

**RECONCILING FOR A CULTURALIZED PAST: THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF  
INDIGENOUS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN TORONTO'S NATHAN PHILLIPS  
SQUARE**

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## Abstract

Since 2011, the City of Toronto has been co-implementing place-making efforts in Nathan Phillips Square with Indigenous communities, people, and organizations that holistically acknowledge the historical presence of Indigenous people and promote their resilience and vibrant contemporary existence. Using autoethnographic work, metaphors established in collective memory studies, and interviews with relevant actors, I argue that Toronto's reconciliation strategy through these initiatives operates within culturalist and multiculturalist praxes, producing a 'legitimate' Indigenous subjectivity according to a past chiefly characterized by cultural genocide. Although the resulting reconciliatory relationship between the municipality and Indigenous people is premised on accepting and equitably including the latter in history-making and memory-preserving processes, thereby resolving Toronto's memory and identity crisis between multiculturalism and settler colonialism, it limits possible ways of creating and changing discourses about Indigenous experiences, histories, and voices. They become constrained within a politics of recognition, reinforcing cultural recognition as the primary means for reconciliation.

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I acknowledge the long past, present, and future Indigenous presences on these lands. I wrote this thesis on the lands of what is now called the City of Vaughan, which is situated on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Huron-Wendat Nation, and the Six Nations. This research was primarily conducted in what is now called the City of Toronto, which is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat people. These lands are covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit and are subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region. These lands are now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. I acknowledge that I am a guest on these lands who has an ongoing responsibility to respect and support the inhabitants of these lands. I also appreciate the forgotten and the remembered of these lands, whose knowledges inform this thesis.

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## Chapter One – Introduction

It is a school day in Toronto, Ontario. I walk into my elementary school's gymnasium with my schoolmates, and as we entered, I began to see unfamiliar artifacts, smelled unidentifiable scents, and heard unknown people playing a big drum. A gigantic sound echoed throughout the gym, a resounding repeating beat. As an innocent child who minimally knew of other cultures, much less their struggles, the artifacts, scents, and strangers were curiosities. My schoolmates and I sat cross-legged in front of vibrantly dressed individuals who greeted us in a different language than any of my learned languages: English, French, Filipino, and Kapampangan. I attentively listened as they recounted stories from their cultures, and eventually, they invited us to participate in the drum circle. Initially hesitant, I joined, but the other drummers showed me what to do with a friendly demeanour. And as the heartbeat-like sound reverberated throughout the room and among us, they told us about the interconnectedness of life, from the trees to the lakes to the animals to humans. Each of us could feel the universal heartbeat of Mother Earth. A feeling that I, as an often solitary and pensive child, rarely felt.

While writing this paper, that memory resurfaced. As far as I could remember, it was my first exposure to Indigenous ways of being, and it is a phenomenological starting point for my work. Understanding the dynamics between Indigenous people and settlers is important if we wish to recognize the power relationships being enacted. In the case of my personal memory, the event occurred within a pedagogical setting meant to educate settler children and faculty on Indigenous lifestyles, mildly exposing them to the effects and histories of settler colonialism. Primarily, however, it was about cultural interactions, operating within liberal multicultural discourses of acceptance and acknowledgement, not reconciliation. At the event, we learned that

Indigenous people were present but did not know anything beyond that. They existed, and that was that.

Although it was a mnemohistorical relationship premised on the exchange of core beliefs and identities, it was nonetheless a mono-exchange, from Indigenous people to settlers, leading me to believe now that it was a form of ‘conscientization,’ a settler move to innocence by ‘decolonizing the mind,’ as Tuck & Yang (2012) describe. The event was a curated version of the diverse histories, identities, knowledges, memories, and values of Indigenous peoples of what is now called Toronto and Canada. Understandably, the event was for children, but it nevertheless glossed over settlers’ responsibilities to the lands and its other inhabitants, all of which, including the historical inequalities experienced by Indigenous peoples, I eventually learned in university and minimally during high school. Now, that could all be attributed to Ontario’s education system, but as many memory scholars have pointed out (e.g., Nora, 1989; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008), schools are important sites of memory, as they intergenerationally impart society’s beliefs, morals, and values. In other words, the group, such as a settler nation, is reproduced ideologically in schools as well as in homes and public spaces.

Thus, in this paper, I investigate how the City of Toronto construes and constructs the Indigenous subject in Nathan Phillips Square through its collective memories. This research investigates what is and could be legitimately considered a part of the Canadian postcolonial imaginary and Indigenous subjectivity while examining how the municipality employs its understanding of the past in the present. Starting from Maurice Halbwachs’ (1925; see also Halbwachs, 1950 and Halbwachs, 1971) works on collective memory and other contemporary memory scholars, such as Jan Assman, Pierre Nora, Kevin Bruyneel, Kenneth E. Foote, Maoz Azaryahu, Owen J. Dwyer, and Derek K. Alderman, I explore the concept of collective memory.



I then contextualize collective memory within power relations and Canada's settler-colonial setting to investigate how the control over perceptions of the colonial past and its manifestations in the present inform contemporary recognition politics in Toronto. In other words, I examine the mnemohistorical power relations (i.e., power relations that refer to collective memory) embedded in the representation and recognition of Indigenous peoples in Nathan Phillips Square (NPS), as dictated by the municipal government. These power relations refer to the past to guide the present and inevitably influence how society perceives its past and future. It is a co-constitutive relationship between the past, present and future, all of which crystallized as emplaced objects and commemorative practices.

Collective memory is inscribed in the actual and virtual spaces of the city, drawing from Isin (2007). On the one hand, celebrations, heritage places, memorials, monuments, place names, plaques, and symbols constitute the concrete manifestation of collective memory in the city, constantly reproducing the state through physical and linguistic indicators, i.e., a discourse. On the other hand, the social body engages with and expresses itself and is maintained through collective imaginations of the past and commemorative practices occurring with and through these actual spaces. In this way, the mnemohistorical power relations embedded in commemorative spaces allow for the reproduction of power relations in the city and, when necessary, their transformation. Indeed, the city has traditionally been a colonial, gendered, and racialized space (Peters, 1998), where 'civility' and 'rationality' reign (Coulthard, 2014, p. 174; Razack, 2014, p. 55). In Toronto, Indigenous histories, identities, and presences are all but relegated to the fringes, with settler achievements aggrandized and valorized (Freeman, 2010, p. 31). One only needs to remember what the City of Toronto markets as ideally 'Toronto.' Most often, what many imagine, and even a cursory search on Google displays, is the iconic Toronto

skyline, with the CN Tower and the Rogers Centre located centrally. These are dominating settler spaces that reimagine the lands of Tkaronto<sup>1</sup> as the City of Toronto, mnemohistorically displacing and disconnecting Indigenous peoples from these lands while reinforcing the perception that the settler-colonial state is now and has been settled. Therefore, I examine in this thesis how settler mnemohistory has permeated and is continuously transforming the subjectivities of Indigenous people and lands in Toronto, and contend that these subjects warrant further attention, especially in a settler-colonial context where violence is enacted both physically and mnemohistorically. I argue that when operating within colonial systems of power, knowledge, and discourse, the collective memory of residential schools serves to legitimize the culturalization of Toronto's and Canada's settler-colonial past or an understanding of its past through a cultural and multicultural present. By framing the traumas of Indigenous people as a consequence of a past characterized by the assimilation of Indigenous cultures into settler society, residential schools become understandable and even palatable to settler audiences. However, this culturalist strategy risks delimiting Indigenous and non-Indigenous memory activism to discourses of cultural appreciation and institutional preservation rather than more radical approaches.

I believe in being an advocate, ally, and activist. In knowing the mnemohistory, or how the past is remembered actually rather than factually (Assman, 1997, p. 9), of what is now called Toronto and Canada, settlers can understand *how* the settler-colonial state operates to subject (both subjugate and subjectify) through certain imaginings of the past. In doing so, I aim to contribute to discussions regarding collective memory, the politics of recognition, colonial subjectivities, and the power relationships in the colony. By knowing how collective memory

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<sup>1</sup> The name 'Tkaronto' is the local Indigenous term for the area now called 'Toronto.'

operates as a power to subject, I believe that anti- and decolonial struggles can be expanded to include commemorative spaces as sites of resistance and reconciliation. I offer only one step in the path to healing. There are undoubtedly many more. Yet, changing how settlers perceive the past and reproduce those perceptions can profoundly affect how they act in the present. It is time for Toronto and Canada to confront the *truths* in history.

### **I am a Settler of Colour: Reflections on Positionalities**

Firstly, I am a person of colour. I did not know what that meant prior to attending university. I knew of and experienced the racial paradigms prevalent in Canadian society, according to which my physical traits, such as my skin colour, define who I am, and which power relations are enacted on me. I am a part of a ‘visible minority,’ encoded within my skin a language that differentiated me from most Canadians (Li, 2001, p. 82). As a result, I have been exoticized, infantilized, and discriminated against by my white counterparts. But my positionality is different from other immigrants of colour because I can speak, read, understand, and be understood in English, i.e., the dominant language in what is now called Toronto. Growing up, my mother consistently discouraged me from speaking my native languages, Tagalog/Filipino and Kapampangan, and encouraged my use of English so as to protect me from the type of racism that she experienced as an immigrant woman of colour who had a noticeable foreign accent. As Derwing & Munro (2009, p. 486) and de Souza *et al.* (2016, p. 609) point out, a speaker’s accent conveys information of difference that intolerant interlocutors could employ to discriminate and stigmatize the speaker. Thus, as a person of colour who can speak English ‘properly’ without a noticeable foreign accent, I can significantly traverse white society more proficiently than other immigrants of colour, like my mother—though that does not preclude or

invalidate my experiences of racism. I recognize my privilege of benefiting from Canada's racial order as an assimilated immigrant of colour, and as a result, I have been committed to anti-racist approaches in my ways of being, doing, and thinking by supporting and advocating for other immigrants of colour as they manoeuvre through white society.

Secondly, I am a settler. I was born in the Philippines and arrived in Canada when I was 7 years old. At the time, I had no knowledge of settler colonialism and its associated violence against Indigenous people. However, I did know of Indigenous peoples because there are some in the Philippines. In fact, I vaguely remember going to Baguio City, Philippines, where my family and I met the Igorot people or the Cordilleran people. They have their own culture and lifestyles somewhat distinct from my general Filipino and ethnolinguistic Kapampangan upbringing. But I did not recognize them as Indigenous peoples. Rather, I viewed them as one of many ethnic groups in the Philippines like myself. That is why when I arrived in Canada and interacted with Indigenous peoples for the first time, I viewed them through a cultural lens, which the discourse of Canadian multiculturalism and the types of knowledge disseminated through pedagogy reinforced. And so, I saw Indigenous struggles in Canada as reflective of other ethno-cultural groups; that they wanted what my community wanted; formal equality. Such an understanding exposes my position within colonial power relations, frameworks of knowledge, and discourses. I benefit from the colonial structure. I accepted a settler reality. And I have a settler mindset. I recognize that my experience as a settler, as a subject who is privileged within a colonial structure that operates to eliminate Indigenous people, influenced my perceptions of the past, present, and future. But that does not preclude me from unlearning settler ways of being, doing, and thinking. Rather, it empowers me to be and do better.

Lawrence & Dua (2005, p. 123) point out that “antiracism is premised on an ongoing colonial project.” Contemporary anti-racism participates in and perpetuates the erasure of Indigenous peoples from their lands by advancing contemporary colonial agendas (Dahmoon, 2015, p. 21). It fails to engage with settler colonialism and instead positions colonization projects, such as genocide and the appropriation of Indigenous lands, as historically settled while framing Indigenous interests as a struggle against the structures of whiteness with the aim of formal equality and recognition rather than against colonial systems of power that deliberately erase Indigenous peoples to enforce and legitimize settler identity and land claims (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 132; Dahmoon, 2015, p. 21). And thus, anti-racist and anti-colonial practices need to problematize the framing of race in traditionally settler spaces to understand and unravel how the reproduction of racial discourses participates in the multi-faceted and intersecting forms of settler-colonial violence against Indigenous peoples (Dorries, 2019, p. 41). Anti-racism should not be predicated on the erasure and exclusion of Indigenous people, whom themselves face a form of racism. Rather, it should highlight Indigenous flourishing and resistances while empowering Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, who are central to Indigenous place-making processes (Dorries, 2019, p. 41).

I now recognize that I am a naturalized citizen of the Canadian state and an unwelcomed guest to the lands of Tkaronto, the traditional territories of many First Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat peoples, and the home of many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. But I also recognize that I am not easily equated with my white settler counterparts. As Phung (2011 as cited in Dahmoon, p. 24) implies, there are degrees of being a settler. My positionality as a settler of colour makes me both a victim and facilitator of white

settler colonialism. This positionality grants me limited settler privilege in the form of benefiting from the violence enacted on Indigenous peoples while simultaneously being subjected to racial inequities (Jafri, 2012, n.p. as cited in Dahmoon, 2015, p. 25). I have been socialized within colonial systems of power, knowledge, and discourse, and in recognizing that, I am empowered to challenge my own settler complicity by questioning traditional and contemporary settler ways of being, doing, and thinking, even anti-racist approaches, and supporting the other inhabitants of these lands. This research reflects that.

### **How to Research Collective Memory: A Geography of Metaphors**

An apt and commonly used metaphor to describe the mnemohistorical processes that occur in space over time is the term ‘palimpsest’ (Pirker, Rode, & Lichtenwagner, 2019, p. 2). It encapsulates the practices of overwriting and retracing collective memory (ibid., p. 2), indicating that in as much as certain collective memories can be forgotten by way of non-maintenance, they can also resurface and be recontextualized for the purposes of the present (Marcel & Mucchielli, 2008, p. 148). Thus, forgotten pasts, such as Indigenous histories, can eventually be crystallized and mobilized to suit contemporary needs. In a colonial context, they may manifest as appeasement and settler allyship through recognition or symbols of Indigenous resistance and survival.

Nora (1989, p. 7) also develops the neologism ‘*lieux de mémoire*’ (sites of memory) to describe “where memory crystallizes and secretes itself.” *Lieux de mémoire* can be categorized as material, functional, and symbolic (ibid., pp. 18 – 22). Material *lieux de mémoire* refer to sites such as cemeteries and generations, where collective memories are tangibly accessible, while functional *lieux de mémoire* are sites dedicated to preservation or pedagogy, such as textbooks

and certain associations (ibid., pp. 17, 22 – 23). Lastly, symbolic *lieux de mémoire* refers to a group's shared historical experiences that they may or may not have participated in themselves but nonetheless function as symbols for the group (ibid., pp. 19, 23). As Nijhawan, Winland & Wüstenberg (2018, pp. 350 – 351) generally define it, a site of memory is a place where individuals and groups materialize their understanding of the past through commemorative practices that are subject to cultural, political, and social changes. In this sense, the notion of *lieux de mémoire* expands Hobsbawm and Ranger's (2012) desacralization of 'traditions' to include an innumerable account of what and where collective memory is.

However, as Legg (2005) points out, Nora's assumptions and biases regarding nostalgia restrict the possible *lieux de mémoire* to those only espousing the predominant and institutionalized narratives of national memory, ignoring subaltern and resistant collective memories. Legg (2005, p. 495) postulates that "[i]f history is produced from a vantage point of patronage, this opens the possibility for counterhistories, for alternative patrons, and knowledges that play to a different tune." What Legg (2005) is ultimately exposing is Nora's (1989) neglect of the power relations embedded in history- and memory-making processes; that extreme measures are implemented to discipline and govern the 'official' civic past. In this way, Nora's (1989) notion of *lieux de mémoire* can be expanded to include sites of counter-memories, which are sites that disrupt the dominant historical continuity, counterhistories, which oppose being forgotten and reread events through different narratives, and temporal reterritorializations, which are the non-traditional spaces of memory, such as a carnival and a rally (Legg, 2005, pp. 495 – 6).

Nijhawan, Winland & Wüstenberg (2018) also detail some inadequacies in Nora's assumptions and conclusions about *lieux de mémoire*. For one, Nijhawan, Winland &

Wüstenberg (2018, p. 351) recount that for Nora, the nation-state and elites are prominent actors in the production of sites of memory and collective memory itself. In other words, the state and those in power can ultimately impose official memory and influence vernacular memory.

However, locating memory-making practices and the processes by which they become realized solely in the control of the state and elite actors fails to recognize the transnational and local aspects of collective memory. For example, Levy & Sznaider (2001: 2005 as cited in Nijhawan, Winland & Wüstenberg, 2018, p. 351) argue that the commemoration of the Holocaust transcends national boundaries and has become what they term a 'global memory imperative,' a central component of legitimizing a global human rights regime. Memory narratives such as the Holocaust serve to reconstitute the image of the genocidal state and the imaginaries of the perpetrators and compliers, such that they are perceived by the international community as being benevolent, self-reflexive, and publicly committed to reconciliation with its past (Nijhawan, Winland & Wüstenberg, 2018, p. 351). The new image offers opportunities for international co-operation, even if the power relationships that contributed to or led to the genocide persist. The conceptualization of mnemonic processes as hegemonic also conceals the complex interactions between non-state and non-elite actors, such as migrants and diasporas. Rothberg & Yildiz (2011) analyze how, through the *Stadtteilmütter* project, Turkish and Kurdish migrant women, particularly mothers, operationalize national memories of the Holocaust to educate themselves and their communities on Germany's National Socialist past and creatively assert and reconstitute their citizenship and migrant subjectivity in German society. *Lieux de mémoire* should be considered multidirectional, multiscalar, and multiform to adequately account for the complex processes of collective memory.



For the purposes of this research, I employed the above metaphors to survey the collective memories embedded in Nathan Phillips Square. The palimpsest metaphor emphasized the history of a space and the dissection of its disparate, and sometimes subtle, mnemohistorical components, while the notion of *lieux de mémoire* outlined how to identify what is a mnemohistorical object. Archival research of City Council's and other relevant departments and agencies' meeting agendas, minutes, and reports was conducted to track the rationalized additions, creations, omissions, and removals of mnemohistorical objects in Nathan Phillips Square. News reports and videos were also considered to further contextualize and supplement any empirical findings. Furthermore, some of these indigenization projects were collaborative, indicating that certain Indigenous organizations were consulted or were involved in some capacity. The Medicine Wheel in NPS is one example, as indicated on its plaque. Thus, I also sifted through the consulted parties' archives to elaborate on their contributions and positions, when applicable.

Moreover, the spatial relations of collective memory need to be considered to understand what narratives are being expressed. Dwyer & Alderman (2008a, 2008b) have organized three common metaphors for analyzing such relations. They are 'as text,' 'as arena,' and 'as performance.' 'As text' means that "landscapes, while initially authored, are in turn reproduced by the myriad social actors who subsequently interpret these sites" (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008b, p. 169). This approach examines the memoryscape as having different stories manifested within it, varying in particulars but united under common themes (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008a, p. 100). Alternatively, the 'as text' metaphor can be understood as a palimpsest, as previously described, whereby different collective memories are rewritten and reinterpreted repeatedly over time. This approach understands commemorative spaces as being 'written,' imbued with intertextual and

subtextual collective memories presented in and through space and intended to be 'read.' For example, Palonen (2008) conducts a textual analysis of memorials and street names in post-Communist Budapest, Hungary, demonstrating the change in expressed narratives during a time of political transition. Dwyer & Alderman (2008a) also provide an in-depth textual examination of the American South's memoryscape by looking at how Black histories become imprinted onto the cityscape and the subsequent interpretations and reactions to them.

'As arena' emphasizes the political struggles and debates surrounding the site of memory as presented. This approach challenges the traditional dichotomous and hegemonic relationship of the 'elites' and the 'populous,' whereby the control of the memoryscape is determined by economic, political, and social capital (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008b, p. 168). Rather, the memory-making process involves a plethora of actors with differing interests, collective memories, and varying degrees of capital, contributing to the dynamism of collective memory beyond a psychological and individualistic lens. For example, van Assche *et al.* (2009) illustrate how certain memory mechanisms, such as attachment to past glories and deep forgetting, complicate co-operation among different stakeholders regarding heritage preservation, spatial planning, and urban reconstruction in Romania's Danube Delta region.

'As performance' visualizes the commemorative space as a stage, both literally and figuratively. These spaces become transformed and imbued with collective memories through bodily performances, such as public dramas, historical re-enactments, protests, civil ceremonies, and festivals (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008b, p. 173). Fortier (2021) provides an example of resistance in the form of graffiti on plaques narrating Canadian national memories of the Don River in Toronto. Likewise, Chi (2001) and Hoelscher (2008) describe separate performance resistances through media, with the former focusing on the photographic and cinematic aspects

of memorializing the Nanjing Massacre in China and the latter investigating Daniel Hernández-Salazar's photographic installations called *Street Angel* in Guatemala City. Performances in commemorative spaces can be particularly sensitive to cultural norms, especially when the imbued collective memories are deemed integral to the nation's identity. Questions of sanctification (how best to worship), sanitization (how best to remember), and securitization (how best to protect) are consequently integrated into the site/sight in question. For example, Spuznar (2010) highlights how competing claims and demands regarding the securitization of the National War Memorial in Ottawa, Canada, were articulated through mass media, affecting the audience's perceptions of and interactions with the commemorative space. Alternatively, Edkins (2013) highlights the sanctification processes occurring at the London Cenotaph in London, England, and the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., through the practical commemoration of trauma, such as flowers and wreath-laying and the invocation of emotions among visitors.

For the purposes of this research, I mainly employed, to various degrees, the metaphors 'as text' and 'as performance' to examine how the settler state visualizes and memorializes indigeneity through its collective (settler) memory. Regarding the metaphor 'as arena,' my focus is on how the settler-colonial state comes to understand and portrays the Indigenous subject in public spaces, but that does not exclude the possibility of tension or alignments among actors, such as the municipal government and Indigenous actors involved in the project. The metaphor 'as arena' was used mostly in situations mentioning Indigenous peoples and their input. Nonetheless, I autoethnographically employed these metaphors to become an embodied tourist, fully immersing myself in the experiential tourism located in Nathan Phillips Square. This part of the research consisted of three trips to the square. The first was during non-festive times when no celebrations or commemorations dedicated to Indigenous peoples took place, while the second

was during festive times when celebrations or commemorations dedicated to Indigenous peoples occurred. Non-festive-time visits occurred throughout the year, mainly in October 2021 and April 2022. Festive time took place during National Indigenous Awareness Month, June 2022. Conducting these two separate temporal fieldworks reveals the active and passive dissemination and inclusion of Indigenous pasts and indigeneity in traditionally settler spaces by the settler-colonial state in NPS.

Commemorative spaces are rich in power relations. As Dwyer & Alderman (2008b) state, “[b]y reflecting *and* refracting cultural norms, memorials contribute to continuity *and* change in society” (p. 174, emphasis in original; see also Dwyer & Alderman, 2008a, p. 104). They iterate what pasts are ‘official’ while providing the mnemohistorical resources for its resistance. Like collective memory, as I describe further in Chapter 2, commemorative spaces are contextual, strategically reinterpreted and reformulated in new ways to reflect socio-cultural changes in society, demonstrating their malleability and susceptibility to current priorities and sensitivities despite their supposed apoliticality and permanence (Foote & Azaryahu, 2007, p. 130; Dwyer & Alderman, 2008b, pp. 167 – 8). When collective memory becomes emplaced in space, it does not only communicate its commissioners’ original intent, contrary to Halbwachs’ positivist assumption (Assman, 1995; Bilsel, 2017, p. 6). Rather, it becomes seemingly fixed social markers with particular meanings that continue to adapt according to the dominant ideas of their socio-political environment. In other words, crystallized collective memories narrate a particular history that is reflective of the beliefs, morals, and values of the people telling it; however, that narrative and its importance change as society evolves. Thus, questions such as ‘what objects are emplaced in space?’, ‘what are their physical and symbolic relationships with other nearby objects and the city as a whole?’, and ‘what narratives are being reproduced through these

objects and their relationships?’ consequently become relevant when analyzing crystallized collective memory. The ultimate question is, then, ‘why these collective memories, and why in these forms?’ Answering these questions illustrates the mnemohistorical relationship between society, its imagined past, and space.

### **Indigenization and Public Spaces: Thoughts on Chosen Site**

I chose to examine Nathan Phillips Square based on two factors. Firstly, NPS is intimately located within globalized tourism networks. The civic square receives more than 1.5 million annual visitors (City of Toronto, n.d.a). The high visitor population results in an increased possibility of encountering the host’s—in this case, Toronto’s—conception and portrayal of indigeneity, which as a consequence of globalization, allows for the increased engagement with this type of socially constructed identity at the local level and its efficient and amplified dissemination through globalized channels of communication (Jacobs, 1996, pp. 34 – 35). Indeed, “globalization refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness” (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 2003, p. 67), increasingly becoming characterized by a high degree of fluidity, or according to Bauman (2000), liquidity, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, as Cohen & Cohen (2012, p. 2177) describe, the contemporary world is characterized by “...accelerated economic, social and cultural change [*sic*], driven by the process of globalization, rapid technological progress, and the communication and information revolutions.” As a result, states and other organizational entities respond according to the fast-paced and ever-changing circumstances of globalized connections. This process entails a reconstitution of rationalizations, subjectivities, and power/knowledge relationships, such as those constructed through tourism.

