

CRACKING THE COLONIAL BEDROCK

**Cracking the Colonial Bedrock:
(Re)creating Antiracist Sociohistorical Geographies**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates creating antiracist spaces and determining what an antiracist sociohistorical geography looks like. I argue that an antiracist sociohistorical geography is always necessarily unfinished and in a state of becoming. I introduce as my study site a section of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, that was once a neighbourhood known as The Ward. At different times in the past, the land of this area was home to the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation, a Black community, a Jewish community, and a Chinese community.

Through investigations of these historic racialized communities and through field site examination, I first document how current cultural representations within this space create racist exclusions. Next, through discussion of my experience with the Ontario Black History Society's (OBHS) walking tour in and around this space, and through analysis of one-on-one interviews with OBHS representatives, I show the tour as creating starting points for developing antiracist geographies. Finally, by imagining the space devoid of racist exclusions, I illustrate what an antiracist sociohistorical geography might look like but also that the portrayal is a spatial and temporal moment and therefore unfinished. I combine an anti-essentialist antiracist historical methodology with critical discourse analysis and critical ethnography.

My main finding is that inclusions of excluded racialized groups into dominant discourse can contribute to naming and perhaps troubling particular racisms, but do not automatically disrupt systems and structures that (re)create exclusions. To deconstruct these powers, antiracism must incorporate ongoing disruptions of dominance over space. My study shows the potential for shifting discursive meanings around racialized bodies in relation to each other and sociohistorical geographies they occupy. These shifts have implications for how sociohistorical spaces become forums of social studies and history education in everyday spaces and in schools, as people (re)learn to read bodies within sociohistorical spaces in antiracist ways.

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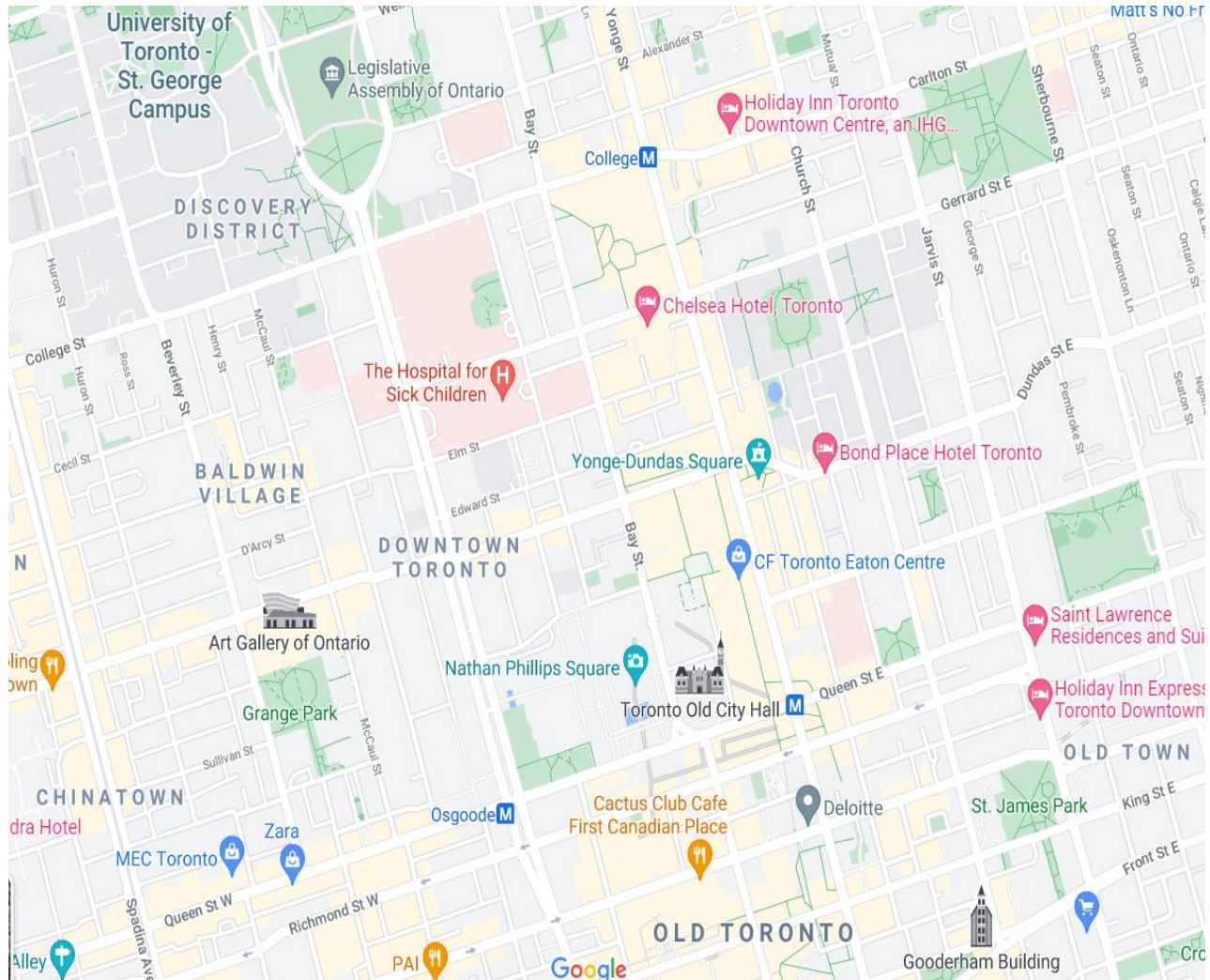
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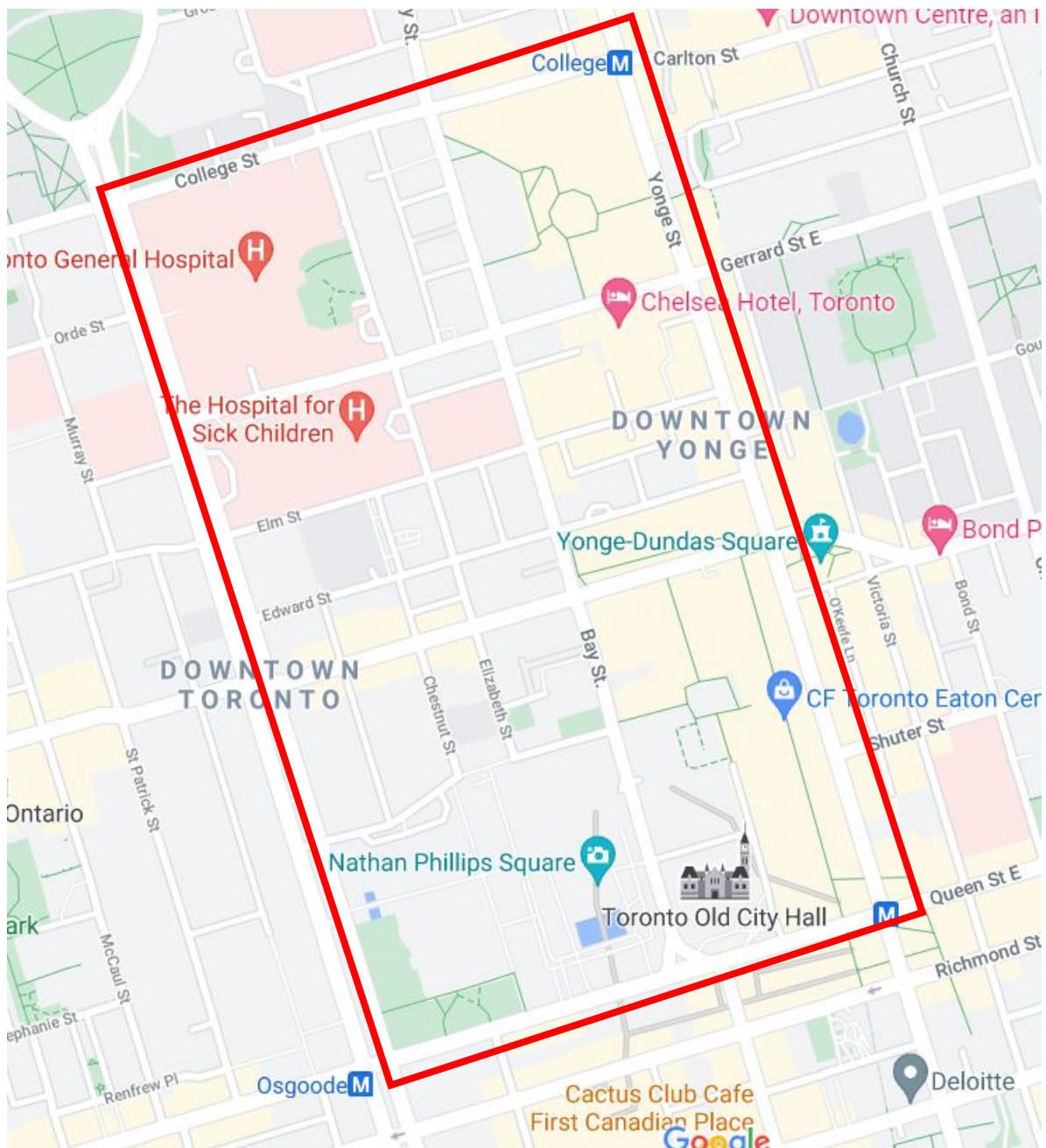
Map 1: Partial Map of Downtown Toronto.

Map Source: Google Maps, 2021



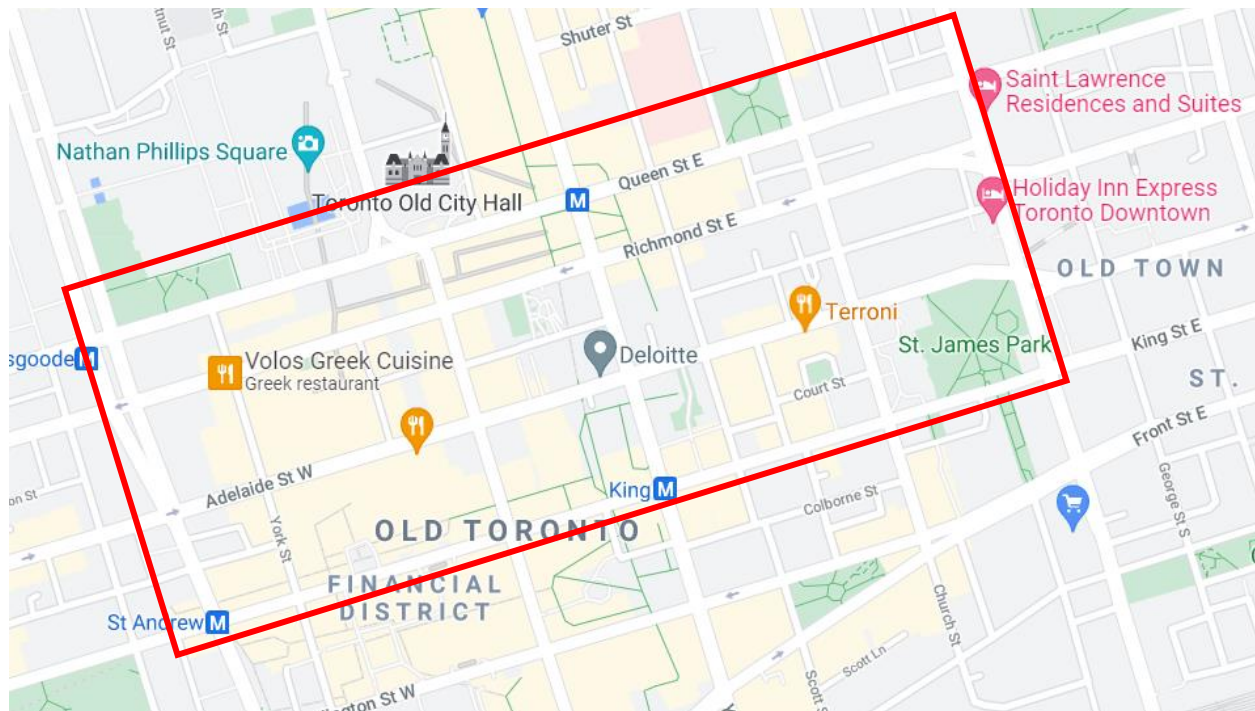
Map 2: Boundaries of The Ward.

Map Source: Google Maps, 2021



Map 3: Area of Ontario Black History Society's Walking Tour

Map Source: Google Maps, 2021



FOREWORD

A discussion of parts of my rollerblading narrative found in Chapter 4: The Ward as a Racist Sociohistorical Geography has been previously published in the *Journal of the Canada Association for Curriculum Studies* (2021, Vol. 18 No. 2) special issue, “Walking: Attuning to an Earthly Curriculum / Marcher : s'accorder à un curriculum terrestre”. While the articles within the issue are focused almost entirely on how the authors connect with and experience different environments while they walk, I shared my experience of rollerblading through downtown Toronto as a sort of “walking-on-wheels” (Currie, 2021, p. 201). I describe in the article how “contemplating my rollerblading forced me to consider the material that structured and marked the route I traveled, all indicative of humans at work, but humans not always in harmony with the earth” (p. 201). The discussion of my rollerblading experience presented in Chapter 4: The Ward as a Racist Sociohistorical Geography contains many of the same points found in the previously published article, but I adapted and expanded upon the discussion in the chapter, so as to provide more depth and not be a mere replication of the article.

INTRODUCTION

Every person—every human body—in Canada today becomes racialized, whether by self-identifying or ascription, and exist with these identities and labels in relation to changing spatial and temporal contexts. Looking at myself, I was born and raised in a small farming town in southwestern Ontario, Canada. My father was born in Canada and identifies as white, and my mother was born in South Africa, moved to Canada as a child, and identifies as Cape Coloured. My mother's racialized identity stems from the South Africa's Apartheid system (1948-1994) that ascribed people a 'race' and imposed a racial hierarchy with white people at the top, Coloured people like my maternal family in a level below, and Black people at the bottom. I identify as mixed-race, but I am often read as white. While I was never subjected to the Apartheid system, my family's experiences with systemic and targeted racisms in South Africa and then in Canada, and my own embodied experiences as a mixed-race, often white-passing male, triggered at a young age my contemplations about how racisms and antiracisms work. Influenced by family stories about being relegated by Apartheid policies to live only in government-dictated, racialized geographic areas, I have spent much time thinking about my own sense of space and place in Canada (Currie, 2020). I use this thesis in part to investigate what tells varyingly racialized people and makes them feel that they do or do not belong in changing social contexts. This study is about the processes of disrupting dominant and sometimes-banal racist meanings that shape and structure societal spaces. I examine how the relationships between people and spaces can and do teach people to read themselves and other bodies as racialized and as naturally or conditionally belonging. My aim is to understand the process of (re)creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies.

Through this thesis, I argue that antiracist sociohistorical geographies are never finished and are in a constant state of becoming. Their creation begins with identifying the tools and structures of racist exclusion. They develop through active disruption of discursive racist meanings that have been made banal (Montgomery, 2005). And they become stable through the strengthening of meanings that de-centre Whiteness and see Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour as unconditionally part of the social and spatial repertoire. However, relationships and meanings between people and material are not fixed, so this process of creating an antiracist space must be active and ongoing.

My argument here developed not just from observing data and piecing together how they worked together, but from a journey of critical thought that began with a moment. Before even designing my research or conducting any fieldwork, this study began with a single sentence that I wrote in a reading response as one of the weekly assignments for the course “Racism and Antiracism in Education.” The sentence was: “If racism is geographical, perhaps antiracism is also.” This thought was a somewhat *off-the-cuff* comment on my reading of Ruth Frankenberg’s (1993) article, “Growing up white: Feminism, racism, and the social geography of childhood.” The article introduced me to the concept of *racial social geographies*—the social mapping of physical space in relation to racializations—and I found it thought-provoking. I had previously given attention to *official* racist policies and regulations (e.g., “Whites Only” signs in Apartheid South Africa and Jim Crow America). In turn, I recognized how these policies and regulations enabled individuals’ racist violence. I had not, however, learned to see the banal racisms (Essed, 1991) and the unwritten, unregulated shaping of social interactions. As part of the feedback I received for my single-page reading response, the course professor—later my PhD thesis supervisor—offered his own *off-the-cuff* comment about my thought: “This could be an

interesting topic for a PhD thesis.” At the time, I was planning to do research on an historic church built by Black congregants and the community that used to surround it in rural southern Ontario (see Currie, 2019 November 20). Somehow, the concept of social geographies did not strike me as relevant in this initial research vision. I took the feedback as a compliment that my ideas were at least worth pondering, but told myself that I already had my research plan in mind. I felt that the idea of examining social geographies might mean starting my plans over.

Despite this declaration to myself, I could not shake the concept of social geographies from my mind. It suggested to me that the spaces people occupy are not fixed or merely observable but are constructed through both physical makeup and social meaning (Hall, 1997). This revelation caused me to suddenly think about, see, and understand myself, people around me, the places and spaces I come from, and those that I will go, in new (to me) ways. As these ideas continued to percolate, I began asking questions about *how* and *why* different social geographies are mapped as they are, as well as *when* they took shape in the social discourse, because everything has a history. I kept Frankenberg’s (1993) link between ‘race’ and space as core to my thinking and added the element of history, landing on the term “sociohistorical geographies” rather than “social geographies” because the “social” exists in and is shaped by historical contexts (Kobayashi, 2004; Stanley, 2016). Additionally, in relation to the “racial” element of racial social geographies, ‘race’ is not a natural occurrence. It is a category socially constructed (Goldberg, 1993) through racism, creating essentialized meanings for the differences between people (Stanley, 2016). As such, it seemed more appropriate to identify social geographies mapped by ‘race’ as racist sociohistorical geographies.

I began to think about how if there are racist sociohistorical geographies, antiracist sociohistorical geographies must be possible, but I did not know what such a space would look

like or what would be required to create it. When I learned that the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) offered walking tours in downtown Toronto, I saw the tour as a potential tool for enacting antiracism in a space that I felt familiar with but did not see as particularly antiracist. I felt that the tour would be an opportunity to observe and analyze the ‘social,’ ‘historical,’ and ‘geographical’ in combination with antiracism. My findings and analysis came to extend well beyond just the walking tour as a tool of antiracism, but the tour is where my empirical investigation began, guided by my research questions.

Research Questions

As I determined and contemplated the various concepts and components of this study, I asked a wide variety of questions, always thinking about where each question would take me in understanding the concepts and components within antiracist sociohistorical geographies. I had some questions come to mind that I know connect to my investigations of racism, antiracism, and space, but that I cannot speak to from my own racialized position. For example, while members of my maternal family experience racist exclusions, and I have negative feelings (i.e., anger and sadness) in response to my family’s exclusions, I am not Indigenous or Black. Instead, I am most often read by others as white. I do not experience the exclusions myself and cannot know or speak to the embodied experiences of Indigenous people, Black people, or people of colour. Additionally, there is no homogeneous embodied experience for people holding these identities. I do, however, still exist in relation to the bodies and spaces around me. As such, I can recognize when and how racist exclusions happen, but it was not for me to ask and speak to questions about feelings of exclusion for Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour. This somatic dissonance (Puwar, 2004) is something I address in this thesis, but only in the sense that it is an intangible feeling that white (usually male) bodies do not experience in the same

ways, if ever. I determined that to investigate racist and antiracist sociohistorical geographies, my questions would need to address a wider scope than just my own lived experiences, but they needed to be those that my gaze would allow me to answer through my own relations.

After my ‘reading response’ moment and my excited certainty of being onto something—that racist sociohistorical geographies could be re-created as antiracist sociohistorical geographies—I realized that I did not know how best to explain ‘antiracist sociohistorical geographies.’ Such a space should indeed counter current racisms and disrupt the (re)creation of racisms going forward, but describing how the space would work to make this countering and disrupting occur proved to be my challenge. This would need to be my investigation. In response, my overarching research question then became: What does an antiracist sociohistorical geography look like and how is it created?

To give myself a narrowed scope to investigate while still tending to the bigger question, I decided to examine the Ontario Black History Society’s walking tour (see Map 3) as a starting point for observing how antiracism and space can interact. In focusing on the tour, I selected the Toronto space bordered by Jarvis Street and University Avenue (east-west) and College Street and King Street (north-south) in downtown Toronto (see Map 2) to be the sociohistorical geography with which I would engage. This space is where the historic neighbourhood of ‘The Ward’ was once situated, which the OBHS presented on the walking tour as a site of Black history in Toronto. The selected place and form of engagement allowed me to ask supporting research questions that pertained to the particular context while also being applicable to my more general wonderings about antiracist sociohistorical geographies. The supporting questions were:

- 1) How is the Toronto territory that is bordered by Jarvis Street and University Avenue (east-west) and College Street and King Street (north-south) structured and marked by cultural representations?
- 2) How do I read these cultural representations as creating meanings of somatic belonging and/or racist exclusion?
- 3) In what ways does the Ontario Black History Society's walking tour disrupt discursive meanings stemming from histories and systems of colonialism and Whiteness?
- 4) How do I imagine my embodied experiences and the reading of other bodies to be different if the cultural representations, their meanings, and the systems they represent, were removed and/or changed?

These questions required some theory-based thinking, yes, but they also needed to be approached through active engagement with space. My methods were designed to incorporate these elements of active engagement and relational being.

Summary of Methods

To seek answers to these questions, I conducted my study in three main stages. First, I participated in the Ontario Black History Society's walking tour in downtown Toronto. Compared to the expanse of Toronto, the tour took place in only a small area, covering the ground of approximately two city blocks north to south and three city blocks east to west (see Map 3). I observed, took note of, and reflected upon how I saw the presentation of historical Black people and events on the tour as opening up antiracist spaces. I also noted any places that the tour guides referenced but that were not part of the tour route. After the tour, using the tour route, the places that were referenced but not shown, and the city space between and around

those points, I examined the city space in which the walking tour route was situated. This broader scope of examination allowed me to take a more focused look at the wider spatial context that the tour navigated. I documented the cultural representations in that space and analyzed how they create racialized exclusions. Finally, with the racist exclusions documented and the antiracist starting points from the tour recognized, I then imagined how I would see and experience the city space if the racist exclusions were removed and the space was (re)created as an antiracist sociohistorical geography.

Summary of Key Findings

Through these three stages, I found that merely creating inclusive representations of excluded racialized groups into sociohistorical spaces is an *add-n-stir* effort that amounts to tokenism. This sort of inclusion perhaps acknowledges particular racist exclusions, and to include representations of historically and presently excluded bodies is not discouraged, but this alone does not make real change to the discursive systems, structures, and discourse of colonial and white dominance. The disruption and deconstruction of these powers requires an active and ongoing antiracism that links cultural representations, systems of power, and the (re)creation of social meanings. Using my findings, I show the potential for shifting discursive meanings around racialized bodies in relation to each other and sociohistorical geographies they occupy. If we can understand how these shifts in meanings can occur, and we can see them as always relational and in flux, there are implications for approaches to social studies and history education, both in schools and in everyday spaces. Sociohistorical geographies become tools and forums for people (re)learning to read bodies, spaces, and the relationship between them, in antiracist ways.

Organization of thesis

I organized this thesis into seven chapters following this Introduction chapter, and after the chapters is a reference section and appendices that include the consent form and list of interview questions I used when conducting two semi-structured one-on-one interviews.

In Chapter One, I present a review of literature from scholarship around *antiracism*, *historical consciousness*, and *social geography*. The review is an examination of the ways that various scholars conceptualize and conduct studies on the different overarching academic fields pertaining to the various and complex elements within my study. Reviewing this scholarship as separate fields is necessary to understand the range of approaches and perspectives that scholars have used and continue to use for each. These fields, however, are not disconnected, as there are concepts within them that intertwine and work in relation to each other. Recognizing this intertwining and relational work is how I developed my conceptual framework.

In Chapter 2, I present my conceptual framework, which I describe as encompassed within the term *(anti)racist sociohistorical geographies*. When I unpack this term and present the concepts within it, the conceptual pieces are *anti-essentialist antiracism*, *cultural representations*, *collective memory and remembering*, *racialized social geographies*, and *somatic dissonance and belonging*. My conceptual framework is a presentation of how I employ these particular concepts found within the overarching literature, and how I see these concepts as always working in relation to each other. I use this framework to focus my analysis of my experiences and findings from this study. The framework is applied through the stance of my methodology.

Chapter 3 is where I present my methodology and methods employed for this study. I explain my choices in research design, field site, methods of data collection, and data analysis.

To summarize here, I used a combination of *anti-essentialist antiracist historical methodology* and *critical discourse analysis*. These combined methodologies informed my qualitative multi-methods approach (McKendrick, 1999). Because antiracism does not just occur on its own and must be enacted (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016), and because discourse occurs through ongoing exchanges of meanings, at least some human participation is at play. As such, my data was collected through the selected critical ethnographic practices (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013) of site observation and semi-structured one-on-one interviews, and also through historical investigation.

In Chapter 4, I give a detailed introduction of the sociohistorical geography that became my field site and show how it is a racist sociohistorical geography. The space in which I conducted my site observations is the area of downtown Toronto formerly known as ‘The Ward,’ which was once the location of various racialized communities. I examine how this space, although historically a home to different racialized communities, was and is marked in ways that support a discourse and establish a bedrock of colonial Whiteness, enabling the continued reading of Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour as *new* or *outsiders*. This examination is, of course, situated in a particular spatial and temporal context, meaning the specific details I describe of the space may not be the same in other sociohistorical geographies around Toronto. Additionally, the markers and structures of The Ward are bound to change. My examination of the situated space, though, highlights the power dynamics and dominance of Whiteness that underpin the shifting space and extend to city spaces beyond The Ward.

After using Chapter 4 to establish a context, in Chapter 5 I describe my experience with the Ontario Black History Society’s walking tour, which is facilitated in and around the streets that were the southern end of The Ward. My description outlines the six focused stops made

during the tour to present markers of historical Black people and events that were once in that city space. I then provide an analysis of the antiracist work that is and is not taking place through the OBHS walking tour. To be sure, I did not seek to discredit the antiracist work the OBHS does, as it is important. Rather, I aimed to examine and understand the complexities of creating an antiracist space. Through Chapter 5, I show that although the OBHS walking tour does not combat all forms of racism, its efforts to disrupt exclusions of Black bodies does create starting points to expand and build on in the development of an antiracist sociohistorical geography.

Following the description of the tour and the contention that it creates antiracist starting points, I use Chapter 6 to look at the relationships between forms of official and unofficial action in (re)shaping Toronto spaces in antiracist ways. I discuss these actions in relation to the concept of antiracist starting points, and I imagine how I would experience a journey through The Ward if the official and unofficial actions were continuously (re)marking, (re)mapping, and (re)creating the space in antiracist ways. The discussion in Chapter 6 and the imagined antiracist space are not meant to establish a formulaic “how-to” in creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies. Much like the descriptions in Chapter 4, my imagined journey is temporally and spatially situated, portraying an antiracist moment, rather than a finished and total antiracist sociohistorical geography. Such an essentialized space does not and cannot exist, because space is always being (re)constructed. My imagined journey is intended to illustrate the ways that antiracism can and must be ongoing and work in relation to space and the people within it.

To conclude this thesis, in Chapter 7, I offer a return to my argument that antiracist sociohistorical geographies are necessarily always unfinished. I do not wish for my argument to leave readers with a feeling of despair, thinking that racism will forever be lurking and will seep back in any time we are not doing intentional antiracist work. Indeed, racism has persisted in

different and dominant ways for centuries, being adapted and (re)created with the changing world. Antiracist work is not quick and easy, and to be effective it must not end once it begins. However, to give hope, I aim to convey to readers ways of seeing themselves, other people, and the spaces they all occupy in different and new lights. In the concluding chapter, I first provide a reflection on how this study has contributed to developing my own antiracist historical consciousness when I occupy sociohistorical geographies. I then acknowledge and discuss the challenges in doing this work. I finish by suggesting paths for future research in sociohistorical geographies beyond city settings, and for history and social studies education to help make antiracism discursive by developing student antiracist historical consciousness.

What this thesis does

This thesis can apply to racist and antiracist sociohistorical geographies beyond the spaces I investigated in Toronto. Certainly, as I convey throughout my discussions, context matters for how racisms and antiracisms can and do work, so what I present here cannot merely be transplanted to other settings. However, across North America and arguably other parts of the world. European colonization and the ensuing Eurocentric/white dominance are discursive. Colonial bedrocks have been imposed and continue to create racist exclusions. My thesis provides a lens for creating cracks in these bedrocks. The particular practices of cracking will be dependent upon the specific markers, structures, and systems in place. More broadly, though, my work here models ways people can begin to see the articulation between cultural representations, the (re)creation and interplay of historical consciousness and collective memory, and the critical considerations required for recognizing one's relationship to racist exclusions. We—all people—perpetuate racisms or bolster antiracisms, because we all see and read ourselves, our spaces, and

other people. We all read and feel ourselves and others in ways of belonging. (Re)creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies, then, is an antiracist project that involves all of us.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout this study, I make use of scholarly literature from three overarching academic fields: *antiracism*, *historical consciousness*, and *social geography*. In reviewing these fields, I critically examine a variety of theories, concepts, and perspectives to establish my own approaches and lenses.

Antiracism

Bonnett (2000) provides what he calls a minimal definition of antiracism, stating that “it refers to those forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism. Anti-racism implies the ability to identify a phenomenon—racism—and to do something about it” (p. 3). He acknowledges that different understandings and forms of racism require contextually appropriate antiracist responses, but the common aim amongst all antiracists is to name and disrupt racisms. Although suggesting that antiracism is simply thoughts and/or practices that oppose racism describes antiracism at its most basic, this description helps to avoid essentializing antiracism when one faces the complexities of racism. Racisms, as Stanley (2011) reminds us, are plural. Depending on the spatial and temporal contexts, racism take on different forms (Goldberg, 1993). Consequently, one must be careful not to denounce an antiracist effort as ineffective when the single act addresses one form of racism but not all forms of racism within a setting. For example, raising awareness is a first step toward redressing the silenced histories of Black people and communities in Canada. It is perhaps a blow to anti-Black racism; however, this act in and of itself has little effect in relation to combatting the exclusion of Indigenous nations from their traditional territories. This does not mean that this specific antiracist strategy failed. Rather, more antiracist strategies are required to address the diverse forms of racisms.

Antiracism is about identifying and disrupting racisms. More pointedly, though, in terms of addressing the banality of racism, antiracism means naming, countering the normalization of, and ending racist exclusions (Stanley, 2016). It is about making uninhabitable any positions that perpetuate and benefit from racisms (Grant & Stanley, 2014; Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997). Racism is discursive in our everyday lives (Essed, 1991) within the structures of the modern state (Goldberg, 2002; Moreton-Robinson, 2015), so there is nothing simple about combatting racisms. It must be done in both large, systemic forms and in individual, everyday ways (Pollock, 2008). Although offering critiques over a decade apart, Ahmed (2004) and Hage (2016) both present arguments that the reason antiracism struggles to become discursive is because it is too often performative and not active in the hands of those in dominant positions (i.e., people racialized as white). To understand and overcome the performativity and inactiveness of antiracism, I examine four established approaches to combatting racism. I first look at *multiculturalism*, move on to *anti-essentialist antiracism*, then discuss *critical race theory*, and end with *critical Whiteness studies*.

