ritual, and aesthetic object to constellate around—as well as the intangible, or what Arendt (1958) calls the "web of human relationships" (p. 184).

I conceive of the public memorial's connection to aesthetics insofar as the aesthetic object allows an issue of concern to be rendered sensible and visible. Following Arendt's phenomenological account, such an insertion into the gaps of what is felt/sensed/seen affords a tangible thing with an affective resonance. In Chapter 5, I explore in more detail the affective capacities of "the weird" and "the eerie," two modes that Mark Fisher (2017) detailed in his final work.[17] While the weird shocks the audience through the insertion of "*that which does not belong*" (Fisher, 2017, p. 61), the eerie gives rise to speculation by drawing attention to nothing where there should be something (or the unknown something—as in the far off *eerie cry*—where there should be nothing).

The memorial as public thing *rallies* together a rich constellation of distinct beings and offers them a thing to gather around, while meanings, processes, or rituals can be reimagined or even agonistically contested by fellow participants—operating as equals. In this chapter, I make the case for the memorial as a pedagogy of grief that sustains the interruptive character of public space, enhances political solidarity, and reminds us of our

[17] It is perhaps fittingly tragic, for this project, that Mark Fisher's *The Weird and the Eerie* was posthumously published as Fisher died during the final stages of writing. In keeping with the concept of the eerie, he himself was conspicuously absent when the book finally emerged in print. I am indebted to his courageous and brilliant work, which masterfully depicted the impasses I take up in this dissertation.

responsibility and proximity to the spirits of the past. By making such an argument, I prepare the groundwork for future chapters that will unearth more of the memorial's historical context, examine how activists have curated archival material to complement this work of remembrance, before delving deeper into the phenomenology and conceptual vocabulary of this commemorative project.

The commemorative turn in public pedagogy: The memorial as "rallying point"

I often return to Gert Biesta's (2012a) typology of public pedagogy as it reminds us of the ways in which the public can be "taught" in a manner that is didactic and homogenizing (pedagogy *for* the public), but also participatory and political (pedagogy *of* the public). One can authoritatively instruct members of the public, but one can also educate people in a manner that facilitates consciousness raising (see Freire & Ramos, 1984). For Biesta, the competing logics of schooling and democracy are at stake: "From a democratic angle it is therefore important to remind ourselves that the world is not a school and also should not become a school" (Biesta, 2012a, p. 692; Bingham et al., 2010). Yet, while a pedagogy *of* the public is certainly more democratic, it is susceptible to what Biesta (2012b) warns of as "the politics of learning" (p. 8). By making "social or political problems into learning problems" (Biesta, 2012a, p. 693), these problems are made the concerns of individuals, rather than the concern of the collective. The "regime of learning" (p. 692) insists that learners learn, rather than emphasizing that people must gather in plurality. Thus, Biesta introduces a third category for public pedagogy—the pedagogy of *publicness.* Biesta (2012a) calls it the pedagogy of "an enactment of a concern for 'publicness'" or "becoming public" (p. 693). Here, we recognize the significance of cultivating space(s) for interruption—what Biesta, following Arendt, suggests is sustaining "a space where freedom can appear" (p. 693).

The pedagogical, in this case, is an experience of possibility afforded by appearing in public—what feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero (2021) calls "the nascent and germinal quality of public happiness" (p. 39). In other words, creating the conditions for newness. This contingency is essential in Arendt's (1958) characterization of the public realm. It is also present in Rancière's (2010) account of staging Dissensus. In Biesta's (2012a) words, "[t]o 'stage' dissensus is to introduce an incommensurable element—an event, an experience and an object—that can act both as a test and as a reminder of publicness" (p. 693). Though Arendt and Rancière have a drastically different interpretation of the political and the social realm, they both emphasize the need for interruption. For Rancière, this interruption emerges from the social, while Arendt insists on the social as merely a site of homogenization and conformity. Arendt maintains the strict phenomenological category of the public realm as the site of plurality and political engagement (martin, 2022a). Without spending too much time on their differences, I want to highlight this concept of the "incommensurable element" (Biesta, 2012a, p. 693). I focus on how such an element—"an event, an experience, and an object"—functions to *remind*.

Here I feel it is worthwhile to grapple with the etymological links we observe in the discourse of memory studies. The "re" in "remind" comes from Old French and Latin words signifying "back from" or "once more." It is etymologically rooted, in some cases, to "ra," as in "rally"—to bring together. "Re" is associated with "coming back" or something "anew"—as in a remnant, which is derived from the Latin "manere," meaning "stay, or abide." Thinking of remnants as "abiding again" or "Staying anew" has interesting implications in discussions of Roger Simon, for instance, as "a thinker of the remnants" (Di Paolantonio, 2015). Memory studies scholars indeed often attempt to return us to conversations long thought to be buried in ruins—literal and figurative. Memory work itself is perhaps best articulated as a work of "abiding" or, others would suggest, "renewing," "recovering," or

"reviving." All of these connote repetition—this etymological sense of "again"—breathing again, becoming active again, becoming conscious again, or living again (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023c). "Rally" is an interesting inclusion in this suite of words, for several reasons. At the most obvious level, "ra" has long been forgotten (the irony of forgetting an etymological link to concepts of remembering) for its association with the "re" prefix. The Old French "ralier" emerged from "alier"—to unite—which has links to words like "ally." At the local level, it is interesting to note that the community drop-in that is facilitated at the Church of the Holy Trinity, up the steps from the Toronto Homeless Memorial, is called "Unity Kitchen." So, to unite again—to rally—is, in its essence, related to these other words we more readily associate with the work of memory. I will argue later for the ways in which memory is implicated in publicness—and vis versa. Perhaps it is worthwhile to consider memory work or commemorative activism as a kind of "rallying point." The Online Etymology Dictionary (2023) words it best: the "place at or about which persons come together for action."

The "incommensurable element" as event/experience/object of and for memory work is a crucial contribution in the landscape of public pedagogy as we understand it today. As Biesta (2012a) says, such an object reminds people of a kinds of spaces required for publicness. It redirects people toward spaces and ways of gathering that "keep open the possibilities for becoming public" (Biesta, 2012a, p. 693). I am arguing that an explicitly *commemorative* event/experience/object can not only give rise to the pedagogy of publicness but can indeed act as a *rallying point* for such pedagogical work. Though not all memorials (and indeed not all sites protest or activism) engender Biesta's notion of publicness, the Toronto Homeless Memorial fosters such an arrangement. In what follows, I elaborate on what this site and example of public pedagogy has sought to accomplish and how I have determined its "interruptive" and generative character over the course of my research.

The last space of publicness

The dissolution of public space—or to put it more accurately, spaces for publicness—is a result of, as organizer Gigi Grant shared, "grabbing the last little bit of land and turning it into profit" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). This takes place in a few different ways. First, it takes place through practices of design that limit the forms of engagement that can exist in/with a space. Publicness can be designed out of space, just as Arendt (1958) argues that the Athenians designed spaces to sustain public exchange. Practices of design can also limit which persons can access a space or find a space meaningful or hospitable to them. Markers of such processes include the rise of rental precarity (Busà, 2017), urban planning as a means to facilitate the financialization of housing (Stein, 2019), and the widespread use of hostile architecture and policing to curtail the equitable occupation and distribution of public space (Bader, 2020; O'Grady et al., 2013a).

The Toronto Homeless Memorial precipitates the opportunity for contestation. It is alive in its capacity for public life. Grant points to the privatization of land and space and the role of the memorial—and Trinity Square more broadly—as a last vestige of public space within an increasingly privatized city (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Amidst mass privatization, Trinity Square offers the conditions for plurality and a space of appearance. The square offers something amidst these contests for land and space, but also it offers something because it is *available* for contestation. Grant describes it as a "hidden" site of "non-consumer" relations (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Citizens here can deliberate around its available uses; it is not yet co-opted by consumer capitalism. Available uses might be a pop-up concert, an encampment during a pandemic, and certainly a commemorative space—ever changing, ever evolving, ever open to contestation. The square is accessible to the practices and needs of the public realm—indeed, its accessibility gives it its truly public character. Grant stresses how unusual a space like this in today's Toronto:

> …Trinity Square, where the memorial is centred, is a really contested area. You have the Eaton Centre right beside us, and the Yonge-Dundas BIA [Business Improvement Area], who acts as the non-lucrative arm of primarily Cadillac Fairview and the Eaton Centre—Cadillac Fairview is the biggest developer in the downtown core of Toronto—and their mandate is really to take up as much land as possible and to make units of currency out of that land for their shareholders. And so, Trinity Square is one of the last places in the downtown core that has not been amalgamated into an accessory of [capitalism]—part of a condo or corporation or so on—it's one of the last pieces of accessible public space that exists in the downtown core. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

Figure 3. Trinity Square.

If Trinity Square is an example—arguably the last example—of public space in Toronto, then it is important to comment on the forces that threaten such a space. For, if it is indeed a/the last site of public contestation, then the forces of consumer capitalism must be hard at work across the 600+ square kilometres that make up this city. Grant laments the way such processes dismantled the publicness of College Park:

> …it's sad because College Park, you know, was also a place like [Trinity Square], but the redefinition of College Park, the heightened security, lighting…the hostile architecture, you know, it really has been made into a private piazza for those several condo buildings that are there…" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

An increasingly popular method for obstructing spaces for publicness is through overt practices of exclusion. These often occur through carceral approaches that "imprison" public

space, while heavy-handed policing and threatened legal action constrain acts of public protest. No longer are cities merely designing commercial thoroughfares in the place of the public square (Low & Smith, 2013; Mitchell, 1995, 2003); now, public spaces are simply fenced off, bulldozed, and/or patrolled by armed police (Kanji & Withers, 2021; Wilson, 2021). Elsewhere, I have written about specific places that constitute the "ruins" of dehousing (martin, 2022b). One such place is George Hislop Park, which borders Sanctuary Toronto, a vibrant community drop-in. Over the years, the City of Toronto has gradually created barriers between this community and this public park—from a chain link fence blocking access to their backyard to what is now a fully obstructed park. The city has claimed that construction is scheduled for this site, but years later, nothing has happened (City of Toronto, 2020; martin, 2022b). Gigi Grant shared,

> Sanctuary has suffered greatly from the intrusion of mass-development and you've seen the parkette right beside Sanctuary—essentially: 'No, this is not for this class of people it's for the private use of condos and residents.' (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022).

The suffering Grant speaks of is not merely the suffering of political exclusion and non-citizenship (Arnold, 2004; Feldman, 2006), but includes an exponential rise in violence and exposure to a toxic drug supply in this newly-created "hidden" space. Such spatial obstructions have made it much more difficult for outreach workers and healthcare providers to intervene in instances of health and safety. This is in keeping with the more widespread irony that municipal—and particularly, police—interventions on the basis of "health and safety" have often caused further harm to encampment residents and dehoused citizens (Flynn et al., 2022).

Grant speaks powerfully of the way the memorial anchors the "refus[al] to disappear" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) across Toronto. Not only does the memorial cultivate a space of appearance in Trinity Square, but it actually "offer[s] a prayer to all of

those people who are resisting" the politics of displacement, gentrification, and dehousing—and those "who will resist these things in the future" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Grant expresses,

> …Trinity Square is unique. It's hidden. And people are drawn there, as they are pushed out of every other part of the downtown core by a network of police and private security firms that try to limit non-consumer interactions in this area…So it's a very beautiful thing that it exists. It's holding up so many parts of our community and it's not even really known. Like what it's doing for people. But it is acting, on its own, in resistance against this macro-concept of…grabbing the last little bit of land and turning it into profit. And so, the memorial being there is part of that. It's part of anchoring that land—that territory—into the earth. It's almost like how family boneyards, in times of our ancestors, would denote people's territories or property or so on…like this is where they were from because their families were buried there. Having these names here is the closest resemblance to that for this traditional community that exists in the downtown core… (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

Memorialization has the potential to feature affective and creative interventions that interrupt the grammar of neoliberalism, which divides individual from collective and past from present (Rothberg, 2012). If you die in Toronto and are given a city-funded funeral, your burial site is likely very difficult to access, especially for people living in poverty. For this reason, organizer Greg Cook reveals that "the memorial acts as a gravestone for many people" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). He adds,

> …Often people have unmarked graves. It's this overlap of those two themes. Where [the memorial is] this space of grieving and mourning, and it's also this space that names somebody and says you're not invisible. Which is what a grave marker partly does. So, it enacts both of those things. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

Figure 4. Greg Cook facilitating memorial.

The initial proposal for the memorial at the Church of the Holy Trinity discussed how "[t]he community could use this as a central gathering place for memorials and vigils, or as a quiet place for reflection" ([TDRC files], 1999). Cook reveals that the personal space for grief is also the political space for grievability that enacts a resistance against the politics of (in)visibility. A grave marker—or boneyard—is indeed a site of personal attachment, yet for this community it is also a political reminder. It offers a statement about one's visible presence and existence amongst those who lived, died, and are worthy of remembrance. The notion of a collective gravestone or marker also means that the memorial's monument is inherently a gathering place—a site of togetherness. Where a plurality or a collection of "past-others" (Chinnery, 2013, p. 255) can be collectively mourned and remembered is also a place where those who remain are re-membered; that is, those who remain are brought together into tangible relations of community and solidarity in the ongoing fight for the living.

A comment on a recent memorial Facebook livestream reads, "If it wasn't for this memorial I would have never known my father had passed away" (Church of the Holy Trinity, 2023b). This sentiment has been expressed countless times over the years. Organizer

Rayna Slobodian's work has largely been focused on preserving the names and networks of family and friends of those who have died, for this reason (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Slobodian shares, "it's really important…if friends or family members are asking us, 'hey do you know this person' or 'I just learned about their death through *you*—through the memorial…can you tell me any more information?'" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). Bob Rose related how a simple, yet significant task for early activists was to "identify people who were laying in the morgue" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). Today, because of Slobodian's efforts, there is now a "digital space" that compliments the memorial-as-gravestone, helping make the memorial more accessible for all. In her words:

> I wanted a digital space because I also wanted to have the ability to put faces and pictures and stories and anything else about people who have died—to make that accessible to humanize them through that digital space. (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022)

Building a common world

The essence of the memorial, as described by several archival documents as well as memorial organizers, is an event that mobilizes people to act regardless of differing worldviews. According to Arendt, the cultivating of a world of acting and speaking beings is predicated on its "thing-character" (Arendt, 1958, p. 9). The public realm is made possible by the gathering around objects—things—that facilitate the togetherness of people. The artifact(s) around which people—citizens—can gather allow for "durability" (Arendt, 1958, p. 8) of the acting and speaking. These "things" orient and make possible a lasting presence—an ongoingness of the action. And action, as Arendt (1958) argues, makes possible "the condition for remembrance" (p. 9). Arendt (1958) goes on to say that by thus preserving the world for others, the actor enacts "natality," which is "the capacity of beginning something new" (p. 9). Bonnie Honig (2017) takes this up with the argument that "public

things" that are cared for and maintained by citizens have the capacity to gather citizens and sustain democratic engagement. For Honig (2017), the things—in this case the memorial event and monument— "press us into object-mediated relations with each other" (p. 7), making, as Arendt would say, the fight for justice more "durable." The togetherness brought about by having a particular thing to gather around is what allows publicness to occur; it is what opens up possibilities for new things to occur.

Greg Cook speaks at length about the "diverse political orientation[s]" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022) found across the activist communities supporting and attending to the memorial over the years. The memorial acts as a thing that makes durable the fight for the living. It enhances and sustains the solidarity across a network of diverse actors. Though it exceeds the scope of this dissertation, it should come as no surprise that there has been a great deal of conflict amidst these activist networks in Toronto over the years. Given the *spectacular precarity* of such a movement, and the overt attempts by media outlets and politicians to fracture its tenuous solidarity and kinship over the years, several organizers have experienced burnout. Many grassroots communities or collectives have disbanded or been torn apart. Yet the Toronto Homeless Memorial has never taken a month off. From the inception of housing activism there have been efforts to commemorate those who have died without housing. And since 2000-2001, the Toronto Homeless Memorial has gathered people together on the second Tuesday of every month. Cook says, "[in] a lot of the activism before and after SHJN [the Shelter and Housing Justice Network]—the political orientation might be pretty diverse, but I feel like the one thing people would agree on is that people are dying and that's not okay" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

Cook makes the significant point that the memorial plays the role of shaping what the activist movement has looked like over the years by sustaining a sense of togetherness—maintaining its public quality, the possibility of plurality, because grief is a force for

solidarity. The activist community is indeed very diverse, and it is held together by this acknowledgment that things are sad, "people all need to grieve," and "something needs to change." Beyond that there is room for lots of disagreement, but the memorial continues to feature in the response by maintaining a space where everyone can appear together in spite of their differences:

> …people all need to grieve. The deaths are overwhelming and continuous. It's trying to offer [a space]… We'll have city workers who get critiqued by people like me a lot who show up at a memorial and need to grieve because somebody they work with died and they're really sad.…maybe along those lines, it's a piece that the broader public can connect [with]…unjust deaths—I think most people are like, yeah something needs to change. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

Within activist communities, Cook points also to the diversity of perspectives across different organizations and decades:

> …even in trying to describe a lot of the advocacy and action that is going on to new people like ESN [the Encampment Support Network] and saying, actually, politically we're all over the place, haha…but the reality is that people are dying because this is happening, and we don't want people dying. That's pretty much the way and when people are like, 'I don't understand this political perspective…' I think that's sort of…It's this thing that we can agree on. That's my observation…You have people all over the map, politically…And who are—I would say—in real time being educated and being forced to think through what are ethical, effective strategies or tactics because, ultimately, I've seen too many people suffer, I've seen too many people die. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

Here we see commemorative pedagogy fostering plurality—or maybe, plurality-as-pedagogy. Cook highlights the role of commemorative practice in public pedagogy—the pedagogical force oriented here in terms of education for the activists themselves. The Toronto Homeless Memorial is commemorative pedagogy as a practice of plurality—an educational environment brought about by a diverse group of grieving people in proximity who want to respond together in an ethical manner. Indeed, Cook notes how "a lot of the

work around the memorial laid [the] groundwork for a lot of the activism and care" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022) over the years.[18]

Commemorative practice and activist solidarity

In terms of this source of internal solidarity, Cook sums up the memorial as "a network—around grieving and making sure that names aren't invisible…that is, I would say, 'utilized,' that is…because connections are there, it is a vital source of community response to crisis or to emergency or to oppression" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Cook suggests that not only does togetherness emerge from collective grief, but that it is a togetherness that allows for a variety of ways to mobilize against injustice. For instance, the kinds of knowledge sharing that occur because of this solidarity allow new stories of injustice to be "brought to light" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Organizer Rayna Slobodian comments on the ways in which stories told at the event can be both commemorative as well as forms of "information sharing" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). By bringing people together, there is an opportunity to speak to the particulars of the oppression that is being experienced among a network of people that is large enough to collectively—and more effectively—respond to that oppression. Slobodian adds that what the Toronto Homeless Memorial preserves is "a sense of community" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). She continues: "it's that sense of community—because it is so draining—it's that sense of community that helps everyone keep going. Because…we are all supported. We are all here because we care. And we're all here because we think that there are ways that this society could be better"

[18] In the TDRC's *National Disaster Post*, David Hulchanski wrote the following after the day of marching, singing, and public grieving across Toronto on October 3, 1999: "The key benefits, I feel, are the linkages with all the other groups…This enhanced the image of the TDRC as a growing movement—not just a few folks who promoted the one-time disaster declaration" (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1999a, pp. 3–4).

(Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). Similarly, over decades of organizing, Bob Rose developed a series of questions that he would ask people: "what do you want to do? Who do you want to do it with? …how do you want to do it? What do you need to do it?" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). In this way, each organizer associated with the memorial has made the connection between an orientation of care, community, and remembrance and the collective capacity, and need, for action. As Gigi Grant shared, "gathering in remembrance…helps us derive energy for action" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Grief given an outlet via commemorative practice engenders activist solidarity and new moments of resistance.

Commemorative practice is essential in activist movements as it sustains both a) the practices of grief required by these inhospitable times and b) the plurality required for meaningful political work/advocacy to occur in an ongoing way. Indeed, Arendt (1958) writes, "…the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives" (p. 57). Without the memorial, without the togetherness brought about by collective grief, the work of housing activism is *spectacularly precarious*. The trauma of dehousing is ever at risk of being rendered a private problem—wherein dehousing becomes merely another stigmatized form of individual failure, rendering these deaths countable, but not grievable. As Honig (2017) would say, a public memorial gives people a thing "to deliberate about, constellate around, or agonistically contest" (p. 5). Activists are mobilized by a shared need (to express grief) and a shared set of practices (to gather and declare emergency). But, I argue, these practices are sustained by the memorial as a thing that brings "innumerable perspectives" into relations of care. And, because the crisis has affected so many—and because the public can relate to the concept of unjust deaths—practices of mourning and remembrance draw a diverse crowd. The thing—constituted by both the event and the monument itself—thus cultivates and sustains what Arendt (1958) calls "plurality" (p. 58).

Housing activism is always at risk of precarity. Dehousing is an inherently alienating and dehumanising experience. Collective power can only be achieved through practices that remind us of our togetherness and our shared humanity. And it is grief—and ultimately, public commemoration—that helps us do that. It is not enough to say that our "shared humanity" will make these lives—and deaths—matter. It is not enough to appeal to the value of human life that we all hold in common. Indeed, Ann Chinnery (2017) has made the argument that we see an over-emphasis on *empathy* in education and ethics today. She argues for a Levinasian commitment to *responsibility*, rather than operating on the assumption that we can somehow understand and come to terms with the reality of the other (Chinnery, 2017). Instead of presupposing existential commonalities, we can take responsibility to ensure a shared reality, a shared orientation, by setting up an object that can "interpellate, join, equalize, or mobilize us" (Honig, 2013, p. 69). In cooperatively enacting shared concern, we "guarantee reality"—that is, a public world to collectively participate in. Arendt (1958) puts it this way:

> Under the conditions of a common world, reality is not guaranteed primarily by the "common nature" of all men who constitute it, but rather by the fact that, differences of position and the resulting variety of perspectives notwithstanding, everybody is always concerned with the same object. (p. 57-58)

As I will address in more detail in Chapter 2, the memorial contributes to the ongoing generation of a kind of "dehousing archive," not just by recording the numbers and names of those who have died, but by, as Roger Simon would suggest, creating a particular "mise-en-scène" (Simon, 2014, p. 6). As Simon puts it, this is "a material social practice that enables…various forms of thought and social relationships" (p. 6). The event gathers people in a monthly enactment of publicness—an invitation for a diverse community to appear together, with all the contingency and possibility that this ritual affords. Grief invites us into these reparative relations.

Arendt and the permanence of the public realm: The not-yet and the no-longer

Arendt (1958) established that the public realm relies on permanence. She, interestingly, goes on to write: "If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men" (p. 55). There are two ways to consider what she means when she refers to "the living only." The first, and most obvious, is to acknowledge that she would have us consider the non-living as in the "not-yet" living. Arendt is directing our attention to a sense of futurity, arguing that the public realm needs to consider those who inhabit it and those who will later appear and inhabit these spaces. The task, then, is for those who appear *currently* to demand and work at preserving the permanence of the human artifice—that is, the actual spaces and things human beings can orient themselves around and be sustained by—in order that future beings can continue to appear, shape, and be shaped by these spaces and things. But there is a second possible reading. The non-living can also be conceived as the "no-longer" living. Arendt (1958) writes that the public realm "…is what we have in common not only with those who live with us, but also with those who were here before and with those who will come after us" (p. 55). In shifting from the *not-yet* to the *no-longer*, there are several questions worth considering. What is the public realm's obligation to the past? In what ways is public space co-inhabited by the spirits of those who have *appeared* before? In a way, Arendt is urging facilitators of public exchange to conceive of the space of appearance as one inclusive of past- and future-appearances. How might the oscillation between these two postures change how we think of publicness?

I wish to elaborate on how our taking into account those no-longer living helps us to further consider the public realm. If caretakers of publicness consider the no-longer living, the public realm must also be a place that welcomes the spirits who have come before. For

the public realm to be hospitable to the spirits and memories of past-others, it must be a site that embodies what Ann Chinnery (2013) calls "reciprocity-by-proxy" (p. 261). By accepting our "inescapable relatedness" (p. 260), Chinnery calls us to recognize that others' past-others also constitute their "being-in-the-present" (p. 261). Individuals who speak at the memorial often do not always share familiarity with the specific "others" who they eulogize (it is a sad reality that there are now single months where dozens of names are added to the memorial). Yet each speaker—indeed, each attendee—is brought into a kind of proximity with the dead who appear in the words, poems, and stories shared.

Toronto Homeless Memorial organizers have a particularly keen understanding of this responsibility to the no-longer. This is best expressed with further discussion regarding the concept of public space. Gigi Grant argues that Trinity Square is a "very alive space" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). There is a sentience to this site. They describe the memorial as "a sentient being, gathering everybody's names and spirits" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). The commemorative act is a dynamic process of welcoming others and past others. And, according to Grant, their spirits dwell there. They describe how "different people will have very similar experiences of spirits in the same spaces" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) in and around Trinity Square. There is an interesting nomenclature at play here where the disenfranchised living are described by Grant as "ghosts in the landscape" and the acknowledged, grievable dead are conceived as "spirits" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). While "ghost" here is a stand-in for a kind of politically disappeared individual, "spirit" is perhaps closer to Avery Gordon's (2008) conception of spectres or ghosts.[19] Grant's "ghost" is politically removed and socially

[19] In *Ghostly Matters*, Gordon frames the "ghost" as that which haunts the present, drawing attention to past violences that have never been resolved and that implicate us here and now. These are repressions of historical figures, but also knowledges, ways of being, and *things*. The ghost, or spectre, has a vitality that calls to the present, addresses us, and make visible the ongoing ways that reciprocity or restitution are being denied by hegemonic power. Gigi Grant says the memorial is part of "an urban last resistance movement" and that "it may be that in time Trinity Square will also become just like all of these other [dismantled public] places, but for

invisible—what Dawn Rothe and Victoria Collins (2016) call the "socially dead." The "spirits" of the memorial are akin to Gordon's (2008) ghosts insofar as they signal to an ongoing form of dispossession and violence that is being made visible. Yet, at the same time, the "spirits" of the memorial, as I understand Grant, refer to specific spirits of humans who once shared our space and time. Grant reveals that

> …there are several parts of this area—the labyrinth, the corners, the breezeways and so on—that spirits of people live within…and are present with us. And it's interesting because so many people who come who are in mental health crisis—or what we perceive to be mental health crisis…will describe this to me. And it's a very common thing. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

At the risk of delving too deeply into the banalities of semantic differences among political philosophers and a sociologist like Gordon, I think it is worthwhile to at least mention Derrida's (1994) account of spectres and spirits in *Spectres of Marx.* For Derrida, the "spectre" is the phenomenological "becoming" of the spirit—wherein a spirit of the past becomes a "thing." But, paradoxically, Derrida (1994) argues, it is "this Thing that is not a thing" (p. 6), insofar as it appears but remains strangely unseen. It speaks (and can be heard) and looks at us (and we feel its gaze) but cannot be visually grasped. This "spectral asymmetry [that] interrupts here all specularity" (p. 6) is explained by Derrida through the apparition of Hamlet's father.[20] Drawing on the Shakespearean tragedy, Derrida refers to this "spectral asymmetry" as the "*visor effect*" (p. 7), whereby Horatio and Hamlet cannot see the King behind the shadow of his armour.[21] Derrida also warns us of a "commerce" of potential spectres—"there is always *more than one* of them" (p. 8; see also p. 13)—which compete for

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this…the presence of this will always exist, whether it's under a building—buried deep beneath the surface or not—it will always be there" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). The spectre of the memorial will always call out from the rubble.

[20] In this discussion, Derrida uses "ghost," "apparition," and "spectre" somewhat interchangeably.

[21] And, interestingly for my discussion of listening in Chapter 4, a spectre who is unseen must therefore be listened to: "[t]he armor lets one see nothing of the spectral body…it permits the so-called father to see and to speak…to speak in order to be heard" (p. 8). Later, Derrida's discussion of the question of the end of history relies on this same logic of auditory attention: "The question had already *sounded*…And the difference in the sound, that is what is echoing this evening" (Derrida, 1994, p. 14).

our attention in making sense of the past. Though Derrida speaks primarily to an "inheritance" (p. 16) received from Marx, specifically, his words ring true when he notes the heterogeneity of inheritances we receive from the spirits of the past—the ways in which such inheritances (and *how* we receive them) must be constantly negotiated, or, at least, understood as a plurality of inheritances. He describes the "tiresomeness" (p. 15) of media spectacle that insists upon apocalyptic themes which have been repeated for decades. Included in these contemporary anachronisms is the way in which democracy (and Western liberalism, etc.) appeal to past forms of political governance that have never been realized—and indeed, are in a sorry state today.

Perhaps the most important point, given my position in this project as "scholar," is Derrida's dismissal of scholarly competencies or spectatorial modes when it comes to communing with spectres:

> And the thing seems even more difficult for a reader, an expert, a professor, an interpreter, in short, for what Marcellus calls a "scholar." Perhaps for a spectator in general. Finally, the last one to whom a specter can appear, address itself, or pay attention is a spectator as such…The reasons for this are essential. As theoreticians or witnesses, spectators, observers, and intellectuals, scholars believe that looking is sufficient. Therefore, they are not always in the most competent position to do what is necessary: speak to the specter…There has never been a scholar who really, and as scholar, deals with ghosts. A traditional scholar does not believe in ghosts—nor in all that could be called the virtual space of spectrality. There has never been a scholar who, as such, does not believe in the sharp distinction between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual, the living and the non-living, being and non-being ("to be or not to be," in the conventional reading), in the opposition between what is present and what is not, for example in the form of objectivity. (Derrida, 1994, p. 11)

Spirit, etymologically, comes from the Latin "spiritus," meaning breath (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023b)**.** It is from here that we get words like *conspire*, which "derives from the Latin, 'breathe together'" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023b; Schmidt, Jr, 2018). Spirit, indeed, is suggestive of an aliveness—an orientation of taking time to breathe amidst a suffocating neoliberal order. As philosopher and media activist Franco

"Bifo" Berardi (2010) argues, neoliberal capitalism produces a constant bombardment of information and a fragmentation of working hours (and associated pay), leading to a ubiquitous panic—a "shortness of breath" (p. 36) that immobilizes us. Grant's observation is that the spirits of Trinity Square are more-than-metaphorical. The sentience of this place, its readiness for contestation and togetherness, fosters a space where the very imprint of the disappeared becomes apparent. The spirits, here, offer moments to breathe together and facilitate a passing of time that rejects the pathological registers of time under neoliberalism. And while "ghost," etymologically linked to the German "geist," connotes a sense of agitation or frightening apparition (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023a), "spirit" is a reframing of persons who are often associated with fear and agitation in contemporary society. Rather than being perceived as haunting Trinity Square (this time *not* in Avery Gordon's sense), they are rather revealed to be *breathing life* into an ongoing conspiratorial event—conspiratorial in the sense of breathing together in a collective manner in opposition to hegemonic systems of power and control (Schmidt, Jr, 2018).

This notion of *spirit* as the conspiratorial action of the grievable dead in Trinity Square extends Arendt's understanding of remembrance. For Arendt (1958), remembrance—the "mother of all arts" (p. 95) for the Greeks—was made possible when the action and speech were "transformed, reified as it were, into things" (p. 95). The action and speech that constituted remembrance had to be materialized into printed words or archivable matter for it to take its place with "the other things in the human artifice" (Arendt, 1958, p. 95). Spirit, as I am considering it, is said to remain long after the monthly memorial events have concluded. These spirits cannot be hidden away in the archive; instead, they haunt the passageways and thoroughfares of Trinity Square, being attended to, seemingly, only by those who have eyes to see or ears to hear. It is a fascinating twist on Arendt's logic, where she surrenders to the suffocating and deadening impact of the archive: "[t]he materialization they have to undergo

in order to remain in the world at all is paid for in that always the 'dead letter' replaces something which grew out of and for a fleeting moment indeed existed as the 'living spirit'" (p. 95). For Arendt, the loss of the contingent, vitality of acting and speaking is a worthy sacrifice in order that such moments become *things*. It is as if she is saying, "they might be dead, but at least these dead things will last." Gigi Grant turns Arendt's logic on its head when they express that it is indeed *spirits*—mirroring Arendt's own language—that abide and remain in the square. And, rather than solely rely on the conventional archive of "dead letters," perhaps this opens up a reconceptualized archive—an archive with more vivid spatial and even immaterial dimensions (see Burgum, 2022). Thus, the durable materials of memory can be supplemented by the immaterial traces—the spirits that remain in the square.

Conclusion

This community, so accustomed to having their grief denied, is surrounded by death. Members of their family or community are rendered, as Gigi Grant characterizes them "ghost[s] in the landscape" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). They are dishonoured by news media; they remain nameless in the official archive. The memorial is a relational space where "ghosts" are given names and honoured, but also where living relatives and friends are attended to.

Grant expressed how organizers "try and make a space that's honouring…but also to sit with people and take their grief seriously" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Contrary to the assumptions we might carry about a memorial, this memorial is indeed about life. It is about a renewal of the public and the spaces for publicness, a restoration of political solidarity amidst precarity, and it is about attending to the spirits of the past while countering the pervasive "ghostliness" of the grieving community who remain. Greg Cook reveals that "the memorial acts as a gravestone for many people" (Cook, personal

communication, January 26, 2022). By gathering around and deliberating over a communal gravestone and its attendant commemorative practices, one might argue that the ghosts who remain are given a materiality—a presence and a present-ness that lays a claim on public attention. By having their grief acknowledged, attendees are turned toward one another, newly involved in a practice of remembrance that makes durable a public world.

While this chapter takes up the appearance of the memorial event itself, the next chapter will engage political-ethical philosophy and memory studies to ascertain the pedagogical capacities of the memorial's archival curation. In doing so, I will also continue to map the historical context, using accounts drawn from the archival material, to illustrate how the memorial emerged out of an ongoing context of commemorative practice in response to the dehousing crisis.

Chapter 2

The memorial archive:

Counter-archival practice, counter-archival *thinking*, and the refusal to disappear

> Open grieving is bound up with outrage, and outrage in the face of injustice or indeed of unbearable loss has enormous political potential. It is, after all, one of the reasons Plato wanted to ban the poets from the Republic. He thought that if the citizens went too often to watch tragedy, they would weep over the losses they saw, and that such open and public mourning, in disrupting the order and hierarchy of the soul, would disrupt the order and hierarchy of political authority as well. Whether we are speaking about open grief or outrage, we are talking about affective responses that are highly regulated by regimes of power and sometimes subject to explicit censorship.
> (Butler, 2016, p. 39)

As with grassroots forms of commemoration the world over, the Toronto Homeless Memorial emerged in a context of violence, by those feeling the immediacy of the violence around them. Friends, outreach workers, nurses, and family members were seeing the devastating results of neoliberal policies. People were dying. Such a community-led memorial is necessarily animated by what Gigi Grant describes as a "personal-political" motivation (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Though not every person witnessing their friends die without housing became an activist, every activist had certainly lost friends. As Cathy Crowe expressed, "I was going to a lot of funerals for a community health nurse…it was kind of a reaction…people that you were close to and who shouldn't have been dying the way they died—so young…" (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022).

Cathy Crowe, one of the founders of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, is a nurse who witnessed the violence of dehousing first-hand:

> …back in the late 90s homelessness got a lot worse. Like dramatically worse from the way it had been. And that was in part because the National Housing Program

> was cancelled in ’93 and then the Ontario Government cancelled its program in ’95-’96 and then the welfare cuts...it led to this explosion in homelessness. (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022)

Figure 5. Brian Boyd Memorial outside Mayor’s levee, January 1, 2003.

The reaction to such a context took many forms, but commemorative practice was always among them. Alongside the memorialization of citizens there were legal proceedings, often in the form of coroner’s inquests, there were marches, there were letters written, there were tours offered so that politicians could be shown what “the war” was like on the ground, and there were several forms of artistic installations and interventions. Drawing from the memorial’s extensive archive the next two chapters will detail the emergence of the Toronto Homeless Memorial, filling in necessary adjacent contextual details. It would take several manuscripts to meaningfully relate the genesis of housing activism in Toronto, so inevitably there will be gaps in this attempt. In this chapter, my particular focus is on 1) the early commemorative movements that pre-date the Toronto Homeless Memorial and 2) the ways in which the archive—and counter-archive—can constitute a counter-hegemonic form of public

pedagogy. The activist-archivists involved in preserving such a history have themselves cultivated a "public thing" that scholars, witnesses, curious bystanders, and civic leaders will be confronted with for years to come. Their methods present a unique and creative social practice that opens up the possibility of future public contestations. And the data—and the manner in which it is presented—is strategically woven together, such that the hegemonic narratives around housing, poverty, and neoliberal restructuring can be effectively countered. I argued in Chapter One that the memorial *event* creates an affective and pedagogical mise-en-scène in terms of how the presentation is curated by organizers. Here, I make the case for the memorial *archive* as a similarly potent "material social practice that enables…various forms of thought and social relationships" (Simon, 2014, p. 6).

The politics of grief

The deaths of people without housing have not only precipitated various actions across the city, the province, and indeed international activist movements, but the activist coalitions themselves have often been unified by a desire for remembrance and grieving. A pedagogy of grief is not only the pedagogical force of the remembrance-as-action or remembrance-as-speech—it is the very knitting together of such acting and speaking beings. A pedagogy of grief can be thought as a moment of interruption (see Biesta, 2012a), wherein grief intrudes on our ability to carry on with "business (or busyness) as usual." And, in answering the call of grief, that is, to "tarry" with it (see Butler, 2003, p. 19), we give attention over to that which might actually sustain us amidst trauma. We engender affective capacities to draw others' attention to crisis. We "disrupt the order and hierarchy of political authority" (Butler, 2015). Benji Hart (2017) writes of grief as being essential to the "collective power" of the coalition and the "movement-building process" (p. 23). Lee Sandusky, reflecting on the work of providing water for migrants crossing the desert at the

Mexico-United States border—and the work of recovering and identifying human remains—says, "...much of the action we take is in response to grief, but also anger and hope; the three are inseparable motivations that sustain organizing and action within our community" (p. 52). In encountering shrines constructed to those who have died in the borderlands, Sandusky argues such places are "...where collective grieving and collective action visibly merge" (p. 54).

Given the meeting place of grief and action, palpable across geographies and socio-political contexts, it comes as no surprise that the Toronto Homeless Memorial is part of a lineage of projects aimed to memorialize and provide a space for collective grief. The archives of the memorial help to establish the significant historical context from within which the memorial—as we know it today—emerged. In this chapter, I will attempt to trace the relevant histories that intersect with and inform the ongoing movement of commemorative activism amidst the era of dehousing in Toronto. I will also comment on the archival practices themselves that trace such a history—with the goal of reflecting on the activist-archivist as a major player within the public pedagogy of housing activists. Finally, I offer considerations for the researcher-as-witness in/for their forays in the archival environment (and beyond). Albeit imperfect, the institutional archive itself is a "public thing" to be defended, contested, and to be used to bring a plurality into meaningful political exchange.

The Rupert Hotel Coalition

At the corner of Parliament and Queen there once was a rooming house, known as the Rupert Hotel. Such rooming houses were once popular, cheap alternatives to sleeping rough for citizens facing extreme poverty in Toronto. For City Hall, they were cheap alternatives to building safe, dignified affordable housing. Without adequate fire alarms or sprinkler systems, the matchbox of a residence went up in flames on December 23, 1989 (Bateman,

2014), killing 10 citizens (D. Hulchanski, 1998). Toronto Disaster Relief Committee organizer, Michael Shapcott, watched helplessly as the fire roared (Shapcott, 2002). As Shapcott later testified, resident Donna Marie Cann re-entered the blaze in an attempt to rescue other tenants. She never re-emerged. Such an act is not only heroic, but is perhaps symbolic of the many others, whose stories are held in the archives, who died fighting—even while subjected to—the crisis of dehousing (see Crowe, 2007). Michael Didow, the son of David Donald Didow, also witnessed the blaze, without realizing that his father was trapped inside (Scrivener, 1996). In the aftermath of the tragedy, the Rupert Hotel Coalition was born. It was Christmas, and Shapcott hosted a meeting with people determined to honour the memory of the victims. They met in his cramped office, nearby. As a first step, "[t]he coalition decided to organize a public and highly political memorial service" (Shapcott, 2002). More than 200 people showed up at the memorial service at All Saints Church—Mayor Art Eggleton even showed up, though he was booed by the many rooming house residents in attendance (Shapcott, 2002). The Rupert memorial would become an annual event. On the sidewalk, where the Rupert Hotel once stood, is a small plaque that lists the names of the 10 people who died (Bateman, 2014). Every year, people affected by the tragedy meet on that same street corner for a memorial. The street corner, with its unassuming plaque, becomes "...where collective grieving and collective action visibly merge" (Sandusky, 2017, p. 54).