Tourism also commodifies and marketizes 'authentic' encounters within an experiential economy, in which the tourist encounters what the industry manufactures to be 'authentic.' Whether these encounters are by chance, planned or arranged, and whether they are once, reoccurring or irregular, collaborative, complementary or adversarial, they are foundational to the tourist experience (King, 2015, p. 498). Encounters inform and reinforce perceptions of the 'hosts' and 'guests,' which are dualistic categories that are central to social analyses between residents and visitors (Smith, 1977 as cited in King, 2015, p. 497). For example, Laxson (1991) examines upper-middle class US tourists during their brief encounters with New Mexico's 'authentic' indigeneity and Native American 'hosts.' She concludes that misconceptions of the 'Indian' continue to be prevalent among tourists, and their Eurocentric worldviews are reinforced through these encounters. I would also add that non-encounters are as important, for the non-recognition of certain individuals in (touristic) spaces leads to their forgetting in spatially embedded narratives. For example, if the unhoused were relegated to the fringes where tourists would never or barely encounter them, say the structures behind an ice-skating rental like in NPS, the unhoused would become non-existent within socio-spatial discourses and relationships crafted for and within these touristic spaces. They would not belong there. They would not even be imagined as belonging there. Thus, the host's actions in and portrayals of certain spaces warrant considerable attention. Hosts impart certain information about the site/sight to guests through various encounters. Such encounters can be in the form of bodily or symbolic presences, such as clothing, events, flags, food, phrases, plaques, performances, and structures. These encounters constitute a spatial discourse about a chosen topic, such as histories and subjectivities, delimiting what tourists and even residents can discuss, imagine, and know regarding the place and its (non)occupants.

Second, the indigenization process in NPS has recently accelerated, with the annual Sunrise Ceremony beginning in 2011, the permanent raising of the five Indigenous flags in 2017, the inclusion of the Medicine Wheel in 2018, and finally, the projected construction of the Spirit Garden in 2024, along with Indigenous events and City proclamations interspersed. These monuments to indigeneity, place-making and place-keeping efforts, and rituals, all of which mainly connect to the trauma of residential schools, indicate an evolving memory culture in the City of Toronto that recalls and brings into the present Indigenous pasts as a means of reconciliation. Both settler and Indigenous collaborators of these events and projects suggest that remembering the past is a key component of revealing the truth about settler colonialism. However, they differ in what the *lieux de mémoire* is supposed to represent. For settler collaborators, these installations remind them of their responsibility to maintain a good relationship with Indigenous peoples and prevent the violence of the past from repeating. Meanwhile, for Indigenous collaborators, these initiatives, particularly the Spirit Garden, over which they have more control, indicate a positive turn in their relationship with settlers and the colonial institution, but it remains to be seen whether settlers will continue to perceive them negatively. Nonetheless, these changes restructure the mnemonic discourses traditionally reinforced by the settler-colonial state by reconfiguring social references to reflect particular articulations of and relationships to its colonial past. In other words, these transformations alter, but usually for the purposes of maintaining, colonial narratives and subjectivities connected to the land, place, and space. Though, it is not always the case, as the Spirit Garden in Chapter 5 illustrates. The collective memories emplaced in these spaces are recontextualized to reimagine settler-Indigenous relationships in a time when the settler-colonial state is challenged by those it has traumatized. In a cyclical fashion, then, the state translates these mnemonic changes as

crystallized memories, or *lieux de mémoire*, such as ceremonies, flags, performances, and presences, affecting how tourists and residents interact and perceive indigeneity in the city and as a whole. I elaborate more on the histories, rationalizations, and effects of the indigenization of NPS in Chapters 4 and 5.

Being a public space, Nathan Phillips Square is a prime site of analysis for the changing socio-spatial relationships between the settler-colonial state and Indigenous peoples. NPS also illustrates the ongoing mnemohistorical transformations occurring during an identity crisis in a settler-colonial state, contributing to the re-subjectification of colonial subjectivities. As Megill (1998, p. 40) states, “where identity is problematized, memory is valorized.” In other words, whenever a group desires to reinvent its identity, citing cultural and mnemonic dissonance, such as incongruent historical ideals, it often draws from the past for inspiration. Currently, the main source of memory for the Canadian settler-colonial state is the cultural and physical genocide caused by residential schools.<sup>2</sup> The indigenization of NPS is a form of reconciliation, particularly in the reclamation of space—not land—for Indigenous peoples to speak the truth, be heard by settlers, and be publicly recognized. Representation in public spaces and the recognition that comes from it is important, as it establishes a sense of belonging for those represented, but we should question ‘how and why this representation is being conducted?’ to understand the rationalizations behind its management.

### **Data Collection**

Using the snowball sampling technique, I interviewed relevant actors, particularly those from the municipal government of Toronto, via Zoom and phone calls to corroborate any

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<sup>2</sup> See National Centre *for Truth and Reconciliation* (2021), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s final report, and Anishinabek Nation (2020), Walmsley (2005), among many others, for explanations on the individual and intergenerational trauma caused by Indigenous Residential Schools.



findings. And since this research engages with indigeneity, these interviews may or may not include Indigenous peoples or organizations who either consulted or were directly involved in the indigenization of NPS. The interviews were conducted over a five-month period, from April to August 2022, totalling three interviews, with one from City Council, one from the Indigenous Affairs Office, and one from Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre. Each research participant represents major actors within the indigenization of NPS, as each individual has, at some time or another, been connected to or directly worked on these initiatives. The audio was recorded using an audio recording device or via Zoom's recording option. My questions mainly included those pertaining to their events/projects that were in NPS, such as their involvement with the event/project, the purpose of the event/project, the mnemohistorical and spatial decisions surrounding the event/project, and any future projects.

### **Purpose of the Research and Outline**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the City of Toronto construes and constructs indigeneity and its settler-colonial past in Nathan Phillips Square through its collective memories. In Canada, like many settler-colonial states, collective memory operates within colonial systems of power, knowledge, and discourse, functioning to reproduce itself ideologically. Commemorative spaces, such as those in Nathan Phillips Square, dedicated to Indigenous peoples and their histories must be critically analyzed to dissect how mnemohistorical power relations delimit possible discourses and transformative practices and maintain colonial relations between settlers, Indigenous peoples, and the lands that both inhabit. These spaces are fraught with colonial discourses, knowledges, and power relations that depend on and inform the settler-colonial state's perceptions of the past espoused as the 'official' history

of the city and the nation. The acts of remembering and forgetting are more than psychological phenomena. It can be a socio-political technology meant to legitimize and delegitimize claims to histories, identities, and spaces. Thus, through the act of deconstructing the settler-colonial state's collective memory and their crystallizations, anti- and decolonial 'practices of freedom' can be further imagined, explored, and prefigured (Foucault, 1987). I ultimately aim to answer the question, "How are Indigenous people represented and recognized in Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square, and how does such representation reflect or disrupt rationalizations of governing the Canadian colony?"

Currently, there are developments in how settlers and the settler-colonial state perceive Indigenous people's relations to cities. Despite many Indigenous individuals living, working, and playing in urban areas, most settlers imagine them residing in the countryside, in the Elsewhere, in the Wild (Forbes, 2001, p. xxi; Peters, 1998). However, the recognition of Indigenous peoples is increasing in urban governance. For example, in 2017, the City Council of Toronto, at the request of the Aboriginal Affairs Committee and Toronto's Indigenous community, established the Indigenous Affairs Office to support municipal work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, break down administrative and financial barriers to accessibility to and fulfillment of Indigenous projects, and strengthen the City's relationship with its Indigenous population (Aboriginal Affairs Committee, 2017a; City of Toronto, 2018; Indigenous Affairs Office, n.d.). Furthermore, the city has developed other initiatives to memorialize and recognize Indigenous presences and histories throughout the city, among which include ceremonial spaces, festivals, place name changes, and symbolic representations in other public spaces across the city. These projects have become more frequent as Canada's colonial past is increasingly questioned and contested by both Indigenous peoples and other anti-racist and anti-colonial social movements.

In the following chapters, I critically engage with the settler-colonial state's use of the collective memory of residential schools in Nathan Phillips Square. The civic square is a prominent public space in Toronto that manifests and transmits, to a substantial degree, the settler-colonial state's portrayals of Indigenous people through multiscale channels of information dissemination. NPS is also experiencing indigenization transformations that involve the selection and (re)placement of embedded collective memories, which can be branded as an effort to transform discourses regarding indigeneity and Indigenous people's social position in Toronto—and Canada by extension.

In Chapter 2, I expand on collective memory by exploring traditional and contemporary conceptualizations and arguments. Collective memory is essentially the collective consciousness of a group, consisting of important social reference points that allow a group to determine their social location, their collective identity, and their needs and wants for their ideological maintenance and reproduction. Collective memory operates to inculcate group cohesion through a collective association of group members with a common—and sometimes idealized—past, which is deeply involved with power relations in the present (Bruyneel, 2016, p. 353). After, I discuss the correlative relationship between collective memory and the city. As Crinson (2005, p. xiv) states, buildings, monuments, places and all other commemorative spaces and practices that are located in the city function as a discursive or rhetorical form of mapping the patterns of past deeds and events onto the cityscape. I then reconceptualize collective memory within systems of power, knowledge, and discourse to illustrate how collective memory functions as a social technology. Doing so provides a theoretical framework for analyzing NPS and the mnemohistorical relationalities that arise from the exercise of power/knowledge through and in these spaces.

Chapter 3 explores discussions of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism is undoubtedly about land, particularly who has access to land and whose claims to the land are legitimate. I present various articulations of settler colonialism that are related to this research. I explore the logics and practices underpinning colonial and settler-colonial cities, examining their positions as nodes of empire (Cowen, 2019, p. 473). I follow with a discussion on the ‘politics of recognition,’ exploring its tenets, critiques, and potential. After, I describe tourism’s role in settler colonialism and its potential as a site of resistance for the oppressed. Lastly, borrowing from Bruyneel (2016; see also Bruyneel, 2017), I illustrate the repressive and productive aspects of settler memory, i.e., the collective memory of the colony. Settler memory legitimizes the colonial hegemonic rule over Indigenous peoples and the appropriation and exploitation of Indigenous lands by officializing a particularly colonial past that highlights the achievements of settlers and the settler-colonial state and disavows the historical violence enacted against Indigenous people and the land. Settler memory allows the settler-colonial state to rationalize the colonial regime through mnemohistorical justifications. Wolfe (2006, p. 388) is correct when he characterizes settler colonialism as a “structure not an event,” as settler colonialism is realized through multiple techniques of power. It systematically operates to eliminate Indigenous peoples and provide settlers unhindered control over Indigenous lands, and Toronto has traditionally been and continues to be complicit in Canada’s settler-colonial project.

Chapter 4 details my investigations of Nathan Phillips Square. Through the metaphors of ‘as text’ and ‘as performance,’ along with the metaphor of ‘as arena’ to some extent, I illustrate how these spaces reinforce the discursive transformations regarding the temporal and social position of Indigenous people in Canadian settler society. Specifically, the Sunrise Ceremony, the Indigenous flags, and the Medicine Wheel culturalize Indigenous people, incorporating them

within a liberal multicultural framework to make them more understandable for settler audiences. The City of Toronto's discourse of Indigenous people revolves around the beauty, diversity, and vibrancy of their cultures, accentuated with mentions of their contemporary existence, suggesting that Indigenous people have been unjustly excluded from urban spaces that accept all cultures. Furthering this rebranding campaign is the inclusion of the collective memory of residential schools, with many of these initiatives having some connection to it, as they are reconciliatory projects. However, as Tatour (2019, p. 1572) explains, the culturalization of indigeneity serves to confine Indigenous interests over land rights within state-centric terms and channels. These initiatives normalize the presence of Indigenous people within the city's everyday, acting to assimilate Indigenous cultures within the larger Canadian multiculturalism.

Chapter 5 outlines the empirical work conducted for the Spirit Garden. The Spirit Garden, or the Indigenous Residential School Survivors (IRSS) Legacy project, is a collaborative project between Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (TCFNCC) and the City of Toronto, with TCFNCC leading the initiative. In this chapter, I look at how the Spirit Garden operates as a form of memory activism, as Gutman & Wüstenberg (2021) define it. At its centre, the Restoration of Identity (ROI) sculpture, or the Turtle, recalls the collective memory of residential schools. Although not to the same extent or manner, the Spirit Garden uses the collective memory of residential schools as a teaching and truth-telling opportunity to settler audiences but simultaneously, its incorporation of cultural imagery and symbols signal an adoption of the local and national strategy to transform Canada's settler-colonial past through culturalist perspectives. In their memory activism, TCFNCC supports, in part, the discursive changes initiated by the settler-colonial institution through the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission (TRC) but leaves room for diverse resistances in the future, as it is informed by and ingrained within deep Indigenous knowledge.

The collective memory of residential schools is only one traumatic and violent event among many. There is a myriad of others. Palmater (2014) explores legislative violence against Canada's Indigenous peoples. Walmsley (2005) looks at colonial violence through Canada's child welfare system. Razack (2014) investigates spatial violence in Saskatchewan in the form of 'Starlight Tours.' Pratt (2005) surveys geographies of abandonment of women, including Indigenous women, in Vancouver, and many more. Reconciliation is a practice that confronts and addresses all historical and contemporary violence against Indigenous people (TVO Docs, 2019). The onus should not be on Indigenous people to express their traumas. Rather, the settler-colonial state should actively work to dismantle and unlearn colonial ways of being, doing, and thinking to ensure that systemic violence—economic, political, and mnemohistorical—is never repeated. Ultimately, Indigenous peoples know their relations to the lands of Tkaronto. Settlers do not. These commemorative spaces and practices should not be another means for settlers to position themselves as innocent by being explicitly 'inclusive' (Tuck & Yang, 2012). They should be opportunities to engage with and adopt anti- and decolonial systems that recognize all of history, not solely the settler mnemohistory that valorizes Euro-Americanness.

Collective memory allows us to display and recognize what and who matters. Reconciliation is an engagement with "historical memory, collective identity and contemporary relations of power shaped by the past" (Blustein, 2008 as cited in Verdeja, 2017, p. 229). Furthermore, collective memory is never absolute, for it can always be corrected by history employed during struggles (Blustein, 2008, p. 178), like with the efforts to institutionally remember residential schools and the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. There

are possible points of mnemohistorical resistances and resolutions that allow for, in part, a reconciliatory relationship between the settler-colonial state, Indigenous people, and the land. However, changing collective memory should not be a panacea. Rather, it is a step among many on the path to healing. Collective memory, especially subaltern ones, plays an important role in recognizing the truth and enacting reconciliation, for it can educate settlers on the *truth* in history and challenge dominant settler memory. My goal for this research is to shed light on a fundamental process of colonialism and explore my research as a space for anti- and decolonial resistance. As William Faulkner once famously wrote in *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), “the past is never dead.” It is never hidden away in the crevices of our minds, cities, or nations.

The past is the present.

## Chapter Two – Collective Memory: The Contemporized Past

Who am I? Such a question is philosophically loaded, but for French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877 – 1945), the ‘I’ derives from a collective consciousness that maintains itself intergenerationally through socializing processes. Halbwachs’ conception of a collective memory, elaborated below, shifted the conversation regarding collective knowledge from a purely phylogenetic perspective, where memories are encoded in genomes and become inherited (known as ‘inheritable’ or ‘racial’ memory), to a socio-cultural focus. In his attempts to connect identity, memory, and society, Halbwachs contributed to the growth of, if not the inception of, the sociology of memory.

The purpose of this chapter is to sift through memory studies’ disparate literature to elaborate on the various intellectual and practical approaches of collective memory. I begin with a broad investigation of collective memory. Any inquiry into collective memory requires an engagement with Halbwachs’ works.<sup>3</sup> In particular, *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* (1925) and *La Mémoire Collective* (1950) discuss his theoretical framework and empirical evidence for understanding his notion of ‘collective memory.’ Of note, *La Mémoire Collective* (1950) is a theoretical break from Halbwachs’ earlier work *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* (1925). In the latter, the individual is almost, if not totally, subsumed into the group. In the former, the individual has the autonomy of choosing which ‘point of view’ (i.e., collective memory) to employ depending on the social relations in which they find themselves. Additionally, I itemize three interrelated features of collective memory, allowing for easier identification of collective memory and how it functions within identity- and group-making processes, or as Beyen (2015, p.

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<sup>3</sup> Many of Halbwachs’ works are unavailable in English. The ones cited here are all in French and were translated and paraphrased by the author.



8) terms, ‘mnemonic socialization.’ Following that, I touch on the spatialization of collective memory in the city, which will transition into my exploration of the link between collective memory and tourism. As Marschall (2012, pp. 324 – 325) stresses, “[m]emory is an important part of the constitution of the tourism landscape itself,” as collective memory provides the mnemohistorical resources to produce profitable ‘memory products,’ such as great historical civilizations, legendary cultural heroes and ‘primitive’ lost worlds, within a globalized ‘experiential economy.’ Looking at this connection will inform my investigation of Nathan Phillips Square since, as iterated before, the location is a prominent touristic space in Toronto. Then, I outline Foucault’s conception of subjectification (also known as subjectivation or subjection) and its relations to power, knowledge, and discourse. In doing so, I establish the theoretical framework by which I reconceptualize collective memory as a social technology.

Often, especially at the national level, the group’s narratives maintain an ‘official’ history that narrowly focuses on specific concepts, events, locations, objects, and peoples that emulate, to some degree, the group’s core beliefs, morals, and values. Indeed, as Nora (1989) postulates, ‘official’ history used by the nation-state is the collective memory of the nation, or national memory, espoused as the intellectual and secular project of ‘history’ to inculcate a national identity among its citizens. In this way, the present according to the nation, or how things are, authoritatively demands a historical justification because to position the present in nothing, in no past, means to declare the present as arbitrary, as if simultaneously having no meaning and every meaning. In other words, for the nation to associate itself with an identity legitimately, it uses the past to inform its present decisions, all while refocusing the past according to present needs. Commemorative practices and spaces, such as holidays, monuments, names, and performances, come to mind because, in their seemingly apoliticality and permanent nature (Foote & Azaryahu,

2007, p. 130), decisions were made that reflected a certain imaginary, meant to illustrate a particular vision of the past constructed from specific collective memories. The present is not made arbitrarily but purposefully. Collective memory operates within systems of power, knowledge, and discourse to legitimize a collective identity by providing a sense of historical continuity and contemporary presence (Sak & Senyapili, 2019, pp. 342 – 343), as well as connecting a past and identity to a space (Bruyneel, 2016, p. 352), i.e., a particular reality.

Collective memory essentially answers the questions, ‘Who are we?’ and ‘what motivates our present decisions?’ Understanding such articulations of the past illuminates fantasies, fables, myths, narratives, stories, and tales of the past that the collectivity has internalized and normalized. It reveals who the heroes, victims and villains are, what events, people, objects and concepts should be memorialized, and how these collective memories are discursively and non-discursively challenged, forgotten, and/or supported. These narratives inform how actions and solutions are conceived and implemented in the present and how futurities are (re)imagined.

### **Remembering the Past in the Present: On Collective Memory**

What is collective memory? In the 1920s and 30s, Maurice Halbwachs developed the concept of ‘collective memory.’ In his theorization, Halbwachs (1925; see also Halbwachs, 1950) suggests that individuals *and* collectivities remember. Just as the aims of psychologists, psychoanalysts, and neuroscientists is to map the terrains of individual memory, identifying the various cerebral and psychological processes through which a person remembers, scholars of collective memory focus on the social processes through which collectivities understand the past and memorialize it through various commemorative forms (Prager, 2001, p. 2223).

When Halbwachs (1925, p. 110) discusses familial collective memory, he maintains that however one enters a family, whether by birth, marriage, or otherwise, one finds themselves a part of a group that is governed, not by personal feelings, but by rules and customs developed intergenerationally well before any member. Furthermore, Halbwachs (1950, p. 76) argues that the foundational element of the group is an interest, an order of ideas and preoccupations, that without doubt, are reflected in the personalities of the group's members but are nonetheless impersonal to conserve their meanings and signs, even if the members change or are substituted. He suggests that collective memory does not solely belong to any individual member. Instead, collective memory attaches itself to a social unity, such as a class, family, and religious community, regardless of spatial and temporal constraints and signifiers to construct a connection between the present and specific (and often socially charged) events in the past that have symbolic meaning to the collectivity (Gronbeck, 1995, p. 7).

Collective memory allows groups to develop an ever-evolving understanding of themselves in relation to other social groups, society as a whole, and what is necessary for their maintenance and survival (Marcel & Mucchielli, 2008, p. 144). They are the narrative structures that inform the group of their essential beliefs, morals, and values (Prager, 2001, p. 2223), while also allowing the group to establish a sense of place, time-consciousness, and social differentiation (Kurtz, 2020, p. 269). However, when entering a new period of life, whether caused by cultural, economic, political, social, or technological developments, the group may transform accordingly, becoming increasingly distant from the collective memory they hold dear. These changes cause cultural and mnemonic dissonance. Collective memory is always contextual (Gronbeck, 1995, p. 7), always providing the group with the 'raw' mnemonic material necessary to re-subjectify, or re-envision, themselves according to present problems, needs, and wants. By

doing so, though, the collectivity reconfigures its collective memories, evacuating them of particular meanings and reimbuing them with more acceptable ones, or excavating and reinterpreting older collective memories, which in turn, recomposes the collectivity's image of the past (Halbwachs, 1925, p. 7; Gronbeck. 1995, p. 7; Linke, 2001, p. 2219; Marcel & Mucchielli, 2008, p. 144).

Collective memory can be deduced through three interrelated features. Firstly, collective memory represents the group's collective consciousness and therefore is collectively and dialectically (re)created to reproduce the group ideologically across generations (Halbwachs, 1925; Halbwachs, 1950). Reese & Fivush (2008) detail the development of collective memory within the family, while Wertsch & Roediger (2008) recognize museums, monuments and memorials, history textbooks, and national holidays as some spaces where collective memory is reproduced and contested. Furthermore, as Bruyneel (2016, p. 353) maintains, "authoritative claims to the meaning of the past are a product of and also shape power relations, inequalities, and oppressions in the present, while also serving as sites with the potential for liberation." Thus, while the group aspires for ideological cohesion, with collective memory and its crystallized forms as its technique of power, struggles over collective memory can occur at multiple levels, spaces, and times and include various socio-political actors, ranging from politicians to activists to family members to institutions.

Secondly, collective memory acts as social reference points for the group. Indeed, Halbwachs (1941, p. 7, italics added, as cited in Schwartz *et al.*, 1986, p. 149) maintains,

"If, as we believe, collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past, if it adapts the image of ancient facts to the beliefs and spiritual needs of the present, then a knowledge

of the origin of these facts must be secondary, if not altogether useless, for the reality of the past is no longer *in* the past.”

In other words, collective memory’s primary concern is not its origins or historical continuity, but the beliefs, morals, and values embedded in each story deemed important to the group in the present. As Thelen (1989, p. 1125) concisely explains, “[i]n a study of memory the important question is not how accurately a recollection fitted some piece of a past reality, but why historical actors constructed their memories in a particular way at a particular time.” The fables, narratives, myths, stories, and tales a group promotes and accepts to be true are of most import because with each reiteration, the principles entrenched in the story become disseminated, adopted, internalized, and sometimes contested by various socio-political actors. Doing so allows for the continuous ideological reproduction of the group. In this sense, collective memory functions textually to generate narratives filled with the group’s principles (Beiner, 2007, pp. 25 – 26). Collective memory can even be conceived as the justification necessary to support the group’s claim to a collective identity (Boyarin, 1994, pp. 15 – 16), as these stories define the group’s “essence,” allowing them to think of themselves as a cohesive entity, united under a common, but sometimes fictitious, philosophy and past.

However, collective memory can also appear in non-verbal forms. Like narratives, physicalized memory acts as a signifier, visually retelling the group’s values. They are infused with important narratives of the past worthy of remembering and crystallizing, such as through art, celebrations, memorials, monuments, museums, and textbooks (Schwartz *et al.*, 1986; Nora, 1989; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). As stated before, Nora (1989) calls these crystallized forms of collective memory *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory). When collective memory becomes indexed onto space as crystallized mnemonic objects, as *lieux de mémoire*, the beliefs, morals,

and values instilled in them survive in the *longue durée* (Bilsel, 2017). They become imbued with an air of authority, permanency, and apoliticality despite constantly being subjected to dominant social ideas (Halbwachs, 1925, p. 7; Foote & Azaryahu, 2007, p. 130; Dwyer & Alderman, 2008b, pp. 167 – 168). No matter what form collective memory takes, it functions the same as social reference points for the group to which it belongs. These references inform the collectivity of what matters to them while creating a sense of place and a shared past reflective of the group.

Thirdly, collective memory is contextual and changes only when necessary to adapt. In the act of remembering, collective memory becomes coordinated spatially and temporally within a framework of knowledge, i.e., the group's set of social reference points, to construct relationalities between the collectivity and others (Vromen, 1993, p. 511). Furthermore, in identifying characteristics of cultural memory, a form of collective memory, Assman (1995, p. 130) claims that cultural memory "always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation." Bartlett (1932 as cited in Prager, 2001, p. 2223) also argues that remembering the past is dependent on frameworks of understanding located in the present. Although collective memory, for the most part, remains conservative to ensure ideological cohesion and continuity, the group must collectively and discursively reconceptualize and update their collective memory according to the group's present needs, lest they risk mnemonic dissonance. In other words, collective memory "requires ongoing articulation" to remain contemporarily relevant (Sak & Senyapili, 2019, p. 343). Collective memory is a continuously evolving project that remakes a group's history in relation to the present. In this system of dynamic social reference points, collective memory can be understood as meaningful to the group.