Multiculturalism. Sato and Este (2018) summarize three main approaches to multiculturalism: *conservative multiculturalism*, *liberal multiculturalism*, and *critical multiculturalism*, all of which are taken up by a variety of scholars of multiculturalism. Steinberg (2009) describes the conservative position as having a ‘West is best’ view, meaning Western culture will be the foundation to which other cultures can/should join. Sato and Este (2018) suggest conservative multiculturalism takes on an assimilationist vision and maintains “that multiculturalism promotes a discourse of tolerance rather than acceptance, which is centred around differences rather than commonalities that bind Canadians together” (Sato & Este, 2018, p. 331; see also Kendi, 2017). While multiculturalism is about inclusion, it is the people in

dominant positions within societal systems who decide who is included, how they are included, and to what they are being included (Hage, 2000). As such, people of colour are framed as outsiders and *permitted* to belong in conditional ways. This approach would then fail in cracking the colonial bedrock, as the power dynamics favouring white dominance remain undisturbed.

An ideological “liberal” perspective is that everyone is equal, and that inequality comes from lack of opportunity (Steinberg, 2009). As Sato and Este (2018) state, “underlying this [liberal] view is the assumption that, in spite of racial differences, each group has the same opportunities available to compete for economic, political and social resources in a capitalist society” (p. 331). This vision at least acknowledges that inequalities exist, but it ignores the systemic barriers to accessing opportunities, and it assumes that a capitalist society is unproblematic rather than exploitative of people (disproportionately Indigenous, Black, and people of colour). Sato and Este (2018) add that liberal multiculturalism “does acknowledge and celebrate differences; yet, it tends to categorize ethnic and racial minorities into fixed identities, which in effect actually reproduces stereotypes by essentializing difference” (p. 331; see also May, 1999). Banks & McGee Banks (2007) call liberal multiculturalism in education the *contributions approach*, an “add’n’stir” of heroes, cultural components, holidays, etc., to the content, making it about prejudice reduction without changing curriculum structure. In Canada, official multicultural policy touts a systemic embrace of all identities. It is, however, tokenistic, allowing for only state-sanctioned conditional inclusions of cultures and racialized identities beyond white French and English (Bannerji, 2000; James, 2001; Kymlicka, 2018). When the state is able to point to its efforts of inclusion, racism is then framed as something perpetrated by individuals—‘bad’ people—within supposedly egalitarian systems. While liberal multiculturalism differs from conservative multiculturalism by appearing to move away from

assimilationist attitudes and to acknowledge people's varying identities as significant, people's identities are still only read in relation to categories that *fit* with the dominant discourse.

Critical multiculturalism promotes the need to “historicize racism and critically engage with a more nuanced and complex analysis of culture, one that links diversity of education with social justice and includes power analysis” (Nylund, 2006, p. 29). It challenges the notion that education is the key to socioeconomic mobility—climbing the hierarchy—for working-class and students of colour. It examines issues of privilege, and it formulates modes of resistance that help marginalized groups (Steinberg, 2009). Sato and Este (2018) describe, “critical multiculturalists recognize the injustice embedded within institutions and structures that perpetuate racial inequality and actively work to dismantle these systems in pursuit of social justice for those most affected” (p. 332). Thus, this critical approach moves beyond racism as individual prejudice and seeks to disrupt systemic racisms. One might suggest that ‘critical multiculturalism’ is just another term for antiracism; however, May (1999) argues antiracism does not incorporate enough elements of cultural structures involved with racializations and racisms. Critical multiculturalism aims to incorporate considerations of culture into antiracism and de-essentialize multicultural approaches without succumbing to pluralism. There is a need to consider culture in antiracism, but there are challenges in aligning with critical multiculturalism. One such challenge is that although critical multiculturalism seeks to de-essentialize approaches and acknowledge that multiculturalism is taken up differently in varying contexts, it is the approach and not the identity categories that is looked at as contextual. Racial categories become reasserted as fixed and linked to culture that is supposedly defined by people's racialized identities. Despite good intentions and critiques of the system, dividing lines are (re)drawn such that ‘multicultural’ still means a white, Eurocentric foundation to which other cultures are added.

Rattansi (2011) contends that ‘multiculturalism’ was *racialized* from its beginnings in the late 1960s. Multiculturalists focused on *fitting* people of colour and racialized categories into discursive systems. In Britain, ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiracial’ are commonly used interchangeably in ways that equate culture with ‘race’ (Rattansi, 2011). This equation is too simplistic and suggests that even if two people who are racialized in the same way live in different places and do not have the same lived experiences, their racialization aligns them with the same culture. In the United States, bolstered by the Civil Rights movement, multiculturalism sees ‘race’ as part of culture (Kymlicka, 2010). While the American perspective shows there to be a relationship between ‘race’ and culture, meaning they are not the same but do shape each other, both ‘race’ and culture are still framed as essentialized, easily identified, and even celebrated (May, 1999; Nieto, 2010).

In Canada, multiculturalism stemmed from the 1963-1969 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B Commission). The B&B Commission “was a response to the growing unrest among French Canadians in Quebec, who called for the protection of their language and culture, and opportunities to participate fully in political and economic decision making” (Jedwab, 2020). After cultural groups other than English and French in Canada voiced their feelings of exclusion by the B&B Commission, in 1971, the government made multiculturalism official policy, but maintained a bilingual framework. Even with a multiculturalism policy, maintaining official bilingualism perpetuated the societal hierarchy that placed French and English at the top (Conway, 2018).

I will note that although official bilingualism places French and English in dominant positions in relation to other languages used in Canada, these two languages and the cultural identities they connect with are not equal in their dominance. In continuing efforts to protect

Francophone language, culture, and history from being diluted and appropriated as part of a pan-Canadian narrative, the province of Quebec opted for a provincial policy of *interculturalism* as a symbolic rejection of Canadian multiculturalism (Lévesque, 2003; Levrau & Loobuyck, 2018). Being a province, Canada's federal stance on multiculturalism does apply to the Franco-centric region and people of Quebec, but the province presents a strong message through its policy of interculturalism that their history, culture, and identity cannot be equated to the rest of Canada. Quebec has its own grand narrative that is also of European settler-colonizers—Whiteness—but it is not the same as the British-rooted Anglo-Canadian grand narrative. As such, Quebec's bolstering of interculturalism intentionally distinguishes the province as distinct from any visions of Canada-wide traits. Its implementation of interculturalism has ramifications for the ways racisms are enacted and countered in relation to the temporal, spatial, and cultural-linguistic setting. The Quebec context, however, goes beyond the scope of this thesis, so I will not proceed in discussing it here. I point to it here only to acknowledge that I am addressing multiculturalism in Canada as it is generally taken up within Anglo-dominant contexts.

During the process of the B&B Commission and leading into the 1971 multiculturalism policy that maintained official bilingualism, there was such outcry from ethnic groups in Canada that were not French or English that the B&B Commission was compelled to release *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Book IV: The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups* (1969). Even this step in developing multiculturalism was still primarily about the inclusion of ethnic groups of European origins that are racialized as white. Then, crafted in 1985 and adopted as part of the Canadian constitution in 1988, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was introduced to “recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges

the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage” (Government of Canada, 1985, Section 3.1.a). While the wording of the Act suggests equality for all people in and entering Canada, and it creates an image of unified ‘Canada’ and ‘Canadians’ (Bannerji, 2020; Haque, 2012; Rattansi, 2011), Canada remains officially bilingual (French and English), and the Act is teleological. It does not actually commit the government to any action. It ignores the racialized divisions and violence against Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour. Extensions of multiculturalism to include racialized identities were and are built on perceptions of Canada as a white, European-founded country where people of colour are *welcome* (Bannerji, 2000, 2020; Kymlicka, 2018).

Temporarily setting aside the marginalization of Indigenous nations and communities of colour that occurs when white multiculturalists see themselves as in the position to do the welcoming (Hage, 2000), multiculturalism in Canada shows that ‘race’ exists but is not a factor in people’s opportunities and abilities to feel unconditional belonging in Canada. James (2017) says that

in national contexts (e.g., Canada) where the multicultural ethos promotes color blindness, cultural democracy, equality of opportunity, and essentialist notions of identity [...there must be] questioning and interrogation of institutions’ (e.g., schools’) claims of being racially neutral and culturally democratic (or culturally neutral) spaces able to fairly accommodate all cultures. (p. 37)

When institutions claim multiculturalism by touting neutrality and therefore being open to people of all cultural and racialized identities, they perpetuate notions that racisms are just about individual hatred and violence. This stance absolves institutions of racism (James, 2008), suggesting that racism is not systemic and that institutions do not perpetuate racism. The

perception becomes that institutions can counter racism by merely not targeting racialized identities and *including* them in the system. While multiculturalism comes with positive sentiments of bringing all people together, it does not give enough critical consideration for the complex and continuously shifting dynamics of the ways racisms come to be. Thus, multiculturalism of any kind would be ineffective in reading a sociohistorical geography that is continuously being (re)created through fluctuating meanings. Unlike the various approaches and framings of multiculturalism, anti-essentialist approaches work to unpack and disrupt racisms in their historical, social, and systemic contexts.

Anti-essentialist antiracism. The emergence of anti-essentialist approaches to antiracism stems out of a journey from Marxism to Cultural Marxism to Cultural Studies of the second half of the 20th century. Key to the initial development of anti-essentialism is scholarship by Hall (1980), Miles (1989), and Donald and Rattansi (1992). There are, of course, other, newer scholars who also show Marxist influences—if not maintaining the title as a Marxist—while critically engaging with anti-essentialist understandings of racism (see discussions below of Bakan & Dua, 2014; Bannerji, 2014; Cole, 2017; Satgar, 2019). Miles (1989) states that “racism and exclusionary practices only have their determinate effects because of [Western society’s] structural features” (p. 131), arguing that ‘race’ is an element couched in capitalist class structure as an ideology. More recently, continuing to carry the Marxist torch, Bannerji (2014) contends that “the idea of ‘race’ [...] is an ideological instrument produced in relations of ruling and justification” (p. 134). Cole (2017) adds that “racialization occurs in relation to varying requirements of the capitalist mode of production” (p. 250). A Marxist stance suggests that ‘race’ is not naturally occurring but is created in the division of labour for capitalist purposes (Roediger, 1991), and racism maintains capitalism.

In critique of Miles, and echoing Hall's (1980) critique of Marxist and biological reductionism, Goldberg (1993) argues that when "Miles emphatically denies that [racism] involves any expressions other than a set of beliefs" and that it is "considered exclusively an ideology," Miles omits "a range of expressions—namely, practices, effects, and implications" that Goldberg insists "are properly constitutive of racialized discourse, in general, and (subject to the proper definitional constraints) to racism in particular" (p. 93). Cohen (1992) suggests "Marxism furnishes its own distinctive teleology of the oppressed, which can easily be transposed from class to nation or 'race'" (p. 73). In other words, Marxism puts parameters on 'race' and racism that do not account for the fluctuations of discourse and imaginings. Chow (1993) acknowledges that the traditional or what she calls "vulgar" Marxist "refusal to let go of the strategic role of economics in shaping social *vocal* structures continues to yield some of the most powerful (!) results of cultural criticism" (p. 384; emphasis and mid-sentence exclamation mark in original). However, as Satgar (2019) opines, traditional Marxists are often dogmatic, take "a formulaic approach to social reality, [...] do not appreciate the importance of non-Marxist radicalism and anticapitalism and do not want to engage in dialogue. Such Marxisms are against the materiality of identity formation in social processes" (p. 3). In contemplating what he calls a 'Marxism without guarantees,' Hall (1986) tells readers that "as soon as we divorce ourselves from a religious and doctrinal reading of Marx [...] the openings between many of the classical uses of the term, and its more recent elaborations, are not as closed as current theoreticist polemics would lead us to believe" (p. 30). The development of Cultural Marxism was an attempt to address these shortcomings of Marxism without departing from Marxism entirely.

Brenkman (1983) posits, “Cultural Marxism is the theoretical and interpretive project that approaches culture in its dialectic relation to the social totality” (p. 22). As Jamin (2018) describes, “Cultural Marxism considers cultures and ideologies as inextricably linked to the economic, social, and political context: they are tools in the hands of the powerful to control the people” (p. 4). Put these ways, Cultural Marxism moves away from the teleological perspectives of traditional Marxism (Cohen, 1992) and away from views that see economics as the core shaper of the various facets of society. It begins to see more interconnected relationships between people and systems. In acknowledging various contexts, this branch of Marxism gives attention to difference, as with different contexts come different cultures. Taking a stance that aligns with Cultural Marxism, but referring to Marxism more generally, Bakan (2014) argues that although Marxism is critiqued as devoid of a politics of difference, “difference can be understood [...] to refer to various forms of conflictual social relationships that occur within the totality of capitalist society [...] it is implicitly integrated into the categories of human suffering identified in Marx’s work” (p. 97). Cultural Marxism may better address relationships than traditional Marxism, and it may acknowledge contexts and difference in ways that traditional Marxism ignored. However, as Davies (1991) recalls, “by the 1980s, British Cultural Marxism became more culturist and less Marxist” (p. 324). While the Marxism element remained part of some critical lenses analyzing culture, it was not as central to all, and thus, Cultural Studies evolved (Davies, 1991; Kellner, 2003).

Contemporary Cultural Studies, as Kellner (2003) describes, “situates culture within a socio-historical context in which culture promotes domination or resistance, and criticizes forms of culture that foster subordination” (p. 32). The socio-historical context is an important point of consideration that Cultural Studies emphasizes. As During (1993) reminds us in his overview of

the field's concepts, "the everyday does not possess a single history. It exists within multiple histories, many of which escape the way the past is remembered and stored officially" (p. 25). Returning to Kellner (2003), Cultural Studies is materialist and thus "focuses on the material origins and effects of culture and the ways that culture is imbricated in process of domination or resistance" (Kellner, 2003, p. 32). This approach to culture sees culture as active, not just a feature within a given context. Although not addressing 'race' and racism explicitly, this form of Cultural Studies begins to resemble a discourse applicable to 'race' and racism as more than byproducts of capitalist exploitation. Developed through the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) starting in the 1960s,

studies of ideology, domination and resistance, and the politics of culture, directed cultural studies toward analyzing cultural artifacts, practices, and institutions within existing networks of power and of showing how culture both provided tools and forces of domination and resources for resistance and struggle. (Kellner, 2003, p. 36)

Although consisting of numerous members with their own perspectives, the CCCS (1982) generally contended that "the parallel growth of repressive state structures and new racisms has to be located in a non-reductionist manner, within the dynamics of both the international crisis of the capitalist world economy, and the deep-seated structural crisis of the British social formation" (p. 7). Their response to the shifting place of Marxism within Cultural Studies was not to abandon Marxism to focus purely on the social, but to embrace an approach that transcends academic and ideological silos. They sought lenses that examine racism as more of an organic beast that (re)develops through the interconnections of systems, experiences, and perspectives (Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982).

Hall (1980), the founder of the CCCS, starts with Marxism, but it is not his only avenue for looking at racisms in complex ways. He argues against the idea of ‘race’ being biological differences. Instead, he contends that it is a category (re)constructed through meanings ascribed to such differences. ‘Race’ is never final. Rather, Hall (in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997) calls it a floating signifier. In (re)thinking practices as functioning discursively, Hall (1996) suggests that the discursive perspective brings into play “a very important insight, namely, the whole dimension of subjectivity, particularly in the ideological domain” (p. 145). He states that “the discursive metaphor [...] enable[s] cultural theorists to realize that what we call ‘the self’ is constituted out of and by difference, and remains contradictory, and that cultural forms are, similarly, in that way, never whole, never fully closed or ‘sutured’” (p. 145). Thus, as Dua (2014) outlines, “Hall proposes a methodology that combines the epistemology of the decentred subject with that of Marxist concepts concerning the power of dominant groups and resistance” (p. 80–81). Dua (2014) contends that although not all are Marxists, *per se*, it would be a challenge to find scholars of ‘race’ and racism who do not present at least some Marxist tendencies. This contention includes me, so it is important that I acknowledge and contemplate the role of Marxism in shaping my lens(es). I do not want to be reductionist (Hall, 1980), teleological (Cohen, 1992), or dogmatic (Satgar, 2019), because I want to be attuned with the dynamic and fluctuating relationships between different people and different spaces.

In analyses of ‘race’ and therefore racism, Hall (1980) shows that an ‘economic’ perspective alone is reductive and ignores social realities, and an emphasis on just the ‘social’ tends not to consider the place of economic processes as contributory to the determination of ‘race.’ He suggests that the economic without the social creates economic reductionism, and the social without the economic becomes caught up in historical relativism. In what he calls a society

structured in dominance, where racism is a core form of dominance, there are a variety of elements (e.g., political, social, legal, economic, etc.) that articulate—inform and reflect each other—to fuel racism and the (re)creation of ‘race.’ As these elements are always in flux, they are never final, so, Hall argues (in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997), scholars must consider racism through a discursive position. They need to recognize how racial categories appear cemented and timeless in society. Additionally, these categories must be examined as something made dominant through the (re)creation of racist meanings. Building on the ideas that ‘race,’ racism, and dominance are in flux and always being (re)created, therefore having no inherent beginnings, Donald and Rattansi (1992) adopt many of the core principles of Cultural Studies but exemplify an adaptation in the field as they argue for *anti-essentialist* approaches.

Anti-essentialism, they state, requires “a shift from the idea of inherited or imposed authority and towards the principles of difference and dialogue” (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p. 5). Additionally, they contend that racism is not singular, and we must recognize “the historical and cultural specificity of different racisms” (p. 5; see also Miles, 1989; Stanley, 2011). An anti-essentialist perspective on ‘race’ and racism suggests that historical and present contexts must be considered, not just because spatial and temporal traits change, but because meanings are never fixed and are constantly being (re)created and (re)asserted. Razack (1998) argues,

The point of anti-essentialism – the complex tracing of the social narratives that script how women [and people of colour] experience their gender [, ‘race,’ and racism,] and how others respond to it – is to determine how to identify and interrupt those assumptions and practices that deny women [and people of colour] their human rights. (p. 158)

She adds that, in short, “the point of anti-essentialism is antisubordination” (p. 158). Stanley (2014) aligns with Razack’s focus on social narratives in his contention that an anti-essentialist

approach to racism “is deeply engaged with analyzing social formations and their consequences so as to understand and harness the forces that make change without presuming that this will produce an end to history” (p. 5). Looking to social formations requires a ‘both-and’ approach rather than an ‘either-or’ perspective, because the former recognizes how racisms work in relation to the ever-fluctuating interconnections of societal facets (i.e., economic, social, legal, cultural, political, etc.); the latter creates silos that attempt to examine racisms through fixed, singular lenses. Anti-essentialism is broad enough to show racist meanings as unfixed and always being (re)created, but is not pluralist, as it insists upon recognizing racisms as historical and relational in order to trace the process of (re)creation.

Stanley (2011; 2016) argues that for a racism to occur, a person or group must first be racialized, then excluded, and experience negative consequences because of the exclusion. Miles (1989) describes racialization as “a process of categorization, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically” (p. 75). If racism is the exclusion of people based on how they become racialized, racism is the creator of ‘race.’ However, racisms do not just create ‘race’ by imposing essentialized meaning upon differences. They continue to re-create ‘race’ in changing contexts (Stanley, 2016), supporting acts of exclusion (Goldberg, 2009; Miles, 1989). Racisms can be understood as being (re)created in a socio-historical and socio-discursive context (Goldberg, 1993), which is to say that ‘race’ is always becoming (Ibrahim, 2014), never final, and therefore should not be investigated in essentialized terms (CCCS, 1982; Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997).

Anti-essentialist antiracism provides lenses to understand how racisms become (re)created and work in relation to a world that is never static. It reads as a comprehensive antiracist approach that is broad enough to address racisms in all forms but narrow enough to

focus on ‘race’ and racism without conflating them with culture or economics. To be thorough, there are other antiracist stances that warrant discussion, at least to understand the variety of perspectives taken in attempts to counter racism. Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) both emerged in the early 1990s, around the time that anti-essentialist antiracism was growing out of Cultural Studies and being distinguished unto itself. Although both CRT and CWS have grown in their use amongst scholars, and they do offer lines of thought that can help see racisms as lived experiences, neither effectively address the active and fluctuating nature of racisms, particularly in relation to sociohistorical spatial contexts.

Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is insufficient in examining how racisms are (re)created and how antiracisms can be effectively enacted because it essentializes ‘race.’ Hartlep (2011) outlines that CRT has five main tenets: 1) racism is an ordinary component of society; 2) interest convergence occurs in racialized inclusion; 3) ‘race’ is socially constructed; 4) there is a need for counter-storytelling in response to discursive storytelling; and 5) white people have been beneficiaries of civil rights legislation. According to Critical Race Theorist Derrick Bell (1993), there is a sixth tenet to CRT. For him, racism is “integral, permanent, and indestructible” (p. 573). Moreover, countering racism is a matter of survival but never a fight that can be won in the American state structure. Pratt and Rosiek (2021) align themselves with Bell’s stance on the permanence of racism. “Such pessimism,” they believe, “is practical because it counsels the development of anti-racist practices and policies as indefinite commitments” (p. 7). While I agree with the authors’ sentiments that antiracism must be an ongoing endeavour, and in this sense, it would seemingly follow that racism is therefore permanent, the American-centric perspective these positions stem from fails to acknowledge changing racisms in different settings.

Racism is not a single and never-ending thing. Racisms, plural (Stanley, 2011), are (re)created in relation to temporal and socio-spatial contexts. With consideration for contexts that include but also go beyond the United States, Stanley (2002) troubles CRT's sixth tenet. He states, "critical anti-racist scholars have noted that, for all their apparent permanence, racial categories are specific to particular contexts" (p. 144–145). He adds that "A body might be defined one way in one context and another way in a different context" (p. 145), and "representations themselves are continually 'at play'; the meanings that they communicate are constantly slipping as they are challenged, reinvented, or bent" (p. 146). If 'race' is not only socially constructed but also never static or universal, always being recreated (Ibrahim, 2014), racisms are then not stable or permanent.

CRT stems from American legal studies (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Where CRT originated is important because 'race' and racism are historicized and taken up differently in different locations. For example, the histories of the (re)creation of 'Black' in the United States have some similarities to Canada (e.g., histories of legal enslavement of Black bodies; higher percentages of Black bodies being victims of police violence [Maynard, 2017]), and there are connections between the two countries' histories, but they are not the same. Anti-Black racisms exist(ed) in Canada, but, as Walker (2009) highlights, "the major difference between the two countries is that segregation and other forms of racial discrimination in the United States were legally codified while in Canada such practices were legally supported though rarely enshrined in positive law" (p. 82; for broader discussion of racism and the law in Canada, see also Backhouse, 1999; Razack, 2002). Additionally, again differing from the United States, during the 1980s in Britain, 'Black' was used for people of African, Caribbean, and South Asian descent (Modood, 1994; see also Telles, 2004, for discussion of different forms of

Blackness in Brazil). The ways ‘Black’ was and is racialized in different places comes with changing meanings, effects, and forms and levels of official control over bodies identified as Black. CRT examines racism in reference to a Black-white binary, which essentializes ‘Black’ and creates Black exceptionalism (Cole, 2017). Cole (2017) believes Black exceptionalism, or any form of exceptionalism, hinders the necessary solidarity to counter racism (see also Hage, 2016).

According to Critical Race Theorist David Gillborn (2009), CRT can be generally characterized

by a critique of liberalism, which points to the failure of notions such as ‘merit,’ ‘neutrality’ and ‘colorblindness,’ which masquerade as fair and just but, because of the uneven playing field of contemporary racist society, actually function to ensure the continuation of race inequality. (p. 126)

This critique of liberalism aligns with arguments that the modern state relies on racist exclusion (Goldberg, 2002) to promote a so-called homogeneous, universal (colonial) form of liberty that emphasizes individualism and property ownership, displacing non-European (non-white) ways of knowing and living (Lowe, 2015). Within CRT perspectives, ‘race’ is central to all intersections of identities and experiences where white supremacy underpins it all (Crenshaw, 2011).

In a critique of Critical Race Theory (discussed further below), Cole (2017) addresses Critical Race Theorist Gillborn’s (2005) suggestion that ‘white supremacy’ is more apt a term than just ‘racism.’ Cole disagrees. ‘White supremacy,’ for him, homogenizes white people as all being in positions of power and privilege. Cole finds this to be counterproductive as a political unifier against racism. He contends that Gillborn’s position makes ‘white supremacy’ a blanket term that labels people as powerful or not powerful and ignores the complexities of real lived

experiences (e.g., poor, working-class white). While ‘white supremacy’ and ‘white privilege’ are concepts that have real effects, ‘white’ becomes (re)created differently in varying contexts.

Leonardo (2013) also put forth a critique of CRT. Although ‘race’ is crucial to how one experiences the world, and even though CRT is correct that ‘race’ is socially constructed, Leonardo argues that the theory does not effectively define ‘race.’ He believes that CRT leaves the workings of white supremacy and the marginalization of people of colour as undertheorized. Although CRT sees ‘race’ as socially constructed, it essentializes racial categories by looking at the construction as occurring once and for all, rather than it being constantly re-constructed (e.g., ‘Black’ is constructed and then Black is a fixed category).

In her recent book, *Black Racialization and Resistance at an Elite University*, Rosalind Hampton (2020) posits, “Black counter-storytelling has been an astute political project grounded in a demand for self-representation and the assertion of counter-discourses” (p. 29). Here, I am not questioning the self-representation of a person who racializes themselves as Black and draws on counter-discourses to do antiracist work when challenging dominant and dominating discourses that are made discursive. However, the concepts of ‘Black counter-storytelling’ and ‘counter-discourses’ convey ‘Black’ as a sort of homogeneous collective battling against Whiteness. There are times where this sense of collective becomes a social reality, but CRT falls short in acknowledging the changing meanings of categories in relation to individual experience within different collective times and places. Racisms are in flux without guaranteed positions or politics (Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997), and ‘race’ is continuously (re)made. With or without this recognition of re-construction, however, it is important to contemplate the CRT stance that “as long as Whites follow their inclinations, the continuation of racist outcomes comes as no surprise and is regarded as an unremarkable consequence of a system over which no

individual exercises much control” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 17). While CRT approaches racism by centring ‘race’ to understand how people of colour are positioned within a white-dominated society, there are other approaches that critically analyze those who racism places in dominant positions.

Critical Whiteness Studies. Critical discussions of Whiteness gained initial momentum in the late-1980s and early-1990s with Roediger’s (1991) investigations into the creation of ‘white’ as a racialized category through 19th-century distinctions of working class (white) and ‘free’ labour (Black), and with white acknowledgements of white privilege (McIntosh, 1989). Many other scholars contribute(d) to the ongoing critical conversations in and about the study of Whiteness (see Applebaum, 2008; DiAngelo, 2018; Frankenberg, 1993; Giroux, 1997; hooks, 1992; Leonardo, 2002, 2009; Nayak, 2007; Roediger, 1994), and there are certainly nuances to this approach (e.g., labour [Roediger, 1991; 1994]; geography [Frankenberg, 1993; Bonnet, 1997]; white fragility [DiAngelo, 2018]). The field developed with the idea that by naming forms of white privilege and white supremacy, they could then be recognized and eliminated. In Leonardo’s (2013) words, however, “becoming aware of one’s Whiteness is one thing, but acknowledging how one’s Whiteness translates into political and social structures responsible for racial domination is quite another” (p. 156). To understand the perpetuation of racisms, it is necessary for people racialized as white to recognize racisms as creating the privileges they experience, and for them to learn to see themselves as connected to racisms. Unpacking and disrupting racisms, however, cannot be only about the white people (Leonardo, 2013).

According to Ahmed (2007), “Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they ‘take up’ space” (p. 150). Adding to this idea, ‘Whiteness’ refers to the systems of dominance that make

‘white’ “the standard against which all other races are measured or valued [... and] the norm against which constructed racial differences become meaningful” (Baldwin, Cameron, & Kobayashi, 2011, p. 5). To use a lens of Whiteness, then, is to examine how a racism positions people racialized as white in dominant ways. In comparison to Critical Race Theory, while CRT positions ‘race’ as a central focus and challenges racist systems that continue to marginalize Black people and people of colour, Critical Whiteness Studies looks to the opposite end of the dominance scale. CWS also focuses on ‘race’ but critiques the ways people racialized as white continue to benefit from systems of Whiteness. When set next to anti-essentialist antiracism, similar to the way CRT tends to see ‘Black’ as a one-time construction, CWS also often essentializes ‘white,’ which oversimplifies the context-related racializing process and therefore under-examines the work of racism (Stanley, 2002). Ahmed (2012) critiques Whiteness Studies for being about making white people feel guilty about being white. She says, “guilt can be a way of performing of rather than undoing of whiteness [... which] works as a ‘block’ to hearing the claims of others as it ‘returns’ to the white self” (p. 169). She then criticizes that many white people trying to move past the guilt and toward naming their Whiteness do so only for claiming “proud antiracism” (p. 170), which again returns to the white self and recentres Whiteness.

Much of what was being unveiled and talked about in the early days of Critical Whiteness Studies was not entirely new; scholars of colour had been highlighting the privilege for many years prior (for examples, see Du Bois, 1903/1994, 1935; Fanon, 1952/2008; hooks, 1984). As such, while many scholars of colour embraced, used, and continue to use scholarship from the scholars of colour named above (Rabaka, 2020), as well as others, CWS came to exist mainly when white scholars saw for themselves and began acknowledging how their own experiences included the issues that scholars of colour were trying to make known. The lag

between the scholars of colour addressing systems of privilege and white scholars acknowledging their connections to it is at least in part linked to what DiAngelo (2018) calls *white fragility*. She states early on in her work that white people are often unaware how they are “socialized into a deeply internalized sense of superiority” and “perceive any attempt to connect [them] to the system of racism as an unsettling and unfair moral offense” (p. 2). Leonardo (2013) posits that “Whites are more accommodating when they hear the same message from a White messenger, which preserves White comfort zones and inevitably feelings of safety” (p. 85). For scholars of Whiteness, a baseline message to understand, in Leonardo’s (2013) words, is that “Whites may have struggles and challenges in life, but race is not one of them” (p. 92). From that recognition, lines of inquiry open to what Whiteness is and looks like, as well as how it works.

Fine, et al. (2004) use DuBois’ notion of being *singularly clairvoyant*—meaning “see clearly” and “discern things which are not necessarily present to the senses” (p. x)—as a foundation for de-centring Whiteness. They seek to flip it such that they “complicate how the ‘living’ of whiteness can resist, rather than simply benefit from, racialized domination” (p. x). They break down Whiteness by going beyond mere acknowledgement that it exists and creates white privilege and present Whiteness as something that is constructed, lived, represented, taught, and contested—active—sometimes all at once. In this organization of Whiteness, it becomes something that is experienced in different ways by people of all racialized identities, and not just something that is perpetuated and/or disrupted by white people while people of colour feel the effects without agency to make change. Aligning with these ideas of Whiteness does create privilege but is more dynamic than just that, as Lowe (2012) contends that there are what she calls *registers of Whiteness*. She shows that through different registers, Whiteness is

understood in varying ways such as beliefs of biological superiority and heritage, performance of privilege, and enactments of dominance. Part of the different ways Whiteness is enacted, experienced, and sometimes embraced, is shaped by its relationship to various types of geographic setting. The dominant meanings of what a given geography is, how it is to be used, who is able to use it, and who has the power to make these issues discursive, is also socially constructed.