The action connected to this ongoing commitment to commemorative practice was very tangible. The coalition led an initiative to secure safe, affordable units for unhoused and precariously housed people. With Michael Shapcott coordinating the project, the coalition partnered with landlords to renovate their buildings and transform them from "creaky tinderboxes into safe, decent accommodation for 525 people" (Shapcott, 2002). The program was so efficient it ended up with a surplus of hundreds of thousands of dollars, which was

returned to the government, while "…the United Nations recognized it as a laudable example of collaboration among the government, the community and the private sector to secure housing" (Shapcott, 2002). The organizing efforts of individuals grieving those lost in the fire resulted in over 500 units of affordable housing to be built or upgraded in Toronto over the next 5 years (Bateman, 2014; Scrivener, 1996). Unsurprisingly, the money ran out in 1994 (Bateman, 2014)—amidst an era of unprecedented austerity. Mayor Barbara Hall, speaking at the Rupert Memorial in 1996 said, "This year I'm less optimistic than in any year since the fire" (Scrivener, 1996). Indeed, "the provincial government, which had been a partner with the City of Toronto in helping improve housing and safety standards, 'has withdrawn from the partnership'" (Scrivener, 1996). As Shapcott said, "We got a big pat on the back, but the model never really moved beyond the pilot project stage…All the studies sat gathering dust" (Shapcott, 2002). A Toronto Star columnist summed it up by saying, ""[Shapcott] and his associates managed to pull something remarkable out of the ashes of the Rupert fire. But it hasn't had a chance to grow" (Shapcott, 2002).

The Rupert Hotel Coalition was motivated by a commitment to commemorative practice—like so many other activist efforts in this era, a memorial provided an anchor for their acting and speaking in the world. Bart Poesiat, a longtime housing activist in the city, would spend the next thirty years committed to organizing and speaking at the Rupert Memorial (Parkdale Community Legal Services, 2020) alongside TDRC members like Michael Shapcott (Shapcott, 2000) and Steve Lane (Lane, 2000). At one Rupert Memorial, Steve Lane would describe the shortsighted nature of Toronto's Hostel Network the "treadmill of human misery" (Lane, 2000). The memorial thus made a point of revealing the banality of such a violent "treadmill"—perpetuated by an increasing malaise. As Steve Lane would later say of the work of the TDRC and allied organizers: it constitutes the "continued call to stand in stark relief against the social malaise that homelessness is somehow

normal…" (Lane, 2000). Attendees at the memorial were committed to the visibility of those whose very bodies had been rendered unrecognizable by the flames (Bateman, 2014). As Michael Didow put it, "I came to keep [my father's] memory alive" (Scrivener, 1996). Syed Hassan (2017) writes:

> We form bonds that outlast the few moments of media spectacle...as the noise fades, we look around and see who is still here with us. Here not in passing rage but rather a deep grief that arises from a place of love, a collective, universal yearning: never again, never again, never again. (p. 64)

This yearning, "never again," is enshrined in the artwork that emerged from the Rupert Coalition. At the top of the Roomer's Rights Organization's newsletter was printed the symbol for the Rupert Coalition—a building surrounded by a series of gravestones, with the word "Rupert" at the top and "Never again" printed at the bottom (Roomer's Rights Organization (Toronto) Inc., 1997).

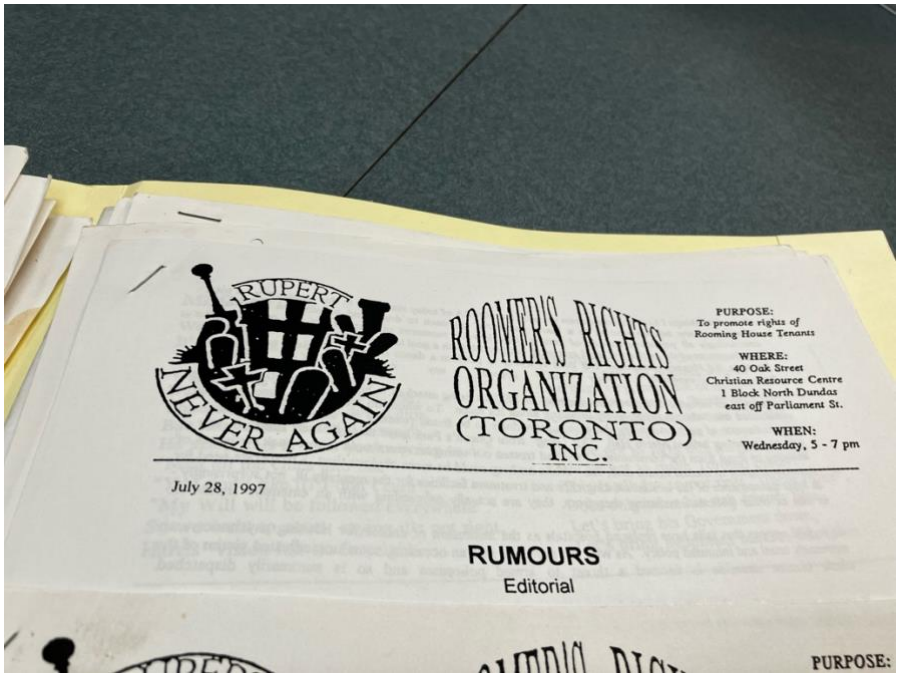


Figure 6. Roomer's Rights Organization logo.

An annual homeless memorial began to be held in cities across North America in 1992 (Shapcott, 2000; *The Annual Homeless Memorial 1999*, 1999). The Rupert Memorial and this North America-wide annual day of remembrance were both usually held on/near the first day

of winter. As such, and given the overlapping organizers and communities represented at these events in Toronto, an effort was later made to combine these events (Shapcott, 2000).

What I've attempted to articulate here in this account is how the Rupert Coalition anticipates much of the logic that we will observe from the Toronto Homeless Memorial. The commemorative work was (and continues to be) part of a larger movement of solidarity and plurality that sought to introduce new ways of caring for fellow citizens. Not only did a practice of remembrance emerge, but hundreds of dignified units of housing also became "something remarkable out of the ashes" (Shapcott, 2002). As organizer Janice Towndrow put it, the memorial is "the beginning of action" (Towndrow, personal communication, February 1, 2022). Such a movement was, I argue, tied to the practices of remembrance that sustained those struggling for a more just city—and it was ultimately the Rupert *memorial* that outlasted the Rupert Hotel Coalition Pilot Project (D. Hulchanski, 1998). A simple meeting, on a street corner, after the media spectacle had faded, the flames dispersed, and the "something remarkable" had been defunded, there were still people attending to one another's experience of grief—acknowledging their shared humanity as they appeared together in the dust of the spectacle.

The "Freezing Deaths"

On the afternoon of December 17, 1985, Drina Joubert died of exposure after being released from hospital without housing (Ramsey et al., 1986). The inquest into her death reveals that she "sought help from practically every available social agency and hospital service in the city of Toronto" (Ramsey et al., 1986, p. 2). Despite this, she ended up freezing to death in sub-zero temperatures inside an abandoned vehicle. The Coroner's Jury indicated a lack of affordable housing and adequate employment services for Toronto's homeless population as factors contributing to her death (Ramsey et al., 1986). Additionally, they

highlight the abhorrent practice of discharging patients from institutional care into homelessness, emphasizing the need to wait until "an appropriate place is found for the patient to live" (Ramsey et al., 1986, p. 3). They also called on the Coroner's office to "keep statistics on all deaths that relate to homeless and unemployment" (Ramsey et al., 1986, p. 5). Joubert's name was among the first to be added to the Toronto Homeless Memorial, 15 years later.

In the span of just a few weeks in mid-Winter, 1996, three men died while sleeping on Toronto's streets. Richard Roy, himself living without housing, pushed for a new coalition—one that foregrounded the voices of those without housing and fought for the memory of these three men: Brent Simms, Eugene Upper, and Mirsalah-Aldin Kompani (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). This conversation, between Richard Roy, Beric German, and Gaetan Heroux, led to the creation of the Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness (TCAH), a union of "homeless and formerly homeless people, advocates and 20 agencies that serve the homeless" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a, 1996b). The TCAH organizing led to a Coroner's Inquest, known as the "Freezing Deaths Inquest," which was, in that Summer of 1996, a hot-button political issue and a stage for the accompanying media spectacle. Significantly, it was a coalition of housed and unhoused activists that had pushed for the inquest, and as Cathy Crowe (2007) relates in her book, "Dying for a home: Homeless activists speak out,"[22] Melvin Tipping, a member of the TCAH, was "the only witness with experience in homelessness allowed by the presiding coroner at that inquest" (p. 34).

Eugene Upper was Melvin Tipping's friend. Tipping later shared, "I wanted to testify more about…Eugene Upper, but when I was on the witness stand, they said I could only talk

[22] Crowe's book chronicles and shares the oral accounts of several prominent activists in the late 90s and early 2000s.

about my present life…The Coroner and the Crown Attorney thought homelessness had nothing to do with the deaths" (Crowe, 2007, p. 40). It should perhaps come as no surprise that the very state violence that abandoned Eugene Upper to freeze to death in a bus shelter also sought to censor his (re)appearance at the trial. Though the trial was haunted, in Avery Gordon's (2008) sense of the word,[23] by Upper (and the other two men, Irwin Anderson and Mirsalah-Aldin Kompani), Tipping's efforts to bear witness were curtailed. Such silencing is not new. State violence always seeks to maintain the invisibility of the victims. Neoliberal rationality continues to separate past from present (Rothberg, 2012). The task, then, is to cultivate spaces for "interruption" (Biesta, 2012a, p. 685), wherein the witness is cared for by the listener, and the invisibilized spectres can produce a "something-to-be-done" (Gordon, 2008, p. xvi). There was indeed a haunting that occurred at the Freezing Deaths Inquest: despite the censorship over the course of the six-week inquest, the jury's verdict attributed all three deaths to "homelessness" (Crowe, 2007; Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). They called on all three levels of government to identify models for affordable and supportive housing and take action to increase the accessibility and availability of such services (Thorpe et al., 1996). Of course, such work remains incomplete.

The inquest of 1996 resulted in over 50 recommendations from the jury (Thorpe et al., 1996), directed at all levels of government. As David Hulchanski wrote two years later, "Virtually none of the recommendations relating to provincial and federal responsibilities has been implemented. Recommendation 17, calling for the development of a 'Housing Plan of

[23] For Gordon, haunting implies that we are connected through complex historical and sociological effects—the past always laying claim on present instances of sociopolitical disputation. Though, the past can easily go unseen—indeed, it must be *listened* to—just as Derrida's "visor effect" suggests how the ghosts of the past are often cloaked, obscured, or visually unavailable (Derrida, 1994). How we position (and legitimize) our knowledge within the "distribution of the sensible" (Bingham et al., 2010; Durham & Goankar, 2019) is reliant on the negotiation between the visible and the absences that *haunt* us (Gordon, 2008). Thus, my reading of Gordon's "haunting" situates a speaker—in this case, Tipping—who attempts to recuperate the voices of the spirits of the past (as explored in Chapter 1) through oral testimony. But also, Gordon's (2008) notion of the "ghost," while representing a loss, can be both a loss "of life, [or]…a path not taken" (p. 64)—in this way the trial itself would become a "ghost" that would haunt the politics of dehousing for years to come.

Action' was ignored" (D. Hulchanski, 1998). The Inquest ended in late July. By September, Richard Roy had died in Allan Gardens. His body, found by Mike Skidd and Gaetan Heroux, was disrespected by the police officers who handled his body and by the media who reported on his death (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). I will address the spirit and legacy of Richard Roy in Chapter 4.

Edmond Yu

In December of 1996, Bob Rose would encounter a man standing in the snowy sidewalk of Queen Street, in Parkdale. The young man, Edmond Yu, was holding a social assistance-cheque outside a rooming house where his landlord had, moments earlier, evicted him (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022; Valpy, 1997). Bob Rose described him as a "distinguished looking man" (Simmie, 1998), dressed in all black and layered up to face the cold. Yu became friends with Rose; he also began spending time with a man named Robert Little. Little would later describe Yu's intellect and capacity for dialogue:

> He would always make a statement and would then emphasize it with, 'but *why*? *Why* does it have to be this way? *Why* is it this way?' I can always just see him saying '*but why*' and there would always be this big smile on his face, almost as if he was challenging you to think about it from a different manner, try and view it from the particular perspective he was presenting it as… (Simmie, 1998).

In the early 80s, Edmond Yu was a scholarship recipient studying medicine at the University of Toronto (Simmie, 1998). He was an A+ student (Simmie, 1998). Those who knew Edmond Yu knew that he was fond of saying, "reality can sometimes be painful" (Simmie, 1998). His father died when he was 18. In 1984 he was top of his class at med school. At registration week, 1985, he was apprehended by police after several months of exhibiting signs of mental illness (Simmie, 1998). Years later, probably over a game of chess, Yu would tell Bob Rose, "I really don't think there's a place in this world for me" (Green, 1999).

Louis Dionne, a staff member at the Parkdale Activity - Recreation Centre (PARC), talked about the deep level of Yu's philosophical inquiries: "He was always after this point of equilibrium between the possible and the impossible, between the visible and the invisible, between life and death. So he was fascinating" (Simmie, 1998). He frequented a local bookstore. The owner would become a friend and they would often discuss philosophy during Yu's countless visits (Green, 1999). He would get up on stage at PARC parties and sing (Simmie, 1998). Bob Rose tried in vain to find Edmond Yu adequate housing. At one point, Rose became frustrated and depressed by the cracks in the system, He testified, "I felt my heart would break and I was so frustrated and depressed… But [Yu] smiled and said, 'You know Bob, reality is sometimes painful.' He was trying to console me" (Green, 1999). Eventually Rose had gotten Yu a room at the Gerstein Centre. On February 20, 1997, Yu would wake early and make breakfast for every other resident in the house, including the staff (Simmie, 1998), before heading out to what staff assumed would be a visit to a family member's house.

A few hours later, Yu's lifeless body, riddled with bullet holes from Toronto Police, would lie on a TTC bus for 6 hours before finally being removed. Hundreds of articles and endless hours of legal proceedings would captivate the Toronto media landscape over the next couple of years. The response to Edmond Yu's death would provide a prolonged opportunity for the public to consider the growing phenomenon of dehousing and death. While there were significant moments of learning for members of the public, the systemic issues underlying Yu's death proved very resistant to change. What did emerge, however, was another avenue for the remembrance and collective witness of those working for a more compassionate world: The Justice for Edmond Yu Coalition (Justice for Edmond Yu Coalition, 1998, 1999).

In February of 1997, the local bookstore owner's wife was visiting with the Dalai Lama himself, while in exile in India. Yu's relationship with the bookstore owner was so significant that, upon hearing of Yu's death, he would contact his wife to share the news while she was in India. At the inquest into Yu's death, Bob Rose "testified…that the man's wife and the Dalai Lama 'lit candles for him that night'" (Green, 1999). A week later, "[l]ocal Buddhist monks chanted while friends and supporters…stood solemnly holding candles near the TTC bus turning loop at the foot of Spadina Ave…where Yu was shot" (Vincent & Boyle, 1997). 50 people attended his initial memorial service ('Man Shot by Police Is Mourned', 1997). Year after year, people would show up to assert the significance of Yu's life. At a memorial three years later, Don Weitz would perform one of many iterations of his rant-poem, Nameless-Homeless, in honour of Yu. The piece concluded in a tone that only Weitz could achieve:

> I'm your brother
> I'm your comrade
> I'm your spirit
> so don't forget me, don't forget…
> A Canadian flag flew at half-mast while people gently laid
> bright yellow flowers on the weeping snow. (Weitz, 2002)

Figure 7. Don Weitz.

So how did Edmond Yu die? Louis Dionne, a colleague of Bob Rose's at PARC answered that by writing, "On Feb. 20, Yu was judged and found strong-looking, foreign-looking, dishevelled-looking, dangerous-looking. He died from wearing three coats. Three coats and 11 vests, not one of which was bulletproof" (Dionne, 1997). Another way to answer that question is to first ask, "how did Lester Donaldson die?" In 1988, Lester Donaldson was found dead in his rooming house at the hands of Toronto Police (Gombu, 1999). Donaldson was a 44-year-old Black man with a successful career (Coyle, 1999). Donaldson, like Yu, had been diagnosed with schizophrenia (Coyle, 1999). He was shot in his own home, while holding a small paring knife. After the White officer who killed him was charged with manslaughter, Toronto Police staged massive demonstrations and refused to work. They also demanded the resignation of Ontario's Attorney General. The Toronto police union president, Arthur Lyman warned that the police would now be "reluctant to arrest black people, and they'll just take over the city" (Burns, 1989). This racist fearmongering was only the tip of the iceberg. In 1994, there was an inquest into the death of Lester Donaldson, 3 years before the shooting of Edmond Yu. The central recommendation from the jury at the Donaldson inquest was to provide a mandatory de-escalation training course for all members of the Toronto police force. The 5-day course was implemented, only to be dropped a year later, in 1995. It was quietly re-adopted in March of 1999, during the media spotlight brought about by the Edmond Yu inquest (Gombu, 1999). What the Edmond Yu inquest attempted to do was enshrine the need for such ongoing training in legislation, so that the police force would not be able to discontinue training once the media attention dissipated (Coyle, 1999). As outreach workers, advocates, members of the jury, and legal experts everywhere agreed, these men did not deserve to die like this. Their deaths were the result of police officers who had spent hundreds of hours at the gun range and almost none preparing to respond to people in distress (Gadd, 1998, 1999b). The lawyer representing the Yu family, Louis Sokolov, said

"[i]t's a bitter irony that more effort goes into giving police officers better weapons than giving them the tools they need not to use the weapons" (Coyle, 1999).

The shooting of Edmond Yu was full of inconsistent stories and questionable practices from the Toronto police. Officer Louis Pasquino, the man who shot Yu, was a trained marksman (Gadd, 1999b) who fired six shots directly at Yu's head. Yu had been holding a child-sized hammer (Hawkins & Colbourne, 1997). He then proceeded to avoid reporting the shooting on police radio—and completely neglected to fill out his daily police log with any details (Gadd, 1999a). The civilian watchdog overseeing the police, the province's Special Investigations Unit (SIU), was represented at the Yu inquest by the *same* lawyer as the officers involved in the shooting—what many insisted was an obvious conflict of interest (Boyle, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). In addition, Police Chief David Boothby, whose career had been peppered with clashes with the police union (Andrew-Gee, 2014), made comments that suggested the innocence of the officers prior to any investigation into the facts of the case (Coalition Against Racist Police Violence, 1997b). Simultaneously, Premier Harris was busy attempting to enhance the powers of the police chief and limit civilian oversight through Bill 105 (Coalition Against Racist Police Violence, 1997b).

Edmond Yu's death caused much grief. As a result of a strong alliance of activists and community groups, vigils and events were hosted across the city to commemorate Yu, while protesting the fatalities at the hands of Toronto Police. The issues spotlighted ranged from coercive treatment of the consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x) community (Bacque, 1997, 1998; Justice for Edmond Yu Coalition, 1999), racist policing (Coalition Against Racist Police Violence, 1997b; Gombu, 1999; Slinger, 1999), and, of course, the intersections these have with affordable housing and ongoing dehousing deaths (Coroner's Jury, 1999; Justice for Edmond Yu Coalition, 1999; Littman, 1998; Weitz, 1998, 2002). As one reporter noted,

> …for the first time, a psychiatric consumer-survivor group was represented at the proceedings…As a result, the jury recommended the provision of safe houses for

> psychiatric patients, more affordable housing, provisions of jobs…that would offer the dignity of work… (Coyle, 1999).

It should come as no surprise that another PARC colleague of Bob Rose's, Mike Lyons, as well as Cathy Crowe would both be featured as speakers at the initial protest-vigil for Edmond Yu on March 1, 1997 (Coalition Against Racist Police Violence, 1997b). The movement would go on to spend years "keep[ing] the memory of Edmond Yu alive" (Justice for Edmond Yu Coalition, 1999), organizing annual memorials that would coalesce people to honour his legacy (Bacque, 2002; The Edmond Yu Safe House Project & Parkdale Activity - Recreation Centre (PARC), 2002). Eventually, Edmond Yu's memory would indeed animate the work needed to retrofit his old rooming house into supportive housing for those struggling with mental illness (Balkissoon, 2010; Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). It was as Bob Rose had predicted, in a prophetic speech to the owner of that derelict property at 1495 Queen St. W:

> …we did as I said to the owner…on the day that the heat went down that he didn't call me…I had been working with this old prospector…[in his] early 80s or late 70s…and he nearly died because the heat had been off for three days…I said to [the owner] after that, I said, "Rocco, I have tried every way up and down to try to persuade you how to change…this is not a place for working class people anymore…this is a place for disabled people. People with mental health issues. And if you don't adjust what you fucking do with this [property]…you're going to hell and you don't know it and I'm going to put you out of business." So, we did. (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022)

On the 14th anniversary of Yu's death, the gathering took on a more joyful resonance. That day marked the opening of Edmond Place, a 29-unit revitalized property for affordable, supportive housing (Hatfield, 2011; Hilditch Architect, 1997; Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022).

Re-membering through the archive

The work of remembering the dispossessed is often counterhegemonic work—it is work that impinges on and butts up against the logic of the traditional archive. The activist-archivist extends the memory of a particular time or era—in this case what we have come to call the neoliberal era—to a community whose work and lives are excluded from official narratives. In this way the archival work is memory work—a literal re-membering or stitching together of stories and events that otherwise would be lost. But the nature of this piecing together relying on archival material is that stuff *is* lost. My work forces me to acknowledge that which is unrecoverable. The most obvious instances of this are the hundreds of Jane, J., and John Does (distinctions based on known preferred pronouns) that occupy the memorial (Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, 2020). Bonnie Briggs, one of the founders of the Toronto Homeless Memorial, in her initial correspondence with Mayor Barbara Hall in 1996, expressed her concern that people dying without housing will "fade into history and become numbers" (Briggs, 1996b). She was known to express that people deserve to be named and remembered. Greg Cook, a memorial organizer and member of the Shelter and Housing Justice Network (SHJN), expressed to me his concerns about the politics of confidentiality:

> The framing of confidentiality is important so I think it's a nuanced conversation…but definitely I would argue… Who [has access] to that detail? …because the government has it… In some ways [the names and numbers of the dead are] shared broadly within some circles…the shelter bureaucracy…or public health…they all know that…but the public? Often the family doesn't know or isn't informed…. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022)

Indeed, there are stories of family members discovering a loved one has died after reading their name on the memorial. Amidst these nuanced challenges, the memorial attempts to trace the stories and honour the lives of those who have been forced to live without housing.

The Toronto Homeless Memorial archive exists in what might be described as 'old' and 'new' forms. In one sense, its history lies (somewhat) preserved at the City of Toronto Archives as well as on the memorial website—though there have been different iterations of the site over the years and some of that data has been lost amidst the era some folks describe as the digital dark ages (Bollacker, 2017). This 'old' archival material is also full of its own complexity and nuance, which I will describe later in more detail. In its 'new' forms, the memorial archive has been kept alive by video recorded memorial events since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, my own interviews are an attempt to record a more extensive oral history and conceptual vocabulary to help contribute to this ever-dynamic archive.

Archive, counter-archive, and the refusal to disappear

How is the City of Toronto archive used by the memorial? What are some of the complexities found within the documentation provided at this site? My project draws on the conventional archive—the City of Toronto Archive—as well as what some would call a counter-archive (more obvious components of the 'counter-archive' being the memorial's own website and my recorded interviews, etc.). Yet it is even more complicated. The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, a collection of housing activists who were very active in the decades bracketing the millennium, have preserved thousands of documents, emails, newspaper clippings, and other material *within* the City of Toronto archives. Thus, in this conventional archive environment lives a set of materials that both records *and* runs counter to the dominant narratives from neoliberalism's early days of dehousing. This is what I term, "the counter-archive within."

Project TIDE

The TDRC files record an instance of conventional archival work in an initiative from the early 2000s called "Project TIDE." Project TIDE—TIDE being the acronym for Toronto Indigent Death Enquiries—was the city's first attempt at tracking deaths of those without housing. The TDRC files record promotional material, research summaries, slide decks, and collated numbers from Project TIDE. At the same time, the TDRC files record the email chains, meeting minutes, protest actions, and alternative sources of data regarding "homeless deaths" that emerged—because of activists and allied researchers—in these same years. Thus, preserved adjacent within the dead archive (Azoulay, 2017; Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995) rests a narrative that extends or even counters the state-archived narrative. This is one of the clever tactics used by TDRC activists—that they preserved the *incomplete* narrative that City Hall was attempting to offer the public next to a (much) more richly detailed and nuanced account of the tragedy unfolding in the city at that time.

While the archival practice that situates memorial data next to something like Project TIDE depicts the insufficiencies of City-collected data, it also gets at something much deeper. While the City data lives in a world of anonymity, the memorial attempts to animate story and relationship. Looking at it this way, it is not simply a matter of saying 'the city only counted X amount, while the memorial counted more.' There is also the fact that the city counted deaths by happenstance—death by suicide, death by drowning, death by fire—while the memorial, whenever possible, recorded the deaths of *people*. We see this in the work of the Rupert Hotel Coalition, the Freezing Deaths inquest, and the Justice for Edmond Yu movement. The memorial 'dataset' is an "archive of feelings" (Cvetkovich, 2003; Salvio, 2017, p. 56)—one that records names, stories, photographs, heartfelt messages of family members, and various artworks. Up against Project TIDE, for instance, the purpose of the memorial is thrown into sharp relief. As memorial organizer Greg Cook said, the memorial is

where “people…in all their humanity, are remembered” (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Rather than an archive-as-catalogue it is an archive as commemorative—or aesthetic—practice that precipitates grief and instils wonder. Di Paolantonio (2015) writes, “due to the curatorial mise-en-scène a remnant-object itself can become an aesthetic image for us to sense and purposefully wonder about, rather than something we simply observe, verify, master and catalogue” (p. 272). There is a curatorial practice evident in the TDRC files that, I argue, is deeply pedagogical.

Grief and appearance

For organizer Greg Cook, the memorial has two main functions. The first is to cultivate a space wherein people can be quiet, be sad, be angry—it is a space to foster the acknowledgement of loss. The second function of the memorial is to create space for people to appear. It is an act of becoming visible—which, for an invisibilized community is always “an act of defiance” (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). But this second function, importantly, is also positioned as a work of care. To say this is a crisis, to call it *injustice*, is to pronounce these lives as valuable. It is to suggest that these are deaths worth preventing. Project TIDE never contained such statements. To merely say, ‘this many people have died’ is to avoid any such statement about injustice and, by extension, avoids any conversation about changing the way we do things. As Cook declared,

> [W]e need to respond like it is a [disaster]…and actually doing that values the lives that are affected by it. But it also recognizes that we can create something different where people aren’t dying. We can have different kinds of policies and different kinds of systems. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022)

There is another way that we have not *tried yet*—the memorial is a recurring statement of recognition that another way is possible.

The TDRC archive reveals how the City of Toronto repeatedly sought to ascertain whether 'the disaster' was real or not. Funds were repeatedly funnelled not into developing solutions, but rather creating new tools to measure and collect data (Vaughan, 2006). After Project TIDE came The Street Needs Assessment. After the so-called "Street Counts" came the long-awaited "homeless deaths" data from the city. Yet none of these has seemed to make a meaningful difference. As Cook says,

> [C]ollecting numbers doesn't actually mean anything in and of itself. It won't mean the city will do better or change… But…at the centre of what the homeless memorial is is to say that we need to at least acknowledge that this is happening in our society. It can't be invisible. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022)

The data on their own are significant yet remain frustratingly impotent without ways to animate the stories and the people involved. Thankfully, the TDRC archive offers this other, much more holistic, part of the story.

The memorial as archive

The Toronto Homeless Memorial contributes to the ongoing generation of a kind of "dehousing archive," not just by recording the numbers and names of those who have died, but by creating a particular "mise-en-scène" (Simon, 2012, p. 6). For Roger Simon, this notion of a mise-en-scène refers to "a material social practice that enables…various forms of thought and social relationships" (p. 6). This occurs through both the event and the archive. As I've said, the memorial event gathers people in a monthly enactment of publicness—an invitation to appear together, with all the contingency and possibility that such a ritualized social practice entails. As I've indicated, no two memorials are ever the same. The possibility for "obstruction," as Roger Simon would say, is also always there. But the practice relies on what Gert Biesta would call the pedagogical work of publicness. That, in and through appearing together and furthering the opportunities for appearance, new things can be invited

to occur. New ways of being together can emerge. And over the years there have been many forms of exhibition-as-event—art installations, poetry readings, plays, live music, etc.—that have all helped sustain this simple memorial. The material from these events also helps supply the memorial archive; through "archive activism" (Cvetkovich, 2011; Juhasz, 2006), the archive can supply the material for these artistic interventions. However, a significant finding of mine, in the many hours I spent examining the archival material from the memorial and the associated TDRC files, is the lack of preserved material when it comes to the contributions of *artists*. It is my hope that my future research will help to fill in some of these gaps in the archive—by recording the oral testimony of artist-collaborators and recovering this missing material in the form of photographs, scripts, testimonies, and other visual or tactile mediums.

Ann Cvetkovich (2011) articulates the archives of queer communities as "archives of feeling," which, she says, are inspired by "strong feelings" as well as "ordinary feelings" (p. 32), the curation of which often foreground the everyday objects and "ephemeral" evidence of/from the past. These, according to Cvetkovich, both use—and challenge—traditional archive sites/formats and, at times, adopt counter-archival approaches that exist outside of (and in opposition to) state or other institutional archival contexts (Cvetkovich, 2003, 2011). In her focus on archives of trauma, Cvetkovich (2003) details the way in which trauma is often "unspeakable and unrepresentable…marked by forgetting…", and thus it can "[give] rise to new genres of expression, such as testimony, and new forms of monuments, rituals, and performances that can call into being collective witnesses…" (p. 7).

The TDRC files are, as the name suggests, mostly preserved in the form of paper files. The affective force of these files is found in the hand-written notes, personal correspondences, and in audio and video recordings. In these recordings, one *hears* the address of the witness and the cadence of voices; the raw emotions and the very *tempo* of the

public rallies (and words shared therein) captured on film/tape are significant forms of affective documentation. Photographs, flyers, and buttons trace *some* of the idiosyncratic and concrete examples of artifacts of personal memory, while others are indeed missing. Should the archive contain some of "Duckie's" marbles, for instance (for context, see chapter 4)? Or are these to remain in personal collections, as active and ongoing reminders for those still wondering if they've lost their marbles; those needing to laugh at the absurdity of late capitalism; those needing a reminder of a lost loved one…? The archive (and counter-archive), especially when shaped by and concerned with trauma, is marked by absences and silences. Thus, I share with Cvetkovich (2003) the commitment that projects like this dissertation "be understood as working as much to produce an archive as to analyze one" (p. 8).

Witnessing when the war is unfinished

In my interview with organizer and outreach worker, Gigi Grant, they shared a powerful story with me. I share it here both to contribute to the archival record, as well as provide an example of an important aspect of the memorial's pedagogic work. Grant was inside the Church of the Holy Trinity, when a collection of shiny, black SUVs pulled up outside. It was 2019; Doug Ford was premier of Ontario. Someone mentioned Ford's name and moments later Grant was outside. It was none other than Doug Ford, with his entourage, having a smoke break. They were outside the Ontario Government's conference centre (in use pre-COVID) at the top floor of the neighbouring Eaton Centre. Grant related the encounter in the following way:

> [Ford] said, "You know, I would really like to give ya'll some money to build like a—I envision sort of like a wall with everybody's name engraved in it, or something like that—something more structural." And I said to him…I was like, okay, well…and I summoned my courage, because you know, it's a bit hard to talk in these situations…and so I said, "Well you know it sounds like a war

> memorial that you want to build. And I think those are built in acknowledgement of the end of a war. But we are still in this conflict. And I would love to build that wall too, but we need to end this conflict first. And I think that's what we need to invest our time and energy into—into actually working on these issues." And so, he was kind of taken aback by that…I had a sense that it kind of stuck with him. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

What is significant about the form of commemorative practice engaged in at the Toronto Homeless Memorial is that the nature of the injustice has only ever been "in progress."[24] It is not a "past" atrocity. It is an unfinished memorial, which is why the event is much more arresting than the monument. There is no visually stimulating "finished product" to hold the gaze of bystanders. Rather, its monthly appearance is a reminder of new names, new stories, ever amassed in this humble chronicling of the dead. What we see here is a "pedagogy of witness" (Simon, 2014, p. 19), which works to help attendees come to terms with "prior events and experiences," (p. 19) while also paying attention to ongoing violence. In this way it is both the dead and the living who must be allowed to speak and to make a claim on the public. Simon's (2014) notion of "a public vision" to address "the problem of undirected emotions" (p. 18) is relevant here. Dehousing persists despite ongoing public outrage, frustration, and, at times, violent hatred. But the outrage is so often misdirected. The dehoused are blamed for nearly every act of violence or vandalism, it seems (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2013). Of crucial importance, then, at the memorial site, is the cultivation of a public vision that reframes the crisis, counters indifference, and forces the public to direct their feelings *somewhere*. It involves reaping the "enormous political potential" that emerges from "[o]pen grieving" (Butler, 2016, p. 39).

Also worthy of note is Simon's (2014) discussion of how the awareness of past events does not always assume there is a "bridge" to the implications for the present (p. 34). While the memorial's connection to the present should be obvious, attendees perhaps also need to

[24] For a discussion of "slow violence," see Chapter 6.

be provided with the resources, in the form of "pedagogical and political discourse" (p. 34) to make sense of these events. Part of this involves 1) cultivating a better understanding of the past—of how dehousing came to be cemented in policy via neoliberal statecraft (from the UK to the US to Canada, and beyond)—as well as by 2) generating an understanding of the *grievability* of dehoused people (Butler, 2015, 2016).

In the context of the archive, this is a tricky dynamic for the researcher-as-witness. Simon (2014) again helps us make sense of this. If, as Simon (2014) writes about lynching photographs, "the camera was an additional instrument of abuse" (p. 25), in the sense that it "arrested" the time in which the spectacle of suffering occurred, then the homeless memorial archive does in fact preserve other "additional instruments of abuse." The TDRC files preserve much of the mainstream media commentary from this period. While—as I have pointed out earlier in this chapter—the curation of this archival material offers a rich counternarrative, the preservation of media publicity necessitates caution from the archival-consumer/spectator/witness. The media coverage of dehousing, for instance, has often, though not always, been a narrative that has dehumanized and desensitized the public to the suffering of our neighbours (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). I have written about this elsewhere from a Critical Mad Studies lens (Martin, 2022). Newspaper clippings from the TDRC files at the City of Toronto archives thus must be handled with care. The researcher-as-witness must not repeat the violent ways reporters and commentators depict the crisis, or the people caught in its brutal undertow. The researcher-as-witness must ensure they are encountering "past-others" with a sensitivity, or as Ann Chinnery (2013) would say, with a sense of reciprocity. For Chinnery, the notion of reciprocity with past-others is possible through a kind of reciprocity-by-proxy. That is, by drawing near others, we can develop a sensibility that allows us to care for the past through these relations of care. In the case of archival research, there is an undeniable asymmetrical relation between the researcher (as

witness) and the past (other). Without acknowledging such an ethically complicated relationship, the asymmetrical reciprocity simply gets caught up in the economy of "recognition," which Chinnery's Levinasian inflections would be critical of. Part of the acknowledgment of this asymmetry involves attending—in the present tense—forums that make possible these relations of care.

The memorial provides an example of such a public forum. Though I have never experienced dehousing, I can draw near others who have experienced this and enter into a kind of reciprocity with others' "past-others" (Chinnery, 2013). This extension of reciprocity to the unknowable past is, for Chinnery (2010, 2013), a necessary part of our ethical commitment to the past. Attending the memorial event must be, for myself as researcher, an exercise that I engage in simultaneous to my entry point via the archive. It allows me to better understand the shortcomings of the media spectacle—to counter the way the media narratives or photographs "arrest time" or act as further "instruments of abuse" (Simon, 2014, p. 25). Yet, even in coming to terms with how the present tragedy is haunted by the accounts, people, and silences of the past—and acknowledging that stuff is lost in my own attempts to work in/with these gaps—I am ever challenged by the ethical quandary that separates the housed researcher from a study of violent dehousing.

The crisis of dehousing and the phenomenon of homeless death can be understood as a kind of inverse to Simon's (2014) example of the "impoverished witnessing" (p. 34) of lynching photographs: rather than running the risk of being "a 'sad past,' but one that has no currency in the present" (p. 34), "homeless deaths" are, I argue, often conceived of as a "sad present" with no currency or relevancy in the constellations we map to our past. Hence why a static, depersonalized term like "the homeless," gained traction in the neoliberal era, rather than the much more dynamic, "dehousing," coined by activist-scholar David Hulchanski (2009; 2010), who was an active member of the TDRC. In other words, rather than determine

and name the specific role we as voters and fellow citizens, and our governments as administrators and policymakers, have had in the upending of a national housing program, the gutting of social assistance, and the manufacturing of "social murder" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022), we label those *subjected* to this disaster. Such nomenclature does nothing to implicate us as witnesses to a broader phenomenon of social and political violence. As the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee indicated of dehousing back in the 90s, this is a "man-made" disaster (Crowe, 2002). David Hulchanski (2010) called it an "invention." It is not merely a 'sad present' of so-called "homelessness," but rather a past manufacturing of "dehousing" that we are implicated in perpetuating. I will speak more directly to the vocabulary of dehousing in Chapter 6. This radical change of posture invites us, then, to witness and to act. It is aligned with this notion of "acknowledgement" that Simon concludes his chapter with. We must go beyond the event, the story, the image itself, and come to understand our own connection to it—not just what is being "stated," but what is it "doing" (Simon, 2014, p. 36). And therefore, what must we do?

Michael Rothberg (2019) presents an "analytical category" (p. 7) that he calls the "implicated subject," which can assist the spectator in coming to terms with their relation to violence. By moving us beyond "the victim/perpetrator imaginary" (p. 7), Rothberg conceptualizes an approach to the notion of political responsibility that breaks the bounds of neoliberal individualism. In recasting *responsibility* as a kind of collective involvement in the reproduction of socio-political circumstances, Rothberg (2019) resists the tidy divisions between perpetrator-criminality and bystander-innocence. Rather than a frozen ontological category, the *implicated subject* exists as part of a dynamic relationship of entanglements in/with injustice(s) somewhere between absolution and condemnation. When it comes to dehousing, the concept of the implicated subject forces us to reckon with our own

entanglements with prerogative power (Arnold, 2004)[25] and violence. Importantly, for this project, is the way Rothberg draws attention to the diachronic (historical) particularities that are entangled with synchronic (contemporary) regimes of power—in other words, how we remember past events matters. Contesting dehousing is not merely about upending violent policies in existence *today*, but about overturning and reconstructing "sedimented layers of society" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 11), such as the kind of neoliberal grammar that I turn to in Chapter 3. Rothberg (2019) insists that "memory can serve as a resource" (p. 11) for movements aimed at making implication apparent to those who benefit from layers of historical injustice.

An archive of memory: action and re-creation

Activist-outreach worker Bob Rose expressed that he always wanted to "move the hyphen" at Parkdale Activity - Recreation Centre (or PARC for short, where he worked, organized, and mourned lost friends for over 30 years). Rather than "Parkdale Activity - Recreation Centre," Rose preferred to think of it as Parkdale Activity "*Re-Creation* Centre" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). In Rose's words, "Because that's what we were doing: re-creating elements of the community…" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). For Rose, the early community events, protest actions and memorial vigils at City Hall were part of a movement of *action and re-creation*, rather than mere activity and recreation. He understood, from early in his career, that the rearrangement of material (not to mention social practices) was needed to foster new passageways and constellations (Di Paolantonio, 2015) between violent pasts, grief-ridden presents, and possible futures.