Now, collective memory is not without its contentions. Wertsch & Roediger (2008, pp. 319 – 320) differentiate collective memory from collective remembering by classifying the former as a static base of knowledge and the latter as a process through which collective memory is contested. The importance of such categorization is evident, as focusing on collective remembering allows for more emphasis on the social and political negotiations and reinterpretations surrounding symbolically important concepts, events, locations, people, and objects. Collective remembering is akin to the metaphor ‘as arena’ introduced in Chapter 1. However, collective memory and collective remembering are co-constitutive, and their separation risks isolating the intimate connections between the two. Collective remembering operates within the framework of knowledge to reconstitute the group’s social reference points, while collective memory influences the direction of collective remembering by providing the mnemohistorical materials and spaces necessary for the renegotiation process.

Furthermore, as Russel (2006, p. 796) notes, the individual has no independent memory, or individual memory, to speak of according to Halbwachs’ conception of collective memory because of the shared nature of reconstructing past experiences (i.e., making collective memory or collective remembering). Kansteiner (2002, p. 181) expresses the same concern. Although there are inherent differences in individual temperaments, which is the focus of individual psychology, Halbwachs conceptualizes individualized understandings as offering little insights into the group’s actions, for “their nature is entirely reworked and transformed by social life” (Halbwachs, *Esquisse* 209 as cited in Marcel & Mucchielli, 2008, p. 141). This anti-individualistic position can be attributed to Halbwachs’ adherence to Durkheimian thought, opting to focus more on the collective consciousness than individual and subjective perceptions. Indeed, Halbwachs (1925, p. 7) classifies the social framework of memory, the structure of

knowledge through which collective memory is understood and contested, as the result, the sum, the combination of personal memories. Halbwachs (1925, p. 15) later admits that individual memories are imperfect reconstructions, or ‘fragments,’ of the past, and only through the collectivity’s fragmented imaginations can the whole representation of the past be envisioned and reproduced.

Collective memory can enhance “the depth and clarity of certain individual memories” by connecting them within a single system of ideas and intimately binding them with other individuals (Halbwachs, in Coser, 1992: 53 as cited in Fowler, 2005, p. 55). Likewise, in consolidating both Halbwachs and Bartlett, a staunch critic of Halbwachs, Wertsch (2002, p. 22) describes the two as actually complimentary, with Bartlett primarily concerned with the influence of socially organized associations and cues on individual mental processes, while Halbwachs focused on how the group provides these mnemonic associations and cues through collective frameworks. Investigations of collective memory essentially focus on memory *in* the group, not memory *of* the group (Wertsch, 2002, p. 22). Individual memories undeniably exist, but only through the collectivity and its contextual framework of knowledge can the individual understand the cultural, political, symbolic, and social meanings embedded in their personal memories and relate to other members of the group. This mnemonic socialization occurs within the imaginaries of the individual and the group, imparting the knowledge of how to recognize the contextually dependent meanings of actions, beliefs, and values. Without such an epistemological and ontological framework, the individual becomes a foreigner, an inauthentic part of the group, a stranger, ignorant of the nuanced significances embedded in the group’s social framework of memory. In other words, the individual’s membership is contested when



they lack the knowledge of the group's collective memory because the individual lacks the proximity or similarity to the group's valuations of reality.

Moreover, collective memory is often confused with history, as both are representations of the past. As Gedi & Elam (1996, p. 33) criticize, Nora's (1989) characterization of memory does not align with historians' understanding of memory as "a human faculty, personal and therefore fallible." They even arrogantly point out that "memory is an unreliable source of valid history" (Gedi & Elam, 1996, p. 33). However, Gedi & Elam (1996) misunderstand that Nora (1989) is not referring to personal memories but *collective* memory. Nora (1989) references 'collective memory' precisely six times, first in his introduction (pp. 7 and 9) and then in his elaborations of *lieux de mémoire* (pp. 20 and 23 – 24). To confuse the two risks alienating the social aspects of memory and reducing collective memory to an individual level. That is why Irwin-Zarecka (2017, p. 116) stipulates that it is best to refrain from employing psychological and psychoanalytical categories when examining collective memory and focus on social, political, and cultural factors instead. Kansteiner (2002, p. 186) also contends that collective memory requires different methods of analysis from those of individual memory because collective memory creates its own dynamics. Nora's (1989) arguments make more sense with this correction in mind. Nora (1989) is discussing the split between *collective* memory and history, specifically the rapid subsumption of the former into the latter caused by the creation of the modern nation-state and its attempts to create a cohesive body politic with a shared past and a common passage through time. Beyen (2015, p. 7) makes the same argument with modern collective identities, whereby 'organic,' or bottom-up, forms and transmission of collective memory, which were more prevalent at local scales, became less and less feasible with the

proliferation of globalization and increasingly replaced by top-down, and sometimes appropriated, national and international memories, such as the Holocaust.

Discussions regarding history and collective memory illustrate three modes of representing the past. Firstly, history as an intellectual and secular project aims to analyze and criticize to depict an accurate account of the past (Nora, 1989, pp. 8 – 9; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 320). The historian strives to be objective and impartial to create a linear progression of relationalities that, when juxtaposed, forms historical facts (Halbwachs, 1950, p. 48). Contrastingly, for Nora (1989, p. 8), history in the service of the nation-state is national memory, for it co-opts the objective language of secular history to dictatorially and violently promote an ‘official’ past of the nation to eliminate contradictory collective memories and stabilize society under a shared past. History, in this sense, creates a singular story for a region, period, city, nation, group, or otherwise (Halbwachs, 1950, p. 48; Nora, 1989). Lastly, to reiterate, collective memory is a social phenomenon manifested in the actions of individuals and conforms to contemporary interests when necessary (Kansteiner, 2002, p. 180). Its goal is to construct and maintain the group’s identity intergenerationally, intimately binding itself to the group that acts in its name (Nora, 1989, p. 9; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 320). Collective memory also does not concern itself with whether it is historically accurate because historicity is not its goal. Rather, it is meant to preserve the group’s beliefs, morals, and values sometimes through historically grounded narratives and other times through fantasies and myths. Collective memory can be interpreted as a “usable past” (Zamora, 1998). Most commonly, collective memory is mobilized to justify or legitimize a group’s identity claims in the present (Wertsch, 2002, p. 31), infusing their identity with historical traces and affective impressions of the past that are symbolically important to the group. As Gordon (2001, p. 17) maintains, memory “serves to

legitimize states, ideologies, and political factions by offering imagined communities a sense of shared posterity and common descent in the human quest for meaning.” As Assman (1997, p. 14 as cited in Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 321) summarizes, the primary difference between history and collective memory is how representations of the past are shaped and viewed in accordance with the present. The past becomes intertwined with the present to remake what we perceive as the contemporary.

Lastly, Beiner (2017) argues quite controversially that ‘collective memory’ does not exist. The argument’s premise is based on the crude [*sic*] concepts of ‘collectivity,’ “which assume homogeneity that is rarely, if ever, present” (Beiner, 2017, para. 11). He further states that in practice, ‘collective memory’ is, at best, an aspiration of politicians, always subject to contestations (Beiner, 2017, para. 11). Although I agree that the adjective ‘collective’ requires reflections, Beiner (2017) confuses ‘collective’ with ‘national.’ A collective refers to a group, or individuals acting as a group, and there is an infinite number of groups in a society or a nation that within themselves contain their own collective memories. Even Halbwachs (1925; see also Halbwachs, 1950 and Halbwachs, 1971) details various collective memories in different collectivities, such as families, classes, and religious communities, suggesting that there are as many collective memories as there are groups. Although I can concede that the term ‘collective’ presumes a homogenous group, it does not only exist as ‘an aspiration of politicians,’ for that would be more characteristic of the ‘national.’ The ‘national’ is the imagined community that Anderson (2016) discusses. It is what politicians and citizens imagine the nation to be, and consequently, there will inherently be multi-layered contestations and power struggles regarding what the nation is and ought to be.

Now, collective memory and national memory are not dissimilar, as national memory is collective memory operating at the national scale. That fact should not disregard the diversity of collectivities and their collective memories. Many scholars coined terms such as ‘social memory’ (Fentress & Wickham, 1992), ‘vernacular memory’ (Bodnar, 1992), ‘public memory’ (Gordon, 2001), and ‘communicative memory’ and ‘cultural memory’ (Assman, 1995). However, it is optimum to conceptualize collective memory as a broad category that contains a multitude of recognized and possible sub-memories, specified according to function, scale, and type. Indeed, each of the sub-categories mentioned above differs semantically but positions collective memory as their site of analysis. Even Beiner (2007) develops further and employs ‘social memory,’ a form of grassroots collective memory, to describe in his case how communities in western Ireland conceptualize the failed French invasion of 1798 through vernacular histories.

So, to summarize my answer to the initial question of this section, collective memory is a group’s shared perceptions of the past, collectively and discursively negotiated. They contain concepts, events, locations, objects, and people deemed worthy of remembering by virtue of their contemporary symbolic meaning to the group. Collective memory is what Assman (1995, p. 129) terms the ‘contemporized past.’ Collective memory also fosters unity, culturally, emotionally, politically, and socially connecting disparate individuals across time and space. It allows the group members to acknowledge commonalities and relate to each other, perceiving themselves as a collectivity. By accepting a collective memory, the individual becomes socialized. They become a legitimate participating subject in the group. As Margalit (2002) describes, collective memory is “the cement that holds thick relations together” (p. 8). Despite its unifying features, collective memory can also be employed violently, as it is used as a technique of erasure and

exclusion against marginalized communities and individuals, which is further elaborated in Chapter 3. The following section discusses collective memory in the city.

### **A City of Memories: Examining Collective Memory in the City**

Cities are symbols and repositories of collective memory (Ladd, 1997 as cited in Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2008, p. 162). They are physical landscapes of objects and practices that invoke recollections of the past and embody the past through construction and reconstruction (Crimson, 2005, p. xii). They are spatial frameworks of social reference points that map collective memories and connect the group to a place permanently. Likewise, the city is also where collective memory is strategically mobilized to influence or maintain certain discourses of the past (ibid., p. xii). It influences what structures must remain because of their mnemohistorical value and what can be destroyed due to their incompatibility with contemporary ideals. As such, collective memory can be conceptualized as a result of the interconnected actors and interactions that consist of the cultural and intellectual practices of remembering, the selective makers of memory, and the diverse consumers of memory (Kansteiner, 2002, p. 180).

For Sak & Senyapili (2019, pp. 342, 344), these interweaving connections can be examined and understood as a system that influences and transforms urban practices and spaces, i.e., the primary means of remembering in the city. Firstly, despite its physical nature, urban spaces are intimately connected with the metaphysical (Hornstein, 2011, p. 7), for in and through their compositions and connections, urban spaces define the city's identity through a combination of recognizably separate structural entities based on architectural, cultural, locational, and temporal factors (Lynch, 1960 as cited in Sak & Senyapili, 2019, p. 344). In other words, the city comprises of various objects, practices, and sites that recall to various points in

the past through historical traces, such that the city is physically inscribed with a multitude of structural narratives about the past that identifies the city's contemporary beliefs, morals, and values. The city is a palimpsest. Every structure in the city evokes a particular past, whether through its spatial relations, temporal origins, style, or otherwise.

Secondly, the meanings associated with the urban space become realized only through the articulations of social relationships between people and others and people and the place (Sak & Senyapili, 2019, p. 344). How people experience urban spaces influences what they feel, think, and remember about the locations, attaching meanings and mental images to them and affecting concurrent and future experiences (ibid., p. 344). Sak & Senyapili (ibid., p. 344) briefly point out that visual representations of the city, such as maps, guides, photographs, and documentaries, communicate experiential and spatial information about certain urban spaces to their audience, visualizing the topography of relationships within the city. However, the highlighted objects, practices, and sites primarily reflect the viewpoint of their creators (ibid., p. 344). They identify what is worthy of notice—or remembering, which reinforces certain relationalities within the city while suppressing others. In the context of urban memory, what buildings, memorials, monuments, parks, plaques, statues, and other *lieux de mémoire* are included in these visual representations further entrenches these sites/sights and their historical traces into the socio-cultural fabric of the city. They become intimately associated with the city's image. And those that are excluded become implicitly forgotten.

Moving to a context of globalized and nationalized collective memories, a sentiment of nostalgia emerges from the sudden ruptures and rapid transformations so characteristic of a globalizing world. Marschall (2012, p. 327) defines nostalgia as the longing for a past that no longer exists or has never existed. Chase & Shaw (1989 as cited in Yeoh & Kong, 1996, p. 57)

identify three conditions for nostalgia. First, societies with a secular and linear sense of time will experience nostalgia more. Second, the present is seen to be deficient in some way, and third, rapid social changes invoke nostalgia, especially when evidence of the past exist as reminders of the yearned past. Nostalgia arises from a temporal disconnect from an imagined past, or as I have worded it earlier, a mnemonic dissonance, when questions of place, time, roots, and heritage become socially salient. Thus, a radical crisis of memory and identity occurs that forces traditionalist ideas of identity to address contemporary ideas and situations. In other words, because of rapid changes, nostalgia induces a sense of longing for an idealized or lost past within the collectivity that urges for or obstructs changes in identity. It can be, in some sense, a symbolic longing for a paradisaical past in the present filled with temporal absences, i.e., a critique of the present in relation to an imagined past (Yeoh & Kong, 1996, pp. 57 – 58). For a contemporary example, former U.S. president Donald Trump's rally call 'Make America Great Again' reflects this sentiment.

Alternatively, nostalgia can be productively employed when coupled with a sense of a loss of place. The restoration of heritage sites/sights in cities, for example, can be used to reproduce lost pasts in the present. However, as Yeoh & Kong (1996, p. 59) argue, the excavation of lost pasts can also result in the evacuation of undesirable traits from those pasts, suggesting that although there is a desire to recover the past, that desire is limited only to traits that are readily amenable and ultimately beneficial to inculcate social cohesion and group identity. As such, cities and other tourist spaces, such as 'villaged' city centres evoking mythical or lost forms of public life, historic buildings separated from their former functions, and museumified heritage sites (Crimson, 2005, p. xi), tend to have sites/sights devoid of vibrant lifeworlds that aim to inspire a collective sense of historical collective identity and community

(Yeoh & Kong, 1996, p. 59). They are anachronistic sites/sights dedicated to the idealized forgotten pasts of certain groups or the nation and juxtaposed with contemporary architectural styles to mythologize the past and present in the city (Crang & Travlou, 2001, p. 163). The nation becomes envisaged and constructed through its preferred pasts embodied in the urban built environment.

### **The Power of the Past: Reconceptualizing Collective Memory as a Social Technology**

Before discussing collective memory as a social technology, power needs to be discussed. In the traditional sense, power enforces and imposes a will onto a subject of a lower order. It acts to subordinate and relegate, to which the subject obeys. It is best to think of power in this way as the authoritative monarchs of olde, whose will was law, and extensively theorized by historical political philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke. Although the description of power as repressive, as a negative force, is a fair assessment, it nonetheless neglects to perceive power as productive (Foucault, 2000, p. 120; Allen, 2002, p. 133). Assuming that power is only repressive also presupposes that the subjugated subject is “a fully formed, stable and unified entity that then gets caught up in power relations which are external to its own constitution” (Allen, 2000, p. 135). Contrarily, Foucault (2000) argues that power is decentralized. He rejects the notion that power can be possessed or accumulated, insisting instead that “[p]ower exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action” (Foucault, 2000, p. 340). Power is relational. Additionally, the exercise of power is not arbitrary, for it is always enacted with a goal or a rationale in mind (Heller, 1996, p. 83). Power is, then, the ability to influence another subject (i.e., a recognizably thinking individual) or another subject’s actions in a rationalized manner (Foucault, 2000, p. 341). It must consistently be



cultivated, maintained, and reproduced (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 231). In this way, power constantly subjects human beings. They are *subjugated* to complex, dynamic, and reciprocal power relations while also becoming *subjectified* in and through those relations.

Now, Foucault's discussions of power almost always, if not consistently, involved the examination of the *a priori* knowledge, the episteme, of the epoch under scrutiny to reflect on the seemingly necessary conditions of governing the exercise of reason (Gutting, 1989, p. 3). As McHoul & Grace (2015, p. 29) neatly summarize, knowledge for Foucault is "much more a matter of the social, historical and political conditions under which, for example, statements come to count as true or false." Knowledge determines what is and could be true and what is and could be false about the world. In his archaeological method, Foucault often strived to historically contextualize power relations according to the conventional ways of being and thinking in that particular time to uncover the rationalizations encoded within power relations. For example, in *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault analyzes the epistemological transition in nineteenth-century France regarding what 'humane' punishment meant and its subsequent transformation of power relations, as opposed to the chaotic and gruesome public displays of punishment conducted a century prior. Elsewhere, in such works as *Madness and Civilization* (1988), as well as *The Birth of the Clinic* (1989), he explores the evolution of the meaning of 'madness' and 'healthy' and its co-constitutive power relations that were formulated and rationalized within scientific knowledge, such as the pathologization and the humanitarian curing of the mad and the sick during the modern era. Gutting (1989, pp. 4-5) characterizes these books as critiques of 'the human sciences,' the body of knowledge that objectivizes human beings as a knowable object and a knowing subject, through which power can be rationalized and exerted. Power produces knowledge, and knowledge presupposes and constitutes power relations

(Foucault, 1995, p. 27). Indeed, to indicate the co-constitutive relationship between power and knowledge, Foucault (1978) coins the term ‘power/knowledge.’ Power/knowledge is historically contingent and never absolute, universal, or true. It attaches itself to a particular time where it restructures and is restructured by complex and dynamic power relations.

I turn, then, to a discussion on discourse, for it is through discursive practices that knowledge is produced and mobilized and, therefore, discourse exercises power at the outset (Hook, 2001, p. 522; Link, 1983: 60 as cited in Jäger, 2001, p. 33). When discussing ‘discourse,’ I do not mean what McHoul & Grace (2015, p. 29) classify as the formal approach to discourse, which is more akin to sociolinguistics, or the sociology of linguistics. Nor am I referring to the empirical approach to discourse, which analyzes the rules and procedures of human conversation (McHoul & Grace, 2015, p. 29). Rather, discourse is the rules and procedures that structure, constraint, and enable possible discursive practices and knowledge production, whether through speech, visuals, writing, or otherwise. While referencing Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Lessa (2006, p. 285) defines discourse as “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the world of which they speak.” Furthermore, Bloor & Bloor (2013, pp. 6-7) characterize discourse as “all the phenomena of symbolic interaction and communication between people, usually through spoken or written language or visual representation,” indicating that discourse can be multi-modal. Discourse is composed of several, and sometimes variegated, statements that operate together to form a ‘discursive formation,’ a system of meaningful statements that convey and imply relationalities about a particular knowledge (Foucault, 1926–84 as cited in Hall, 1992, p. 201). Discourse and discursive practices establish and operate within rules and categories, a regularity, which govern the semiotics and relationships within a given society in a

particular epoch (Foucault, 1972, p. 38). That is, discourse is the system of socially meaningful statements. As Hall (1992, p. 201, emphasis in original) states regarding the construction of the ‘West,’ discourse is “a particular way of *representing*” a particular kind of knowledge (in his case, the ‘West’ and the ‘Rest’) and its relations with other knowledges. It is a language (*langue* in French)<sup>4</sup> that produces and represents knowledge of a particular matter at a particular time, promoting what is and could be true and denouncing what is and could be “false” through various power relations. Like power, discourse can be both restraining and enabling (Hook, 2001, p. 523). On the one hand, discourse limits what and how knowledge is expressed and understood through power relations. On the other hand, by criticizing what is considered true and false, discourse allows individuals to conceptualize and enact new ways of being, doing, and thinking to undermine previous knowledges and power. It is, thus, fair to assess Foucault’s works as excavating the rules, systems, and procedures, i.e., discourse, by which our ‘will to knowledge,’ our ability to determine what is true and false, constitutes and is constituted by the conditions in which power is structured and exercised (Young, 1981 as cited in Hook, 2001, p. 522).

Discourse allows subjects to make sense of reality. As Hall (1992, p. 291, emphasis in original) maintains, “[s]ince all social practices entail *meaning*, all practices have a discursive aspect. So discourse enters into and influences all social practices.” Discourse contextualizes what is already and will be known, or conceived as true, and, therefore, informs and postulates possible actions within a given society in a particular period. It facilitates regimes of truth in which actions and thoughts have meaning and can be understood. However, discourse does not

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<sup>4</sup> In French, *langue* refers to a unique system of communication, while *langage* is the faculty inherent in all human beings (Léon & Bhatt, 2017, p. 6). Therefore, it is more appropriate to classify ‘discourse’ as a *langue* than a *langage*.

deny the materiality of objects. Objects can exist and interact physically, just as a ball can be kicked. But the object's symbolic meanings and those of the actions applied to the object depend on the discourses governing the semiotics and relationships of those material objects (Jäger, 2001, pp. 5 – 6). Discourse outlines the rules that regulate the game of truth. It, therefore, defines what power relations can and cannot be realized and what knowledges can and cannot be produced and operationalized, as well as how power/knowledge can and cannot affect the constitution of respective discourses. Quite cyclically then, power and knowledge can influence the formation, transformation, and correlation of discourses, altering the rules that govern power and knowledge to produce new discourses, power relations, and knowledges (i.e., resistance) that in turn, provide the cultural, historical, political, and social conditions for its own resistance (McHoul & Grace, 2015, p. 44).

Discourse can be characterized in four ways. First, discourse creates a particular world shaped by a society's historically contingent perceptions of physical reality. As such, subjects exist and interact within a discursively constructed reality, operating within social relations of associations and meanings (McHoul & Grace, 2015, pp. 34 – 35). We live in a world of accepted truths, where truth equates to real. Second, discourse establishes regular and systematic rules by which knowledge is produced and understood. Statements frame knowledge, and it is through discourse and its practices, through the rules that govern how statements function, that meanings are made and can be interpreted (Hall, 1992, p. 291; McHoul & Grace, 1995, p. 38). We live in a world of governable and governed meanings. Third, discourse reveals relationships. Statements are declarative, and discourse inherently directs questions of authority and qualifications at the speaker to define their social role and possible actions towards them (Foucault, 1972, p. 50). How and what is expressed as knowledge displays and assumes a relationship among

interlocutors. And fourth, discourse is intimately involved with power relations, as discourse constraints and enables how power can and cannot be exercised. As a doctor uses medical discourse to claim the social position of a ‘doctor,’ a subject in-and-of-itself, and the authority to subject others medically, or through the science (knowledge) of medicine, the reverse cannot be said for their patient, for medical discourse forbids it (Foucault, 1972, p. 50). Discourse orders power relations.

The correlative relationship between power, knowledge, and discourse produces and gives life to the meanings and relationalities that construct and populate our reality. Power is the common ability to act on or influence another or another’s action through rationalized means, while knowledge consists of what society accepts as true and false about its world. Discourse governs power and knowledge to delimit what is and is not imaginable and practicable in the ‘real world’ (McHoul & Grace, 2015, p. 34). Discourse is effectively a ‘paradigm’ for understanding what is real (knowledge) and actionable (power). Alternatively, we can describe the relationship as such: power is the action of expressing a statement, knowledge is the statement produced, and discourse is the meaning coalesced from the collection of expressed statements.

Collective memory operates within the dynamics of power, knowledge, and discourse. As stated above, the city is where collective memory manifests and is challenged. Mnemonic actors, specifically the state but residents and the media could be included, exercise power over what should be remembered and how it should be represented. The designation and preservation of heritage places exemplify the correlation between power and collective memory, for it is in the act of deciding what society considers as its ‘heritage,’ which could include a multiplicity of pasts competing to be sanctified (Jacobs, 1996, p. 35), that a singular past is identified, given

meaning to the collectivity, and represented materially. Simultaneously, those that are not 'heritage' become open to demolition and destruction if not vigilantly protected and are relegated to the fringes of society's collective memory. The historic Dominion Wheel and Foundries site on Eastern Avenue in Toronto is a contemporary example of the state's (i.e., Ontario government's) exercise of power over what should be demolished and forgotten for rationalized means—in this case, for new housing developments—and the somewhat successful social struggle for the preservation and remembrance of the community's heritage and connection to the space (Stewart, 2021, August 20). A more historic and pertinent example is the expropriation and razing of Toronto's first Chinatown to construct Toronto's New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4. However, it should be noted that mnemohistorical power relations are diverse and go beyond the city, penetrating a variety of (semi-)interrelated spaces and fields, such as pedagogy (e.g., Carr, 2003; Duckworth, 2015), property (e.g., Estes, 2013; Witz & Murray, 2015), and cuisine (e.g., Bascuñan-Wiley, 2019; Wincott, 2020). Power in terms of collective memory is about influencing what is and should be remembered and forgotten from the collectivity's imagination for some rationalization, influencing what actions and relations are enacted and remain possible.

Knowledge in the form of collective memory details information about the collectivity's past that, when expressed or enacted through power relations, imbue the information with a sense of truth. Mnemohistorical power/knowledge breathes life into their past, animating the connections between the present and a particular past. Knowledge as collective memory is the 'official' history of a group and place. It reminds the collectivity of what is true and false about their history and their historical relations with others and their society, i.e., what their identity is. Again, heritage management and tourism, or commemorative spaces and practices in general,

exemplify the connection between collective memory and power/knowledge. Heritage management and tourism selectively dictate the history of a space and place and its relations to certain peoples through various sites and performances across the memoryscape, i.e., the landscape of collective memory, for cultural, economic, political, and social purposes. Each one meticulously details the mnemohistorical linkages between the collectivity, others, and the location, while simultaneously removing or diminishing the importance of other groups from the spatio-mnemohistorical narratives of the land and society. However, being inextricably linked to the collectivity's identity, heritage places are sites of affirming affiliation with particular pasts and contesting the constitutions of that identity (Karp, 1992:5 as cited in Jacobs, 1996, p. 35). Knowledge as collective memory determines what is and could be the collectivity's identity, past, and relationalities.