Baldwin, et al. (2011) bring together scholarship that examines the connections between racism and the social constructions of what is and is not ‘nature.’ The authors acknowledge foundational scholarship of Whiteness Studies and give credit to scholars such as Roediger (1993) and Ignatiev (1995) who link the creation of ‘white’ with distinctions between ‘working class’ and slavery or indentureship. However, Baldwin, et al. (2011) depart from these foundations by stating, “To frame whiteness as just a historical artifact tethered to class politics [...] forecloses geography and geographical imaginaries as integral to the consolidation and circulation of white normativity” (Baldwin, et al., 2011, p. 6). Core to their argument is that “whiteness in all its historical-geographic variability is fundamentally concerned with spatializing racial difference in ways that allow for its spatial practices to pass unquestioned” (p. 6). Baldwin, et al. (2011) show Whiteness as integral to creating, defining, and racializing societal spaces. Urban spaces are distinct from spaces of nature because they were designed as such through their colonial beginnings. Areas labeled in racialized terms such as “Black neighbourhoods” or “Chinatown” are distinguished because they are not white spaces.

Lund and Carr (2015) use the concept of the “Great White North” to trouble visions of Canada as a distinct place without any significant turmoil of racism while being a place where Whiteness is normalized and largely goes unexamined. They state that “slavery, colonialism of

First Nations and other peoples, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and a host of other political, economic, and cultural strategic maneuvers and mindsets have all been buttressed by the grandiose conceptualization of the White man as morally enlightened” (p. 2). The supposedly morally enlightened view, then, is not that the dominance of Whiteness is racist, but that the colonizer’s systems and structures just *make more sense*. This sort of unchecked and often unintended arrogance stems from assumptions of the superiority of Enlightenment and modernity (read Eurocentric) thinking (Lowe, 2015; Piot, 1999), much of which structures Canadian society and is taught in Canadian education. For example, as I examine in upcoming chapters, Canadian cities predominantly set in a grid format is a structure introduced by European colonizers (Grant, 2001), enabling control of the land through divisions of property (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). In schools, the inclusion of histories about Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour, are minimal and tokenistic. Illustrating this point, the #BlackedOutHistory project initiated by the Ontario Black History Society (2020) shows that in the 255-page Nelson History 8 textbook—commonly used in Ontario classrooms—only 13 pages included any reference to histories of Black people and communities. Canada is portrayed as a ‘white-founded’ place of peace and unity because

A common sentiment that continues to bind Canadians together is the self-assured notion that Canada does not suffer from the same racial problems as in the US. *We believe we are less segregated, less discriminatory, less racist, and less divided, and we often remind ourselves of Canada’s status as the first nation to have its multicultural identity entrenched in its constitution.* (Lund & Carr, 2015, p. 3; emphasis added)

While the Franco-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian narratives may differ, the idea that European (white) people *settled* the land and built the country positions Whiteness as foundational—the ‘we’—and in a positive and even altruistic light.

The overarching concern from Lund and Carr (2015) is how Whiteness is addressed and problematized (or not) through education. As they state, “for far too long, many White people have believed, or have been led to believe, that race and racism are concerns only of those who are directly affected by it as its targets” (p. 6). Part of this ‘being led to believe’ comes through the ways people are taught in ways that normalize Whiteness. Educators work in systems that were built on Whiteness, and white educators come to their classrooms from their experiences of Canada as white people. To borrow James’ title question from his chapter contribution to Lund and Carr’s (2015) book, “who can/should do this [antiracist] work”? This question returns to the challenge of white people using Whiteness Studies to move beyond white guilt and performative denouncements of racism. To move beyond performativity, for white people to critically examine the crux of Whiteness and their positions within it, they must understand and trouble the ways that the everyday spaces they occupy and take for granted (Maynard, 2017) are built on and shaped by racist colonial foundations, which privileges white bodies’ belonging.

Similar to critiques of CRT, Moreton-Robinson (2015) suggests that Whiteness Studies is locked in a Black-white binary, and Indigenous perspectives are underrepresented and under-theorized. She argues that the concept of granting Indigenous peoples their land is not Indigenous sovereignty because this action comes in accordance with governmental law, which assumes white possession and authority. She shows that Indigenous ways of knowing position bodies as part of the land, whereas Eurocentric/Western ontology sees them as separate, which lends to the logic of land being *terra nullius* and open for possession. “As part of state formation

and regulation,” says Moreton-Robinson (2015), “patriarchal white sovereignty is mobilized through a possessive logic that operates ideologically and socio-discursively” (p. 178). Barker (2021) admits that “although it is tempting to assume that settler people are nefarious or unrepentant conquerors, that is too simple a construction, even if the vast majority remain unmitigated colonizers” (p. 16). The continued colonial dominance, then, must stem from and be maintained through some sort of normative mentality and forgetting that justifies the ongoing occupation of Indigenous territories. This *white possessive logic*, as Moreton-Robinson (2015) calls it, sets the stage for the creation of property such that ownership of the land translates to control of the land, which enables laws, regulations, and developed social understandings about how land is to be divided and used, as well as who is able and permitted to use it. Understanding Whiteness is an integral part of understanding racisms, but racisms must be recognized as relational. They involve both relationships between people of varying racialized identities and those relationships in connection to spatial and temporal contexts.

Racisms are complex and always being (re)created, meaning that antiracism must be active and ongoing (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016) to (re)create antiracist meanings that counter and make uninhabitable the (re)creation of racist meanings (Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997). “Being an antiracist,” Kendi (2019) contends, “requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination” (p. 23). This must be done through an ontology of what Hage (2016) calls *mutuality*, or what Donald (2009) calls *relationality*, whereby approaches to antiracism include a would-be antiracist person recognizing their own connections to the continuation of racist systems, structures, and actions. Multiculturalism, too, often lends to *add’n ’stir* approaches and maintains views of racism and antiracism as equating to individual action. CRT and CWS lack sufficient acknowledgement of relational fluctuations of

‘race’ and racisms. While an anti-essentialist antiracist approach is not a silver bullet to all racisms, it overcomes the shortcomings of other approaches. It insists on considerations for the historic and changing ways that racisms are (re)created and made banal through the articulation of varying societal systems and contexts (Hall, 1980). Understanding these articulations and how they become discursive requires investigating racisms as ingrained and potentially disrupted within the sociohistorical spaces we produce. Developing and enacting antiracism in these contexts means there must be consideration of historical consciousness.

Historical Consciousness

Scholars have theorized *historical consciousness* for at least five decades (see Gadamer & Fantel, 1975; Grant & Rogers, 2018; Funkenstein, 1989; Lukacs, 1968; Rüsen, 1989; Seixas, 2004, 2006, 2012, 2017; Straub, 2005; Weintraub, 1975), critically pondering it for different purposes: connections to morality; being a way of thinking; being embodied; or being a framework for bridging history scholarship with public and popular presentations of history. The term ‘historical consciousness’ can connote one’s awareness of the past or simply one’s acknowledgement that there is a past. Indeed, this awareness is part of historical consciousness. And yet, historical consciousness involves more about dynamics in recognizing all things, including the self, as historical (Gadamer & Fantel, 1975). The development of historical consciousness, for Wineburg, et al. (2007), is “not as a series of courses or lectures but as the result of a complex interplay between home, community, school, and the historicizing forces of popular culture” (p. 44). They warn against the “comforting, albeit fallacious, notion that historical consciousness develops rationally and sequentially through the efforts of a state-mandated curriculum” (p. 70). Historical consciousness is relational and fluctuates with spatial and cultural context. This interplay and one’s recognition of all things as historical affects the

workings of cultural tools and the mediation of meanings in relation to (re)creating collective memory.

Rüsen (1989) situates historical consciousness as a spatial and temporal relation that “ties the past to the present in a manner which bestows on present actuality a future perspective” (p. 39). He outlines four types of historical consciousness. However, as Seixas (2004) suggests, the four are interconnected, with a person potentially experiencing multiple types and with each type building from the others. The first is *traditional*, which is linked to the roots and repetitions of obligations and celebrations. The second is *exemplary*, where we look to past “cases representing and embodying general rules of temporal change and human conduct” (Rüsen, 1989, p. 45). The third is *critical*, which is to engage with historical argumentation about the construction of history and therefore the potential to deconstruct the fixity of traditions and rules. Here, a person troubles the notion that one exists as they do only because of the past, but does so by engaging with and challenging history, thereby maintaining oneself as historical. The fourth is the *genetic* type, which is to think of history as changing, such that the happenings of the past are not questioned as real, but the interpretations of the past—the meanings we give it—are understood as shifting in relation to the temporal context from which the past is being examined. The common element throughout all four is that an individual is always connected to the phenomena and understandings of the past.

Particularly within the field of History education, Seixas (2012) examines historical consciousness and takes the position that developing historical consciousness is for people to recognize themselves as “historical agents operating in their own historical moment” (p. 871). Framing people as historical agents within an historical moment speaks to the idea of history as constructed and of the present time being re-constructed in the future as history. This framing

aligns with Rüsen's (1989) outline of historical consciousness as seeing relationships between the past, present, and future. Additionally, the recognition of history as constructed builds on Seixas's (2004) point that "historical distance is not so much given as constructed" (p. 24), suggesting that people can see themselves as removed from the past at different levels and forms. This sense of constructing historical distance lends potential to people recognizing direct connections between themselves and the past. The challenge, however, is that at any level, there remains at least some distance between a person and the past. Grant and Rogers (2018) critique Seixas's 'historical agent,' stating that it "relies on the interpretation and contextualization of the past as a 'finished' entity and engaged through historical traces outside the body in the present moment," which "assumes and therefore makes unproblematic the very separation of past/present/future and its orientation as a teleological procession" (p. 8). They argue that Seixas's discussion of historical consciousness should not be discounted entirely. Seixas is not *wrong* and does work to see history in complex ways, but his position comes with limitations for the roles of non-Western epistemologies and varyingly embodied relationships to the past.

Grant and Rogers (2018) argue for an embodied historical consciousness, which "is not tied to nation or nation-building, but connects with affective, lived-experiences in the present; that allows for a relational understanding of being" (p. 2). Indeed, some people may have a sense of nation or nation-building as being part of who they are, thereby making nation or nation-building core to their lived experiences. Grant and Rogers' embodied historical consciousness, however, is one where nation and nation-building are not *expected* as part of everyone's relationship with the past. They comment that "Seixas' current historical consciousness, as he admits, requires an engagement with the ontological components of historicity [...] particularly the ways bodies are somatically living the effects of what is contained in 'the past'" (Grant &

Rogers, 2018, p. 3). This call for historicity aligns with what Kovach (2009) calls *self-location*, which “anchors knowledge within experiences, and these experiences greatly influence interpretations” (p. 111). Also emphasizing the relationality of people, Hirsch and Stewart’s (2005) vision of *historicity* suggests that seeking to “index the fuller qualities of this social and personal relationship to the past and future makes it a complex social and performative condition, rather than an objectively determinable aspect of historical descriptions” (p. 262). They add, “Historicity [...] is the manner in which persons operating under the constraints of social ideologies make sense of the past, while anticipating the future” (p. 262). With an important and distinct recognition of the fluctuations of people and contexts, McGregor (2017) describes historicity as “a changing, moving relationship with time; contingency and situatedness; culturally diverse forms of drawing meaning; and, the varied purposes and uses of history and memory [...] in contemporary society” (p. 8, Footnote 6). These views of historicity support Grant and Rogers’ (2018) perspective of where historical consciousness is under-theorized in relation to the changing ways people exist.

As part of framing their discussion, Grant and Rogers (2018) elaborate that embodied historical consciousness

means not only being attentive to living bodies in-and-as history and separating history and ‘the past’ from the body as a rational discipline, but making an overt space for working through ontological and affective elements, such as the trauma of being excluded from historically ‘somatic norms’ in nation-building narratives. (p. 3)

They continue, “this also means untethering national grand narratives as the space of ‘common’ past, to critically construct an historical consciousness, differently” (p. 3). This branch of the historical consciousness conversation creates much-needed opportunity for connecting with

understandings of racism and antiracism in relation to sociohistorical spaces. This focused shift links to ‘embodied historical consciousness’ by building acknowledgement for how the (re)creation of racialized identities and experiences is connected to people’s understandings of themselves as shaping and being shaped by history within changing spatial contexts.

Hall (1980) states that when enacted, “racisms also dehistoricize—translating historically-specific structures into the timeless language of nature” (p. 342). As part of naming, disrupting, and ending racisms, antiracism requires historicizing space (i.e., the meanings mediated between material structures and people), which is an examination conducted by people, thereby linking it to historical consciousness (Stanley, 2016). This is not to say that consideration for historical consciousness is automatically an act of antiracism, but rather that antiracism involves historicity and the self. The connection of antiracism and historical consciousness—an antiracist historical consciousness—would take up Grant and Rogers’ (2018) point about needing to develop historical consciousness that recognizes the ways people are somatically linked to the past and, as such, are positioned in particular somatic ways within the present. Because of the ways this sort of historical consciousness connects the body with temporal contexts, it would play a significant role in the (re)production of spatial contexts known as social geographies.

Social geography

‘Social geography’ suggests a particular form of creating, thinking about, and using space. Investigations into the role(s) of the social in relation to physical geographies date back to the mid-19th century (Ruppert, 1984; Valentine, 2001). In discussing how ‘social’ was and is viewed through a spatial lens, Jackson (2003) conveys that “the social was traditionally seen in terms of a series of relatively independent ‘dimensions’ of difference whereby it was implied that inequalities of race, class and gender could be stacked up in some simple additive fashion” (pp.

39-40). In the 1960s and 1970s, as Valentine (2001) suggests, social geography developed within the context of social and political tensions, increasingly engaging with investigations of social (in)equalities and (in)justice. The ‘cultural turn’ in the 1980s and 1990s created emphasis on identity, meanings, and representation, taking focus away from structural inequalities (Valentine, 2001). Studies of cultural geography did develop to the point of being shown as distinct from social geography (Anderson, et al., 2003). However, over time, because examinations of social geography have become more specific and the dynamics of the social are shown to be complex, scholars increasingly understand the bridges interconnecting the social and cultural in all their forms (Gregson, 2003). As the field of social geography shifts, a key question to continue asking is, what is a social geography?

Within the academic field of social geography, there is no single theory or definition for what a social geography is or how it is produced (Del Dasino, Jr., et al., 2011). Moss and Dyck (2003) consider the geographies of bodies and how they are linked to the physical and social geographies they inhabit. They suggest that “in geography, space and place necessarily are central in analyses that take issues about the body seriously, thus contributing to spatializing and *embodying* social geography” (Moss & Dyck, 2003, p. 58; emphasis in original). Del Casino, Jr., et al. (2011) remind us that the field of social geography is “intimately concerned with questions of life, and not just human life but life writ large” (p. 7). Gregson (2003) argues that the ‘social’ in social geography “relates directly to the materiality of social life, specifically to the conditions of its organization and reproduction” (p. 43). Following these perspectives, a main point to ponder is that a social geography is not merely a physical space that people are occupying. Rather, people are part of the creation and the material of a space (Donald, 2009). Scholars increasingly acknowledge and consider the intersectionality of an individual’s identities

(Crenshaw, 1991); the relationships between people who exist in the same setting (Frankenberg, 1993); and how these identities and relationships are linked to the (re)production of space (Razack, 2002; Hopkins, 2021). With these issues intertwining, a brief look at Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space offers a helpful starting point for examining the complex ways social geographies are understood.

All spaces are social in the sense that no spaces are natural, and all are produced by people. All spaces are labelled (e.g., a park, a neighbourhood, a country, etc.) and understood through meanings that are continuously mediated between people and the material with which they engage (Lefebvre, 1991). Even outer space—commonly referred to as just ‘space’—is only known as such because of the meanings that humans apply to it. And when what we would call ‘nature’ includes naturally occurring reproduction of flora and fauna without human involvement, the label and understanding of what ‘nature’ is insists upon meanings of what is ‘not nature,’ all of which requires human production. Admittedly, as Meehan and Rice (2011) point out in their discussion of nature and social geography, the creation of the stuff of nature involves complex relations involving humans, flora, fauna, technologies, and discourse. ‘Nature-not nature’ is not a distinct binary with a clear line demarcating the two sides (e.g., trees do grow within city spaces). However, where ‘nature’ and ‘not nature’ are made the dominant labels of a respective space is a result of human decision. The way space is constructed and labeled has effects upon how it is used, who is permitted to use the space, and who has the power to (re)construct and maintain the labels of the space (Baldwin, et al., 2011). The production of space is a social act that is never finished. From Lefebvre's (1991) discussion of how the concepts of ‘production’ and ‘space’ might be perceived differently, I draw on some overarching messages that I summarize as such: material alone does not make a space; discourse alone does

not make a space; actions alone do not make a space; and it is the ongoing relationships between all three that produces a recognized space.

The material exists, sometimes through natural occurrence and sometimes through human fabrication, but, as Hall (1997) argues, it only gains meaning through discourse. Shaped by discourse, the material becomes a cultural representation, and some representations become dominant and discursive while others are seen as anomalous add-ons. With reference to Gregson's (2003) discussion of the role of 'social' within social geography, Jackson (2003) says that "'the social' has not simply been replaced by 'the cultural' but is increasingly refracted through the cultural" (p. 39). Important to remember, though, is that while discourse gives meaning to the material, the result is still only the idea of space. The production of space requires that the idea be operationalized, such that the meanings become enacted and, to put it colloquially, the space lives up to its name. If 'the social' is refracted through 'the cultural,' as Jackson (2003) suggests, recognizing and understanding a social geography requires questioning not only what cultural representations are present. Critical examination is needed of who is represented, how they are represented, who was and is in the position to make the certain meanings dominant, and who was and is excluded by the meanings stemming from the cultural representations. Within the production of social geographies, there are elements of power to consider (de Leeuw, Kobayashi, & Cameron, 2011).

Highlighting the reciprocal relationship between people and space, Lefebvre (1991) maintains that "the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and action" (p. 26). He adds that "in addition to being a means of production [space] is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (p. 26). As such, Lefebvre contends that if space is produced, to understand that production means necessarily considering history, because the enactment of

power and domination through forms of spatial production stems from a past. Consideration of history is not simply a matter of looking at what a given space was prior to it being produced in present ways for present purposes. Looking at history opens to questions of who was able and permitted to occupy and use a space, and who had the power to produce a space in discursive and dominant ways. Creating and examining social geographies, then, is more appropriately be seen as creating and examining sociohistorical geographies.

Woodward, Dixon, and Jones (2004) suggest that space and social power are made largely invisible through the banality of dominant societal systems and structures. Yet, they contend, “it is untenable to conceive of social relations of class, gender, race, or nation as falling outside of the purview of the spatiality through which they are practiced and reproduced in everyday life” (p. 404). For example, Najib and Teeple Hopkins (2020) argue that Islamophobia is a spatialized process that should be examined through a multi-scalar approach. Islamophobia, they say, “occurs at different scales: globe, nation, urban, neighbourhood, body and emotion” (p. 451). While Najib and Teeple Hopkins focus on Islamophobia, their outline of the different scales and their relation to space speak to the need to consider racisms of any kind within their temporal and spatial contexts, always linked to embodied experiences. Although now nearly two decades past, we still need Gregson’s (2003) call for a return to “questions about the materiality of society and about societal inequalities” (p. 43). Following this declaration and call, the consideration of space requires an engagement with the ‘social’ not merely because the production of space inherently involves people, but because of the different ways that ‘social’ becomes represented and enacted by and through the production. With this sense of production in mind, I examine the ways that social geographies can be understood as racialized social

geographies, which I discuss in more detail as part of my Conceptual Framework in the next chapter.

The names we give to space create emphasis on specific elements of that space, so the term ‘social geography’ highlights a relationship between people (social) and physical/material components (geography). More than just a mashing up of words, however, ‘social geography’ highlights that there is ongoing (re)production of space taking place. A space is marked with cultural representations that become operationalized by making the different meanings from the cultural representations dominant or marginalized. People embody those meanings (or not) (Moss & Dyck, 2003) and, in turn, feel and are read as belonging or not, giving shape to ‘the social’ of the geography. As time passes and people move in and out of a space, meanings can change or be re-asserted, making for a different ‘social’ but still linked to past meanings (Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, sociohistorical geographies are always being (re)created through the fluctuating meanings mediated between the material and people (Wertsch, 2002) with their various levels and forms of historical consciousness.

Conclusion

The construction of sociohistorical geographies, with different meanings mediated and shaped through people’s historical consciousness, can be done through and then (re)create racist exclusions, hence the need to examine the field of antiracism. The review of literature above provided me with an array of theories and perspectives from which I developed my own way of understanding the (re)construction of sociohistorical spaces in racist and antiracist ways. From within this literature review, I drew out specific concepts that intertwine and interact, portraying a framework for understanding how the (re)creation of sociohistorical geographies works and becomes discursive. The (re)creation is certainly a social construction, but more to the point of

how it works, it is an ongoing process. It required my continued consideration for relationships between people, material, the mediation of dominant and marginalized meanings, and the changing effects on differently racialized bodies being read as belonging or not.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for my study is encompassed in the term *(anti)racist sociohistorical geographies*. The core concepts I used to frame this study are interconnected and work in relation to each other. Each concept pertains to the pieces that ongoingly contribute to the (re)creation of racist and antiracist spaces (for visual representation of relational and unfixed interconnections, see Figure 1 at end of this chapter). In the Literature Review chapter, I discussed a range of perspectives that take up academic fields related to my research. I created my conceptual framework by using particular concepts found within the broader fields. The result is that my conceptual framework consists of *anti-essentialist antiracism, cultural representations, collective memory and remembering, racialized social geographies, and somatic dissonance and belonging*.

Anti-essentialist Antiracism

In the Literature Review chapter, I discussed anti-essentialist antiracism as one of several antiracist approaches. Rather than repeat what was already said, I provide a brief explanation of what makes anti-essentialist antiracism the particular antiracist approach that underpins my framework. There is nothing inherent, which is to say there is nothing essential, about any given racialized identity. A racialized identity is socially real, in that it can become a core element of who a person feels themselves to be or how a person is read by others. However, the meanings that bring a real-ness to a racialization are always (re)constructed in relation to the varying contexts in which a person exists (Ibrahim, 2014). Anti-essentialist antiracism is about not only identifying and disrupting racist exclusions and is also about understanding processes of social formations and troubling discourses that (re)assert fixed meanings upon different racializations (Razack, 1998; Stanley, 2014).

In the context of my study, anti-essentialist antiracism acknowledges movement, both in the physical sense of material and bodies shifting in and out of spaces, thereby continuously (re)creating the makeup of seemingly static geographies, and in the sense of the ongoing mediation of unfixed dominant and marginalized meanings (Wertsch, 2002). Indeed, when a person who identifies as any given racialization enters a space, they will likely maintain their racialized identity, but the meanings attached to that racialized identity are in flux. Racism thrives in part through meanings treated as ahistorical, aspatial, timeless, and permanent (Bonnett, 1997; Hall, 1980). The very fact that central to my study are multiple historic racialized communities, positioned within a distinct neighbourhood that is no longer recognized, exemplifies how things change. Yet, even with apologetic acknowledgements of traditional Indigenous lands, or of street names commemorating perpetrators of Black enslavement, the narrative of Toronto's white, male, colonial origins remains foundational. While I discuss this bedrock of colonialism more in the coming chapters, here I will point out that the framing of Indigenous and Black people within the colonial origin narrative positions them only as victims and as outsiders, secondary to the history of the city. In short, people holding these racialized identities may be connected to, but are much more dynamic than, these singular, colonial histories.

With anti-essentialist antiracism, I seek to destabilize and decentralize—not erase—the Eurocentric narrative by troubling how it is maintained and disrupting the essentialized ways that Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour are read through the narrative. I state that I do not erase the Eurocentric narrative because it is important to acknowledge, engage, and challenge the role the narrative has played and continues to play in the (re)creation of sociohistorical geographies (Stanley, 2009). Colonization happened, Black enslavement

happened, attacks against Jewish people happened, Chinese disenfranchisement happened, and so many other systemic and targeted racisms continue to happen. Because these pasts cannot be changed, it is not the colonial narrative I seek to remove entirely, and rather my sights are on challenging the normalized dominance the narrative represents (Razack, 1998).

Anti-essentialist antiracism insists on consideration for the relationality between people, material, and meanings (Donald, 2009), which is to say that context matters. Racist exclusions occur differently in varying times and spaces and are not just about targeted violence against racialized people and groups (Stanley, 2011). These exclusions often come in forms that appear as *normal* and *everyday* parts of life (Essed, 1991). However, the normalization of exclusions occurs from the (re)creation and repetition of dominant (i.e., colonial) meanings, in turn making other meanings and the people they stem from seem as *coming from outside* or *foreign*. Through anti-essentialist antiracism, the aim is to identify and disrupt the continued dominance of meanings that perpetually position Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour as *new* or *outsiders*, and that essentialize them in relation to a colonial bedrock that is maintained. A significant part of that bedrock is made up through the meanings mediated with the materials that mark a space (Wertsch, 2002). The markings of a space contribute to the discourse (Tator, Henry, & Mattis, 1998) and become representations of either the dominant or marginalized cultural meanings of a sociohistorical geography.

Cultural Representations

According to Hall (1997), culture “is not so much a set of *things*—novels and paintings or TV programmes and comics—as a process, a set of *practices* [...] and] culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings—the ‘giving and taking of meaning’—between the members of a society or group” (p. 2). Cultural representations, then, are more than

just the material objects occupying a space, and are the meanings that are mediated (Wertsch, 2002) and (re)created between people and the material through discourse (Hall, 1997). The material markers are not merely talked about and rather are integral to the “repertoire of words, images, and practices by which meanings are circulated and power applied” (Tator, Henry, & Mattis, 1998, p. 27). Many cultural representations are part of the everyday activities and even of the décor in seemingly common and public spaces. They are overlooked for the work that they do in maintaining a colonial-centric status quo. People who are excluded from this status quo can and do enact resistance to their exclusions, sometimes through interjecting their own cultural representations in efforts to disrupt dominance. This interjection can be a form of agency, but their representations remain conditionally present. It is the people in positions of power who are able to (re)fix representations that support particular (white, colonial) dominance as part of the everyday. These meanings then (re)assert the normativity of white, colonial dominance under the guise of timelessness and permanence (Hall, 1980).

One example is the national flag. Billig (1995) contends that the majority of national flags presented throughout societal spaces are “unwaved” and “mindless flags” (p. 40). They are simply part of a banal landscape. They reassert symbols of nationalism as people pass by without taking notice or thinking about them. In connection to but also beyond flags, Billig discusses this sense of the “unwaved” symbols to point to the banality of nationalism and nationalist markers, suggesting that the stuff of national structure and identity exists in everyday and taken-for-granted ways. Within the Canadian context, along with the national flag being presented on government buildings, outside of hotels, in people’s yards, and/or flapping from a car window, symbols and discourse that reassert ‘Canada’ can be found in forms that seem so commonplace: the maple leaf molded in the lid of a Tim Horton’s coffee cup; the phrase “the Prime Minister...”

when “of Canada” is taken as a given; the celebration of Canada Day on July 1st despite only five provinces of the 10 provinces and three territories becoming part of Canada on that date (Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia in 1867, and PEI in 1873); or the comparison “we’re not like Americans” where the ‘we’ is an oversimplified assumption of a homogeneous and unified Canadian population (Stanley, 2006). These examples are just a sample of the ways that ‘we’ becomes created and normalized. The overall contention is that this ‘we’ creates inclusions and exclusions that are normalized, which has negative ramifications particularly for Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour. These cultural markers, even when unacknowledged or unintentional, recreate meanings and reassert the certainty of Canada’s permanence, leaving the authority of Canada largely unquestioned. The markers are cultural representations through which power (i.e., white, colonial dominance) is (re)asserted. Billig’s (1995) notion of “unwaved, unsaluted, and unnoticed” markers becomes applicable to the various symbols and markers that contribute to meanings of nationalism and belonging for some bodies while creating racist exclusions of other bodies, often in banal ways (p. 40).

Statues, monuments, and flags. In a discussion of the ways nation-states occupy imagined terrains that serve as mnemonic devices for social continuity, Osborne (2001) describes monuments as “the memorialized persons, places, and events that have been nominated, evaluated, and accepted in what is, essentially, a state-approved, if not state-directed, exercise” (p. 56). He suggests that “it is the nature of the public reaction to monuments that determines whether or not they serve as passive visual statements contributing to social cohesion, or as active elements in a public discourse of redefinition” (p. 57). Moreover, “plaques, and other mnemonic objects,” he posits, “always perform an action that is governed by conventions, contribute to the formation of social relationships, and often involve the sanction of prevailing

systems of power” (p. 59). When markers go unnoticed (Billig, 1995), the lack of reaction speaks to the normativity of the meanings of the cultural representations and lends credence to the assumed authority of the systems, structures, and people in dominant positions. Billig (1995) suggests that “Perhaps if all the unwaved flags which decorate the familiar environment were to be removed, they would suddenly be noticed” and “there would be close, scandalized scrutiny” (pp. 40–41). The challenge against dominance through cultural representations can occur with the removal of the symbols thought to be the *norm*, but also through contesting the dominance through counter-symbols that challenge the potential for meanings of racist exclusion to be mediated.

Rogers (2014) recalls an experience from a secondary school classroom wherein she and her students hung a flag of the Mi’kmaq First Nation in the room that was otherwise covered with Canadian flags and symbols hung by another teacher. She describes how the other teacher saw the Mi’kmaq flag as an affront to the Canadian flag and proceeded to hang an even larger Canadian flag to reassert dominance. Rogers’ students called out the other teacher’s act as one of racism. The markers of Canada within the classroom work as cultural representations that “tell a male, colonial history, which is reproduced and normalized by the physical presence of artifacts as everyday, banal realities [...] in an attempt to ‘fix’ Canadian history as belonging to racialized white peoples” (Rogers, 2014, p. 42–43). Rogers explains that “Through the use of fixed nationalist symbols (Billig, 1995), us/them binaries are maintained, where those who are us are seen around the classroom, and those who are excluded are racialized as other and do not belong in the physical or conceptual social geography of the space” (Rogers, 2014, p. 43). The presence of the Mi’kmaq flag, as she discusses, became a tear in the metaphorical (but also somewhat literal) wallpaper of nationalist, racist dominance within the classroom (Grant & Stanley, 2014).

The Mi'kmaq flag challenged the discursive culture and brought about a shift, even if temporarily, in the meanings, away from those that enable continuation of the uncritiqued certainty of Canada's authority. That the other teacher felt the need to hang a larger Canadian flag illustrates the ways that dominance can be shaken and must be re-fixed—the wallpaper must be patched (Grant & Stanley, 2014)—if it is to be maintained, which highlights its unstable and uncertain reality. In some cases, when a marker is shown to be so unstable that its meanings of racist exclusion are made uninhabitable (Grant & Stanley, 2014; Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997), the marker is removed.

Through a discussion of the tensions around the 2018 decision by the Victoria, British Columbia, city council to remove a statue of former Prime Minister of Canada John A. Macdonald, Stanley (2019/2020) presents an analysis of the ways that settler-colonial dominance and racist exclusion underpin the discursive cultural meanings in Victoria and across Canada. He posits that “the structuring of settler colonialism is not just from a now distant past; rather, it continues today as it is woven into the material, symbolic, and embodied spaces,” but that, similar to Billig's (1995) comments on noticing the unwaved flags, “for most settlers [the structure of settler colonialism] is largely invisible until such time as monuments get taken away or dominant systems of representation get challenged” (Stanley, 2019/2020, p. 90). As Stanley points out, while for settlers John A. Macdonald is commonly seen as the first Prime Minister of Canada, for many Indigenous peoples, he was “the chief architect of the residential schools who engineered their cultural genocide” (p. 89). For settlers, the latter is not a past they experienced or of which they now feel the ongoing negative effects. The statue acts as part of a repeated pattern (Kumashiro, 2002) that “makes certain [white, settler colonizer] bodies appear to belong, others appear to be interlopers, and still others conditional upon an explanation” (Stanley,

2019/2020, p. 98). The presence of the statue represents a certainty of white, colonial power, and the public resistance to its removal confirms an acceptance of and comfort with the dominant meanings that exclude Indigenous bodies (Osborne, 2001). Statues, monuments, and flags are, however, not the only cultural representations that articulate white, colonial dominance.