[25] The citation to Kathleen Arnold's work is intended to distinguish this understanding of power from that of Arendt's (1958) considerations of power and dispersal as inherently contingent and non-violent.

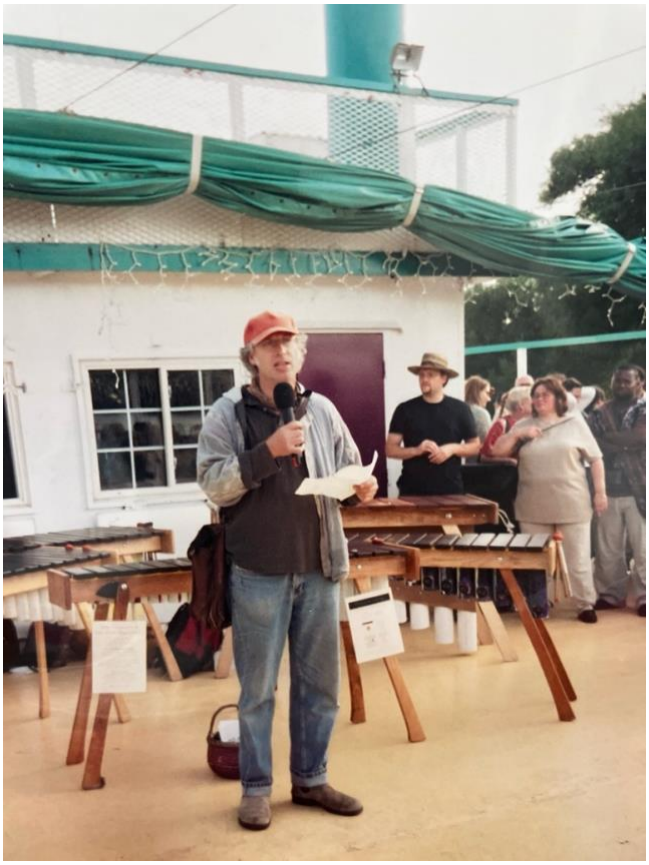


Figure 8. Bob Rose, 1999.

Greg Cook articulates how this "dehousing archive" is generated in part through a practice of oral history: "It's a mashup of this kind of written archive [and] oral archive—that exists in people's memories…and gets passed on…and even some of what I'm saying around the oral archive are stories I heard before my involvement" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Indeed, much of what Cook knows about the memorial was passed on to him by volunteers, organizers, and community members who came before through the archive that "exists in people's memories." An example is in what organizer Cathy Crowe describes as "whole wonderful bodies of work" (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022) that emerged through the poetry of Don Weitz and Bonnie Briggs, among others. If you attend the memorial today, you will likely hear excerpts from Briggs and Weitz's poetry. You may even hear a version of Weitz's poem, "nameless homeless," made into a song by musician Tom Smarjda. The poem, better known as a "rant," was constantly being

rearranged, retold, and reimagined throughout the 10+ years of public readings from Weitz himself (Eric Weissman, 2016; Nuttall, 2021; Weitz, 2002, 2016). It was an ever-evolving performance piece (see Chapter 5). Herein is an example of what Roger Simon (2014) would call an "advent"—that is, "an event defined by the arrival of traces of past events with potential to impact on one's present" (p. 6). As Weitz reads aloud in a filmed version on National Housing Day, 2016, "remember, remember these brothers… Remember…Eugene Upper, Irwin Anderson, Mirsalah-Aldin Kompani…and hundreds and hundreds more who died on Toronto's mean streets…" (Eric Weissman, 2016, 13:22). This ongoing work of action and *re-creation* provide echoes of relationships that help trace the history and aesthetic practices animating the memorial over the years. They are, in themselves, simultaneously acts of protest, archival curation, and grief-ridden commemoration. They stretch back to acknowledge and carry on the memories that pre-date the memorial—The Rupert Hotel, the inquests, Edmond Yu's story—so that commemorative and archival practices are intrinsic to the constant re-creation of the elements of community life amidst struggle.[26]

The memorial's archivists are invested in a practice of curation. Mario Di Paolantonio (2015) traces Roger Simon's concern for the remnants of difficult pasts by revealing how remnant-objects can be made to "face us" through "the pedagogy of curation" (p. 271). The way in which organizers collate material in the archive, or present material in public commemorative practice can, Di Paolantonio (2015) argues, "[activate] the call of the unsettled past in our time" (p. 272). Documentation is adjacent to affect. It is an archive that is inclusive of forms of emotional address that call out to the viewer. Paula Salvio refers to the process of uncovering traumatic histories as one of "encounter" (Salvio, 2017, p. 166). For Salvio, the affective force of commemoration leads to an encounter with other stories,

[26] Media artist and scholar Alexandra Juhasz (2006) writes about uncovering ways "to relodge…frozen memories in contemporary contexts so that they, and perhaps we, can be reanimated" (p. 320).

people, and their material conditions. And through all of this, much of the documentation is managed and maintained in the conventional (City of Toronto) archive. It is a "counter-archive within" that impinges on the colonial logic of state archives. The nested nature of such material opens the possibilities of encounter for anyone who approaches these files. Not only does the viewer encounter stories of others, but they are confronted with how such testimony runs counter to the state-preserved material next to it. The "counter-archive within" draws attention to the humanity of dehoused citizens amidst media or state-led stigmatizing and invisibilizing. It also inspires ongoing movements of interruption that can occur through such pedagogical work—the work of acting, speaking, gathering, and appearing together.

There are questions that emerge from the notion of a "counter-archive within." While I have established here the significant interchange between those who *supply* this archival material and the "viewers" who *encounter* it, one wonders about the care-taking processes that manage and order the material. Who is doing the *labour* (in the Arendtian sense) that orders this *work* (in the Arendtian sense)? What do activists risk in allowing state mechanisms for storing/ordering data to take charge of these artifacts? While some of these questions will remain unsatisfactorily answered without a comprehensive archival ethnography of the City of Toronto archives, my experience with the TDRC fonds was such that the ordering of the files, as explained above, was primarily (if not entirely) managed by the activists themselves. The City of Toronto Archives does maintain the authority to gate-keep the access to the stored files as well as what "counts" as worthy material to supplement the existing collection. Thus, it is important that activists are simultaneously engaged in forms of labour that upend the ordering systems used by/in state archive contexts.

Organizer Rayna Slobodian says, "…[our] ways of living are so toxic" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). Gigi Grant calls it a "civilizatory crisis…a crisis at the level of civilization" and "a cult of death" (Grant, personal communication, March 9,

2022). Countering these deadly ways of being will involve cultivating the conditions for re-creation, togetherness, and solidarity to animate new forms of public address and new forms of archival material. A recent example of which is the book, *Displacement City*—which is, as Robyn Maynard writes, "the story of mutual, collective support, of refashioning public space to meet public need" (Cook & Crowe, 2022, p. xxxiv). The book emerged out of and was strongly informed by the memorial. Several organizers involved in the memorial contributed to the book, and it was edited by organizers Greg Cook and Cathy Crowe.

While this chapter has sought to work *with* the archive, historically grounding the ongoing commemorative project of the Toronto Homeless Memorial, it has also been an effort to engage with the question of how to orient the researcher (and perhaps spectators more generally) to ethical witnessing practices. Such practices imply the deep searching that must occur across archival terrain, while admitting the incompleteness, the gaps, the failures to appear that exist in various archival contexts—yes, even in *activist* archives. Thus, I offer considerations for the recuperation of what (and who) is lost—the ghosts (or *spirits*) of the untrodden paths and the unknown (or misremembered) dead. The next chapter will offer further historical context, while unearthing the rise of a distinctly neoliberal rationality, and its implications for Toronto. This geographically specific account depicts the way of thinking that has influenced the very archival practices contested in this chapter—the silences and deficiencies of state/colonial archives and the banality of dehumanizing media narratives and political discourse. I present this portrait of the neoliberal regime of thinking through an account of the "We Are You" Memorial Project, the initial proposal for a homeless memorial in the City of Toronto, which was spearheaded by none other than Bonnie Briggs in 1996. Chapter 3's narrative will reveal how early memorial organizers would trouble the very ontological framework demanded (and perpetuated) by neoliberalism.

Chapter 3

The neoliberal turn in Toronto

In many ways, this chapter is emblematic of the co-related impasses that this dissertation seeks to address—neoliberal dehousing and the decline of the public realm. Here, I situate the emergence of dehousing in Toronto as it intensified in an era of unprecedented political transformation—that is, amidst the altering of the very political structures, processes, and geopolitical boundaries that constituted Toronto. This occurred through an event known as "amalgamation." Such political transformation was, indeed, politically motivated. The architect of the reimagined neoliberal city was none other than Ontario Premier Mike Harris.[27] By drawing on archival material and historical accounts, I reveal how the changing fabric of civic institutions was co-constitutive of a diminished democracy, the marriage of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, and the associated "business ontology" (Fisher, 2009) that dictated the actions of political leaders.

In a brief theoretical interlude, I conceptualize a response to the political impasse I map in this chapter. Relying on Freire's (1984) notion of humility and Arendt's (1958) depiction of respect, I articulate these as pre-conditions to the faculties of forgiveness and making promises that sustain plural, relational connections (Arendt, 1958). I develop this line of thinking in response to the newly materialized neoliberal city.

Such historical context and theoretical analysis assist me in further explicating the evolution of commemorative activist practice through this same period. The mid to late 1990s saw the rise of what would become the first attempt at a permanent monument dedicated to the victims of neoliberal dehousing. The project was initiated by Bonnie Briggs and would

[27] Harris was the author of *The Common Sense Revolution*, which any reader of Antonio Gramsci would find quite apt.

come to be known as the "We Are You" Memorial Project. In addition to the TDRC's archival material, I draw on complimentary historical accounts as well as public interviews with pre-amalgamation political leadership to draw attention to the significance of these changes for democratic engagement, for citizens, and for the dehousing crisis. Such changes underscore the importance of this early commemorative project, even as they stymied the efforts of organizers and allies. The newly arranged Toronto would indeed pose significant barriers to the organizing of the proposed memorial. Having foreseen some of the effects these changes would have, activists raced against the clock to establish the memorial's foothold in a civic landscape that was deteriorating before their eyes.

"Mega" government and the responsibility for civic life

> "I think there's been a failure to acknowledge the failures…" (TVO Today, 2010, 09:30)
> - Former Mayor Barbara Hall

A theme that kept emerging from my interviews with memorial volunteers was the slow, continual depletion of allyship from members of city council, and others in positions of political authority (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022; Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). To be honest, I initially planned to write just that—a kind of depressing notation on the history of the memorial. Where once members of provincial parliament and city Councillors would attend the memorial, now there were vacant seats. The fact that Queen's Park and (certainly) Nathan Phillips Square are a casual stroll away did nothing to boost attendance. The memorial still receives the odd mention at a council meeting (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022), but rarely do politicians *appear* at the memorial—to pay respects, to speak, to grieve. And yes, to be honest, I hadn't thought to ask why. I supposed I already knew. These are the bleak times we are living through, what else is there to say? And yet, as I read through the archive, as I took a closer look at the years

leading up to the memorial—the rallies, the vigils, the deaths, the inquests—a picture began to emerge of a Toronto in transition. This was a Toronto succumbing to neoliberal forces—policies, yes, but also something broader than a simple policy playbook. Policies at the time were symptomatic of a rationality that seeped its ways into the halls of power and trickled down—the way the wealth was supposed to—to the voters, the citizens. Importantly, the picture that has emerged reveals that, while there exists a political malaise, there also persists a possibility of something new. By tracing the decline of the political realm in Toronto, I think we may begin to see a map toward new possibilities for us as citizens.

One of the most pressing issues of today is the shift in how we view, and engage in, politics. In North America, at least, the embrace of neoliberal rationality has meant the fear of big government (Fisher, 2009) and the search for individual solutions through consumerism, rather than democratic processes (Brown, 2006; Fisher, 2009). As Mark Fisher (2009) points out, this anti-statist rhetoric is full of its own contradictions. The seemingly impossible marriage of neoliberalism with neoconservatism has meant the elimination of the welfare state, while other state-funded programs are aggressively defended. Despite the rhetoric of doing away with state interventions, the bank bailouts of 2008 proved that specific uses of public funds are still welcomed (Fisher, 2009). And, Fisher continues, while "…neoconservatism's strong state was confined to military and police functions…[it] defined itself against a welfare state held to undermine individual moral responsibility" (Fisher, 2009, p. 61; see Brown, 2006).

And what did this look like in Toronto? The Harris government of Ontario, in 1997, decided to amalgamate the six municipalities[28] that made up Metropolitan Toronto at the time. It was an attempt to simplify the government and, as a result, save money. This is in

[28] Technically, there were the 5 lower-tier municipalities of Toronto, East York, Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, in addition to the borough of York (H. Schwartz, 2009).

keeping with Mark Fisher's assertion that, in neoliberal times, we are witness to a logic—a "business ontology"—that holds that all facets of society should be managed as if they were a business (Fisher, 2009). Thus, decisions happen quickly in the name of minimalism and cost-efficiency, without asking questions about the significance of democratic arrangements for a robust, participatory, and creative civic life. With fewer politicians holding office in Toronto, there would be less people to pay. While members of Harris's conservatives still try to muddy the waters and argue that amalgamation saved money (TVO Today, 2018), the numbers prove otherwise (H. Schwartz, 2009). The transition costs were somewhere between $275 million (H. Schwartz, 2009) and $350 million (TVO Today, 2018). Any savings as a result of fewer city Councillors had to be balanced against increased staffing and office budgets (H. Schwartz, 2009). "The government of Ontario believed it was simplifying local government by combining smaller units into larger units. They believed that larger cities were better able to reduce costs by eliminating duplication. The evidence however does not support this view" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 484).

More significant than the financial picture in Toronto was—and is—the disastrous methods used, and results brought about through this neoliberal agenda. One of the more nefarious aspects of Bill 103 was the way in which it was applied quickly, with no public input, and in concert with the downloading of several massive costs onto the municipality. First, the bill was "sent…straight to first reading - without releasing a position paper, as would have been usual for such a major reform" (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997). Second, before the bill had even passed, the provincial government "gave much of the control over existing municipalities to an appointed interim board of trustees, whose decisions would be final" (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997). The Ontario Courts ruled that this executive order was undemocratic and had no legal standing before the bill had passed in the house (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997).

Just a few weeks later, the Harris government followed this with what became known as "Mega-Week"—a massive series of reforms aimed at downloading costs from the provincial government onto the city. A "megacity" and a "Mega-Week"—a lot of "mega" from a party seemingly opposed to big government. The people acted fast. A Toronto-wide referendum was held on March 3, 1997, with higher voter turnout than a typical municipal election (TVO Today, 2018). A remarkable 76.8% of voters rejected the proposed amalgamation (Bradburn, 2023; TVO Today, 2018). Jane Jacobs declared that "Anyone who supposes harmony will prevail and efficiency reign after whole-hog amalgamation…has taken leave of common sense" (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997). This, of course, was a reference to Mike Harris's policies, published and promoted as the "Common Sense Revolution" (Duchesne, 1999). Former Mayor John Sewell organized rallies and fought for the voice of the people, saying, "I live in a democracy, and I want control over people who make decisions for me" (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997). Even former Mayor David Crombie, when confronted with Harris's Mega-Week described it, albeit through a clumsy analogy, "as though they went to a baseball game and tried to score a hockey goal" (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997). Mayor Barbara Hall was—as always—hopeful. Despite her fears for what would become of downtown Toronto, the state of urban poverty, and the disappearing middle class, she said,

> Whatever happens, big change will come from it… People have seen their communities at risk, and have put time and energy into organizing and talking about things. I don't believe that will disappear - people will stay involved, and find ways to take responsibility in civic life. (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997)

After amalgamation, over a quarter of a century later, we would do well to ask: Did this remain true? Why or why not? What has happened to how we engage in the political realm, in Toronto? Engaging with a few examples from post-amalgamation Toronto, in this chapter I seek to trace 1) how democratic action, contestation, and even understanding has faltered, 2)

how the “megacity” influenced the political power of citizens, and 3) what these two effects have brought to bear on unhoused people generally, and the Toronto Homeless Memorial, specifically.

The loss of public things

Former-mayor John Sewell holds that the Harris government was attempting to reshape the political map of Toronto for their own gain. While [old] Toronto’s Mayor, Barbara Hall, was deeply committed to the complexities of life in the city’s core, Mel Lastman, coming from North York, was able to build alliances with other suburban regions (TVO Today, 2018). Ultimately, “Harris’s advisers favoured Lastman because of his promise to freeze taxes, something that would look good for the Progressive Conservatives whenever the next provincial election occurred” (Bradburn, 2023).

In a recent panel discussion on the 20th anniversary of amalgamation, Sewell cited the example of public recreation programs. Before amalgamation, public recreation programs in Old Toronto were free for children. Given the high density population, the diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and the lack of accessible green space, the need to provide such programming as a public good was essential for low-income children (TVO Today, 2018). As a result of amalgamation, 1) inner suburban municipalities, not sympathetic to the spatial and social constraints of the inner city, immediately imposed costs for recreational programs and 2) the new school board was told they could no longer rent their facilities without imposing significant fees (TVO Today, 2018). Such an example demonstrates how neoliberalism has facilitated the loss of public things. It is not merely that inner city children were left struggling to access meaningful programming for active, healthy lifestyles—though this, too, is significant—but that citizens were stripped of a public good that they might constellate around, defend, and coordinate together (Honig, 2017).

Safe Streets for who?

Given neoconservatism's legitimization of public spending for the purposes of defence and security (Brown, 2006), the 1990s and early 2000s in Toronto saw a surge in spending on policing, even while the crime rate in Toronto was dropping (O'Grady et al., 2013b). Notably, this increase in policing led to a 2000% increase in ticketing between 2000 and 2010—a majority of which were issued to unhoused youth in the downtown core, a result of the so-called Safe Streets Act (O'Grady et al., 2013b). Instances of harassment of unhoused people by police were common (Hardill, 2000). As street nurse Kathy Hardill wrote, the Safe Streets Act allows "municipalities to characterize survival at its most desperate level as a criminal act" (Hardill, 2000). The effects of this have, unfortunately, continued (O'Grady et al., 2020). What researchers found was the nature of policing in Toronto over this period made unhoused people less safe and less able to access opportunities for meaningful economic participation (O'Grady & Greene, 2003). Unsurprisingly, it was Mel Lastman who was given the endorsement of the Metro Toronto Police Association. He promised more officers in the downtown core and a brutal response to young offenders—and even very young offenders. In a speech on the campaign trail, Lastman declared, "I want heavy penalties for these young people…I don't care if it's age 10 — I want to see young offenders penalized. I don't want to see them walking the streets…" (Bradburn, 2023). In a subsequent interview, after the outcry in response to his remark, he back-peddled, saying "A 10-year-old is a little young, it really is, but a 12-year-old knows a little better. And maybe something should be done" (Bradburn, 2023). Given his success in the election, such a posture was evidently overlooked, or even welcomed by a significant portion of the electorate.

In a gesture of good faith, or an attempt to appease his critics, Lastman would later appoint Councillor Jack Layton to spearhead the Advisory Committee on Homeless and

Socially Isolated Persons (Butt et al., 2004). Yet the Safe Streets Act and the oppressive policing of poor and unhoused citizens would continue. Michael Bryant, the Attorney General of Ontario, would later dub the Safe Streets Act the "let's sweep it under the rug act" (Advisory Committee on Homeless and Socially Isolated Persons, 2006, p. 2) and the Advisory Committee on Homeless and Socially Isolated Persons (2006) would eventually demand this piece of legislation be struck down. They were ignored.[29] Perhaps this was a result of the post-9/11 eagerness to double down on the 'protection' of public space and the subsequent reluctancy to question the hegemony of legislation that purported to enhance the safety of citizens (Low & Smith, 2013). Yet the Safe Streets Act, passed in 1999, affirms that such attitudes predate the post-9/11 world (Low & Smith, 2013).

This period also saw the rise of hostile architecture, more affectionately known as "crime prevention through environmental design" (CPTED) (Bader, 2020, p. 48). The rhetoric of the revanchist city—taking back the streets from those who have 'invaded' public space—was made popular in this period. This was true from post-apartheid South Africa to Rudy Giuliani's New York (Busà, 2017; Low & Smith, 2013). Neoliberalism has resulted in the rearrangement of public space(s) for purely commercial interests—the mobilizing of political actors in the form of public protests have been met with police sweeps and arrests in the name of security (Low & Smith, 2013), though recent events have shown that such clampdowns are differently confronted on the basis of race, class, and political orientation (Borger, 2021). The revitalization of downtown areas has sought to employ the same racial and class-based logic that precipitated the "white flight" to the suburbs: the new downtown must be rendered "clean and safe" for the very white, middle-class populations who earlier were tempted to abandon the inner city. This has resulted in attempts to control and privatize

[29] For some reason, Bryant did not act to repeal this legislation when he had the power to do so; he would later fight against it, but only after he no longer held his role as Attorney General (Star Editorial Board, 2019). Indeed, Bryant later admitted, ""I failed. I am accountable. I have no excuses" (Benzie, 2014).

urban spaces by giving over the management of public space to private entities, commercial interests, and local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). As I've already mentioned, Gigi Grant spoke to the redesigning of College Park in downtown Toronto as a prime example the neoliberal politics of urban space, saying "it really has been made into a private piazza for those several condo buildings that are there" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Mitchell and Staeheli (2005) write:

> Such control—developed over years of experiment and still not entirely complete—has entailed rewriting the rules of public property, transforming the laws that govern it, and more and more frequently handing its regulation over to private entities (Zukin, 1995). It has also entailed a literal privatization of public space, a moving of the spaces of sociability onto private property, that is, recreating the suburban mall downtown. For critics like Darrell Crilley (1993), such a privatization creates "pseudo-public space," no longer really public in the sense of open access for all. (p. 153)

Unhoused people are in a double bind, in such circumstances, as they lack the necessary private space to retreat to (martin, 2022a), while the neoliberal urban development results in "a decreasing claim on public spaces that are reconstructed as pseudo private" (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2005, p. 153). Mitchell and Staeheli (2005) use the example of San Diego's "Clean and Safe" program, organized by the downtown Business Improvement District, to demonstrate how the revitalization of so-called public spaces relied on the dispersal of poor people through policing and "[p]ractices of exclusion…through design" (p. 156). Gigi Grant mentioned similar approaches from the Yonge and Dundas Business Improvement Area, within whose boundaries the Toronto Homeless Memorial continues to operate. They revealed how these committee meetings have even begun to acknowledge the shared recognition that the very tactics aimed at downtown revitalization have exacerbated the violence of dehousing (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). This is reminiscent of what Mitchell and Staeheli (2005) observe is a paradoxical "legislative mean spirit" coupled with the "simultaneous generosity" (p. 158) of supporting local drop-in

centres and patchwork programs that function as band-aid solutions to the (de)housing crisis. Activist-outreach worker Gaetan Heroux (1996a), in the early days of the crisis, revealed how this very same dynamic was at play in Toronto: instead of addressing the vicious legislation that gutted welfare and public housing, affluent citizens had instead rallied to create, at that time, 20-25 separate Out of the Cold sites to provide temporary refuge for dehoused people. "There is no indication that the flow of people is stopping…someone has to ask the question: what is happening?" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a).

Know your audience: Constituent work, NIMBYism, and the deadly results

What amalgamation produced, or exacerbated, was the kind of campaigning that sought to cater to one's base, offering loyal followers the kind of rhetoric they wanted to hear. In the mayor's race, Lastman benefitted by rallying the inner suburbs—and, due to the somewhat aligned priorities of North York, Etobicoke, and Scarborough, ignore the inner city (Bradburn, 2023). This shift in approach was even more dramatic in the campaigns of the various city Councillors. While the old model featured a two-tiered council chamber—whereby Councillors had to fulfil obligations to their local constituents and Metro-wide commitments—the new city hall was characterized by Councillors committed, above all else, to their local wards (TVO Today, 2010, 2018). Art Eggleton, Toronto's longest serving mayor (1980-1991) would later affirm the need for "a city-wide perspective" (TVO Today, 2010, 20:30). In a recent contribution to Toronto's City Hall Watcher newsletter, Joy Connelly (2022) wrote about the needed shift "from local champion to city-wide leader." She continued, saying "[t]he problems Toronto faces — housing affordability, poverty, aging infrastructure, climate change, inequity and, most importantly, inadequate funds to meet the city's needs — require city-wide solutions" (Connelly, 2022).

What this emphasis on constituent work has produced is a city with wards pitted against wards. NIMBYism is the logical result of such a political system. By this I mean the localized attempts to deflect social or environmental service projects "elsewhere"—Not In My Back Yard. Supportive and low-income shelter and housing developments become a political hot potato that Councillors readily toss away. Certain wards amass political power in their capacity for spatial exclusion, while others become laden with stigma. This has been described as the "mutually constitutive process" of "socio-spatial stigmatization" (Takahashi, 1997, p. 910)—whereby places *and* people are stigmatized in a mutually reinforcing manner. Town hall discussions always appear in the same way: why must the new shelter be built in our ward? Why not someplace else? At the time of writing, 59 units of supportive modular housing collect dust in storage while the local Councillor denies the implementation of this source of affordable housing (Elliott, 2023). For over 2 years, this has cost the city approximately $77,000 per month to store these housing units as they sit empty (Elliott, 2023). The TDRC archival material is full of examples of such practices. While shelters are only a temporary, emergency response to dehousing, they are required to save lives. Not only have city Councillors squabbled over whose ward should provide such services, Councillors have allowed city-owned buildings in their wards to fall into disrepair and be sold (for peanuts) rather than a) continue as shelter space, or b) be retrofitted to function as long-term supportive housing units (Bonnar, 2012; Grant, 2012; Spurr, 2012). This lack of foresight and NIMBY-motivated urban planning was also true of federally owned buildings from this era (Connolly, 2003).

Dusty Fiske

In May of 1998, the city shut down the Salvation Army Friendship Room shelter operating at Dundas and Victoria streets—near the newly revitalizing Dundas Square (Crowe,

2001c; James, 1998). Kyle Rae, who I discuss later as the Councillor responsible for curtailing the homeless memorial conceptualized by Bonnie Briggs's homeless memorial committee, was behind this decision. When it came to the Friendship Room, Rae's professed logic rested on the fact that "[o]perating a hostel in the middle of a tourist area is incompatible" (James, 1998). Yet, in the same breath, he rationalized the decision by arguing that "[p]eople are intimidated and terrified by [the homeless]" (James, 1998) and that "[businesses] in the Yonge and Dundas area have complained to him about…the high numbers of people hanging around outside…" (James, 1998). First, we see the kind of NIMBY-affirming constituent work popularized in the post-amalgamation era. Second, Councillor Rae unabashedly promoted the fear-mongering and stigma-laden rhetoric that was stripping dehoused people of their citizenship and humanity (see Arnold, 2004; Feldman, 2006). And finally, further to this last argument, somehow the contradictory problematizing of "high numbers of people" in a popular tourist area was not apparent to Kyle Rae or his housed constituents. Indeed, the Toronto Police Service, in keeping with my previous discussion regarding the Safe Streets Act, were fond of giving out tickets for loitering in spaces such as these (O'Grady et al., 2013b). Clearly, the issue was not the "high numbers of people," but whether these people were perceived to be part of "the public" or not.


THE SALVATION ARMY

GOD IN THE CITY TO 11 PM

'BACK ON THE STREET: Hostel user Dusty Fiske doesn't think it's fair that businesses pushed city council to end funding for the 50-bed Salvation Army hostel on Dundas St. E., forcing it to close and lay off 15 staff.

Business complaints shut down Salvation Army's 50-bed hostel

BY NATALIE JAMES
STAFF REPORTER

The Salvation Army is closing a 50-bed downtown hostel and laying off 15 staff after losing city funding because of complaints from area businesses.

"Operating a hostel in the middle of a tourist area is incompatible," said Toronto Councillor Kyle Rae (Downtown), defending the decision. "People are intimidated and terrified by (the homeless)."

The Salvation Army operated a drop-in service at the site before the hostel beds were added last November as part of the city's Out of the Cold program.

The program was intended to provide emergency shelter for the homeless during the winter months.

But, Rae said, many bars, restaurants and stores in the Yonge and Dundas area have complained to him about an increase in crime and about the high number of people hanging around outside the Salvation Army building.

While business people agreed to the hostel being open during the winter, they don't want it open year-round, he said.

"There was no discussion about extending it into the tourism season."

News of the closing came as a shock to hostel-user Dusty Fiske. "They're putting 50 people back on the street," said Fiske, who used to sleep on grates behind the Royal Bank at Front and Bay Sts.

The businesses are being unfair, he said. "Would they rather me sleeping in front of their building than sleeping in this building? Does that make any sense?"

Margaret McCleod, an executive director of the Salvation Army, said she had been told by city staff the program

Please see Closing, B8

Figure 9. Dusty Fiske.

In the late 90s, outreach worker Danielle Koyama sparked a friendship with Dusty Fiske. Fiske, with his cowboy boots and winning smile, had endured several years without housing (Koyama, 2002). In May of 1998, Fiske was living at the Friendship Room. A born activist and "wonderful story teller [sic]" (Koyama, 2002, p. 1), Fiske spoke out against the displacement he and his neighbours were experiencing: "[t]hey're putting 50 people back on to the street" (James, 1998). A long-time supporter of OCAP and TDRC (Crowe, 2001c), he invited Koyama to her first protest (Koyama, 2002). He spoke to the media, asking whether his housed neighbours would prefer him "sleeping in front of their building than sleeping in this building?" (James, 1998). By the end of winter, 2001, he was committed to hospital with pneumonia—on March 1st he died from pneumonia and heart failure (Crowe, 2001c). He was just 42 years old (Koyama, 2002). Fiske died amidst an unexpected series of deaths in the community. A memorial was held outside the Church of the Holy Trinity at 8:30 am on Tuesday March 6, 2001 (Crowe, 2001d; 'Deaths of Homeless Marked', 2001). According to some accounts, this was the first of the regularly occurring monthly memorial services in Trinity Square (Crowe, 2001a). It occurred on "the one-year anniversary of the death of Jennifer Michele Caldwell, 20, who was fatally burned in a sleeping bag beneath a footbridge" ('Deaths of Homeless Marked', 2001). The memorial marked the deaths of Ronald Back, Annmarie, and Dusty Fiske (Crowe, 2001d). At 9:30 am, a moment of silence was held in council chambers at City Hall to honour these people ('Deaths of Homeless Marked', 2001).

Political disrepair, humility, and respect

In the acknowledgment of failure from the failed actor, there is a required humility. At the same time, the allegations of fault or error require of the accuser a posture of respect. The following section will draw on Freire's (1984) notion of humility and Arendt's (1958)

understanding of respect insofar as they are the conditions required for the faculties of offering forgiveness and making promises—the faculties that, according to Arendt, make durable the web of human relations. I make this argument drawing on the context of the political shifts I note in this chapter.

I riff on the title of Bonnie Honig's (2017) book, *Public Things: Democracy in Disrepair*, as I examine our failures as a democracy and, perhaps more significant, our inability to acknowledge our failures. Try something for me. Watch TVO's panel discussion[30] with John Sewell (former mayor of "old Toronto"), John Matheson (former chief of staff to the minister of municipal affairs and housing), and Janet Eckert (former PC cabinet minister) on the 20th anniversary of amalgamation (TVO Today, 2018). If you share my experience, you will notice a distinct inability to acknowledge any fault in the timing, approach, or process of amalgamation. While a range of commentators have pointed out the grossly undemocratic, rushed, and expensive nature of this moment in Toronto history, these members of Harris's inner circle appear unable to remain open to this.

As Freire (1984) noted, humility is one of the essential aspects of the phenomenon of dialogue.[31] The naming—and thus, the re-creation—of the world is, for Freire, a part of an "encounter" that he describes as "the common task of learning and acting" (p. 78). Yet for this common task to be *held in common* requires that each member of the encounter reject elitism, the assumption of the ignorance of the other, and the fear of displacement *by* the other (see pp. 78-79). Indeed, each actor must recognize that they are "as mortal as everyone else" (p. 79). Such a contribution to educational theory must also be applied to the realm of politics. To be mortal, as such, is to engage in the recognition of our capacity to fail just as

[30] https://www.tvo.org/article/in-the-first-megacity-mayoral-race-it-was-old-toronto-vs-everybody-else-and-mel-lastman-won

[31] Other ingredients necessary for true dialogue, according to Freire, are love, faith, hope, and critical thinking (Freire & Ramos, 1984, pp. 77–81).

much as we might learn.[32] It is also to acknowledge that, as mortals, we *share* the responsibility for the re-creation of a world in which we might all inhabit joyfully, involved in the acting and speaking of citizens. Thus, as citizens rendered mute—or as noisemakers—there is an inherent desire to assert the *mortality* of the political elite. What can happen, on the other hand, is the reduction in the desire to engage in "the common task of learning and acting" whatsoever—a kind of political malaise can set in.

In a separate panel discussion, from eight years earlier, a group of former Toronto mayors took stock of the political climate that gave rise to Rob Ford, then the lead candidate running for mayor (TVO Today, 2010). They discuss the anger and the inattention of voters in Toronto. In a much more collegial conversation, each person present acknowledges the ways in which voters have been made to feel disconnected from what happens at City Hall. David Crombie says, "A friend of mine [said] he felt that City Hall's job was to look after our needs…and that City Hall thought that we should fit into their plans…I think there was that sense of disconnect that is still there…" (TVO Today, 2010, 05:00). Speaking to the municipal upheaval in the election of 1972, he shares that "…there had been a previous 5-6 years of people in communities organizing themselves for a reform of city council…people wanted things to happen…what they did see was that City Hall should be the place that they can go to get their grievances addressed…[there] was a determination that they were actually going to change things in a positive way…" (TVO Today, 2010, 10:00). In contrast, John Sewell points out,

> The difference between '72 and now…I think people have been trying for the last 3 of 4 years to be heard at City Hall—and they haven't…and they have tried to organize…and they [have been ignored]…I believe that the megacity had a lot to do with it…but the politicians—they just said, "sorry, we know what we're doing here…" (TVO, 2010, 12:00)

[32] "At the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only [humans] who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know" (p. 79).

It is in this conversation that Barbara Hall recognizes that a fundamental flaw in contemporary politics is "…people not accepting responsibility [when things don't work]…We can probably all think of things that didn't work that well when we were hoping they would as mayors, and yet you acknowledge that…and I think there's been a failure to acknowledge the failures…" (TVO Today, 2010, 09:30). An essential part of acknowledging failure is being in dialogue. And dialogical engagement cannot happen without being with citizens—appearing together, to speak and be heard. Acknowledging failure is part of the exchange that invites *forgiveness*—an essential ingredient of/for politics (Arendt, 1958).

Though Arendt richly theorizes the faculties of forgiveness and making promises, she does not stipulate what is required on the part of the failed actor—the one in need of forgiveness. In other words, what qualities or conditions give rise to a *productive* forgiveness of their otherwise irreversible deed? In order for all parties to "learn more than they now know" (Freire & Ramos, 1984, p. 79), they must act in humility, as mortals, in their dealings with one another. The failed actor must, then, be able to acknowledge when they fail—even if only when/as a failure is pointed out to them. Yet, in our current climate of character assassinations, the failed actor must be assured, somehow, of the possibility of forgiveness. Otherwise, "our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover" (Arendt, 1958, p. 237).

The forgiver, on the other hand, has the potential to enact newness. They are the party who offers this opportunity for acting again. For the forgiver, Arendt provides us with the requisite quality, which she understands to be respect. For Arendt (1958), respect is distinct from the admiration of certain qualities that an individual might possess. She writes that it "is a kind of 'friendship' without intimacy…it is a regard for the person from the distance which the space of the world puts between us" (p. 243). Concurrently, she warns of "the modern loss of respect" (p. 243), which is a result of the idea that respect should only be directed

toward those for whom we have personal admiration. This, she argues, is a sign of the deterioration of the public realm. In reflecting on contemporary politics and the reluctance to acknowledge failure, I find it interesting that Arendt's central example of forgiveness—indeed, the person she credits with its "discovery"—is Jesus of Nazareth.[33] As she reveals, Jesus, "bent on challenging the public authorities in Israel" (p. 239), had only a small group of politically ostracized followers, perceived to be inchoate noisemakers living under an oppressive Roman regime, even dissenting from their association with the Jewish polity at the time.[34] What is instructive for Arendt, then, does not appear to be the influence of the forgiveness in the moment of forgiving—"for they know not what they do" (see Arendt 1958, p. 239) was spoken moments before Jesus's death—but rather the "constant" task of sustaining the "web of relations" (p. 240).

In the press conference after Richard Roy's death, Cathy Crowe's comments address the lack of attendance from political leaders: "…isn't there something wrong in this province? When homeless people die and the ministry of housing does not attend the inquest?" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). Her exasperated response to the stigma-laden questions from the Toronto Sun reporter lead her to say, "I think we're just sorry that questions aren't being asked about solutions…we'd like to focus on solutions…" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). Seeking for solutions, however, would entail an acknowledgement of a *wrong*. Crowe was waiting on a condition of humility to emerge from her interlocuters, such that the dialogical relationship could continue.

[33] Arendt is clear to orient her discussion of Jesus strictly in a secular sense, acknowledging the obvious religious context/connotations—it is this context that she argues has long prevented forgiveness from being discussed for its politically generative qualities.

[34] For works with a distinctly theological grammar that deal with these themes, see Cornel West and Christa Buschendorf's *Black Prophetic Fire* (2015)—in particular the notion of "looking at the world from below" (p. 117)—Walter Brueggemann's *Out of Babylon* (2010), Richard Horsley's *Jesus and Empire (2002)*, Ched Myers's *Binding the Strong Man (2008)*, as well as Stanley Hauerwas and Romand Coles's *Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical Ordinary: Conversations between a Radical Democrat and a Christian (2008).*

The requirements of humility and respect are worthy of reflection for citizens and activists as well. In what ways have we failed to gather—to precipitate public exchange, to be *with* others in coalitions, and to invite political leaders to the table? By approaching the work of repairing our sites of/for democratic interruption with an acknowledgement of our own failures, perhaps we might make audiences more receptive to listen and attend to what we have to say next. Perhaps, through the mutual recognition of how we have failed one another, we might cultivate opportunities to pursue solutions together. Perhaps, even, we may come to see how our forms of political engagement, our manner of approaching or promoting public exchange, have failed our political opponents and curtailed opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Have we maintained the capacity to regard one another with respect, across "the distance which the space of the world puts between us"? Might acting with humility and respect invite relations with others who have forgotten these essential qualities? This failure-denying political leadership needs to be shown examples of the kind of humility and respect necessary to re-enter the public realm—the political arena where we may all resume acting, speaking, forgiving, and making meaningful promises to one another.

The 1997 municipal election in Toronto would constitute a choice that the public would be faced with between personality and the personable, promises that were extravagant versus sincere, and a City Hall conditioned by hubris and NIMBYism, rather than humility and respect. It was a watershed moment for the city, representative of a broader story of neoliberalism and neoconservatism spreading across the West.

A report for the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto begins with, "[i]n the 1997 municipal election for the newly amalgamated City of Toronto, one social issue stood out: homelessness" (Butt et al., 2004, p. 1). Mel Lastman famously declared that there were "no homeless in North York" (Butt et al., 2004, p. 1). Within a day, the body of Linda Houston, a 48-year-old woman without housing, was found outside a gas station in North

York (Bradburn, 2023; Butt et al., 2004; Queen, 2010). Mel Lastman was a salesman (Bradburn, 2023). He made promises that sounded good in the ears of those who wanted their own space, cleared of snow in the winter, safe from taxes that might address the rising destitution brought about by the province (Chidley & Hawaleshka, 1997). Barbara Hall was a quiet, compassionate presence. She listened to people. David Stein, from the Toronto Star, noted that "Hall has not tried to turn herself into a personality and she is not making extravagant promises. What you see is what you get: a practical, skillful [sic] politician. The passion for Toronto is there but so carefully expressed, you must listen hard" (Bradburn, 2023).