Mnemohistorical discourse compiles and is compiled by all the rationalized statements throughout the memoryscape, produced and reproduced by various actors, forming a structured system of symbolic meanings (Hall, 1992, p. 202). Mnemohistorical discourse creates a spatio-temporal world where fleeting moments of time are anchored to an immovable space (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008b, p. 168), where group members learn their collective identity, their social position, and their history through historical traces and affective impressions. It influences and constraints which pasts are prioritized in history textbooks, memorials, speeches, and other commemorative spaces and practices. Mnemohistorical discourse also influences which present and future actions are feasible by subjecting them to certain seemingly absolute cultural, historical, political, and social conditions, revealing which group has more influence over what the past means and how it should be represented. Frequent depictions of heroism and grandeur for one collectivity and depictions of frailty and paltriness for another, or even a lack of any

depiction, often signify an oppressive and unequal relationship between one group and others. Examples can be seen with the proliferation of Civil War monuments in the American South and their contested meanings in contemporary society, as well as the politics surrounding their Civil Rights counterparts, which contrast and challenge the discourses of the U.S.'s past (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008a). Alternatively, #blacklivesmatter (BLM) activists from around the world toppled statues of colonial leaders, such as the statues of Edward Colston in Bristol, U.K., King Leopold II in Antwerp, Belgium, and various Confederate figures in the U.S. (Wall, 2020, June 14; The New York Times, 2020, June 24), to resist the dominant mnemohistorical discourse present in their respective cities. Mnemohistorical discourse contains the core beliefs, morals, and values of a collectivity, constantly being reproduced and sometimes problematized through the various commemorative practices and spaces located in a memoryscape.

Celebrations, heritage places, memorials, monuments, place names, plaques, and symbols are all commemorative spaces and practices that have been chosen because they express and contain certain mnemohistorical meanings to the collectivity. Collective memory is a social technology by which power/knowledge is exercised. It uses the past to justify how the present is made and understood while simultaneously reconstructing and reaffirming the group's 'official' history according to dominant discourses of the past. However, collective memory and its associated spaces and practices are a part of a more extensive system of meanings that reproduce a particular order of things. Collective memory illustrates that the present is not constructed arbitrarily but purposefully; that history in the service of the nation is not 'official,' and all representations of such depict a particular reality with a particular past for a particular purpose.



## Conclusion

Collective memory is everywhere. It is in what we feel, hear, see, taste, and touch. As Nora (1989, p. 8) points out, “[e]ach gesture, down to the most everyday, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning.” We enact and embody collective memory in our everyday practices. But we must also realize that our collective memory operates within systems of power, knowledge, and discourse that reproduce what we consider the ‘real world.’ Our reality has a past that had been surveyed and selectively constructed through rationalized means. A critical look at the various components of the city, from commemorative plaques to individual neighbourhoods to ritualistic performances, will reveal diverse collective memories that reflect the identities of each group inhabiting the city. They inscribe the urban landscape with their collective memories by living, playing, and working in the city, contributing to the broader memoryscape. But viewing the mnemohistorical relationalities between objects and subjects exposes the underlying power relations and knowledges that construct over-arching narratives of the past through the discourse of history. That is *mnemohistory*, the past remembered as is (Assman, 1997, p. 9), not the intellectual project of history. It is exclusionary. It is inhibiting. It is violent. More will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Celebrations, heritage places, memorials, monuments, place names, plaques, and symbols all habitually and sometimes mundanely remind us of the answer to ‘who are we?’ and ‘what motivates our present decisions?’ They are constant and banal reminders of our reality and our past. That is why it is important to challenge, question, and problematize these structures, spaces, and practices. Currently, the City of Toronto is re-examining its commemorative framework, re-analyzing the various memorials and monuments that populate the city’s memoryscape, and

issuing a new commitment to anti-racist and anti-colonial commemorative strategies (City Manager, 2021; Executive Committee, 2021). Although this policy is a radical step in deconstructing the city's past, worries remain about whether this ideological pivot is merely operating within a 'politics of recognition,' as Coulthard (2007) problematizes, and may only result in the 'decolonization of the mind' and no concrete action beyond symbolic gestures, as Tuck & Yang (2012) discuss. The results of this change cannot be fully engaged with, for the new commemorative framework will be released later in 2022. But this research partially engages with what the City of Toronto sees as problematic, particularly the manifestations of colonial histories in public spaces.

As a society, we are products of our pasts, but we produce the past that we want. Thus, we must strive to be inclusive in concretely representing the past and challenging what we consider and accept as 'official' history. If we do not, we risk alienating and forgetting others, and we ultimately risk repeating history.

### Chapter Three – Soft Powers of Settler Colonialism

As Veracini (2011, p. 1) articulates, “colonialism is not settler colonialism.” Although colonialism and settler colonialism both consist of a system that subjugates a population within a colony, an exogenous political body that is predicated on the displacement of peoples and the reproduction of unequal power relations (Veracini, 2010, p. 2 – 3; Veracini, 2011, p. 1), settler colonialism also aims for the elimination of the lands’ Indigenous peoples (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016, p. 251), or as Wolfe (2006) terms it, the ‘logic of elimination.’ For the settler colony, Indigenous peoples unequivocally contest settler claims to the lands of which settlers seek to control and exploit and with which they can form a new destiny (Harris, 2004, p. 170; Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Settler colonialism is more about land, permanent settlement, and territoriality than creating an economic dependency structure with the metropole through the exploitation of subjugated labour (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388; Veracini, 2011, p. 3). In doing so, settler colonialism continuously and systematically eliminates Indigenous claims and connections to the lands and reframes the lands as possessable and tradeable, by which European settlers can rationalize their identity status as authentic ‘indigenes’ rather than foreign colonizers (Wolfe, 2006, p. 390; Huang & Weaver-Hightower, 2019, p. 3).

This chapter focuses on settler colonialism. It surveys the disparate literature regarding pertinent techniques of soft power over Indigenous people employed by settler-colonists. I begin with a discussion on colonial and settler-colonial cities. Cities are the nodes of empire (Cowen, 2019, p. 473), by which colonists create the material preconditions for the conceptualization, expansion, governance, and prosperity of the settler colony (Jacobs, 1996, p. 105). They provide the administrative, cultural, economic, legal, political, and social conditions for enacting settler governmentality and the enforcement of settler authority over the lands, Indigenous peoples, and

the other inhabitants. This will be followed by my engagement with discussions regarding the 'politics of representation.' The politics of representation is central to this research as it focuses on how the settler-colonial state, in the form of the municipal government of Toronto, recognizes Indigenous peoples and indigeneity to shape the country's post-colonial mythos and imaginaries. Then, I explore the connections between tourism and settler colonialism to elaborate on tourism's role in settler-colonial societies since Nathan Phillips Square operates within globalized channels of tourist information. Lastly, mainly drawing from Bruyneel's (2016; see also Bruyneel, 2017) conception of 'settler memory,' I recontextualize collective memory within a settler-colonial context, illustrating the mnemohistorical violence enacted within the settler colony.

### **Exploitation or Elimination? Examining Colonial and Settler-Colonial Cities**

Cities play a paramount role in the mobilization and reproduction of settler-colonialism. According to Porter & Yiftachel (2019, p. 177), the occupation of Indigenous lands is central to settler society's establishment, permanency, and prosperity. Furthermore, cities have been identified as traditionally settler spaces where indigeneity and Indigenous peoples distinctly and consistently do not belong (ibid.). As a result, formerly Indigenous lands, i.e., the cultural source of indigeneity, or 'grounded normativity' for Coulthard & Simpson (2016), are transformed as explicitly non-Native spaces within a settler-colonial regime. In the settler-colonial context, cities are where civility and rationality exist juxtaposed to the perceived barbarism of the native wilderness (Coulthard, 2014, p. 174; Razack, 2014, p. 55). They are understood to be spaces of Western civilization where liberalism and democracy thrive and the globalized economy flourishes. But these are all discourses that conceal the violent pasts and presents of the city that

reaffirm relations of Indigenous disassociation, displacement, and disempowerment (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019, p. 177).

‘Settler-colonial cities’ differ from ‘colonial cities,’ just as settler colonialism differs from colonialism. For one, colonial cities are conceptually understood as nodal points within the broader networks of empires (Hugill, 2016, p. 3), as administrative, economic, military, political, and social centres, from which the empire expands its boundaries and exerts power. Colonial cities function as links between the metropolitan ‘core,’ where imperialism ideologically governs and imagines the empire (Young, 2001, 16–17 as cited in Harris, 2004, p. 166), and the edges of empire, where colonialism is practiced according to local particularities (Harris, 2004, pp. 166 – 167). Processes of “mass transfer” of human and material resources from the colonial hinterlands to the imperial centre determine and manage the urban processes of the colonial city (James Belich, 2009 as cited in Hugill, 2016, p. 5). In other words, the logics and practices of wealth extraction and transfer, that which propels imperialism, are common among colonial cities.

Problematically, as Hugill (2016, p. 3) notes, the literature regarding colonial cities consistently positions colonial urban processes as ‘historical.’ The literature maintains and perpetuates the notion that the predatory urban processes premised on wealth extraction, accumulation, and transference so characteristic of imperial and colonial rule have by and large been categorized as historical processes of city-building (ibid.); that ‘post-colonial’ urban processes emerged once the colonizers and imperialists returned home. In this way, colonial cities are seen as historical realities, not contemporarily lived.

Moreover, colonial cities are characteristically landscapes of imperial domination that reflect the hierarchical divisions of the larger empire. Fanon (1963, pp. 38 – 39, 41) describes the colonial world as Manichean, compartmentalized and starkly divided between settler and native

quarters, where the language of brute force, manifested as policemen and soldiers, imposes on natives the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. Hugill (2016, p. 3) adds that these quarters, these spaces, violently carve the colonial city into sectors of colonist abundance and native scarcity. In this context, the colonial city employs racial segregation as a legal and spatial strategy of enforcing imperial dominance and white hegemony for metropolitan accumulation (Home, 2014, p. 75 as cited in Hugill, 2016, pp. 3 – 4). Ultimately, the colonial city functioned as an extended exploitative machine for the expansion and prosperity of the empire, conceptualized as temporally located in the past. It was organized to manage differences, whether between the colony and metropole or between colonizers and colonized and promote the uninterrupted flow of human and material resources from the colonial periphery to the metropolitan core through the logics and practices of exploitation, i.e., colonialism (Veracini, 2011, p. 3; Hugill, 2016, p. 4).

Contrastingly, settler-colonial cities function under the pretense of permanent settlement. Settler-colonial cities operate within what Wolfe (2006, p. 388) terms ‘the logic of elimination,’ whereby settler-colonial cities emerge from the repressive dissolution of Indigenous societies and the productive replacement of them with a new colonial society on the expropriated lands. The distinguishing feature of settler-colonial cities as opposed to colonial cities is the desire for settler colonizers to erase and replace their Indigenous counterparts. They desire to possess, and have ultimate access and claim to, Indigenous lands in perpetuity (Hugill, 2016, p. 4). In other words, settler colonizers desire permanent settlement. These are the rationalizations by which the cultural, economic, political, and social practices of disassociation, displacement, and disempowerment, such as coercive assimilation, military crackdown, and structural elimination, are consistently enacted. These rationalizations animate the governing relationships between

settlers and Indigenous peoples, maintaining and mobilizing settler governmentality for the benefit of the former (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012, p. 422).

However, a couple of notes should be considered. Although colonialism and settler-colonialism are ideologically and practically distinct, they regularly interact, intersect, and intertwine (Veracini, 2010, p. 4). Thus, colonial cities and settler-colonial cities could be conceptualized as both based on exploitation *and* elimination, and it can be argued that the categories of metropole and colony are porous and geopolitically contextual. The settler-colonial/colonial city could simultaneously function for and with the globalized networks of empire to support wealth accumulation and transference to the imperial core while concurrently establishing the permanent settlement and supremacy of the settler colony over its territory at a local, national, and regional level. Furthermore, despite discussions of settler-colonial cities as definitively settler spaces in settler-colonial discourses, it should not invisibilize the unending and ongoing violence that is fundamental to the socio-political reality of settler-colonial cities and the various Indigenous resistances occurring to challenge these assumptions and processes ceaselessly (Tomiak *et al.*, 2019, p. 3). Settler-colonial cities are, and will always be, contested spaces.

### **Be your Authentic Self: An Exploratory Discussion on the Politics of Recognition**

According to Taylor (1994, p. 26), the politics of recognition emerged from the changing societal perceptions of modern human beings in the eighteenth century. Notably, a new preoccupation with identity and recognition emerged due to the increasingly individualized views of the self that no longer relied on a social hierarchy but more so living ‘authentically’ (ibid., p. 28). In this sense, identity originates from the inward self, the moral source of

fulfillment and being, not a devotion to an outward self, such as God, or an affiliation with one's social position. The ideals of authenticity, dignity, and uniqueness have become central components to the conceptualization of the modern liberal self. The formation of identity, however, is not understood monologically but dialogically, for individuals are not socially rootless beings (ibid., p. 32; Ruparelia, 2008, p. 42). Whether “in agreement or struggle with their recognition of us,” the dialogue that we have with others shapes our identities (Taylor, 1991, 45–46 as cited in Coulthard, 2007, p. 441). Furthermore, as Coulthard (2007, pp. 440 – 441) and Coulthard (2014, pp. 27 – 28) remark, the politics of recognition stems from the Hegelian intersubjectivity that relies on reciprocal processes and exchanges of recognition, of dependently acknowledging the Self and the Other as ‘beings-for-themselves.’ In other words, the politics of recognition requires the individual to recognize themselves *in relation to* others. Likewise, Coulthard (2007, pp. 441 – 442, emphasis in original) and Coulthard (2014, pp. 29 – 30) point out that the same dialogue can *deform* identities. The deformation of identities, or the *misrecognition* of them, can cause real suffering and distortions for the group when society reflects “a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture” of that group and the misrecognition of others could even be considered as a form of oppression (Taylor, 1994, p. 25, 36). As Lamey (1999, p. 12) summarizes, being an ‘authentic’ self demands the acknowledgment of one’s originality and the unencumbered expression of one’s dignified way of being.

Taylor’s (1994) conception of the ‘politics of recognition’ rejects the ‘difference-blind’ governance put forth by proceduralist liberalism in diverse polities, such as the U.S. and Canada (Lyshaug, 2004, pp. 306 – 307; Coulthard, 2007, p. 441). In his critiques, Taylor (1994) problematizes the ideal of cultural neutrality in liberalism, whereby ‘difference-blind’ liberalism allows cultures and peoples to meet and co-exist. As Lyshaug (2004, p. 307) comments, “[w]hat



gives rights-based liberalism moral purchase is the fact that it is rooted in a particular set of ‘moral sources’—a framework of meanings that constitutes a conception of the good.” Western liberalism stems specifically from Christian discourses about the proper governance of Christian civilizations (Taylor, 1994, pp. 62 – 63), which made Western liberal policies, despite their allegedly secular identity, continue to reflect ideas of the dominant Christian cultural groups. Indeed, there is diverse literature validating this claim, from critical race theory (e.g., Carbado & Roithmayr, 2014) to settler-colonial studies (e.g., Lawrence, 2002) to feminist theories (e.g., Chambers & Roth, 2014). Furthermore, Lyshaug (2004, p. 309) mentions that cultural neutrality is clearly impossible, for every state must affiliate itself with a particular culture to conduct official business and, I would add, to know itself and its relationalities.

Taylor (1994, p. 63) maintains that as societies become increasingly multicultural, states will have to recognize and accommodate various group-specific claims without compromising their basic political principles (as cited in Coulthard, 2007, p. 441). Here, Taylor (1994, p. 64) urges for cultural survival, whereby the cultural group can live ‘authentically,’ and the recognition of their worth. He also emphasizes the need to recognize and protect the equal dignity inherent in everybody, instead of the uniform treatment of all citizens regardless of class, cultural, gender, religious, sexual, and other differences (Lyshaug, 2004, p. 307). For Taylor (1994, p. 26), proper recognition of others is not merely an act of civility but “a vital human need.” As a result, Taylor argues that a liberal regime of reciprocal recognition would allow minority groups, such as Indigenous peoples, to stave off the cultural, political, psychological, and social oppression caused by misrecognition or nonrecognition and even allow them to benefit from such a system (Coulthard, 2007, p. 442; Coulthard, 2014, p 30).

Although Taylor's (1994) compelling argument for a more diversity-conscious liberal state is refreshing compared to the settler-colonial state's violent tactics of disassociation, dispossession, and disempowerment, it is nonetheless fraught with problems. Firstly, the liberal model that Taylor (1994) espouses is inherently unequal, in that despite its attempts of highlighting the diversity within the state, in acknowledging its multiplicity of cultures, the recognition of such cultures ultimately assumes a relationship of subordination. The dominant group ultimately grants the subaltern group recognition; they are not mutually recognized. Coulthard (2007, p. 450) positions this problematic within the colonial context, whereby the mutual recognition that Taylor embraces, which requires a mutual dependency among the interlocutors, lacks consideration for the oppressive relationships in which this act of recognition takes place, like that of the settler-colonial state and its colonized population. For Coulthard (2007, p. 451), the absence of equal relation between the 'master' (i.e., the settler-colonial state) and the 'slave' (i.e., the self-determining communities) results in the nonrecognition of the former and the continuation of the colonial *status quo*. This relationship merely transforms "the unconcealed structure of domination to a mode of colonial *governmentality* that works through the limited freedoms afforded by state recognition and accommodation" (Coulthard, 2014, pp. 15 – 16, emphasis in original). To put it more generally, Taylor's (1994) approaches to culture threatened to obscure the varying hierarchies and power relations embedded in the settler-colonial state and not liberate the oppressed (Ruparelia, 2008, p. 42).

The shift to a politics of identity recognition threatened to overshadow, or arguably has overshadowed, the politics of redistribution. As it stands, the politics of recognition neglects to address the material inequalities between the dominant and subaltern groups caused by a rapidly globalizing economy, whereby the ascendancy of capital, multinational corporations, and elite

social networks continuously exploit the unique differences among cultural communities (Fraser, 2000: 110 – 112 as cited in Ruparelia, 2008, pp. 42 – 43). Likewise, as Coulthard (2014, p. 106) notes, in a settler-colonial context, like Canada, the politics of recognition have melded with the politics of reconciliation in problematic ways. For one, this politics of reconciliation temporally relocates problematic colonial injustices in the past (Coulthard, 2014, pp. 120, 121). By manufacturing an ‘official’ colonial past characterized by violence against Indigenous peoples, i.e., by acknowledging of particular pasts to formulate a singular understanding of the past, the settler-colonial state identifies colonial violence as ‘historical’ and rationalizes the narrowing options for restitution (Irlbacher-Fox, *Finding Dasha*, 33 as cited in Coulthard, 2014, pp. 120 – 121). It also creates an artificial divide between the state’s violent past and reconciliatory present to rationalize the enactment of ‘transitional justice’ that focuses on the recognition and accommodation of Indigenous peoples (Coulthard, 2014, p. 121). In other words, the politics of recognition/reconciliation reproduces power relations, knowledges, and discourses that maintain the disavowal of ongoing settler-colonial violence. The settler-colonial state can then say, “There is no colonialism anymore,” and label itself as ‘post-colonial.’ Doing so supplants the need to considerably address the material effects of historical and ongoing colonial injustices (Coulthard, 2014, pp. 108, 120). Thus, as detailed, despite its openness to diversity, Taylor’s (1994) liberal model is more abortive than transformative, superficially granting rights to being recognized but not enacting structural cultural, economic, political, and social changes that would provide the substantive equality that Taylor (1994) desires.

Moreover, Ruparelia (2008, p. 43) argues that Taylor’s conception of the politics of recognition conflicts with some principal tenets of the civic republican tradition. Particularly, Ruparelia (ibid., p. 43) notes that a healthy modern democracy requires active civic participation,

strong cultural roots, and a distinctive political culture of community, loyalty, and mutual self-sacrifice. However, Taylor's politics of recognition creates tensions between the preservation and acknowledgement of diversity and these fundamental components of modern democracies (ibid., p. 43). If liberal democratic states justifiably pursue cultural diversity, that same diversity may cause fragmentation within the socio-political fabric of the state, resulting in varying conceptions of the common good and a fractured civic political culture (ibid., p. 43). Ruparelia (2008, p. 43) contends that "Taylor's claim that modern liberal democracies could justifiably grant special rights to specific minorities, either to ensure their cultural survival or rectify historical injustices," risks destabilizing and splintering the singular concept of the nation. As a result, the larger political community's notion of the common good collides with the cultural preservation of specific social groups (ibid., p. 43). In other words, the politics of recognition would pit the individual rights of minority groups against the collective rights of the nation, opening the possibility for more severe inequities rather than resolving them (ibid., p. 43). Although Ruparelia (2008, p. 43) maintains that this is a problem for a healthy modern democracy, the politics of recognition in this way forces liberal democratic states to balance individual and group rights, leading to incremental legal, political, and social improvements for disadvantaged groups. I would suggest instead that the issue of a fractured political community is more about how those who originally benefitted from the traditional governance would react to the emergence and proliferation of a diverse democracy than about how a diverse democracy would ideologically splinter the nation. I think of the populist movements as examples, particularly the resurgence of alt-right and far-right movements in Western states.

Additionally, the intercultural understanding brought on by the acknowledgement of diversity, or as Dreyfus & Taylor (2015) put it, 'fusing horizons,' is self-serving and is

detrimental for the groups being recognized, for the celebration of the state's diversity would mostly be enjoyed by and catered to the dominant group (Lamey, 1999, p. 14). In the case of Canada, it would be the Anglo-Canadians. Lyshaug (2004, pp. 310 – 312) discusses that by preserving cultures and acknowledging their worth, the state's affirmation of cultural symbols restricts individual and group authenticity. For one, the boundaries of cultural communities are malleable and porous, with varying local, national, and transnational interconnections, meaning that individuals constantly and meticulously navigate the complex web of meanings that originate from various cultural sources (ibid., pp. 310 – 311). This complexity opposes the state's assumption that cultural borders are clear and distinct, easily recognizable for others, which results in the state's failure to adequately recognize diverse cultural sources and encourages individuals to adhere to artificially organized cultural communities (ibid., p. 311). Consequently, Taylor's (1994) politics of recognition institutionalizes cultural 'scripts' (Appiah, 1994, 159 as cited in Lyshaug, 2004, p. 311). These scripts bind collectivities to particular expectations, norms, and attributes to which they must adhere to be recognized as 'authentic.' In other words, the articulations and institutionalization of a 'mosaic multiculturalism' reduce cultural identities to essentialist forms (Benhabib, 2002, 7 – 8, 4 as cited in Coulthard, 2014, p. 81). As a result, cultural expressions from subaltern groups often reflect the dominant group's assumptions about them, not their complex array of cultural sources, making them fixed, rigid, and inauthentic (Lyshaug, 2004, p. 312).

Despite these problematics, the key goals of the politics of recognition are meaningful and important, but how to achieve them remains contested. Aside from Taylor's (1994) proposition that the democratic state, liberal rights, and substantive equality are sufficient in promoting cultural diversity, integrity, and recognition, Benhabib (2002 as cited in Coulthard,

2014, p. 82) advocates for an inclusionary model of the politics of recognition that creates a democratic dialogue reflective of society's diversity. This type of the politics of recognition promotes the fluidity of cultural and identity formation in and through the institutional matrix while institutionally accommodating for such differences (Benhabib, 2002, ix as cited in Coulthard, 2014, p. 82). Benhabib's inclusionary model is positioned as democratic and emancipatory, as it supposes the further integration of minority groups into the deliberative process while Taylor's (1994) cultural preservationist paradigm is essentialist and restrictive (Coulthard, 2014, p. 83).

Another option instead of the politics of recognition is the disavowal of the oppressor and the reclamation of the self. Drawing on Fanon's work, Coulthard (2007, p. 454) argues for a politics of recognition that rejects the rigidly binary relationship between the dominant and subaltern groups and affirms a multidimensional racial/cultural aspect that recognizes the complexity of cultural and identity formation. In other words, this type of the politics of recognition continues to be premised on the individualized identities that Taylor (1994) discusses, but rather than focusing on the state's recognition, the individual and collectivities themselves provide the necessary affirmation and empowerment for them to be authentic and enact 'practices of freedom' (Foucault, 1987). It is a transformative praxis that aims to reclaim the self from oppressors by "critically revaluating, reconstructing and redeploying culture and tradition in ways that seek to prefigure, alongside with similar ethical commitments, a radical alternative" (Coulthard, 2007, p. 456). This politics of recognition ultimately encourages the individual and collectivities to explore and formulate their own cultural identity without reference to the institutionalized attributes, norms, and expectations that traditionally subjected them. It is cultural self-determination.

Coulthard & Simpson (2016) discuss the importance of ‘grounded normativity’ for Indigenous politics. ‘Grounded normativity’ refers to the establishment and reproduction of deep reciprocity based on relations of non-domination and non-exploitation with the lands, waters, their inhabitants, and people (ibid., p. 254). Specifically for Indigenous peoples, their relationship to place heavily informs their cultural, political, and social knowledge, norms, and traditions. The land is where their pasts—i.e., collective memories—are animated and lived in the present. Thus, in relation to the politics of recognition, and as Coulthard (2007) argues, the reclamation of the self by Indigenous individuals and collectivities stems from the notion of place-based cultural self-determination, whereby the land provides the means to reject the settler-colonial state and its cultural domination. The land gives them the necessary knowledges and practices for them to live ‘authentically’ and empower themselves and others while prefiguring radical alternatives and oppositions to the oppressive capitalist, colonial, heteropatriarchal, and racist structure (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016, p. 255). Even in a traditionally settler space like the city, ‘grounded normativity’ can still be maintained (e.g., Fortier, 2021).