Markers that operationalize space. Everyday spaces are covered with markers that operationalize the space, by which I mean that the markers have a function in directing the ways people occupy and use space. These markers include but are not limited to street name signs, traffic signs (e.g., STOP signs, parking signs), transit station signs (i.e., bus, subway, and train stops), names on buildings, architectural styles of buildings, and even the layout of the streets and sidewalks. These all, too, are cultural representations. By presenting a particular discourse as the *norm*, they contribute to the (re)creation of meanings that go unnoticed by those who feel belongingness but that perpetuate colonial power dynamics and racist exclusions. As Stanley (2009) and Smith (2017) show in my discussion of their work below, one need only step back and consider everyday surroundings to recognize many of the markers that are taken for granted and the exclusionary meanings that are (re)created, unquestioned, and made banal.

Taking his readers on an imagined bus ride from University of British Columbia (UBC) campus to Vancouver's Chinatown area, Stanley (2009) draws attention to markers—what he calls artifacts—of colonialism in everyday spaces. He begins with recognizing that even if multiple languages are spoken by people, the signs that operationalize the space are predominantly if not entirely in English (and French in some provinces of Canada). The predominance of English is indicative of European colonization, domination, and exclusion of Indigenous peoples and their languages that were present in the space called Canada for thousands of years prior to European arrival. Along the bus journey, Stanley (2009) unpacks

spatial features. He examines UBC itself being the creation of white, male politicians presiding over Indigenous territory. He points to the many streets, communities, and even mountains named after British military leaders and events. And he discusses how the existence of a Chinatown at all acts as a reminder of Vancouver being established and developed along racialized lines. His description shows the ways that settler-colonizer histories and bodies are represented through everyday signs and structures, while the histories and bodies of Indigenous peoples and people of colour become minimized, if not erased. To conclude his discussion of the markers of colonialism, Stanley (2009) urges not the simple removal of such markers—although he is not discouraging their removal—but the “need to re-mark them, naming them for what they are” (p. 156). Stanley’s hope is that “in the end, this might create space for other actions, for a politics of anti-colonialism” (p. 156). This naming of colonization and racism, as Stanley points out, can be done across the majority of the Americas, not to mention a great number of countries around the world.

In similar fashion to Stanley (2009) but focusing on downtown Toronto rather than Vancouver and taking readers on a subway ride rather than a bus ride, Smith (2017) examines the ways that Toronto—particularly its subway transit system—is mapped with colonial commemorations. Moving from station to station, he unpacks the ways that subway station names (e.g., Bloor-Yonge, Wellesley, College, Dundas, Queen, King) become everyday toponyms that naturalize the presence of colonizer names. He states that “the banality of place-names becomes an effective means to teach and cement the settler project into public and geographic imaginaries” (p. 37). These names map the space in official and possessive ways (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Razack, 2002), such that the space becomes that of a Eurocentric past and therefore a white foundation. Following Smith (2017), “the map ‘lies’ about what it is

covering and it becomes difficult to see what else exists beneath the taken-for-granted spatial understandings that now configure and produce meanings about where ‘we’ are” (p. 38). In all spaces of what is called Canada, there are Indigenous histories, as well as histories of Black bodies and bodies of colour in many places, that were paved over and renamed (Casagrande, 2013), and that now go unmarked. In his conclusion, Smith (2017) comments that “riding through the subway, driving down local roads or walking through parks—each often banal celebrations of colonial dominion over the lands—we are reminded of the powerful articulation of history, geography and settler-coloniality through toponymic practices” (p. 44). While Smith is correct that this articulation is at play and that the settler-colonial dominance is repeated and normalized to the point of going unnoticed by the Anglo-dominant settler-colonizer ‘we,’ the continued settler-colonial work of these toponyms goes beyond the individuals they commemorate. Even if the subway riders do not know the colonizing histories of the individuals and institutions represented, there is still a language of dominance (i.e., English) being used that itself has a history and that creates inclusions and exclusions. The work of cultural representations leads to a collective remembering and memory of the past that shapes and is shaped in relation to historical consciousness.

Collective Memory and Remembering

As defined by Wertsch (2002), *collective memory* “is a process of mediation between human agents and different cultural tools or technologies of memory available in a particular socio-cultural setting” (p. 98). Collective memory does not work the same way as *individual memory*. It is not a matter of some sort of homogeneous memory within a group as if the group represents many identical memories (Wertsch, 2002). For this reason, Wertsch (2002) warns that for understanding collective memory, investigators must be careful not to lean too heavily on

analogies that rely on individual memory, such as the notion of *collective amnesia*. Such a concept insinuates that everyone within a collective (e.g., team, community, society, nation) has come to forget the same selected histories, leaving everyone with the same memories of the past. This mutual forgetting is not the case and Wertsch (2002) suggests that the multiple individual memories within a collective sometimes differ and even conflict. It is the technologies of remembering—what Worcman and Garde-Hansen (2016) call “ecosystems of memory” (p. 24) and what I discussed as cultural representations—that lend to the (re)assertion of a dominant collective memory.

The notion of collective memory being mediated does sound somewhat contradictory. In a sense it is. However, recognizing this is a step in understanding how collective memory actually works. Wertsch (2002) writes of *collective remembering* as a reminder that although ‘memory’ suggests a recall of a past already created, the past is (re)constructed each time it is referenced, and ‘remembering’ is the active process of that (re)construction. As Worcman and Garde-Hansen (2016) state, “to remember is to reconstruct in the present moment a past, not as it once was, but as it is considered now by the rememberer (in light of all that has happened since)” (p. 24). Repeated cultural representations reinforce the remembering of particular pasts and not others, such that there are memories that mirror the cultural representations, thereby being included as the collective, and there are memories that do not *fit* and are marginalized.

The mediation in creating a collective memory, Wertsch says, is a result of debates between memory as an accurate representation and memory as a usable past. He argues for what he calls *functional dualism*, which he describes as a “complex mix of meeting the needs of accurate representation and providing a usable past [...] for the creation of coherent individual and group identities” (p. 31). The inquiries to be made in a given sociohistorical geography are

how accuracy is measured and who makes the decisions for what is accurate and what is usable. Létourneau (2006) says historical collective memory is “a set of references [...] through which the past, the present, and the future are not only decoded and constructed, but also anticipated” (p. 80). And “in no way,” he continues, “must we tell students [or any people] that all representations are equally valuable” (p. 85). These statements suggest that historical collective memory is fluid, which gives cause to ask if the value of representations changes with different context, and to whom the representations are valuable.

Teelucksingh (2006) posits that “celebrated Canadian markers of racial diversity and racial harmony that are spatially managed through systems of domination are in fact commodified versions of multiculturalism” (p.1). She adds, “race continues to be ‘mapped,’ both materially and symbolically, onto Canadian as an important organizing principle in keeping with notions of desirability and undesirability” (Teelucksingh, 2006, p.1). Mackey (1998) examines nation-building and nationalism of dominant people in Canada and suggests that Canada’s “nationalist narratives of tolerance [...] misrepresent the encounter between cultures and the brutal history of conquest and cultural genocide that Canada is founded upon” (p. 15). The technologies such as plaques and monuments, as well as the everyday markers that operationalize sociohistorical space, all participate in the marking and mediation of collective memories that map racialized identities in relation to a nationalist narrative. Here Barker (2021) states that “the degree to which settler people enact colonization as a physical usurpation of place and the attendant mental process of justifying and forgetting this usurpation through a transformative and affective situation in place are significant” (p. 16). He continues, “settler colonization, as a project, relies on individuals and collectives rationally identifying particular opportunities as ripe for exploitation in what is, at least in part, a conscious process” (p. 16).

White dominance over space has been made normative in part through this physical usurpation—the maintenance of discursive spatial markers—enabling racist exploitation and exclusions to become just part of the everyday. The cultural representations that (re)assert exclusionary meanings as *the* collective memory must be investigated and troubled for their perceived permanence. Collective memory is constantly in flux. The spatial markers act as tools of mediation and symbols of supposedly static historical narratives. Meanwhile, people engaging with these technologies are negotiating the meanings presented by the technologies in relation to the meanings they bring from their own positions and experiences—their historical consciousness. One's form of historical consciousness shapes how they read a space and the people in it, understanding who is and is not represented, how they are represented, and why this might be the case. Cultural representations lend to selected collective remembering within a given space, normalizing visions of a space as inherently linked to particular bodies and not others.

Racialized Social Geographies

Frankenberg's (1993a) description of *racial social geography* shows that it “refers to the racial and ethnic mapping of a landscape in physical terms, and enables also a beginning sense of the conceptual mapping of self and other with respect to race” (p. 54). From this description, Frankenberg shows that space is created and labeled along racialized lines, resulting in social geographies such as neighbourhoods and schools being recognized as a ‘Black neighbourhood,’ a ‘diverse school,’ or the ‘Chinatown.’ As part of this spatial creation, people become read with conditions put upon their belonging based on how they are racialized. The spaces, however, are not merely *racial* social geographies, as Frankenberg calls them. They are *racialized*, in that their (re)creation and the conditions upon people's belonging in different spaces is an active and

ongoing social process. White is constructed as the “norm” and takes the dominant position (see also Moreton-Robinson, 2015). However, ‘white’ takes different shapes and has different effects upon both racialized white people and people of colour, depending on the social context.

Racialized social geographies are constructed and labeled in relation to ‘white’ (Baldwin, et al., 2011). For example, even though the label of ‘diverse school’ suggests a student population of multiple racialized identities, it is because white is the “norm” that the diversity is highlighted.

Gershon (2020) incorporates sound in his examination of what he calls *ridiculously white institutions* (RWI), as sound provides a door into the lived interactions within a space. It picks up nuances to the social. He finds that “soundwork underscores the kinds of everyday oppressions that occur when less-reflexive but well-intentioned liberals are a central stumbling block for the liberation of marginalized peoples” (p. 53). To borrow a longer quotation from him,

Increasing the number of faculty and students of color at an RWI is an important and valuable marker for diversity work at a college or university, as are the number of students of color who navigate a P[redominantly] W[hite] I[nstitution]/RWI to graduation. However, a constant need to quantitatively document successes in many ways misses not only the experiences for students of color on campus but also the complex and complicated nature of creating and maintaining pathways for marginalized peoples to successfully negotiate institutions.

In short, an increase in people of colour within an historically white place does not automatically mean that felt exclusions are erased. People of colour must still navigate spaces where power dynamics continue to position white as dominant (see also Ahmed, 2012). Frankenberg (1993) emphasizes ‘geography’ because these social interactions reflect not just the individuals involved but the social *spaces* around them. Racism affects how and with whom people interact. It also

shapes and is shaped by where those interactions occur (Razack, 2002). Although Frankenberg's use of 'racial' rightly asserts that "race" is core to social geographies, the social meanings ascribed to a racialization come out of racism, and racisms are created and recreated in relation to different sociohistorical contexts.

Racism does not create these geographies on its own. People enact and are implicated in them. People have agency in relation to their roles within a given time, place, and space. Exploring the discursiveness of racism, Kobayashi (2004; 2017) engages with notions of the intertwined-ness of "race" and geography. She posits that the physical world is socially constructed and consists of socially constructed human beings. Each act of construction, she argues, comes out of historically produced landscapes, lending to the notion of 'spacialization' as much as racialization (Kobayashi, 2004, p. 241). Elsewhere, de Leeuw, Kobayashi, and Cameron (2011) write that "discourses over difference, no matter how many degrees of separation they may involve between particular bodies and their representations, always occur in material landscapes and always occur through concrete spatialities" (de Leeuw, Kobayashi, & Cameron, 2011, p. 24). In other words, there can be no divorce between space and racialization; the two continuously shape each other. Lefebvre (1991) declares that "Any 'social existence' aspiring or claiming to be 'real,' but failing to produce its own space, would be ... a very peculiar kind of abstraction unable to escape from the ideological or even the 'cultural' realm" (p. 53). This notion supports Kobayashi's sense of spacialization because a racialization is claimed to be real and becomes a social existence, (re)producing and simultaneously being (re)produced by space.

Bonnett and Nayak (2003) highlight the paradox that "geography is based on race but the most racial of terms appear to lack territorial significance, to escape geography" (p. 300). The authors urge readers to confront "the ways racial identities can be essentialized by being

removed from history and geography” (p. 300). Kobayashi (2005) argues that only being reflexive of one’s place within a specific time and space is necessary but insufficient; it is social transformation that can lead to overcoming racism. Positionality, she asserts, is “more than simply the space that one occupies: it implies a recognition that such occupation is active, engaged, and contested” (p. 36). If one recognizes the relationship between the social (re)making of both space and racisms, then “race” is seen as active, engaged, and contested within social geographies. Ignoring that relationship, however, perpetuates essentialisms that determine when, where, and how people can or cannot identify themselves and engage with space around them.

Sundstrom (2010) examines what he calls the “looping effect” of spatial experience and racialization. He suggests that it is not just that a racialization is impressed upon a place; the racialized place is impressed upon people, and the state of the place, such as a so-called Black neighbourhood, comes to represent and shape people’s Blackness. In school settings, James (2012) says “there is a tendency to associate [Black students’] ‘problem’ behaviors with the fact that they reside in stigmatized neighbourhoods in urban areas—areas that receive disproportionately negative media attention that portray them as deprived, derelict spaces to be feared” (p. 480). In another study examining racialized and marginalized students’ participation in their education experiences, James (2007) describes that “[marginalized] students would hang out in the hallways of schools and wear hats (which were against the school rules) in an attempt to challenge their socially constructed ‘bad guy’ image and to force others to think of them in new ways” (p. 24). James’s sometimes use of “marginalized” rather than identifying any particular identities is indicative of the shared experiences of conditional belonging and exclusion felt by students of colour who do not align with the dominant, white culture of the school. In the study, James (2007) shows that teachers made assumptions about marginalized

students being ‘at-risk’ and ‘trouble-makers,’ such that their presence in the school spaces needed to be monitored and controlled. The marginalized students could be present within the social geography of the school, but the school was a white space in that the presence of students of colour came with conditions. James (2007) explains that the marginalized students’ “actions and claims to spaces thus became ways for students to assert themselves and to resist both surveillance and the ways they were being constructed by school authorities” (p. 24). In claiming the restricted spaces of the school, the “students interrogated the discourses that defined them academically, culturally, and socially. In turn, they attempted to make these spaces safe, self-validating, relevant, unifying, and empowering” (p. 24). Occupying the spaces that were supposedly off-limits was not a matter of breaking the rules for the sake of breaking the rules, and rather it was an act that sought to disrupt the construction of students of colour as problematic students. Students of colour claiming the space of the hallways but not causing problems exposes the rules as arbitrary control measures and the image of students of colour as ‘trouble-makers’ as an ascribed identity constructed through racism.

Many people of colour, Sundstrom (2010) says, embrace their racialization as an identity and do not want to remove themselves from their racialized place. Rather, they want to end the “social ills and distributive injustice” that become connotations of their racialization (p. 86). He concludes, “Once place and material conditions are added into accounts of human kinds [racializations], it becomes possible to recognize that categories themselves are changed when the material conditions that surround or are part of a category are changed” (p. 93). However, Sundstrom misses nuanced relationships between place and space. When he refers to space, he seems to use it interchangeably with place. One’s place within a space is affected in many ways, including racialization, and is not the same as the space being occupied. This distinction adds

complexity to Sundstrom's looping effect that can be better analyzed with the inclusion of work by Winchell (2018).

Winchell (2018) carries on Frankenberg's notion of *white as the norm*. However, she suggests whiteness is not homogeneous and changes with each specific context. She follows Kobayashi (2005) by declaring a need for a dialectic of place | space that considers 'place' and 'space' not as separate but as intertwined. The intertwining shows a person's place as influencing of and influenced by the forms of racism within a space. The changing relationship of place | space (Winchell, 2018) in various historical contexts makes for different racisms which alter meanings to (re)create a supposedly single category of "race". Moreton-Robinson's (2015) contention is that 'white' is seen as the norm because, despite Indigenous presence, European colonizers saw the land as *terra nullius*, in need of *modern* use, and now, the state, although demographically diverse, is regulated by institutions relying on the land being of white place and space. The *white possessive* logic (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) persists. It takes different forms in different states, each of which warrants examination, but all of which show the exclusions of Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour as linked to the white dominance over space through the creation and maintenance of the public and private property binary.

Peake and Ray (2001) seek to unpack the ways spaces within Canada are what they call uneven geographies, racialized in ways to maintain Whiteness as dominant and other racialized identities as add-ons, secondary to the national history and therefore to so-called Canadian space. People of colour are read as supposedly "negative disruptions of the Canadian landscape" and "in the national imaginary of the 'real' Canada – Canada as the great white north – lies beyond the nation's largest cities in the countryside and small towns (also overwhelmingly white)" (p. 180). These notions of people of colour as disruptive and the *real* Canada being white links to

Hage's (2000) discussion of white nationalists and white multiculturalists alike assuming positions of dominance. Both act as the gatekeepers of the country by either pushing out people of colour or welcoming them in, as if people of colour are always from somewhere else and white multiculturalists are self-proclaimed ambassadors. James (2017) says that

in national contexts (e.g., Canada) where the multicultural ethos promotes color blindness, cultural democracy, equality of opportunity, and essentialist notions of identity [...there must be] questioning and interrogation of institutions' (e.g., schools') claims of being racially neutral and culturally democratic (or culturally neutral) spaces able to fairly accommodate all cultures. (p. 37)

With strong echoes of Moreton-Robinson's (2015) *white possessive logic*, Razack (2002) discusses how "although the spatial story that is told varies from one time to another, at each stage the story installs Europeans as entitled to the land [that is called Canada], a claim that is codified in law" (p. 3). The systems of power are the staples of the societal structure (e.g., governance, education, economy, etc.) that allow for this white possessive logic and racialized social geographies to continue largely unchecked. The existence of these systems, however, is evidence that spaces are produced and can therefore be deconstructed and reformed.

The racialization and spacialization (Kobayashi, 2004) of a sociohistorical geography stem from and are (re)affirmed by meanings continuously mediated by cultural representations and the collective memory they help shape. People of the same racialized identity living, working, and congregating in the same community is not automatically a consequence of racism. Those people could be friends, work together, or have the same taste in the places to hang out, or they might not know each other at all and existing near each other is mere coincidence. Racism comes into play when a space becomes distinguished in racialized ways and people of particular

racialized identities are *expected* to live there, thereby drawing racial lines of inclusion and exclusion that dictate where different bodies *belong*. While the laws of Canada do not restrict the movement of varying racialized people within the country, for Indigenous bodies and bodies of colour, that movement is often conditional. There may not be official signs or rules telling people of certain racialized identities that they are not allowed in a given space. However, the cultural representations, the resulting collective memory, and the consequent way a space is racialized, all signify to some bodies that the space is theirs while telling others, “You may be permitted here, but it’s not your space”.

Somatic Dissonance

The concept of *somatic dissonance* is not merely the physical exclusion of the body from a space, and it refers more so to the feeling that, for one reason or another, one’s body and embodied identity does not ‘fit’ or ‘belong’ with the somatic norm within a given setting (Puwar, 2004). This means that while a person can be physically present within a space, the space is produced and marked with meanings that the person does not and perhaps cannot embody, framing them as an outsider or, to use Puwar’s (2004) term, as a ‘space invader.’ Shadd (2001) presents a reflection of her experiences being a fifth-generation Canadian who is Black and is asked the question “where are you from?” She shares that when someone asks her this question, most often with the connotation that because she is Black she must have roots outside of Canada, the person asking is “unintentionally denying [her ...] long-standing place in the Canadian mosaic” (p. 15). The question “where are you from?” is not an overt statement of “get out!” but it does create a meaning that Black bodies are *different* than what is expected in Canadian spaces. One does not only read other bodies and they also reads the self through this feeling of somatic dissonance.

Puwar (2004) examines how different spaces and positions “have historically been ‘reserved’ for specific [white male] kinds of bodies” (p. 144). Spaces are reserved and teach these specific types of bodies that they belong by being constructed as what Puwar (2004) calls a “palace of mirrors” (p. 17). Grant and Rogers (2018) describe Puwar’s “palace of mirrors” imagery as spaces “where normalized somatic identities in terms like ‘Canadian’ are reflected back in positive ways, reinforcing those identities as part of the collective, historically, and in the present, and others as ‘space invaders’ into the national norm” (p. 7). Whether at the large scale of the national level or on the smaller scale such as inside the corner pub, cultural representations not only commemorate and prioritize particular histories and bodies; they can enable an unacknowledged but real feeling of comfort and belonging for some people—they have a sense of embodying the space—while other people are unable to find their reflections within the surrounding representations and discourse. In colonized spaces, the comfort and belonging are afforded to white (usually male) bodies, as if their presence is natural. Bodies of colour are exoticized, not necessarily being forcibly ousted from a space but nonetheless disoriented. Puwar (2004) suggests there is a need to understand how the “disorientation and consequent reorientation” (p. 18) of the excluded bodies occurs. To reiterate, there does not need to be a sign or another person stating outright “Whites only” for bodies that do not align with the *somatic norm* to feel a sense of exclusion. Disorientation, as Puwar (2021) describes, “is incredibly telling of the historical mismatch between bodies and spaces” (p. 255). She adds that “female and racialized bodies still have to work against the grain of both how their bodies and the spaces they move in are defined” (p. 255). Somatic dissonance offers an added layer of understanding of ‘exclusion,’ which lends to problematizing efforts of ‘inclusion.’

Ahmed (2012) examines the acts and policies of ‘inclusion’ and the perpetuation of racism within institutional settings. While so-called public spaces are not institutions in the same sense as a department in the government, a corporation, or a university—just as a few examples—the spaces are subject to the policies, laws, and regulations set in place by governing bodies. They are treated in similar fashion to the more distinct institutions. As such, Ahmed’s critical discussion of the performativity of most ‘inclusion’ efforts applies to public spaces as well and has ramifications for the somatic dissonance or belonging of different types of bodies. For Ahmed (2012), to institutionalize the inclusion of bodies of colour is to make it routine and to name the previously prominent Whiteness. However, this inclusion is often a matter of perception, optics, lipservice, and interest convergence or conditional hospitality. It changes the image of the institution (i.e., government-regulated public space) away from Whiteness while maintaining Whiteness as the foundation.

Efforts to include historically excluded bodies without reforming systems of colonialism and/or Whiteness equate to an *add’n’stir* approach, which, as Ahmed (2004; 2012) contends, is performative rather than making real antiracist change. Looking to Lentin (2008), for those in positions of power and who benefit from the everyday systems and structures couched in racism, it is “easier to promote diversity than to oppose racism, especially if that racism is the racism of the state itself” (p. 326). This promotion of diversity aligns with what Sato and Este (2018) describe as *liberal multiculturalism*, which “does acknowledge and celebrate differences; yet, it tends to categorize ethnic and racial minorities into fixed identities, which in effect actually reproduces stereotypes by essentializing difference” (p. 331). Even with the best of intentions, ‘inclusion’ can be harmful. It creates the aesthetics of unity—the appearance of what Rose-Redwood and Rose-Redwood (2017) call ‘bodies-in-alliance’—but can easily silence the voices

that come from racialized identity and experience. As Rose-Redwood and Rose-Redwood (2017) state, “the assembly of bodies [...] need not imply that polyvocality is overcome and unity reigns supreme” (p. 649). In reference to the ongoing legacies of slavery almost 200 years after the *Slavery Abolition Act* put into action in Canada in 1834, Walcott (2021) states that “...emancipation [of enslaved Black bodies] is a legal process and term” that he argues “marks continued unfreedom, *not* the freedom it supposedly ushered in” (p. 1, emphasis in original). He continues,

one must note that at every moment Black peoples have sought, for themselves, to assert what freedom might mean and look like, those desires and acts toward freedom have been violently interdicted. It is this ongoing interdiction of a potential Black freedom that I have termed the long emancipation. (p. 1)

In all these perspectives about the inclusion of different bodies, the overarching message that is important to the context of my study is that the spaces of what is called Canada are produced in ways that reflect and often benefit white(-looking) bodies. Although there are official forms of inclusion that *welcome* bodies of colour (Hage, 2000), there are conditions put upon their presence and upon their claiming space. The space is never reflective of being *their* space in the way it is for white bodies.

Conclusion

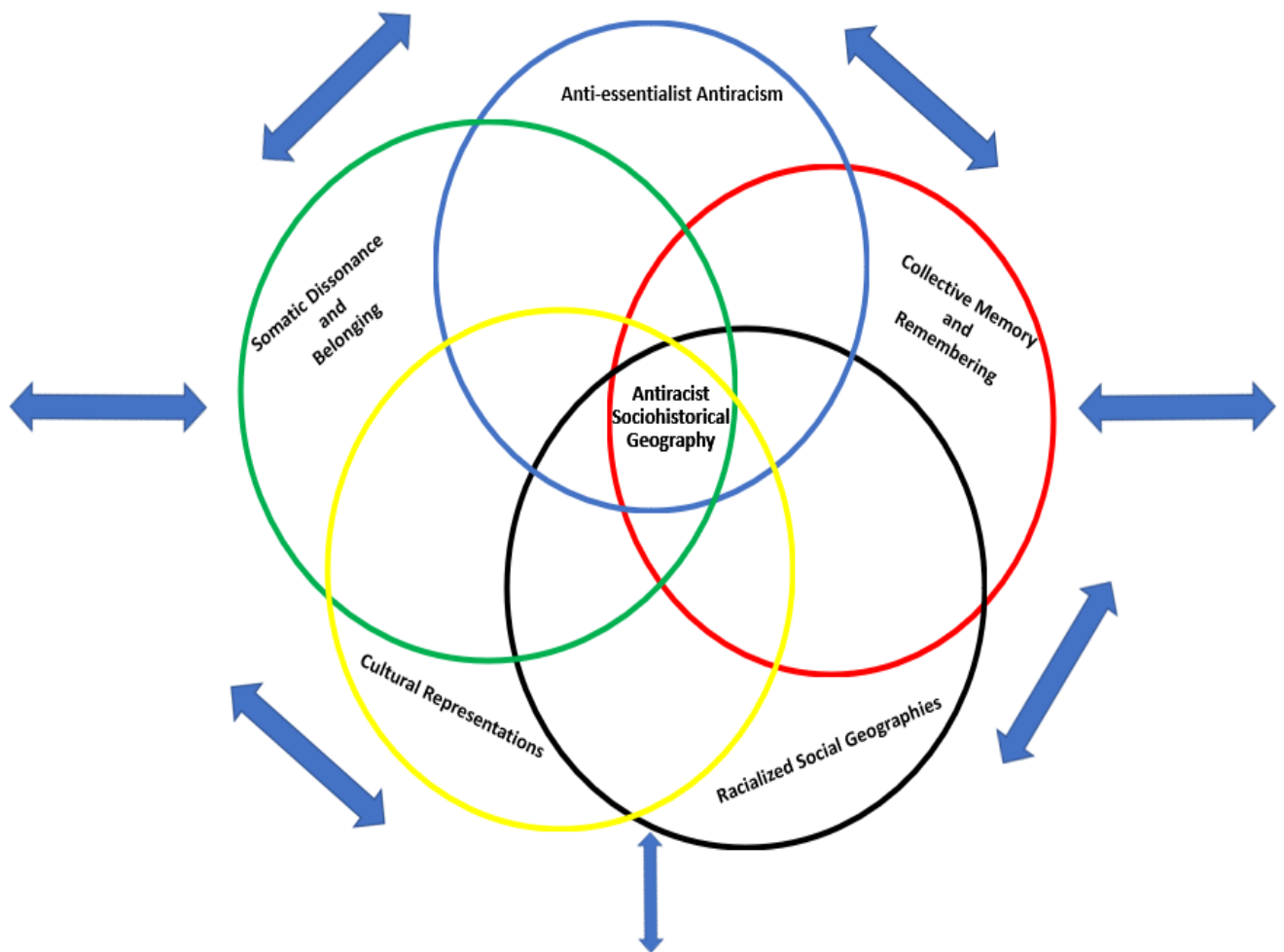
Returning to the overarching idea of (anti)racist sociohistorical geographies, to understand the (re)creation of these spaces, what they consist of, and how they work, requires consideration of the concepts discussed above as active and ongoing in relation to each other (see also Figure 1 below). The spaces of downtown Toronto that I examined are marked, given meaning, (re)shaped, and utilized in racialized terms that are (re)asserted by dominant cultural

representations. These representations mirror and confirm the perceived certainty of a collective memory that solidifies white, English, and usually male bodies being the timeless norm. The ways these concepts articulate (with) each other in real-world contexts is not linear. The mediation of meanings between people, material, and the other bodies within a space, occurs again and again. Even when a space appears static, its makeup constantly changes as a result of bodily movement.

There is nothing essential about sociohistorical geographies. They are (re)created. Nor is there anything essential about the bodies that occupy those spaces. The labels and meanings attributed to different bodies are also socially (re)constructed. Racialized identities and their various positions within social and societal settings stem from spatial and temporal contexts. If there is always a link between space and racialization (de Leeuw, Kobayashi, & Cameron, 2011; Kobayashi, 2004, 2017)—which is to say relationships between space, racism, and antiracism—the work of disrupting, destabilizing, and dismantling racist exclusions requires understanding how sociohistorical geographies are continuously (re)created and operated. Everything and everyone is historical. When some meanings are made banal and seen as the norm—dominant—while other meanings are marginalized and silenced, the so-called norm is a result of a particular collective memory being promoted through cultural representations. Certain bodies can claim this memory. They see themselves and are read by others as unconditionally belonging in the sociohistorical space around them; other bodies (i.e., Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour) are not afforded similar readings in the same sociohistorical space. The various elements in the (re)creation of sociohistorical geographies, warranting my conceptual framework, can be seen as constantly ongoing (re)construction and communication of meanings as dominant or marginalized. This suggests that the (re)creation of sociohistorical geographies is

done through forms of discourse, and the effects of such discourse are the inclusion or exclusion of variously racialized bodies. My understanding of how the effects of discourse (re)create racist or antiracist sociohistorical geographies informs my selection of methodologies and therefore methods.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Diagram



CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY & METHODS

Methodology

Methodology is the approach that underpins how I design the study, which methods I choose, and how and why I implement them. In Howell's (2012) words, "methodology will impact on methods and have considerable influence on what knowledge is considered to be and the consequent outcomes of the investigation" (p. 1). For this study, I use an *anti-essentialist antiracist historical methodology, critical discourse analysis, and critical ethnography*. These combined methodologies are most appropriate for this study because I am analyzing various forms and components of discourse for their racist effects and antiracist potential, all of which can and should be traced through history to understand how some discourse is made dominant and how some is marginalized and silenced.

Anti-essentialist Antiracist Historical Methodology. Razack's (1998) contention that anti-essentialism is anti-subordination, which I addressed in my literature review, serves as a general starting point in solidifying my methodological approach. It is not only that the meanings we use are (re)constructed and therefore unfixed, but also that they have effects that can perpetuate and/or disrupt power dynamics of dominance and exclusions (Stanley, 2014). Dominance continues when meanings that support exclusions are (re)created to appear permanent and timeless. Racism is a form of dominance to which anti-essentialism can be applied; thus, anti-essentialism and antiracism go hand in hand for my methodology. Adding to the dynamics, though, is the point that racisms are historical in that they can be traced through time and space to understand how they become (re)asserted.

The Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) (1982) argues that it is "not possible to see racism as a unitary fixed principle which remains the same in different historical

conjunctures” (p. 8). To be sure, though, while the CCCS argument is for a conception of racism that is historical, the authors are not suggesting that racists are simply relics stuck in the past. Such a perspective would be reductionist and oversimplified, positioning racism as merely an attitude maintained out of ignorance. Racism is linked to the past, but it is not just *the past continued*. Present society and the meanings that uphold it are products of the past both because they are built out of something that came before them and because of the ways people interpret and (re)produce dominant and marginalized histories (Stanley, 2000).

Antiracism must include efforts to identify and disrupt readings of the past that support the use of systems and structures built and developed on visions of European/white foundations. Stanley (2012) states that “anti-racism as historical methodology promises a richer reading of sources, a better understanding of context, and leads to better and more interesting questions and lines of inquiry” (p. 326). He adds that “anti-racism offers a better picture of reality, and is more alive to the complex social dynamics that continually reproduce and circulate certain people’s meaning while excluding the meanings of most of the people in the world” (p. 326). The addition of ‘historical’ to my methodology does not equate to me conducting a strictly historical investigation of racism. Rather, ‘historical’ is included because racist meanings and the contexts in which they occur can and should be historicized to add depth to understanding how they work. Historicizing these contexts becomes part of unpacking how they and the racisms they enable are constructed and maintained through discourse made discursive. As such, to complement my anti-essentialist antiracist historical methodology, I also employ critical discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis. The concept of discourse includes but consists of more than just the words people use to communicate. According to Fairclough (1992), “discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and

constructing the world in meaning” (p. 64; also see Hall, 1997). More specifically, and an understanding at the core of this thesis, Tator, Henry, and Mattis (1998) state that “discourse involves ‘discursive formation,’ which is the totality of ordered relations and correlations of subject to each other and to objects; of economic production and reproduction; of cultural symbols and signification; of laws and moral rules; and of social, political, economic, and/or legal inclusion or exclusion” (p. 26). They add that dimensions of discourse include “A repertoire of words, images, and practices by which meanings are circulated and power applied” (p. 27). This framing suggests that dominant discourse is created, enacted, and made discursive through repeated social and systemic language and cultural representations. Discourse is made discursive, in turn making the dominance or marginalization of meanings discursive.

Fairclough (1992) states that “the discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people’s heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures” (p. 66). Social practice is not only structured; it is contained and controlled. Foucault (1977) asserts that discursive formations form a “system that operates in the process of training and correction” (p. 180). He complements this stance by arguing elsewhere that the knowledge discourse creates becomes a discursive formation within a context, but that there are *rules of formation* (Foucault, 2004, p. 94). These rules are said to be the conditions of existence for knowledge within a structured field. Power is enacted in these rules within perceived boundaries, distinguishing not only which discourse and therefore knowledge is *permitted* to exist in circumstances, but also whose discourse and knowledge. Foucault (2004) says, “discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe” (p. 96, emphasis in original).

More than who creates, aligns, and even benefits from the various forms of discourse made discursive and dominant, what also demands attention, inquiry, and analysis, is how particular bodies that did not create, do not align, and do not benefit, are excluded by a discourse.

van Dijk (1993) describes that critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on “*the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance*” by examining the “relations between discourse, power, dominance, social inequality and the position of the discourse analyst in such social relationships” (p. 249, emphasis in original). He states that “critical discourse analysts want to know what structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in these modes of reproduction” (p. 250). The crucial element to note from van Dijk’s (1993) description is the potential for discourse to challenge dominance. Disrupting the dominance of discourse requires implementing and using a different discourse that engages and counters dominance, and then becomes discursive itself. Discourse is not neutral, and it is made active by those with the power to do so. Fairclough (1992) contends that

Critical approaches [to discourse] differ from non-critical approaches in not just describing discursive practices, but also showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. (p. 12)

The design of the street structure; the divisions of private and public properties; the names and language on signs; the images in advertisements: these are all parts of discourse, made present by human decisions, and having consequences for who is read as belonging or not. As Wodak (2001) says, “for CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful

people make of it” (p. 10). Language, in this case, is more than the words people speak, and it is broadly about the communication of meanings that are mediated and operationalized.

Meanings, however, are not mediated and operationalized on only a one-to-one basis in a pluralistic fashion. As Wodak (2001) reminds, “an important perspective in CDA is that it is very rare for a text to be the work of any one person. In texts discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power which are themselves in part encoded in and determined by discourse and by genre” (p. 11). From this, she concludes that

texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance. A defining feature of CDA is its concern with power as a central condition in social life, and its efforts to develop a theory of language which incorporates this as a major premise. Not only the notion of struggles for power and control, but also the intertextuality and recontextualization of competing discourses are closely attended to. (p. 11)

If critical discourse analysis is about unpacking the centrality of power in changing social contexts, and racist meanings are (re)created in part through mediations with cultural representations that (re)assert racialized exclusions as banal, CDA offers lines of inquiry about how cultural representations work as discourse and who is positioned with power in relation to said discourse. This analysis of discourse, combined with using an antiracist lens to historicize the components of the discourse, lends to understandings of how sociohistorical geographies—the spaces shaped by discourse—maintain and/or disrupt meanings of racist exclusion.

When the discursive discourse in a spatial and temporal context is one of racism, antiracisms would work to knock racism from its stable position and to make antiracism discursive, permeating sociohistorical geographies. A discursive antiracism would mean that the

spaces people occupy and the discourses they engage with are understood as historical and historicized products. The spaces and discourses would be seen as ongoing projects that are continuously (re)marked and (re)framed so that no one racialized group is seen as naturally belonging while other racialized groups are seen as *outsiders*. As antiracism is something that must be ongoing, never final, then the notion of discursiveness shifts from the rules of formation (Foucault, 2004) being set and maintained to the rules of formation being (re)asserted. In relation to antiracism, the need to (re)assert meanings suggests that antiracism must be the core concept underpinning the various facets of discourse (Tator, Henry, & Mattis, 1998), and these facets must always be adapting with changing contexts (i.e., ongoing systemic change). There are a variety of methods I employed throughout this study to identify, historicize, and critically analyze the repertoire of discourse linked to the section of downtown Toronto on which I focused.

Critical Ethnography. Ethnography is “the practice of writing about peoples [...] a way of making sense of other peoples’ modes of thought” (Barnard, 2000, p. 4). Hage (2020) believes that when antiracism is the focus of ethnographic writing, it is important “to write ‘with’ rather than just ‘about’ one’s informants” (p. 150). He suggests that “a piece of antiracist writing can be in itself a form of life that participates in enhancing the being of the racialized, aiming to speak to them in the sense of speaking into them and participating in their being” (p. 150). Indeed, my antiracist aims are not to speak *for* anyone but to use my work in part as a platform where racist exclusions can be disrupted, and silenced voices can be recognized and heard. Throughout my ethnographic practices, I must consider my own positionality to recognize how my own ways of knowing influence my understanding of research participants’ ways of knowing.

As Johnson (2017) reminds me, ethnographers should not be homogenized because they “draw on different theoretical traditions and write from different class positions and ethnic identifications” (p. 403). For example, Henson (2020) grapples with experiences of being a critical Black ethnographer, stating that “like the tension that Blackness places on the distinction between subject and object, it places a similar tension between being Black and becoming an ethnographer” (p. 324). He suggests that “we must conceive how being Black and an ethnographer creates particular tensions and the alternative performances that are necessary as a critical Black ethnographer” (p. 324). I am not Black, so I do not experience the same tensions that Henson describes. This alone shows how ethnography is not *just* ethnography from one researcher to the next. However, Henson’s points are linked to my practices as they do trigger in me a more general consideration for where I position myself and where others position me in relation to ethnography’s traditional “distinction between subject and object” (Henson, 2020, p. 324). Indeed, critical ethnography is meant to be a departure from such traditional distinctions, in part to cut off ethnography’s colonial and racist roots (Henson, 2020). This does not mean that my lived experiences as a white-passing, English-speaking man do not seep into my approaches, nor that the way other people read and ascribe identities for me does not affect how they do and do not connect with me. My use of critical ethnography insisted on me being “highly reflexive whilst recognizing both the value-laden-ness of research and that only a partial view [could] ever be offered” (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 200). The notion of the research being value-laden is not simply because it will be of use to future scholarship (although that is a goal). Rather, the way the research is done can portray a variety of meanings that are connected to particular people, material, and discourse, with different meanings holding different values depending on context.

A branch of critical ethnography that I utilized specifically because of its link to discourse is *post-structural ethnography*. This branch of ethnography contributes to observing the ways histories can be told to de-essentialize the grand (white) narrative. It becomes an attempt to write/right history (Munro Hendry, 2011, p. 13). However, as Munro Hendry (2011) points out, the dilemma is in telling counter-hegemonic histories while using the essentialized labels that poststructuralism seeks to deconstruct. With allusions to Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013), I write elsewhere that “post-structural ethnography attempts to present an unfamiliar story, perhaps in an unfamiliar way, that presents a multivocal [...] perspective of a given culture with respectful and ethical treatment of research participants [and historical spaces]” (Currie, 2016, p. 18). Multivocality within a given culture is the idea that there are always a variety of meanings being mediated by people in their relation to the spatial and temporal context, as well as in relation to other people within the same context. With the multiple voices, contexts, and relationships all working and changing at once, I contemplated the idea of “the *conjunctive*” often used by Black Feminist ethnographers. Particularly used by Black Feminist ethnographers considering African diaspora, this idea refers “to intersections or co-constitution of these cultural formations” (Johnson, 2017, p. 403). The conjunctive, as Johnson (2017) describes, looks to the activeness of shaping and experiencing the intersections of identities, voices, and contexts, as opposed to them being a mere *conjuncture*, where these intersections simply exist and can be observed.

Linking back to Henson’s (2020) discussion of the critical Black ethnographer, I as the ethnographer carry my own intersections, but they are shaped and used in complex ways in relation to other people and spaces. The distinction between subject and object has never been clear-cut, and we need not aim to make it so. Rather, I embrace and consider the constant

fluctuation, because it reflects life and, as Henson (2020) concludes, “It is an unacceptable idea to continue to reproduce an ethnographic identity that continues to maintain a particular ideal of who constitutes the human” (p. 333). For the purposes of my own study here, the complexities of relations within and between changing contexts—the realities of human life—required the combination of methodologies I describe above, and these methodologies informed my methods.

Methods

To investigate how the area in and around what was The Ward is structured and marked as a racist sociohistorical geography, how the Ontario Black History Society’s walking tour presents histories of Black people and communities within that colonial landscape, and how an antiracist sociohistorical geography might be (re)created, I used a qualitative multi-methods approach. McKendrick (1999) states that “multi-method research is an attempt to combine research methods to address a particular research problem” (p. 41). He elaborates that “multi-method research may be deployed in preference to modification (which in any case may not be feasible) or by deploying alternatives (through which any insights that could be gleaned from the prior resources and approaches would be lost)” (p. 41–42). Multi-methods can be but is not always synonymous with mixed-methods—the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. I specifically use qualitative multi-methods because using qualitative rather than quantitative inquiry means

the researcher relies on text data rather than numerical data, analyzes those data in their textual form rather than converting them to numbers for analysis, aims to understand the meaning of human action [...], and asks open questions about phenomena as they occur in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses. (Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1316)

In designing this study, I focused on racism, antiracism, and space, all as historical and active, never static, so my methods of data collection and analysis needed to reflect this. Recognizing the dynamics and ongoing fluctuation of the concepts and sites I was investigating led me to understand that to examine in any depth the (re)creation of racist and antiracist sociohistorical geographies, it would be insufficient to do *just* historical investigation, *just* site observation, or *just* one-on-one interviews. Additionally, I was investigating the sites and data of the study with a lens of social education in a broad sense. I was examining the technologies and practices of creating meanings that become carried and used by people as knowledge about themselves, other people, and the temporal and spatial contexts they occupy. The findings from each method informed the findings from other methods and gave a more rich and nuanced portrayal of the spatial (re)production in focus. With anti-essentialist antiracist historical methodology (CCCS, 1982; Razack, 1998; Stanley, 2012) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2001) as my methodological foundation, to gather data, I used critical ethnographic practices (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013) of site inventory and analysis and semi-structured one-on-one interviews, as well as historical investigation.

I provide further detail and discussion below, but as an overview, I began data collection by participating in the OBHS walking tour and then, afterward, recording my reactions to and reflections on the tour. Several weeks after the tour, I returned to the Toronto spaces both in which the tour took place and that the tour guides referenced but did not include on the tour route. With my return, I followed the grid pattern of the streets and walked back and forth, east to west and west to east, shifting northward street by street, all the while documenting my journey with photographs and written notes. During this same visit to Toronto, I also conducted

two semi-structured one-on-one interviews: one with OBHS President Natasha Henry and one with OBHS First Vice-President Channon Oyeniran. Throughout the time of employing all these practices, I continuously conducted historical investigations into the spaces, historical places, and historical people I encountered during the walking tour, my own walking journey, and the interviews.

Site observations. The site of this study is situated in downtown Toronto, Ontario, Canada. When I began the observation and data collection process, as is often the case when using ethnographic practices, the site being examined was generally but not specifically defined. The initial lack of site distinction was because I did not have prior knowledge of exactly where the Ontario Black History Society's (OBHS) walking tour would take me within the downtown space. Only once I participated in the tour did I have a starting sense of the spaces of downtown Toronto that I would examine. While my analysis of a sociohistorical geography within Toronto's core went beyond just the route of the OBHS walking tour, the tour provided a starting point from which I then broadened the site and imposed strategic boundaries for the physical spaces I engaged. The route of the walking tour was the site where antiracist starting points were enacted, but racism was and is not isolated to just those starting points, so it was necessary to take in some of the wider city context. Thus, the site of this study grew over time, until I used historical city neighbourhood boundaries to determine where my physical study site ended.

The OBHS walking tour consisted of six stops, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. The first stop was inside Toronto City Hall. The second stop was just outside of Osgoode Hall, home to the Law Society of Ontario (formerly Law Society of Upper Canada). The third stop was at St. Lawrence Hall. The fourth stop was at a plaque commemorating Mary Ann Shadd

Cary. The fifth stop was the Anglican St. James Cathedral. The sixth and final stop on the OBHS walking tour was at a commemorative plaque that presents the story of Albert Jackson.

In simple terms, my research methods while on the walking tour were walking, looking, and listening. A recent special issue of the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* asked authors to consider how walking attunes their connections to different forms of space. Lyle and Snowber (2021) state, “place informs me as *walking the path as the path walks me*” (p. 9; emphasis in original). They recognize “somatic practices of walking [...] that can uncover new ways of perceiving and understanding” (p. 15) and suggest that to “walk is to access ancient knowledge and [...] make] poignant connections between walking and ways of being and thinking” (p. 15). In another contribution to the issue, Donald (2021) writes with hope about upholding “walking as a life practice that has the potential to enable relational renewal” (p. 55). He argues that “A pressing curricular and pedagogical challenge faced by educators in Canada today is how to facilitate the emergence of a new story that can repair inherited colonial divides and give good guidance on how to proceed differently” (p. 57). This new story is what I sought by walking back and forth through the selected streets of Toronto. I was attempting to engage with sociohistorical geographies through lenses that helped me to see continued racist exclusions, the potential for antiracist changes, and my place within it all. Donald (2021) states that

inspiration comes from the ancient *nêhiyaw* (Cree) wisdom concept of *wâhkôhtowin*, which refers to enmeshment within kinship relations that connect all forms of life. When human beings undertake walking as a life practice, the *wâhkôhtowin* imagination can be activated, wherein the networks of human and more than human relations that enmesh us become vivified and apparent. From this confluence of walking and the *wâhkôhtowin*

imagination emerges the possibility of a new story that can give good guidance on how to live life in accordance with kinship relationality. (p. 55)

To be sure, I do not conduct arts-based research like Lyle and Snowber, and I am not Cree like Donald, nor did I specifically seek out Cree teachings to guide my practices for this study. I borrow the sentiments offered through Lyle and Snowber's reflections, and through Donald's description, primarily because they help me to contemplate and articulate the benefits I felt for my research by walking through the Toronto streets. I did not rush along the sidewalks, and I methodically and carefully took in what markers I saw as *different* and, in turn, made note of what therefore struck me as *normal*.

Although a challenge because I already knew I was using the tour experience as part of my research, I first walked, looked, and listened—no writing of notes—in an attempt to recognize and contemplate my instinctive responses to the historical narratives presented to me. The spaces in which we walked were familiar to me as someone who formerly lived and worked in downtown Toronto, but the shared stories and their connections to those particular streets were new to me. I paid close attention to the moments when I felt surprised, as these moments were indicative of me seeing a seemingly familiar space in different, new, and unfamiliar ways. For example, and as I discuss in throughout coming chapters, one surprise was seeing Toronto City Hall not as just a building that houses departments and employees of municipal government but as a symbol of Whiteness that paved over and silenced histories of various racialized communities. These surprises generally stemmed from learning about historic people and communities that once occupied the same physical space that I did on the tour, but that were not reflected in the dominant fabric of the city's makeup. The surprises changed the way I walked

along those streets and, thus, gave me new lenses for examining the discourse of the city in antiracist ways.

As I mentioned above, after the walking tour, I created a written record of my experience, inclusive of the stops along the tour route, the narratives presented at each stop, and my personal reflections about what I noticed, learned, thought, and felt upon visiting each stop. My reflections developed from my reaction immediately after the tour was finished: “There was so much I didn’t know was there. It completely changed the way I see this city.” With this reaction as a basis, I thought back through the tour and started my reflections by asking myself questions: What exactly looks different to me? How is it different? What does it mean that I see it differently? Does my changed purview matter? If so, why? How do I connect (or not) to these spaces now that I see them in these different ways? My overarching takeaway from these reflections was that, as a visitor to the city throughout my youth and as a resident of the city for approximately three years between 2010 and 2013, I took for granted the structure of the city and my ability as a white-passing person to occupy these spaces without social conditions put upon my option to belong. Entire historic communities of varying racialized identities used to exist in the same spaces, but they were and are qualified as being distinct or *different* within the wider, supposedly white city. I then took my reflections from the tour and continued walking to examine what more I could see differently through my new lenses.

The tour, as I showed above and discuss further in Chapter 5, started inside Toronto City Hall at a display featuring Cecilia Reynolds in the context of the neighbourhood The Ward. This neighbourhood was historically labelled as a slum that housed new immigrants to the city. The Ward included at different times a Black community, a Jewish community, and a Chinese community (Lorinc, McClelland, Scheinberg, & Taylor, 2015), all of which were racialized in

ways that distinguished the community residents as *different* from the *real* (white) Torontonians. The political boundaries of The Ward were College Street to Queen Street (north to south) and Yonge Street to University Avenue (east to west). In starting the walking tour with an introduction to The Ward, even though most stops were set just southeast of the boundaries of the historic neighbourhood, I read the subsequent histories of Black people and the neighbourhood as linked. As such, when deciding on how to define my study site and therefore where to engage and analyze, I declared my site to be the combined physical spaces of the OBHS walking tour route and the streets that made up The Ward.

When I returned to Toronto several weeks after the tour to conduct observations beyond the tour route, I started at the southeast corner of the tour route (the intersection of King Street East and Jarvis Street). I walked the streets from east to west and west to east, moving northward to the next street on the grid once I covered the ground of each street. I continued this walk until I reached the northwest corner of The Ward (the intersection of College Street and University Avenue). In doing this walk, I passed through the spaces in and around The Ward, and I inventoried how these spaces are structured and marked. I chose to walk these streets not only for the ease of stopping and starting at my desired pace, but also because walking forces an interaction with sociohistorical geographies and allows me to better consider my place within these spaces.

These street spaces were once those of communities of racialized identities that I do not and cannot claim. Yet, as I walked, I paid attention to the fact that I did not feel like an interloper of some kind (Puwar, 2004). The cultural representations around me told me that my white-passing, English-speaking, male body belonged. The key questions I considered were not just what markers I read as *different* and *normal*, but also why I read them in these ways and how this

reading translated to the ways varying racialized people become framed as timeless and belonging or as new and outsiders. Unpacking these questions with the depth they required began but could not be achieved all while walking.

To capture the elements of the space that I noticed in the moment and those that I would only notice later, I took photographs at approximately every major intersection, as well as any time I saw a spatial marker that I felt would be crucial to have documented (e.g., a street section with multiple restaurants featuring Asian cuisines and language, set against the English street names and construction signs). Additionally, when my walking took me back to the stops of the OBHS tour, I photographed each stop's featured artifact (e.g., a plaque, a building, a display) and then photographed the space around the artifact, endeavoring to depict the context in which each artifact was set. I took several photographs each time I stopped and captured several angles in an attempt to produce a near-panoramic view. To supplement these photographs, I also made use of virtual access to the space by way of Google Street View. For ethical reasons around anonymity, in neither my use of photographs nor of Google Street View do I make visible any person's face or distinguishing features, unless the visual I use is of an image portraying people for advertising purposes (i.e., when I took photographs of advertising banners hanging in a public space).

Although Google Street View's form of 360-degree photography does allow a viewer to move the computer screen through the streets and see the surroundings almost as if walking in person, the photographs I took and the visuals I procured from online did not provide the same sense of me being in the space. The visuals were helpful for recalling the cultural representations I encountered, but less so in triggering somatic responses that told me when, where, and how I was included or not. The main purpose of the photographs and the Google Street View images was to

aid me in creating an inventory of how the sociohistorical geographies in and around The Ward were marked with cultural representations.

The inventory contributed to conducting a thorough critical discourse analysis, as cultural representations are part of the repertoire making some discourse discursively dominant and others marginalized (Tator, Henry, & Mattis, 1998). Creating the inventory was not for quantitative purposes (i.e., I did not count the exact number of representations or compare percentages of space occupied by particular types of representations). Rather, I used the inventory to document what material was present, because it is with that material that meanings might be mediated (Hall, 1997; Wertsch, 2002; Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016). During both my in-person investigation of the spaces and my analysis of the visuals, I looked at how the city streets were designed and structured (e.g., a grid pattern that creates blocks of property deemed public or private). I peered down those streets lined with towering buildings, noting how the buildings created a corridor effect and flanked the supposedly public sidewalk with symbols of private ownership. As part of examining the dominant representations, I created a table of the street names within The Ward, including whether each street was a major or minor street/thoroughfare, as evidence of who and what was deemed worthy of officially marking the space.

I assessed which markers were presented as official and/or permanent, which ones were repeated, and which were one-of-a-kind and/or temporary. I analyzed these markers not just for what they (re)present as individual pieces of material, but also, and perhaps more importantly, for how they articulate (with) each other (Hall, 1980). Their articulation is what moves the spatial effects from that of several individual markers that each represent a historic and racialized identity to markers that work together to spacialize an entire sociohistorical geography in

dominant, racialized, and racist ways (Kobayashi, 2004). My investigation and analysis of the OBHS walking tour and of the spaces in and around what was The Ward allowed me to see what cultural representations were featured and what meanings they conveyed. The meanings I encountered, though, were mediated through my own lenses. To gain a richer understanding of how my reading of the space compared to the intended effects of the OBHS tour, I conducted semi-structured one-on-one interviews with two OBHS representatives.

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Stake (2010) believes that “empathy and advocacy are and should be part of the lifestyle of each [qualitative] researcher” (p. 14). However, Merriam (2009) also advises qualitative researchers that “The key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s” (p. 14). I positioned myself as a participant. I took part in the OBHS walking tour, so despite me being the researcher, my understanding of the phenomenon of interest does matter. I did not design the walking tour and my perspective is not the only one that creates meaning for the tour. I needed to do more than analyze the walking tour for whether or not its educational practices were antiracist. I needed to understand what the intentions were and are for the educators (i.e., OBHS personnel) creating and implementing the OBHS resources. I saw the tour and the city spaces as doing antiracist work in particular ways. I also wanted to ask in what ways the OBHS representatives saw sociohistorical geographies being (re)marked as a result of the walking tour. By taking the tour, creating an inventory of the city spaces first, and then conducting interviews, I obtained what I will call a more authentic vision of what the tour was meant to do and what it did do in terms of (re)shaping how I read the sociohistorical geography. The historical narratives of Black people and communities, the historical spaces to which these narratives were linked, and the present spaces in which these narratives were told, all acted as

cultural representations with which I mediated meanings. Interviewing the OBHS representatives aided me in seeing added complexity to the (re)creation of sociohistorical geographies, because the meanings I understand are not necessarily the meanings that every other person understands or that they aim to convey. The interviews shed light on how sociohistorical space becomes racialized in relational ways.

Before conducting any interviews, I obtained ethics approval from the Office of Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa (see Appendix A). Ethics approval was required to ensure that I would maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of any interview participants who wished to remain unidentified, as well as to show that my research methods and reporting would not risk endangering any participants. As I wrote in my original study proposal and therefore my application for ethics approval, I initially aimed to interview at least 10 but not more than 12 people connected to the OBHS walking tour: up to five OBHS representatives who design and implement the walking tour and seven members of the public who participate in the walking tour. I crafted an “Overview of Research Study” letter that I intended to use to recruit interview participants (see Appendix B). I created two different consent forms: one for the OBHS representatives (see Appendix C) and one for the members of the public (see Appendix D). Finally, I formed a list of 10 questions that I used to guide the interviews (see Appendix E). I used some of these documents, but not all, because, in the end, I interviewed only two people.

When I participated in the walking tour, the tour group consisted of myself and two friends I invited to join me. I chose not to interview my friends for two reasons. Firstly, we had discussed the tour and our expectations for it before the experience. As such, I worried that my prior knowledge of my friends’ perspectives would skew the conversation for more desirable responses, as opposed to allowing the unforeseen views of a stranger to shape the dialogue. The

other reason I did not interview my friends was because they did not have the time availability to be interviewed immediately after the tour. Their unavailability showed me the challenge of trying to secure an interview with people who did not enter the tour expecting to dedicate an added hour of their time after the fact. For this reason, as well as the fact that the walking tour was a fair-weather and participant-requested event, rather than being regularly scheduled, I opted not to interview members of the public. The logistics made it such that gathering seven interviews from tour participants could require more time than would be manageable or appropriate for a study of this size. While I made my decision to not interview members of the public, I still aimed to interview up to five OBHS representatives.

After participating in the walking tour and creating an inventory of the spaces in and around The Ward, I sent email invitations to all the OBHS personnel. I included the “Overview of Research Study” letter and asked that anyone interested in being interviewed reply to the email to schedule a time to meet. At the time of writing, OBHS operations, which include the facilitation of the walking tour, was handled by a small staff of only seven people. Their board of directors included another six people, but I did not attempt to contact them, as I was interested in only one particular element of the organization’s operations, not their wider structure. However, the board of directors did become involved because the organization was concerned that I was requesting to know about the organization’s private information. The first email response I received was from OBHS President Natasha Henry, informing me that I would not be permitted access to private information and that I would not be allowed to interview OBHS personnel. When I replied to this refusal and explained that I had no interest in the OBHS private information and that I merely wanted to learn more about the design and facilitation of the walking tour as an antiracist educational tool, my request was taken to the OBHS board of

directors for consideration. Upon their decision, I was told that I could interview only Natasha Henry and the OBHS First Vice-President, Channon Oyeniran, both of whom agreed for their names to be used in this thesis. It is because of these restrictions on OBHS interview participants that throughout this thesis, to assure confidentiality and anonymity, I do not provide any direct quotations, names, or descriptions for the walking tour guides, aside from noting that they are both women who identify as Black.

I conducted a semi-structured one-on-one interview with each person, meaning I spoke with each person separately and they were unaware of the responses given by their colleague. Each interview took place in a Toronto location that the interviewee suggested, and each conversation lasted approximately 40 minutes. Before beginning each interview, the participants signed the consent form I created specifically for OBHS representatives. With the agreement of the interviewees, both interviews were audio-recorded. I then transcribed the interviews using *researcher-edited transcription* techniques, sometimes called *denaturalized transcription*. This practice is when the researcher omits space-filling sounds from the transcripts (e.g., ummm; ahhh) and adds enunciation to words spoken in a casual or colloquial form, so that pronunciation such as “wanna” is transcribed as “want to” (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). I used researcher-edited transcription because the aspect of importance to my study was the messages each interviewee conveyed, not features such as their respective speech patterns. Once I transcribed the interviews, I provided both interviewees with a copy of the transcript for their respective interview. Henry and Oyeniran then read through their respective transcript to ensure that I did not incorrectly transcribe any of their statements, and to make sure there was nothing recorded that in hindsight should have been off the record. Once each person approved their transcript, I coded the transcripts by hand, highlighting and noting terms and statements that

unveiled themes and meanings about the walking tour, Toronto, place, space, racialization, racism, and antiracism. I was then able to use these themes and meanings to analyze what the OBHS hoped I, as a walking tour participant, would take away from the tour experience, as well as how the OBHS hoped I would see the city spaces in new and antiracist ways. Considering how people might come to see the city in new ways highlights the need to examine why these seemingly new insights were not apparent before. For this examination, I implemented historical investigation methods.

Historical investigation. I used historical investigation methods as an ongoing practice, rather than a distinct stage within the research process. Perhaps like the investigation of any sociohistorical geography, there was no single line of historical narrative for the spaces I engaged with for the study. Investigating one narrative often connected me to another of which I was previously unaware, hence the ongoing nature of my research. Even as I write this thesis, people continue to occupy and (re)shape spaces, and they will become the histories of tomorrow, meaning the stuff that histories will be made of is currently and constantly at play. With my understanding that by investigating the past, I was not observing but was actively *doing* history by (re)creating it through my own relationship with temporal and spatial contexts (McGregor, 2017), a concept underpinning my methods of historical investigation was *historicity*.

To briefly reiterate the core point of historicity that I discussed in the Literature Review chapter, historicity can aid in broadening understanding of how people engage with the relationship between their pasts, presents, and futures. Much like Smith's (2012) point that 'research' is linked to colonialism, Hirsch and Stewart (2005) contend that, as it stands, the Western sense of 'history' is not effective for cross-cultural investigations. Here, I intentionally carry forward the use of 'cross-cultural' in two ways. Firstly, I entered the space as someone who

lives in another city, investigating a sociohistorical geography of Toronto with its own dominant and marginalized cultural meanings. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, through my historical investigation, I was in part attempting to encounter cultural meanings from a temporal context that I have never and can never experience firsthand. Throughout the study, I remained cognizant that my understanding of the past was and continues to be shaped by my own lenses of identity and lived experience, which are themselves never static either. I chose the narratives that I investigated. I did not intentionally ignore or omit any histories of racialized people and/or communities, but there were inevitably some stories that I missed because I was drawn to others for one reason or another. Many of the lines of historical inquiry I pursued stemmed directly or more broadly from my experience and knowledge creation on the OBHS walking tour.

After participating in the tour, I had not only several names and events to further inquire about; I had a physical space to unpack and a critical and specifically antiracist lens to look through. Much of my historical investigation was focused on the past peoples and communities that occupied the space in and around what was The Ward. This means that I examined histories of people in the space that pre-existed The Ward, but whose histories connect to the eventual creation of the neighbourhood. Looking back to times prior to Toronto even existing, let alone The Ward, and then moving forward chronologically, I was able to piece together and understand the ways The Ward became (re)created and (re)racialized with the in and out movement of various racialized communities. To examine the historic (re)creations of The Ward and the racialized communities established within and upon the colonial bedrock of Toronto, I looked mainly to secondary sources, but did employ some primary sources.