Lastman, despite his callous remarks on the campaign trail, narrowly won the election. Listening, it would seem, was not a priority for the majority. Perhaps, the uneasy marriage of neoconservatism and neoliberalism had crept north of the border:

> Not only does neoconservatism figure redistribution as a wrong against the middle class, but also the political rationality of neoliberalism is expressly about winners and losers based on entrepreneurial skill, and the political rationality of neoconservatism is about preserving what you've got and protecting your own, whether an individual family or the national family. (Brown, 2006, p. 701)

The "We Are You" Memorial Project

In 1996, activist Bonnie Briggs wrote a letter to Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall. She shared her vision of a "permanent memorial or marker" listing the names of those who have died without housing on Toronto's streets (Briggs, 1996b). Referencing the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) annual day of remembrance, she insisted that this was not enough: "Every year, we talk and lament about them and have a memorial for them in Nathan Phillips Square. But a month or so later, we forget about them, they fade into history and become numbers. Something has to be done to remember them" (Briggs, 1996b). Briggs recognized that, while there were memorials and vigils for unhoused people at this point—

within community drop-in centres and shelters across Toronto, as well as the public memorials held by the NCH and the Rupert Hotel Coalition—they were sporadic and lacking a permanent fixture. There was no public thing to gather around (Honig, 2017)—no element of human artifice to hold things in place and facilitate remembrance (Arendt, 1958).

It is important to note that while the annual NCH memorial lacked a permanent fixture, it did orient attendees around particular objects, which became part of the yearly ceremony in Nathan Phillips square. There was always a cardboard coffin, draped in a white bed sheet, which would be available for mourners to inscribe the names of those who had died (Briggs, 1999b; Hunter, 1994; MacKinnon, 1995). The coffin would lead a processional, which would often be led toward the offices of those in political power (Briggs, 1999b). Although part of a North America-wide commemorative movement, which dates back to 1990 (National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), 2000), the event in Toronto was initiated locally by the Street People's Association after the death of Arthur "Red Dog" Moses, in September of 1992 (Crawford, 2002; Hunter, 1994). As Mike Crawford writes, "Red Dog was a member of the Street People's Association and his death inspired the very first Homeless Memorial" (Crawford, 2002). Crawford coordinated the event and spoke at it every year (Briggs, 1999b; Crawford, 2002).

Bonnie Briggs, along with her husband Kerre, lived without housing for two and a half year in the late 80s (Briggs, 1996a). This was in the era before the mass dehousing of the mid-1990s, so there are several details of Briggs's account that would seem incredible to us today—though certainly Bonnie and Kerre Briggs are remarkable people, regardless of what political landscape they encountered. For instance, Kerre maintained his employment throughout this period, often working overtime at a local furniture store, while sleeping "in a wrecked and abandoned car behind a shopping mall close to his work. He used the subway lockers to keep his clothes and belongings safe" (Briggs, 1996a, p. 5). Kerre also volunteered

as a coach for the North York Hockey League; he never once missed a practice or a game and led his team to an undefeated season in 1987. Bonnie writes,

> In May, still homeless, we showed up for his league's awards banquet, despite the fact that when we arrived, we had no idea when or if we would have a safe place to sleep that night. To this day, my husband has the only undefeated record as a coach…in the thirty-five year history of the North York Hockey League at any age level. In October 1987, he was by then also a member of the league's governing board. (Briggs, 1996a, pp. 6–7)

But maybe the stigmatizing attitudes weren't all that different in the 1980s. Kerre was subsequently fired from his coaching position and, as early as February of 1989, he was giving speeches about his experience at rallies for unhoused people (Briggs, 1996a). Bonnie also became very politically active. A close friend of hers and member of the Meeting Place drop-in, James Jerome, had advocated for and helped in the planning of an affordable housing initiative through the SouthWest Housing Group (Briggs, 1996a). The project took 7 years. Two weeks before Jerome's move-in date, on May 14, 1991, he died ('We Are You' Project Committee, 1997b); the adverse health effects of life without housing were too great. Bonnie Briggs cited this as the reason for enrolling in the Community Worker program at George Brown College: "…seven years is far too long for anyone to have to wait for housing. I'd like to see this time shortened. I know this may be an unattainable dream, but I want to see hunger, homelessness and poverty ended in my lifetime" (Briggs, 1996a, p. 13). Sadly, a seven year wait for affordable housing would feel like good news today; the current wait time of 15 years for social housing in Toronto became normalized just 10 years later (Shapcott, 2006). Amidst the context of mid-90s dehousing, Bonnie Briggs was involved with Basic Poverty Action Group, The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, North Regent Park Residents' Steering Committee (Briggs, 1996a), and soon, the Homeless Memorial Committee, which she would set in motion (Briggs, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d).

As I've drawn attention to, Mayor Barbara Hall stands in stark relief to the political climate that would emerge soon after her mayoralty. If there was a moment when City Hall moved its priorities from "look[ing] after [citizen's] needs" to "fit[ting citizens] into their plans" (TVO Today, 2010, 05:00), this was it. Soon after receiving Briggs's letter, Mayor Hall wrote a personalized letter back to Bonnie Briggs, encouraging her plans. Then, Bonnie "joined her on a walking tour of Yonge Street. I enjoyed the tour and thanked her for accepting my proposal for a homeless memorial" (Briggs, 1996c). It was true what Bonnie had said in her letter to Mayor Hall: "I'm…happy to see you out among the public. I know you will give my proposal serious consideration…Keep up the good work, Barb. Talk to you later" (Briggs, 1996b).

Susan Innes, a staffer in the mayor's office, would later tell Bonnie that "my letter had been read by everyone at City Hall and that they all loved my idea" (Briggs, 1996c). On September 11, 1996, Cathy Crowe would join Bonnie Briggs for a meeting at City Hall (Briggs, 1996d). Attendees at the meeting discussed how the memorial could be designed and where it might be placed. As might be expected, some suggested a plaque on the sidewalk, while others wanted it placed in a shelter. Bonnie resisted the idea of "another square in the sidewalk" (Briggs, 1996d) and scoffed at the idea of it being in a shelter: "Can you believe it? Hide it away where no one would see it!" (Briggs, 1996d). It is unclear who she was referring to, but a letter from staffer Mark Sterling urged Briggs "…to direct your energies to a more practical, functional commemoration. For example, the City was recently involved in building a new hostel, a second Street City, in which artists were invited to contribute ideas to create harmonious living conditions throughout the building…" (Sterling, 1996). Crowe and Briggs imagined something more.

On October 31, 1996, the first official meeting of the Homeless Memorial Committee would convene (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996a). Briggs had gone to great lengths to

recruit a diverse mix of voices, while prioritizing reaching out to those who shared her experience of living without housing (Briggs, 1996d, 1996e). The meeting featured Bonnie Briggs, Bob Yamashita from City of Toronto Housing, Cathy Crowe, and Paulette Sage from George Brown's Community Worker program—with Al Gardiner (Out of the Cold program) and Bart Poesiat sending their regrets (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996a). Poesiat, a lifelong activist and legal advocate (Parkdale Community Legal Services, 2020), already had several years of experience organizing the Rupert Memorial. One thing was unanimous:

> It is clear that the easiest and most expedient way to go from the City's point of view would be a plaque on the ground. We all agreed that the memorial needs to take a more meaningful form, that is both more visible, educational and at the same time encourages people to come together. (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996a)

From its first meeting, such a memorial was committed to the practice of bringing people together. They also agreed on the "need for a person who has had direct experience with homelessness themselves, such as Bonnie, to coordinate this effort" (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996a). The initial plan was to partner with 4th year students at the Ontario College of Art (OCA)[35] in order to bring the committee's thoughts to bear on the design of the monument (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996b). In the pitch shared with OCA students, the objectives for the memorial included the following:

> 1. This art must pay tribute to the struggles of homeless persons.
> 2. it must educate the public in a sensitive and provocative way in order that they will creatively respond.
> 3. It must be designed, constructed and maintained with the full participation of people who have experienced homelessness. (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996c)

[35] It is known today as OCAD (Ontario College of Art and Design) University.

Once again, the emphasis was on a participatory, commemorative practice that would invite creative response—as Bob Rose would say, "re-creating" the necessary elements of community and political life.

For reasons that go unrecorded in the archive, OCA decided not to participate in this project (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996d). The design process persisted, with committee members deciding the memorial should have a sheltered component to it, functioning as a symbolic reminder of the human need for adequate shelter (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996d). In addition, the committee discussed the need for opportunities for public engagement and response (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996d). The memorial was intended to situate all citizens—housed and unhoused—together, affirming their shared humanity and reinforcing the notion of collective responsibility. Thus, two possible titles were suggested: "We Are You" or "You Are Us" (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996d). While the initial rough drawings were provided by Bob Yamashita (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1996e), by January of 1997, two architects had joined in the design process, Paul Raff and David Warne (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1997a). By late February, the project had been renamed, "We Are You"—the justification being that this was ultimately a project that aimed to "educate, inform and involve the public" (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1997b).

Raff and Warne were eager to be involved. They saw it as their role to facilitate discussions, provide draft drawings of the memorial, liaise with stakeholders at City Hall, and assist Briggs with the development of her accompanying memorial website. Paul Raff and Bonnie Briggs (1996) wrote, "Inadequate housing is not just a political problem: it is a human tragedy…This can change. Positive change must begin with understanding. This [website] is intended to be a step in that direction." In their initial presentation to the memorial committee, Raff and Warne shared that their earlier projects had been "deeply concerned with ideas of

home, community, and memory in our urban environment" (Raff & Warne, 1997). They went on to say,

> We are eager to take on the responsibility of ensuring that the Memorial be publicly visible & intriguing; that it encourage interaction; that it educate the public in [a] sensitive and provocative way; and that it do this while embodying the urgent significance of the homeless situation in our society. (Raff & Warne, 1997)

Though there is no explicit reference to this in the archive, it is possible that Raff and Warne's eagerness irritated certain committee members—perhaps a result of their leadership roles, even while never having experienced dehousing. While this is conjecture, it could explain the near-immediate exit of activist Paul Rodgers, who resigned from the committee citing "concern re design process" (Homeless Memorial Committee, 1997b). Bob Yamashita would also take a more arm's length role in the committee soon after, though he, as an employee of the city of Toronto, cited "conflict of interest issues" as his reason ('We Are You' Project Committee, 1997a). This was, very likely, tied to the city's moratorium on building new monuments (Crowe, personal communication, October 19, 2023).

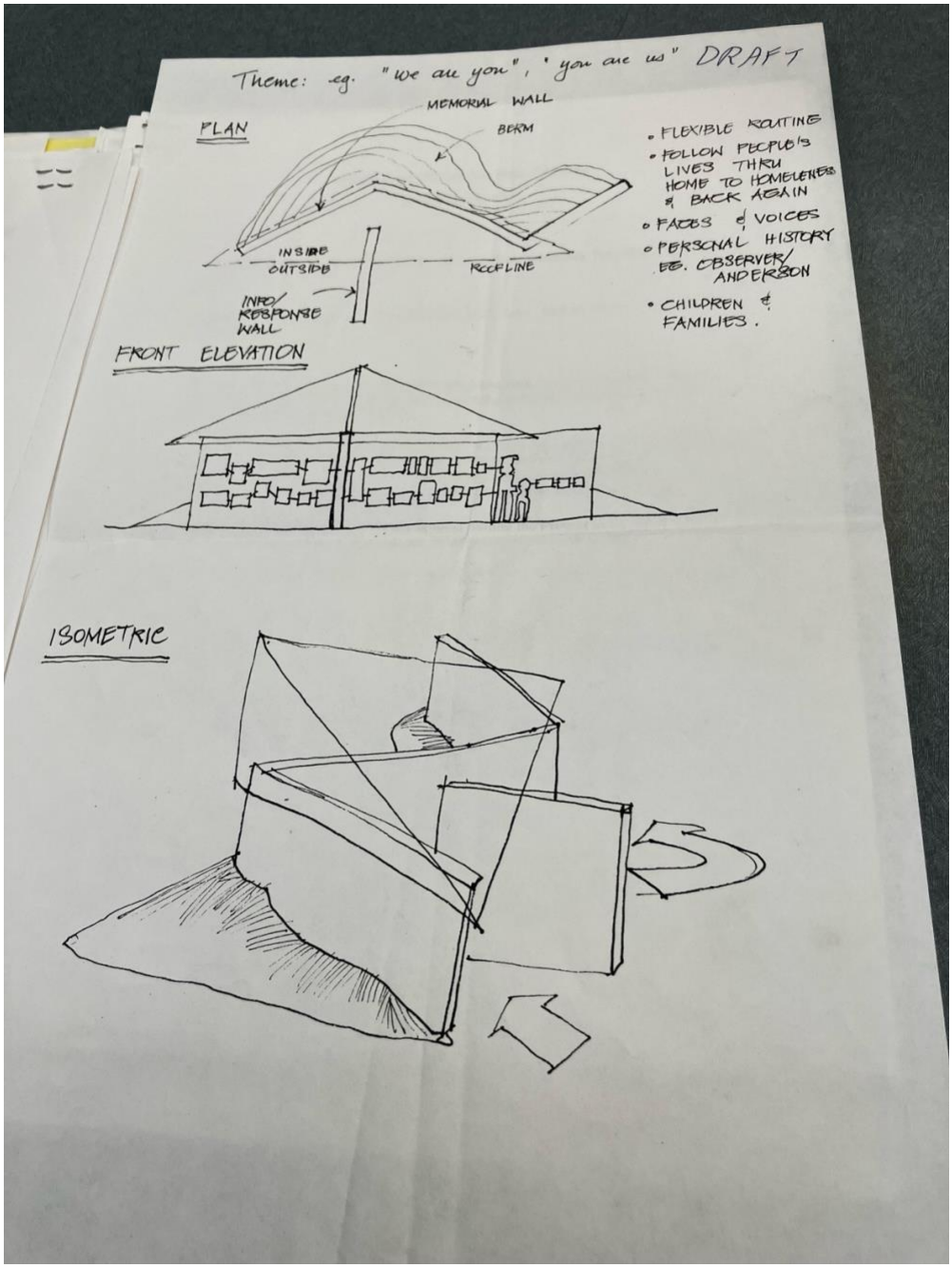


Figure 10. “We Are You” Memorial draft sketch.

By May of 1997, the committee had decided that the memorial needed to feature people’s stories—Bonnie Briggs’s (1996a) short memoir, “From homelessness to college” was nominated as the first to be “considered for the first curated display” (‘We Are You’ Project Committee, 1997b). City staff questioned the memorial’s presence in Nathan Phillips Square (‘We Are You’ Project Committee, 1997a). Eventually, the city would block the idea

entirely, citing a moratorium on any new memorials (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022). Given the publicly visible space available, the proximity to downtown, and the support of church leadership ('We Are You' Project Committee, 1997d), the committee decided that the memorial should be located outside St. James Cathedral, in St. James Park ('We Are You' Project Committee, 1997c).

In the Summer of 1997, it was clear that Toronto's political landscape was going through significant upheaval. While the memorial committee had the support of Mayor Hall (1997), it was clear that a sea change could be imminent. The committee had its work cut out for them. They had to determine the costs of their venture, plan to fundraise ('We Are You' Project Committee, 1997e), and convince local stakeholders to support the initiative (Homeless Memorial Committee et al., 1997). The most problematic of these stakeholders would prove to be none other than Councillor Kyle Rae, as this was, unfortunately, his ward. While Rae's communications to the committee are not preserved in the archives, the committee's letter in response reveals his concerns: "Dear Councillor Rae… We appreciate your feedback, and have developed the proposal to ensure safety and security…" (Homeless Memorial Committee et al., 1997). Further, they attempt to appease Rae by stating that "…we are eager to meet with any neighbours of St. James Park, *particularly local business persons*, to ensure they are fully informed and consulted…" (Homeless Memorial Committee et al., 1997, emphasis added). In Kyle Rae, we are exposed to both the *neoconservative* obsession with safety and security (Brown, 2006) and *neoliberalism's* "business ontology" (Fisher, 2009). Rae's understanding of the memorial is somewhat bizarre, as he refers to it as a "public kiosk" (Homeless Memorial Committee et al., 1997). As Cathy Crowe said, "Kyle Rae didn't like the idea [of the memorial] at all because he thought people would use it to have sex in and do drugs and things like that" (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022). Not only did he fundamentally misunderstand the pedagogical and political coalescing

intended by this monument, but he could also not imagine how such a space for public grief—grief pointing to the city's failure to house its citizens, no less—could contribute to Toronto-the-business. Or, how would it be received by the business-operators—what purpose could "*homo politicus*" have against the needs and priorities of "*homo oeconomicus*" (see Brown, 2015)?

Under the demands of neoliberalism, the possibilities of the human as political actor (*homo politicus*) are submerged under "*homo oeconomicus* as human capital" (Brown, 2015, p. 33). If, in every domain, we are presumed to be market actors (Brown, 2015), then no wonder a community network deemed to be of low social capital, engaged in an activity deemed to be of no entrepreneurial purpose, was 1) told they should first appease the local business class and 2) ultimately told their monument was not welcome. The City of Toronto's moratorium on memorials is also worthy of comment. Aside from the democratic sensibilities that are "tended" (Brown, 2015, p. 11) by public forms of commemoration, what does a moratorium on memorials actually suggest—that there is nothing else worth remembering? Nothing newly requiring us to pay attention to our past—and the ways it inflects upon our present?

What might have happened if post-amalgamation Toronto had elected a different mayor? Despite encouraging the appeasement of local "merchants,"[36] Barbara Hall had ultimately proved to be supportive of the project. In August of 1997, she wrote,

> I am pleased that you will be holding a meeting with the merchants in the area of St. James Park to discuss the possibility of locating a memorial in this park. I look forward to hearing their feedback and continuing to work with you to establish this important memorial to homeless people in our city. (Hall, 1997)

Meanwhile, the memorial committee pleaded with Councillor Rae:

> As you informed us, the City administration is very busy these days. The Homeless Memorial's relatively small gesture could make an enormous difference

[36] I read this inclusion to be tactical: Mayor Hall knew who the local Councillor was.

> to the lives of many citizens this winter. It would be tragic if we let changes in government outside all of our control delay it another winter… (Homeless Memorial Committee et al., 1997)

During this Summer, letters of endorsement streamed in from stakeholders in support of the memorial. Terence Finlay, the Anglican Bishop, supported the use of the park outside of St. James Cathedral (an Anglican church) (Finlay, 1997). Michael Cooke, the Dean of Community Services and Health Sciences at George Brown College wrote, "This project constitutes a useful and visible step to building awareness and commitment among the citizens of Toronto" (Cooke, 1997). And Mayor Barbara Hall (1997) herself declared, "I believe that a memorial to those who have lived and died on the streets is a permanent reminder to all of us of our responsibility to care for all our citizens and provide for their essential basic human needs."

As Susan Crane (2021) would say, what happened next was, well, nothing. A few short months later, the worst fears of housing activists were realized. The man who promised to freeze taxes and facilitate the Harris government's decimation of the social safety net was elected. Without a mayor who might apply some pressure on Councillor Rae, he was free to ignore the pleas of those sympathetic to the memorial committee. Indeed, it was only a few months later that he would facilitate the closure of The Friendship Room, where activist Dusty Fiske was living (James, 1998). Discussions of a memorial in St. James Park would persist for several years (Briggs, 2002; Gulliver, 2002), indeed, as Cathy Crowe shared, "that committee work lasted for a long time...And it always included someone from Holy Trinity on the committee" (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022). In the end, nothing would come of the original proposal of a memorial in St. James Park.

All of the Nothing in St. James Park

We cannot be heard in our petitions to local government if we are mere units of capital. If there is no shared *mortality*—no sense of inhabiting a common world, in which we go forth into dialogue with respect and humility—then there can be no forgiveness of past wrongs, and no promises of a just future. The past must continue to call to us. The ghosts of the past—the absences in the record, the unmarked graves, the empty site where a homeless memorial might have been—are worthy of our notice. The recognition of Nothing comes from paying attention to change over time—which is, really, the central theme of this chapter. This chapter emerges from a particular way of noticing the changes in our city, in politics, over time. But it also remains steadfastly committed to the practices of remembrance which, at this stage in this narrative, were rendered mute, invisible. Ignored by Kyle Rae, under attack by the Harris government, and restricted by a blanket moratorium on memorialization: the dream of this memorial would persist. As Susan Crane (2021) writes, "[s]omeone who knows what has changed and what is missing will remember what was and recognize its absence" (Crane, 2021, p. 32). The vision for a memorial would continue to be reanimated by Bonnie Briggs, Cathy Crowe, members of the Church of the Holy Trinity, and countless others. Meanwhile, the emptiness of St. James Park would echo with past echoes, past *unseens* and *unremembereds*, as the estimated 5000 impoverished victims of cholera still lie in a mass grave under this park (The Cultural Landscape Foundation, 2001),[37] their remains unmarked, their memory unremarked upon.

But "Nothing is always Something that's been left as Nothing" (Crane, 2021, p. 218). And this committed group of activists were indeed committed to *Something* happening. The next chapter will trace the materialization of the Toronto Homeless Memorial as it exists today. I outline its "arrival" in Trinity Square and describe the workings of the monthly

[37] I am indebted to Dr. Steve Gennaro for pointing me to yet another eerie connection with this project.

commemorative event. In doing so, I reveal the pedagogical situation of the memorial as a site for the acknowledgment of and ethical commitment to the ontological status of attendees and past others. It is a site that makes possible the appearance from the exclusion-zone through a transformative relationship that occurs via a praxis of listening and wonder. In a way, Chapter 4 constitutes a narrowing of the contextual frame: from the municipal politics of Toronto (and Ontario) discussed in Chapter 3, I now move to the specificities of what has been happening in Trinity Square for the past 24 years. As the reader will find, this ongoing event runs counter to much of the neoliberal logic discussed in this chapter; it is an antidote, opening the possibility for ontological recognition, political appearance, and paying attention to the blank spaces and unmarked graves that we must attend to in neoliberal times.

Chapter 4

An atmosphere of listening and wonder:

The paradoxical quality of appearing from the exclusion-zone

Amidst the hollowing out of the political, as outlined in Chapter 3, citizens continued to take stock of what was happening. What "common" sense was being sold to them? What might these changes to our democratic fabric mean for our ontological status as citizens in Toronto? Housing activists remained steadfast in their commitment to making visible the events and disappearances taking place during the neoliberal turn—what I conceptualize here as *the hegemony of nothingness*. In this chapter, I note the decision to locate the memorial in Trinity Square and I describe the materiality of the memorial in its current form.

To describe the memorial, this chapter goes beyond the material and spatial form of the commemorative event. Here, I discuss the memorial as initiating a unique kind of *atmosphere*—one in which citizens can regain their capacity to see and hear one another. This occurs through the work of "listening" and "wonder." My understanding of wonder, here, is informed by the work of Mario Di Paolantonio (2019), who establishes wonder's capacity to counter thoughtlessness, while remaining distinct from aloof contemplation, competitive modes of knowledge-accumulation, and disengagement from the world. Wonder does not set out to frenetically consume knowledge or remain in detached contemplation, but rather to "*dwell* with the unusualness of the usual" (Di Paolantonio, 2019, p. 218). In other words, what the memorial does is set up an environment that holds the pervasive, individualistic neoliberal atmosphere *at bay*. Instead, this repetitious monthly gathering cultivates a sensibility of care that extends across temporalities. This plural gathering is deeply concerned with the past, the present, and the future. Insofar as it enacts a forum for the ontological recognition of the other it is an atmosphere we might, following Adriana

Cavarero (2021), describe as "felicitous." It is concerned with allowing this mutual recognition to channel into the appearing to one another as coherent speakers who are heard and welcomed. Here we get at the heart of this dissertation: how does the commemorative event activate opportunities for publicness? How does the memorial gather the plural assembly—and what does the assembly do with/for one another, once gathered?

I draw on the image of a chrysalis, borrowed from musician Jonathan Meiburg, to argue for the kind of transformative work accomplished in this context. In addition, I engage in a detailed discussion of the pedagogical—as outlined by philosophy of education scholars like Jacques Rancière, Charles Bingham, and Gert Biesta—to underscore the way in which public pedagogy must confront the very ontological disavowals intrinsic to the neoliberal "exclusion-zone" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Finally, with the help of memorial organizers and the TDRC archive, I offer examples of the transformative public pedagogy of housing activists. This is both to show—to *prove*—the validity of my theoretical musings, but also to contribute to the dynamic archive of the Toronto Homeless Memorial through a praxis of storytelling.

On the decision to locate the memorial at the Church of the Holy Trinity

With the St. James Park memorial site stalled out, TDRC activists sought to secure another downtown site to "house" a regular commemorative event. The TDRC already had an ongoing collaborative relationship with the Church of the Holy Trinity, a community with a vibrant history of social justice activism. By the late 90s, the TDRC's central organizing hub was a rented office in a house owned by—and adjacent to—the church. TDRC rallies often kicked off outside the church, in Trinity Square, walking distance from Toronto's City Hall and the mayor's office, which they visited often (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022; Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). In 2000, Reverend Sara Boyles

approached Cathy Crowe and offered to host the monthly memorial in Trinity Square as the frequency of deaths had increased to the point that a march or vigil after each individual death had become unfeasible (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022). The first monthly memorial was held in October of 2000 (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022; Gulliver, 2000),[38] and has been held at that site on the second Tuesday of every month since then (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022). Apart from a couple of extreme weather events, the memorial has been hosted "outside, to make the point" (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022).

The Toronto Homeless Memorial today

The monthly memorial event takes place at the base of a small, stone staircase, leading up the south entrance of the Church of The Holy Trinity. This area is known as Trinity Square, which also operates as the western entrance to the Toronto Eaton Centre. A microphone sits on ground level here and is made available to everyone in attendance. Behind the microphone is a simple wood-framed structure with the words, "Toronto Homeless Memorial" curving across its top. Though there have been various iterations of this small monument over the years, currently, it displays artwork by indigenous artist and residential school survivor, Sam Boucher (Cook, personal communication, September 10, 2023).

The first memorial monument was established when the Church's original "message case" was repurposed (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022). A member of the congregation from the Church of the Holy Trinity, Ron Panter, created the first design (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022). The next iteration featured

[38] Some archival accounts suggest that March 6, 2001 was the first official monthly memorial (Crowe, 2001a; 'Deaths of Homeless Marked', 2001; Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, 2018), but other accounts suggest it began in October of 2000.

hundreds of marbles embedded in mosaic fashion underneath the small monument's title. For years, Michael Mallard, or "Duckie," was a fixture at the memorial. He handed out "memory marbles" so that participants could carry a physical reminder of a loved one who had died. The marbles were in honour of a friend (whose name is now on the memorial) who was told she was "losing her marbles" by a caseworker because she slept outside, rather than under a roof where she felt unsafe. He was quoted saying, "And now whenever someone tells you you've lost your marbles, you can say, 'No, I've got them right here!'" (Dettloff, 2017). Jim Houston, an artist and volunteer at the Church of the Holy Trinity, embedded Duckie's marbles onto the wooden frame of the memorial to create a "stained glass" aesthetic (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022).[39] Houston then commissioned his daughter Rebecca "to design the iron arch 'Toronto Homeless Memorial' sign" (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022). With the help of $200 from the Church of the Holy Trinity, artist Philip Sarazen fabricated the iron arch that sits atop the monument. Sarazen is famous for both his bicycle-stand sculptures (Diana Chan McNally [@Diana_C_McNally], 2024) and other creative works, such as "'zoosemobiles' – whimsical, giant musical tricycles that became a symbol of joy and wonder" (Wheeler, 2024). He died while living in the encampment in Allan Gardens and on February 13, 2024, his name was added to the Toronto Homeless Memorial (Church of the Holy Trinity, 2024). A speaker at the memorial shared the following in their remarks about Sarazen:

> "He always believed that there was something better, that there could be more than this…even though he was twice my age, he maintained this hope and this belief that things could get better that I lost years ago—and I'm only 21…I want to honour the fact that he believed…he never lost the fight…as his neighbour, I hope he rests in peace." (Church of the Holy Trinity, 2024, 18:49 - 20:23)

The "Toronto Homeless Memorial" arch remains today.

[39] See Figure 3.

Contained below the arch was a display case where pages upon pages sat with the name of each person who had been commemorated at the Toronto Homeless Memorial. The list stretched back to the 1980s and featured well over 1000 names. Jim Houston would painstakingly make photocopies of the pages displaying the names—but "[a]s more and more names were added, the font got smaller and smaller" (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022). Eventually, he created an "accordion" style display, where each page had a tab "which the public could use to move the pages" to read the ever-growing list of names (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022). In 2020, a major act of vandalism all but destroyed the display. Jim Houston reconstructed the "accordion," an anonymous donor provided $500 for repairs, and Joel Houston welded new locks (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022). Today, the number of names exceeds the space available; the list is posted online, and attendees are given a link to the site that holds the names (Houston, personal communication, September 15, 2022; Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, 2020). Sam Boucher's painting now faces the crowd. It is full of intricate symbolism, which he has taken the time to explain. It is worth including an excerpt from one of Boucher's public speeches at the memorial:

> We have a responsibility to take care of others…that's what kindness is all about…I see that kindness all over…when I did that sign, that's why I put those hearts—those little wee hearts inside there—to represent all those outreach workers, all those people like Zach, Leigh…all these people out here…you know yourselves. The man that speaks up in that building [pointing toward Queen's Park], that's a voice [a reference to Chris Glover, MPP for Spadina-Fort York, who spoke at this same memorial]. You know what, that's part of the heart. That's the reason I did these things. Because these people out here are my life. They're my family. Whether they are a four-legged creature or that two-legged person… We're homeless, but we're not hopeless. So, miigwech, thank you people. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 2023a, 54:00-54:58)

Figure 11. Toronto Homeless Memorial monument.

The Church of the Holy Trinity, along with Urban Native Ministries, Sanctuary Toronto, The Shelter and Housing Justice Network, Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction, and several other organizers/organizations are joined in the meaningful coalition that makes this memorial event possible (Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, 2018). The event begins with a land acknowledgement, which highlights the way in which the oppression and displacement of Indigenous peoples is related to the ongoing crisis of dehousing deaths in Toronto. During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers began to acknowledge the hospitality of the Trinity Square encampment in peaceably sharing the land with the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network (THMN). The event is then led in drumming and song by Indigenous members of the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network and allied community. The sound echoes vibrantly off the stonework that brackets the square; the music juxtaposes the austerity

of the oft-overlooked monument that the drummers stand next to. Members of the audience are encouraged to sing the words if they know them.

A member of the THMN stands at the microphone to offer words for the people whose names are to be added for a given month. A moment of silence follows the reading of the names. A crowd solemnly gathers, sometimes with candles that are passed around, sometimes with a cool marble pressed onto their palm by Michael Mallard. These simple tokens of remembrance are extended to any who share the space of the square. The larger the crowd, the more passers-by stop to quietly observe the singing or the moments of silence. Pedestrians crane their necks. Conversations wane and voices hush. The volunteer leading the ceremony invites anyone who knew any of the people being commemorated to come and offer words, art, a poem, or a song. Sometimes the story told is the injustice of how a death came to occur (police violence, rejection from Toronto's shelter referral centre, an unwarranted discharge from hospital, etc.), while other times there are multiple ways the vibrancy of people's lives are animated through humour, tearful narratives, or a shared song. Tom Smarjda, whose title according to the THMN website is "musical genius," regularly gets up to sing a rollicking critique of neoliberalism, white supremacy, and the theft/destruction of land and place. Bonnie Briggs would, up until her death in 2017, stand and offer a poem she had written. Much of her poetry has been preserved as part of the THMN's archive on their website. Finally, over the years there has often been space reserved at the end of the event for announcements concerning the latest developments from City Hall, the Premier's office, or other halls of power. The announcements often share when and where a future rally, press conference, die-in, or related public event will take place. In this way the attendees at the memorial have historically been invited to participate in the actions intended to directly respond to government (in)action and ongoing trauma.

Bonnie, and her husband Kerre, never wanted the memorial to last. They figured "…the government would get off its ass" (Adler, 2017). Today, the memorial "glar[es]" (Adler, 2017) out at a public gathering place, providing evidence—in Thomas Keenan's (2018) sense of rendering something visible through tangible proof and intentional demonstration[40]—of the ongoing violence. It does so by quietly occupying a high traffic courtyard. On its own, the wooden frame was a signpost filled with names (and several anonymous Jane/John/J. Does). But this list of names was made to "appear" by the materiality of the crowd holding candles, the pictures of loved ones taped to the bottom of the structure by family and friends, the words spoken or sung, and in the introspection done in moments of silence. While much has changed over the years, organizer Rayna Slobodian notes that "saying the names, the moment of silence… bringing people up to speak of people who have died…that kind of process has stayed the same…" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). The list of names is made meaningful and relevant as a matter of intimate mourning, as a matter of preventable violence, and as a matter of public concern. Moreover, these "appearances" occur in the contingent manner required of a truly public space of appearance. No two memorial services occur in the same way, but the *process* has stayed the same. The events are ever open to the "always more of the world" (Di Paolantonio, 2019, p. 223), ever awake to the praxis of remembrance-amidst-death.

Commemorative pedagogy and appearance

> …Oh, child.
> Where were you?
> Where were you,
> All your life?
> Inside a chrysalis, writhing!
> (And it's real.

[40] "Some evidence never seems to speak for itself, or at least not loudly enough, so it has to be exposed, shown, demonstrated, stated, claimed, proven and made evident to others" (Keenan, 2018, para. 20).

It's real.
Joy is real…)
(Meiburg, 2012)

In Jonathan Meiburg's songwriting, there is an apparent concern for listening, appearance, and natality. The cover of Shearwater's latest album, *The Great Awakening*, even features what looks like an egg, surrounded by a procession of animals (Meiburg, 2022).[41] I begin this section with these lyrics from an earlier album, as they are the best articulation of a kind of *metamorphosis* that I want to explore here. Meiburg's image of a being in a chrysalis, pregnant with potential, is the perfect starting place for a discussion of the transformation of muted beings into coherent speakers—or "noisemakers" into citizens. The song itself ends with Meiburg exclaiming the words "it's real, joy is real" again and again. As chrysalis metamorphized into public speaker, there is indeed a joy—or felicity (Cavarero & Gervase, 2021)—that is very real. I argue that such a metamorphosis is made possible by works of public pedagogy that are focused on *listening*. And, for Meiburg's part, he is invested in making the kinds of songs that "[feel] like [they are] listening to you, somehow… Like there's a space for you in [them]" (Terich, 2022).

A common assumption about those living without housing is that it is the result of physical (i.e. physical disability) or psychic (i.e. "mental illness") "failure"—there is a popular charity-based logic that has emerged that seeks to sympathize with those whose bodies have failed them (Prince, 2014). Critical Disability Studies scholarship has revealed the way in which socio-political power relations, rather than simply failures of health or bodily capacity, have stripped certain people of citizenship, access, and political inclusion (Prince, 2014). The notion of disability relies on the hegemony of "normalcy," constructed by various media over the course of the last two centuries (Davis, 2006). Such a posture resulted

[41] It is beyond my purposes here, but Meiburg is preoccupied with the more-than-human world, often drawing hope from the persistence and beauty of the non-human when the human situation looks bleak (Johnson, 2022).

in the acceptance of the moral inferiority of the disabled subject (Chapman & Withers, 2019) and the subsequent over-policing and violent incarceration of such "inferior" beings (Abbas & Voronka, 2014; Ben-Moshe et al., 2014; Rembis, 2014). Dehoused citizens are often subjected to the popular conflation of a lack of housing with madness (Martin, 2022).

Rather than examine the physical or mental experience of dehousing, this chapter has, as its starting point, the political experience of living without housing. It is my contention that people are without housing because of social and political failures in our democracy, rather than an individual failing of mental or physical capacity. Indeed, a wide array of research supports the notion that living without housing drastically increases the likelihood of becoming disabled, rather than the other way around (Wellesley Institute, 2010). Drawing on philosophy of education scholars, the TDRC archive, and interviews with memorial volunteers, I make a case for overcoming this political impasse through the cultivation of a "felicitous atmosphere" wherein citizens can utter words, listen, and be recognized. An atmosphere of "listening" and "wonder" grants ontological status to the dehoused, *metamorphizing* the noisemaker into a speaking subject, whose words matter. At the same time, such an atmosphere extends the possibility for others to speak of their past-others, extending ontological affirmation in cross-temporal relations of care. In other words, at the Toronto Homeless Memorial, the dead speak, resist erasure, and are welcomed in an atmosphere of listening and wonder. Both the living and the dead are, one might say, emancipated from the chrysalis. They are *received* by a plural audience who has gathered to take part in the profound and intimate act of listening to their accounts and recognizing their shared subjectivity.

“This is not okay”: The pedagogical imperative of equality

Near the outset of the memorial event each month, the organizer hosting the event will remind the gathered assembly of two things. First, that we gather to mourn those we have lost. Second, we come together to say that this is not okay. Herein are the two explicit purposes of the memorial: a space for grief and a political assertion of personhood and voice. In what follows, I detail the pedagogical and political significance of the assertion, repeated monthly, that “this is not okay.” As witness, I “translate” (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 178) this phrase as an expression of refusal, a struggle for political recognition, and, paradoxically, a gateway into a generative atmosphere of “public happiness” (Arendt, 1965; Cavarero & Gervase, 2021).

If Arendt establishes the terms and conditions of the public realm, Jacques Rancière’s work addresses what happens when politics remains “out of reach.” It’s as if Arendt is asking, how does the already rendered political community initiate something, sustain their action, and forgive one another? While on the other hand, Rancière wonders, what are the possibilities for coherence when the voices of citizens are ignored? What capacities do citizens have for interjecting—for newly being heard? How does the political impinge upon an existing order predicated on exclusion?[42] In what follows, I develop an argument based on Rancière’s remarks on how power gets obscured in contemporary schooling, though I apply this in the context of public pedagogy more broadly. Thus, I urge the reader to consider how activists can generate an atmosphere conducive to attending to the enunciations of abjected citizens—in the way we might consider interventions in/for the teacher-pupil relationship. Indeed, in both schooling and the realm of the political, we witness the masking of ruling power relations and the insistence on equality, despite the obvious ways that certain parties

[42] Here I am indebted to insightful conversations with philosophy of education scholar Itamar Manoff.

are not "full" participants in public discourse—they are not sensed, heard, or received by their "superiors."

Jacques Rancière describes the manner in which schooling is predicated on "[i]nequality…asserting itself through equality" (Bingham et al., 2010, p. 8). That is, through a façade of presumed equality, learners fail to recognize the ways privilege is (invisibly) mapped onto the power relations of the classroom:

> …it is precisely this appearance of equality that is the driving force behind educational inequality. It remains up to the students and their 'individual talents' to make a difference. But, these talents are nothing but the cultural privileges of the children of well-to-do families. The children of the privileged classes do not want to know this, the children of the dominated classes cannot know this and the latter give up due to an acute awareness of their lack of talents. The school fails to enact equality because its egalitarian appearance hides the fact that inherited cultural capital has in fact been given the new face of individual difference. (Bingham et al., 2010, p. 10)

Extrapolating on Rancière's work in a philosophy of education context, as it is here applied to the conditions of conventional schooling, I argue that such an inequality asserted through equality is present in the politics of public pedagogy—that is, in the manner in which *the educational* is made to appear on the street corner and the media landscape. To describe what I mean by the educational, it is helpful to draw on the work of Henry Giroux, who has been called the "father" of public pedagogy (Pinar, 2010). His work detailed the intersections between cultural studies and the educational, emphasizing the political task of confronting a democracy-in-crisis while influenced by thinkers like Raymond Williams (1966) who identified the "permanent education" we are exposed to in the entirety of our cultural experience. For Giroux, neoliberalism itself is a public pedagogy that we are increasingly shaped by (França, 2019; Giroux, 2010). The "education" we receive as we trade political action for a cheap citizenship—one in which our capacity to "act" is reduced to our ability to consume—is one that, Giroux might say, "instructs" us to ignore our own imagination (Giroux, 2003). The banal, neoliberal public pedagogy is the growing ideological and

institutional ensemble that produces a hyper-competitive atmosphere, characterized by self-interest and feelings of insecurity (Giroux, 2010). Amidst this understanding of the educational lies our responsibility to assist others in generative interventions in democracy as the site of struggle; by recognizing our capacity for education-as-intervention, we locate ourselves as actors in history, as participants in public discourse, and as those with the capacity for hope in a more just future (Giroux, 2010). Such a discussion also helps us come to terms with Rancière's notion of refusal, which I will explore below.