Taylor’s (1994) advocacy for the politics of recognition is commendable because it does highlight a critical issue, particularly that inequities need to be considered and expressed in society for socio-political changes to occur. However, the approach to realizing his goals remains refutable, with its essentialist focus and lack of proper consideration for actual power relations, such as capital, colonial, and mnemohistorical. Quite problematically, settler-colonial states, such as Canada, have wholeheartedly embraced this type of the politics of recognition in the form of the politics of reconciliation, maintaining contemporary power relations that rationalize the continued subjection of Indigenous peoples to the settler-colonial state’s rule. But the politics of recognition has the potential to inculcate forms of resistance and alternatives that could

transcend social inequities. It is merely a matter of how subaltern groups envision themselves and their futurities.

### **Touring Colonial Pasts: Tourism, Colonialism, and Settler Colonialism**

Tourism sites/sights have multiple considerations embedded in their conceptualization, construction, and commodification. As Desmond (1999, p. xiv as cited in Marschall, 2012, p. 326) points out, tourism consists of commercial activities and ideological framings of history, nature, and tradition. Marschall (2012, pp. 325 – 326) also notes that memory sites, such as memorials, monuments, and museums, are powerful reflections on preferred interpretations of the nation's history and identity. These sites/sights are curated locations that employ usable pasts to appeal to and satisfy the audience's emotions and desires, including nostalgia and patriotism (Marschall, 2012, p. 326). In this way, tourist sites are multiscalar communicators of national and local identities, albeit organized according to certain cultural and ideological practices (ibid.). They are also designed to bolster and market the allure of the destination to attract tourists, potential investors, and international political decision-makers by providing 'authentic' experiences (ibid.). Therefore, commemorative tourist sites have immense cultural, economic, ideological, mnemohistorical, political, and social value because whosoever can shape the collective memories embedded in these sites/sights can control the narrative structures about that place and then disseminate them efficiently across tourism's global channels of information (ibid.).

For one, tourism has historically been strongly implicated in colonial and settler colonial projects. Boer (2016, p. 10) argues that tourism acts as a propaganda instrument that disseminates knowledge about colonizer and colonized by transforming the images and



narratives of peoples, places, and pasts according to one-dimensional stories that strip them of their richness and complexity. For example, Francis (2017) recounts how the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was integral to the image-making project of the Canadian West. Notably, the CPR heavily promoted and conducted train tours of the Rockies and Prairies that followed a straightforward narrative in which foreign tourists and potential immigrants could ‘read’ the civilizing project of Canada, from the modernized and industrialized cities of the East to the historical ‘primitive’ peoples of the West (Francis, 2017, pp. 23 – 25). The tours were ultimately a means of reimagining the Canadian West, not as a barren wasteland inhabited by ‘savages,’ but as a pristine natural wonder filled with sunny paradises of grassy meadows, broad rivers, majestic mountains, and fertile plains ready to be tamed by industrious white settlers (ibid., p. 25). It reaffirmed the idea that the Canadian civilization would soon reach the West and implied the consequential elimination of Indigenous peoples, their relationships, and their societies. Like other settler-colonial tourism industries, such as Australia (e.g., Clark, 2010), these tours relied on European paradigms that sought to capture ‘prehistoric’ peoples, places, and pasts untouched by progress but soon to be, or already were, possessed by white settlers. They produced and efficiently disseminated harmful narratives about the objects that tourists were viewing, such that the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples as easily profitable and temporary props becomes institutionalized settler myths.

As Boer (2016, p. 12) asserts, tourism offers opportunities for resistance that reveal the uneven power relations and oppressions in settler-colonial states through culture, sightseeing, and fun. As Hall & Tucker (2004, p. 2) claim, “[i]ssues of identity, contestation and representation are increasingly recognised [*sic*] as central to the nature of tourism.” Tourism can become a space where the subaltern challenges dominant colonial narratives by presenting

tourists alternative and more holistic depictions (Hollinshead, 2004 as cited in Boer, 2016, pp. 12 – 13). Marschall (2012, p. 326) describes a non-governmental organization called Zochrot that offers tours to Palestinian villages destroyed by Israel in the late 1940s as a means of appealing to empathetic tourists. Boer (2016) also provides a case study in Jerusalem regarding Palestinian resistance through the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster, an ‘alternative’ tourism organization focused on promoting Palestinian culture and perspectives in the city. Through the organization, Palestinian collaborators built touristic infrastructure, including maps and tour guides, to re-represent the city as a diverse city populated, not only by Jewish people, but also Palestinians, Assyrians, Indians, Africans, among others (ibid., pp. 14 – 16). The narratives they collectively produced through their collective memories of settler colonialism illuminated the complexities of everyday lives inhabiting Jerusalem, allowing Palestinians and other subaltern groups to reassert their right to the city and undermine dominant assumptions about Jerusalem and its marginalized groups.

Tourism has been employed to affect images, narratives, and perceptions of a people, place, or past. On the one hand, states utilize tourism to affirm hegemonic orderings and dominant understandings, erasing certain stories from the socio-geographic landscape. On the other hand, subaltern groups mobilize tourism to resist their subjugation by reviving forgotten histories and revealing unequal power relations. Boer (2016, p. 19) illustrates that in Jerusalem, Palestinian resistance through tourism takes the form of touristic products, such as alternative tours and maps, which highlight Palestinian and other non-Jewish sites/sights, challenging the dominant colonial narratives of the city using suppressed pasts. Tourism can allow subaltern groups to reclaim knowledge about them. However, this form of tourism inevitably competes with the more established and powerful state-sponsored tourism industry, which as Boer’s (2016)

exploratory case study demonstrates, complicates how tourism as resistance is conducted. Nevertheless, tourism as resistance offers a voice to the silenced, so that they can reshape their identities, reorder social geographies, and reclaim places.

### **Remembering the Colonial: On Settler Memory**

In 1884, Toronto commemorated its semi-centennial anniversary of its incorporation, its first major commemorative event. Tens of thousands of people—with reports of over one hundred thousand (The New York Times, 1884, July 1)—came to see the attractions, celebrating Toronto's history (Freeman, 2010, p. 22). There was a procession of city officials and other prominent citizens among the many events, followed by the Semi-Centennial Committee and members of the York Pioneers, the city's main heritage organization (ibid., p. 23). Twelve historic tableaux featuring historic events followed, such as “The Indian Wigwam, with painted warriors in full costume” and “The Early Settlers, a log house surrounded by men engaged in all kinds of farm-work with primitive implements” (The New York Times, 1884, July 1). The parade detailed, signified, and reimagined Toronto's creation story (Freeman, 2010, p. 25). It represented the city's history by enabling and mobilizing a settler perspective of the past through heavily condensed representations of complex historical processes (Furniss, 2006, p. 173, 182 as cited in Freeman, 2010, p. 25).

However, the parade and the other events were not memorializing the settlement's founding. Otherwise, the celebrations would have been a commemoration of 1793 when Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe abandoned his plans to make London, Ontario, the capital of Upper Canada (modern-day Ontario) and instead focused on Fort York, now known as Toronto (City of Toronto, 2006). Instead, the first major commemorative event of the city

centred around its incorporation, suggesting that the celebration was a commemoration of what Toronto was and what it could be. Indeed, the subsequent tableaux to the “Incorporation of Toronto,” placed roughly in the middle of the parade, emphasized the progressive nature of the city, referring to its various monikers such as “Toronto, the Centre of Agriculture,” “Toronto, an Educational Centre,” and “Toronto, the Queen City” (Freeman, 2010, p. 28). Furthermore, Indigenous peoples were significantly neglected in the tableaux depicting Toronto’s modernity, with the “Incorporation of Toronto” being the last to feature them (*ibid.*, p. 28). The juxtaposition between Toronto’s pre-history, indicated as the time before the city’s incorporation, and modern history (i.e., after the city’s incorporation) were all deliberate and rationalized decisions made by mnemonic actors, which included city officials, heritage preservationists, and committee members. It was a purposeful reframing of Toronto’s history by officializing the city’s ‘modern’ history starting at its incorporation, which retold and remembered a colonial past from the perspective of settlers rather than drawing on Indigenous pasts and perspectives.

The 1884 commemoration of the city’s incorporation exemplifies the use of settler memory, for it employed the collective memory of the colony to reproduce and remind citizens and non-citizens of the colonial order and the cultural, historical, political, and social conditions that created it and continue to form it. According to Bruyneel (2016, p. 351), “[s]ettler memory refers to the mnemonics—that is, the functions, practices, and products of memory—of colonialist dispossession and settlement that shape settler subjectivity and governmentality.” Elsewhere, Bruyneel (2017, p. 37) emphasizes that settler memory is the capacity to know and disavow historical and contemporary colonial violence toward Indigenous peoples that is foundational to the creation and maintenance of settler-colonial states. It is the capacity to see

and unsee Indigenous peoples in the past and present (Bruyneel, 2017, p. 38). In history, Indigenous peoples are relegated to marginal roles, while in the contemporary, their existence is understood through appropriated objects, motifs, and names rather than their lived experiences. Although settler memory functions as such, it is merely an abstraction of collective memory to the national level in the service of the nation-colony. It habitually operates within colonial systems of power, knowledge, and discourse that govern the semiotics and relationalities of and within the settler-colonial state. It extends to particular themes embedded in the governance of a colonial past. Settler memory assumes that the discourse of the past is settler-centric, meaning that the history of the lands is intimately bonded to the settler-colonial state's collective memories. This form of collective memory results in commemorative aims and actions that continuously obscure Indigenous agencies, bodies, histories, languages, presences, and more importantly, a contemporary existence. As Morgan (2005, p. 68) points out, this mnemonic process carefully delineates historiographical areas for Indigenous peoples, such that they are subjectified as either controlled and contained who can then be forgotten or ceaselessly confrontational with the state meant to remind settlers of their 'savagery.' Settler perceptions of the past, such as dying and problematic Indigenous populations, the city as the epitome of settler dominance and ownership, and settler Canadians and the Canadian state as the true and historical owner of its lands, are examples of this discourse. Power relations and present knowledge reflect and reproduce such ideals.

Settler memory functions as a technique of oppression since settler governmentality, in its pursuit of eliminating Indigenous life-worlds, i.e., through a "logic of elimination" (Wolfe, 2006), operationalizes settler memory to maintain a colonial past, ideologically reinforce the settler-colonial state, and reproduce settler relationalities in the present, which in turn, aims to

appropriate, eradicate, or subdue Indigenous pasts concerning the disputed lands (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012, p. 423). The repressive power of settler memory is the officialization of settler mnemohistory as the *prioritized* source and maker of history for Indigenous lands and peoples, legitimizing settler actions, goals, presences, and rhetoric. It also acts to erase Indigenous pasts and their connections to the lands and subjugates and subjectifies Indigenous peoples and lands according to settler mnemohistory.

Furthermore, the productive power of settler memory formulates a collective colonial identity and legitimizes a settler ideology and hegemony on Indigenous lands (Bruyneel, 2016, p. 352). Deloria (1998, p. 4) describes the contradictory role of Indigenous people and indigeneity in the formulation of U.S. identity. On the one hand, the discourse of the ‘noble Native’ serves to critique Western society, allowing settlers to live peaceably on a continent with which they desire close affinity. On the other hand, the concept of the ‘savage Indian’ justifies an assimilation and eradication campaign against Indigenous peoples. In this way, the elimination of Indigenous peoples, rationalized as a natural consequence of European progress, allows settlers and the settler-colonial state to appropriate indigeneity and construct an American<sup>5</sup> identity, a legitimate yet mythical successor to both European historical grandeur and Indigenous origins on the continent. The selective convergence of the two pasts is a technique for the settler-colonial state to anchor itself mnemohistorically into the socio-geographic fabric of Indigenous lands, which the settler-colonial state then uses to differentiate itself culturally and geographically from its mother state and reproduce a colonial hegemonic order.

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<sup>5</sup> Here, the term ‘American’ refers to the Americas (i.e., North, Central, and South America). I do not use it in the conventional Anglo-American way that refers to the United States of America. Deloria (1998) uses the word ‘American’ this way.

As Groat & Anderson (2021, p. 468) note, Indigenous peoples experience two intersecting ‘culture wars,’ with one being the fight against the ‘Great Man Theory’ that transfigures certain historical figures to almost deity-like status, and the other being the active work to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing, such as oral histories, into the Western concept of ‘commemoration’ to be considered legitimate commemorative practices. The pervasiveness of the ‘Great Man Theory’ throughout Western imaginaries position certain historical figures, predominantly settler white cis males in positions of power, as worthy of remembering in perpetuity because they exemplify good citizenship and right morals (Gordon, 2021, p. 427). They are honoured through grandiose monuments that enshrine their achievements publicly. Nathan Phillips Square exemplifies this need to monumentalize history and preserve legacy, which is further discussed in Chapter 4. Simultaneously, because of the dismissive nature of settler colonialism against Indigenous peoples to ensure the erasure of their agencies, bodies, cultures, histories, stories, and voices from settler retellings of the past, stemming from the ‘logic of elimination’ (Wolfe, 2006), Western commemorative forms deliberately ignore or co-opt indigeneity and Indigenous pasts to legitimize the settlement of Turtle Island<sup>6</sup> and other Indigenous lands (Groat & Anderson, 2021, p. 469). As such, the subjectivity of the ‘Indian’ in settler commemorative practices is used as a white possessive (Moreton-Robinson, 2015), whereby the ‘Native’/‘Indian’ subject, whether as a cultural, legal, political, or social form, is used to naturalize the inferiority and racialization of colonized peoples through historical narratives, stripping them of their agencies, bodies, cultures, memories, sovereignties, and voices. In the settler imaginary and retellings of the past, the ‘Indian’ remains a naïve, reductive, incomplete being who suffers from their inability to emulate European ideals (Moreton-

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<sup>6</sup> The name ‘Turtle Island’ is a term used by some Indigenous peoples in Tkaronto to refer to what is called North America. The name for the continent differs depending on the culture, nation, or territory.

Robinson, 2015, p. 149). Indigenous peoples remain historical and disregarded to ensure the continued legitimacy of 'indigene' settlers.

Shefvland's (2021) analysis of Pocahontas' story, its co-optation into settler memory in West Virginia and Florida, and her reification as 'America's Indian' exemplifies this violence. Pocahontas and the various dramatizations and depictions of her life by settlers has transformed her memory into a mythical retelling of the past whose being can be moulded to reinforce settler narratives of place. She has become a Mother figure, who in her interactions with settlers, nurtures them with her knowledge of the lands (Shefvland, 2021, p. 285). She has also become a saviour of the colony, both a Christian convert and John Smith's rescuer (ibid.). Ultimately, the cross-cultural harmony between Indigenous peoples and settlers that her commemorations depict legitimizes the indigenization of settlers and reaffirms their rights and ownership of Indigenous lands through stories of sexualized love and inter-cultural marriage (Deloria, 2004, 20 as cited in Shefvland, 2021, p. 285). Pocahontas becomes co-opted and subjected to the 'Great Man Theory' to symbolize the seemingly peaceful transition of land title from Indigenous peoples to settlers, which narratively positions settlers as the only natives on Indigenous lands and allows for the displacement and disempowerment of Indigenous peoples. Pocahontas is only one of many appropriated Indigenous historical figures used to construct settler narratives of place. Other examples include Louis Riel, Sitting Bull, Geronimo, La Malinche, India Catalina, and Levtaru, among many others. In discourses of the past, the 'Native' remains subject to colonial ideologies and history-making practices, such that they sustain contemporary settler ideologies and identities and rewrite colonial conquest as peaceful history.

Tuck & Yang (2012) also discuss ways settlers fabricate and legitimize their connections to Indigenous lands and 'indigene' identities. They note that in becoming Indigenous, in playing



Indian, settlers desire to be innocent, to find some relief from the uncomfortable reality of colonialism and maintain the structure that benefits them (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9). Tuck & Yang (2012) describe various settler moves to innocence that attempt to achieve this reprieve, specifically settler nativism and settler adoption fantasies. Settler nativism refers to the assumption that a settler individual has a long-lost Indigenous ancestor (ibid., p. 10). By ‘acknowledging’ and ‘remembering’ their Indigenous ancestry, particularly an Indigenous grandmother to make their history more appealing, settlers can rationalize the renouncement of their settler identity, of which their American identity is not since it is from the continent, while disregarding their complacency to and place in the structure of colonialism (ibid., p. 11). This settler move to innocence allows settlers to reimagine their personal and collective histories as being deeply rooted in Indigenous pasts yet refuse to claim to be Indigenous themselves, so that they can assert themselves to be blameless in the eradication of Indigenous peoples and retain their ‘right’ to possess Indigenous lands.

Settler adoption fantasies allow settlers “to *become without becoming [Indian]*” (ibid., p. 14). These fantasies absolve sympathetic settlers from the crimes of colonialism and bequeath them with a sense of Native-ness that does not overshadow their European-ness, becoming the sole and rightful inheritors of the identities and lands of ‘disappearing’ Indigenous peoples (ibid., p. 14). According to Tuck & Yang (2012, p. 16), these fantasies fabricate historical memory, such that the ‘official’ history reflects a peaceful transition of land title from Indigenous peoples to settlers, all while generating widespread historical amnesia that erases the horrors of colonialism from settler imaginaries. In other words, settlers believe themselves to be legitimate owners of Indigenous lands because they inherited that right from their already dying or dead adopted Indigenous kin. Both these settler moves to innocence feature Indigenous peoples as a

prominent part of settler histories, but they remain elusive enough to distance settlers from being fully 'Indigenous.' Through these settler moves to innocence, settlers can legitimize a hybridized American identity and reinforce settler memories to justify their existence and actions on appropriated Indigenous lands, seemingly absolving them of the horrors of colonialism.

Currently, the Canadian settler-colonial state is fixated on the violence caused by residential schools. That can be mainly attributed to the re-discovery of unmarked mass gravesites of residential school victims. Though tragic, which cannot be underscored, these events operate within the power relations, knowledges, and discourses emanating from the politics of reconciliation. They continue to temporally relocate colonial violence in the past and rationalize 'transitional justice' policies that merely recognize historical harm rather than restore Indigenous relationships with the lands, waters, people, and the other inhabitants. As a result, despite enacting reconciliatory acts, such as adhering to the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Actions, settler colonialism continues to persist. Until the Canadian state abandons settler understandings of the past (i.e., settler memory) and the practices that they inform, colonial systems of power, knowledge, and discourse will be continuously reproduced. As Bruyneel (2016, p. 352) stresses, an attention to settler memory should be a component of contemporary anti- and decolonial politics, for the absence of prominent Indigenous voices in the 'official' history of what is now called Canada and Toronto is an ongoing colonial violence. But it should be emphasized that Indigenous peoples have resisted and continue to resist such retellings of history since colonialism began. They actively undermine settler memory through their art, performances, protests, and by enacting their own collective memory. As settler memory demonstrates, control over the past in settler-colonial states is integral when reframing the

present since it has appropriated, disrupted, and marginalized Indigenous voices since its inception. That needs to change.

### **Conclusion**

Settler colonialism is definitively about access to and possession of land. However, settler colonialism does not only exert its power through military force (i.e., hard power). Rather, through the multitude of soft power approaches, settler-colonial states reaffirm their hegemonic status and reproduce settler-colonial power relations that continue to erase Indigenous peoples and their counterclaims even in a supposed post-colonial era. The city is central to this project, as it is the administrative, cultural, economic, educational, ideological, mnemohistorical, political, and social machinery through which the settler colony advances its goals. It is where the logics and practices of elimination manifest. The city is where tourism controls dominant narratives and profits from the mis- and non-representation of subaltern groups. It is also where the colonial hegemonic order becomes reproduced mnemohistorically and physically. Settler colonialism's goal is ultimately to erase Indigenous peoples and replace them with settlers. As such, it is essential to engage the settler-colonial state in multiple fields, problematizing and decolonizing every aspect of settler society, because assuredly, the settler-colonial state has already colonized and mobilized them for its benefit.

## Chapter Four – Nathan Phillips Square, Where History is (Re)Made



Figure 4-1: New City Hall overlooking Nathan Phillips Square (photo by author, October 14, 2021).

*Often I sit in the sun and brooding over the city, always  
 in airborne shapes among the pollution I hear them, returning;  
 pouring across the square  
 in fetid descent they darken the towers  
 and the wind swept place of meeting, and whenever  
 the thick air clogs my breathing it teems with their presence.*

*I sat one morning by the Moore, off to the west  
 ten yards and saw though diffident my city nailed against the sky  
 in ordinary glory.  
 And dreamed a better past. A place, a making,  
 two towers, a teeming, a genesis, a city.*

— Dennis Lee (2017, p. 27)

As Kingwell (2015, pp. 279 – 280) notes, Lee reflects on Canada during the mid-1960s, where new ambitions rewrote the urban landscape, erasing old neighbourhoods and the people that called them home. The above poem’s narrator contemplates on the simultaneous temporal collisions of the past, present, and future, prompted by the constant urban dance of visitors hurrying to their destinations. The narrator imagines the glorious future about to come but remembers those who have been mindlessly forgotten from the place. They question what is and what could have been. The poem alludes to the creative destruction brought on by the new present ceaselessly obliterating and scraping away at the historical past, bringing with it a hopeful yet haunting future. To dream a better past is to remember those who had been forgotten in the present, to defend their memory vigilantly.

This chapter presents the empirical work for Nathan Phillips Square (NPS). It begins with a brief excavation of the space’s pasts to reveal the City Hall-Nathan Phillips Square (CH-NPS) complex as a palimpsest. Due to NPS’ shared history with New City Hall, only this section amalgamizes the two as the CH-NPS complex, which is nonetheless the place’s name. The rest of the chapter, and Chapter 5, solely focuses on NPS. Viewing the CH-NPS complex as a

palimpsest resurfaces the diverse histories located in the space and further foregrounds the discussion on collective memory and urban renewal. This section is also a means to remember, in part, the spaces and communities that had been forgotten from NPS. I start with Taddle Creek and the buried histories of the area's Indigenous peoples. Due to the nature of settler colonialism, Indigenous pasts in traditionally settler spaces become explicitly erased or co-opted to support settler narratives of place. Taddle Creek is no exception. I then transition to St. John's Ward, or the Ward. As Lorinc *et al.*'s (2015) title suggests, the Ward was Toronto's first immigrant neighbourhood. It was a multicultural neighbourhood that existed from the mid-1800s to the 1940s. However, because of its heavy association with migrants, poverty, and the working-class, the Ward became a common target for social reformers who decried the neighbourhood's decrepit and unsanitary living conditions. The residents were described as "feeble-minded" and "morally-deficient foreigners," with frequent nativism present, particularly against the Ward's Chinese residents (Lorinc, 2015a, pp. 16, 18). The Ward became a symbol of rampant poverty and immorality, summed up in a 1922 *Globe* article as the place where "[m]oral leprosy spreads" (*ibid.*, p. 18).

Both Taddle Creek and St. John's Ward illustrate the vicious nature of settler-colonial urbanization projects, such as New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square. A discussion on the history of the CH-NPS complex is necessary to elaborate on this process. Toronto justified these erasures through 'civilizing' and 'modernizing' discourse, while blatantly disregarding the communities and individuals interacting with and inhabiting the space from the structural narratives that constitute the place, or as Thrush (2016, pp. 13 – 14) calls it 'narrative estrangement.' These narratives define what the city is, who belongs in the city, and what the

city values, which in turn, frames and influences how the city and its inhabitants interact with others in the past, present, and future.

Following this, I detail the indigenization of NPS, primarily manifested as the Sunrise Ceremony, the Indigenous flags, and the Medicine Wheel, using archival research, fieldworks, and interviews. I separated my fieldworks into two temporal areas, festive and non-festive times. These indigenization efforts signal a discursive change regarding settler perceptions of Indigenous cultures and people. Although important work, as Indigenous cultures have historically been legislatively and systematically erased, these initiatives attempt to culturalize indigeneity, such that it can be articulable within a liberal multicultural framework. Doing so allows settler imaginaries to envision Indigenous traumas as a consequence of historical cultural erasure and marginalization, Indigenous histories as a struggle among cultures, and Indigenous subjectivities as cultural entities requiring institutional protection.