The secondary sources were books, academic journal articles, scholarly blog articles, and news articles that offered historical narratives of The Ward—often in racialized terms—and

historical descriptions of the general spaces that are now downtown Toronto. My heavy use of secondary sources for my historical investigation was because I was not seeking to contest the histories already written and then write a new or different history for The Ward or Toronto. Rather, I was looking for opportunities to engage with the histories of The Ward in new, antiracist ways. The secondary sources provided a range of historiographies that offered context and content for connecting the past with the present, seeing the continuation of racism at play, and identifying possibilities for antiracist paths forward.

For primary sources, while I did make use of some documents about municipal political ridings and magazine publications from the early 20th century that focused on the then-present-day people of The Ward, I mostly examined historic maps of Toronto. To ensure the maps were those created and used in official capacities, rather than artistic renderings of Toronto's historic structure, I examined maps found on the City of Toronto "Historical Maps & Atlases" online page and in the Toronto Public Library's Digital Archive. The maps aided me in contextualizing and analyzing my spatial inventory, as I could see which streets, street names, political boundaries, and sometimes building structures remained present and which were changed over time. The continued presence of particular markings helped establish which cultural representations might be deemed timeless and/or permanent. Being able to note the markings that changed allowed me to see that governments over the years were open to renaming and remarking the city space, but that changes most often retained English, colonial (white) representation.

Today, Toronto sits on the traditional territory of several Indigenous territories. However, when the Town of York was established in 1793, and then when its name was changed and Toronto became incorporated in 1834, the comparatively small city, including the land that

would become The Ward, was situated on the Mississauga of the Credit territory. Through my historical investigation, I sought to understand this history of Indigenous people and land being colonized, but I did not want to rely on a Eurocentric grand narrative of progress (Stanley, 2006). I investigated the history of the Mississauga of the Credit in that space and their eventual exclusion by turning to the Mississauga of the Credit's telling of the past as it is presented through various documents and reports available on their current website (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, 2018).

Once I felt that I had sufficiently surveyed the history of the Mississauga and the British colonization of the area, I looked firstly to the book *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood* (2015). The book is an edited collection that provides an overview of the neighbourhood's creation, the people who inhabited it, and how the communities within it were perceived by the wider city population. During the OBHS walking tour, The Ward was described to me as Toronto's first Black community, so while I worked my way through *The Ward*, I also investigated the people and events featured on the walking tour. The book helped me to more complexly contextualize the narratives presented on tour, considering these people and events in relation to their changing sociohistorical geography. For example, when I read in various sources about Emancipation Day celebration parades going through the streets of The Ward (see next chapter), points of clarification were needed: What is Emancipation Day and when is it? When did these parades stop? Why did they stop? Answers to these questions are, in part, related to the history of shifting and changing of racialized populations within The Ward. This sort of inquiry connected me to the narratives of other racialized communities within The Ward that came after the Black community.

My historical investigation continued as I investigated the histories of the former Jewish community and then the Chinese community in The Ward. Much like my look into the histories of the Black community in the neighbourhood, I used secondary sources to gain understandings of how these communities came to exist, how the communities developed and functioned, when and why they moved from the area, and how they and The Ward were read in racist ways. There were people of other European national and cultural identities who lived in The Ward, and they may have suffered from discriminations of different kinds. My focus on the Black, Jewish, and Chinese communities, however, was because these people and the spaces in which they lived were distinctly racialized and they experienced conditions and exclusions because of how they were racialized. Historicizing structures and markings of the space that was The Ward was to historicize and analyze the discourse that shapes and maintains the sociohistorical geography. This look into the past contributed to tracing and understanding how Indigenous bodies and bodies of colour are far from new in this space, but how the colonial bedrock has been maintained to normalize the dominance of Whiteness.

Conclusion

I began this study with the idea of examining the OBHS walking tour as an educational tool for enacting antiracism, but it developed into so much more. The walking tour's efforts to counter anti-Black racism became only part of my larger examination and theorization of (re)creating racist and antiracist sociohistorical geographies. This shift in the breadth of my study did not change my methodological approach or the methods I originally incorporated into my project design. Rather, the scale on which my methods were applied was simply expanded. Critical discourse analysis and anti-essentialist antiracist historical methodology underpinned all my practices, even as my study site and focus broadened from histories of Black people and

events presented on the route of the OBHS walking tour to histories of racialized people and communities in and around The Ward. My chosen methodologies provided a lens so that as these expansions of site and focus occurred, I did not see merely more of the same histories and racisms, but nor did I see multiple siloed histories and racisms. My methodologies helped me to understand my various findings as connected, relational, and active, even when they appeared banal. I employed my methodologies and methods to analytically deconstruct and imaginatively reconstruct the sociohistorical geography that was The Ward. Through my critical discourse analysis and historicizing of the space, I created three findings-and-analysis chapters that move through an antiracist process of identifying, disrupting, and ending racisms (Stanley, 2016). The next chapter (Chapter 4) *identifies* racisms by highlighting the ways racisms are (re)created through cultural representations (i.e., part of the discursive discourse) that enact racialized exclusions. Chapter 5 moves to the stage of *disrupting* racisms, as the OBHS walking tour highlights starting points for using histories to form cracks in the colonial bedrock. And Chapter 6 is my attempt at *ending* racisms by imagining the active and ongoing—never final—(re)creation of an antiracist sociohistorical geography.

CHAPTER 4: THE WARD AS A RACIST SOCIOHISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

The city of Toronto has long been a city consisting of various social geographies known by neighbourhood names. Some examples include Liberty Village, Leslieville, St. James Town, Cabbagetown, Entertainment District, and even Old Toronto, which is in reference to where the core of the city was when it was said to be founded as York in 1793 and still when it was incorporated as Toronto in 1834. Before Old Toronto became labelled as such, within this section of the city was a neighbourhood called The Ward, but The Ward, both in name and marking within its former space, has largely faded from present-day city discourse. At the time when the city was incorporated, the municipal government began using a ward system, splitting the city into five municipal political ridings: St. Andrew, St. David, St. George, St. Lawrence, and St. Patrick. As years passed, lines were redrawn to create additional wards and St. John's Ward was added to the city's political ward system in 1853, carved out of the eastern end of the neighbouring St. Patrick's Ward (Toronto Municipal Council, 1870). Today, for those who engage with histories of Toronto, although 'St. John's Ward' no longer exists, its name is synonymous with the social space of *The Ward*.

The historic neighbourhood of The Ward was once an area of Toronto known at different times as a Black community, a Jewish community, a Chinese community, and, more generally, a neighbourhood of poor immigrants. Chan (2011) states that "The Ward gained a reputation as a slum after the House of Industry, a poor house, was opened at Elm and Chestnut streets in 1848" (p. 35). While some residents of The Ward were financially poor, others were business owners, physicians, teachers, and more. Smardz Frost (2015) contends that "The area became 'The Ward,' a pejorative term that betrays the deep disassociation of white Torontonians from new immigrants with different cultural backgrounds, languages and beliefs" (p. 70). There is no

definitive date that people stopped using ‘The Ward’ as a common reference for the area. It seems that it faded away as “Businesses, churches, synagogues, theatres, and shops closed as residents were moved out and buildings were demolished to make way for hospitals, government buildings, Eaton’s Department Store, a bus terminal, New City Hall and Nathan Phillip Square” (Toronto Ward Museum, 2020, “About The Ward”). In this chapter, I argue that despite the historic presence of these communities, the space of The Ward was and remains marked in ways that perpetuate racialized exclusions. The marking of the space enables the reading of Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour as “new” or as “outsiders”—conditionally present—thereby (re)creating the space as a racist sociohistorical geography.

To create a context that can then be historicized and analyzed to show the different ways that racist meanings were and are (re)created and shape the sociohistorical geography of The Ward, I provide a broad description of the current cityscape around and within the area that was The Ward. As I stated in my introductory chapter, this description is temporally and spatially situated, as there is no universal lens, and I am always examining the space through my own perspective and embodied experience with it. I also acknowledge that I am not permanently present in the space, and shifts and changes can and do occur that I will not observe. There are, however, features that seem permanent and/or official while others appear more clearly temporary and/or unofficial. My description documents the lay of the land, from the prominent building materials to styles of transportation infrastructure to the types of buildings found lining the grid-patterned streets. Between, on, and around the material features in the description are markers such as street signs, statues and monuments, flags, and banners that play parts in the mediation (Wertsch, 2002) and (re)creation of meanings throughout the space. Following the broad description, I take a closer look at the markers and present the ways that they work to

maintain an imagined community (Anderson, 2006)—a social construction of place “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, p. 6)—where Whiteness is a given and dominant, enabling readings of Indigenous peoples as *outsiders* and Black people and people of colour as *new*. The markers I discuss are not exhaustive of the sociohistorical markers in the space of The Ward. As I will show, the meanings I read in relation to them do not stand in isolation; they articulate with each other (Hall, 1980) and with the wider material structures of the space (Lefebvre, 1991), interweaving with each other, mapping, (re)creating, and teaching meanings about where, how, and which bodies are read as *belonging* in the space (Puwar, 2004).

As I analyzed the sociohistorical space of The Ward, I turned to the works of a variety of scholars that helped me to generally frame the lens through which I viewed the relationships between structures and markers of this so-called public space. When I refer to ‘public,’ I contemplate Biesta’s (2012) discussion of how spaces taken for granted as being public—accessible to all people who abide by legal and social rules—are always *becoming* public, being (re)shaped in relation to people’s identities and the meanings they (re)create with the material space. There is nothing inherent about the labels of identity people claim for themselves or ascribe to other people, and there is nothing natural about the ways material spaces are developed, defined, and distinguished from other spaces (Baldwin, et al., 2011). In different spatial and temporal contexts, social meanings are created and re-created so as to form dominant and discursive meanings that function in ways that exclude or place qualifiers upon the presence of varying racialized people. The idea that ‘public’ is accessed in the same ways by all people ignores the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour, which are experiences that make visions of ‘public’ different depending on how one is racialized. For example, as Afua Cooper stated during an interview for a July 2018 episode of *CBC Ideas*: “To

be Black in Canada includes always being ready to justify your existence in any given time and place”. ‘Public’ may be (re)shaped in relation to people’s identities, but not all of those publics become read as dominant. The tension of having to justify one’s occupation of space does not occur for those who do not need to question whether or not they belong, because the sense is that the public space is *their* space, but *their* space is one of Whiteness.

The concept of Whiteness is not a suggestion that all people identified as white are intentionally racist. Rather, it refers to systemic structures in society where the racialization of white is dominant—particularly white and English-speaking, in the case of The Ward—while Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour may be included, but are conditionally present and often must conform to the dominant ways of being. Whiteness is the system that sets the standards for which and how different racialized identities belong in changing contexts (Baldwin, et al., 2011, p. 5). There is no need for those who identify with “the standard” to justify how they belong (Puwar, 2004). As Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi (2011) contend, “if white normativity is integral to the formulation of historical and contemporary forms of racism, its power lies in its unequal capacity to naturalize its geography” (p. 6). Frankenberg (1993b) shares a similar point, stating that

The material and discursive dimensions of whiteness are always, in practice, interconnected. Discursive repertoires may reinforce, contradict, conceal, explain, or ‘explain away’ the materiality or the history of a given situation. Their interconnection, rather than material life alone, is in fact what generates ‘experience.’ (p. 2)

Leonardo (2013) cautions that “The turn to Whiteness disrupts the focus on minorities, indeed recenters Whites once again” (p. 89). This is indeed a path I endeavor to avoid, by focusing not on the intentions of systems of Whiteness but on the effects the systems can have on Indigenous

peoples, Black people, and people of colour. I engage with Whiteness as synonymous with ‘public’ in order to understand how a racist sociohistorical geography is (re)created and persists without actively barring Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour from the space that was once The Ward. To begin this understanding of the effects of Whiteness, I start with myself and examine how I—a mixed-race, white-passing, English-literate man—understood myself to belong (or not) within the streets of Toronto and, more specifically, The Ward.

My Presence in The Ward

I first engaged with the space that was The Ward as part of my commutes to work in 2012 and 2013, although I did not realize at the time that I was traveling the historic area, and it did not dawn on me to consider the history of the streets. In my mind, I was simply on my way to work, which in itself speaks to how I took my presence in the space for granted, in part because there was nothing and no one telling me I did not belong. I worked in Toronto on the 11th floor of a 21-storey office building above St. Patrick subway station, at the intersection of Dundas Street West and University Avenue. On spring and summer days, provided it was not raining, I rollerbladed approximately 3km to work from my apartment building that was six major blocks east and three north of the office building. I rolled along the paved roads (unpaved roads are not ideal for rollerblading), making my right and left turns through the grid of streets and cutting through the Ryerson University campus grounds on my way southwest to Yonge Street. There, I crossed and connected to Edward Street, an east-west road that runs from Yonge Street to University Avenue and parallel to the main thoroughfare of Dundas Street West. Edward Street was less congested with automobile traffic compared to major streets, and it brought me to University Avenue only one street north of my workplace destination. That I made this journey on a regular basis, never felt unsure of my ability to read the markings of the space to navigate

my way, was never questioned for my presence in the spaces I traveled, and never felt the need to prepare to justify my occupation of the space, were all enactments of Whiteness (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Moreton-Robinson's (2015) contention of a white possessive logic does not suggest that people who benefit from Whiteness are actively aware of their dominant occupation of the land, but that their presence is taken for granted as a result of European colonization being framed as *the* history of that space. Razack (2018) complements this notion, arguing that white settler societies like Canada were established by Europeans on non-European land, originated in the dispossession and attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples by European settlers, and now continue to be structured by a racial hierarchy (p. 114). Moreton-Robinson's (2015) argument is that despite Indigenous presence, colonizers saw the land as *terra nullius*, in need of *modern* use, where 'modern' stems from "everyday forms of culture, politics, and economy associated with [...] industrial capitalism in Europe of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and disseminated globally by European imperial expansion" (Piot, 1999, p. 179, endnote 1). The modern state such as the settler-colonial country of Canada, although demographically diverse, is now regulated by institutions relying on the land being understood as a property to control, with the (white) authority to control it being unquestionable and just the way it has always been.

As I rollerbladed, there were and are some representations of languages and images on route that are not of European or white, English origins. However, those representations become qualified as different than the *norm*, layered on a bedrock of colonialism, not shown as foundational to the city, and noticeably anomalous in relation to the surrounding cityscape. For example, travelling along Edward Street, if on the lookout for such things, one might see the Chinese noodle restaurant at the corner of Edward Street and Bay Street that has Chinese-

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language characters on its sign (see Image 1 below). The Chinese language in the photograph is on a single sign that can be easily overlooked, meanwhile being surrounded by markers that are not only in the dominant English, but many of which are directives (e.g., MAXIMUM speed

Image 1. Corner of Edward Street and Bay Street. A single Chinese-language sign surrounded by English-language markers, some of which are directives controlling the movement of people in the space.

Source: Google Street View, October 2020



limit) in ways that non-English cultural representations are not. The directive signs control the actions of people and come with legal punishments if they are not obeyed. One might also see banners outside the YWCA at the corner of Edward Street and Chestnut Street that feature images of Black women, Muslim women, and other women of colour (see Image 2 below). Again, the images in the photograph that represent identities other than white and English are surrounded by directive signs (e.g., STOP, NO STANDING) that rely on people being able to read and understand English. The directive signs perpetuate the certainty of authority for a language that is only dominant in the space because of colonization of Indigenous lands and exclusion of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the YWCA banners in the photograph are hanging on streetlight posts that are considered city property. The representations of varyingly

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racialized women are displayed only with permission from a non-Indigenous government body that claims control over Indigenous territory (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Image 2. Banners outside of Edward Street YWCA. Images are representations of women racialized in various ways, but images only present with permission from city government. Banners surrounded by directive signs regulating people's movement in the space.

Source: Google Street View, October 2020



Directive signs often go unnoticed as markers of dominance and are taken for granted by the white, English-literate travellers. As I rollerbladed on the same street in these photographs, I paid no attention to the language of the directive signs, because English is made banal through its repetition. English marks the space as owned, controlled, and occupied by those

who are literate in the colonizer-imposed language. The colonizing language excludes the Indigenous peoples and their languages that were present before colonization took place, as well as anyone who is not literate in English. To arguments that inclusion of marginalized people is increasing, and that over time the exclusions have been decreasing, the point may be true that representation is changing, maybe even for the better. However, this does not automatically translate to changed meanings that end racisms. For example, I point to the fact that the numbers shown on the various signs and buildings—the numbers we use every day in all sorts of settings—are actually Hindu-Arabic numerals that originated in India around the 6th or 7th century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017). Yet, Arabic is not an official language in many of the places that use these numbers, and, as Ziadah (2017) shows, anti-Arab racism does occur in Canada. The effects of inclusion that representations are supposed to evoke, that Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour are acknowledged and equality is therefore achieved, are not always as long-lasting as would be preferable to those being represented. Understandings of space as property to be controlled perpetuate the colonizing structures that maintain ‘white’ as the *norm* (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Reflecting on my experiences as a mixed-race but white-passing person, although I sometimes encounter people who racialize me in ways other than white and ask microaggression questions of “Where are you from? Are you originally from China?” or even more bluntly, “So, what *are* you?” most people racialize me as white. On my way to work, crossing paths with a great number of people, no one ever asked me if I spoke English or told me to go back where I came from. People of colour, however, do experience this form of racism. For example, on a Saturday in July 2020—the summer after the Covid-19 pandemic began—Justine Yu, who identifies as Filipina-Canadian, was sitting in an open, un-fenced Toronto greenspace next to a

school reading a book. A white woman walking by told Yu that the greenspace was private property and that trespassing was not permitted. Yu pointed out to the woman that there were no “No Trespassing” signs posted and continued to read. The woman then claimed to be a teacher—an apparent attempt to assert authority over the space around the school—and remained nearby, telling Yu that Yu was not able to read English, and shouting that Yu should “go back to China” and that “all Chinese people should go to jail” (Neufeld, 2020, July 28). Setting aside the point that Yu is not Chinese, the woman’s statement of “go back to China” suggests a reading of racialized Chinese people as being from somewhere else and not belonging in Toronto, despite racialized Chinese people being present in Toronto since the late 19th century (Chan, 2011). Additionally, given the current context of the ongoing pandemic and the earliest cases of Covid-19 being reported as occurring in China (World Health Organization, 2020), I expect that the woman’s insistence on sending all Chinese people to jail was racist blaming of all Chinese people for spreading the virus, even though many non-Chinese, non-Asian people have contracted Covid-19 from interactions with non-Chinese people.

In an online survey done by the Angus Reid Institute in June 2020, “Of the more than 500 Canadians of Chinese ethnicity surveyed from across Canada, half reported being called names or insulted as a direct result of COVID-19, and 43 per cent said they had been personally threatened or intimidated” (Zeidler, 2020 June 22). According to statistics released in September 2020 from the online racism incident reporting centre Project 1907, since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, of the over 600 incidents of anti-Asian racism reported, approximately 30% of the incidents involved assault (i.e., targeted coughing, spitting, physical violence), 45% of the incidents took place in open public spaces (i.e., street, sidewalk, park), and 26% of the incident occurred in Toronto. When I traveled through the streets of Toronto and more specifically

through The Ward, I was not subjected to this type of racist harassment. My white-passing body was not read as being from somewhere else.

The police officers that I passed on my rollerblading commute never stopped me to question my appearance in the space. The Ontario Human Rights Council (2020) released reports on studies of the Toronto Police Service and showed that in overall single-charge cases between November 2013 and July 2017, Black males (only 4.0% of Toronto's population) make up just over 25% of the arrest cases. The percentage of arrest cases does not equate to charges being laid and criminal convictions being ruled. The reports show that Black people are 3.7 times more likely than white people to be detained by the Toronto police and then released without charge. Numerous authors such as Awad Ibrahim (2004; 2014), Desmond Cole (2015; 2020), and Robyn Maynard (2017) have published personal and researched accounts of the general over-policing of Black bodies and "carding" in Toronto, where police stop a person, disproportionately men racialized as Black, and demand to see the person's identification as an opening for interrogation about whether or not the person *belongs* in a given space.

Awad Ibrahim (2004), a scholar of "race" and racism, tells a story of cycling in 1999 along Bloor Street in downtown Toronto and being stopped by the police. He recalls cycling in the bicycle lane and his only infraction, he admits, was that he was not wearing a helmet. The police said nothing of his missing helmet and instead immediately asked him if he was ever in trouble with the law, telling him that he "fit the description" of a man they were looking for (p. 82). The description was of a Black man carrying a dark bag. Ibrahim is Black, but his bag was light blue. Nonetheless, the police requested Ibrahim's identification, recorded his information, and then told him to collect his things, adding "You are free to go now" (p. 83) without any form of apology for wrongfully detaining him.

Desmond Cole (2015), a bestselling author, journalist, and broadcaster in Toronto who identifies as Black, shared with readers that he has been stopped by the police over 50 times in Toronto, Kingston, and other cities across Canada, almost always including the police asking him for identification. He makes clear that not one of those times was he doing anything illegal. He was simply occupying public spaces as a Black man. On one occasion shortly after moving into a residence in Toronto, he took an evening walk to find a place to do some writing. Just after leaving his home, police stopped him and asked him if he lived in the area. When Cole asked to know why he was stopped, the police said there had been some break-ins in the area. Cole told the police that unless they thought he committed the break-ins, he had the right to walk, which is when the police drove away.

In *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, Robyn Maynard (2017) cites a 2003 study done in Toronto that “found that more than one-third of Black students who were not engaged in criminal behaviour had been stopped by the police, compared with less than one-tenth (4 percent) of white students” (p. 89). She adds, “While the ability to walk freely in public space is something that is taken for granted by most white Canadians, the same cannot be said for people of African descent” (p. 89). I am technically a person of African descent, as my mother was born and spent the first ten years of her life in South Africa, and she is a woman of colour. However, I am not racialized as Black, which is what Maynard means by the term “people of African descent”. I am a white-passing mixed-race person who coincidentally (or maybe not) has never been asked by police for an explanation for my presence in any particular area and who has never been stopped and told that I “fit the description”.

Maynard (2017) is correct, at least in my experiences on those days while I rollerbladed. I took for granted that I had the right to travel in those streets. I was aware of racisms perpetrated by the police, but did not fear entering public spaces. I felt no need to qualify my being in the space. I did not have an explanation waiting in the front of my mind in case I was questioned. These were simply not experiences I ever endured. The few times I have been randomly asked to qualify my existence in Canada were from people without any sort of legal authority, so although annoyed at times, I had no sense of potential negative formal consequences. My lack of concern for being excluded from the space I traveled through on my way to work was part of my white privilege that stems from how I look, no matter how I identify myself in racialized terms. I was and mostly still am read as white and therefore as belonging, while Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour—many racialized groups who have existed in Canada as long as, if not longer than white people—are read as “outsiders” and “new,” only belonging conditionally and with qualifications, if at all. Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour enter these same *public* spaces under different terms than I did and do. This reading of them as outsiders, new, and conditionally present is not due to random individual opinions; it is constructed and reinforced through systems and the so-called public structures and markings that physically shape the city space.

Above, I listed a selected variety of streets that I used as my route for my rollerblade journey to work. As I rolled through the streets, I did not contemplate how I was privileged as a person whose first and only language with fluent use is English, and so I did not consider how or why English is now the dominant language. The land on which Toronto sits is Indigenous territory colonized by the British, so English was not the original language of the territory, which is something I will come back to later in this chapter. There is a plethora of languages spoken on

the streets of Toronto, yet the official street signs are all written using the Roman alphabet and mainly English words and names, with a minute amount using non-English words and names that are written in anglicized forms (Casagrande, 2013). For example, Spadina Avenue and Spadina Road are the anglicized forms of the Anishinaabemowin word *Ishpadinaa*, which translates to “place on a hill” (McRae Williams, 2014). Even the name of the city, Toronto, actually derives from the Kanien’kéha word *tkaronto*, which translates to “where there are trees standing in the water” (Levine, 2014, p. 8). This name, however, comes from the language of the Kanien’kéha Nation whose traditional territory is outside of Toronto in what is now northern New York State, and whose adopted territory in southern Ontario does not include the land on which Toronto was positioned in 1834 when the city’s name was put in place. The city’s name, then, is not even honouring the Indigenous keepers of that land, who are the Mississaugas of the Credit. Moreover, in my years of visiting and living in Toronto, I cannot recall the city name ever being recognized in common parlance as connected to any Indigenous language. Various Indigenous names and languages have been appropriated and misrepresented to the point that they are largely unrecognized as Indigenous at all. The English-dominant street names are also something I will return to, but for now I use it briefly here as an acknowledgement of factors that I took for granted. I was not made to feel like an outsider in the city in which I lived. I was not born or raised in the city, and I moved there as an adult, so I was new to the space, but there was nothing that told me I did not or could not belong in the city. The streets were banal to me, and I was unknowingly enacting Whiteness through my unquestioned occupation of the city streets, which included those of The Ward.

A City Designed by and for Dominance

When I began rollerblading to work, I quickly found my preferred route of streets, but did not consider how that route came to exist or how my route options were ultimately limited by the design of the city. The Toronto city streets are predominantly structured in a grid formation, creating limitations and forms of control over where and how people experience their surroundings (Grant, 2001). While Grant (2001) points out that the grid structure of urban design does have advantages of simplicity, replicability, legibility, and ease of physical access, she concludes that “the grid clearly signifies that planners were at work. It denies spontaneity and indigenous [sic] landscape traditions. It imposes a rational conceptual order that transcends time and space and proclaims the control and power of central authorities” (p. 237). The grid-designed streets not only proclaim control and power through their existence, they were also originally created through hierarchies of power. Winks (1997) states that in Upper Canada, where white men claimed ownership and control over the land, “Negroes built roads for the Loyalists” (p. 47). This brief statement is indicative of how Black labour was exploited to help create the infrastructure of settlement that white colonizers then used to employ their visions of property, which echoes Moreton-Robinson’s (2015) point about property being a product of Whiteness. Through the grid design of the city, the central authorities created and continue to operationalize delineations between public and private spaces, determining who and what is permitted to occupy categorized spaces. There was nothing natural about The Ward being positioned as it was, or about The Ward ever having existed at all. The covering over of the Indigenous land with the materials and technologies of colonialism followed a mentality of conquering the land. This colonization largely eliminated Indigenous epistemologies and practices that worked in relationship with the land.

Trees are planted along some streets and outside of some buildings, presenting some nature-influenced décor, but are positioned and manicured within distinct public and private property lines. When living in the city, if I occupied and engaged with space of grass, trees, and shrubbery, it was only when I made the conscious decision to do so during my evening and weekend times, which meant I chose to travel to one of the few city parks in the area where I lived. As Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi (2011) state, “nature is a social construct used to maintain hegemonic social relations across a number of epistemological sites, from colonialism (Braun 2002) to capitalism (N. Smith 1984) to racism (Kobayashi 2003)” (p. 7). The ways that spaces are socially constructed create privileges for certain people to claim or perhaps take for granted their belongingness, while others, as Cooper stated of Black people, must justify their presence. To contemplate some of these privileges, I recalled the space that I encountered as I traveled through the streets of the former Ward on my way to work, and I considered how the material city that seemed *normal* to me actually has effects on the social geography.

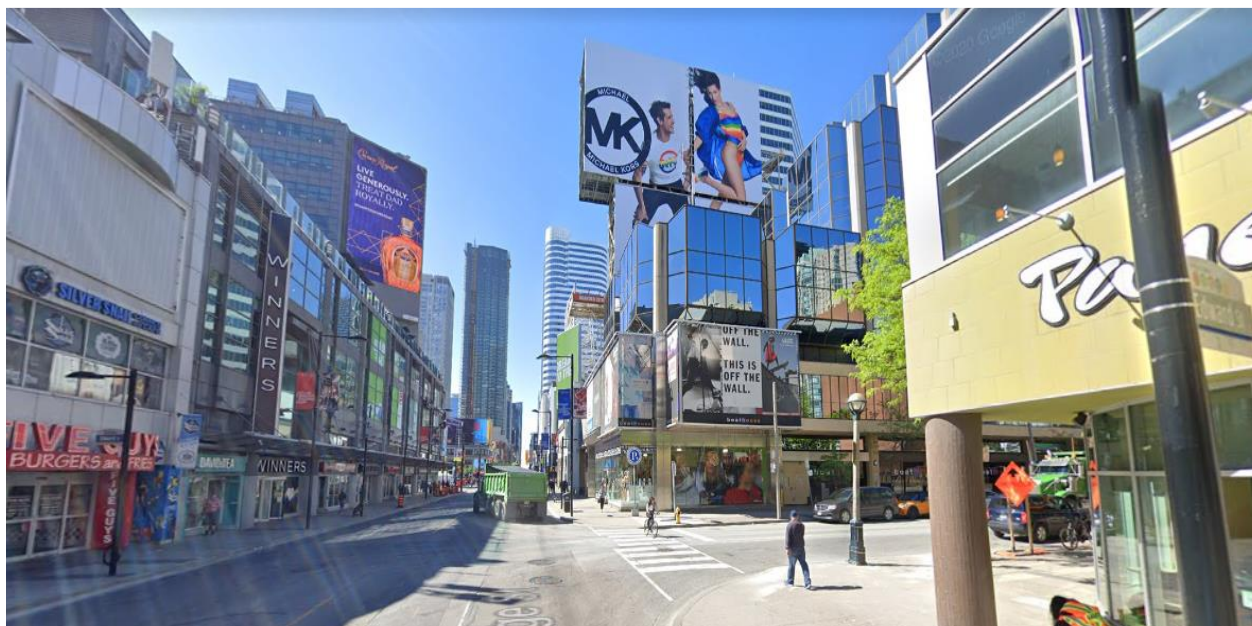
None of the buildings in The Ward that I passed in my days of rollerblading, and still today, are less than two storeys tall (this does not even factor in any underground levels). Many of them rise over 20 storeys into the sky, and the majority of them are used for non-residential purposes. The tall and sometimes towering buildings created a maze effect through the walls of brick, concrete, and glass that structure the corridors and literally overshadow the streets with symbols of power. To illustrate this, I provide Image 3 below, which is an image looking southward at the corner of Yonge Street and Edward Street where I crossed into the space that was The Ward. The photograph shows the streets that pave over Indigenous land, making them so-called public property, but a public property that was first structured through colonialism and is now controlled and maintained by non-Indigenous government bodies. The photograph also

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shows the corridor effect created by building after building forming a linear structure to the streetscape, each building a piece of private property that replicates and reinforces the colonial fort mentality (Donald, 2009). The Eurocentric notions of property are protected and encouraged to expand while Indigenous understandings and relationships with material space (i.e., land) are marginalized out of sight. Once again, the systems rooted in colonialism and now couched in

Image 3. Corner of Yonge Street and Edward Street. The street is paved and lined with towering buildings that are all examples of property to be controlled, paving over Indigenous histories, representations, and knowledges, and reinforcing colonizing structures of space.

Source: Google Street View, June 2019



Whiteness are built into the concrete, but appear as the banal and accepted authority. Dovey (2008) states, “The successful corporate tower [like the one I worked in and the many I passed on route to work] offers corporate identity, authenticity and authority. It embodies metaphors of strength, stature and strategy, of physical dominance translating into financial domination” (p. 4),

not to mention its phallic symbolism suggesting masculine dominance. The towering buildings, too, were created out of hegemonic human decisions and worked in relation to the grid pattern of the streets to declare what is public and what is private property (Moreton-Robinson, 2015), but all of which is approved through government systems. With the structure of the streets and the placement of the buildings all subject to government approval, the markers that populate the spaces shape the ways that ‘public’ and ‘private’ articulate (with) each other (Hall, 1980) as the materials of dominant systems, (re)creating dominant imagined communities (Anderson, 2006). As I mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, markers such as street signs, statues and monuments, advertisements, banners, and flags in, around, and on these streets and buildings also play into mediating different meanings for the space of The Ward. They make some meanings *official* while silencing others.