For Rancière (2010), this process of unequal privilege masquerading as equality is predicated on the teacher's—or, citizen's—"refusal to know" (p. 10). This can be through a disavowal of the operation of power, or, Rancière argues, through an "interiorization of the logic of the system" (p. 10). Such "refusals" then set up a self-perpetuating structure in which the horizon of possibilities is infinitely reproduced by the very circumstances (the "refusing" citizen/educator) that require contestation and upheaval. For "publicness" to occur, as Biesta (2012a) points out, what is actually required of public pedagogy is an interruption of this infinite loop—what Freire (1984) called the "limit-situation" (p. 105) that constrains the horizon of possibility. Citizens, paradoxically, need to reject the rejections (or refuse the refusals) that preserve the ruling power relations as they exist in moments of/for public contestation. Rancière (2010) writes:

> Equality is fundamental and absent, timely and untimely, always up to the initiative of individuals and groups who, set against the ordinary cause of events, take the risk of verifying their equality, of inventing individual and collective forms for its verification. (p. 15)

It is these paradoxical principles that Rancière (2010) asserts we must "listen to" (p. 16). To return to Jonathan Meiburg's songwriting, he implies that he is interested in making music that is "trying to find out what is going on" (Johnson, 2022)—perhaps becoming alert to the refusal of refusals that I have explored here. And, as Rancière attests to, it is a risky

endeavour—indeed, this insistence on equality is "the incalculable leap" (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010, p. 9).

In a related discussion, Bingham and Biesta (2010) emphasize the political, rather than psychological, nature of language learning. It is political insofar as uttering words into the world in a manner that can be heard involves an "intersubjective effort to insert oneself into a distribution of the sensible where previously speech had not existed" (p. 59). In *Disagreement*, Rancière (1999) describes this as the paradoxical effort to have ones voice be heard as more than "noise" despite lacking the very conditions of a common world that might make such shared subjectivity possible. While a specific example is missing in Rancière's (1999) discussion of the workers' movement, what he deems necessary for the workers' insertion into the public realm, is to speak to their bosses "in relation to a common…object" (p. 53).[43] For my purposes, I consider "bosses" and "teachers" plausible stand-ins for other sources of authoritative dominance in civic arrangements. As will be noted in my examples from the TDRC archive, housing activists were constantly up against the logic of "refusal" and the lack of a "common world" from which to speak. In order to gain access to the "distribution of the sensible" (Bingham et al., 2010, p. 62), the TDRC had to establish a site of/for public contestation, in which citizens could rally around an aesthetic object and widen the horizon of possibility to its fullest extent: the possibility for *interruption*.

It is here that, I argue, Rancière offers an important theoretical *extension* to the realm of the political of Arendt's (1958) phenomenological account. For Rancière, the very access to such a realm cannot be taken for granted. The visibility, legibility, and capacity to be heard

[43] "…recognition does not occur because what the demonstration presupposes is…a common world in the form of a public space in which two groups of speaking beings, the bosses and the workers, might exchange their arguments. But the world of work is supposed to be a private realm where one individual proposes conditions to a number of individuals who each either accepts or rejects them…no arguments can be received because they are addressed by subjects who do not exist to subjects who also do not exist in relation to a common equally nonexistent object. There is only revolt there, the noise of aggravated bodies. All that is required is to wait for it to stop or ask the authorities to make it stop." (Rancière, 1999, pp. 52–53)

must always be asserted and struggled for through dissensus: "[p]olitical struggle proper is therefore not a matter of rational debate between multiple interests; it is above all, a struggle to have one's voice heard and oneself recognized as a legitimate partner in debate" (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010, p. 9). The work of commemorative pedagogy is both to foster a sense of the grievability of those abjected from public regard, while also cultivating an *atmosphere* that engenders a new kind of sensibility. This new sensibility is made possible by the plurality cultivated by the aesthetic object. One can describe this sensibility, paradoxically, as an experience of public happiness—or, as Adriana Cavarero (2021) puts it, "felicity" (p. 38). For Cavarero (2021), the notion of felicity etymologically situates us in the experience of generative fecundity, what Arendt (1958) calls "natality"—the "felicitous…entry into the world" (Cavarero & Gervase, 2021 p. 38) where unique individuals can act and speak together.

Cavarero's (2021) discussion of public happiness is based primarily on Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution (1965).* While Arendt orients the concept around the experience of the American revolutionaries, she (and Cavarero) illustrate how this "political emotion" (Cavarero & Gervase, 2021, p. 31) has been exhibited across numerous historical and geographical contexts. Cavarero (2021) contrasts the kind of corrupting, individualized happiness that, in conditions of mass society, attempts to supplant this political quality through the promise of consumerism and economic security. But the social realm—the behavioural conformism of the masses—is no replacement for the participation in politics by unique and distinct individuals. Despite the alienating atmospheres of neoliberalism, Cavarero (2021) insists that the appearance of unique individuals is not only possible, but affords the opportunity for actors to "joyously actualize their ontological condition, rooted in birth, of being unique and beginners" (p. 37). Indeed, Cavarero also points out how the etymology of "happiness"—via "felicity"—can be traced to "the feminine sphere of fertility

and birth" (p. 38). What bears repeating is the significance of the atmosphere of the memorial being conditioned by a plurality rather than "the masses"—such a space is generative, not oppositional; horizontal, not hierarchical; humanizing, not conformist. This allows for each attendee to engage in the joyous act of "publicly disclos[ing] *who* they are" (Cavarero & Gervase, 2021, p. 39). Indeed, as Cavarero (2021) and Arendt (1958, 1965) gesture to, the power of such a gathering is not merely *shared* as result of its participatory qualities but is *constituted* by the very plurality that gathers there.

Attaining this shared power—and the associated "happiness" of appearing together—is a constant struggle against social exclusion and ontological denial. Memorial volunteer Gigi Grant spoke about the way in which dehoused citizens are part of an "exclusion-zone" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) in late capitalism. While a dominant narrative insists there is simply not enough for everyone, making any kind of state-intervention for their health, wellbeing, and safety impossible, this "class of non-being" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) is subjected to a logic that asserts their non-participation is their own fault. Organizer Janice Towndrow echoed this by explaining, "If, in some fashion or another [people] can't [engage in certain activities] …there's no role for them. [Some people cannot earn the] 'badges' of adulthood that are necessary and [this is] also…a barrier to work and employment… And so, it ends up in non-participation in society" (Towndrow, personal communication, February 1, 2022). In Grant's words:

> …this non-being class of people…are supposed to have made a choice [so] that they end up living on the street or in shelters or so on—or using substances—and so, having made that choice as a separation from capitalism, which is obviously an illusion, they are also making the choice to die. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

Against such an ontological negation, the generative appearing together, the entry point into the "distribution of the sensible," is entirely urgent. The atmosphere cultivated by the memorial is indeed felicitous—its opposite is ontological denial, and death. And death after

ontological denial is *erasure*. The necessary form of address, as I have alluded to, is not detached spectatorship; nor is it media spectacle (see Chapter 5), rather, it is an atmosphere that opens up and nourishes a sensibility of listening and wonder. It is a new configuration that metamorphizes the housing activist from noisemaker to a newfound coherence. The common object affirms the ontological status of all as beings with names who can speak. Bingham and Biesta (2010), following Rancière, write:

> …Rancière calls this [attaining the status of speaker] the "understanding of understanding" (Rancière, 1999, pp. 44-49). Understanding happens not only at the level of propositional content, but also at the level of ontological status. When a speaker inserts him or herself from the position of noisemaker into a newly configured distribution of the sensible, one first of all calls upon others to understand the words one uses. But secondly, one demands of the other an understanding that one is no longer simply a noisemaker. There is thus an understanding of one's newly acquired status as speaker at the same time that there is an understanding of the words that are spoken. (Bingham et al., 2010, pp. 61–62)

A last, but necessary, addendum to this point is the fact that this notion of a "class of non-being" is so pervasive that there is constant risk it will creep up to re-pave the "cracks in consent" (marino et al., 1998) initiated by this "understanding of understanding." This is a result of the neoliberal conditioning that makes acceptable this "exclusion-zone," but also the way in which the *refusals* of this neoliberal conditioning are easily forgotten. There is a relationship here that deserves to be more fully fleshed out: the relationship between resistance and the problem of a "forgetful" socio-political order. Part of the violence of neoliberal rationality is in its very capacity to not remember its capacity for violence. And this is why, even if the deaths were not so constant and relentless, the Toronto Homeless Memorial is required as a monthly event. Its assertions are necessary as an "iterative" pedagogical practice. In spite of how tiring this is for memorial volunteers (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022), in spite of the risks they run in taking this incalculable leap" (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010, p. 9) on the second Tuesday of every month, such a

commemorative practice reminds the public how some citizens must regularly fight for their status as speakers (Bingham et al., 2010). And month after month, participants at the memorial must continually offer the pedagogical reminder that "this is not okay."

Richard Roy and the activist-as-speaker

After Richard Roy's body was found in Allan Gardens in September of 1996, Thane Burnett, a reporter from *The Toronto Sun* newspaper wrote a dehumanizing piece about him, using all the stigmatizing language from *The Sun's* usual repertoire.[44] In response, several members of the TCAH (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness) held a press conference at Queen's Park to honour Richard Roy and to present a dignified narrative to the media. The TDRC archives have a full recording of this press conference, which is preserved alongside much of this toxic reporting from this period. It is an example of what I call the "counter-archive within." Adjacent to the stigmatizing and violent narratives constructed and maintained by media outlets, lies the testimony of Roy's friends and co-organizers. The event offers a drastically different story, which is punctuated by the emotions and sonorous voices of those who appear in that space—Michael Skidd, Steve Lane, Gaetan Heroux, Beric German, Cathy Crowe, and a crowd of witnesses and TCAH allies whose voices can be heard in the meeting room (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). If the media would not hear them, then members and allies of the TCAH would fill the gallery and care for those bearing witness to Richard Roy's life. They had learned from Melvin Tipping's experience at the "Freezing Deaths" Inquest (Crowe, 2007)—they were not to be silenced again. This gathering created what I have referred to as a paradoxically *felicitous* entry into a common world. As Beric German promised the reporters gathered that day, "…we are going to start

[44] *The Toronto Sun* was the only one of Toronto's media outlets to endorse Mayor Mel Lastman, while Sun President Paul Godfrey was a member of Lastman's campaign team (Bradburn, 2023).

wearing black arm bands…Many of the people in this room are committed now; that we are not going to let people die and stand by. There are going to be things done. This province is not going to let poor people die in the street and get away with it…" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a).

This press conference is an example of housing activists insisting upon their own personhood, as citizens with speech capable of being heard. In addition to challenging media narratives, their speech is also commemorative—they describe Richard Roy, they bring *him* into these cross-temporal relations of care. In Steve Lane's introductory comments, he shares that "the despair and the despondency that Richard Roy finally succumbed to are part of my daily burden and will live inside of me until my end…" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996). Lane then passes the microphone to Michael Skidd, who speaks with poignant brevity:

> I knew Richard Roy on and off for five years, he was one of the nicest people I know. He had a big heart and was kind and gentle. Richard had his problems, but so do I and so do you. Richard died of neglect, a lack of understanding, and a broken heart. I loved him very much and we deserve better than what this society has to offer us. (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996)

The housing activists at this commemorative press conference were also at work resisting the disavowal of the power relations that perpetuate such deaths. It was an example of what I have called the refusal of refusals. Gaetan Heroux drew attention to the fact that "Richard's death has to be seen in a context…It's *this house* [Queen's Park] that has set the context for Richard's death. The welfare policies and the housing policies that have been implemented by this government have created great suffering…" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). As Cathy Crowe said:

> In July, we spent five weeks at [the freezing deaths] inquest…fighting for housing to be named as an issue into why these men died…in each of the jury verdicts into what's called 'by what means'…is listed 'homelessness'; the jury spoke the truth…homelessness is identified in the coroner's verdict on those three deaths.

> And it is without question why Richard Roy died. (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a)

She went on to say:

> I have to ask…isn't there something wrong in this province? When homeless people die, and the ministry of housing does not attend the inquest? They did not attend one day of a five-week inquest into three deaths. They have never consulted us, they have never called us, they have never replied to our request for a meeting. Within two weeks after the inquest, Mayor Barbara Hall had the courtesy to meet with us…I have to say that the Metro level of government implemented an inquest task team…now obviously they cannot solve the problem alone. But they have met with us, they have listened to us, and we are there telling them what they need to do—and they are asking us. And I would like to say, to the ministry of health, and housing…we would like to talk to you—I hope you're listening. We would like to talk to you. (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a)

Here we observe this cogent and repetitious emphasis on *listening*. The TCAH members present that day were committed to listening to one another. They also encouraged this capacity in the members of the press assembled there. Crowe shared how, as gently and graciously as possible, a group of activists from the "Freezing Deaths" Inquest took the jury's verdict in hand and walked it to the office of the Minister of Housing, Mr. Allan Leach. They requested a meeting. They followed up with phone calls. They were, repeatedly, met with *silence* (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). What becomes clear in these organizing efforts is that they were predicated on metamorphizing noisemakers into speakers. Activists were inviting their audience into a posture of listening and wonder. And this wonder is intended to orient spectators toward the world-making sensibility of attending to and "tarry[ing] with things" (Di Paolantonio, 2019, p. 218) beyond serving some purposive design.[45] These kinds of appeals—"we would like to talk to you—I hope you're

[45] And thus, it is distinct from so many of the institutionalized efforts to "understand homelessness." I think here especially of "street counts" and other instrumentalist forms of data-gathering that undertake analysis with an attitude of what Di Paolantonio (2019) calls "curiosity"—a posture that seeks to "conquer" knowledge and move on. The object of knowledge is pre-meditated, approached through "a frenzied mode of attention" (p. 218), and quickly sequestered, digested, and discarded once its initial purpose is attained.

listening…"—appear again and again in the TDRC archives. Indeed, the TDRC's working with the media, which I will discuss further in Chapter 5, was first and foremost an effort to facilitate dialogical interaction across a wider swath of society at the time. As Beric German pointed out at the time,

> The media of course is the filter through which we are trying to talk to many people about the fact that this city has a crisis of homelessness. And as Gaetan said, we knew Richard [Roy] …And what kind of man wrote this article? And what kind of editor let this through? (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a)

German's comments, motivated by *The Toronto Sun*'s article on Roy's death, appealed to the reporters present on that late-September afternoon to be reasonable interlocutors. In demanding ontological status, he was rejecting the parameters of the capitalist "exclusion-zone" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) that Roy (and others) had been assigned to. Barbara Craig, a street nurse at the time, wrote a letter to the audience at Queen's Park that day. Beric German read it aloud on her behalf, in a tone only he could achieve:[46]

> In what kind of society do we live, when someone is actually paid to write a derogatory article such as this about a man they do not know? Richard was a human being with his own inner demons. Just like you and me. For him, life had many struggles. What do you know, Thane Burnett, about life on the street? Do you know the loneliness, pain, and sorrow that dogged Richard every day? Do you know that he once had a job, a home, and a family? Do you know that he was someone's father and had a kind heart and an intelligent mind? Does it make you feel superior to use such words as 'bum' and 'derelict'? You are not getting the real story, but a lot of ignorant nonsense designed to attract readers. Yours sincerely, Barbara Craig, RN (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a)

Later in the press conference, when the microphone is turned over to questions from the media, a reporter from *The Toronto Sun*—a colleague of Burnett's who goes unnamed—attempts to assert the popular misconception that unhoused people *prefer* or *choose* to live

[46] "[Beric] comes from the prairies, and he's got a voice like a…dustbowl preacher [laughing]. He had some theatrical training, so he knows how to project…He knows how to speak and pause. He knows how to grab the mic and just look at the audience and not say anything and just let everybody wait…" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022).

without housing. There is a pause, while the shaking of heads is almost audible. Several TCAH activists respond, but it is Crowe's response that directs the audience to 1) the weight of grief being experienced and 2) the need to ask questions and resist silencing—in other words, she urges the reporter back again toward this posture of listening and wonder:

> [P]eople in this city—hundreds and hundreds of them—are grieving…It's very hard when we don't get asked about solutions…or about how to prevent further deaths, because after Richard died everybody in this room that had different conversations all just thought in their heart…they knew another death was going to happen after the inquest…we knew it. And we were so sad it was Richard. But we know there will be another one. And how can we as a society accept that without asking why, what can we do to stop it, and why are some people staying silent on it?" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a)

It is only after these words that the reporter can be heard, quietly, responding, "I wish to apologize…" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). What is significant about this TCAH press conference is the activists' capacity to resist the disavowal of systemic inequality, address those who have interiorized neoliberal logic, and cultivate an atmosphere in which Richard Roy's humanity is affirmed.

The memorial and cross-temporal up againstness

Years ago, I stood in front of the memorial signpost as the monthly event was starting. I had a brief encounter that I ended up writing down in my journal later that day:

> *A woman stands next to me at the memorial. She has arrived a few moments late. She turns to me and quietly asks, "Is this the memorial for the homeless?" I say yes. She smiles, kisses her hands and raising them in the air, declares, "Praise God." Looking back at me she says, "There's just a lot…" and her words trail off as she taps her heart with a hand. I nod. "Yeah," I say. It's the only word I can think of.* (martin, personal communication, n.d.)

The sensibility wrought by the ontological affirmation I am discussing here is one that welcomes a different kind of temporality—one that is sensitive to the past and the "somebodies" (see Arendt, 1958) that address us from the past. These are people constituted

by “who” they are/were, and, through relations of care with those who constellate around the memorial, can indeed become past-others for us to enter into reciprocity with (Chinnery, 2013). Thus, it is a site that opens participants up to an experience of radical alterity. A memorial can thus play the role of the “remnant-object” (Di Paolantonio, 2015, p. 272); that is, it functions as an aesthetic form that invites observers toward a sensibility of wonder, rather than detached spectatorship. The commemorative object is always in flux, facilitating togetherness across temporalities and layers of difference, and sustaining participants’ ability to gather, remember, render grievable, and continue to struggle for a less violent world.

The Greek idea of the polis is not equated with a particular political arena, but rather “the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose” (Arendt, 1958, p. 198). To sustain such a space, amidst what organizer Bob Rose calls “spectacular precarity” (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022), the memorial offers reminders of what is at stake—and what is required—when we attempt to cultivate solidarity in neoliberal times. Put simply, time is ever at risk, and stories are always required. Neoliberal rationality seeks to individualize and pathologize dehoused people (Williams, 2005), it separates past from present (Rothberg, 2012), and it leaves us dizzy with the speed at which nothing meaningful happens (Berardi, 2010; Crane, 2021; Fisher, 2009; Virtual Futures, 2011). As our *budgets* for *paying* attention and *spending* time shrink, we require aesthetic objects that invite bodies together in a manner that births new temporalities and forms of relationality that can appear in public.

Recently, an example of such an invitation occurred at the memorial. The context of Spring, 2023, was yet another fraught municipal election—one that had yet again caused division amongst the community. At the memorial, musician Tom Smarjda got up, took out his guitar as he often does, and played a song entitled “Into Harmony.” He introduced the song by saying, “…glad you’re all here. Many voices…get louder” (Church of the Holy

Trinity, 2023b). The song's chorus repeats, "It takes time to communicate and bring our visions together as one…into harmony" (ibid.). Smarjda was not suggesting that we all begin to think in the same way, but that we remember to gather and *take time* together. As Arendt writes, the "revelatory quality of speech and action comes to the fore where people are *with* others and neither for nor against them—that is, in sheer human togetherness" (Arendt, 1958, p. 180).

Franco "Bifo" Berardi (2010) and Mark Fisher (2011) both wrote about the limitations of human, biological temporalities against the ever-accelerating digital machine that comes to the fore under neoliberalism; Berardi (2010) calls this the "discrepancy between cyberspace…[and] cybertime" (p. 40). For Berardi, our refusal to acknowledge the "slowness of our bod[ies]" (p. 41) means that we enter a state of reckless decision-making "without attention" (p. 41)—that is, without ever having the capacity for "giving our attention to others gratuitously" (p. 41). Public life is stripped of the sensuousness, the love, the care, and the necessary attention to bodies in proximity to our own. There is a spatial implication to this inattentiveness that Berardi (2010) warns us of. He writes, "We have no more time for that spatial kind of attention that means attention to the body – to our body, to the body of the other. So, more and more, we feel that we have run out of time; that we must accelerate. And we feel simultaneously that acceleration leads to a loss of life, of pleasure and of understanding" (p. 46). Several organizers commented on the effort to resist this inattentive mode of negotiating time and space. Rayna Slobodian underscored that "[the memorial] takes people's time. It takes people's energy. But that's the society that we live in that forces the people who care to give up that time and space and effort" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022). And the effort to care comes with a cost. Bob Rose shared, "…believe me, this work can leave you…hurt. On a personal level. They used to say I'm a phoenix. I've burnt out and come back many times. And you have to be…I can look

around and see the cost in people's personal lives—broken relationships…whatever" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). These organizers were resisting the prevailing logic that denies spatial proximity and attentive slowness; their expression of this resistance meant that they were engaged in the costly work of grieving hundreds of friends and fellow activists (Crowe, personal communication, February 1, 2022; Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022).

As Judith Butler (2012) explains, in her reading of Arendt, freedom cannot exceed the "unchosen condition" (p. 143) of plurality that is its prerequisite. In other words, to be free, we must accept the togetherness in which we experience freedom—otherwise we negate what Arendt calls the "birth of new [humans]" (Arendt, 1958, p. 247), the ontological foundation of action in the world. The spatial significance of this togetherness, or as Butler (2012) terms it, "up againstness" (p. 134), is emphasized when she asserts that "unwilled proximity and unchosen cohabitation are preconditions of our political existence" (p. 145). Yet, in contrast to Berardi, Butler (2012) notes that the shifting and increasingly interconnected global community does not need to cause "paralysis" (p. 138), but rather can "move" us to negotiate what she calls the "multilocality and cross-temporality of ethical connections" (p. 138) insofar as they (re)turn us to whatever ethical concerns face us "here." Commemorative practice necessarily involves an ethical commitment to cohabitation with others at the memorial; it also calls us to register cross-temporal sufferings that face us from the past. The Toronto Homeless Memorial lends new meaning to Butler's (2012) assertion: "We can be alive or dead to the sufferings of others—they can be dead or alive to us" (p. 150). Perhaps those who gather at the memorial are "brought to life" just as much as those who are remembered there.

Of course, this *being with* takes time. So too does witnessing—it takes time in the sense that we acknowledge it is worth our time (as time is so often distilled down to a discretionary expenditure), but it also forces us to acknowledge past times and possible future times.

Memorial organizers and attendees operate with a different orientation to the past through a kind of cross-temporal up againstness (Butler, 2012), to stretch Butler's concept, that occurs at the memorial. The best way to articulate this is through what Ann Chinnery (2013) has called "reciprocity-by-proxy" (p. 261). That is, by accepting our "inescapable relatedness" (p. 260), Chinnery calls us to recognize that others' past-others also constitute their "being-in-the-present" (p. 261). Individuals who speak at the memorial often do not always share familiarity with the specific "others" who are eulogized (it is a sad reality that there are now months where dozens of names are added to the memorial). Yet each speaker—indeed, each attendee—is brought into a kind of proximity with the dead who appear in the words, poems, and stories shared by others. Relations of care extended to others in such a context perhaps have a way of allowing us to care for the past.

On a Tuesday morning, a couple of years ago, Gigi Grant found a perfectly intact tail feather from a Red-Tailed Hawk. They picked it up as, in Grant's words, "this is for something else…I took it with me to work" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Later, at the memorial, a group arrived that included parents mourning the loss of their son. Grant spent time in conversation with the young man's mother, who shared that she wished she had some message from him that he was okay. Grant asked the woman to describe her son: "who *is* he?" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). At first, she struggled to answer, saying "it's hard because of his mental health to tell you who he was…" So, Grant tried again: "what do you remember about him?" In response the mother shared the following story:

> 'He loved birds. He loved to tell me about birds. And he would look up in the sky and point them out to me…he just had such a deep affinity with birds…'
> And I [Grant] was like, 'This is so weird because I found this feather this morning and I said to myself it's not for me…this is for somebody else that I am carrying…' And I [Grant] pulled it out and I gave it to her and we both…started crying because of how impactful that was. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

If we take Ann Chinnery's words seriously, then this grieving parent was quite capable of sharing *who* her son was. Arendt's notion of "who" somebody was relies on their insertion into the world of acting and speaking humans—it can only be known by understanding "the story of which he is himself the hero" (p. 186), in contrast to "what" he was. This "what" for Arendt is constituted by the work produced and left behind by an individual—that which helps us become informed about their perspective, we might say. What Grant—and by extension, the memorial—is asking for here is *who* this young man was. At the memorial, each somebody is indeed the "hero" of a story that, at times, requires others to tell it so that they may be inserted into the present "by proxy," through a storyteller who might map these cross-temporal relations of care. And, I should add, through story*listeners*, who participate in the pedagogy of grief in their receiving of testimony; they give these stories—these "whos"—a site of plurality in which to be in proximity.

A situation whereby dehoused citizens can meaningfully appear is of utmost importance to the revivification of the public realm, in its truest sense. It enacts a pedagogy of grief that resituates who has a claim on public memory and who gets to be commemorated, even as—or perhaps made more significant because, to paraphrase Gigi Grant, the war is not over (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). It is aspirational to say that the TDRC/the THMN have "achieved" this revivification, or a kind of *permanent* ontological status or equality. Indeed, are conditions not worse than they have ever been since the 1990s? Rancière confirms that such interruptive assertions are themselves unanticipatable and fleeting.[47] Yet the paradoxical quality of such ontological affirmations makes each "moment" of interruption significant. And housing activists are nothing if not committed to the ongoingness of action.

[47] Arendt (1958) also notes how power is made in the plural appearing of citizens and "disperses" immediately afterwards.

Conclusion

To return to Meiburg's image, I ask: where were you? Where are we? Inside a chrysalis, writhing? In a partitioned "public," refusing to acknowledge those precluded from entering the space of appearance as speakers? Does a "chrysalis" muffle speech into incoherent noise, or do our interruptive actions precipitate the metamorphosis of our fellow citizens? And finally, after such a transformation, how might we insist upon the regular appearance of voices cultivating this posture of wonder? For it is, I argue, this posture of wonder—this ongoing opening to alterity—that can alter the power relations that have maintained the chrysalis for so long. Listening and wonder beckon us—the plural assembly—to refuse the refusals to recognize privilege, the interiorization of neoliberal logic, and, ultimately, the perpetuation of systemic violence and crisis.

A memorial is a site for the collective "verification" (Bingham et al., 2010, p. 15) of equality. At such an event, the organizers (and participants) are engaged in an ethical commitment to the ontological status of one another, in addition to the cross-temporal sufferings of those in the past. These "past-others" call participants into this cross-temporal "up againstness." In other words, the equality of all is affirmed by the plurality of all—the "unchosen cohabitation" (Butler, 2012, p. 145) that exists between the dead, the living, and the spirits that inhabit places like Trinity Square (see Chapter 1).

On May 4, 2023, musician Doris Kilpatrick died. She was 38. Having lived without housing, she was honoured by many at the memorial on June 13, 2023. Her partner encouraged all in attendance to listen to her music to "get a chance to know a little bit about who she was, her soul—who she truly was" (Church of the Holy Trinity, 2023b, 26:15). Later, to close the memorial, he played one of her songs through the speaker—which is to say, the memorial was concluded to the sounds of *Kilpatrick's* voice. Indeed, it is again Cavarero

(2021) who attunes us to the unique sonorous voices that make up the plural assembly (as well as the "pluriphonic rustle" (p. 83)—here drawing on Roland Barthes—of plurality).[48] There are countless examples like this: participants reading a letter to a loved one, a poem from a writer being grieved, a song, a favourite catchphrase or joke… All such instances allow some form of address to pass between the assembly and the spirits of the dead. All require listening and the intention to receive the words of a speaker—and conversely, to reject the impulse to treat such address as mere noise. In such a way, the reception offered by the crowd widens, in that moment at least, the "distribution of the sensible."

While this chapter has described the kind of atmosphere activists have been cultivating at the Toronto Homeless Memorial, Chapter 5 will grapple with the alienating qualities of the media landscape in neoliberal times. While activists have sought to produce these productive, democratic spaces—these opportunities for learning—they are confronted with a disaster-obsessed regime of media spectacle: is anybody listening? What strategies for affective public output are possible? For "good" political outcomes, housing activists have had to rely on fast-paced media spectacle to elicit public concern. Amidst this phenomenon, which I call "bad news good," I illuminate certain aesthetic interventions, mobilized by memorial organizers, that can precipitate weird and eerie modes (Fisher, 2017) for communicating this crisis.

[48] It is "[a]s if surging democracy had a sound that revocalizes, every time anew and as adults too, the nascent and generative happiness of beginning" (p. 85). It is also worth noting that Cavarero's earlier work, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression* (2005), has specifically taken up the politics of the voice itself as it has appeared throughout history in its varied, embodied uniqueness.

Chapter 5

On the media and the framing of *bad news good*:

The weird and eerie modes of activism as a praxis of memory

> I would say this for myself, but other people definitely express this…it's really heavy work. It's emotionally overwhelming just collecting the names of dead people. There's complexity to it, I guess. One person with lived experience expressed…that it seemed like the more people that died, the more publicity it got in the news and that felt like a really complicated thing. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022)

> …it's an important thing that the ceremony become the political force. The ceremony that we do together is the political force and political will…and when people witness it, when people who are in—like, changemakers or whatever, policymakers—when they actually witness people's hurt and loss… It does fundamentally change something inside us…. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

In keeping with the more "traditional" notions of public pedagogy, I find myself grappling with questions like, how might the Toronto Homeless Memorial be understood as a pedagogy of/for the public? What has the memorial taught Torontonians (or Canadians) about "homelessness" as an ongoing (worsening) event? How has such pedagogical work challenged the narrative of the inevitability of homelessness? In attempting to answer these questions, I have uncovered an impasse that requires extensive unpacking. It is an impasse I have come to call "bad news good," which faces activists, audiences, and victims of neoliberal dehousing. By "bad news good" I mean the way in which "good" pedagogical outcomes always (or often) seem to rely on bad news. Good pedagogical *opportunities*—in forums in which people can appear together—are often a response to traumatic media narratives. To teach the public about dehousing and its effects, organizers were reliant on public attention being harnessed through the reporting on tragedy. While the media acted as a

"filter" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a) for activists, public attention—and thus, *attendance* (at the memorial or other rallies)—was mobilized through the spectacle of bad news. People freezing to death, being run over, being beaten by military personnel, dying from a toxic drug supply, or living at the margins of society, in tents on contaminated land, while facing police violence and eviction—such are the conditions from which the "good" teachings emerged. And "the more people that died, the more publicity it got" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Opportunities for educating the public came out of people dying. That relationship between media spectacle and pedagogical praxis is indeed a very complicated thing.

In this chapter, I explore the idea of "bad news good," using examples from the TDRC archive and my interviews. I argue that such a relationship between media and housing activism has relied on the phenomenon of spectacle, which exchanges a politics of care for a "politics of pity." It is a situation where the speed of media output is not in keeping with the slow unravelling of the crisis. Media outlets are ever in search of sudden moments of crisis that draw public attention to the issue, while dehousing is so immobilizing and disempowering precisely because it (mostly) evades such moments. Rather, it unfolds slowly, as more families, working class people, victims of unfair evictions, and other spectacularly precarious citizens are subjected to its brutal gravity. Contemporary media does not know what to do with such a persistent, slow tragedy. Journalists seek moments that exemplify what is happening—an *event*, a moment of injustice. Some politicians try to affirm that what is happening is wrong, while many others give themselves over to an attitude of inevitability. *It must have always been this way. What an intractable crisis—if only something could be done.*

Finally, I argue for a way out of the impasse presented by "bad news good." The attachment to spectacle is one that renders the public realm a site of banality, void of

sensuousness. Maxine Greene's observations made some time ago now still hold relevance, we are witnessing people "withdrawing from a public culture perceived as meaningless" (Greene, 1982, p. 5). Talking heads keep talking and the citizen realizes that their own input is devalued—they are "spectator, consumer, audience, and audiences are not consulted, any more than consumers are. The point is to sell, to render the product attractive…" (Greene, 1982, p. 5). What media outlets have realized, unfortunately, is that spectacle sells. And while it has been necessary for housing activists to strategically utilize this approach to generating public outrage, it is not the only way. What memorial organizers have realized is that there is another way, one that resists the politics of pity and enacts a situation of care-full-ness. It is care-full in the sense that it motivates participants toward a posture of shared humanity and solidarity. It is careful also in the sense of being *cautious* about the neoliberal assumptions that can be perpetuated by mainstream media portrayals of dehousing. This alternative approach can be called action as *ceremony* (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022).

A note on public pedagogy

In earlier chapters, I have made the case for the Toronto Homeless Memorial as a site of publicness. That is, according to Biesta's (2012a) typology, the memorial's public pedagogy is one that invites openings for enactments of publicness, from which a contingent, affective pedagogical interruption can occur. Aesthetic interventions or subversive archival contributions, for instance, afford moments of "dissensus," where unexpected publicness can engage, surprise, and interrupt.

Now I take interest in the memorial's way of enacting a pedagogy of/for the public. What is meant by this is in keeping with more conventional definitions or understandings of public pedagogy—insofar as these understandings are explicitly concerned with *learning*. The capacity for community activists, say, to teach the public, can be called a pedagogy "for"

the public (Biesta, 2012a). A pedagogy for the public can be defined as the didactic means that ideas are communicated to an audience to inform or instruct them about a particular socio-political concern (Sandlin et al., 2010).

A pedagogy "of" the public, on the other hand, is in keeping with a "popular education" approach, inspired by thinkers like Paolo Freire, Augusto Boal, dian marino, and others. Such an approach enlists audience members and participants in the action of co-constructing a new way of considering the problems and concerns at hand. The memorial has hosted various artistic interventions that can be thought of in this regard. For instance, a 24 hour vigil event hosted on August 8-9, 2005, featured drumming, singing, art installations, and a performance of a play in the style of theatre of the oppressed (Boal, 1993; Crowe, 2007; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 2005f, 2005e, 2005d).[49] Importantly, a pedagogy of the public still has the goal of *learning* at its heart (Biesta, 2012a).[50]

Having briefly summarized these two pedagogic modes, I will begin with a discussion of the pedagogy *for* the public, which has largely occurred in and through media outlets that have amplified, sometimes problematically, the crisis of dehousing in the public realm.

The pedagogy for the public and the media as filter

I have already told the story of the press conference held after the death of Richard Roy, but I want to refer again to Beric German's words, when he shares, "[t]he media of course is the filter through which we are trying to talk to many people about the fact that this city has a crisis of homelessness" (Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness, 1996a). This

[49] This performance was directed (in part) by Simon Malbogat with the theatre group Mixed Company (see Crowe, 2007, p. 144).
[50] This contrasts with Biesta's public pedagogy that enacts "a concern for publicness," which avoids the "regimes of learning" (Biesta, 2012a) by taking, as its starting point, the goal of cultivating a public situation, where citizens can appear together with all the contingency afforded by that political experience of togetherness. While learning can certainly happen in such an atmosphere, it is not the point of departure for such an experience.

idea of the media as filter has been important to the dissemination of the messaging from housing activists. It has also been a significant undertaking. As Greg Cook revealed, "…we have to actually work hard often just to get those stories in the media. There has to be a lot of thought and strategy just to get people to pay attention" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

The media, oftentimes, has also perpetuated much of the harmful stigma and neoliberal rationality so difficult to contend with. It is thus important to note that the pedagogy for the public has not only occurred through press releases and mediated messages concerning crisis-level violence, but also through pedagogical address *directed at* media representatives themselves. The press conference after the death of Richard Roy is a perfect example of this. Here, activists are not only correcting the narrative for media outlets to share; they are speaking to representatives from the media in order that they become more educated about the nature of the crisis at hand.

In this chapter, I want to reinforce an earlier argument of mine that media coverage often reinforces neoliberal assumptions that many carry about dehousing (Martin, 2022). This is part of a broader impulse to refuse media that generates what Susan Sontag calls "representative instances of…their plights" (Sontag, 2002, p. 79). The plights of dehoused people are complex and their stories are easily lost amidst the temptation to represent and see through the logic of the spectacle. I find myself tempted toward writing about how the number of dehoused dead in Toronto will soon surpass the number of those killed in the 9/11 attacks. But what purpose would this serve? Would it only serve to reify the notion of spectacle as a site of attraction? North America has a long history of addiction to poverty-as-spectacle. We continue to fall for the cheap gimmick that "by making suffering loom larger…[we] may spur people to feel they ought to 'care' more" (Sontag, 2002, p. 79). If care

is even engendered through spectacle, it is indeed a cheap care. It is manifested on social media pages and not on the streets.

Several memorial organizers discussed the strange relationship the memorial has had with media outlets. In January of 2020, when the 1000th name was added to the memorial, it was indeed very complicated. Amidst the sadness of this was a kind of strange "milestone"—for some it perhaps proved that all this counting was proving something. It was a number that could shock. For some activists, this was a moment where "at least" someone noticed; for the first time in a while, people were paying attention. The notion of "bad news good" helps to take stock of this strange dynamic. What kinds of information are dispersed through "bad news good"? How is this information retained by audience members? In what ways does the information proliferate through various segments of the social milieu? What kind of posture does the public adopt toward the recorded names? The memorial gains visibility, but does the commemorative practice gain anything? In some cases, it does. The memorial event where the 1000th name was added to the memorial was a beautiful moment of publicness. Hundreds of people visited the memorial that week. On Tuesday at noon, Trinity Square was filled with bodies. Children played with the marbles that were handed out. Hundreds of candles were lit. Tears were shed. Care, in this moment, had a sonic quality. It was reminiscent of Cavarero's (2021) notion of public happiness—paradoxically made possible in a moment of deep grief.

Examining the cultural production of the Toronto Homeless Memorial cannot occur without an analysis of the media coverage of the event. Additionally, as is noticeable in this dissertation, it has been necessary to draw on the TDRC's archival material that contained examples of commemorative practice that pre-dated or occurred alongside the memorial (Paul Croutch's memorial or the annual memorials and marches for Edmond Yu, for example). Over the years, several journalists stand out as having paid particularly close attention to the dehousing crisis. Such attention, as I argue here, has had complicated effects on organizers,

participants, and other audiences. Journalists like Catherine Dunphy (1998a, 1998b, 1999a, 1999b), Emily Mathieu (2018, 2019, 2020), and Joanna Lavoie (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2021a, 2021b) come to mind as well-intentioned examples of writers trying to communicate the extent of the crisis. Yet even these efforts cannot help but contribute to the feeling of "bad news good."

The dead as a symbol

One of the trademarks of "bad news good" is the recasting of human beings into *symbols*. There is an inherent danger in transposing and abstracting someone into a symbol of systemic injustice. While certain individuals are indeed *examples* of broader forms of dispossession, casting them as a kind of figurehead for a particular fight for justice serves to undo their unique humanity. They are at risk of no longer being a "who," in the Arendtian sense discussed in Chapter 4, which I will reiterate briefly. While, for Arendt, "what" someone is can be established through their contributions to the historical archive, and "who" someone is can be found in "the story [in which they are] the hero" (Arendt, 1958, p. 186), I argue that this symbolic sensibility transposes a person into their "why." In other words, in attempting to gather meaning from a person's unfair death, the media has the capacity to forego the person's unique story, or even their specific contributions, and speak only to their identity in relation to a cause. It is a just cause, to be sure, but distilling a person down to their "why"—indeed, casting them as a particular "why" is to make assumptions about their raison d'être—it overlooks the meaningful particularities that humanize each of us.