### **Revisiting History: A Reading of the CH-NPS Palimpsest**

While conducting my fieldworks, I could not help but let my imagination run free. I became what Walter Benjamin (1999; see also Benjamin, 2002) calls the *flâneur*,<sup>7</sup> the aimless

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<sup>7</sup> I recognize that the notion of *flâneur* traditionally calls to a white, European, cis, able, upper-middle class male subjectivity whose privileged stroll through the urban landscape informs a particular reality devoid of marginalized experiences. However, when adapted to other positionalities, the notion of *flâneur* can offer different perspectives that enliven subaltern understandings of the city. For example, Elkin (2016) argues that women can also be *flâneurs* (i.e., *flâneuses*) by illustrating how various women across different urban contexts interact, or ‘stroll’ through, the city and what the city means for their subjectivities. Although Elkin (2016) continues the tradition of representing the *flâneur/flâneuse* through privileged lenses, mainly bourgeois whiteness, the notion of *flâneur/flâneuse* can be co-opted to display the everyday experiences of racialized bodies in the city as they walk through its landscapes. Bastia-Rodriguez (2014) examines how the racialized women in Chika Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters’ Streets* mediate their identities as they traverse Antwerp, Belgium, particularly as tourists rather than as migrants, affording them certain perspectives and privileges that they otherwise would not have been able to access. Thus, the use of the term *flâneur*

and half-dreaming stroller whose imagination playfully reconstructs the present and past as they walk across the landscape. Eiland (2007, p. 121) describes the *flâneur* as moving through “a particularly stratified space and time—one could also say, peculiarly haunted.” As I walk the lands on which the CH-NPS complex is located, hauntings from the past reappear. They tell of histories that have been almost, if not entirely, erased of their physical traces. Seventy years ago, the space would be filled with the demolished houses and businesses of displaced families, friends, and migrants. One-hundred-and-fifty years ago, the lively diverse migrant communities of St. John’s Ward would be felt, with workers and children occupying dirty streets bordered by dilapidated one- or two-storey houses. And many years before that, the sounds of a now-forgotten stream would be heard, accompanied by visions of an Indigenous gathering place. The history of the CH-NPS complex connects Toronto’s Indigenous and early settler pasts with its deep migrations stories to retell narratives of violent erasure that are all too familiar within a settler-colonial context.

Taddle Creek used to flow through what is now the CH-NPS complex before any initial colonization of the area. It stretched from the Annex, cutting through the University of Toronto and running through the CH-NPS complex near Queen Street West until entering Lake Ontario near the Distillery District. There were some indications that First Nations settlements existed in the area, such as the Mississaugas of the Credit (Coutts, 2002, p. 4), and the number of artifacts uncovered during the construction of the CH-NPS complex suggests that the creek was a significant gathering place for various Indigenous peoples, such as the Iroquois and the Ojibway Nation (Otto, 2015, p. 33; Sylvester, 2017, September 6). As the Toronto settlement—then called

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here is meant to recall to my psycho-geographical experiences of the city as I walk through Toronto’s memory, tourist, and urban landscapes as an embodied tourist.



the Town of York—grew, early settler history overshadowed Indigenous pasts and their relations with Taddle Creek. By the 1800s, settlers relied on Taddle Creek as a source of fresh water but also used it as a dumping ground for waste, resulting in various disease outbreaks like cholera and typhoid throughout the nineteenth century (Tait & Burrige, 2011, p. 30). Eventually, due to its extreme contaminated state and its effects on economic activities in the Toronto Harbour, Taddle Creek was buried and integrated with the city's underground sewage and water-intake system, leaving minimal contemporary evidence of its existence (Coutts, 2002, p. 4; Tait & Burrige, 2011, p. 30; Robinson, 2016, April 29). The story of Taddle Creek is one of many Indigenous pasts and relations that have been literally and figuratively buried by the more dominant settler mnemohistory of the city. With the encroachment of the urban, Taddle Creek's history and the narratives and relations attached to it changed to reflect its physical state, from a gathering place in Tkaronto to a problematic cesspool of disease to a part of Toronto's hidden infrastructure. Although Taddle Creek has effectively disappeared from Toronto's riverscape, its history illustrates the violent erasure of certain pasts caused by settler urban development.

Bounded by College Street to the north, Queen Street West to the south, Yonge Street to the east, and University Avenue to the west, St. John's Ward was an ethnic neighbourhood in Toronto during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Keung, 2017, October 11). In its early years, it was a thriving African-Canadian community, many of whom were escaped slaves or freemen fleeing to Canada via the Underground Railroad and became attracted to the strong abolitionist community in Toronto (Lorinc, 2015a, p. 12). It was also home to the Poor House, which provided welfare to women and children in need of food and shelter (ibid., p. 13). The Ward would eventually house many other immigrant communities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from the Irish potato famine survivors to persecuted Eastern European Jews

to transitory Italian labourers to Chinese working men and later, their wives and children (Fair, 2016, p. 127; Myseum, 2022). This diversity created many of Toronto's first ethnic enclaves, such as Little Italy, centred around Centre Avenue and Elm Street, and Chinatown, located where the CH-NPS complex is today (Lorinc, 2015b; Zucchi, 2015; Wong-Tam, 2015).

The Ward could be considered an 'arrival city' now, as Lorinc (2015a, p. 15) states. However, at the time, the Ward, with its ethnic diversity and immense poverty, symbolized everything that 'Toronto, the good,' an epithet that recalls the city's strong Anglo and Christian identity, violently opposed (ibid.). The Ward became subjectified as a working-class 'slum' where immoral acts were rampant, bringing with it the ire of moralistic social reformers and the paternalistic attitudes of medical practitioners. As Gray (2013, pp. 98 – 99) describes, the Ward was notorious for its wretched living conditions, with dilapidated buildings, feces scattered across the streets, and pungent smells wafting through the air. According to Yee (2005, pp. 81 – 82), the neighbourhood was considered to be "an ugly blight on the urban landscape." Further exacerbating these connotations were racial tensions, with many Italian and Jewish residents consistently being policed and Chinese inhabitants vilified as 'maniacs' (Valverde, 2015; Keenan, 2015). Despite the animosity and continued expropriation of the Ward without extensive community consultation for various urban developments, such as T. Eaton Co.'s factories in the 1890s and E.J. Lennox's City Hall in 1899, the Ward would persist until the 1950s when the southern portion of the Ward would become the CH-NPS complex. Although St. John's Ward, its residents, and its lively communities are mere memories now, with minimal physical traces but abundant in local and personal mnemohistorical connections, the Ward's history remains important for Toronto's migration stories and represents the persistence of diversity in the face of adversity.

During the Ward's gradual expropriation, plans outlining the use of the space were drafted, many of which focused on reactivating the area to better suit the needs of the municipal government but all of which failed. In 1911, a Civic Improvement Committee, with John Lyle as their consulting architect, proposed a broad ceremonial avenue situated west of Bay Street tentatively called Federal Avenue, connecting Union Station to the proposed municipal squares on Queen Street, which would have been where present-day Nathan Phillips Square is located (Armstrong, 2015, pp. 10 – 12; City of Toronto, n.d.b). There were other proposals in the 1920s, such as E. J. Lennox's 1925 design of an eleven-storey block in a central courtyard and Alfred Chapman's proposal of a Neo-classical ensemble of government buildings on Bay Street and Albert Street (Armstrong, 2015, p. 12). However, the 1928 – 29 proposal, which attempted to revive Lyle's vision of a civic square on Queen Street, rework surrounding streets and construct prestigious office buildings, would be the last until a decade later due to the growing economic depression and later, the outbreak of the Second World War (ibid., 2015, pp. 12 – 14). Nevertheless, the idea of a civic square and the revitalization of downtown Toronto would persist.

In the 1940s and 50s, several government departments deemed it absolutely necessary to expand to accommodate Toronto's booming postwar population growth, renewing discussions regarding the construction of a new municipal building and an accompanying civic square (Armstrong, 2015, p. 14). Initially, due to a strong sense of local protectionism, a consortium of three established architecture firms from Toronto (Marani & Morris, Mathers & Haldenby, and Shore & Moffat) were commissioned to design the building and square in 1954 (ibid., p. 18; City of Toronto, 2016). By the time preliminary designs were submitted in early 1955, Nathan Phillips had been elected mayor. Although he continued to support the new city hall project,

Mayor Phillips criticized the designs and consistently pushed for an international design competition despite continued rejections from Council due to its immense cost and complexity (Armstrong, 2015, p. 20). In December 1955, the City Hall project was published, and the response was frank. Architectural students decried the plan, denouncing it for being “dull and uninteresting,” “a funeral home of vast dimensions,” and a “monstrous monument to backwardness” (ibid., p. 20; City of Toronto, 2016). The proposal would also eventually be rejected by the electorate, paving the way for the design competition that Mayor Phillips originally wanted (City of Toronto, n.d.b). According to Armstrong (2015, p. 26), Mayor Phillips desired for the new city hall to be symbolic of Toronto’s ambitions for wider recognition and reject the conservative and traditionalist ways prevalent in Toronto’s pre- and interwar periods. The building and square had to be noteworthy, and Mayor Phillips believed that only an international design competition could achieve that. Mayor Phillips wanted to ideologically transform Toronto, being himself the first Jewish mayor of Toronto and breaking the long-established lineage of Orange (Protestant) mayors. By having such a prominent structure, Mayor Phillips not only reactivated the old-fashioned and dilapidated downtown but also signified Toronto’s glorious rebirth in the post-war era. Toronto would become a modern city, with its architecture reflective of that fact.

The competition was not immune to the ideological divide that plagued previous planning. For one, Eric Arthur, the professional advisor and chairman of the jury for the competition, was a vehement supporter of the international competition, mentioning that doing so would globally draw in radical innovation. Meanwhile, other architects and politicians desired for a more local or national competition, citing that it would have been “more satisfactory” for local practitioners to produce designs that would cause less of a “psychological reaction” from

Canadians (Armstrong, 2015, p. 30). Then, there was again the matter of cost, with traditionalist claiming that having an international competition would just be too expensive. Nevertheless, the year-long competition was opened to international entries. In 1958, Viljo Revell, a Finnish architect, was declared the winner, with Mayor Phillips commenting on the proposal's 'breath-taking' design (City of Toronto, 2016). On November 7, 1961, construction began, and on September 13, 1965, the new building would be officially opened with much celebration, including a military pageant, performances from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the city's ethnic communities, and a fireworks display (Armstrong, 2015, p. 148; City of Toronto, 2016).

This brief retelling of the CH-NPS complex's history alludes to the dominant discourses about the space. As its namesake, who also represented the same ideal, stressed, New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square represent a distinct break from tradition, with its Modernist style contrasting the more Neo-Classical and Romanesque designs of surrounding buildings, such as Old City Hall. The CH-NPS complex can be envisioned as a monument to what Toronto can be. The complex constructs an imagined past that is characteristically outdated and as such, should be discarded and not emulated, while reimagining the present and future through different yet familiar narratives. Freeman (2010) discusses the 1884 semi-centennial celebrations in Toronto, in which the city's colonial pasts are juxtaposed with its 'modern' period to construct a story of desired progression and a renewed hope for the future. The celebrations also characterized these pasts as backwards while the city's present was explicitly associated with innovation and civilization—i.e., modernity according to the civic officials. In other words, the past is archaic, the present is modern, and the future is transformative. The CH-NPS complex repeats these same sentiments but at a different temporal period. It represents Toronto—and Canada by extension—in a time of transition choosing to forge a better future rather than remain cemented

in the past. With its curved towers, New City Hall welcomes all to participate in the democratic process, which the openness of Nathan Phillips Square reflects. By having a Modernist structure as its seat of government, Toronto figuratively rejects a characteristically conservative, traditional, and pragmatic past and embraces a more global, innovative, and open present, which extends to perceptions of the city's future. These sentiments inculcate a sense of national pride and optimism about the city's—and the country's—future, as it was intended.

However, as Cutcher *et al.* (2016, p. 6) point out, “commemorative sites are so often highly gendered or racialised both within the sphere of formal organisations and beyond.” NPS, being named after the 52<sup>nd</sup> mayor of Toronto due to his commitment to the realization of the structure, invokes what Butler (2004) terms as “the politics of mourning” because by naming the square after him, Toronto declares that his life is worth remembering and in turn, associates the square with Mayor Nathan Phillips, his aspirations, and ideals. This association, along with the embedded values of innovation and modernization, traditionally within the sphere of Western rationalism, marks the square as masculine and settler-oriented and further encodes the achievements of (white) settler cis males in positions of power into Toronto's memory and urban landscapes. This characterization of the square seems to be obscured in the gender-neutral and race-neutral languages emplaced in the space, such as the use of the terms ‘Canadians’ and ‘Humans’ on the Freedom Arches plaque and the monotoned gray colours of the structures. However, the all-encompassing royal ‘We,’ whether in terms of nationality, humanity, neutrality, or otherwise, unconsciously references a specific group that has historically dominated culturally, economically, institutionally, politically, and socially, and becomes what traditionally characterizes the collectivity, which in settler-colonial contexts, are mostly white settler cis males. As such, the various languages employed in the square, despite being neutral,

automatically encodes and reinforces the gendering, racializing, and colonizing of the space for the royal ‘We’ while marginalizing the plebeian ‘Them,’ those who are not white settler cis males.

Today, the lands on which the CH-NPS complex is situated lack any historical traces to the pasts of Taddle Creek and the Ward. They have become replaced with memories of cultural celebrations and settler national pride. Importantly, these forgotten pasts illustrate the pervasiveness of settler epistemologies in shaping the city’s memory and urban landscapes. By destroying the physical historical traces to these pasts and co-opting these spaces to support settler narratives of place, settler mnemohistory serves to erase Indigenous peoples’ and marginalized communities’ relations to the place and characterizes the evolution of the space as an inevitable consequence of urban progress and renewal. Settler mnemohistory effectively disregards Indigenous and other subaltern claims to legitimately use and inhabit these spaces by disassociating their claims historically and reasserts the representative dominance of white settler cis males in public spaces. Toronto’s memoryscape continues to marginalize subaltern pasts. Toronto lacks significantly accessible concrete reminders of the violence that created it and as such, the city suffers mnemohistorically. Toronto chose to forge a new future by forgetting what once was.

### **Reclaiming Space: Examining the Municipality’s Indigenous *Lieux de Mémoire* in NPS**

In one of my meetings with my supervisor, Dr. Laam Hae, she told me—paraphrased—that space is the medium through which everything happens; that space allows for and hinders possibilities. This section is about the City of Toronto’s attempts to reclaim space for Indigenous peoples. It discusses the ways in which the municipality attempts to

challenge and change, albeit sometimes problematically, the entrenched settler mnemohistory that has traditionally harmed Indigenous peoples. In 2010, the City of Toronto adopted the Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Peoples, which outlines eight goals that the municipality established to support the urban Indigenous community in various ways, such as educating civic servants on Indigenous histories and contemporary contributions and strengthening relations with Indigenous communities and organizations (City of Toronto, n.d.c). And in 2015, City Council, in consultation with the Aboriginal Affairs Committee, the municipality's advisory board on all issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples, acknowledged eight Calls to Action from the TRC's final report that Toronto could implement (ibid.). These Calls to Action are reportedly reflected in the Statement of Commitment (ibid.). Of most import, the City of Toronto has taken it upon itself to advocate and implement a more holistic approach to history and its representations to highlight, not only the historical traumas inflicted on Indigenous peoples, but also their resilient and vibrant existence in the present.

Every year since 2011, the City of Toronto commemorates the summer solstice, June 21, with a Sunrise Ceremony at Nathan Phillips Square—except for the 2020 and 2021 Sunrise Ceremonies.<sup>8</sup> The ceremony includes a sacred fire, a prayer circle, smudging of sage, a pipe ceremony, singing, drumming, strawberries, water, and sharing stories and lessons. According to the City of Toronto (n.d.d), the ceremony is to greet a new day, be thankful for all creation and Mino Baamodziwin (The Good Life). It is also about recognizing all that has come before in creation in a good way with a good heart and a good mind (thecityoftoronto, 2020, June 20, 10:50; thecityoftoronto, 2021, June 22, 11:20). Councillor Mike Layton (2022, April 29), an

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<sup>8</sup> Due to COVID-19, the City of Toronto opted to do these ceremonies online. The actual ceremony itself was not recorded to respect Indigenous cultural protocols, but an explanation of the various elements involved by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders was provided for the audience.



interview participant who has been involved with the ceremony since its inception, remarked how the Sunrise Ceremony was originally a small city event, targeted towards the City of Toronto staff to promote cultural competency of Indigenous traditions, cultures, and histories. Now, the ceremony has been recontextualized, evolving to include hundreds of residents and visitors who wish to participate and to ensure that those who partake in the event understand the full picture and story. Chief R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation corroborates this sentiment when he comments on how Indigenous Peoples Day and Indigenous Awareness Month are times for raising awareness of and understanding the history of the lands, whether Indigenous peoples or settlers, both told and untold (thecityoftoronto, 2021, June 22, 4:20).

The Sunrise Ceremony is a functional *lieu de mémoire*. Although commencing as a cultural competency event, the Sunrise Ceremony changed to become an interactive educational space for settlers. In its annual appearance, the Sunrise Ceremony becomes a ritual for settlers to learn and engage with Indigenous ways of being, doing, and thinking that according to the settler imaginary, has been buried or lost, while Indigenous participants act as performers of indigeneity in a settler context. Because Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders can perform and share their traditions and histories to willing settlers in an educational and publicly accessible space, they are able to, in part, redirect colonial understandings of Indigenous peoples through their cultures and experiences, presenting themselves as benevolent, caring, and peaceful individuals and communities. Such examples include Elders Marie Gaudet of the Wikwemikong First Nation and Jimmy Dick of the Moose Cree First Nation's storytelling and teachings during the 2021 Sunrise Ceremony and Elder Gary Sault of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation's prayer for the 2020 Sunrise Ceremony (thecityoftoronto, 2020, June 20, 0:00; thecityoftoronto, 2021,

June 22, 9:09). Accompanying such efforts is the City of Toronto's sustained campaign to emphasize the contemporary existence of Indigenous peoples, with special reference to their diverse cultures, limitless contributions, and rich histories. As an educational space, the Sunrise Ceremony operates to impart Indigenous beliefs, morals, and values onto settler participants in a participatory manner and reimagine colonial perceptions of history, such that suppressed Indigenous knowledges of the past are included.

Coupled with the Sunrise Ceremony, there have been physical transformations to NPS to further reclaim space for Indigenous peoples and enact reconciliation. During the 2017 Sunrise Ceremony, people gathered under the newly raised Indigenous flags. Although the City of Toronto has raised Indigenous flags since 1999, particularly those of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Métis Nation, the 2017 ceremony was the first time that the flags of the aforementioned nations, along with the Six Nations, the Huron-Wendat Nation, and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami were raised permanently (See Figure 4-2). The initiative was inspired by the discussion on the urgency for "municipalities to connect with local Métis, Inuit and First Nations in a positive and engaging manner" conducted by Chief Bellegrade, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations at the time (Aboriginal Affairs Committee, 2016). Councillor Mike Layton (2022, April 29), who had put forth the motion for the permanent installation of the Indigenous flags, retold the story by which these flags were set up:

"Just east of the [Indigenous] flags is the flags of the provinces and territories...and there seemed to be something absent in the fact that the colonial governments' flags were up permanently but it was only on occasion that we would have an Indigenous flag...At some point it [the permanent raising of the flags] came up. It seemed to be something reasonably easy to do...Our protocol staff didn't feel it was appropriate to put the flags with the

Dominion of Canada flags. There was 3, 4, or 5 City of Toronto flags at the location where those Indigenous flags are. And the City of Toronto flag is a pretty flag, but like what? Are we celebrating the incorporation of the City of Toronto? Kind of a lame thing to have hanging in your civic square. And someone said, ‘That’s where they go!’ Everybody sees them [the Indigenous flags]. You could be standing in the middle of the square. You’re not going to see the [provincial and] territorial flags. You’ll see the Canada flag, but you won’t see the [provincial and] territorial flags. And I think everyone thought, ‘You know what? What a great idea to put them in such a prominent place, at the end of the reflecting pond, right where everyone sees them for all the events!’”

Although he recognizes that the initiative is not in any means representative of a land back exercise or offering, Councillor Mike Layton stresses that it was a significant acknowledgement at the time since it was a recognition of the land and the original landholders when there was none that were permanent before. Additionally, he hoped that these Indigenous flags would remind visitors, primarily City of Toronto staff who have undergone Indigenous cultural competency training, of the stories of great peaces between nations and the deep sad stories of residential schools, conquest, and colonization, which perhaps would inspire them in their work towards reconciliation.

Evident within Councillor Layton’s statement is the rejection of the more traditional history of the municipality; that the City of Toronto’s history begins with its incorporation, as Freeman (2010) highlights. Councillor Mike Layton ridicules that notion and opts to replace it with a past that acknowledges the historic presence of Indigenous peoples and nations in Toronto. His remarks contrast with what Billig (1995, p. 6) calls ‘banal nationalism,’ according to which “[t]he ideological habits, by which our nations are reproduced as nations, are unnamed

and therefore unnoticed.” National symbols, like flags, are considered unproblematic because they are mundane parts of the everyday; however, in their ordinariness, they contain beliefs, histories, morals, and values that influence attitudes and actions. The Indigenous flags are *lieux de mémoire*. In this case, Councillor Mike Layton explicitly criticizes the unequal representation of flag displays between colonial governments and Indigenous nations and communities, drawing a closer attention to the seemingly settled and benign landscape of Canadian national identity, for which Skey (2009, pp. 336 – 337) advocates. Councillor Layton disrupts the banal acceptance of Canadian nationalism and Torontonians settlement from within the colonial institution that created the representational inequality in the first place by replacing colonial flags with Indigenous ones. The initiative is an attempt to re-place Indigenous visibility in public spaces and replace Toronto’s colonial identity. These sentiments seem to be reflected with



Figure 4-2: The Indigenous flags in NPS, left to right – the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Six Nations, the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Métis Nation, and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (photo by author, October 14, 2021).

Indigenous representatives, as the flags further represent the municipality's public recognition of their contemporary existence. Chief R. Stacey Laforme asserted that the flags allow "Indigenous peoples to see themselves reflected in the city on a permanent basis" (CityNews, 2017, June 21, 0:15). Meanwhile, Sara-Beth Holden, the president of the Toronto Inuit Association at the time, acknowledged the importance of the flags as rallying points, as symbols of thriving Indigenous communities in Toronto (ibid., 0:33). By having such public displays of recognition for Indigenous histories and peoples, the flags represent, in some respect, disruptions to entrenched settler understandings of Toronto. Particularly, the City of Toronto is home to settlers *and* Indigenous peoples; that Indigenous peoples belong in the city.

On June 21, 2018, celebrants at the Sunrise Ceremony recognized the addition of a 3D Medicine Wheel and a new vinyl wrap to the popular Toronto Sign. Located on the west side of the sign, positioned before the first 'T,' the Medicine Wheel composes of four quadrants, with yellow to the right, red at the bottom, black to the left, and white at the top. There is also an accompanying plaque at its base detailing the Toronto Sign's and its other fixtures' origins and symbolism (See Figure 4-3). The text pertaining to the Medicine Wheel reads:

The Medicine Wheel was added on June 18, 2018 in honour of Indigenous Peoples and to increase awareness of National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21.

The Medicine Wheel symbol was chosen, in consultation with Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, as it is an emblem of North American Indigenous cultural values, tradition and spirituality. Its four directions (East, South, West and North) symbolize completeness, wholeness, connectedness and strength.

In April 2022, there was a nearby post that repeated a similar description for the Medicine Wheel, but it also outlined in detail the various symbols on the Indigenous vinyl wrap, which resembled birchbark inlaid and included the two-row wampum belt, the Métis sash, the turtle, feathers, the sweetgrass braid, the medicine wheel, lacrosse sticks, the inukshuk, fire, the Ojibway canoe, and the dreamcatcher.<sup>9</sup> Along with what the plaque states, the Medicine Wheel symbolizes healing, particularly for the trauma caused by residential schools, which is further supported by its incorporation into Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre's Indigenous Residential School Survivors (IRSS) Legacy Celebration in October 2018 (Gerard, 2018, June

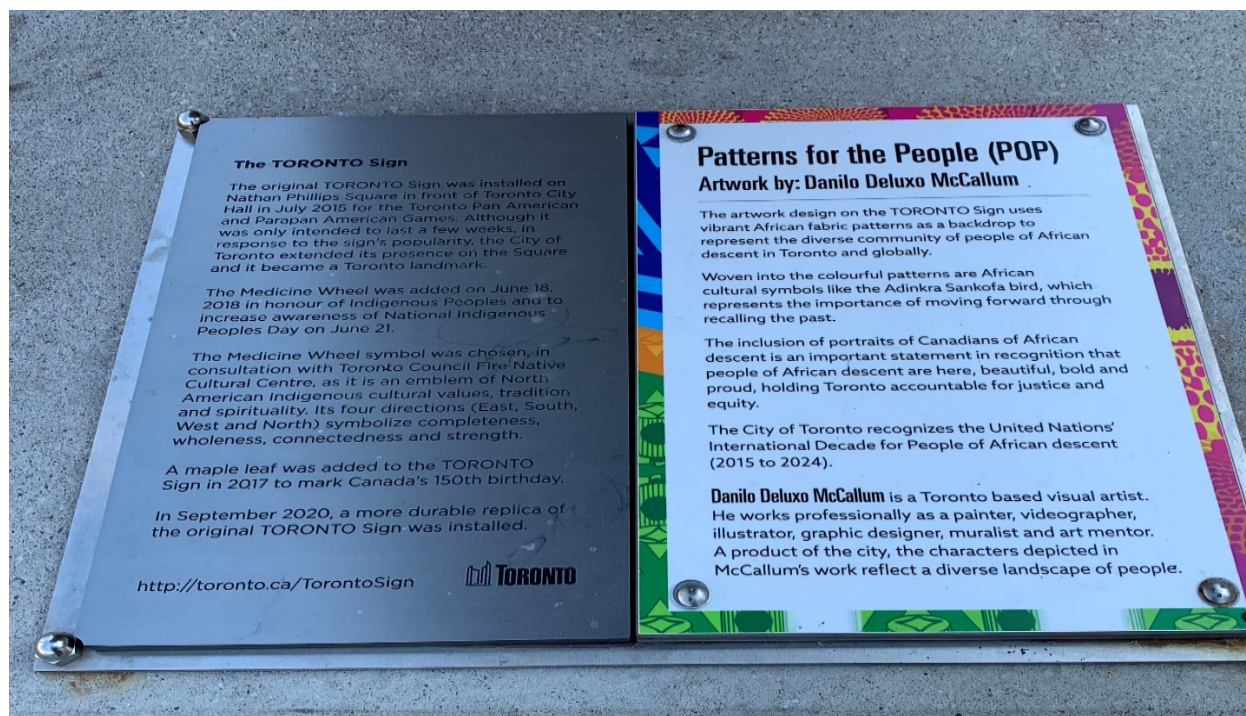


Figure 4-3: Left - "The Toronto Sign;" Right - "Patterns of the People (POP)" (photo by author, October 14, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> The vinyl wrap was removed by the time the fieldwork was conducted. As of October 14, 2021, the *Patterns of the People (POP)* vinyl wrap was installed, the description of which can be seen in Figure 4-3.