On most street corners there are street signs indicating the name of the street. Again, the names of streets around and within The Ward are written using the modern adaptation of the Roman alphabet (Upward & Davidson, 2011) and English or anglicized words and names, with the names being seen at each intersection, thereby being repeated. In an examination of Toronto’s (post)colonial street naming, Casagrande (2013) states that “because of their administrative functions, toponyms [street names] tend to be more or less stable over the years in order not to create confusion or ambiguity. As a consequence, their discursive components tend to fossilise as the ‘story’ they tell crystallises in time and space” (p. 293). According to the study, of the Toronto street names across the city—not just in and around The Ward—only approximately 0.75% of the city’s street names refer to Indigenous names, places, and language. Most often these Indigenous-related street names were “modified and accommodated to the European ear and mouth” (p. 291). I earlier discussed the name ‘Spadina’ being an anglicized

form of the Anishinaabewmowin word *Ishpadinaa*, and the name ‘Toronto’ being from the Kanien’kéha word *tkaronto*. There are other examples of this appropriation and anglicization of Indigenous names and words such as ‘Chesapeake,’ which comes from the Algonquian word *chesepiooc* meaning “at a big river” (Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 2018). It is also noteworthy that Chesapeake Avenue in Toronto is nowhere near a big river, and it is at best nearby the Taylor-Massey Creek, exemplifying yet again the ways that Indigenous names are appropriated and misrepresented by non-Indigenous bodies. In the space that was The Ward, the streets do not even have appropriated and anglicized Indigenous names, and they are dominated with English words and names (for a complete list of present-day [2020] street names within the space that was The Ward, see Table 1 below). Of the 21 streets currently laid out in the space that was The Ward, the only street name that does not appear to be English is Laplante, which is French, yet another European language and the other official language of Canada. The single French name surrounded by English names and language does itself speak to the British colonial dominance over all else. The ‘Laplante’ name inserted in this place can appear as an attempt to include French representation within the English-centric narrative of the Eurocentric grand narrative of Canada. This conflation of French and British histories is precisely what the Quebec government sought and seeks to reject through its policy of interculturalism. As part of this conflation, and as part of ‘Laplante’ being blurred amongst the overwhelming English presence, there is an erasure of any French history as part of the history of what is now Ontario. Naming the streets in these ways creates complexities within exclusions and works to dominate the space with Eurocentric language and historic representation, overwhelmingly English and British. The mapping of the space makes official the historic and current colonizer/white ownership and control of the land (Smith, 2017).

Table 1. Present-day street names of the area that was The Ward.

Street/Road/Avenue Name	Direction and Type of Street/Road/Avenue
Yonge Street	- Eastern border of The Ward - Major north-south street
University Avenue	- Western border of The Ward - Major north-south street
College Street	- Northern border of The Ward - Major east-west street
Queen Street West	- Southern border of The Ward - Major east-west street
James Street	- Minor north-south street
Bay Street	- Central street through The Ward - Major north-south street
Elizabeth Street	- Minor north-south street
Chestnut Street	- Minor north-south street
Centre Avenue	- Minor north-south street
Barnaby Place	- Minor north-south street
Laplante Avenue	- Minor north-south street
Albert Street	- Minor east-west street
Armoury Street	- Minor east-west street
Hagerman Street	- Minor east-west street
Foster Place	- Minor east-west street
Dundas Street West	- Central street through The Ward - Major east-west street
Edward Street	- Minor east-west street
Elm Street	- Minor east-west street
Walton Street	- Minor east-west street
Gerrard Street West	- Major east-west street
Hayter Street	- Minor east-west street

The southern edge of the area that was The Ward is Queen Street West; the northern border is College Street; the eastern boundary is Yonge Street; and the western side is University Avenue. These streets are all major streets running through the city's downtown core. Within these boundary streets, there are a number of shorter streets that run north-south such as Chestnut Street and James Street, but the two north-south streets that span The Ward are Bay Street and Elizabeth Street. In similar fashion, Albert Street, Armoury Street, Hagerman Street, and Hayter Street are short east-west streets, but the four roads that span through The Ward are Dundas Street, Edward Street, Elm Street, and Gerrard Street. The majority of these street names are after specific British colonial people and settler colonizers. Gerrard Street was named by Upper Canada's Chief Financial Officer, John McGill, for his friend Samuel Gerrard, who lived in Montreal (Bateman, 2014, November 29). Hagerman Street was named for Christopher Hagerman, who married Elizabeth Macaulay, the daughter of James Macaulay, owner of the land upon which The Ward was built. For whom Elizabeth Street is named is not definitive, but through my personal communication with John Lorinc and Ellen Scheinberg—editors of *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood*—educated suggestions are Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada John Graves Simcoe, or Elizabeth Tuck Hayter Macaulay and Elizabeth Macaulay, who were the wife and daughter, respectively, of James Macaulay. Through additional research, I found in the *York Pioneer and Historical Society, Toronto: Report for the Year 1920* a statement that "Russell Street bears his [Peter Russell's] name and Elizabeth Street that of his sister" (p. 11). Peter Russell was appointed administrator of Upper Canada from 1796 to 1799 (Firth, 1983), and he and Elizabeth were both landowners who enslaved racialized Black people. The 1920 report suggests Elizabeth

Street is named for Elizabeth Russell, but does not directly state or provide conclusive evidence that she is the namesake.

Regardless of which story of naming is correct, the street name Elizabeth and the other street names of The Ward are products of British colonialism. They are names representing colonizers, their locally-born descendants, or colonial actions and institutions (e.g., University Avenue and College Street). What is more, while The Ward was known in varying racialized terms, it came into existence as white property, as it began as land owned by James Macaulay who divided it up into properties for houses, which eventually became part of the city (Lorinc, 2015; Sylvester, 2017, September 6). The neighbourhood is and remains a product of Whiteness, with the land being understood as property to be bought and sold, distinguished as a place where Black, Jewish, and Chinese bodies were expected to be found, and mapped with white, English names. All reinforce meanings that the bedrock of the city was and is white and English.

While the familial relations and actions of the streets' namesakes are a different issue than the language and alphabet used to present their names, it is worth noting the actual people so as to better understand the power behind the language being used. There are numerous people and languages that could represent the various racialized and marginalized communities of The Ward's past that made active contributions to the city, but they are not found in the street names. As a starting example, there is no Jackson Street in The Ward, after Toronto's first postal carrier of colour, Albert Jackson, who was brought to The Ward in 1858 as a toddler by with his mother after they escaped slavery in Delaware, USA. Jackson was raised in The Ward and then married his wife and raised his own children, also in The Ward. There is a commemorative plaque for Jackson on the side street of Lombard Street, at the site where the postal office once stood and where Jackson worked (Heritage Toronto, 2017a). The plaque stands along with a much more

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prominent stone-sculpted Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom, complete with the motto “Dieu et Mon Droit” (God and My Right), that was above the post office’s main entry doors until the building was demolished 1957 (see Image 4 below). As the photograph shows, the coat of arms—a marker of British colonization of what is now Canada—is more prominent in the garden. It contributes to both linking Albert Jackson to the colonial project and making the acknowledgement of him as the first Black postal carrier a story of Canada as the redeemer country (Roman & Stanley, 1997) that ultimately provided Jackson with a life free from American enslavement.

Image 4. Albert Jackson Plaque in the foreground. Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom in the background.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



In 2015, the City of Toronto gave University Avenue the ceremonial name of ‘Nelson Mandela Boulevard.’ The naming pays tribute to the former South African president who spent 27 years (1964-1990, inclusive) incarcerated as a political prisoner in his home of South Africa for his fight against the country’s Apartheid government and system that was in place from 1948 to 1991. According to the City of Toronto’s website (2020c), “Ceremonial naming assigns a secondary name to a street that already has an official name. These names are symbolic, usually to honour an individual, event or an organization. They do not replace the legal name of the street.” The street name ‘Nelson Mandela Blvd’ can be seen in cursive writing above *some* of the official ‘University Avenue’ signs, making known that it is an honorary title (see Image 5 below). I identify as a mixed-race South African-Canadian, as my maternal family is racialized

Image 5. Honorary street name of ‘Nelson Mandela Blvd’ above official ‘University Avenue’ sign.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



as Cape Coloured (a racialized category in South Africa) and moved to Canada from South Africa to escape the racisms they faced in Apartheid. With this as my familial background, and me being an advocate of antiracism, I admire and feel personal connection to the anti-Apartheid

work of Mandela, and think it should be recognized and continued. However, I also acknowledge that his name does not represent the racialized communities synonymous with the social histories of The Ward. Indeed, giving the ceremonial name to University Avenue may not have had anything to do with recognizing the historic Black community of The Ward. With or without specific focus on The Ward, however, the effects are that the settler-colonial history retains its place through many of the official street signs while the histories of Black people and communities in the city are overlooked. They become replaced by a Black representation that does not require the city to confront its own racisms of the past and present and that plays into readings of Black bodies as coming from *somewhere else*. The honorary presence of Mandela's name allows the city to align itself with the ardent opponent to racist oppression, applauding Mandela's promotion of the "Rainbow Nation" and work *with* his former oppressors so people of all racialized identities become included. The naming of Nelson Mandela Boulevard, then, is an example of interest convergence and conditional hospitality (Ahmed, 2012). Toronto's system of Whiteness can claim racialized inclusion while not actually disrupting systemic structures of racism.

There are no streets in The Ward using Chinese-language words or named after people of Chinese birth or origins. There is no Lumb Street, after Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb, who co-owned Kwong Chow restaurant in The Ward beginning in the 1950s, lobbied for the elimination of discriminatory immigration regulations in Canada, was a leader in the "Save Chinatown" campaign in The Ward, and was the first Chinese-Canadian woman to receive the Order of Canada. In November of 2019, the City of Toronto did unveil Jean Lumb Lane, a one-vehicle-wide laneway between buildings that accesses private individual parking garages on the eastern side of today's Chinatown (see Images 6 and 7 below). On either side of the laneway, the walls

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are painted with images of China, including the gates to the Forbidden City, a statue of a dragon, and the Great Wall of China. However, while Lumb's name does create a link to the past, and these images bolster representations of China, this is not the Chinatown Lumb fought to save and this is not in The Ward where her restaurant was located. The Chinatown that Lumb campaigned to save was displaced over the span of approximately two decades starting in the 1940s when the city government began expropriating land from the Chinatown residents and business owners to make space for the current city hall and Nathan Phillips Square, which were opened in 1965.

Vitiello and Blickenderfer (2020) show that across three different eras since the late 1890s, city planning across North America sought to destroy Chinatowns. From the 1890s to the 1930s was what they call the "City Beautiful Era," from the 1940s to the 1970s was the "Urban

Image 6. Official Jean Lumb Lane street sign. Restaurant signs background show Chinese characters, but the street sign honouring the Chinese community leader is anglicized.

Source: Jean Lumb Foundation, 2019

Image 7. Jean Lumb Lane, a one-vehicle laneway leading to private parking garages. Walls of the laneway painted with images of the gates to the Forbidden City, a dragon statue, and the Great Wall of China.

Source : Google Street View, June 2019



Renewal Era,” and starting in the 1980s and arguably continuing today is the “Postindustrial Downtown Revitalization Era”. Lai (2007) contends that Chinatowns go through “cycles of growth and decay” (p. xvi), and move through stages of “budding, blooming, withering, and dying or reviving” (p. xvi). Once a Chinatown reaches the last stage, it might be revived by a rejuvenation of the characteristics that made it a distinct cultural centre, or by relocating to create what Lai calls a “New Chinatown”. Based on Lai’s descriptions, the Chinatown of The Ward was what he calls an “Old Chinatown”: established before the Second World War and “a Chinese residential, institutional, and commercial inner-city neighbourhood that is physically discernible by its land uses, commercial façades, demographic structures, and socioeconomic activities” (p. 4). While the current Chinatown in Toronto is a “New Chinatown,” there was little option for reviving the old one in The Ward as it became one of several Chinatowns in Canada and the United States that became victim to city plans of the “Urban Renewal Era” (Vitiello and Blickenderfer, 2020). Jean Lumb Lane is positioned within the current Chinatown of Toronto, but I argue that placing it there reads as putting Chinese representation where Chinese people are *expected to be*. Such placement allows for the cultural destruction by the Urban Renewal Era to be maintained, rather than commemorating Lumb within the city space where she was a community leader, thereby disrupting the structures of Whiteness within The Ward.

There is also no Jacobs Street, after Rabbi Solomon Jacobs, who was a leader in The Ward’s Jewish community from his arrival in 1901 to his death in 1920. Being fluent in English, he was able to speak on behalf of a largely Yiddish-speaking community, such as when he acted as a mediator when the majority-Jewish employees of the Eaton Company went on strike to protest long working hours and low wages (Levine, 2014). The Eaton Centre shopping mall now spans from the intersection of Yonge Street and Dundas Street West southward to the corner of

Yonge Street and Queen Street West. It includes access to two of the city's subway transit stations. The name Eaton is repeated at all of the street entrances into the shopping mall and is part of the city's transit structure. There are, however, no street names using Yiddish words.

And there are no streets in The Ward named after anyone from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation or names using words in the Mississaugas language of Anishinaabewmowin, despite The Ward being located on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas. Starting in 1787 when British colonial representatives took possession of the land after the *Toronto Purchase* and called it York—something I discuss in more detail later in the chapter—representations of the Mississaugas started to be pushed out. When the settler colonizer government incorporated the city as Toronto in 1834, and then continued to expand the city, the Mississaugas' presence was overrun by development. The municipal government does offer a land acknowledgement where it states that Toronto today is situated upon the land of numerous Indigenous nations, “including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples” (City of Toronto, 2019). The land acknowledgement includes numerous Indigenous nations because of the expanse of Toronto, but in 1787, the area that the British began developing as York, which included the land that became The Ward, was home to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Now, when members of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation (the name taken by the Mississaugas of the Credit after being pushed out of their traditional territory) enter the space of which they are the traditional keepers, they enter conditionally. There are no markers to tell non-Indigenous people that the land is specifically Mississaugas of the Credit territory. Because of the reserve system imposed by the Canadian federal *Indian Act* (first introduced in 1876), which relegated First Nations peoples to small, distinctly defined areas of land (property) under the rule of the federal government, the reserve

land is where First Nations peoples are expected to be. Members of the Mississaugas of the Credit present in The Ward or downtown Toronto at large become qualified as being *off their reserve*, and therefore on property that is not theirs, owned by the government. The presence and identity of a member of the Mississaugas of the New Credit becomes different than the *norm*.

While there are a few plaques for *some* notable people of colour who lived and worked in The Ward and contributed to making it a distinct community, such as Albert Jackson and Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb, the languages, cultures, and Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour that made up the main residents of The Ward and the land on which it sits are excluded from the official mapping of the streets that were their home. This exclusion contributes to them being read as outsiders and new to the space. Representation through street name signs is not sufficient to fully disrupt this type of reading of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour, as can be seen in the fact that the city's name derives from an Indigenous language while Indigenous peoples are still excluded. However, representation does contribute to possibilities for enacting antiracism.

Representations of people who are not of British origins, not white, and not English-speaking as part of the present-day makeup of The Ward, as opposed to merely having once lived there, is scant. Having said this, while it is important to recognize the prioritization of colonizer's names over the names of the colonized, enslaved, and other racialized and excluded people who once occupied and operationalized the space, it is probable that the street names have become so banal to most people today that the colonial history is not the association people make with the street names. When I rollerbladed to work and read the street names, I did not think of myself as traveling on a street that was named after a British military leader or that shares its name with a former King of England. If, however, I set aside the predominantly British people

for whom so many of the streets are named, and I focus on the names as just street names rather than actual people, English and anglicized language is still dominant. The dominance of Whiteness, however, is not just because the official signage of the streets is in English; the repetition of the signs has added exclusionary effects.

Kumashiro (2002) argues that repetition of particular symbols can be oppressive by causing marginalized and silenced people “to experience, again and again, the privileging of only certain ways of identifying, thinking, or relating to others” (p. 68). Languages besides English are present today in The Ward, but they are contained, often paired with an English translation. They do not have the certainty of permanence that street name signs do, with a few exceptions such as the Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb plaques (Ontario Heritage Trust, 2016) that are written in both English and Chinese languages and are firmly cemented into the ground (see Images 8 and 9 below). Using the Lumb plaques as an example, even when commemorations do provide representation of people and histories that are not English-speaking and white, they are

Image 8. Plaques for Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb written in English and Chinese languages.

Source: Jean Lumb Foundation, 2009. Photo credit to Alan L. Brown.



Image 9. Plaques for Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb at south end of Elizabeth Street, north of City Hall.

Source: Google Street View, June 2019



surrounded and overshadowed by markers of dominance that operationalize the space and convey senses of power. Parking regulation signs, ‘STOP’ signs, street name signs, and the towering buildings—all property continuing the development of the colonial fort (Donald, 2009)—make a plaque in a garden seem tiny. When I travelled through the space that was The Ward, both as an everyday commuter and then later as a researcher making note of various historic and racialized representations, I did not actually encounter these plaques in person, hence my borrowing of images from The Jean Lumb Foundation’s website and Google Street View. As can be seen in Image 9, the plaques are small within the scale of their surroundings, blending in with other features of spatial décor and are not active or directive, so any educational effects they convey largely rely on people seeking them out. Meanwhile, the city as a product of colonialism is marked and engaged at every turn. Additionally, some may see the Chinese

language of the plaque shown in Image 8 as a disruption to the English dominance, and indeed the Chinese language can count for something in terms of Chinese presence, but English remains the foundation even on the Chinese-language plaque. ‘Jean Lumb’ is written out in the English and Romanized presentation of the name, and the Chinese name written in Chinese-language characters is in brackets, being made secondary. If the Chinese version of the plaque was meant to provide Chinese representation, thereby normalizing the historic presence of a Chinese community in Toronto, I question why the English and Romanized name is necessary on the Chinese-language sign.

The street signs are repeated at each street corner, reasserting English as official and dominant street sign by street sign, confirming senses of ownership and belonging for those who recognize English as *their* language, and supporting senses of English as official and permanent. If a street name sign is damaged, the city will arrange to have it fixed or replaced, paying for it with citizens’ tax dollars and maintaining the permanence of English as the language of the public. English, then, is public, supposedly representative of and accessible by all citizens; other languages are conditionally present. Of course, there are Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour who are fully literate in English, and for some of them English is the only language with which they can communicate. They are, however, historically linked to languages that are not English and that became disconnected from these people after generations of racist colonial dominance. There are no signs of Indigenous languages present in or around The Ward, which allows for the colonial narrative of Toronto being a British-founded city to continue. The perpetuation of the colonial narrative enables British-looking (read white) people to go unquestioned, as well as anyone who is not white to be read as being secondary to the space. In parts of the city outside of The Ward such as the area now known as Chinatown, there are street

name signs featuring Chinese characters. At the intersection of Spadina Road and Davenport Road (approximately 3 kilometres north of the northwest corner of The Ward) the street name signs for Spadina Road and Davenport Road include the honorary (read unofficial) names of *Ishpadinaa* and *Gete-Onigaming*, respectively, from the Anishinaabemowin language. If Chinese languages, Indigenous languages, or any other languages besides English, were not deemed secondary and unofficial, perhaps they would be on the parking regulation signs, street signs, and the names of the towering buildings, not just on plaques or honorary add-ons, separate from the official operations of the city space.

Along Dundas Street West from University Avenue to Bay Street, there are restaurants that predominantly feature various Asian cuisines, including different types of Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Hakka, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese food. Despite the range of cuisines, this area is said by some online pop culture commentary to be unofficially but increasingly dubbed ‘Little Tokyo’ (Grief, 2017, June 17). The moniker identifies it as distinct from the city around it, thereby creating a social understanding of the area being contained. I took the photographs in Images 10 and 11 (see below) while standing at the corner of Dundas Street West and Centre Avenue, capturing Image 10 while looking east and Image 11 while looking west. In Image 10, there are several examples of different Asian languages present on the signs of restaurants that provide food of various Asian cultural cuisines. The presence of so many vehicles on the road becomes telling, however, because the directive signs that convey the government-enforced laws of driving are shown in English (e.g., the MAXIMUM on the speed limit sign; the STOP on the stop sign at the corner; the words written on the ‘No Parking’ sign in front of the Hong Shing restaurant). In Image 11, there is a greatly diminished representation of Asian languages on commercial properties, but the directive signs remain prominent. Anyone

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who cannot read English would not know that they are being told not to block the intersection or that certain streets are closed due to construction. The effects of this are about who controls the space and who is read as aligning (or not) with the powers that be.

The various Asian languages are layered on top of the city space's official foundation of English—the colonial bedrock—which was made dominant through colonization and now continuously covers over any indications of the land being Indigenous territory. Where the Asian languages do appear, they move from highly prominent to almost disappearing entirely, all with a single turn of my head. English continues in all directions, enabling the banality of English and reaffirming perceptions of (racialized) Asian people as conditionally present. On the days that I rollerbladed to work, to avoid higher volumes of traffic, I chose to travel on Edward Street, which is one street north and runs parallel with Dundas Street West. On Edward Street, there was

Image 10. Looking east from corner of Dundas Street West and Centre Avenue. Several Asian languages and cuisines are represented, but act as layers of cultural representation on top of the colonial/white bedrock of English.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



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Image 11. Looking west from corner of Dundas Street West and Centre Avenue. The Asian cultural representations have largely disappeared in this photograph, but the colonial/white bedrock of English remains.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



no significant presence of the Asian languages and representations, if any at all, but English was still all around me. Despite the space in which I rollerbladed being that of an historic Chinese community, I had the choice to travel in a way such that the presence of Asian cultures and languages went unseen. This focused area of restaurants featuring Asian cuisines—surrounded by blocks of multi-storey buildings of government, legal, and financial operations—is located along a stretch of Dundas Street West that flanks Elizabeth Street, which was the main street running through Toronto’s original Chinatown until the 1940s. This area of the city is no longer the cultural centre it once was, but the Whiteness has been maintained and further developed.

The Asian languages presented are not on official signs or made to appear permanent. If they are used repeatedly, it is generally because there are multiple restaurants or shops of the

same culture in the same contained area, rather than because the language articulates (with) the wider city. If any of these businesses fail, the signs and the languages on them are removed while English remains along all the streets. It might be argued that although ‘Chinatown’ and ‘Little Tokyo’ are in reference to two different Asian countries, this section of Dundas Street West today can be seen as reminiscent of the space being a crack in the bedrock of colonialism and Whiteness throughout the city (Grant & Stanley, 2014). I and other online writers, however, suggest that it should not be understood as some sort of recognized Japanese or even pan-Asian neighbourhood, as “it’s only a commercial zone made up of restaurants, cafes and one store” (O’Mara, 2016, June 18). More than anything, they are places where people who work in the surrounding office buildings, as I did, can buy food on their lunch breaks. The restaurants are *permitted* and are *contained* within the space, but do not hold authority over the space, as they are subject to the municipal, provincial, and federal laws and regulations. If they are cracks in the bedrock, the system of Whiteness restricts just how much they can chisel. These areas of racialized and cultural representation are given distinct identity within the city because they appear as *different* in relation to a normalized, dominant imagined community (Anderson, 2006). Thus, they should not be thought of as divorced from the Whiteness.

Markers of The Ward presented in languages other than English and representing cultures and racializations other than white are “unofficial” and not part of the hegemonic body. It should be noted, though, that there are some “unofficial” signs (i.e., signs that represent establishments not deemed public property and therefore not within the official government’s responsibilities for obligatory maintenance) that do align with and therefore reinforce the dominance of Whiteness. In the spring of 2019, approximately six years later from my days of rollerblading to work, with all the street names unchanged, I walked through the streets of the former Ward and saw two

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types of banners repeatedly suspended from streetlight posts that lined the sides of the streets. The banners (see Image 12 below) were part of advertising for the *9 & 99: The Howe Gretzky Exhibition* at the Hockey Hall of Fame, which is located at the intersection of Yonge Street and Front Street, just less than a kilometre south of The Ward's southeast corner. Much like the YWCA banners shown earlier, these Hockey Hall of Fame banners hung from streetlight posts, which require permission from the city government to be put in place. The Gretzky and Howe banners differed, however, because they were repeated, light post by light post, throughout the downtown streets, and their visual presentation does not suggest an attempt at conveying inclusion of people who have been historically excluded. The visuals suggest an assumption that everybody already knows the names and faces of Gretzky and Howe. The visuals of the women

Image 12. Banners for The Howe Gretzky Exhibition. Shown in English only and with no images of Gretzky or Howe, suggesting assumptions that the so-called public are all fluent in English and follow hockey.

Source: Hockey Hall of Fame Facebook Page, January 2020



of colour on the YWCA banners attempts to represent people of colour as included in the social makeup of the city because they were historically and still often are seen as new. Gretzky and Howe, admittedly of celebrity status but nonetheless both white men, represent the supposed *norm*, so their racialized identities do not require visual representation.

I grew up playing and watching hockey, learning the names of *the greats* from both the past and then-present, and I have a father and grandfather who are fans of the Detroit Red Wings in the National Hockey League (NHL). For these reasons, when I saw the banners repeating along the streets, I knew the “9” corresponded with the “Howe” on the red and white banner because red and white are the colours of the Detroit Red Wings, which is a team Gordie Howe played for in the NHL. I also knew that the “99” was in reference to “Gretzky” on the blue, white, and orange banner because those are the colours of the Edmonton Oilers that Wayne Gretzky played with in his early NHL career. Being a hockey fan and being fluent in English were assumed by the Hockey Hall of Fame to be traits of members of the public, and the city government perpetuated this version of ‘public’ by approving the placement of the banners, yet again claiming the city space as property to be controlled.

For the banners to be effective, people need to be able to read the words and recognize the meanings that are being conveyed. The designs of the banners with the key colours, numbers, and names appeared to be primarily targeting people already familiar with these players and teams. In one sense, the banners work to (re)create an imagined community inclusive of those who know the affiliations of the names, numbers, and colours and need not question what these signs mean. The parameters of that imagined community, however, are more narrowly defined than simply who knows the teams and players. National Hockey League games have been aired

on Canadian television networks in English and French for decades. In recent years some games are now covered in Inuktitut, Italian, Punjabi, Tagalog, Cree, Cantonese, and Mandarin in recognition of hockey fans being of cultures and languages other than English- and French-Canadian (CBC News, 2019 March 24; Schram, 2021, April 15). Upon doing a quick Google search of “Canada’s game,” the first result was a line from a 2015 James H. Marsh article in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* that states, “That hockey is ‘our game’ is incontestable.” A similar search on the Chapters Indigo website resulted in a long list of books with titles tied to hockey as Canada’s game or “our” game. Hockey is even one of Canada’s two official national sports (lacrosse being the other). The sport and the country are presented as intertwined such that being Canadian means knowing about hockey. While television networks may entertain the vision of ‘Canadian’ and hockey fans as including a wide range of cultures and languages, the Hockey Hall of Fame banners do not acknowledge that range of people. The “us” and “them” I read are not about who is and is not a hockey fan. The subject of the banners represents an imagined community where being a hockey fan and knowing the numbers and colours means being Canadian, but it is secondary to its linguistic and racialized inclusions and exclusions. The effects of the banners exclude all the languages I mentioned, and therefore the people who speak them, by appealing to the dominant *public* language of English. This appeal again reaffirms the white, British colonial foundations as legitimate, enabling the reading of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour as “add-ons” to the social makeup of the space.

Understandably, one banner hanging from a streetlamp post does not have the room to include the multitude of languages spoken by people who live and work in The Ward today. The banner designer’s decision to use English and the banners being repeated throughout the city, however, speaks to how English is understood as the standard, giving it meaning of being “old”

in this space, which articulates (with) the way the space is claimed through how it is marked. I have given several examples to show how English is made dominant through the official signage on street corners; through languages other than English being “outside” the community, contained as *different*, and ephemeral; and through the Hockey Hall of Fame banners exemplifying how “unofficial” and ephemeral markers in English are repeated and not distinctly contained. The space in which English is shown as a mainstay is marked as being Canada through the numerous Canadian flags that officially and unofficially fly throughout The Ward. Flags and the symbols associated with them (e.g., the large maple leaf outside of City Hall or the maple leaf molded into the lids of Tim Horton’s to-go coffee cups) do the official and unofficial, active and passive work of marking and claiming territory, identifying a territory as belonging to a particular group (Billig, 1995). There are unofficial, non-Canadian flags that fly in The Ward, such as the flag of Thailand I observed hanging outside of a Thai-cuisine restaurant, or the company flag outside of the Moores Clothing for Men store. These flags mark single spots, though, and are for commercial purposes, making them appear as anomalies in comparison to the repeated Canada, Ontario, and Toronto flags that are read as the “owners” of the space.

Throughout The Ward, there are different national, provincial, and territorial flags, with particular flags being repeated in different locations, creating a variety of meanings for the work the flags were and are doing. The flag most repeated across The Ward was Canada’s national flag: on flagpoles on the traffic island dividing northbound and southbound traffic lanes at the intersection of University Avenue and Queen Street West; outside the current Toronto City Hall and Old City Hall; above entry doors and on rooftops of office buildings and hotels; and even on the exterior walls of spas and restaurants. In many of these cases, the Canadian flag was accompanied by the Ontario provincial flag, which includes in its design the Union Jack flag of

the United Kingdom positioned in the upper-left corner of the Ontario flag. In front of Old City Hall, accompanying the Canada and Ontario flags on the World War I and II cenotaph is the Union Jack itself—not just embedded in the Ontario flag—marking Canada’s continued link to Britain.

Outside of Toronto City Hall, on specific days, flags of different organizations or nations are raised because “Flag raisings enhance public awareness of activities such as fundraising drives, multi-cultural events and national or independence days” (City of Toronto, 2020b, “Flag-Raising & Half-Masting”). There are also flags of five Indigenous nations displayed: Mississaugas of the New Credit, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Métis, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (see Image 13 below). As shown here, there is representation of nations that are not

Image 13. Indigenous flags outside of Toronto City Hall. These flags are not repeated around the city, thereby keeping acknowledgement of the city as Indigenous territory contained to this single spot.

Source: Urban Toronto website, 2017. Photograph credit to Matthew Derohanessian.



Canada or the United Kingdom. However, the City of Toronto flies the Canadian flag on at least two poles and follows the protocol that “the Canadian flag should always be flown on its own mast. It should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag” (City of Toronto, 2020, “Flag-Raising & Half-Masting”). Of the numerous flag poles outside of City Hall, the ‘Official Flag Pole’ on which only the Canadian flag is ever flown is 99 feet tall, unlike the other poles that either extend from walls or are less than 20 feet tall. No matter how many different types of flags are flown at this location, they all fly physically under the Canadian flag, indicating that they are *permitted* within the controlled space (Hage, 2000) and that the national structure of Canada is dominant, maintaining the space in white, colonial-rooted terms. The flag of Canada flies highest, is repeated throughout the city, and links with the everyday national symbols (e.g., the maple leaf on police name badges, Tim Horton’s coffee cup lids, or storefront displays of clothing at Roots). Throughout the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the British colonizer’s creation of Canada is represented as the dominant but banal authority.