After the murder of Edmond Yu, discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the ensuing media hysteria would feature several problematic portrayals of Yu—not the least of which were the hegemonic assumptions concerning mental illness and the inevitability of either a) "homelessness" or b) carceral containment. For my purposes here, I will skirt those issues to

draw attention to another concern: Edmond Yu as *symbol*. As Helen Henderson wrote, "Edmond Wai Hong Yu was shot dead on an empty TTC bus at the foot of Spadina Ave. Only a dozen horrified onlookers witnessed the shooting nine days ago. But we are all witnesses to the tragedy his death symbolizes" (Henderson, 1997). Yu's death became a symbol of police violence (Gombu, 1999; Slinger, 1999), a symbol of the need for coercive treatment for psychiatric consumers/ex-patients/survivors (Bacque, 1998; Weitz, 1998), and a symbol of dehousing more broadly. Yet others tried to maintain an image of Yu, the man, through an affective aesthetics that resisted the temptation to determine *why* he had lived (Hawkins & Colbourne, 1997; Smith, 1998; Weitz, 2002).

The death of Eugene Upper, discussed in Chapter 2, was given similar treatment. In a piece in *Toronto Life*, the author offered this assessment:

> He had no idea of the fuss he would case, that he'd make the newspapers, that politicians would cry for funds in his name. That he would become a symbol instead of a man. In the early morning of January 5, 1996, Eugene Upper curled up on the floor of [a] bus shelter at Spadina and Nassau and slowly froze to death. (Clunie, 1996, p. 22)

The *Toronto Life* piece continually reasserted the claim that Upper was a man about whom "nothing" was known. In one sense, it is amazing the piece was published, given the fact that there was, allegedly, nothing that could be said about the man. An idea of Upper determined through "what" he contributed is treated as an impossibility—the man offered nothing for the record, nothing could be preserved: "There are no surviving pictures" (Clunie, 1996, p. 22). Furthermore, an idea constructed of Upper as a "who" is negated: "He may have tried his luck in Hamilton before coming to Toronto, but no one really knows…Several Toronto hostel workers recall him as a quiet man, which is about all they could say" (Clunie, 1996, p. 22). It is telling that the author's attempts to understand this man appeared to begin and end with those employed in the "industry," when they could have asked friends of Upper's like Melvin Tipping (see Chapter 2). Perhaps the journalist never considered that a man like Eugene

Upper could have had meaningful friendships. If the conclusion had been reached that there is no "who" or "what" to be discussed, then the logical next step is to try to abstract and establish the dead as a symbol, a "why." The mainstream media posture appears to propound that *at least then they can become a lesson for the rest of us, something pedagogical*.

A central argument woven throughout this dissertation is that the pedagogy of grief is animated in and through the appearance of acting and speaking human beings. It occurs in the denial of the logic that says, "there is nothing to say here," or worse, "there is nothing to *see* here." The commemorative practice under analysis in this project emphasizes a community of vibrant, creative people—each a unique "who"—who appear in public. This occurs with the assistance of a *care-full* archival practice concerned with the preservation of "what" has been recorded and maintained across this movement, amidst this crisis. In other words, the pedagogical occurs through action with real people, appearing in spaces that contest the hegemony of nothingness.

The hegemony of nothingness

> Nothing is happening until we take notice that Nothing is happening. At that point, a process of meaning-making begins. What we choose to find significant about the Nothing that is happening is what we will remember, and whenever we designate something about the past as "remembered," we are engaging in historical consciousness. A blank space holds meaning in abeyance; memory adds meaning, as it always does when the past becomes part of a history. (Crane, 2021, p. 55)

In *Nothing Happened: A History*, Susan Crane articulates the nature of the crisis that occurs when we speak of nothingness. For Crane (2021), "…Nothing is happening all the time" (p. 48), which is another way of saying that the process of meaning-making that occurs when memory is applied to moments of historical erasure is often blocked. Without the particularities of what gets remembered amidst all the Nothing we are surrounded by, there can be no historical consciousness. And historical consciousness, at its best, is a process of

co-participation, where a plurality of "rememberers" can gather around to insist upon a history—a happening. *This is why memory is at the crux of housing activism*. The dehousing crisis is a slow, pervasive process of denying (or not noticing) meaning-making through remembrance. Hegemonic narratives record the "advances" made to public space, in the form of high rises, for instance, without recording what once stood in their place. The hegemony of nothingness is also palpable in my previous example of Eugene Upper. If "nothing" can be said of the man, then there is no one to mourn. *If humans are transposed into symbols, then a supposed struggle for justice is abstracted; it becomes a theoretical exercise.* Such a re-presentation of the facts of Upper's life leaves us with a sense of emptiness. And, as Crane writes, "[e]mptiness [is] a sign of the crisis" (Crane, 2021, p. 92).

Elsewhere I have written about the "ruin" in spatial terms—the sites of displacement and dehousing are part of this "Nothing" that Crane is trying to take note of (martin, 2022b). Here, I want to describe the hegemony of nothingness as part of a broader architecture of erasure. Rather than articulate this in spatial, material terms, the hegemony of nothingness is part of a phenomenon that disappears people's relational connections, capacity for action, and deservingness of concern. It is this aspect in the stories from mainstream media that is most concerning—the capacity to say, "this is an issue that matters," while at the same time stripping the issue of a subject. The positioning of the dead as symbols strips the story of a main character. Personhood and subjectivity—one's capacity as an actor in the world—is lost. The political vitality of the movement is minimized; instead of hearing the voices of unique human beings we receive prescribed social causes. The issue here is twofold: first, there is no ontological recognition of the victims of violence and their capacity for political (and historical) presence, and second, a moral or ethical directive from the media is void of the contingency and spirit of distinct political actors.

It is for this reason that housing activists often make a point of saying, *this was who this person was, known, loved, and capable of acting and speaking.* They are not only trying to humanize those who die without housing, they are disrupting a way of figuring the crisis as one without people—or of people without pasts. In depicting people with pasts—with networks of community, stories, and political contributions—activists were contesting a paradoxical situation in which there was *Something to do* in spite of there being "Nothing to see here" (Crane, 2021, p. 20).

The Weird and the Eerie

Mark Fisher's (2017) discussion of the *weird* and the *eerie* is useful as I begin to discuss the affective capacities that provide a "way out" of the impasse of "bad news good." In his posthumously published book, he articulates the affective dimensions of these two modes beyond their considerations as merely registers that distress or terrify. The weird, for Fisher, has to do with the insertion of an object out of place. Importantly, reckoning with the sensation that a thing "should not exist, or at least it should not exist here" (Fisher, 2017, p. 15), forces us to interrogate the categories we use to understand our world: "[t]he weird thing is not wrong, after all: it is our conceptions that must be inadequate" (Fisher, 2017, p. 15). The weird is often concerned with that which does not belong. These questions of belonging, this "sense of *wrongness*" (Fisher, 2017, p. 13), can re-orient us toward the new—through a recognition that our previous understandings are no longer tenable. Columbian artist Doris Salcedo has drawn on this affective mode in much of her work. While I have written about Salcedo's aesthetic interventions elsewhere in more depth (martin, 2022a), I will limit my remarks here to one example. In Salcedo's work, *Atrabilious*, the audience is presented with pairs of shoes that are partially obscured by the stretched membranes of a cow's bladder. She explains her approach in the following way:

> In *Atrabiliarios* I had placed myself exactly there, with minimal resources and working with the most despicable material you can think of. Something that we all feel repelled by. Cow bladders on one hand, and old shoes. We don't like old shoes but nevertheless every time we see a shoe on the street we wonder what happened there. It's the wrong place for that shoe to be. So the materials come from that. (Salcedo, 1992, n.p.)

The shoes represent people who have been disappeared in the protracted civil war in Columbia, a central point of departure for many of Salcedo's works. The weirdness of a shoe where it does not belong forces Salcedo's audience to reconsider their own relationship to suppressed memory, the disappeared, and what we might call the politically *grotesque*. The work is in keeping with Fisher's assertion that the weird often features a "quality of shock" (Fisher, 2017, p. 13).

The eerie, on the other hand, is a mode that invites us toward a speculative posture in response to questions of absence or presence. Rather than producing shock—and that shock as a vehicle for personal/political reflection—it is a mode that produces curiosity about the unknown. For Fisher (2017), there are two aspects to the eerie: "[t]he sensation of the eerie occurs either when there is something present where there should be nothing, or…nothing present when there should be something" (p. 61). Fisher explains these two modes, which he terms *failure of absence* and *failure of presence*, by, respectively, 1) the eerie distant cry in a wilderness that should otherwise be quiet and calm, and 2) the eerie effect of a coming upon a site of ruins or an abandoned building. For my purposes here, I am more concerned with this second mode. Fisher explores, drawing on the writing of Daphne du Maurier and Christopher Priest, the ways in which disappearances get produced. Priest's novel, *The Glamour*, introduces the phenomenon of "negative hallucination," which Fisher (2017) elaborates on as an example of disappearance—or "nothing where there should be something" (p. 74). A negative hallucination is a *not-seeing*. This contrasts with Gigi Grant's observation,

referenced in Chapter 1, of people seeing the spirits of the dead in the breezeways of Trinity Square—what might commonly be referred to as a "positive hallucination." Fisher writes,

> Negative hallucination is a phenomenon that is in many ways more interesting—and more eerie—than "positive" hallucination. *Not seeing what is there* is both stranger and more commonplace than seeing what is not there. Failure to see, the involuntary process of overlooking material which contradicts—or simply does not fit with—the dominant stories which we tell ourselves is part of the ongoing "editing process" through which what we experience as identity is produced. (Fisher, 2017, pp. 74–75)

Couched within the eerie are questions about authorship and agency—what forces constructed this story, these buildings, those cultural assumptions? Fisher notes that there are inherently questions of memory that require consideration here. How does memory get produced? Or, more specifically, how do gaps in memory get filled? A gap in memory being a kind of disappearance—there are what Fisher (2017) calls "confabulatory process[es]" (p. 72) that seek to fill these gaps with particular understandings and assumptions.[51] While the weird seeks to shock us into questioning our conceptions of the world we take part in, the eerie calmly invites us to notice the nothings, the gaps in memory, the moments of not seeing.

Just as the neoliberal rationality is produced via narrative, a kind of confabulatory process, so too can the efforts of housing activists work to draw attention to this "machinery," while "filling in the gaps" left by John, J., and Jane Does. Such "eerie" efforts resist the commonplace negative hallucinations in neoliberal life—the repetitious *not seeing* of those forced to sleep rough, panhandle, or freeze to death in a bus shelter. Aesthetic practices can indeed offer us this affective mode. As Fisher (2017) puts it,

> The perspective of the eerie can give us access to the forces which govern mundane reality but which are ordinarily obscured, just as it can give us access to spaces beyond mundane reality altogether. It is this release from the mundane, this

[51] "Memory is already a story, and when there are gaps in memory, new stories must be confabulated to fill the holes. But who is the author of these stories? The answer is that there is not so much an author as a confabulatory process without any "one" behind it…this functioning is usually obscured, and only comes into view when something goes wrong—when the stories fail, and the question about the machinery that produces them becomes unavoidable." (Fisher, 2017, p. 72)

> escape from the confines of what is ordinarily taken for reality, which goes some way to account for the peculiar appeal that the eerie possesses. (p. 13)

In the following section, I offer examples aesthetic practices associated with the memorial that feature both weird and eerie affective capacities.

Weird Poetry in Eerie Times

> …it's worth considering how poetry has been a means to challenge the status quo, to point out where injustice has occurred and Nothing has happened to those responsible, to articulate precise grievances that have long been recognized as never having been recognized. If Nothing has changed but it should have, poetry is a powerful way to express that anger, pain, and suffering—all of which have unique histories. (Crane, 2021, p. 199)

To make something appear where nothing was, activists have drawn on a rich assortment of aesthetic practices. A constant source of creative interrogation occurred through the poetry of activists and memorial participants. Central to this ongoing creative practice was Bonnie Briggs, Michael Mallard, Sara Boyles, Sherman Hesselgrave, and Don Weitz, among others. Such poets would publish pieces in zines, newsletters, and other publications, but, more significantly for this discussion, their writings all had a public life in which they were received and shared. Not only were the poets readily available for public readings, sharing their works monthly (in the case of Bonnie Briggs) at the memorial, but their works were taken up and reworked by generations of fellow artists and musicians at the memorial. Don Weitz, for instance, asked Tom Smarjda to put several of his poems to music, many of which are still performed at the memorial today. As Arendt said,

> The venture into the public realm seems clear to me. One exposes oneself to the light of the public, as a person… Speaking is also a form of action. That is one venture. The other is: we start something. We weave our strand into a network of relations. What comes of it we never know…this venture is only possible when there is trust in people. (Arendt, 2013, p. 38)

This venture of trust that Arendt speaks to is also very applicable to the shared way that Briggs wrote and (often) performed her poems. As Greg Cook said of Bonnie Briggs's writing, "She's almost always speaking to the moment" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Briggs seemingly had a poem for every day of the year. There were poems for the turning of the seasons, for Remembrance Day, for "The Lonely Season" of Christmas, for Thanksgiving, for each election, for the Olympics, for Valentine's Day, for New Years, and more (Briggs et al., 2020). Cook observes, "…often her poems were very political. In a sense saying, this is not okay. Then other times they were just really sweet… [she was] often reflecting what was happening in the world of housing advocacy and politics" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). For years, Briggs would meet with Rev. Sara Boyles each month to collaborate on a poem for the monthly memorial (Briggs et al., 2020). When Rev. Sherman Hesselgrave took the job at the Church of the Holy Trinity, in June 2008, he continued this tradition, "usually meeting in the Trinity Square Cafe the week before the memorial, armed with a legal pad and a rhyming dictionary" (Briggs et al., 2020).

Figure 12. Bonnie Briggs, 2004.

For Briggs, political (and pedagogical) action always emerged out of participation. The conceptual grammar of her poetry always hints at the idea of collaboration that was so essential to the writing process itself. To draw a parallel, memory studies scholar, Jill Bennett has observed that "…Salcedo's methods demonstrate an overriding concern with inhabitation—that is, with the ways in which those left behind learn to inhabit the world made strange and uninhabitable by death" (Enriquez et al., 2017, p. 70). I believe that Bonnie

Briggs shared this same concern for how to inhabit a world made strange—by dehousing and, by death. In *Remember, Remember*, she writes,

> The corrective is love: a rising above
> The petty concerns, the fears and the spurns,
> To fiercely embrace our hopes and our place (Briggs et al., 2020)

Words like "place," "occupy," and "gathering" urge the reader toward a vital togetherness. In *Street Thanksgiving*, she writes,

> What will it take to create a table
> where everyone—weak or strong—will be able
> to be fed and sheltered with a life that is stable? (Briggs et al., 2020)

Here I am tempted to read into her work a nod to the Arendtian "table," which stabilizes and orients those around it, cultivating a space for the political. While I am uncertain whether Briggs was familiar with Arendt's table—taken up by Bonnie Honig, as explored in Chapter 1—it is perhaps more likely that Briggs was influenced by one specific table she may well have sat around. Of the TDRC's Tent City days, several activists relate how the community shared leadership and decision making power among everyone (see Crowe, 2007, p. 56). Nancy Baker shared how the TDRC facilitated community meetings, with Don Heap (see Chapter 6) arriving by bicycle and a member of the TDRC supplying KFC for everyone, "and then we would have our meeting outside around a big round table" (Crowe, 2007, p. 73). In this way, such a table—capable of orienting a community around a shared space of belonging, navigating conflict and decision-making by acknowledging one another as equal political actors—existed in a most literal sense.[52] It is perhaps this sort of table that Briggs sought to be applied more broadly for all citizens in Toronto. Similarly, she invoked this shared, habitable

[52] In a grassroots community house that I once lived in, known as "the Oodelally," there existed a similar giant table, constructed by hand by a friend who measured the living room and built the largest table that could possibly fit in that house.

space in *Oh, Canada, You Spacious Land* when she invokes the fight for a national housing program with the line, "We need a national roof we all can gather under" (Briggs et al., 2020).

The poetry of the memorial captures a spirit of the emergent, nascent possibilities that Cavarero (2021) considers. Briggs, like Cavarero, prompts her audience to consider the *sonority* of this movement toward political recognition. She urges her listeners to "Resolve this year to open your ears / To hear things for the first time" (Briggs et al., 2020). So even as she depicts "the void in which survivors live following such loss" (Enriquez et al., 2017, p. 74), she also turns to a posture of hopeful attention to the sonic quality of political resurgence. This movement features the necessary transition from silent listening to political speech. In *New Tears for New Years*, she concludes with this stanza:

> Everyone's death diminishes us, a poet wisely wrote.
> Every life has purpose and possibility,
> from princes and paupers to you and me.
> We turn from silent homage
> to raise our voice once more
> and call for housing justice
> and an end to the war on the poor. (Briggs et al., 2020)

This turning from silent homage to the collective raising of voices is characteristic of her insistence on everyone's insertion in a public world. Here, too, we see her invoking "the war on the poor" as discussed at length in Chapter 6.

Susan Crane (2021) writes, "[s]omeone who makes Something out of Nothing…[is] making a fuss, an unsubstantiated claim on everyone's attention" (p. 218). But, as she goes on to say, this kicking up a fuss is an essential task of scholars of historical consciousness. To use her words, "[m]ost of the past is Nothing until we notice it. That's where histories begin…" (Crane, 2021, p. 219). The poem *Christmas is in the air* contains the following stanzas:

> Compassion means "to suffer with," not pity from afar.
> To enter into another's plight you have to get out of the car.
> If change is what we really want, then let it start with us,
> by speaking for the voiceless ones and kicking up a fuss. (Briggs et al., 2020)

The task, for Briggs, is indeed to kick up a fuss—to make Something out of Nothing. Drawing attention to the "machinery" of neoliberalism involves (historical) consciousness-raising. If our "seeing" is conditioned by "the car," we might take this to mean we are spatially separate from the spectacle under observation. We observe as we pass by, through the tinted windows of a media tickertape that flows past at highway speeds. We remain insulated—our bodies, the sonic landscape—and we engage only through a "frenzied *temporality*" (Di Paolantonio, 2019, p. 218). To enter the eerie mode of witnessing the unwitnessed, one must "get out of the car." This occurs, here, through speech and "wit(h)nessing"—a kind of witnessing that is founded on togetherness and affective encounters (Boscacci, 2018).[53] Again and again, memorial poetry invited attendees into a different temporality, one that resisted the impasse of "bad news good." Such aesthetic practices "filter" the crisis at a different tempo, one that allows for a politics of care, rather than the temporal frenzy and spatial distance that leaves only the possibility of pity (and this, usually, is short-lived).

To kick up a fuss is a weird act. The phrase itself evokes a sense of shocking onlookers, of creating a "scene," some would say. This work of weirdness—the insertion of that which does not belong—is a response to an eerie state. In other words, the poetry of the memorial responds to a failure of presence—a "negative hallucination" (Fisher, 2017) of "the void" (Enriquez et al., 2017) in which dehoused people have been forced to live (and die). By kicking up a fuss, Briggs and other poets cultivate a weird moment where those who receive the words of the poets are presented with a Something out of Nothing—a Something that, according to the hegemony of nothingness, does not belong. And, as I have stated already, the weird creates a situation where the new can occur—as our old understandings no longer hold

[53] The original word-concept here is attributed to Bracha Ettinger (2004).

up. It is here that we must rest our hopes or at least gain a sense of the significance of all this weirdness—all these years of monthly poems and creative interventions. What the poets of the memorial are encouraging is a rejection of the old ways—the old ways that have been so violent, so dehumanizing, and so full of *Nothing* happening.

What the aesthetic practices of artists like Doris Salcedo and the homeless memorial's poets insist upon is a "world." As Arendt (2013) noted, the modern world is constituted by a pervasive worldlessness—and thus, "a peculiar loneliness" (p. 34)—in which it is difficult to access the space where things become public, "[i]n which art appears…[i]n which all kinds of things appear" (p. 34). Thus, the task of the modern artist/poet is to engage in their weird/eerie endeavours through a course of public intervention itself. Thus, the *form* and *context* of the artistic engagement is, itself, a weird interruption—a shocking out-of-placeness where something "should not exist, or at least it should not exist here" (Fisher, 2017, p. 15). Such artists stand in public squares and interject—they "[speak] to the moment" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022) in spaces where they invite a *world* to receive their provocations. In *Doris Salcedo: The materiality of mourning*, Mary Schneider Enriquez (2017) observes,

> …the relentless stream of graphically violent imagery…identified in cultural spheres as pornomiseria, poses a special challenge for artists: how to present an image of death so that its personal and public significance engages the viewer" (p. 20)

To extend this observation, up against the violent imagery that seeks to make "good" out of "bad news," how might these weird poems—this remembrance of death—alter the fleeting temporality of media stories? How can the "viewer" become participant? By countering the politics of pity via spectacle, memorial poetry offers attendees an invitation toward an intimate, slow, engaged attention to the pain of the other. The memorial poets insist upon a history that is largely unmapped territory; the collected works invite attendees to

gather around and remember-with. In addition, they contrast the fleeting temporality of media spectacle with an ongoing *intergenerational* attention. The poets "pass down" their works; new works are reimagined, old pieces are constantly (re)invoked; the aesthetic practices of the memorial are ultimately an act of trust and collective participation in order to "inhabit [a] world made strange and uninhabitable by death" (Enriquez et al., 2017, p. 70). The invitation is, thus, an eerie one: *come, inhabit a world with us in the ruins of dehousing, when the dust of the spectacle has cleared. Something has happened (and continues to happen) here.*

A sense of historicity: The People's Court as an eerie event

In 2000, Bonnie Briggs interviewed journalist Catherine Dunphy for the TDRC's publication, *The National Disaster Post*. Dunphy spoke about the disagreements she had with her editors about what constitutes an event as "newsworthy" (Briggs, 2000). She also noted a kind of public amnesia concerning the policy shifts that had occurred during the Mike Harris years. People had, according to Dunphy, forgotten not only the legislation that cut welfare rates in 1995, but they had forgotten the *linkages* between the underfunding social assistance while passing legislation making it easier to evict tenants (Briggs, 2000). To be clear, I am not critiquing the work of journalists, as such, in joining with these grassroots movements to amplify their reach. And certainly, in the case of Dunphy, we see a direct concern not only with the dehousing crisis, but with the politics of memory and erasure. Dunphy was not only interested in documenting tragedy—her journalistic advocacy was an attempt to provide some historicity to the crisis.

Activists and artists often did a more comprehensive job of animating this historicity. In this way, they filled the gaps in memory, the forgotten linkages between state policies, by inserting something where there was nothing. Or, to put it another way, telling a part of the story that had been covered over, rendered as a gap by the confabulatory process of neoliberal

machinery. On December 8, 1998, the TDRC held a mock trial, "Homeless People v. the Government of Canada and the Government of the Province of Ontario" (Dunphy, 1998b; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1998c). The People's Court event was aimed at establishing exactly how the crisis had unfolded in Ontario—citing policy documents and factchecking government claims concerning their commitments to housing and social assistance. When David Hulchanski took the stand, he entered several documents into evidence. Among them, the following excerpt:

> …from the provincial Conservative's policy document, *The Common Sense Revolution*: "We will end the public housing boondoggle that profits only the large property developers and return to a shelter subsidy program for all Ontarians who need help in affording a decent level of shelter. This will eliminate the inefficiencies of government-owned and -operated housing. By spending money on people instead of bricks and mortar, we will be in a position to eliminate the two-year waiting list for affordable housing. [underlining added]" (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1998c, pp. 4–5).

Later, the documents from this People's Court event stated "Professor Hulchanski reminded the court that this promise has not been implemented" (p. 5). In this way, the event was an example of an eerie pedagogical interruption, one that drew attention to what had been disappeared from memory—namely, significant political promises to the unhoused community. These unfulfilled promises were an example of a systemic "negative hallucination"—a state-wide *not seeing* of the bodies abjected from public attention. It was an invitation to enter a speculative praxis that asked questions about the "mundane reality" inherited in the Mike Harris years.

Figure 13. David Hulchanski unrolls scroll, People's Court event, 1998.

Hulchanski would later enter into evidence a list—in the form of a memorandum from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada—of co-op and non-profit housing projects that had been cancelled by the Conservative Government. The list contained approximately 17,000 units of housing, capable of housing 45,000 tenants. As the trial minutes record, "Professor Hulchanski presented the list in the form of a scroll which, when unrolled, stretched from one side of the court to the other" (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1998c, p. 5). Such a performative instance presents both another eerie interruption—insofar as each unit represents a Nothing that should be Something, or a *failure of presence*—but there is also something weird about this act. A scroll rolling across the floor, being stretched and stretched by the many hands unwinding it from its anchor, is indeed a shocking display. It is almost goofy in its non-belonging.

Catherine Dunphy herself attended this mock trial. In her piece bearing witness to this public act of testimony, she took note of several participants. To me, this constituted an effort to resist the hegemony of nothingness—she was offering accounts of real people. The most

notable of which is her depiction of Billy, a man who testified at the trial. Dunphy recognizes that "[h]e had to stop speaking every few words to catch his breath" (Dunphy, 1998b). This sense of breathlessness was echoed in a quote from a church leader, Rev. Gus Pendelton, in Halifax. His words were featured in MP Libby Davies's report, *Homelessness: An un-natural disaster, a time to act,* which was published only two months later: "It's as if homeless men don't deserve to breathe the air" (Davies, 1999, p. 3). Both of these references, from a respected journalist and politician, also mirror the insights from Franco "Bifo" Berardi who, years later, would note the "shortness of breath" (Berardi, 2010, p. 36) we experience amidst the dizzying speed of late capitalism. Indeed, neoliberalism takes our breath away.[54]

Artist Scott Sorli would later provide a commentary on these years of the Mike Harris "Common Sense Revolution" through a publicly accessible piece of art sharing the same title. The *Toronto Star* printed the following description:

> The artwork traces Ontario's descending welfare payouts against a rise in the number of homeless people dying on Toronto's streets. It spikes in 1995, the year Mike Harris's Tories were elected under the banner of the 'Common Sense Revolution'—also the name of Sorli's piece. (Marlow, 2007)

Sorli's piece constituted yet another effort to historicize the dehousing crisis through a reappearing of a Nothing—an event, or rather a congruence of events, that had been quickly forgotten or erased from memory. This disappearance had already created a gap, which Sorli was seeking to fill through an aesthetic intervention. The hegemony of nothingness—and *nothing-to-see-here-ness*—is very persistent in neoliberal times, and such interventions, even when mathematically graphed over time, have had a hard time gaining traction. Why?

[54] I use these words with a nod to Mario Di Paolantonio, who I think once said these exact words to me in conversation.

Slow Violence and "bad news good"

What is it to speak of "homelessness," again? And what publisher, in their right mind, would dare publish another treatise concerned with those forced to dwell on our streets? Such questions can plague a young scholar/writer, sure. But these are questions imprinted with a logic that says the slow continuing crisis is the slowly disappearing one. Rob Nixon (2011a) captured this logic perfectly when he wrote about slow violence. For Nixon, the creeping pace of a disaster renders it void of any kind of spectacular moment in which mass media can capitalize on its noticeability. By creeping along, slowly worsening, crises like climate change and dehousing can stay just under the radar of public concern. Publishers often wait until some new "event" emerges that renews the supposed relevance of the ongoing disaster before bringing commentary or analysis into print. The slow, uneventfulness of dehousing thus gets punctuated by media frenzies as a result of some new "bad news." Society quickly becomes inured to such frenzies—the unprecedented number of deaths must therefore always be higher, the charred remains of an encampment or rooming house must always come with a photograph with more flames than the last one, the activist-rage always requires some new "angle" (a clash with police, an ensuing riot, etc.)—and so often the banality of what Don Weitz called "nameless homeless" (Briggs et al., 2020) is allowed to carry on.

It is these media frenzies that I'd like to consider here; in particular, I hope to think through their relationship to housing activism. Given the way in which neoliberal rationality quickly acclimatizes to crises—specifically the slow moving, but no-less violent ones—this reliance on new "bad news" sets up an awful relationship between the media and housing activists. At the risk of repetition, for the (de)housing crisis to become "news," that is to say, in order to get people to pay attention to the crisis, there must be some new terrible occurrence. Activists, then, are always forced to widely disseminate moments of intense suffering. In moments of deepest grief, when memorial organizers would likely prefer to be

with friends and family, they are reporting loss and galvanizing public interest. The work is exhausting. And then comes the complicated experience of having people pay attention; there is a yearning for bad news with a good outcome, or "bad news good," as I have come to call it. The redemptive logic of "bad news good" occurs in various degrees and scales. "Homelessness" has, at times, landed on the national news and as a hot button election issue because of some new protest action or violent episode. "Bad news good" is worth noting, as a concept, as these "violent episodes" do not simply fall into the laps of reporters or get taken up in the natural course of a given news cycle. No. In each case, whether it be the murder of Edmond Yu, the Freezing Deaths Inquest, or the national disaster declaration, activists worked tirelessly to make the media—and by extension, Canadian society—pay attention.

Activists were attempting to shift our relationship to time. Slow violence resists any kind of temporal demarcation that pronounces it "important." Yet the TDRC and other housing activists were constantly pointing to various events that could arrest time, for a time, anyways. Susan Crane (2021) writes, "[c]olloquially, when you say, 'Nothing is the way it was,' you are acknowledging that change happens over time, but you're also asserting that the natural temporal flow is more marked in times of crisis" (p. 71). Tent City was one event that, when it was over, many would say, "Nothing is the way it was."

At Tent City, in 1999, Brian Boyd talked about all the effort that went into educating Canadians about the systemic issues. Boyd said, "What we're trying to do [at Tent City] …is to work with the media to bring attention to the fact that there is a real serious problem here and all across Canada. It's very hard work now, it's very hard" (Crowe, 2007, p. 108). Tent City was a site where Brian Boyd and others could offer a pedagogy *for* the public (Biesta, 2012a), by explicitly teaching through interviews and other means. But Tent City was indeed a site of interruption (Biesta, 2012a). It offered an opening for a new way of living, of exchanging ideas, of sharing space. It showed the public what life might look like if dehoused

people were given a level of autonomy disallowed by the shelter system. As Boyd shared, "…people don't want to be managed, we want to be self-governed" (Crowe, 2007, p. 109). And that self-governing took on an incredible form of collective care and cooperation. As Marty Lang shared, "I still miss parts of Tent City—everyone gathering around the first fire of the day. Whoever got up first put water on for coffee. I miss the people who would come down to help us out. I miss all the kids' groups who used to come down because usually they would be directed to me for a talk and a tour and some history of the place…" (Crowe, 2007, p. 96).

But for all it allowed pedagogically, Tent City was also the site of people living at the very margins of a wealthy city, on contaminated land, constantly in a precarious relationship with the landowner (Home Depot), and dwelling, at best, in prefab houses "meant for disaster relief for the victims of flood and war" (Connolly, 2003). These terrible conditions of struggle were the right recipe for camera crews requiring a position from which to record the slow violence that is dehousing. Activists like Brian Boyd, The Colonel, and Cathy Crowe flew into action testifying to the conditions of life on the streets of Toronto and calling for a commitment to public housing. Once again, they were forced to rally around the bad news. They were doing as so many activists are forced to do: generating some good out of the bad news.

Having spent some time on the impasse of "bad news good," while offering a conceptual frame (the weird/eerie) for the work of interrupting the banality of mainstream spectacular media narratives, I will conclude with another aesthetic mode. This last provocation, to conclude this chapter, is based on my conversation with Gigi Grant, whose ideas have heavily shaped much of this dissertation.

A way out of the impasse: Ceremony as the political force

> And, you know, this disenfranchisement of loss is something that we really need to address as a society that is growing increasingly numb to…humanity. We're growing increasingly numb to the humanness of one another. And this is a signifier of that. It's a signifier that we have an essential problem. But…examining it really challenges a lot of these issues. So, there's a personal-political to [the memorial] that I think really helps us strike a balance between the obfuscation of people's loss—for whatever type of political gain—and the exploitation of that loss on the other, counterbalance of it. So, it's an important thing that the ceremony become the political force. The ceremony that we do together is the political force and political will…and when people witness it, when people who are in—like, changemakers or whatever, policymakers—when they actually witness people's hurt and loss… It does fundamentally change something inside us…I'm sure you have been forever changed by the ceremony that you have been at in Sanctuary for the loss of people who both you knew intimately and did not know at all. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

Grant's notion of ceremony as the political force is significant for a few reasons. First, they help map the oscillation between obfuscation and exploitation that is so persistent in representations of dehousing. On the one hand, loss is disappeared for the political gain of those who are content to perpetuate the exclusion-zone. Members of the exclusion-zone are non-citizens; their loss need not be treated as real—thus not *realized* in hegemonic narratives. On the other hand, is the political force of exploitation, or the mobilizing of a particular story or action around a symbolic problem. Political actors can benefit by an abstraction of loss—if even for the purposes of some long-term "achievement" of justice.

To repeat what I wrote earlier, if humans are transposed through the logic of spectacle into symbols, then a supposed struggle for justice is abstracted; it becomes a theoretical exercise. Grant spoke at length about how the memorial network has helped the event shift from being characterized by a movement of advocacy to a movement conditioned by a politics of grief and a yearning for ceremony. As Grant put it,

> …we've struck a balance between what is advocacy and what it means to do advocacy with people's hurt—and to make sure that those folks who are directly connecting with the memorial—needing a place for mourning in

> marginalization—and the marginalization of loss that comes with homelessness—that they are shaping that advocacy…. (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022)

Grant calls this the importance of "ceremony becom[ing] the political force" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022). They emphasise the nature of ceremony as having the capacity to call on the witness, to make palpable "people's hurt and loss." For Grant, those present at the ceremony are forced to recognise and reject "the obfuscation of people's loss" and enter the space as witnesses. The pedagogical work of ceremony is thus to change the position of those in attendance. Even if I attend as bystander, onlooker, or sympathetic citizen, I am beckoned to draw near to hurt and loss in such a way that I cannot ignore my newfound position as witness.

Greg Cook noted, in similar fashion, that "we want this to be a space for people to mourn, to celebrate people's lives, to remember…and there's a big piece of that…it's just really important—a human experience of life, of ritual…" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). This movement from advocacy to ceremony is itself a *weird* expression. Ceremony ostensibly does not "belong"—which is to say it is unexpected—in the clashes between activists and power brokers. Hegemonic power expects *advocacy* from activists—I would argue that this continual expression of angry uprising met with passive, hegemonic disdain has perhaps met its logical endpoint. Such relations *benefit* from both obfuscation—the modus operandi of hegemonic power—and the exploitation of loss. Ceremony, instead, turns this relationship on its head. Ceremony, as Grant would have it, invites onlookers to be *changed*. Ceremony is the unexpected, weird mode that hegemonic power could not have predicted. It is an active, insistence on personhood and on the real, continued presence of loss and grievability. It is a crowd of witnesses gathered, speaking, declaring there *is* Something to see here.

The fight for the living

The memorial is also about a fight for the living. To do this, the memorial has found ways to make this struggle visible, while countering the harmful narratives that are abundant in neoliberal times. Greg Cook points out the obvious in that the name itself, "Toronto Homeless Memorial" suggests that the narratives we hear about this wealthy, compassionate, innovative city are incomplete. The narrative of death by dehousing is "not a story that the powers that be want people to hear about Toronto. [It's] not good for business" (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Cook continues:

> …the second piece we talk about…is that we are making a political statement—this is an injustice. There are structures of oppression that cause this…we need to respond like it is a [disaster]…and actually doing that values the lives that are affected by it. But also recognizes that we can create something different where people aren't dying. We can have different kinds of policies and different kinds of systems. (Cook, personal communication, January 26, 2022)

The fight for the living is the recognition that another way is possible. It is defiant work, at times, but it is also hopeful work that attempts to involve a plurality in this political work. This being the work of upending certain systems and constructing new ones. The political work here is also characterised as relational and/or a work of care—that is, to say that this is a crisis, that this is injustice, is to pronounce these lives as valuable. It is to suggest that these are deaths worth preventing. It is also to, in keeping with the interruptive capacity of the weird, suggest that there is another way we haven't tried yet.

This chapter has extended my thinking on how the "atmosphere" of the memorial is confronted by the media spectacle of "bad news good." Up against this impasse of/for public reception, the memorial has engaged eerie and weird modes that cultivate a speculative posture through various aesthetic practices. Ultimately, commemorative activism invites and mobilizes participatory practices for inserting a "Something" into the "emptiness" of the public record. Ongoing aesthetic practices that pay attention to the past—and its bearing on

our present and future—resist the "confabulatory processes" (often taken for granted) that erase the victims of neoliberal dehousing. In the next, and final, chapter, I move to a central aspect of the conceptual vocabulary of the memorial—that of "dehousing" itself. I provide historical context to the term, while engaging in an argument concerning what the use of such a term provides housing activists, what it warns against, and how it should be interpreted as a pedagogical provocation.

Chapter 6

Dehousing and the conceptual vocabulary of war

Introduction

In embarking on this project, I found myself asking a series of questions aimed at uncovering the conceptual vocabulary of the Toronto Homeless Memorial. I was wondering, also, how such a vocabulary allows organizers to both establish the "situation" of the memorial and how its work intersects with global movements for justice. This chapter addresses the following questions: what are the operative discourses of the Toronto Homeless Memorial? What does the story told by the THM archive and past/present steering committee members tell us of their priorities, practices, and vision? How might these be contrasted against the priorities, practices, and vision that compose the prevalent logic of neoliberalism?

This final chapter orients itself around the notion of "dehousing" as significant to the Toronto Homeless Memorial and TDRC's operative discourses. While I use this word frequently throughout this dissertation, here I pause to emphasize the origins of the word "dehousing" itself, plumbing the depths of what such a word tells us about the crisis under analysis. I am also paying attention here to what this word tells us about the ethical and ontological commitments of housing activists themselves. Dehousing is about dispossession, and with it, the fulfilment of the economic aims of imperial power (in the case of WWII, the dismantling of an enemy empire's economic machine). The activists who draw on this political grammar do not intend to incite thoughtless, retaliatory violence, but to situate how governments of so-called liberal democracies have participated in the widespread destruction of housing units. The elimination of civilian access to adequate shelter is an undermining of basic human rights, a destabilization of democratic sensibilities, and, in the final analysis, an act of war. Further, housing activists, in gesturing to a context of dehousing and war,

establish themselves in non-violent opposition to all acts of war, whether domestic or international. This commitment to non-violence, I argue, is not simply a byproduct of observing people die without housing. Rather, non-violent participation is an essential characteristic of housing activism, given the way it is manifested in peaceful protest, the opposition to war *everywhere*, and the coalitions built across activist movements with a commitment to peace. While the deaths of friends and family members incited action by highlighting the urgency of the crisis, housing activists largely operated from an ethical commitment to non-violence and an ontological framework that viewed each civilian life as inherently valuable and grievable.

In drawing parallels between the "dehousing" enacted during World War Two and neoliberal dehousing, it is also important to observe their differences. The wartime logic of dehousing often rested on a false distinction between houses and the lives of civilians living inside those houses. This made it possible to say that British Royal Air Force (RAF) policy was merely encouraging the destruction of bricks and mortar—thereby affecting enemy morale. What neoliberal dehousing helps clarify is that the removal of a civilian from their dwelling is, too often, a death sentence.[55] Second, while wartime dehousing prioritized certain lives over others—the life of a British soldier over a German civilian, say—neoliberal dehousing hierarchizes a model of a "liveable" (for who?), "safe" (for who?), technocratic city over the lives of non-conforming civilians. As I will return to develop later in the chapter, the neoliberal city relies on the displacement and disappearance of the poor—the rising death tolls of dehoused citizens illustrate that prioritizing safe(r) spaces and universal access to housing would pose too great a risk for the restructured neoliberal city. To properly critique "dehousing," I engage with historical commentary regarding "area bombing" policy in World War Two and how a similar logic of abandonment is brought to bear in the

[55] Just as thousands lay dead in the rubble of bombed out houses in World War Two.

neoliberal "war on the poor." In both cases, dehousing rests on the premise that the death of (certain) people and the death of public things are inconsequential in comparison to the aims of (supposed) global security and the notion of economic wellbeing for "all." The conceptual frame of "dehousing" reveals that both historical moments feature a troubled relationship to the political, the value of civilian life, and the loss of public things.