18). The Medicine Wheel acts as a *lieux de mémoire*, as it recalls the violence of the past through its symbolism of the healing relationship between the City of Toronto and the urban Indigenous community.

### **Re-placing Culture: The Culturalization of a Settler-Colonial Past**

Weaved throughout these place-making efforts is an emphasis on culture. The municipality draws from the national memory of Indigenous traumas, particularly those of residential schools, to formulate the structural narratives that govern its reconciliation strategy at the local level. With the emphasis on Indigenous residential schools coupled with the municipality's already established liberal multicultural framework, the colonial past becomes characterized as being fraught with cultural transgressions, with settlers enacting policies directed towards the cultural assimilation of Indigenous peoples. The residential schools become the epitome of cultural genocide in Canada. As such, cultural recognition and accommodation is the main reconciliatory strategy, manifested in the celebrations of Indigenous cultures and their re-characterization as 'diverse,' 'vibrant,' and 'beautiful.' Councillor Mike Layton even noted that these projects were intended to celebrate Indigenous cultures and foster cultural exchange. As Turner (2004, p. 265 as cited in Tatour, 2019, p. 1572) elucidates, since the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples was premised on the demonization and vilification of their cultures presented through racist representations, the focus on cultures in struggles for Indigenous rights is justified. The inclusion of Indigenous histories and symbols, such as the flags and the Medicine Wheel, increases Indigenous visibility within settler society so that settlers construe Indigenous peoples as a (permanent) part of Toronto's multicultural landscape. Mainstreaming the acceptance of Indigenous cultures is a part of the larger reconciliatory project to deny the settler-colonial state



the conventional pretext traditionally employed against Indigenous people. It re-subjectifies Indigenous people as acceptable and valuable to settler society rather than ‘savage outsiders,’ the logic being that with more interactions between settlers and Indigenous peoples, the less racist settlers would become as they grow to appreciate Indigenous cultures more.

However, as Tatour (2019, p. 1572) notes, the culturalization of indigeneity risks repeating the colonial logics that maintain the historical hegemonic ordering and depoliticizes Indigenous peoples as an accepted cultural ethno-racial group. For one, the Sunrise Ceremony enacts performances subjected to settler perceptions of indigeneity. Albeit changed to conform to the contemporary cultural, political, and social transformations, mainly induced by the collective memory of Indigenous residential schools, the lessons, myths, and stories retold in the Sunrise Ceremony follow culturalist perspectives. They are largely devoid of uncomfortable truths, such as the question of land sovereignty, to remain palatable for a majority settler audience. There are mentions of historical and contemporary violence though. In the 2017 Sunrise Ceremony, Darlene Ritchy, the president of the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre at the time, expressed concerns for the economic, political, and social inequalities that Indigenous peoples experience repeatedly (CityNews, 2017, June 21, 1:10). In the 2020 Sunrise Ceremony, Chief R. Stacey Laforme used the opportunity to briefly discuss the many struggles of Indigenous peoples, such as discrimination, poverty, the missing and murdered Indigenous women, suicides, and the theft of Indigenous children, while also advocating for solidarity with others (thecityoftoronto, 2020, June 20, 26:46). But these truth-telling sessions ultimately function to depict Indigenous peoples as entities that require protection against social inequalities to ensure their cultural survival. These initiatives are meant to educate settlers on Indigenous cultures and experiences, not enhance Indigenous agency or voices.



The Medicine Wheel also operates within culturalist perspectives. Its plaque and other descriptions for it, such as on the municipality's website (see City of Toronto, n.d.f), proposit that the medicine wheel is emblematic of 'North American' Indigenous (or sometimes just Indigenous) cultural values, traditions, and spirituality, without any permanent reference to the diverse histories, memories, and teachings embedded in it (e.g., Pitawanakwat, 2012; Whiskeyjack, n.d.). By supposing an all-encompassing belief system among all North American Indigenous cultures and nations, the City of Toronto strips the medicine wheel of its diverse cultural and symbolic associations that are deeply rooted in specific cosmologies, epistemologies, geographies, histories, and ontologies. The municipality inadvertently disseminates a colonizer interpretation of the medicine wheel and perpetuates the notion of a 'pan-indigeneity.' The same can be said for the vinyl wrap's symbols, as they too lack any diverse interpretations. This neglect is in stark contrast to the municipality's constant promotion of diversity among Indigenous communities.

As Lyshaug (2004, pp. 310 – 312) argues, in affirming cultural symbols, the state restricts the malleability, porousness, and complexity of meaning-making that varies locally, nationally, and transnationally, often becoming inauthentic cultural representations. Groat & Anderson (2021, p. 477) maintain the same sentiment when discussing the federal government's policies regarding displays of Indigenous cultural heritage. Interestingly, in *Toronto's First Indigenous Health Strategy* (2016, p. 12), the municipality remarks on the diverse cultural teachings embedded in the Medicine Wheel, providing a more in-depth description of its meanings. Yet, such mentions are absent in NPS' Medicine Wheel, which is a prominent site for visitor engagements with indigeneity in the square as it is attached to the popular Toronto Sign. At best, the Medicine Wheel increases Indigenous visibility and awareness for reconciliation through its public

accessibility and integration into the wider channels of tourist information, resulting in the reclamation of space for Indigenous peoples, as intended. But at its worst, it sustains the notion that all Indigenous peoples are the same culturally and spiritually, reducing indigeneity to colonial essentialist interpretations of Indigenous beliefs, histories, memories, morals, symbols, traditions, and values.

Furthermore, these depictions of indigeneity become commodified as tourist products. During non-festive time, the Medicine Wheel would receive considerable visitors partly because of its proximity to the Toronto Sign. Its physical association with the Toronto Sign grants the Medicine Wheel some popularity while also enhancing the settler memory emplaced in it. The Medicine Wheel acts as a sign of inclusion, allowing settler visitors to recognize indigeneity within curated settler spaces without fully acknowledging settler colonialism. In other words, the space allows for their disavowal of settler colonialism's violence, as Bruyneel (2016; see also Bruyneel, 2017) discusses. As visitors document their interaction with indigeneity in NPS, they can ignore the deep-rooted inequalities in the presentation of settler-Indigenous relations because



*Figure 4-4: The Toronto Sign with the Medicine Wheel (image by the City of Toronto, n.d.f)*

the intended interaction in the space allows it. Meanwhile, during the 2022 Sunrise Ceremony, many visitors recorded the event. These photographic souvenirs transform tourists into “image junkies, experiencing the world vicariously through the associated images they consume” (Sontag, 1977: 21 as cited in Laxson, 1991, p. 372). The participatory nature of the event, such as participating in dances and eating strawberries and blueberries, also enhances the experience, making it more ‘authentic’ for tourists, as if they are privy to such sacred practices. As Laxson (1991, p. 372) iterates, the uniqueness of the engagement between settler visitors and Indigenous hosts prompts tourists to document, or become overanxious to document, such an uncommon event in their everyday. Interactions become attractions. They become spectacles of the sacred, facilitating emotional and spiritual engagements between visitor and host. The tourist desires to learn the host’s experiences to vicariously live them in a controlled manner, to become them without becoming them.

The issue these reconciliatory efforts present is not so much about the failure to recognize the colonization of Indigenous peoples and lands, as such histories are extensively lacking in these representations and settler discourses. Rather, the problem is depicted as the historical exclusion of a culturally valuable people from the democratic processes of the nation. And as such, the municipality’s anti-colonial strategies tend to centre around an inclusion/exclusion axis, whereby the colonial institution attempts to equalize, to some degree though not completely, the public representation between colonizers and colonized to reconcile for and redress historical oppression. Indeed, the motion for the flags recognizes that the formal acknowledgement of First Nations through the flags is an act of reconciliation (Aboriginal Affairs Committee, 2016; Executive Committee, 2016). The incorporated Indigenous histories can be read as intelligible historical traces of settler colonialism curated to conform to the narratives of contemporary

reconciliation. In other words, certain pasts are excluded to construe current reconciliatory efforts as a response to an equity issue, while making other solutions, such as large-scale land back projects, become predominantly unthinkable.

No matter how well-intentioned they may have been, these initiatives fail to critically challenge the asymmetrical relationship that constitute settler-colonial relations, as Councillor Mike Layton implicitly acknowledged. For example, being a city-led initiative, the flag raising illustrates the unequal relation between the ‘master’ (i.e., the settler-colonial state) and the ‘slave’ (i.e., the represented Indigenous communities), further obscuring the colonial hierarchies and power relations that are entrenched in the settler-colonial state with public pleasantries (Coulthard, 2007, pp. 450 – 451; Ruparelia, 2008, p. 42). The equity initiatives in NPS lack any redistribution of power in history-making efforts and maintain the colonial *status quo*, as only by the will of the municipality did certain Indigenous pasts become incorporated into the city’s ‘official’ history, or more appropriately, settler mnemohistory.

Moreover, the inclusion and display of Indigenous knowledges and practices into settler commemorations can be described as a ‘decolonization of the mind.’ Tuck & Yang (2012, p. 19) problematize this conscientization by elaborating on its power “to stand in for the more uncomfortable task of relinquishing stolen land.” For the Sunrise Ceremony, settlers become exposed to Indigenous realities and pasts through these rituals to invoke cultural recognition and Indigenous spirituality, leading to what may be considered as a ‘spiritual rebirth’ of the person or an awakening to the truth. In this vein, it seems as if by learning about the hardships of Indigenous peoples and participating in their ceremonies, settlers can become appreciative of and connect with Indigenous peoples at a spiritual and emotional level, with minimal to no acknowledgement of the deep-seated imbalances between them and Indigenous peoples at large.

Indigenous peoples become romanticized as what Deloria (1998, p. 21) calls ‘noble Indians,’ a subjectivity often mobilized to criticize Western society. The City of Toronto utilizes the inclusion of indigeneity and Indigenous traumatic pasts as a critique of the historical exclusion of Indigenous peoples in history-making processes, further entrenching and legitimizing the municipality’s equity response to reconciliation.

Further complicating these efforts is the assumption of an artificial temporal divide between the city’s colonial past and post-colonial present. The Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Peoples adopted in 2010, along with these place-making and place-keeping initiatives, serve to temporally demarcate Toronto’s commitment to reconciliation. In these efforts, the collective memory of Indigenous residential schools plays a crucial role in the municipality’s contemporary self-representation, particularly as it seeks to re-present itself as a benevolent and self-reflexive city dedicated to modes of anti-colonial inclusion. Toronto’s—and Canada’s—past is racist, but its present is more aware, and its future is transformative. Additionally, Councillor Mike Layton (2022, April 29) attributes the failure of the municipality to give land back seven years ago, when the flags were permanently raised, to the different circumstances of the past. He describes the past as “a totally different world.” His statement assumes that the past was problematic as it did not allow for appropriate reconciliatory actions, whether administratively, culturally, economically, politically, socially, or a combination of them, while suggesting that in the present, some of the barriers have been more or less resolved to create a more conducive environment for reconciliation.

Although that may be true, imagining the past as a separate temporal field from the present and future risks erasing and perpetuating particular assumptions about reality and subjectivities. For example, Ashley Nadjiwon (2022, May 24), an interview participant who is

the Indigenous Youth Research Associate with the Indigenous Affairs Office from the Wikwemikong unceded Indian reserve community, recounted the internal dynamics between Indigenous City Staff and their settler counterparts. She referred to the lack of support and incredulous assumptions from settlers that position Indigenous employees as inherently experts on all Indigenous issues and knowledges. She also pointed to the unequal knowledge procurement and appreciation practices when asked for information, particularly that her settler counterparts are not expected to share personal experiences, but Indigenous people are. Her experience and those of other Indigenous civic servants reveal, in part, the problems within what Ahmed & Swan (2006, p. 97) term “the equality regime,” whereby race equality in public organizations is a ‘positive duty’ but leaves unchallenged the systematic barriers and harms that afflict the racialized. In Ashley’s case, the collective memory of Indigenous traumas in settler imaginaries operate to reproduce Indigenous subjectivities as traumatized individuals whose experiences must be prompted to be heard for settlers to learn from such violent pasts. Ashley later adds, however, that there are projects in motion meant to minimize these harms, such as establishing an Elder Circle for monthly support, and other engagements, such as food revitalization and sovereignty efforts, suggesting that the City is taking reconciliation quite seriously. Nevertheless, to reiterate Coulthard (2014, p. 121), a temporal divide between the past and present rationalizes the enactment of ‘transitional justice’ that focuses on recognizing and accommodating Indigenous peoples but leaves unproblematized the structure of colonial governance. Although the municipality is disrupting settler discourses regarding Indigenous peoples and their cultures, settlers continue to feel entitled to Indigenous knowledges, which the municipality encourages through its reconciliatory efforts, while Indigenous peoples remain subjected to and by the settler colony.

These place-making efforts are important because they aim to rewrite the discourses concerning Indigenous belonging, cultures, and subjectivity in settler imaginaries of the city. They illustrate to settlers that Indigenous peoples have a vibrant contemporary existence in the city, contrasting the traditional colonial assumptions of their non-belonging status in urban areas and their death and dying condition, along with disrupting negative perceptions of Indigenous cultures. These initiatives are not perfect, as they reproduce the hegemonic configurations of the settler-colonial state, despite the municipality's sustained efforts to delimit harms according to its perceived barriers. They are also temporally and spatially limited, expressed more explicitly during National Indigenous Awareness Month (also known as National Indigenous History Month) in June. Nevertheless, some City Staff recognize that these efforts are not a panacea to settler colonialism but are the first steps to rebuilding and re-bridging harmed relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers. The Sunrise Ceremony, the Indigenous flags, and the Medicine Wheel are meant to start a conversation about settler depictions and perceptions of Indigenous peoples in the city's past, present, and future. If anything, these efforts signal that Toronto is at least trying to participate in reconciliation. Though, future projects must be done critically and collaboratively to ensure that harm is not perpetuated, an example of which is the Spirit Garden, the City of Toronto's joint response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #82.

## Chapter Five – The Spirit Garden, Where the Past is Culturalized



Figure 5-5: Conceptual design for the Spirit Garden (image by Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, 2018).

“To repair what was damaged, reclaim what has been displaced and to work towards restitution for future generations”

— Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (2019, December 4, 0:00)

Consisting of archival research of municipal documents and those of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (TCFNCC), interviews with relevant actors, and the fieldwork



conducted, this chapter presents the empirical work on the Spirit Garden, or the Indigenous Residential School Survivors (IRSS) Legacy project. It begins with a brief description of the space, elaborating on the meanings embedded within it. The Restoration of Identity (ROI) sculpture, or the Turtle, features most predominantly. Although not the sole art piece in the space, the Turtle was specifically identified through TCFNCC's conversations with Elders to be a significant representation of their past. The Spirit Garden was designed to revolve around Turtle Island, incorporating diverse Indigenous cultures, images, and knowledges and further reinforcing the importance of the turtle and its teachings. Following this, I detail the process by which the Spirit Garden was developed, starting with the motives for its creation and then providing timelines for its development, as detailed by research participants. The Spirit Garden was formed from a complex array of interests and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, governments, and organizations and as such, this chapter only minimally presents the work contributed to the IRSS Legacy project's realization. It focuses on the contributions and collaboration between the City of Toronto and TCFNCC, as they are the main actors in its development. I conclude with an analysis of the Spirit Garden. Particularly, due to its connection with the TRC and its emphasis on residential schools, the Spirit Garden reinforces the reconstruction of Toronto's, Ontario's, and Canada's settler-colonial past through culturalist and multiculturalist perspectives. Although not ignoble, this form of memory activism delimits possible discursive changes to cultural appreciation and preservation rather than more radical approaches, constraining possible actions and behaviours. There is, however, potential for more creative and radical use of space to resist against the settler-colonial state in the future.

### **Indigenizing Commemorative Practices: How the Spirit Garden Developed**

Soon to be located in the south-west quadrant of NPS, near Queen Street West and Osgoode Hall, the Spirit Garden is a 19,250 square foot Indigenous cultural space dedicated to residential school victims, while also representing the resiliency and strength of survivors and families (Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, 2017, pp. 20 – 21). As of 2022, the space will feature a gathering space, a fountain with the Seven Grandfathers Ramp, a Two-Row Wampum walkway reminiscent of the Two-Row Wampum Belt treaty, a Voyageur canoe, an Inukshuk, a timber-frame Teaching Lodge, a Three Sisters sculpture and teaching garden, an amphitheatre, the White Pine, or Tree of Peace, and Indigenous plantings throughout the space (See Figure 5-1).<sup>10</sup> Some reports also indicate space for a garden of medicines and plants, though it may be included within the broader category of ‘Indigenous plantings’ (City of Toronto, 2021). Every component in the space is premised upon deep cultural knowledge and deep cultural memories that originate from many generations of knowledge, history, and culture, as the interview participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20) maintained. According to Andrea Chrisjohn, Board Designate of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, the space will embody the diversity of Indigenous cultures and knowledges, while incorporating the environment with the principles of the Kuswenta (the Two-Row Wampum) to promote friendship, mutual respect, and peaceful co-existence between Indigenous people and settlers (City of Toronto, 2021). The IRSS Legacy project will be a teaching, learning, sharing, and healing space, with year-round programming from Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, such as Elders and traditional teachers (IRSS Legacy Project, 2018).

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<sup>10</sup> Because of the ongoing nature of its development as of June 2022, the IRSS Legacy project and its various components are subject to change.

At the centre of the space, and its focal point, is the ROI structure (See Figure 5-2). Commissioned by TCFNCC and created by Anishinaabe artist Solomon King from the Cape Crocker community, the ROI structure is a snapping turtle, symbolic of Mother Earth, climbing over a boulder inscribed with the names of 17 residential schools that operated in Ontario, and its head looking up towards the north-east (Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, n.d.). The ROI structure will be 6 feet tall, 6 feet wide, and 9 feet long (IRSS Legacy Project, 2018). The Turtle, particularly the tiles on its shell, also represents the Indigenous lunar calendar and honours the 11 nations in the region, the Métis People, and the Inuit (ibid.). Through the ROI structure, the past, present, and future converge. Its past-oriented vision focuses on honouring the residential school victims and survivors, commemorating their struggle and resilience through the movement of the sculpture. As the Turtle ascends, so too do those who have been lost and those who have been hurt. In its present, the Turtle symbolizes how Indigenous people are reconnecting and rooting themselves back with creation (Aboriginal Affairs Committee, 2017b; IRSS Legacy Project, 2018; Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, n.d.). They are reclaiming who they have been, who they are, and who they will be. As the Turtle asserts its presence, so too do Indigenous people. As it looks forward, its gaze meets two objects, as the participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20) described. On the one hand, the Turtle directly faces City Hall, with its presence perpetually reminding politicians of their ongoing commitment and duty to reconciliation now and forevermore. On the other hand, it watches the sunrise, basking in the new life that the Sun brings to the Earth. As the Turtle welcomes the future with hope, as it welcomes the changes and generations to come, so too do Indigenous people.

According to the Aboriginal Affairs Committee (2017; see also Executive Committee, 2017), and as Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (2017; see also Toronto Council Fire

Native Cultural Centre, 2018) corroborates, the IRSS Legacy project and the ROI structure are, in part, responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action #82, which urges provincial governments to install a publicly-accessible and highly-visible Residential Schools Monument in their capital cities and honour residential school survivors and victims. As Councillor Mike Layton (2022, April 29) recounted, the originally proposed piece by TCFNCC would have been a single structure (i.e., the Turtle) in the middle of the square, with no room to grow. He expressed the necessity to have the Turtle, suggesting that following the TRC recommendations was important, but that the commemoration needed to be more than just the structure. It needed to be a place that could elevate Indigenous voices and stories, as Ashley Nadjiwon (2022, May 24), the Indigenous Youth Research Associate with the Indigenous



*Figure 5-6: A computer image of the Turtle Sculpture at night (image by Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, n.d.)*

Affairs Office from the Wikwemikong unceded Indian reserve community and who has been supporting the IRSS Legacy project, also remarked. Although the Turtle would have sufficiently fulfilled the Call to Action according to the prescribed guidelines, the municipality took the opportunity to expand the project beyond settler normalcy of monuments and memorials to support the construction of a holistic space dedicated to the celebration of Indigenous people and their cultures and the commemoration of those who came before and those who had been lost.

However, as the participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20) recounted, the vision for the project and the project itself began long before the municipality's involvement. The work on the project began in the mid-2000s, with TCFNCC conducting its own TRC forum, documenting and listening to survivors' and their families' stories regarding their experiences with residential schools. Their work contributed to the larger TRC process, from which the 94 recommendations originated. As such, TCFNCC knew that the TRC recommendations would include Indigenous art installations and commemorations. They created a team dedicated to the project and conversed with Elders to understand how they wished that past would be represented, and from that process, the turtle would be singled as a significant representation. The participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20) also remarked that the language used within the TRC, particularly its emphasis on a 'monument,' contrasted with Indigenous commemorative practices, which do not include monumentalizing the past. Recognizing that the TRC reports are products of a settler bureaucracy that does not have an intimate knowledge of Indigenous protocols, teachings, and cultures, the project team had to re-interpret the language of 'monument' to conform to cultural nuances, resulting in Solomon King's Turtle sculpture. Here, the municipality's and TCFNCC's timelines converge. But the relationship between the City of Toronto and TCFNCC was initially challenging. For example, in 2017, TCFNCC proposed replacing the Archer located in front of

City Hall with the Turtle, but the proposal received criticisms from some councillors and the city's arts community. There were also suggestions from the municipality to place the sculpture in the periphery, but TCFNCC, with the leadership of Andrea Chrisjohn and the support of many within the organization, relentlessly refused. Eventually, in 2017, TCFNCC identified the south-western quadrant as the site for the sculpture, to which the municipality agreed because, among other factors, it was an underutilized space, resulting in the current vision for the project.

Despite the negotiations regarding where the site would be, the City of Toronto would not dictate the contents and purpose of the commemorative space. Rather as Ashley Nadjiwon (2022, May 24) reiterated, TCFNCC will lead the project on behalf of the local Indigenous community for the Toronto public and as a partner of the City of Toronto in delivering the project. Moreover, as Councillor Mike Layton (2022, April 29) expressed, the municipality's role is to support TCFNCC's endeavours administratively and financially, while advocating on their behalf to other levels of government, not supplant them. The Indigenous community through the TCFNCC would have primary control over which pieces are to be commissioned and by whom, how the layout will be designed, and for what purposes will the space function. Structuring the relationship between the municipality and TCFNCC in this manner provides Indigenous communities through TCFNCC the agency and support needed to express Indigenous cultures, histories, identities, stories, and voices that is appropriately reflective of their respective communities. For example, the space is inclusive of a wide variety of Indigenous experiences. It does not solely focus on residential schools as its memory prerogative, although that is the most prominent. Nor does it exclude or espouse, implicit or otherwise, a pan-Indigenous identity. Each element is to be created by someone from each represented community, allowing deep cultural knowledge to be embedded into each piece. As the participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20)

implied, the project has been extensively co-operative, not only with the municipality and other levels of Canadian government, but also with many Indigenous communities, individuals, and organizations across Ontario. Furthermore, it incorporates Indigenous histories in its use of land, such that the Earth becomes a part of the commemorative space and its practices. The incorporation and use of water, the teaching garden and other plantings are some examples. Maintaining their relationship with the space will, then, become a commemorative practice in-and-of-itself, illustrating the extent to which TCFNCC re-interpreted settler ideas of ‘monumentalizing’ and ‘honouring’ the past to conform to Indigenous cultural practices.

As of 2021, the IRSS Legacy project’s estimated budget was \$17 to 20 million, with \$13 million from the City of Toronto, \$4 to 6 million from TCFNCC, and \$1.5 million from the Ontario government (City of Toronto, 2021). In contrast, only Winnipeg, Regina, and Edmonton have or are in the process of creating a monument to honour residential school survivors and victims, none of which have the same budget or are the same size as the Spirit Garden (CBC, 2014; Provincial Capital Commission, 2021, January 27; Clancy, 2017, July 12). Ashley Nadjiwon even commented that Edmonton’s memorial budget was \$1.5 million, approximately 20x less than that of the Spirit Garden. Meanwhile, as of June 2022, the other provincial capital cities have no foreseeable plans to fulfill the Call to Action. I would note that the Call to Action #82 is relatively inexpensive and fairly easy to accomplish compared to other Calls, as it requires a monument, or a re-interpretation of such, dedicated to residential school survivors and victims. It arguably operates as a litmus test for the dedication that the provinces and their capital cities have to fulfilling the other Calls to Action, or at the very least, act as a minimal benchmark of success. As both Councillor Mike Layton and Ashley Nadjiwon noted, the amount of money, work, and time put into the Spirit Garden by the City of Toronto demonstrates the municipality’s

commitment to realizing the project and supporting its Indigenous partner and the urban Indigenous community.

Although the considerable administrative and financial support from the municipality to TCFNCC to realize the Spirit Garden is an important aspect of relationship-building, the nature of that relationship is of most import, as it represents a significant transformation in how the municipality conducts itself with Indigenous partners. As most research participants emphasized, the relationship between the City of Toronto and TCFNCC has been a learning experience for both parties. Particularly, all participants indicated that relationship-building is predicated on mutual support for each others' endeavours, such as through information sharing and capacity building. They have also highlighted that the relationship has been non-confrontational, with TCFNCC leading and the City of Toronto acting in a supporting role. Conducting memory-making processes in this way provides increased autonomy to subaltern groups regarding their re-articulation of the past and their resistance against marginalization and erasure from national memories.

### **Advocating for an Indigenous Past: The Spirit Garden and Cultural Memory Activism**

Such a relationship can be characterized as what Gutman (2017) identifies as 'memory activism.' As Gutman & Wüstenberg (2021, p. 2) define, memory activism is the "strategic commemoration of the past in order to achieve or prevent change in public memory by working outside state channels." Memory activism includes various modes of organizing, whether as a group or individual, formal or informal, and spontaneous or continuous. Memory activism focuses on the actions of non-governmental actors whose interests depend on the collective memories to which they subscribe. As iterated in Chapter 2, collective memory represents the



collective consciousness of a collectivity and informs members of their beliefs, morals, and values through consistent but contextual reiterations of their collective history. Collective memory provides the social references points necessary to construct and sustain relationalities between the collectivity and others, while re-subjectifying themselves according to present problems, needs, and wants. As such, memory activists may compete to legitimize their interpretations of the past in the public realm in their pursuit of defined goals, alluding to the metaphor of ‘as arena.’

The IRSS Legacy project strategically employs the collective memory of residential schools, among others, to ascertain legitimacy in its memory work in transforming national memories and include Indigenous peoples more prominently in public representations of the past. However, the contention would then be its proximity to state channels. Since the IRSS Legacy project arose, in part, from the TRC report, a product of a settler bureaucracy as stated before, and its realization is based on the municipality’s support, it cannot fully detach itself from the state apparatus. But in its development, the IRSS Legacy project is inherently community-rooted, with TCFNCC collaboratively leading with various Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals for the Indigenous people in Ontario. TCFNCC co-opted the memory imperative established by the TRC, and the global model of truth and reconciliation, while using local cultural practices and languages, such as art and testimonies, to manoeuvre in and through colonial memory-making processes and accomplish their goal of transforming national memories of Indigenous cultures, histories, and peoples through the Spirit Garden. TCFNCC’s memory activism creatively straddles the boundaries between state institutions and civil society to operate efficiently with and within the settler-colonial state, but in the process perpetuates the state’s culturalist and multiculturalist perspective to contrast historical

understandings of Indigenous people and accentuate their diverse and vibrant contemporary (cultural) existence.

However, unlike the previous indigenization efforts in NPS, as described in Chapter 4, the Spirit Garden acts as a holistic space for Indigenous people to actively participate in the political and social environment of the city. As the participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20) noted, the Spirit Garden will be a community space for the entire Indigenous community. They provided the Teaching Lodge as an example. The Teaching Lodge will be a three-season building, accessible to Indigenous communities and organizations for ceremonies, teachings, sacred events, and other assemblies. It would include year-round community-based programming designed to advocate for Indigenous people and educate about Indigenous cultures, histories, and presences near City Hall, an already political space. As the participant from TCFNCC (2022, June 20) further remarked, the Spirit Garden would act as a real space for Indigenous organizing in the downtown core, when there was none before. The Spirit Garden will act as a spatial medium at the heart of the city, within proximity to a manifestation of the settler state apparatus, through which Indigenous people may express themselves culturally, politically, and socially to resist against erasure and marginalization from settler imaginaries of the city. Simultaneously, with the Indigenous community through TCFNCC having primary control over the space, the Spirit Garden integrates questions of sanctification, sanitization, and securitization for the benefit of Indigenous people. For example, the Teaching Lodge will provide Indigenous people privacy to enact sacred events as a community without extensive interference from settler audiences. Through the space, Indigenous people will be able to control how they honour, how they maintain, and how best to protect their cultures within a settler-colonial context.

### **Reconciling through Cultural Equity: Memory Activism and Equity-Based Reconciliation**

As the Spirit Garden illustrates, the culturalization of indigeneity does not necessarily depoliticize Indigenous people solely as an accepted and tolerated ethno-racial cultural group, so long as they retain control and ownership over the narratives that define their identity. Though, that does not mean that culturalized indigeneity is not immune to being restricted as a result. As Heller (1996, p. 91) postulates, the subject's ability to speak, express their truths, and participate in discourse is ontologically bounded to the discourses in which the subject finds themselves. The discourses that inform the subject's reality informs them of possible 'practices of freedom' (Foucault, 1987). In the case of the Spirit Garden, because of the constraining effects of culturalization, Indigenous people are prompted to envision more creative resistances that manoeuvre effectively within established cultural and multicultural discourses to ensure that their identities and the deep and complex relationship with the land that inform their cultures are never marginalized and suppressed again. The co-optation and employment of the settler-colonial state's culturalist and multiculturalist praxes provides TCFNCC the means to articulate their resistance that is understandable to the settler-colonial state. As Indigenous people through TCFNCC re-assert their contemporary cultural presence, they are recognized, though not entirely, by the settler-colonial state. Likewise, this form of activism allows Indigenous people through TCFNCC to exercise some power in ways that reveal and undermine established national memories, particularly those that have characterized Indigenous people as 'uncultured savages.'

However, the cultural premise remains. Visitors understand their reality, and the reality of the objects that they are observing, through particular power relations, frameworks of knowledge, and discourses. As emphasized in Chapters 2 and 3, collective memory operates

within contextual systems of power, knowledge, and discourse. They produce a particular reality of truths that subjects come to accept or deny. For settlers, they would contextualize indigeneity within contemporary colonial understandings of the past and Indigenous people. And as stated in Chapter 4, the settler-colonial state infuses the collective memory of residential schools within its already accepted perception of the past. Residential schools are understood as overt links to a past focused on the cultural assimilation of Indigenous people, which is explicitly incongruent with contemporary ideals of multiculturalism and influences current relationships between settlers and Indigenous people. This fusion emphasizes the erasure and marginalization of Indigenous cultures while recognizing the harm and promoting atonement for such actions. The preservation of Indigenous cultures and markers of that past consequently becomes imperative, such as the Spirit Garden.

Furthermore, the Indigenous memory activism implanted into the Spirit Garden reflects this strategy, though not as extensively, nor in the same manner. But its adoption limits possible ways of creating and changing discourse about Indigenous experiences, histories, stories, and voices, as they become constrained within cultural and multicultural praxes. As Gutman & Wüstenberg (2021, p. 11) allude, campaigns such as #IdleNoMore, #MMIWG (Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls), and #Resistance150 are other forms of Indigenous memory activism that do not explicitly follow cultural or multicultural discourses, but rather emphasize the ongoing structural racism and violence against Indigenous people and the unequal distribution of economic, political, and social benefits between settlers and Indigenous people. Although residential schools remain a very traumatic event, which absolutely cannot be underscored, its consistent prioritization within culturalist and multiculturalist perspectives risks erasing other pasts and interpretations that indicate the Canadian settler-colonial state's violence

against Indigenous people. As such, the mnemohistorical discourses embedded in the Spirit Garden will mostly consist of culturalist perspectives operating within a liberal multicultural framework, reproducing a particular reality in which Indigenous people are primarily understood through the goals of cultural appreciation and preservation. Indigenous people are, then, understood as cultural entities that require institutional protection. Such relations will continue until discursive changes occur, especially those that go beyond discourses of culture.

TCFNCC's memory activism lends its public legitimacy to the City of Toronto's campaign to implement equity-based reconciliation, according to which one of the goals of reconciliation is to foster an equitable and inclusive society for Indigenous people (City of Toronto, n.d.e, p. 15). For example, the municipality's Recognition Review Project is an initiative dedicated to re-examining Toronto's colonial commemorative practices and propose changes to them. It has already identified at least sixty place names, including Yonge Street and Jarvis Street, and various monuments and memorials dedicated to problematic individuals, such as slave owners, that maintain Toronto's colonial and imperial identity (City Manager, 2021, p. 22). The City Manager and City Staff have indicated the necessity to address and replace these commemorations because they are ideologically incongruent with Toronto's contemporary beliefs, morals, and values, manifested as its motto "Diversity Our Strength" (ibid., p. 1). Equity forms the foundation of this project, as it acknowledges the historic imbalance between the overrepresentation of settler white males in the public realm and the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples, Black communities, racialized communities, women, 2SLGBTQ+ persons, and other equity-deserving groups (ibid.). Even the language used to refer to marginalized groups categorizes them as 'equity-deserving,' mentioned twelve times throughout the report (ibid., pp. 1, 2, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, and 17). Moreover, as the City of Toronto's Reconciliation

Action Plan (City of Toronto, n.d.e, p. 46), the municipality's 10-year reconciliation plan, indicates, Indigenous languages are to be prioritized in the renaming of City streets, parks, and other City assets, further ensuring that more Indigenous elements will be integrated into Toronto's memory and urban landscapes. By proposing the problem as an equity issue in public representation, the proposed resolution is for more commemorations dedicated to 'equity-deserving' groups, such as Indigenous people, and less those honouring settler white males in positions of power, which has been the convention. Additionally, these new commemorations would confront, in part, the history and legacy of colonialism and systemic racism by revealing the truth about the municipality's past and promoting anti-Black racism and anti-colonial history- and place-making practices.

Although implementing cultural equity as a form of reconciliation is a practical solution, as it operates within existing political channels and discourses, it fails to address the pre-colonial sovereignty of Indigenous people and their ongoing claims to land. Rather, the settler-colonial state, in the form of the City of Toronto, implements the further integration of Indigenous cultures into the multicultural fabric of Canadian society. Indigenous people are, then, to be recognized as valid cultural entities within the colonial institution, while the adoption of an anti-racist and anti-colonial discourse allows the settler-colonial state to shed its settler-colonial status, with the acceptance and inclusion of Indigenous people in history- and memory-making processes, among others, as evidence of this identity change. The legitimization of the present solution by way of presenting a past fraught with cultural erasure and marginalization contributes to the broader reconfiguration of Canada's nation-building practices to accommodate for public calls for decolonization. Such a past reinforces the distinctness of Indigenous cultures from their settler counterparts, such that equitable solutions are reasonable and even optimal, but it delimits

possibilities for more radical solutions that comprehensively address historical and contemporary colonial injustices. Indigenous people effectively become a part of the Canadian multicultural mosaic, adding to the cultural vibrancy of Canadian society, reinforcing the tolerant views of Canada, and ultimately perpetuating settler-colonial logics and relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Nonetheless, the work being done is an important aspect of reconciliation. The development of the project illustrates a different way to build and re-bridge relationships between settlers and Indigenous people. It demonstrates the City of Toronto's willingness to recentre Indigenous ways of knowing and organizing by consistently supporting its Indigenous partner in the restoration of their identity through the Spirit Garden. This research should not, however, be interpreted as an advocacy for the municipality to only focus on the mnemohistorical aspects of reconciliation (i.e., listening to the truth in history), as that would not lead to substantial structural changes. Rather, these initiatives, along with material changes to the socio-economic circumstances of Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations, must change concurrently. The Spirit Garden and the other indigenization initiatives in NPS are some of the few steps among many on the path of reclamation, restoration, and reconciliation. If settlers do not holistically and consistently challenge the intangible harm caused by settler colonialism, such as the marginalization and erasure of Indigenous peoples from national history and commemorations, then settlers remain ignorant to the full scale of the violence done. History and the past are sites where violence has occurred and continues to occur. Settler history-making, memory-making and memory-preserving, and commemorative practices have consistently imprisoned Indigenous subjectivities in the past and refuse them a contemporary existence,

which in turn, allows for the disavowal that Bruyneel (2016; see also Bruyneel, 2017) discusses. The place-making efforts in NPS challenge, in part, that well-entrenched belief by anchoring Indigenous presences and subjectivities in the present for settlers to witness permanently and repeatedly. They redefine what it means for Indigenous peoples to belong in Toronto and to actively participate in the cultural and social environment of the city, all while proclaiming Toronto's commitment to supporting the urban Indigenous population. Indigenous people need to lead and be included in these processes and practices, and beyond, for further substantial changes to occur.



## Chapter Six – Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to examine how the City of Toronto construes and constructs the Indigenous subject in Nathan Phillips Square according to its collective memories. In Chapter 2, I describe collective memory as narrative structures that inform the group of their essential beliefs, morals, and values, perpetuated through both physical and non-physical forms. It is collectively and dialectically (re)created to reproduce the group ideologically across generations, across space-time (Halbwachs, 1925; Halbwachs, 1950). It transforms history and the past into contested spaces of interpretations, authoritatively claiming meanings of the past, shaping power relations, and providing the means of its resistance (Bruyneel, 2016, p. 353). Collective memory is a collective of social reference points, from which the collectivity understands itself and its cultural, political, and social place in society, while prompting particular actions and justifications for those actions. It unites the collectivity under a common, but sometimes fictitious, philosophy and past. Collective memory is contextual, adapting to present problems, needs and wants to ensure the survival of the collectivity as it traverses time. It is a continuously evolving project that looks to the past to understand the present and possible futures. In Chapter 3, I detail the importance of cities to the settler-colonial project of eliminating Indigenous people for the benefit of settlers. Cities provide the administrative, cultural, economic, legal, political, and social conditions for enacting settler governmentality and the enforcement of settler authority over the lands, Indigenous peoples, and the other inhabitants. Particularly, as repositories of collective memory, cities (re)construct the past according to the present problems, needs, and wants of settlers, such that settlers can legitimize and sustain their contemporary and future existence on Indigenous lands, while disavowing the legacy of settler colonialism.

The collective memories in NPS operate to inform residents and visitors of how Toronto sees itself and its relationships with Indigenous subjectivities. Through the localization of national and global memory prerogatives of truth and reconciliation over cultural genocide, the municipality openly rejects the traditional colonial relationalities of overt domination. Instead, it espouses a reconciliatory relationship premised on the acceptance and inclusion of Indigenous people and cultures to resolve its memory and identity crisis between multiculturalism and settler colonialism. The two cannot exist in the contemporary and as such, changes to its collective memories are required. The municipality characterized the collective memories of a colonial mythologized (white) past as completely non-representative of history, or presents a false historical narrative, as it is evidently devoid of Indigenous histories, further justifying the inclusion of Indigenous people in history- and memory-making processes. This initiative is also reflected in other projects, such as the Recognition Review Project briefly discussed in Chapter 5, suggesting that Toronto's memoryscape is evolving and becoming more indigenized so as to recognize the contemporary existence of Indigenous people. However, operating within the politics of recognition/reconciliation and the nature of the settler-colonial city to maintain settler legitimacy on Indigenous lands delimit possibilities for Indigenous resistances. In the case of the Spirit Garden, the culturalization of indigeneity within the city restricts Indigenous memory activism to culturalist and multiculturalist perspectives but prompts involved Indigenous actors to creatively resist against the settler-colonial state, such as re-interpreting settler ideas of 'memorializing' and 'honouring' the past to incorporate Indigenous commemorative practices.

When enmeshed within colonial power relations, frameworks of knowledge, and mnemohistorical discourses, the collective memory of residential schools serves to legitimize the culturalization of Toronto's and Canada's settler-colonial past, such that Indigenous traumas can

be principally attributed to cultural assimilation, with residential schools becoming prime examples of cultural genocide. By framing the past as such, the history of settlers and Indigenous people can be characterized as a war against cultures, which can be understood as explicitly antithetical to the municipality's contemporary ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. As such, the solution is equity-based reconciliation, with increased recognition by memorializing buried and suppressed Indigenous pasts, particularly the trauma caused by residential schools, the deaths of Indigenous children, and the strength of survivors, coupled with an emphasis on the beauty and diversity of Indigenous cultures. This strategy operates within culturalist and multiculturalist praxes to disrupt negative perceptions of Indigenous people through public celebrations and cultural exchanges and reconfigure Indigenous people's temporal location as contemporary rather than (pre-)historical. The City of Toronto has made the commemorations of Indigenous people and their experiences a memory imperative to legitimize its adoption of certain narratives and reconstitute its image from a historical participant of genocide and colonial hegemony to a benevolent and self-reflexive political entity dedicated to reconciliation now.

However, such a strategy risks erasing the complex history of settler colonialism and the interconnected relations of historical oppressions and contemporary struggles. It also fails to incorporate the full breath of indigeneity and Indigenous histories. The culturalization of a 'pan-Indigenous' identity, as the Medicine Wheel illustrates, imbues commemorations dedicated to Indigenous people with colonial essentialist understandings of indigeneity, such that Indigenous cultures conform to a liberal multicultural framework and become perceptibly 'authentic' and palatable to settler audiences. Indigeneity, then, becomes a white possessive (Moreton-Robinson, 2015), weaponizable for the continued disassociation, disempowerment, and displacement of Indigenous people advocating for issues beyond culturalist and multiculturalist perspectives.

These Indigenous subjectivities become ‘inauthentic’ cultural entities and are reverted to a state of savagery, temporally dislocating them back to the past. They exist elsewhere, not in the now. A connected point is the issue of mutual dependency prevalent in settler-colonial contexts, as Coulthard (2007, pp. 450 – 451) problematizes. Though, the Spirit Garden illustrates a change in this relationship, where Indigenous people acquire more control and ownership over projects pertaining to their community. Of note, during the 2022 Sunrise Ceremony, Mayor John Tory discussed a housing initiative in which 15 Denison Ave., a city-owned site, would be transferred to an Indigenous housing provider, giving them control to design, build, finance, own, and operate an affordable housing development. But even this relationship operates within the established framework of colonial hegemony, leaving the sovereignty of the Canadian settler state over Indigenous lands unquestioned and even encouraged. Further research in this area needs to be conducted to analyze the relationships within these future collaborations and projects.

There is also an absence of educational supports for the commemoration in NPS. They lack the necessary informational infrastructure to integrate Indigenous collective memories adequately and appropriately into the city’s memoryscape. For example, the Medicine Wheel’s plaque and other descriptions are considerably devoid of the cultural and historical complexity embedded in the symbol. The flags also lack the same support, as they require visitors to have had knowledge of their meanings beforehand for the flags to have some meaning, as Councillor Mike Layton implied. City Staff are fortunate in that they have such knowledge, but everyday visitors may not, particularly tourists and newcomers. Without such background knowledge of the histories, peoples, and values attached to these representations of culture and history, they will remain peripheral to settlers and risk being a mundane symbolic recognition of Indigenous

peoples. If the purpose of these initiatives is to change settler perceptions of Indigenous peoples and the city's history, there should be accompanying educational efforts and informational infrastructure to ensure that settlers comprehensively understand these representations. I implore the City of Toronto, and TCFNCC when the Spirit Garden is completed, to actively incorporate these symbols in engagements with settlers and make explicit the diverse cultural meanings and historical links embedded in them to fully utilize the educational potential of NPS as a *lieu de mémoire*. Such initiatives could include updating plaques and descriptors to allude to the diversity in meanings embedded in each symbol.

Currently, the City of Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan seemingly offers substantial changes, with its main goals consisting of giving land back, making financial reparations, and decolonizing city affairs (City of Toronto, n.d.e, p. 13). In 2022 – 2023, the main initiatives consist of co-creating lasting relationships with Indigenous communities, governments, and organizations, such as co-developing protocols and supporting Indigenous-led projects, to construct a stable foundation for future works. The Action Plan is also unlike previous plans because it has no set budget and functions as a living document to change according to the present needs and wants of Indigenous peoples (ibid., p. 57). With all these in mind, the City of Toronto seems to be taking reconciliation seriously, as Councillor Mike Layton and Ashley Nadjiwon expressed. All these initiatives were, in part, inspired by perceptions of the past, particularly the cultural, economic, historical, political, and social inequalities that settler colonialism continues to foster. It is yet to be seen whether this 10-year plan will continue the tradition of equity-based reconciliation or transform the structure of settler colonialism.

As this research indicates, how and what becomes commemorated extends beyond symbolic representation. The acts of remembering and forgetting influence imaginaries,

subjectivities, and possibilities, particularly when they are physicalized as *lieux de mémoire*. Commemorative forms and practices can be both detrimental and transformative, inspiring certain actions and emotions that shape human landscapes. During my time as an embodied tourist, I experienced these feelings. I imagined erased worlds filled with forgotten peoples, felt loss and joy, and learned more about my city's past. All of these encourage me to advocate for those who have been forgotten and support those who wish to be remembered. But I also recognize my privilege as an academic who is involved in these areas of study. In researching, I began to know these pasts, presents, and futures, albeit limited, while also realizing the intensity of mnemohistorical erasure. When I mentioned Taddle Creek or the Ward to both Indigenous and settler research participants, most had no knowledge of their existence. And as I traversed NPS, I saw scores of visitors ignorant of those who came before in that space, focused on photographing their experiences and relaxing, not knowing that NPS was built on careless settlement and destructive racism. These forgotten places are important pasts to remember because they hold incredible stories of relationships. They are there waiting to be recognized and remembered.

The past is a contested space in which power relations influence the coalescence of an imagined, unified history. Colonial commemorative practices and the settler memories they employ exemplify the violence that (mnemo)history incurs on Indigenous peoples, from textbooks minimally mentioning them to the erasure of their cultural and historical relations with the lands and waters to a colonial origin story that depicts a peaceful transition of land title from Indigenous peoples to settlers. These are harmful narrative structures that shape settler understandings of place and reality and legitimizes a settler existence without referencing or outright revising its coloniality. Without critical engagements in history-making, memory-

making and memory-preserving, and commemorative practices, Indigenous peoples remain subjected and subjectified according to settler constructions of history (or more accurately settler mnemohistory). They would continue to occupy the historiographical areas of controlled or confrontational (Morgan, 2005, p. 68), remaining tethered to the hegemonic colonial ordering of subjectivities. Moreover, these place-making initiatives need to be accompanied by more material structural changes. Although Councillor Mike Layton and Ashley Nadjiwon mentioned various efforts to support Indigenous peoples, such as food gardens and housing projects, more large-scale and substantial decolonizing projects also need to occur. Many aspects of colonial hegemonic rule, especially its historical displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands, remain undisrupted. Toronto's official history is mostly untouched. It merely changed to emphasize Indigenous presences but leaves unproblematic the question of Indigenous sovereignty over their lands and waters and the ways in which settlement reinforced and continues to reinforce colonial hegemony.

Collective memory can foster violence inasmuch as it can promote change and resistance. The City of Toronto's initiatives to disrupt settler understandings of Indigenous pasts and subjectivities is one of many steps along the path to healing. The institutional recognition of subaltern pasts can operate as a practical reconciliatory project if Indigenous peoples can participate effectively without hinderance from the colonial institution. That is quite difficult to accomplish, as this research illustrates, because even with good intentions, settler epistemologies and ontologies interfere to reproduce the colonial *status quo*. An institutional approach to reconciliation fails to address questions of land claims and the restoration of the pre-colonial sovereignty of Indigenous people (Dombrowski, 2016, p. 12). As such, institutionalizing Indigenous pasts results in the maintenance of colonial logics and power relations, as Chapter 4

indicates, leaving Indigenous people subjected to and by the settler-colonial state. But the extensive inclusion of Indigenous people in the IRSS Legacy project demonstrates to the City of Toronto a more radical relationship structure, according to which Indigenous people retain most of the authority over their projects and the municipality remains supportive. Despite its benefits, this form of relationship requires extensive politicking to ensure consistent support from the municipality, sacrificing certain Indigenous interests. Though, realistically, that may be necessary, particularly when dealing with an administrative, economic, cultural, political, and social centre of the settler-colonial state. That should not excuse the City of Toronto from participating in radical reconciliation, such as institutionally abandoning settler memories and actively initiating and supporting land back initiatives throughout the city. Instead, its privilege and positionality should inspire the municipality to act proactively and respectfully in its relationship with Indigenous people. Although Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan indicates that it will do so moving forward, the past continues to haunt the present.

Strolling through Nathan Phillips Square, I felt a sensory experience. As I entered through the south-east entrance, the splashes of the fountain cut through the rapid noises born from the busy lifestyle of the city, with cars whirring past and pedestrians hurriedly rushing to their next location. There were smells of food wafting in from nearby vendors. Odours of hotdogs, burgers, fries, and other regular street delicacies floated through the air and into the square, silently dissipating as I neared the fountain. The fountain was split into two. On the right, somber ripples spread through the calm waters under the Freedom Arches, a series of arches dedicated to the ceaseless fight for freedom. People quietly chatted, relaxed, and ate around them. On the left, the fountain danced, surrounded by ecstatic visitors waiting for their turn to take pictures in front of the famous Toronto Sign. Children clambered onto each lettering as they



yelled for their parents' attention, and tourists playfully posed with friends and family, smiling and making silly faces. In the background, New City Hall watched over the various activities in the civic square with its grandiose presence supplemented with its picturesque appearance. As my visit revealed, Nathan Phillips Square has an air of democratic drama, an environment where a vast range of exchanges and interactions can happen. I cannot help but remember the forgotten. They are ghosts amidst the living; they call but no one listens. Nathan Phillips Square is at the intersection of settler colonialism, property, racism, and violence, while also transforming into a site of reconciliation. An imperfect and ongoing transition.

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