Dehousing as an act of war: People, homes and public things

I begin by examining the specific nomenclature adopted by David Hulchanski and the TDRC as they sought to generate public understanding of so-called "homelessness." By referring to the newly emergent crisis as "dehousing" (D. Hulchanski, 2007, 2010; J. D. Hulchanski, 2000; J. D. Hulchanski et al., 2009), these activists were gesturing back to a dark chapter in wartime history. Here, I attempt to make sense of how this earlier dehousing policy emerged and what we can learn from how it was adopted, justified, and put into practice. I draw on several historical accounts, most notably, Alex Bellamy's book, *Massacres and morality: Mass atrocities in an age of civilian immunity*.

In the period between the First and Second World War, Britain and the allies developed the military strategy that came to be known as "area bombing" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 135) for the purpose of "dehousing" (p. 132) enemy civilians. This military strategy marked a shift from the aerial bombardment of specific military targets to the widespread bombing of industrial cities. The prevailing logic held that, through the destruction of people's homes, the enemy's industrial production could be disrupted, and their morale weakened (Bellamy, 2012). As early as 1918, Major-General Sykes "defended the strategic bombardment of cities to destroy enemy morale" (p. 135). In 1922 the logic of "terror bombing" was published in a "Staff College Manual" (p. 135) and in 1935 it was found in the *Royal Air Force's (RAF) War Manual*. Not unlike the dehousing of the neoliberal era, the adoption of wartime

dehousing was, however, dependent on the political consensus of the day. Under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Britain's Bomber Command was warned against bombing any civilian targets (Bellamy, 2012). This was in keeping with a League of Nations resolution of 1938 that insisted on the exclusive bombing of military targets (Bellamy, 2012). Unsurprisingly, only a few days after war was declared with Germany, justifications began to be made for terror bombing. Bomber Command's Director of Planning petitioned against Chamberlain's restrictions, writing that the offensive against Germany must be "unhampered by the inevitable fact that there is bound to be incidental loss, and possibly heavy loss of civilian life" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 135). Indeed, under Winston Churchill, the RAF gradually began the practice of bombing heavily populated civilian areas.

There are several notable aspects in the way in which dehousing was rationalized by British military leaders during the Second World War. Also notable was the way that the RAF and the United States Army Air Corps (USAAF) publicly denied any involvement in this ethically compromising strategy, recognizing that such an approach may threaten public support for the war effort (Bellamy, 2012). Hugh Trenchard, the first head of the RAF, recognized the moral dilemma of bombing innocent civilians, and thus developed what became "the fallacy that it is possible to bomb a house without intending [to] kill the inhabitants" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 136). This logic was adopted by several prominent wartime strategists as it allowed them a "convenient fiction" (p. 158) to offer a public largely opposed to the mass killing of civilians.[56]

By 1942, Britain had become bolder in their approach to dehousing. On the 14th of February, Bomber Command was issued a directive indicating "that bombing be 'focused on the morale of enemy civil population and in particular of the industrial workers'" (Bellamy,

[56] Worthy of note is the fact that, based on opinion polls conducted at the time, most British subjects were opposed to retaliatory bombing of German civilians, even after the Blitz, while a majority of Americans supported the use of the atomic bombs against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, neither of which were notable military targets (Bellamy, 2012).

2012, p. 139), which was further clarified by Chief of Air Staff, Sir Charles Portal, to mean city centres and "not…dockyards or aircraft factories" (p. 139). To affirm this policy change, Arthur Harris, the most publicly outspoken defender of area bombing, was appointed Chief of Bomber Command on February 24, just over a week later (Bellamy, 2012). On March 30, Lord Cherwell produced a report "known as the 'dehousing paper'… which proposed and supported the idea of Bomber Command carrying out a strategy of area bombing rather than continuing with what he referred to as the futile attempts at precision bombing" (Wynn, 2021, p. 19). The stated goal, according to the dehousing paper, was to create mass homelessness in Germany (Marr, 2009, 2011), resulting in a refugee crisis of unknown proportions (Hastings, 2013). Britain's new Chief of Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, was painfully honest about such operations:

> Harris made his colleagues and politicians uncomfortable because he acknowledged—indeed wished it to be known—that he attacked cities to kill Germans, and that his colleagues deceived themselves about what they were doing by using such mealy-mouthed terms as 'de-housing.' (Biddle, 1999, p. 663)

What this early use of a term like dehousing demonstrates is the capacity for cognitive dissonance between the human need for (and right to) adequate shelter and one's capacity for basic survival. In a way, depriving people of housing has always been somehow naturalized as merely reverting to a kind of primitive state of being—rather than creating life threatening conditions (forget the fact that, in WW2, civilians' houses were being actively bombed out from under them). A life without adequate housing is untenable. This is why it is designated as a fundamental human right by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2024). In addition, what theorists like Kathleen Arnold (2004) have pointed out is the way in which the loss of housing results in a loss of citizenship. Hannah Arendt (1966), herself a refugee of the Second World War, noted the plight of the refugee as one that strips a person of their humanity. To put it another way, life without housing—this "refugee

status"—alters the relationship one has to the very concept of human rights. In an essay originally published in 1944, *The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition*, Arendt (2007) offers a cogent critique of human rights, as influenced by Franz Kafka's *The Castle*. For Arendt, via Kafka, human rights are not exceptional, yet they have been (wrongly) given the status of being "privileges bestowed" (p. 294) rather than axiomatic laws of humanity. For the refugee to have to assert their right to human rights, or their "normal" (p. 295) humanness, is, for Arendt, a situation that precludes the opportunity for a "commonly conditioned and commonly controlled humanity" (p. 297). This line of thinking is, famously, later extrapolated on in Chapter 9 of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966).

Thus, the creation of a refugee crisis through dehousing in Germany was an attempt to displace German humanity. It was an effort to create, in Germany, yet another category of *exception* (for the Jews had already been designated an exception with regards to their basic humanity). Arendt was highly critical of the response to the question of Jewish humanity, not only in Germany, but across Europe and the West. In an essay originally written in 1943 entitled *We Refugees*, Arendt (2007) noted that the plight of the Jewish diaspora involved a loss of home, occupation, and language; ultimately, she asserts, there was "the rupture of our private lives" (p. 265). Elsewhere I have written about the political loss experienced by dehousing as leaving the citizen without a private space of retreat from public life—rendering their experience of publicness one without reprieve, lacking a site to maintain one's interiority (martin, 2022a). In this essay, Arendt (2007) goes on to suggest that this experience of "exile" (p. 265) was one rooted in an insistence on *forgetting*. This aligns with my argument in Chapter 5, that memory is vital to housing activism; it is ultimately an intersubjective process of remembering what has been lost, by and with those living in "exile." Indeed, as Arendt concludes the essay:

> Those few refugees who insist upon telling the truth, even to the point of "indecency," get in exchange for their unpopularity one priceless advantage:

> history is no longer a closed book to them and politics is no longer the privilege of gentiles. (p. 274)

Here we return to one of Arendt's central ideas: that access to the political is essential to affirming one's humanity—one's capacity as an actor and a speaker in public. By "telling the truth" in this way, a person enters history and enacts the human condition of natality, being "born" into the public realm. In this next section, I will delve into the particulars of political dissent in the context of dehousing during World War Two, while making parallels with the contemporary experience of dehousing. What emerges is an apparent tension between bolstering public morale[57] and upholding the space for political contestation open to questions of moral responsibility. Those who sought to access this "privileged" space of politics were often silenced, willing to "risk" only private correspondences, or had their claims treated as unreliable.

What wartime dehousing also espoused was a logic of *inevitability*. In private military communications, and certainly in public press releases, the mass killing of civilians was repeatedly justified as an inevitable fact of war. As British and American policy shifted further and further toward the dehousing approach, this logic of inevitability became more entrenched. Inevitable, collateral damage is understood at an entirely new level when one considers the diary entries of navigator Joel Punches. On October 18, 1943, Punches wrote, "Duren, Germany. A town of 50,000 people. Not much military importance. Just wanted to wipe out the town. Morale raid, I guess…" (Bashow, 2011, 43). Also jarring is an entry from November 19, 1943: "Flew for an hour over Germany and Pathfinder ship couldn't find the

[57] I have found this to be a significant semantic miscue regarding Arendt's notion of "togetherness." The appeal to a collective consensus for the sake of "morale" has nothing to do with togetherness. For Arendt, togetherness is reliant on the distinct quality of each individual who can assert their own uniqueness, while attending to the differences in thinking from those around them. Togetherness thrives on difference, not conformity, sustained through the making of promises and acts of forgiveness.

target, so we dumped our bombs on a small town and came home. The town dropped on turned out to be a town in Holland. Not so good!" (Bashow, 2011, p. 43).

Indeed, the notion of "pickle-barrel accuracy" (Biddle, 1999, p. 663) is a myth that has been wholly disproven, given the rudimentary technology of the era. And, ironically, as technology improved drastically as of 1945 (Bashow, 2011; Bellamy, 2012), the war on civilians was greatly intensified, as evidenced by the bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki (Bellamy, 2012). After thousands of residents and unknown numbers of previously dehoused refugees were killed in the incendiary attacks on Dresden, Winston Churchill himself called for a review of the RAF's approach after a "sudden attack of conscience" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 144). Critics have noted that Churchill's response to Dresden was an attempt to distance himself from a morally questionable act that he was himself deeply implicated in (Bashow, 2011). While several prominent wartime strategists supported and encouraged the use of area bombing, its "effects on civilian populations, especially at the end of the war, began to weigh heavily on the Anglo-American conscience and have done so ever since" (Biddle, 1999, p. 664).

A question that emerges, then, is one of culpability. Who is responsible for dehousing, then and now? To address this, we must also consider the extent to which citizens had access to the realm of the political, wherein such responsibility can be negotiated. What were/are the conditions of publicness that were/are required in order that such policies be reviewed, democratically debated, and, perhaps, overturned? What role do citizens play in contesting dehousing—and how might political leaders be held accountable in perpetuating such violent policies? In the context of 1940s Britain, Alex Bellamy (2012) reveals,

> On the one hand, there certainly were pockets of dissent which provided clues as to the real nature of Bomber Command's strategy for those who wanted to listen. On the other hand though, the pockets were small and limited to sections of the elite and their arguments not widely disseminated in the popular press. (p. 143)

As I insisted upon in Chapter 4, the capacity for *listening* is deeply pedagogical. How, then, to cultivate this desire for listening? In addition, how and why might such a capacity for listening be restricted to "sections of the elite," as Bellamy suggests? In bearing witness to state violence, public pedagogy must activate a politics of visibility that *widens* the public realm. Herein is the precondition of plurality—a broad range of acting and speaking (and listening) citizens who might render legible the emergent dissent. I will return to the problem of the curtailing of dissent at the end of this chapter.

In a letter to the Secretary for Air, Archibald Sinclair, in November 1943, the Marquis of Salisbury wrote, in response to the many public comments from Arthur Harris, that "…there is a great deal of evidence that makes some of us afraid that we are losing moral superiority to the Germans.…Of course the Germans began it, but we do not take the devil as our example" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 141). Similarly, several prominent Church leaders and academics also privately questioned the morality of the bombing and purposeful dehousing campaign (Bellamy, 2012). But where was the public outrage? One example is found with nurse, pacifist and writer, Vera Brittain, who famously publicized much of this repressed information based on accounts from victims of aerial bombardment (Brittain, 1944; Luckhurst, 2017). Brittain, with other "anti-war clergymen and activists" referred to area bombing as a "carnival of death" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 148; Brittain, 1944). Interestingly, while her information came from eye witness accounts (Luckhurst, 2017), such testimonies were (and are still) shrugged off as hyperbolic and inaccurate (Bashow, 2011). Here again we see parallels with (de)housing activists in neoliberal times—the struggles to animate publicness, the capacity to share the testimony of/with eyewitnesses and victims, and the capacity of the state and other pundits to reject such testimony. I also find it interesting that both Vera Brittain and Cathy Crowe's activism seemingly stemmed from their professional commitment as nurses amidst these crises. By engaging in work that involved literally and figuratively

pulling bodies from the rubble of dehousing, both women took aim at generating a space of/for the political.[58]

To stem any such dissent from taking hold in the public realm, the British government, military officials, and mainstream presses continued to promote the idea that the RAF was purely bombing military industrial targets, and any other impacts were "unavoidable collateral damage" (Bellamy, 2012, p. 140). Arthur Harris's appointment openly contradicted this public narrative. Harris was vocal about his support for terror bombing. As Alex Bellamy (2012) writes, "Harris believed that government denials were bad for the morale of his crews. As he saw it, they were being ordered to risk their lives to implement the government's strategy whilst the government itself was not prepared to publicly defend it" (p. 142). In a memorandum to the Air Ministry in 1943, he wrote:

> It should be emphasised that the destruction of houses, public utilities, transport and lives; the creation of a refugee problem on an unprecedented scale; and the breakdown of morale both at home and at the battle fronts by fear of extended and intensified bombing, are accepted and intended aims of bombing policy. *They are not by-products of attempts to hit factories.* (Bellamy, 2012, p. 142)

In a further communication, he spelled out that "the German economic system which I am instructed by my directive to destroy, includes workers, houses and public utilities" (pp. 142-143). Indeed, in a private response to Sir Charles Portal after the Dresden bombing, Harris noted, "I do not personally regard the whole of the remaining cities of Germany as worth the bones of one British grenadier" (Bashow, 2011, p. 57).

As Arthur Harris's correspondence indicates, the dehousing of World War Two and neoliberal dehousing differ in one significant way. Contained within the directive of military dehousing was the stated aim of *fracturing* a national economy through the destruction of people, homes, and public things. Under neoliberalism, the aim has shifted. For neoliberal

[58] A speech from Crowe in 2001 was even titled, "Homelessness is a political issue: Nursing as a political act" (Crowe, 2001b).

governments, the goal is a *restructured* economic system, which carries with it the necessary collateral damage of people, homes, and public things. While the risks of dehousing are the same, the proposed rewards of neoliberal dehousing includes aspects like increased material production, the commodification of urban space, and corporate revenues. What I draw attention to here is the way in which people, homes, and public things can continue to operate as pawns in a broader geopolitical chess game that, whether in the 1940s or the 1990s, can both be conceived of as acts of war. Perhaps the neoliberal order is a reversal of Arthur Harris's vicious logic: that the bones of one citizen (or one thousand) are not worth the restructuring of the neoliberal city.

Housing activism and the conceptual grammar of non-violence

War is one of the central ways in which housing activists have conceptualized the contemporary (de)housing crisis. The phrase, "the war on the poor" has been popularized across several activist contexts, perhaps most notably in Toronto by the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) (Clarke, 2020; Withers, 2021), among others (Chan & Mirchandani, 2007). Movements like "Homes (and food, or clothes, etc.) not Bombs" explicitly laid bare the political choices nations make to not only fund warfare abroad, but to do so at the expense of funding the social safety net and other emergencies (at home and overseas) (Crowe, 2003a, 2003b; Homes Not Bombs, 2004). As street nurse Kathy Hardill wrote, "[w]e must not allow war in Afghanistan to obscure the war being waged here against poor people" (Hardill, 2001).

While "wars abroad" can be conceived as "active wars," "the war on the poor" is often more difficult to accept as it is a quiet, passive "war." In the next section, I offer scenes from the early organizing work of the TDRC, which provide further historical context in a discussion of these two "wars." First, TDRC documentation helps to juxtapose the "active" emergency measures enacted during military conflict with the passivity of government

(non)responses to growing social malaise. While wars abroad took priority, they were also used to *justify* this ongoing war (against the poor) at home. It is important to note that both "active" and "passive" wars are premised on a logic of abandonment and inevitability. Secondly, I want to situate the way in which a commitment to non-violence has characterized housing activist movements more broadly. This goes beyond the logic of the funding "shell game." Activists were not merely trying to change government spending habits by re-allocating funds to these domestic concerns. Rather, I argue that housing activism has at its most radical[59] level, a conceptual grammar of pacifism that orients it at every turn. The pedagogical work of housing activists is thus inherently a work of peaceful, creative protest; activists' repeated condemnations of war are not a symptom of navigating funding priorities, but part of a broader ontological commitment to the rights of all beings. Prioritizing *home* is indeed part of the larger human project seeking restoration, interdependence, and mutually just arrangements for all. Housing activism is a part of a movement that would see all—oppressed and oppressor—achieve *belonging*.[60]

On October 8, 1998, the TDRC's inception occurred when they coordinated a large event at All Saints Church in order to declare homelessness a national disaster (Crowe, 1998; Monsebraaten, 1998; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1998a). The public response was massive. On October 28, a motion to declare homelessness an emergency-level disaster in Toronto had passed nearly unanimously in City Council (Crowe, 2007; R. James, 1998; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1998b). By November 8, the 'Big City Mayors' Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Canadian Housing and Renewal

[59] And here I consider the etymology of "radical" as getting to "the root" of a thing.
[60] In this way, one might wonder if there will always be housing activists even if we lived in a society without unhoused people. By this I mean a) that there will always be individuals committed to the work of coordinating generative spaces of belonging—this capacity for non-violent, anti-oppressive togetherness, and b) that there is a latent "housing activist" within anyone who anticipates the ethical and ontological concerns that arise at any instance of human statelessness or displacement. Such an ethical commitment must always be "at the ready" if (and indeed, when) such violent movements of dehousing occur, at home or abroad.

Association (CHRA), among hundreds of organizations across Canada, had endorsed the TDRC's declaration of a national disaster (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1999b). As the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights wrote in their December 4, 1998 report:

> The Committee is gravely concerned that such a wealthy country as Canada has allowed the problem of homelessness and inadequate housing to grow to such proportions that the mayors of Canada's ten largest cities have now declared homelessness a national disaster… (U.N. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1998)

The following year, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appointed Claudette Bradshaw in a new role as "Minister Responsible for Homelessness"[61] (Crowe, 2007). To her credit, Bradshaw toured the nation to better understand the crisis. She announced $750 million in short-term services for unhoused people, which would be managed under a new program, called the "Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative"—or, SCPI, which was often called "Skippy" (Crowe, 2007, p. 25). Activists continued to pour on the pressure, as short-term services precluded the use of funds for any transitional housing. Finally, the Liberals and their newly minted "Skippy" team surrendered to the idea of "the first federally funded housing in almost a decade" (Crowe, 2007, p. 26). Despite this achievement, activists knew they had not solved the issue. The Liberals subsequent infrastructure program earmarked little to no money for housing. While Bradshaw called her program a necessary "first step" (and it was!), no further funding commitments were made and, ultimately, emergency measures, which are always a short-term, band-aid solution, were never bolstered by long-term commitments to housing. And while "Skippy" funding was renewed in 2003, by 2006 it was renewed for less time, with less money, and spread out over more territory—with more needs (Crowe, 2007). As Cathy Crowe (2007) wrote, "[t]he homelessness strategy was designed to

[61] I can't help but see, embedded in the job title itself, a way for Chrétien's Liberals to offload responsibility onto one, unfortunate Member of Parliament. Bradshaw was doomed from the beginning. ("Who's responsible for this disaster?")

make homeless people more comfortable, but it wouldn't make them any less homeless" (p. 26).

This context is important as it constitutes the lead-up to an intensifying demand for shelter spaces in Toronto (and across Canada) as well as, famously, the events of September 11, 2001. By September of 2001, unfair wages, precarious work, and insufficient social assistance had continued to dehouse people to the point that, despite "Skippy" funding, Toronto Hostel Services had declared a 200+ shortage of beds. And while Toronto's Advisory Committee on Homeless and Socially Isolated Persons had voted to open a 200 bed emergency shelter, nothing had come of it (Hardill, 2001). Then, in the wake of the September 11th attacks, the city enacted emergency measures, which resulted in the "almost immediate creation of a 450-bed shelter for stranded airline passengers," one that, it turns out, was not needed in Toronto. As Kathy Hardill (2001) wrote, "hundreds of homeless Torontonians…would gratefully accept such shelter if it were offered to them. So far, no such offer has been made." The post-9/11 world clarified for housing activists that there was an unwritten hierarchization behind the use of the word "emergency." Not all emergencies were equal. To be fair, the events of 9/11 were—and still are, for many—horrific. They required of us our utmost participation in responding to the traumas that such violence precipitates. But Hardill's point was that it matters that our response to emergencies fit the demands. I don't know what was required—in Toronto—for those affected by 9/11 at that time, but it (apparently) wasn't shelter beds.

It also is worth noting the temporalities of slow disasters—what Rob Nixon (2011a, 2011b) has called "slow violence." The dehousing crisis is a disaster that has been (relatively) slow to unfold. There are no eruptive moments of crisis, rather, it is a form of gradual, violent unveiling that has—most of the time—failed to capture the imagination of the public (Nixon, 2011a, 2011b). In contrast, military attacks, like that of 9/11, occur with stunning,

instantaneous spectacle. They have an immediacy that quickly accumulates into public response, mania, and the notion of a powerful, singular event that can often be arrested in the form of a photograph or a brief video clip (Nixon, 2011b). In the wake of 9/11, it arguably became even harder for housing activists to gain an audience for the slow violence of dehousing that was continuing to occur in this newfound post-9/11 media (and military) frenzy. While the emergency declaration of 1998 had captured the public imagination, its effects had (mainly, though not entirely) resulted in patchwork, short-term responses and, before they could be sedimented into long-term affordable housing, a new spectacle had distracted public attention. It was a spectacle that would draw our nation into years of funding war and not housing.[62]

The Moss Park Armoury

The Moss Park Armoury (and the Fort York Armoury) became a contested site in the early years of the new millennium. For at least 2 years, Homes Not Bombs, a coalition of various housing activists, in coordination with the TDRC, hosted a weekly vigil outside the Moss Park Armoury. Vigil organizers provided food ("not bombs") and clothing ("not bombs") for attendees in their ongoing petition for a society that houses people. In their words, the practice of open, public contestation outside the Moss Park Armoury was "a perfect example of our basic philosophy at Homes not Bombs: Canada Should Build Homes, not Blow Them Up!" (Homes Not Bombs, 2004) They would engage in dialogue with passers-by about their ideas and even provide draft architectural plans for how "to transform

[62] Or, as some would say, two wars: a war abroad and a war on the poor continued at home: "…over 80 percent [of Canadians]…want the mission in Afghanistan to end…The continuance of the investment of $100 million per month in the war demonstrates the flagrant disrespect for our democratic will to stop the deaths both abroad and at home" (Fong, 2008).

the little-used war training facility at Moss Park Armoury into affordable, non-profit housing" (Homes Not Bombs, 2004).

In 2003, the TDRC hosted a rally that marched its way to the doors of the Moss Park Armoury. Pallbearers carried the burnt-out mattress of Bobby McLaughlin, who had died when his temporary shelter had caught fire. Cathy Crowe gave a speech at the outset, saying:

> Last August, John MacCallum, the War Minister wrote TDRC in August and said, "the provision of Canadian Forces armouries for use as homeless shelters interferes with military training and has an adverse effect on operational readiness." …In other words, people must continue to die on our streets so that Canadian solders can be trained to kill people abroad. A day after he wrote this a homeless man, who had been beaten in Allan Gardens died in hospital. Since then 31 men and women have died homeless…. (Crowe, 2003b)

Figure 14. Bobby McLaughlin's mattress.

The rally was marked, in several ways, as a kind of funeral procession. Along with McLaughlin's mattress and "pallbearers," Crowe also noted a collective and material expression of grief conducted by participants:

> Right now…homeless people are rallying nearby in a drop-in centre at All Saints Church. They will be joining us and they will be carrying 300 placards with the

> names of homeless men and women who have died on our streets. The war on the poor has had many casualties…. (Crowe, 2003b)

A month earlier, Crowe had given a speech at Metro Hall. In it, she decried the government's pronouncements to become further entrenched in the war in Afghanistan. She drew attention to the financial priorities of the federal government:

> The federal government can barely utter the word housing. The provincial government remains silent and cruel, and our City government leaves people in squalid, crowded shelters and on the streets. Human rights abuses abound. And…they contemplate war! And the investment in arms, bombs and soldiers to kill and make many others homeless…. (Crowe, 2003a)

In the archived copy of Crowe's speech, one section was written in all caps: "WE ARE BUILDERS—NOT DESTROYERS. WE ARE BUILDERS AND CAREGIVERS" (Crowe, 2003a). The logic of non-violence is clearly bound up in a desire for generative alternatives. As I've drawn attention to, this was not merely a question of funding priorities, nor was it merely a rejection of violence: this was a movement that reiterated again and again that there was an alternative to violent domination. And this alternative was *also* inherently one that would construct new ways of being human together. It was, according to its etymological origins, *generous*.[63] Cultivating space for the new is predicated on cultivating the conditions for *belonging*, for citizenship, and for expressions of democratic plurality.

In January 2004, the Fort York Armoury was opened as an emergency shelter (Crowe, 2004). The rallies, conversations, and public speaking had paid off. In her thank you note to fellow organizers and allies, Cathy Crowe acknowledged the support of Mayor David Miller: "I must say that we had an absolutely exceptional working relationship with the Mayor's office. Mayor Miller called me himself to thank us for our work" (Crowe, 2004).[64] As

[63] I am motivated by Ann Stoler's (2018) etymological understanding of generosity, which gives preferential treatment to the sense of "generative practices" that "beget" new ways of including others in space.
[64] Crowe also references the "energy, pizzazz and commitment" (Crowe, 2004) of Bob Rose in these organizing efforts.

outlined in Chapter 3, this was in stark contrast to the Mel Lastman years, and the exception to the rule in the years of waning support from public officials and political leaders. It has been widely noted that David Miller constituted Toronto's last progressive mayor—and the only one since amalgamation.[65]

Paul Croutch

The armouries would continue to be a site of conflict and contestation for housing activists. They continued to represent the political prioritizing of investments in military training and weapons manufacturing over social assistance and public housing. To put it another way, to echo my central argument here in this chapter, the obsessive militarism and eagerness to be implicated in prolonged conflicts in the Middle East were themselves *acts of domestic dehousing*. Politicians who repeatedly invoked balancing federal budgets as the justification for a lack of investment in public housing did so without calling attention to government spending as a matter of *priorities*. To save money on the social safety net was only essential given the billions being spent on war overseas (Fong, 2008; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 2008a). The TDRC helped launch the Housing Not War movement, which became a nationally recognized campaign (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 2008b).

In addition to the armouries as symbolic of this broader problem—the federal funding of war by defunding the social safety net—the Moss Park Armoury also became a site of direct, brutal violence in 2005. In late August, the remnants of Hurricane Katrina had made their way to Lake Ontario, with massive rainfall hitting the city (Lownsbrough, 2008). Paul Croutch, a 59-year-old psychiatric survivor, lay on his usual bench in Moss Park, trying to get

[65] At the time of writing, Olivia Chow has become Toronto's newly elected mayor—the second progressive mayor in nearly 3 decades. Though it is too early to tell what her legacy will be, her years of support for the TDRC and the Toronto Homeless Memorial alongside her late husband, Jack Layton, offer a glimmer of hope that her office will be one that again pays attention to the acting of speaking of housing activists in the city. Though, as noted in Chapter 3, the structure of City Hall and the deep-rooted culture of NIMBYism are very resistant to change.

some rest amidst the storm. Though he was known to the Gateway Shelter (Gerson, 2005), Croutch tried to avoid the conflicts that could occur in shelters by "sleeping rough" most nights of the year (Howard, 2008; Martinuk, 2005). In the early morning hours of August 31, 2005, three members of the Queen's Own Rifles regiment, which is housed at the Moss Park Armoury, were returning from a night of heavy drinking. Jeffery Hall, Mountaz Ibrahim, and Brian Deganis had an altercation with Croutch, where they called him several derogatory names (DiManno, 2008; Lownsbrough, 2008). After Croutch yelled back at the men, they attacked him, with Hall and Deganis beating him severely (Lownsbrough, 2008). In an article from *Toronto Life* during the trial for the three reservists, the author relates how "when Valerie Valen tried to intervene, her legs were kicked out from under her. "She blurted out that she was a woman. 'It doesn't matter,' [Corporal Jeffrey] Hall told [Rifleman Brian] Deganis, 'it's a dyke, anyway'" (Lownsbrough, 2008, p. 48). After being brutally assaulted (DiManno, 2008), Valen tried in vain to get bystanders to call 9-1-1. Eventually a cab driver phoned in the incident. Croutch was brought to St. Michael's Hospital where he died of his wounds (Gerson, 2005).

On September 8, the TDRC organized a memorial event in the park for Paul Croutch. They invited attendees to lay flowers on the bench that Paul would sleep on—and where he was beaten to death (Martinuk, 2005). Several organizers spoke about the ongoing struggle to turn the Moss Park Armoury into housing, and the newly emergent struggle to have Croutch's murder prosecuted as a hate crime against unhoused people (Martinuk, 2005). In the film footage from the protest-memorial, Beric German points to the armoury in the background, saying,

> …we mighta lost 4 guys here…one man was brutally murdered…and another 3 men were taking training in violence…and those 3 men are now charged with murder…and maybe their lives are over now too because we decide that we're going to train men here in violence…[Croutch's] body was unrecognizable…. (Martinuk, 2005)

Don Heap, a long-time pacifist-activist,[66] ex-MP, and TDRC ally spoke about his own experience as a parachutist in World War Two and his lifelong involvement in class struggle and peaceful protest: "we have to get together to make sure that housing is available…and we can have peace…" (Martinuk, 2005).

The murder of Paul Croutch revealed that the armouries were more than badly allocated federal buildings. They were, in the words of Beric German, sites where men "take training in violence." And the ramifications of this training presented a double-edged sword for dehoused people. Not only were the federal lands not available for safety and refuge, but they harboured the very hatred of dehoused people that perpetuated their "spectacular precarity" (Rose, personal communication, March 16, 2022). The Croutch trial revealed that such instances were, in fact, commonplace. Physical attacks on dehoused people were discussed by former reservists as forms of unofficial initiation rites for new recruits (Lownsbrough, 2008). Once again, the conceptual grammar of the protest actions that emerged foregrounded this obvious connection between militarism, violence, and dehousing. Juxtaposed with this, housing activists were quick to humanize Paul Croutch through acts of tender and meaningful memorialization, which rallied people around their anger and their grief. As Michael Shapcott shared at the memorial on September 8, "We're here today because we're angry and because we're demanding justice… angry…not like a mob…Paul Croutch's murder will be something we will remember with a great deal of pain and a great deal of anger…at the memorial" (Martinuk, 2005).[67]

[66] On January 9, 1996, Dan/Don Heap and a handful of other activists gathered on the steps of the Ontario Legislature and poured a dark, red liquid down the steps. The act was symbolic. It was in direct response to the Harris cutbacks. As Heap said in an interview afterwards, they were "dramatizing what this government is doing to Ontario people—killing people" ('Ex-MP Heap among Seven Held at Protest', 1996).

[67] "There has to be some kind of alarm that's going off, saying, our grief is getting worse and worse and worse… People, more people, are dying and dehoused" (Slobodian, personal communication, February 2, 2022).

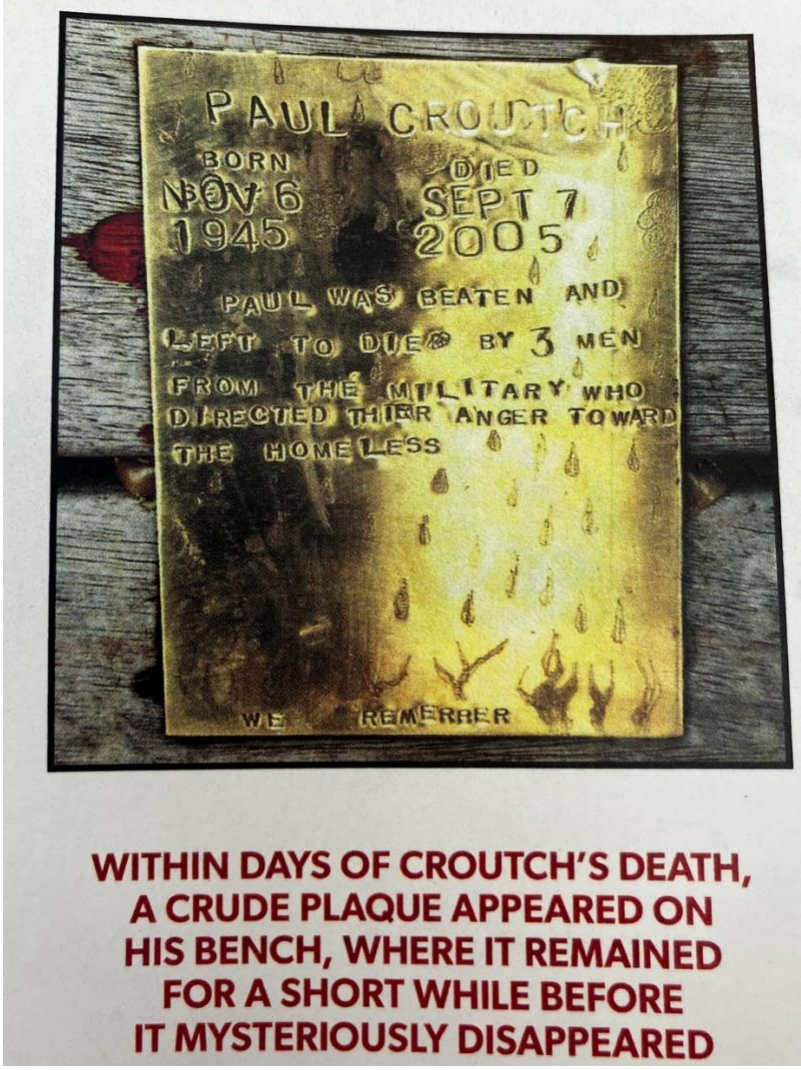


Figure 15. Photograph of Paul Croutch Memorial Plaque.

The TDRC, though it is unclear who specifically was behind this, made a memorial plaque, which they affixed to Paul Croutch's bench (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 2005a, 2005b). It was removed shortly afterwards, presumably by the city—but again these details are unclear—hinting at Hannah Arendt's notion of how power is manifested in the appearing together and "disperses" shortly afterwards (Arendt, 1958). *Toronto Life* recorded this in the following way:

> Within days of Croutch's death, a crude commemorative brass plaque appeared on a Moss Park bench, where it remained for a short while before it mysteriously disappeared. The plaque was etched with what appeared to be tears—or perhaps raindrops, meant to evoke the heavy storm on the night of the murder. It looked to have been produced in haste, which may explain why it gives an incorrect date for Croutch's death. The plaque read: "Paul was beaten and left to die by 3 men from

> the military who directed their anger toward the homeless." (Lownsbrough, 2008, p. 52)

The plaque also, notably, featured the words "we remember" at the bottom. The staff at the Gateway Shelter later organized Croutch's funeral (Martinuk, 2005).

Don Heap

On April 2, 1999, Good Friday, Don Heap[68] and two fellow activists attempted to climb a wrought iron fence near Jarvis and Bloor St, in downtown Toronto. Heap was 74 years old and had a crowbar slung across his back (Valpy, 2000). The fence surrounded a war memorial and was on the property of St. Paul's Anglican Church. Heap, a fellow Anglican priest himself who worked at the Church of the Holy Trinity, was determined to dismantle the war memorial at St. Paul's, which featured a sword embedded in the Christian cross. The group had petitioned the church for months prior to this confrontation (Heap, 1999, n.pag) on the basis that, within the Christian worldview, the cross of Jesus was the antithesis of the sword. They "want[ed] the church to remove the sword from the memorial [a cross] and replace it with a plowshare" (Sarick, n.d.).[69] Heap himself was no stranger to war, having enlisted to fight against Nazi Germany, earning his wings as a parachutist (Martinuk, 2005). A lifelong pacifist, he had put his convictions aside when confronted with the horrors of Nazi Germany. The war ended before Heap saw combat, and he spent the rest of his life committed to non-violence and social justice. He marched with Martin Luther King in Montgomery, Alabama (Plokhii, 2014; The Church of the Holy Trinity, 2014), spent 50 years attending "ban-the-bomb" marches (Sarick, n.d.), protested the Harris government cuts ('Ex-MP Heap

[68] Daniel James Macdonnell Heap was affectionately known as "Don" for much of his life (Plokhii, 2014).
[69] In Heap's word, "…Let us turn our own swords into ploughshares…All who love the Church can make this the public sign of our renunciation of war and our embrace of the gospel of reconciliation…" (Heap, 2000). This being a reference to the prophet Isaiah: "He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (The English Standard Version Bible, Isaiah 2:4, 2016).

among Seven Held at Protest', 1996), and helped found the TDRC (Plokhii, 2014; The Church of the Holy Trinity, 2014).

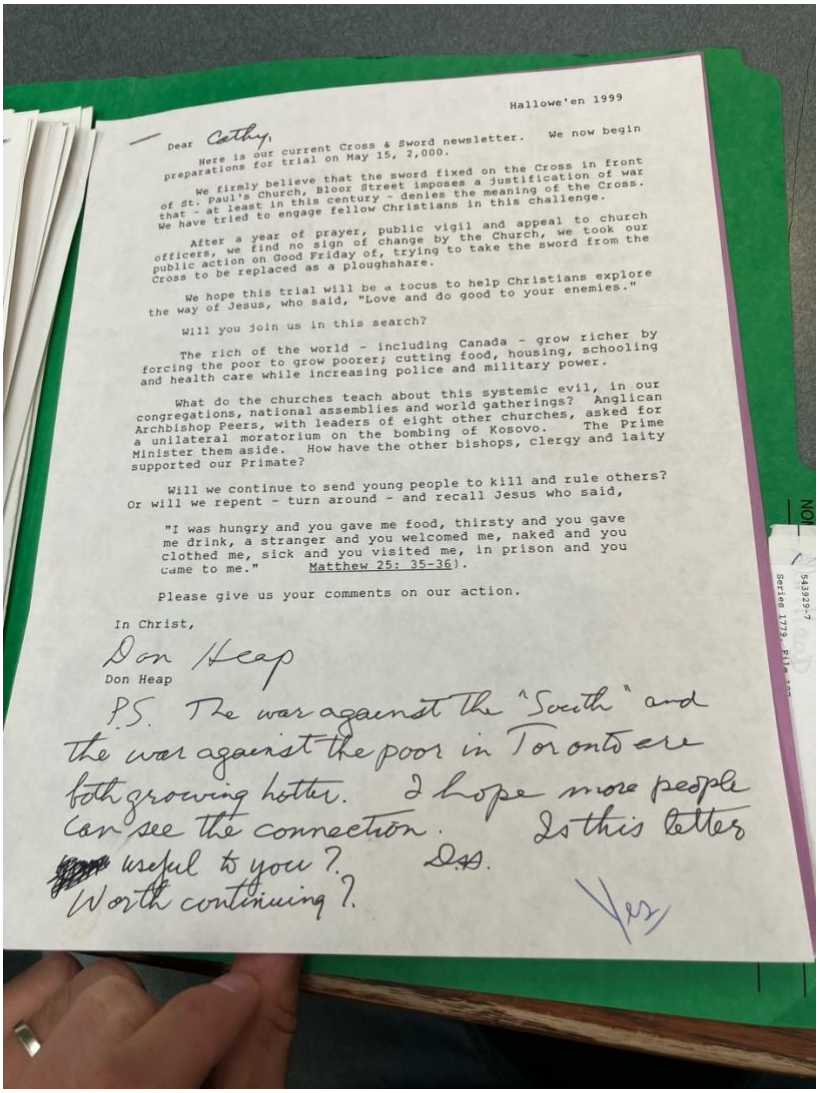
As Heap wrote to Cathy Crowe in the Fall of 1999, "[a]fter a year of prayer, public vigil and appeal to church officers, we find no sign of change by the Church, we took our public action on Good Friday of, [sic] trying to take the sword from the Cross to be replaced as a ploughshare" (Heap, 1999, n.pag). The three men were halted in their efforts by "a contingent of waiting police" (Valpy, 2000), called by church leaders, who warned them they would be arrested the moment they started climbing. At 74 years old, Don Heap didn't hesitate. This would be at least the fourth time he would be arrested for such efforts (Plokhii, 2014). The trial would become part of Heap's broader pedagogical work, which was to teach the Church—and the global North—the way of non-violence (Heap, 1999, n.pag). Alongside the trial, Heap would publish a series of zine-newsletters, entitled "The Cross & Sword" (Heap, 1999, 2000), with subtitles like, "Urgently the Church must decide." As he wrote to Crowe, "[w]e hope this trial will be a focus to help Christians explore the way of Jesus, who said, 'love and do good to your enemies'" (Heap, 1999, n.pag).

Don Heap's correspondence with Cathy Crowe is worth referencing for a few reasons. The two had a special friendship. In his later years, Cathy Crowe would visit Heap's bedside as he lay in long term care; years into a struggle with Alzheimer's disease, Crowe recounted that he still knew all the words to his favourite protest songs (Plokhii, 2014). There they would sit, in the last days of this feisty pacifist-priest, singing their favourite songs together. It is a beautiful image. Heap's family would even include Crowe in their special thank you notes at his celebration of life (The Church of the Holy Trinity, 2014). In his letter to Crowe during the trial, Heap wrote, "The rich of the world—including Canada—grow richer by forcing the poor grow poorer; cutting food, housing, schooling and health care while

increasing police and military power" (Heap, 1999, n.pag). Heap had such respect for Crowe that, in his own handwriting, at the end of the printed letter, he writes:

> P.S. The war against the "South" and the war against the poor in Toronto are both growing hotter. I hope more people can see the connection. Is this letter useful to you? Worth continuing? (Heap, 1999, n.pag)

At the bottom of the page, underneath Heap's scrawl is an answer, presumably written by Crowe, underlined and in large font: "Yes" (Heap, 1999, n.pag).



Hallowe'en 1999

Dear Cathy,

Here is our current Cross & Sword newsletter. We now begin preparations for trial on May 15, 2,000.

We firmly believe that the sword fixed on the Cross in front of St. Paul's Church, Bloor Street imposes a justification of war that - at least in this century - denies the meaning of the Cross. We have tried to engage fellow Christians in this challenge.

After a year of prayer, public vigil and appeal to church officers, we find no sign of change by the Church, we took our public action on Good Friday of, trying to take the sword from the Cross to be replaced as a ploughshare.

We hope this trial will be a focus to help Christians explore the way of Jesus, who said, "Love and do good to your enemies."

Will you join us in this search?

The rich of the world - including Canada - grow richer by forcing the poor to grow poorer; cutting food, housing, schooling and health care while increasing police and military power.

What do the churches teach about this systemic evil, in our congregations, national assemblies and world gatherings? Anglican Archbishop Peers, with leaders of eight other churches, asked for a unilateral moratorium on the bombing of Kosovo. The Prime Minister them aside. How have the other bishops, clergy and laity supported our Primate?

Will we continue to send young people to kill and rule others? Or will we repent - turn around - and recall Jesus who said,

"I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to me." Matthew 25: 35-36).

Please give us your comments on our action.

In Christ,

Don Heap

Don Heap

P.S. The war against the "South" and the war against the poor in Toronto are both growing hotter. I hope more people can see the connection. Is this letter useful to you? Worth continuing? DH.

Yes

Figure 16. Letter to Cathy Crowe from Don Heap, "Hallowe'en 1999."

The legacy of Don Heap is an important chapter in the legacy of the Church of the Holy Trinity. To this day, outreach workers and priests from the Church of the Holy Trinity vigorously defend housing as a human right and care-fully help steward the Toronto

Homeless Memorial. For Don Heap, the Church, broadly speaking, was largely implicated in the politics of dehousing, militarism, and violence that he believed "denies the meaning of the Cross" (Heap, 1999). His preserved newsletters, part of the TDRC files in the City of Toronto Archives, are part of a significant tradition of Christian troublemakers, intent upon calling the institutional Church—along with Western governments—to account for its complicity in war on the global South and on the poor. His writing to Crowe also carries with it an endearing humility that seeks to confirm whether his analysis is correct or sufficient: the question, "Is this letter useful to you?" offers us a glimpse into the manner in which this coalition-building took place. The conceptual grammar of (anti)war—contesting the war on the poor—was built[70] by activists keen to clarify and co-determine whether their analysis and messaging was coherent, well-conceived, and allied with neighbouring movements for justice.

Finally, in keeping with Chapter 3, Don Heap is yet another example of a politician deeply committed to public contestation and togetherness. It is important to note that Heap was not only a member of Toronto City Council, but a federal MP who staunchly opposed Canada's militarism and advocated for a publicly funded housing program. In the "Tent City" years, Heap would dutifully hop on his bike (in his mid-70s) in the middle of winter to attend the gatherings around the table[71] to discuss the collective management of this community (Plokhii, 2014). Heap was motivated by an ethical commitment to non-violence and a belief in animating the political. His ontological commitment to the value of civilian life manifested in attempts to have such lives appear in and through acts of interruption and public contestation. The radical politics of non-violence, for Heap, were intrinsically tied up with the preservation of spaces of/for appearance. Acting in public was about getting to the root of the problem of dehousing. His arrests were not merely theatrical confrontations; rather, he

[70] "WE ARE BUILDERS—NOT DESTROYERS. WE ARE BUILDERS AND CAREGIVERS" (Crowe, 2003a).
[71] See Chapter 5.

followed these public acts with pedagogical provocations in the form of zine-newsletters, letters, and speak-outs that resisted the ongoing erasure of dehoused citizens—at home and abroad. As his daughter Margaret said of his love of the outdoors, he was obsessed with "following streams back to their source, which I [later] saw as a metaphor for getting to the root of things" (Plokhii, 2014).[72]

Neoliberal logics and the denial of dissent

By invoking "dehousing" as part of the neoliberal war on the poor, activists gesture both to programs of state violence and the *politics* of wartime emergency. In the context of wartime, there is an erosion of the rights of citizens, under the pretence of state security; hence the popular adage, "the first casualty of war is the truth" (Hardill, 2001). Neoliberalism poses risks not only to the civilian populations being dehoused, but to the political work of disrupting such hegemonic logic. In this section, I contrast the operative discourses of TDRC activists with the priorities and logics of neoliberalism. At this point, this chapter has highlighted how the term "dehousing" helped define a particular form of state violence, by invoking British RAF policy. Here, I take this one step further to articulate the *stresses* that dehousing (then and now) has placed on the realm of the political. Dehousing is not only about the death and erasure of the poor; it is also predicated on the denial of dissent.

In the 1940s, economic *destruction*, achieved through the destruction of economic actors (civilians), was considered a legitimate war aim. In contrast, neoliberalism features the destruction of the working poor and those in the "exclusion-zone" (Grant, personal communication, March 9, 2022) as a necessary means of economic *success*. In both cases, however, such practices were/are justified through an operative logic of state-wide

[72] It is, again, worthwhile to reference the etymology of the word "radical."

emergency.[73] Under conditions of emergency, acting and speaking in public are curtailed; democratic contestation is traded for a culture of antipolitics (Boggs, 2000). Just as there was limited opportunity for protest during the RAF's years of dehousing, so too are such opportunities limited by neoliberal rationality. The following paragraphs will explain how.

Contemporary society is deeply entrenched in the politics of neoliberalism, which can be summarized as a widespread loss of public investment (Kristof, 2012), and ultimately, a crisis of imagination (Fisher, 2009). While neoliberalism is a free market economic system that features mass privatization and the deposing of the welfare state, it is also a "political rationality" (Brown, 2006, p. 693) that influences the thinking, speaking, and acting of states and citizens. **First,** neoliberal logic seeks to position citizens "as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for 'self-care'" (Brown, 2006, p. 694). Amidst the widespread elimination of social assistance and the financialization of human rights like housing, citizens are fed stories of individuals who overcome their oppression. As neoconservative logic would have it, our successes or failures rest on the moral individual and the welfare state only undermines this individual moral responsibility (Fisher, 2009). **Second,** neoliberal logic seeks to individualize pain, mental health, grief, and memory. Thus, interrogations of the increasing privatization of care, the appropriation/removal of public space, and widening gaps in quality of life are met with the logic of market capitalism, neo-conservatism, and stigmatization. Models of democratic governance shift from submitting to the will of the people to a business logic (Brown, 2006) or even, ontology (Fisher, 2009). **Third,** amidst the widespread elimination of the public, a site of democratic intervention, the occupation of and action within public spaces by and for non-commercial interests becomes highly contested and policed**. Fourth,** the diminishing

[73] This is what I have earlier referred to as a logic of abandonment and inevitability, which occur under conditions of "emergency."

public realm is coupled with what artist Xaviera Simmons has called "the ever shifting cultural gaze" (Simmons, 2014, para. 2), which cannot seem to hold itself still enough to recognize the present-ness of such crises. I think here of the relevance of "Bifo" Berardi's (2010) work concerning semiocapitalism—in particular the asymmetry between the boundlessness of cyberspace and the restricted, boundedness of cybertime, which has left us in a perpetual state of inattention.

I wonder, how did we get here? Carl Boggs (2000) traces the way in which, despite the rise in a more inclusive democratic project in early American development, American liberalism simultaneously embraced "the rise of global militarism" (p. 42) and "a fierce individualism" (p. 43), which permitted the terrorizing of Indigenous, Black, and Mexican peoples and territories (Boggs, 2000). The participation of the public sphere was ever at odds with notions of privatization, accumulation, and commitment to social hierarchy embedded in *corporate* liberalism (Boggs, 2000; Hirthler, 2016; Lustig, 1986). Since the 1960s, we've witnessed a rise in a culture of antipolitics, as a result (Boggs, 2000).

This culture of antipolitics emerged with good reason and intentions. In the Cold War era, there developed increasing concentrations of corporate power, bureaucratization (see Fisher, 2009), and disillusionment as a result of nefarious political actors (President Nixon, for example) (Boggs, 2000). Unfortunately, antistatist rhetoric, which initially was rooted in leftist radicalism and anarchism, was co-opted by the right-wing neoliberalism of Ronald Reagan. Thus, the supposed end of "big government" could be brought about in a strange reversal, resulting in a steadily diminishing public realm and the rise of a depoliticized citizenry (Boggs, 2000). As Boggs expresses, "[d]epoliticization is the likely popular response to a system that is designed to marginalize dissent, privatize social relations, and reduce the scope of popular participation" (Boggs, 2000, p. 46). The war on the poor has been just as much about the deaths in the "exclusion-zone" as the marginalization of their

dissenting voices. Hence, citizens find it difficult to muster the "public spirit" (Eliasoph, 1998, p. 8) necessary to revivify publicness. Nina Eliasoph (1998) is quick to admit that "public life is hard work" (p. 10); she wonders, how do "…people create everyday life contexts for political conversation?" (p. 10). Importantly, she recognizes that these processes grate against the logic of citizenship, as expressed within neoliberal contexts: "[State] officials ask apolitical citizen-volunteers to fill in for underfunded charity and welfare agencies, saying that such 'citizenship,' is more necessary now, in times of cutbacks. But the politicians do not ask the citizens to discuss the political decisions that made the cutbacks" (Eliasoph, 1998, p. 13).

Meanwhile, and herein we see the contradictory nature of neoliberal and neoconservative logic (Brown, 2006), Carl Boggs (2000) examines the pervasive "war on drugs" that gave rise to mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex. In keeping with the values of neoconservatism, "[t]he idea of getting tough on crime and building more prisons while giving the state more power over people's daily lives is one of the present era's prime articles of faith" (Boggs, 2000, p. 56). Thus, the taxpayer ends up paying for "big" government intervention one way or another (Kristof, 2012). Unfortunately, these expenditures continue to revolve around "militarism, materialism, racism, and poverty" (West & Buschendorf, 2011, p. 451). Somehow it was possible for "corporate and government elites" to demand ever-increasing military spending, while "simultaneously renew[ing] their assault on 'big government,' the welfare state, and public regulation" (Boggs, 2000, p. 57). Indeed, the unabated rise of militarism during and after the first Gulf War was made possible by dismissing any political resistance as ill-informed and "utopian" (Boggs, 2000, p. 58).

What has emerged in the structure of public political debate is a dearth of meaningful exchange: we are "saturated" (Boggs, 2000, p. 60) by environmental messaging that doesn't

translate into national policy, "form and image" (Boggs, 2000, p. 63) consistently supersede the importance of content, and "deficit" has become a coded way for politicians to further "agendas designed to slash public programs" (Boggs, 2000, p. 64). Amidst all this careful posturing, the North American political landscape narrowed dramatically in the 1990s, with both conservative and progressive candidates agreeing on neoliberal common-sense notions of minimizing welfare, maintaining a static minimum wage, and escalating the war on drugs, prison spending, and the military industrial complex (Boggs, 2000). War abroad and the (domestic) war on the poor are both characterized by an ever-escalating militarism: prisons and policing at home coupled with military interventions overseas. Ultimately, what the citizenry witnessed was "little connection between electoral discourse, for example, and what [was] actually taking place in the world" (Boggs, 2000, p. 66). Such an analysis will of course sound familiar given my arguments in Chapter 3.

How can we change? A final appeal for public things

"The war on the poor," administered through the purposeful violence of dehousing in neoliberal times, puts all of us at risk. This is especially true given the quickly disappearing middle class, the unabated rising costs of real estate, and the corporatization of the political machine. The phrase, "the war on the poor" is not in itself a *declaration* of war, which would negate the possibility for a reclaimed public, but is instead a *pronouncement* of the crisis as it is experienced by the "permanent underclass." It is not levelled, at least in the context of the memorial archive, as a threat of a newly waged class war, but it is a *diagnosis* of the "limit-situation" itself. This is 1) to emphasize that housing activists are, according to conclusive evidence from the archive, opposed to violence in all its forms, and 2) to assert that, if a war

is being waged, it is being waged "from above."[74] This "war" is not some retaliatory, insurgent violence "from below," but rather a purposeful denial of housing and, as such, a denial of citizens' basic human rights and capacity for dissent. Thus, such a phrase is itself a reassertion of the citizen's capacity for dissent.

The conceptual vocabulary of dehousing is, here, explained by comparing the historical emergence of the term during WWII with its applications in neoliberal times. The moral bankruptcy of targeting civilian families in Hitler's Germany was a question of economic *destruction* (and the supposed triviality of such damage—whether positioned as "collateral" or not). By invoking this historical period, David Hulchanski and other housing activists were pointing to a system that refused the humanity of the "exclusion zone," this time in favour of a *restructured* economy and the promise of economic prosperity.[75] While extrapolating further on the nuances of contemporary global militarism and social divestment is beyond the scope of this dissertation, figuring the underclass as "enemy citizens" is a strong rhetorical move that requires our attention. If the problem is this acute, then is there hope for public pedagogy at all? Are we passed the point of negotiation? Dehousing is a concept that needs to linger in our hearts and minds; it begs the question: *how can we change?* If citizens feel targeted as enemy combatants, we need to do something to invigorate a democratic publicness, to respond back to hyper-militarism. "*How can we change?*" is not only an educational question, but also a question of politics and political philosophy.

There is an eerie quality to the undertheorized areas of the politics of international and domestic funding commitments, the connections between media hysteria (see Chapter 5) and global militarism, and the ways in which institutions that train in violence perpetuate

[74] In Franz Kafka's *The Castle,* Arendt points out that the central character, K., comes to the realization that the inalienable human rights he seeks (and perceives to be so natural for "normal" human existence) are instead treated as "a present endowed…as Kafka puts it, from 'above'" (p. 293). Thus, the *withholding* of basic human rights ("from above") is indeed an exceptional state, and in my reading, an act of war on those dispossessed of this "natural" state.
[75] This, for many, remains an unfulfilled promise.

violence. The incendiary violence of 9/11 led to a media frenzy that fuelled years of global conflict, while leaving an underfunded system of public housing and social assistance to rot. At the same time, such a political commitment gave rise to incidents of domestic violence perpetrated by the very soldiers training to protect us. The murder of Paul Croutch reveals that it matters which institutions we prop up as publicly funded things worthy of preservation. The conceptual vocabulary of dehousing emphasizes that militarism abroad is "training men in violence" at home, which itself exacerbates the problem of war as well. In enabling the landscape of neoconservative funding priorities, dedicated to so-called "global security," we commit ourselves to the use of public facilities that endanger the very lives we profess to protect—as Beric German proclaimed, "we mighta lost *four* guys here…" (Martinuk, 2005). In other words, "dehousing" claims the "lives" of the foot soldiers of global militarism since such a commitment degrades all, dehumanizes all, and leads to the disenfranchisement of both victims and perpetrators.

Bonnie Honig (2013, 2015) argues against the privatization of public things in the name of efficiency. Here again we see the instrumentalism of neoliberal thought prioritized over keeping—and cultivating—spaces for the unexpected, for the democratic, for shared ways to gather and activate togetherness. The trouble is these public things are often "hiding in plain sight" and "may decay if untended" (Honig, 2013, p. 65). And, it would seem, they have largely been untended. Nicholas Kristof (2012) observes the way in which ongoing tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans have depleted public services and resulted in the proliferation of private industries—from schools to private security. Kristof (2012) notes that contemporary neoliberals seem to prefer to pay for poverty through the "back-end way"—that is, through the prison industrial complex (another site for "training men in violence")—as opposed to "upfront" payments via things such as robust public education.

Indeed, Honig (2015) argues that "neoliberalism's indiscriminate privatization" (p. 624) is in fact a "challenge to *democracy*" (p. 624, emphasis original). Ultimately, Honig (2013) encourages us to counter questions of efficiency of things with the idea that public things can "interpellate" (p. 68; see also p. 74) us into relations of equality. Such interpellation can foster the attitudes required for expressions of dissent. In other words, Honig invites us to gather and debate the uses and capacities of our public institutions: what good is an armoury? What might we do at this library? What is the best use for a public garden? In so doing, we not only shape the uses and capacities of these sites, but enter into relations of equality that are, themselves, democracy-in-the-making (Taylor, 2018).

Arendt (1956) holds that power "exists only in its actualization" (p. 200). This is part of its contingent, even fragile, nature—it "vanishes the moment [people] disperse" (p. 200). In this way, one might argue that depoliticization only breeds further disillusionment and withdrawal. On the other hand, actualizing power together can foster the togetherness and dissent required for future contestation. The conceptual vocabulary of dehousing offers an opening for housing activists to name these critical aspects of this ongoing crisis and mobilize citizens to challenge an economic system predicated on death and antipolitics.

The 1998 declaration of national disaster was indeed an example of widespread public dissent. It marked a moment where citizens mobilized to add to the public record. Despite the unfulfilled state commitments in response to this pedagogical interruption, such a moment of public dissent and national media attention preserves the work of activism as capable of achieving non-violent democratic intervention, even in a time of war.

Conclusion

The memorial participant as "castaway"

By shadowing
All the darkened fields
Of forgotten words
And civilian lives
Violence
Through the changing guards
Through the grinding away
And their furious marching
By gathering the holy light
And weathering
A castaway life
And the rising fear
The hollowness
Of the flags and gods
That are raised in the air
In the wake of their raging
Your skinny arms
Hold the lantern up
On the brightest array
Of the stars in their moorings
And summoning
The holy light down
On citadels
The blackening sky
Collapsing sun
The burning wall
That approaches our eyes
You live again
In the shuddering light
These images
This valediction
You are running from
A rising tide
You are castaways
(Meiburg, 2010)

"This is where the power is, you see. Always. The underneath."
(Ondaatje, 2011, p. 221)

The "skinny arms" (plural) that raise a lantern are, in Meiburg's *Castaways*, a challenge to the impending darkness, the opacity of sense and sensuousness that has diminished our capacity to think and feel with/for one another in neoliberal times. They, the plurality of arms that extend their light out in front, are castaways, weathering the false sense of political activity engendered by mere media spectacle—the "hollowness" of the brief, easily forgotten measures to garner readership or social media followers. The castaway is one that demands an ongoing insistence, one that, at times, even *foregoes* the media spotlight for a committed relationality, a slow cultivation of togetherness (against a phenomenon of *slow* violence), and a shared orientation of grievability. Met with the political impasse of a crisis of dehousing and a crisis of publicness, the memorial participant discovers in shared grief, and shared anger, a posture of care that can extend across space and time. By appearing to one another, regardless of what current distraction is offered by mainstream media, the participant-as-castaway joins in an atmosphere of listening and wonder, which restores one's propensity "to think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5). The crisis of neoliberal "flags and gods" is one that refuses the work of memory—the question of "how did we get here?" In opposition to this refusal, the eerie pedagogy of the memorial enlivens our collective ability to trace the paths of the last 40 years, to question the logic of self-dependent market actor, and to instead imagine a future that is different. All of this is made possible as participants can constellate around a thing—an aesthetic object and an iterative event—that facilitates the plurality that is freedom's prerequisite (Arendt, 1958; Butler, 2012).

In his novel, *The Cat's Table*, Michael Ondaatje positions "the underneath" as the site of contingent possibility for/by the political castaway. The Cat's Table itself is a literal table, of course reminiscent of Arendt's table, where a group of travellers, on a ship known as the *Oronsay*, are making the crossing from Sri Lanka to England. Their table is the furthest from the Captain's Table, the site of privilege and exclusivity, where the banal registers of power

are perpetuated. But where the power lies, at least in the Arendtian sense, is always an open question. As Ondaatje writes,

> In any case, it seemed to us that nearly all at our table, from the silent tailor, Mr. Guneskera, who owned a shop in Kandy, to the entertaining Mr. Mazappa, to Miss Lasqueti, might have an interesting reason for their journey, even if it was unspoken or, so far, undiscovered. In spite of this, our table's status on the *Oronsay* continued to be minimal, while those at the Captain's Table were constantly toasting one another's significance. That was a small lesson I learned on the journey. What is interesting and important happens mostly in secret, in places where there is no power. Nothing much of lasting value ever happens at the head table, held together by familiar rhetoric. Those who already have power continue to glide along the familiar rut they have made for themselves. (Ondaatje, 2011, p. 75)

The Cat's Table is a gathering of outsiders, each with their own creative ventures and diverse experiences—a plurality. The book reiterates the impotence of the supposed authority of the captain's tables of the world—sites that Hannah Arendt might assert are constituted by patterns congruent with the social realm: conformity, repetition, and, therefore, the inability to introduce something *new*. In contrast, the underneath is a site of/for the unexpected. As explored in Chapter 3, a City Hall that has traded the concerns of citizens for an attitude of detached authority becomes lodged in this "familiar rut," whereby acting and speaking citizens are *required* to re-establish the conditions for new things. In other words, addressing the crisis of publicness *depends* on the cultivation of newness from the very "tables" that have become disregarded or undiscovered. It is part of my intention here to point to a monthly gathering, to bear witness to trauma and grief, to draw attention to such a phenomenon, a site of political *repair*. Indeed, I believe it is just such a phenomenon that can coax the neoliberal "thinker" past this crisis of antipolitics—this crisis of sense. And, in doing so, we might be able to halt the parallel crisis, which I refer to as dehousing, from claiming the lives of hundreds more.

On the emergence of the aesthetic object

I wrote much of this dissertation at the Toronto Reference Library. In the heart of downtown Toronto, this library is a public thing that is open to the citizens of Toronto; we impinge upon each other's quiet study, our too-loud cell phone conversations, those of us who tap the spacebar too hard (my apologies to my wife, as well), and the welcome intrusions of friends we bump into. Such a space is shared in so many ways, by so many people. While books, unsurprisingly, occupy much of the visual space at the library, there are other aesthetic objects that make a claim on our attention. Glassed-in reading rooms supply leisurely space with couches; the vast atrium allows sight lines—and sonorous echoes—across the entire building; and artworks on the walls are filled with their own stories, their own resonances. The building's architect, Raymond Moriyama, envisioned this library as an "empty cup," challenging the modern obsession with material form by channelling attention to the things—the citizens, the ideas, the imaginative potential—that would fill "the cup" (Moriyama, 1977). The design of the library itself was oriented around a specific concern for the public. As Moriyama (1977) remarked,

> Of course, I do accept responsibility for the basic architectural resolution. This, in many ways, is a resolution of contradictions: openness versus security, accessibility versus protection, personal interests versus group interests, public interest versus librarians' interest, efficiency versus informal involvement, quality versus quantity. To this day, on individual issues I can argue both ways. The only conviction I held throughout was that the result, whatever the direction or form, must enhance the library's human purpose and increase its value to the public. (p. 11)

This dissertation returns to the notion of "emptiness" in several places. Here, I will make the case that Moriyama's concern for emptiness was itself representative of Fisher's eerie aesthetic mode, wherein a *failure of presence* offers space for wonder, setting the stage for transformative speculative experiences to occur. Moriyama, interestingly, designed a library full of empty space. In it, he imagined the public could be given space to appear; he even

acknowledged and was open to the shifting future uses of the library that neither he, nor anyone in the 1970s, could predict (Moriyama, 1977). This "defined emptiness" (Moriyama, 1977, p. 10) was intended, paradoxically, to provide an affective capacity that could generate *togetherness*, insofar as it was a provision for the public—a network of contradictory intentions that must be given a space to mediate these competing interests, claims, or priorities. The library, for Moriyama, was to act as a vessel to "hold" these contradictions in tension—in order that it might achieve the kind of social and political transformation the future might demand of us. In what follows, my comments on the aesthetics of the library go beyond what one library user called the "groovy 70s orange & brown curvilinear goodness" (V., 2017) of Moriyama's architectural work, and hone in on an untitled painting that sits on the 2nd floor.

When I arrive at the Toronto Reference Library I climb several sets of stairs, as I usually like the tables by the windows on the fourth floor (though my tendencies change, from time to time). I have a daily ritual, of sorts. At the landing of the first staircase, I look to my left and take in a beautiful painting. I always make sure to acknowledge this painting, especially over the course of this project. Painted by Toronto-based[76] Ojibway artist Sam Ash, the painting is untitled. It features several critters, human and non-human, with their focus drawn toward the centre of the frame. A river flows across the large, colourful painting; the three most obvious non-human animals appear to be poised on the banks of the river. The three human shapes each are adorned with vivid colours and prints of yet more non-human shapes. The figure on the right has a medicine wheel on their chest.

I am not an art critic, and I cannot pretend to offer insight into all the potential meanings behind this piece. What I can say is that this visually arresting piece is yet another

[76] Though originally from Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation and later Sioux Lookout, where he was a victim of the "Sixties Scoop": "Sam was 2 when his mother died in childbirth. Not long after, he became ill and lost his hearing. Sam was sent to a hospital in Sioux Lookout but was not returned home to his family. He was placed in foster care in Umfreville, more than 200 kilometres away" (Koyama, 2021).

aesthetic object, which deserves/requires additional layers of historicity to be explained. Sam Ash's works, more generally, render sensible the relationality between various beings—themselves given "voice" by an artist who spent most of his life unable to hear (Jamie, 2021).

There are other stories I could tell here—stories that illustrate the kind of generous care and attentive listening that occurs amidst the crisis of dehousing. First, I re-tell this one as it is a public story, told in part by Cathy Crowe's (2007) collection of accounts from various housing activists. In other words, my commitment to "what cannot be said" is such that other, more personal anecdotes, are not fitting for my purposes here—nor do I have permission to share them. I merely want to draw attention to the fact that this is one story among many. Second, I offer this story as it provides a glimpse into the kind of listening I discuss in this dissertation—namely, the kind of listening that gives rise to aesthetic practice, or an aesthetic object, which inspires new ways of thinking/feeling/being in the world.

In 2001, Marty Lang and The Colonel shared a room at Seaton House[77] with a man they knew as Silent Sam. Silent Sam was deaf; he had not spoken to anyone in a long time. The two men, committed housing activists, had "formed [their] own sign language" (Crowe, 2007, p. 120) in order to communicate with Silent Sam. Having developed a means to listen, the two men "encouraged all of his efforts" (Crowe, 2007, p. 118) and affirmed his identity as an artist. Ash, for his part, would gain back the confidence to reengage in his painting practice. Several supporters, including artist Elio Delcol, would eventually organize a showing of Sam Ash's paintings at the Mackenzie Cultural Gallery in Windsor in October, 2005 (Koyama, 2021). He sold 60 paintings. What followed was the (re)emergence of Sam Ash as one of the most notable Indigenous artists working in present-day Canada. In 2018, he would donate the 8" x 10" untitled canvas to the Toronto Public Library, stating in the Deed

[77] Seaton House is an infamous men's shelter in Toronto's Downtown East.

of Gift notation that it should be displayed **"**in a public library space where it can be viewed by the public for free" (Gillian, 2018).

Every time I pass the painting, I think of friends of Ash's who still attend the memorial. I think of the years he spent invisible, silent, without housing. I think of the eerie quality of a painting where there might have been nothing. And, most notably for this discussion, I think of the listening involved in cultivating an aesthetic object that could be provided for public display, freely available for the public to gather around it, to view it, consider it, and be moved by its material appearance. I am moved by the relationality and listening that played a role in bringing Sam Ash's paintings into spaces of appearance. It is striking to think that this painting, completed while Ash was in prison (Koyama, 2021),[78] has now been "freed" from carceral containment. Freedom being the necessary characteristic of acting and speaking beings—and the utterances and aesthetic objects they produce—who are "birthed" into the public realm (Arendt, 1958).

What I am arguing for is a manner of listening that assists in generating and sustaining aesthetic objects. It is an iterative process, for once the aesthetic object materializes, it, too, speaks. The encounter is thus ongoing—in witnessing Sam Ash's untitled painting on the 2nd floor of the Toronto Reference Library, we partake in this mysterious act of listening across time. We open ourselves up to receive whatever messages are encoded in the aesthetic object, whatever sensibilities it/they might awaken in us. Indeed, Raymond Moriyama thought the same of the library building itself. In his remarks at the official opening, he stated:

> The tendency in writing, for me at least, is toward a certain kind of definition, order and clarity. This can kill the joy, mystery and beauty of ambiguity, that make up the experience and language of architecture. *The building, now complete,*

[78] Prisons, I would remind the reader, are the converse to the "public things" that we might collectively participate in sustaining (and, in turn, that sustain democracy). As noted in Chapter 6, the carceral system constitutes paying for poverty through the "back-end," rather than through the "up front" costs of supporting generative public institutions.

> *must "speak" to the public in its own way. To be seen is to be heard.* What follows then, is not a description of the building but my response to a request to set down the influences and ideas, thoughts and feelings, from which the architectural intent of defined emptiness and the form and functional organization of this library evolved. (p. 10, emphasis added)

To be seen is to be heard. This was literally true for Silent Sam. It is, I argue, also true for the aesthetic objects we gather around, and those curated in the activist archive (and counter-archival contexts). The verb *to witness* inherently connects the visual to the epistemological: as it is etymological rooted in the "Proto-Germanic *witanan 'to have seen,' hence 'to know'" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2024). Further, the Old English root "witnes" connotes personal (i.e. oral) *testimony* based on personal knowledge or "personal *presence*" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2024), attesting to the connections between the visual and the auditory, the personal and the public, the past and present.

Where to from here?

We live in strange times. Democracy seems void of dialogue; public spaces increasingly become zones for consumer capitalism; land continues to be treated as units of capital; we navigate "fast" crises and ignore slow violence; there is a reliance on media spectacles that drain our capacity for attention; even a so-called "class war" against "the elite" in America is being led by a real estate tycoon; citizens cling to the familiar, ever losing the capacity (or desire) to appear in plural assemblies, together yet distinct. And yet, there is much to learn from the pedagogical work of "castaway" actors. Contemporary public pedagogy needs to be informed by housing activists who have navigated the contingent work of animating a space of appearance during the dehousing crisis. The Toronto Homeless Memorial reveals that a diverse community of citizens can gather around a thing, cultivating aesthetic practices and objects that engender new ways of thinking, seeing, and feeling. In response to violence and grief, a plurality of citizens can establish a common world—

sustained in part by archival practices that preserve the artifice of a movement ever-in-the-making. Such archival work deserves further attention. There are a variety of archival sites dedicated to housing activism across Canada, and North America. This dissertation has largely drawn on the work of only one example, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee. The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty is currently in the process of archiving years of documents that attest to their unique approach to housing activism. The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) has an extensive archive of podcasts, poetry, and material related to various protest actions that have been ongoing for several decades, as well. In the United States, The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (2021) is using GIS technologies, poetry, oral histories, Indigenous knowledges, and public sociology to generate an archive of displacement—and practices of resistance against such forces. These are only a few examples of many. In keeping with "that which cannot be said," some archives of those working amidst the dehousing crisis are indeed private, and their materials are not available for scholars of public pedagogy. Other activist groups and communities, though, have amassed years of documentation of affective aesthetic practices that have never been properly organized, or preserved in an accessible manner. Such work deserves to be attended to, compiled, and studied for the sensibilities that artists, poets, filmmakers, and other citizen-pedagogues offer as a lifeline amidst the contemporary crisis of publicness. It is my hope that I will be able to continue this witness-work, to follow in the footsteps of the activist-archivists who have gone before me.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics forms and approvals

Informed Consent Form

Date: July 8, 2021

Study Name:
Organizing Remembrance: Publicness, Commemoration, and Counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial

Researcher name:
Principal Investigator:
Timothy Martin, Doctoral candidate, Faculty of Education, York University
tmartin1@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

You have been invited to participate in a qualitative interview about your experiences at and involvement in the Toronto Homeless Memorial. As a scholar of public pedagogy and homelessness, I believe that this memorial can offer insight into how best to gather the public together to democratically contest the lack of affordable housing, mourn the deaths of friends and family members, and generate strategies to care for and house all citizens of Toronto. Your insights and experiences are an important part of understanding how housing activism can cultivate public dialogue, how a lack of affordable housing is literally deadly, and how memorialization can teach the public to better care for one another. This project will collect these important insights with the goal of sharing them with both scholarly (via conference papers and academic writing) and non-scholarly audiences (most notably, via the online archive of the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network).

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do an interview via Zoom (or other online technology, based on your personal preference). Interviews are usually 1 hour (60 min) long. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded (there will be no video recording of interviews). In the interview, we will discuss a series of topics that feature how you came to be involved in the memorial, what it means to you, and how you have engaged with the event and the ongoing sharing of personal testimonies, artworks, poems, etc. If you would like, the interview will feature space for you to share a personal testimony based on your participation in the memorial, which will aid in furthering public understanding of this event (and homelessness, more broadly). With your consent, your testimony may be shared via the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network's website. Any excerpts from your interview that will be used for publication in academic journals, conference papers, or the memorial's website will be sent to you for your review and approval via email several months afterwards. The entire process could take up to a year. My research will culminate in the writing and presenting of a dissertation, in keeping with my doctoral studies program.

Risks and Discomforts:
We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:
The research will contribute to motivating society toward the recognition of housing for all as a basic human right and homelessness as a distinct failure of our democracy. It attempts to teach people not just about the violence of homelessness, but the need for political gatherings that contest unjust policies and educate the public about the stigma that remains pervasive in Canadian society. You may not directly benefit from participating in this study, but your experience of being interviewed may help you reflect on your own work in housing activism. Additionally, participants who want to share their story for a wider audience may have their story included in the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network's online archive as well as in my doctoral dissertation, pending all necessary permissions. You will receive an electronic copy of the audio recorded interview as well as a transcript of the interview for your own records.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researcher, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

- Unless you choose otherwise all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

- Research data will be documented on paper notepads and an audio recording device. It will be stored, ultimately, on a computer hard drive. The data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet (hard copy) and/or on a password protected device (electronic copy) and only the researcher will have access to this information.

- Data will be stored for a period of 3 years after the conclusion of the study, until August, 2025, upon which it will be destroyed by paper shredder and/or cleared from any/all hard drives.

- Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

- The data collected in this research project may be used – in an anonymized form - by members of the research team in subsequent research investigations exploring similar lines of inquiry. Such projects will still undergo ethics review by the HPRC, our institutional REB. Any secondary use of anonymized data by the research team will be treated with the same degree of confidentiality and anonymity as in the original research project.

- Participant testimonies/stories may be published in the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network's webpage, pending approval of the interviewee. It will be anonymized in this repository, unless the interviewee consents to waive anonymity. This will be for the purpose of telling personal stories to a wider audience for the benefit of the individual(s) involved and the political organizing of the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network.

- Based on COVID-19 protocols, this study will use the Zoom platform to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). Further, while York University researchers will not collect or use IP addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic devices without informing you, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements (where possible) for you to participate, perhaps via telephone. Please contact the researcher for further information.

- Recordings (audio) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members' local computer, not the cloud based service.

- Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at tmartin1@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Mario Di Paolantonio, at MDiPaolantonio@edu.yorku.ca and/or 416-736-5002. You may also contact the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education at gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca and/or 416-736-2100 ext. 22051.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee,

York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in **Organizing Remembrance: Publicness, Commemoration, and Counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial** conducted by Timothy Martin. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____ **Date** _____
Participant

Signature _____ **Date** _____
Principal Investigator

Additional consent (where applicable)

1. **Audio recording**

☐ I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

Signature: Date:

_____

Participant Name: _____

2. **Consent to waive anonymity**

I, _____ consent to the use of my name in the publications arising from this research.

Signature: Date:

_____

Participant Name: _____

3. **Consent to publish excerpts from my interview on the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network's webpage**

I, _____ consent to the use of my interview in online posts on the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network's webpage.

Signature: Date:

_____

Participant Name: _____

Draft Interview Questions

Date: July 8, 2021

Study Name:
Organizing Remembrance: Publicness, Commemoration, and Counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial

Researcher Name:
Principal Investigator:
Timothy Martin, Doctoral candidate, Faculty of Education, York University
tmartin1@yorku.ca

Draft Interview Questions:

1) How did you come to be involved with the Toronto Homeless Memorial?
2) What has been your role with the memorial?
3) "How have you seen things change? How have they stayed the same?" (Brown, 1997, p. 28)
4) What is/are the role(s) of the memorial in Toronto?
5) What has the memorial archive helped preserve?
6) Do you have a story that you feel would help others understand the memorial?

References

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Form TD2: Research Ethics Protocol Form for Graduate Student Thesis, Dissertation, or Pilot Project

Research ethics protocols for theses, dissertations, and pilot projects are approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS).

- Submit paper copies of the relevant forms to your Graduate Program for review and signature.
- Graduate Programs will forward forms to FGS Thesis & Dissertation Coordinator.
- All submissions must include:
    - TD1 (Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Submission) Form signed by the student, supervisor, and Graduate Program Director,
    - thesis/dissertation proposal
        - In cases requiring preliminary research (e.g., pilot project), submit the pilot project research proposal instead of the thesis/dissertation proposal.
    - Informed consent form
    - If applicable, other documentation required for your specific research ethics protocol
- The average time to process minimal risk protocols is approximately 40 working days from the date of receipt by FGS. INCOMPLETE OR ILLEGIBLE PROTOCOLS WILL BE RETURNED TO THE RESEARCHER, WHICH WILL DELAY THE PROCESS.
- Research involving Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples; that is more than minimal risk; or that involves clinical trials, is approved by the York University Human Participants Review Committee (HPRC). Use HPRC Form
- Research ethics protocols for a course, or a Major Research Paper (MRP), are approved by your Graduate Program's Delegated Research Ethics Committee. Consult with your Graduate Program for appropriate forms.
- For more information on research ethics related matters, please visit the ORE website: http://research.info.yorku.ca/research-services/research-ethics/ or FGS Research Ethics: http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/thesis-dissertation/research-ethics/
- Contact: Research Officer (fgsro@yorku.ca)

Part A – General Information

A. Student Information

Student Name		Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
Timothy Martin		09/07/2021
E-mail	**Phone**	**Student number**
martin.tim12@gmail.com	416-471-5702	215354533
Program		**Degree**
Education		PhD

Check one: ☐ Thesis ☑ Dissertation ☐ Pilot Project

Title of Research Project

Organizing Remembrance: Publicness, Commemoration, and Counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial

Privacy: Personal information in connection with this form is collected under the authority of *The York University Act*, 1965 and will be used for educational, administrative and statistical purposes. If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by York University, please contact: Faculty of Graduate Studies, 230 York Lanes, (416) 736-2100 x 55521.

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Certificate #:	**STU 2021-134**
Approval Period:	**10/22/21-10/22/22**

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Timothy Martin**
Graduate Student of Education
martin.tim12@gmail.com

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Director, Research Ethics
(on behalf of You-ta Chuang, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Friday, October 22, 2021

Title: **Organizing Remembrance: Publicness, Commemoration, and Counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial**

Risk Level: ☒ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: ☒ Delegated Review ☐ Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, **"Organizing Remembrance: Publicness, Commemoration, and Counter-archival practices at the Toronto Homeless Memorial"** has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, **"RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".**

Please note *that due to ongoing changes with the pandemic, all researchers must review the procedures on the YuBetter website (Section: Coming to Campus) as there may be changes to protocol requirements.*

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Director,
Office of Research Ethics