The Indigenous nations’ flags are not repeated around the city in the same ways as the Canadian or Ontario flags, and their presence outside of City Hall is representation under authorization of the government. The Indigenous nature of the space becomes marginalized by the flags being contained to one spot. Despite the work that flags are meant to do in marking ownership, that spot cannot even be legally claimed as Indigenous space, but rather is tokenized presence of Indigenous representation within what has become Canadian space, as shown by the repeated and towering Canadian flags. On the south side of City Hall, positioned near all the flags, there is a large TORONTO sign. On the left side of the sign is an Indigenous Medicine

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Wheel, and on the right side of the sign is a large maple leaf—a symbol of Canada, as shown through the national flag (see Image 14 below). Tourists often stand with the sign to take photographs to commemorate their visit to the city. The Medicine Wheel is a symbol of spirituality used by some—not all—Indigenous groups and, like the various Indigenous flags, is positioned to convey the message that Indigenous nations are part of Canada. Setting aside for a moment the problematic aspects of suggesting that Indigenous nations are parts of Canada—I will return to that shortly—the Medicine Wheel does not include any explanation to the public that it is an Indigenous symbol. The effect of making Indigenous peoples symbolically present relies on people already being familiar with some Indigenous ways of knowing, which have been

Image 14. TORONTO sign with maple leaf and Indigenous medicine wheel. The medicine wheel is shown as a generic Indigenous symbol, but is not identified as Indigenous, allowing for token representation without acknowledging the colonization that makes Indigenous representation necessary.

Source: Photograph taken by author, 2019.



systemically and systematically excluded throughout history. Without explanation, the Medicine Wheel could just as easily be mistaken for a symbol of multiculturalism, given that the Government of Canada brands the country as multicultural, with an official *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988). However, even for people who are familiar with the Medicine Wheel's link to Indigenous knowledges, this generic representation of Indigenous nations is also subject to contained and therefore marginalized presence. While some might argue that the flags and Medicine Wheel are signs of inclusion of Indigenous peoples, this argument would overlook not only the ongoing effects of racisms enacted against Indigenous nations by government systems (e.g., the Indian Residential School system), but also the ties that different Indigenous nations have to specific territories of land. The Mississaugas of the Credit flag is present, yes, but not in any way that specifically identifies the space as traditional Mississaugas territory. Symbols of the Mississaugas' presence in this space, along with the few other token markers of Indigenous peoples, are authorized by the government. They are uncritically qualified as being part of Canada rather than nations distinct from Canada, and are easily erased if the City of Toronto government decided to remove the flag.

Looking at the ways that markers relate to each other, the space of The Ward is shown to belong to Canada with English as the public (dominant) language. If English is shown as the “old insider” language of Canadians, then non-English languages and the racializations that correlate with them become read as the “new outsider” identities. Advertisements in numerous bus stop shelters throughout The Ward act as evidence of the “old insider”-“new outsider” binary. Inside several shelters were posters advertising a company that offers employment mentoring for newcomers, stating that newcomers “make *our* country strong and more diverse” (see Image 15

below; emphasis added). Each poster featured a portrait of a person that appeared to be transformed from an everyday image of the person into a cartoonish rendering. Written entirely in English, the prominent caption accompanying the portrait presented the words “I AM (A NEW) CANADIAN”. In significantly smaller print below the caption, the year the person in the picture arrived in Canada was written. The man in Image 15, who I racialize as Indian, was said to have arrived to Canada in 2013, which was six years prior to my seeing the poster in the bus shelter. Other posters from the same company featured different people, but all appeared to be people of colour. These posters were not inside every bus shelter, but their images and

Image 15. Poster in bus shelter advertising mentoring for newcomers.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



message were repeated so as to become a notable marker of the space. As I read each poster, my immediate questions were: are all newcomers racialized people? How long must someone live in Canada before they are no longer “new”? I recognize that not all newcomers are racialized people, and there is no definitive amount of time to remove the label of “new.” These posters, however, did not reflect this, and I still pondered the questions through a more rhetorical lens, thinking about how the senses of belonging are presented and developed (or not) in Canada.

The posters in the bus stop shelters equated ownership of Canada with those who are literate in English, which plays on the banality of a dominant, European-originated, and white-colonizer language in the space. Newcomers—all shown to be people of colour—are being welcomed and aided in “our country” (Hage, 2000). The design of the poster above teaches people how to read the person in the picture. Rather than simply being a Canadian, Rajeev is specifically labelled as a “new Canadian,” qualifying his presence. People of colour, then, become labelled as “new” and “from somewhere else,” lending a sense of legitimacy to white people continuously asking, “Where are you *really* from?” regardless of whether the person of colour arrived in Canada yesterday or are fifth-generation Canadian (Shadd, 2001). Additionally, the poster presents a narrative of Rajeev going “from factory work to starting his own accounting company,” portraying Rajeev as a struggling immigrant and Canada as the redeemer country (Roman & Stanley, 1997). The narrative, then, is that not only are people of colour new, but they come to Canada in a position of deficit, and Canada—the white, English-speaking country—will save the poor person of colour. Ultimately, the message this poster and others like it repeatedly contribute to is that white, English-literate people were here first, and they established the bedrock on which Toronto and the wider Canada were built.

Some may argue that it is common knowledge that Indigenous people are not “new,” and that the history of The Ward largely consists of histories of people of colour and marginalized groups, so, again, they can be seen as not “new”. Where, then, are their languages and names and statues beyond the tokenized, contained, and ephemeral markers? Their presence and belonging in the space of The Ward, and in the wider city of Toronto, as shown by Awad Ibrahim’s, Desmond Cole’s, and Justine Yu’s experiences, requires qualification and justification. The need to justify existence in the space extends Cooper’s earlier-mentioned description of the Black experience in Canada to people of colour and Indigenous people in Canada. The lived experiences of people with these various racialized identities are not necessarily the same, but the general effects upon their presence are shared. The histories of Indigenous peoples, of Black people, and of people and communities of colour are silenced, excluded, and erased from the space they once occupied, which is an erasure that contributes to them being read as “new” and “outsiders” in the space. It leaves white, English-speaking people as those who can claim a history and belonging in the sociohistorical geography.

Histories Erased

There has been a range of academic engagement with Indigenous, racialized, and marginalized histories of Toronto, and more specifically of The Ward (see referenced sources below), which includes histories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Black, Jewish, and Chinese communities that once occupied The Ward. I turn to this work as opposed to sifting through archives myself because I am not seeking to produce a new or different history. My investigation for this chapter is not focused on one specific history of the space, and rather I seek to historicize the ways the space is shaped and marked in dominant, racist ways. For this reason, my aim here is not to present an in-depth telling of each community. Rather, I make use of the

scholarship in existence to present snapshots of when each community came to be distinct; what the social and professional makeup of each community was like; the racisms they faced; and how these histories become erased in the present-day social geography, thereby validating perceptions of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour as always new and outsiders.

Prior to British colonization, the Mississaugas of the Credit were the keepers of the land that became the British colonial settlement of York and that is now the downtown core of Toronto. Present-day Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation provide on their website an historical overview (2018) explaining that the Mississaugas are part of the Anishinaabe Nation whose territory was on the north side of Lake Huron until the late-1600s. As their overview presents, they came to occupy the space of what is now Toronto after repeated conflict throughout the 1600s with the Haudenosaunee, whose territory was in southern Ontario, and who were violently encroaching on Mississaugas territory. After the Mississaugas pushed the Haudenosaunee back to southern Ontario and the two groups signed a peace treaty, around 1695, a large group of the Mississaugas decided to move from the north side of Lake Huron to establish a territory spread out between what is now Toronto and the eastern end of Lake Erie. With no mention of any interactions with French colonizers prior to British colonization, the Mississaugas' historical overview explains that they remained in this territory from the late-1600s and throughout most of the 1700s until the British colonial government sought control of the land and approached the Mississaugas to negotiate a land agreement.

In 1787, the British colonial representatives and the Mississaugas agreed on the *Toronto Purchase*, leaving the British to believe they purchased and therefore controlled the land. Unlike the British understandings of land as property to be bought, sold, and possessed (Moreton-Robinson, 2015), the Mississaugas of the Credit “did not believe that land could be ‘sold,’ or that

their rights to use land and access resources for food and living, could be absolutely and permanently signed away” (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, n.d., p. 13). They also “believed their lands were held in common, unlike the settlers who believed in the individual ownership of land” (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, n.d., p. 13). In 1794—one year after York (now Toronto) was founded—the British representatives realized that the agreement lacked a written description of the land purchased, rendering it void. The British and the Mississaugas then revisited the agreement and, in 1805, *Toronto Purchase Treaty 13* saw the land agreement re-confirmed, but “with a surreptitious increase in the amount of land surrendered” to the British (Freeman, 2010, p. 24). In the end, the British “purchased” just less than four million acres of the Mississaugas territory, leaving the Mississaugas with around 200 acres and being required to repeatedly negotiate with colonial government for the rights to fish in a variety of waters (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, n.d., p. 13). As time went by and the Mississaugas attempted to adapt to the changing physical and social geography of their territory, it became “increasingly clear that the community would have to relocate to an area less directly disturbed by Euro-Canadian settlement” (p. 14). As told in the historical overview, “in 1847 the Mississaugas accepted an offer from the Six Nations to establish a new settlement on a tract of land situated in the southwest portion of the Six Nations Reserve” (p. 14) in southern Ontario.

According to 2010 news reports that provided updates in the Mississaugas’ case seeking proper compensation for the land deal with the British, “The Mississaugas filed two claims in the late 1980s. Ottawa [the Canadian federal government] spurned talks until 2003” (Reinhart, 2010, January 27) and then negotiated with the Mississaugas for seven years. In 2010, the Mississaugas of the New Credit accepted a settlement of \$145-million from the Canadian federal government.

The Mississaugas' then-Chief Bryan LaForme stated that the money is “a good start for us [Mississaugas] and it prepares us for the future” (Reinhart, 2010, January 27). The phrasing “a good start” is telling of how the Mississaugas' do not see their relationship with their territory as finished, holding true to their ways of knowing that their connection to the land cannot be permanently signed away. My reading of the chief's statement is that the financial settlement is “a good start” to wider efforts for righting a wrong of the past. Indeed, the money can be supportive of the Mississaugas community, but it does not disrupt the exclusions of the Mississaugas histories and marked presence in the space of Toronto.

The relationships with the land that the Mississaugas lived by (some of which may still be practiced by the Mississaugas of the New Credit) are not part of the way their territory in Toronto is now structured. That the Mississaugas called the area of Toronto “Wonscotonach,” an Anishinaabewmowin word meaning “Back Burnt Grounds,” is not found in the streets of the city. Casagrande (2013) offers a reminder that more European-sounding names were “given to what was nameless for the European explorer” (p. 291). In giving names to places that were already named, the Mississaugas history and presence becomes buried—sometimes literally—under a colonial project of development. The grid design of the streets, the traffic signs and lights, and the towering buildings are all part of understandings of space being owned in the public-private binary of the cityscape. Public lands are not “held in common,” as the streets, sidewalks, and traffic laws designate how these spaces are to be used as forms of property, rather than in sustainable relationships for life. Following Donald's (2009) discussion of colonial frontier logic, the absence of representations of the Mississaugas and their histories in Toronto allows for the perceived validation of the “myth that forts facilitated the civilization of the land and brought civilization to the Indians, [and] we can see that the histories and experiences of

Aboriginal peoples are necessarily positioned as outside the concern of Canadians” (p. 3). The single Mississaugas of the Credit flag hanging outside of City Hall acts as a sort of reserve. It enables the municipal government to point to inclusion, but it minimizes and contains the Mississaugas to a particular place in the *civilized* fort that has become Toronto (i.e., the paved streets, the towering buildings, the repeated flags and symbols of Canadian nationalism, the English-language signs marking city property). The supposedly civilized fort marginalizes—all but erases—the memory of the histories of the Mississaugas in this space. Indications of their presence were long ago paved over as part of the colonial project, imposing British colonizer bodies and all they brought with them—English language, white identity, private-public understandings of property (Moreton-Robinson, 2015)—as the foundational features. Additional racialized histories exist within The Ward, but they have also been largely buried under the city development started by the colonizers.

The presence of Black bodies in what is now Toronto did not start with the arrival of those escaping American enslavement via the Underground Railroad and those immigrating to the city. People racialized as Black were enslaved in what is now Canada by early European settler colonizers, with the earliest record of a Black enslaved person being from 1629 (Canadian Museum of History, n.d., Virtual Museum of New France) and the institution of slavery being legally in place until it was fully abolished in British colonies and territories in 1834 (Trudel, 1960). Henry (2018, August 1) states that “Town of York censuses from between 1797 and 1808 counted 13 enslaved Black men, women, and children owned by provincial administrator Peter Russell, provincial secretary and registrar William Jarvis, and Solicitor General Robert Gray.” Upper Canada Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe championed the *Act to Limit Slavery* in Upper Canada in 1793, but slavery was not legally abolished until 1833 with the *Slavery*

Abolition Act, which was only enforced throughout all British Colonies starting on August 1st, 1834 (Winks, 1997). This is not to say that the only Black people in York/Toronto prior to 1834 were enslaved, as there were free and emancipated Black people there. The point is that although Black bodies have been present in what is now Toronto as long as white bodies, the white bodies had the power to legally control Black bodies for over 200 years. Even after that, various levels of government dominated by white men continued to attempt placing qualifications on Black presence.

In 1850, the *Common Schools Act* was established and granted school district councils authority to create schools for “coloured children” to keep them out of public schools (McLaren, 2004). The last of these segregated schools in Ontario closed in 1965 (Henry, 2019). Although schools for “coloured children” were never implemented in Toronto, the significance is that there were official options to place conditions on the education of Black children that were not being imposed on the education of white children. The fact that these separate schools did not occur in Toronto should not overshadow the power that a white government held over Black bodies. In 1911, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier and his Liberal Party cabinet approved Order-in-Council P.C. 1324 which proposed banning for one year “any immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada” (Yarhi, 2020). The Order-in-Council went as far as being signed and submitted to the Governor General; however, it was never declared law (Troper, 1972). Troper (1972) suspects although never confirmed that Laurier vetoed the Order due to the potential for raising diplomatic tensions with the United States and upsetting Black voters in commonly Liberal ridings. Nonetheless, the Order-in-Council’s proposal and approval by the political party in power—that immigration specifically by Black people was even an issue of debate—spoke volumes to continued potential for white

control over Black bodies. In 1943, when Hugh Burnett, a Black 25-year-old man, was refused service in a restaurant in Dresden, Ontario, because he was Black, he wrote a letter to Liberal federal deputy minister Louis St. Laurent, to which St. Laurent responded by telling Burnett that racial discrimination was not against the law (Henry, 2019). The discrimination against Burnett was technically a provincial matter in legal terms and was therefore out of St. Laurent's federal jurisdiction. Ontario's *Racial Discrimination Act* of 1944 made illegal "any notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation indicating discrimination or an intention to discriminate against any person or class of persons for any purpose because of the race or creed of such person or class of persons." Nonetheless, St. Laurent's response remains indicative of white men in power condoning, if not actively pursuing, the control and exclusion of Black bodies. From the 1830s to approximately the 1890s, as slavery ended but (the option for) white control continued, The Ward contributed to centralizing the Black community in Toronto.

Literature and records are unclear about when a Black community distinctly took form in The Ward, but Shadd, Cooper, and Smardz Frost (2005) describe that when "the city did not have a defined Black neighbourhood, St. John's Ward was a favourite place of residence for many immigrant families" (p. 33). Scholars who do examine the Black community of The Ward (see Henry, 2018, August 1; Lorinc, McClelland, Sheinberg, & Taylor, 2015; Smardz Frost, 2017) commonly emphasize the Black residents as made up largely of Freedom Seekers and free Black people who fled to Canada from the United States after the *Slavery Abolition Act* became enforced in 1834. Shadd, Cooper, and Smardz Frost (2005) state that "On first arrival, former slaves and free Black immigrants often boarded with families in St. John's Ward" (p. 33). Why the first Black residents of The Ward chose to live there is not known for certain, but there are suggestions that the low cost of housing provided incentive to stay (Shadd, Cooper, & Smardz

Frost, 2005, p. 35). Within a little over a decade after the *Abolition Act*, Black people in Toronto owned houses and businesses, and worked in a variety of professions, including as blacksmiths, carpenters, hairdressers and barbers, grocery store operators, dressmakers, and a few as medical doctors—much of the professional stuff one might expect to find in an established community. By the mid-1850s, there were approximately 500 Black people living in The Ward, which is estimated to be half of the racialized Black population of Toronto (Henry, 2018, August 1).

In addition to everyday life, The Ward became the hub where in growing numbers, “A diverse Black population commemorated Emancipation Day: former locally enslaved Blacks and their descendants; Black Loyalists and their descendants; free Blacks, freedom seekers, Canadian-born Blacks, and West Indian immigrants” (Henry, 2018, August 1). Black people and families lived and worked in areas of Toronto besides The Ward, but inside the neighbourhood “were celebrations and picnics, musical events and bazaars, often to raise money to help incoming refugees and advance the work of anti-slavery” (Smardz Frost, 2015, p. 69). Churches in The Ward that served predominantly Black congregations doubled as centres from which societal organizations could offer services to the Black community. Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, who were formerly enslaved in Kentucky, escaped to freedom, and became successful entrepreneurs in Toronto—including starting Toronto’s first horse-drawn taxi service called *The City*—purchased six houses in The Ward and rented them at low costs to the families of freedom seekers (Smardz Frost, 2015). As this snapshot shows, The Ward was a core space in the fight against American slavery and in support of Black people, whether they were freedom seekers or not.

After the American Civil War ended in 1865, thereby abolishing legal slavery in the United States, some of The Ward’s Black residents who had sought freedom from enslavement

returned to the country that once placed them in bondage. In the latter years of the 19th century, some of the Black residents who had not moved (back) to the United States relocated to other areas of Toronto. This did not mean that Black residents began to spread out across the city. Despite the support for the abolition movement, Toronto was and is not free of anti-Black racism. As stated on the plaque commemorating Albert Jackson, by the late-1910s, the neighbourhood around the intersection of College and Bathurst—one major intersection west of the northwest corner of The Ward—“was becoming a centre of Black life in the city.” After moving on from The Ward, Black people still needed a space where they could feel they belong. Levine (2014) shows that even into the late 1950s, Black residents of Toronto were often turned down in their efforts to purchase real estate, due to opinions that their presence would reduce the value of surrounding properties. Markings of the community of Black people that once lived, worked, celebrated, and gave shape to the historic streets of The Ward, however, are minimal, offering little to tell people racialized as Black that it is or ever was also their space.

As an example of a still-present spatial feature from the days of the Black community in The Ward, the Church of the Holy Trinity still stands, although it is encircled by the Eaton Centre shopping mall and a towering hotel near the intersection of Yonge Street and Queen Street West. The church was built in 1847 and was a stop for celebrants on the 1852 Emancipation Day parade route “where Rev. Henry Grasett delivered a sermon” (Henry, 2018, August 1). If, however, one takes the time to find the church hidden behind the large commercial buildings, there is nothing to indicate the relationship that the Black community held with the church, or that Emancipation Day celebrations ever took place in The Ward at all. That The Ward was once a central space where freedom seekers could find support is not evident in any of the space’s markings. The homes of Black supporters of freedom seekers were torn down and

paved over through city development. In contrast, St. George's Hall, a two-storey red-brick building built in 1891 that housed support services for British immigrants, still stands near the corner of Elm Street and Yonge Street and is designated a National Historic Site. Black bodies are not shown as part of the history of the space as it is today. As mentioned earlier, with a history to claim in the space, white bodies are presented as "old" and unconditionally belonging; the erasure of the histories including Black people results in Black bodies being understood as "new" and occupying the space only in qualified ways. There are no signs in The Ward today saying "No Black People Allowed," but there is also little to show that Black people have a historic presence in the space and therefore that Black bodies are not "new".

Following the years of The Ward being a space of a Black community, The Ward was also home to a large Jewish community, with the peak years for the number of Jewish residents being between 1905 and 1912 (Chan, 2011, p. 36). The initial Jewish residents were East European Jews (Murdie & Teixeira, 2000), but, as John McAree wrote in a May 1, 1912, *MacLean's* magazine article, "The streets [of The Ward] swarm[ed] with old Jews and young, flashily dressed young Jews in the latest Queen Street styles, and patriarchal old Jews in gabardine and skull cap" (p. 18). McAree's description comes through a racist gaze as his comments suggest that there is some sort of observable essence to Jewish people, regardless of what they are wearing. People from eastern Europe are likely (although not certainly) to appear physically different from people from Ethiopia, and yet both regions of the world have histories of Jewish populations (Bruder, 2008). There is nothing inherent about the physical makeup of a Jewish person. With a high Jewish population in The Ward, McAree may have been correct that the young people he saw were "young Jews in the latest Queen Street styles," but there is nothing stated to confirm that these people identified as Jewish. Thus, McAree perpetuated the

racialization of ‘Jewish.’ Various scholarly sources (e.g. Levine, 2014; Murdie & Teixeira, 2000; Rosenberg, 2003) estimate that by 1912 the Jewish population of the neighbourhood was around 15,000 to 18,000, making living space quite compact. As Murdie and Teixeira (2000) declare, The Ward “became a self-contained Jewish community with a high degree of institutional completeness in terms of its cultural, religious, and educational facilities, as well as Jewish businesses serving the needs of the community” (p. 7). Though it may have been self-contained, the Jewish community was not sheltered from the city outside of The Ward and the racisms that it brought.

While some members of the Jewish community did come from Europe, and I earlier emphasized a correlation of European with white, at the time of the Jewish neighbourhood in focus, racisms determined ‘Jewish’ to be a “race” unto itself, different from white. It was a racialization that was commonly and openly targeted and discriminated against in Canada into the 1960s (Levine, 2014), as well as something still occurring now two decades into the 21st century. As evidence of this, the Toronto Police Service’s 2019 *Annual Hate Crime Statistical Report* showed 32% of hate crimes (44 of 139 incidents in one year) were directed at Jews. While The Ward was known as a Jewish neighbourhood, Jewish children still experienced bullying at school, and there are countless stories of violent assaults and neighbourhood vandalism against the Jewish community in The Ward. They were one of the targeted groups when public discourse turned to the causes of the city’s ills. Many white citizens of British birth or background found Jews to be disruptive of their visions for a “White Canada Forever” (Levine, 2014). This attitude was found in various parts of Canada in addition to Toronto (see also Ward’s (1978) book *White Canada Forever* for analysis of white British Columbian racisms toward racialized Asian people between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries). While racisms take

different shapes and have different effects of exclusion for varying racialized people and groups depending on context (Stanley, 2011; 2014), the maintenance of Whiteness—white supremacy—was and seemingly continues to be the common denominator across different forms of racism in Canada.

Like so many racialized groups who faced and continue to face racism, the Jewish community did not crumble in the face of anti-Semitism, and they sought even more so to solidify their place within the Toronto cityscape (Levine, 2014). Although a recognized Jewish community remained in The Ward until about 1920, from around 1912 to 1915, in response to overcrowding, a significant number of Jewish residents and businesses moved two major blocks westward to Kensington Market. Anti-Semitism, however, continued and carries on today. As one of the more (in)famous incidents of anti-Semitism in Toronto, in 1933, a team of Jewish baseball players and a group of anti-Semitic spectators clashed in violence that escalated to an altercation known as the Christie Pits Riot.

Christie Pits is a recreational space with a baseball diamond and greenspace located on Bloor Street West, about halfway between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue, and approximately two major blocks north and two-and-a-half blocks west of The Ward's northwest corner. On the 80th anniversary of the riot, Joe Black, a man who as a child witnessed the outbreak of violence, shared his recollection with CBC's program, *The National* (2013). Black recalled that the riot occurred at a local baseball game where one team was identified as mostly Jewish players. The other team was identified as mostly Italian players. A group of onlookers said to be members of the 'Pit Gang' unrolled a large cloth sheet along a hill next to the baseball diamond and displayed a large Swastika painted on the sheet. When the team of Jewish players, along with members of the Italian team, took it upon themselves to remove the flag, the group of

Nazi supporters pushed back and began chanting “Heil Hitler”. At that point, the fighting broke out with people using baseball bats, knives, and anything else they could find as weapons. Word of the riot spread, and more people came to the park to join the violence for over six hours. News stories of the day reported estimates of 10,000 people being involved in the riot (CBC Cross Country Checkup, 2017 August 21; Michaels, 2020).

Lupinsky (2011) suggests that the riot was part of ongoing “turf wars” between Jewish and Anglo communities from around 1920 to 1945. He states that “the Christie Pits Riot of August 1933 was simply the largest example of the kind of fighting that continually raged between the ‘Pit Gang’ (and other similar groups) and Toronto’s Jewish young men and teenagers” (p. 121). As the name suggests, the ‘Pit Gang’ laid claim to the territory around Christie Pits, but, as I showed through the lived experiences of Jewish people in The Ward, the anti-Semitic sentiments that the gang touted were not unique to the place or time of the Christie Pits Riot. As the Jewish community shifted from The Ward to Kensington Market and into the city blocks northwest of Kensington Market, around the major intersection of Bathurst Street and Harbord Street (Vipond, 2017), anti-Semitism followed, or perhaps was already there waiting. Although such large-scale outbreaks of anti-Semitic violence are a rarity in the news today, anti-Semitism is still commonly reported, often shown through acts such as spray-painting schools and homes with markings such as Swastikas, “Nazis were here,” and “Blame the Jews” (Lavoie, 2020, June 23).

Deniers of racism in Canada or mere apologists might claim that the Swastika banner and chants of “Heil Hitler” at the Christie Pits Riot were linked to Hitler and Nazism, and that more recent examples of anti-Semitic racism are isolated incidents, not representing common Canadian opinions. Indeed, it is unlikely that someone openly promoting anti-Semitic views in

the streets of present-day Canada will be met with general applause, and the label of ‘Nazi’ will probably be applied with disdain, but history shows that both systemic and individual acts of anti-Semitism are not new or rare in Canada. Colonization insisted on Canada also being a Christian country.

As Tulchinsky (2008) shows, Jewish people, although small in numbers, have been present and practicing Jewish religious traditions in what is now Canada since the 1750s, and perhaps earlier, although records cannot confirm the pre-1750 presence. Based on Tulchinsky’s descriptions, it seems that for the first half-century, there was little significant resistance to the presence of Jewish people (mostly men). They lived according to Jewish doctrine while participating in the trade and commerce businesses of the day, including providing a range of supplies to the British military. Official pushback against the inclusion of Jews, or at least against Jewish practices, occurred when attempts were made to adapt official systems built on a Christian foundation.

As an example of Jewish exclusion from official systems, in 1808, after Ezekiel Hart—a Jewish man—won a bi-election for a seat to represent Trois-Rivières in Quebec’s Legislative Assembly, he attended the opening of the Assembly’s next session to be sworn into his new role. When taking the official oath, “Hart put his hand on his head as a substitute for the traditional covering, and replaced the word ‘Jewish’ for ‘Christian’ at an appropriate point in the recitation” (Tulchinsky, 2008, p. 26). Upon the complaints of other representatives of the Assembly, and despite Hart’s declaration that he would re-take the oath, “the Assembly adopted the resolution that ‘Ezekiel Hart, Ecuyer [sic], professant la religion juive, ne peut siéger ni voter dans cette chambre’” (p. 26; translation: “Ezekiel Hart, Esquire, professing the Jewish religion, cannot sit or vote in this chamber”). In the following general election, Hart was again elected to represent

Trois-Rivières, and in 1809 he took the oath using the Christian wording and actions, but representatives in the Assembly argued that Hart was still the same Jewish man and should therefore not be permitted to take his seat. When Governor Sir James Henry Craig appealed to authorities in England, Colonial Secretary Lord Castlereagh upheld Hart's exclusion, agreeing that a Jewish person could not sit as a member of the Assembly (Vaugeois, 1988). At best, the presence of Jews was accepted so long as the practices particular to their religion were done *over there* and not within the systems of governance and control. At worst, in the 1830s, while Ezekiel Hart's sons, Samuel, Aaron, and Adolphus, were joining legal and political battles, taking up the mantle of fighting for Jewish rights and representation (Vaugeois, 1988), some people were calling for all Jews to be strangled and their properties seized (Tulchinsky, 2008). In 1832, the Quebec government under Louis-Joseph Papineau passed a statute that was described as the "Magna Carta of Canadian Jews" and "entitled [Jews] to the full rights and privileges of other subjects of His Majesty" (as quoted in Backhouse, 2011, p. 305). However, while the statute is evidence of the official promotion of Jewish equality, the need for the statute to be passed is indicative that anti-Semitism was in the air.

Moving ahead, during the 1920s and 30s, immigration policy was designed in ways to decrease the number of Jewish people coming into Canada, but without officials declaring outright, "No Jews." Abella and Troper (2012) state that "following British and American immigrants, preference was given [to] northern and then central Europeans. At the bottom were Jews, Orientals and blacks [sic]" (p. 5). Immigration officials felt that if those "at the bottom" did make it into Canada, they could at least be marginalized by pushing them into labour-intensive work such as in mines, lumber camps, or prairie farming. Jewish people, however, were understood as "city people" (Abella & Troper, 2012, p. 5), perhaps as a result of connecting

with already-established synagogues that were central to Jewish communities. In any case, the concern of immigration officials was that incoming Jewish people were going to take jobs that should be reserved for Canadians (read white people of British origins) and people coming from the “Mother country,” Britain (pp. 5-6).

In 1923, Canadian officials made changes to immigration regulations such that all Jews, except those born in Britain, fell under a Special Permit Class along with people from Italy, Bulgaria, Syria, and Turkey. Since Italy’s government at the time restricted emigration from Italy, and immigration from the other countries was minimal, the Special Permit Class appeared particularly targeted at limiting and controlling the intake of Jewish people. As the story goes, in 1939, when Jewish people were seeking refuge from the horrors of the growing Nazi regime in Europe, to the question about how many Jewish refugees Canada was going to accept, an unidentified immigration agent replied, “None is too many,” reflecting the government’s view that “immigration preference should be given to those judged similar in ‘racial characteristics’ to the Anglo-Canadian majority” (Abella & Troper, 2012, p. xii). While someone being Jewish arguably fell out of focus in official Canadian immigration policy after the Second World War, likely in part due to desires to not align Canada with Nazi values, anti-Semitism did not disappear. In 2000, the Toronto Police Service’s annual report on hate crime showed that Jews were the targets of 19% of the acts of hate crime. In the 2010 report, that number increased to 27% of the city’s hate crimes. The most recent report for 2020 shows yet another increase, as acts against Jews made up 34% of hate crimes in Toronto. Recent stories of anti-Semitism in Toronto are nothing new and are not anomalies.

Such a history of anti-Semitism is indicative of Jewish people and communities being present within Canada for several generations, and The Ward acted as one of those communities.

Unfortunately, the histories or the presence of the Jewish community in that space is not marked, allowing for continued silencing of discriminations and exclusions, and leaving little for Jewish people of Toronto to claim as a place in The Ward. When the histories of the Jewish community in The Ward are erased, they continue to be read only as de-historicized outsiders from the rest of the city, and the discriminations that are acknowledged become seen as isolated incidents, rather than discursive racisms. If racisms cannot be properly named and historicized, they cannot be effectively disrupted and ended. As the Jewish community moved outside of The Ward to build a community safe from discrimination, a new community in The Ward developed, seeking the same sort of support and shelter from racism as the Black and Jewish communities before them.

Based on population records, the number of Chinese people in Toronto in 1881 was only ten. With increased immigration, that population grew such that by 1901 there were 159; by 1911 there were 1,036; and by 1921 there were 2,134 (Chan, 2011). Around 1915 when a large number of Jewish residents were leaving The Ward for Kensington Market, many of the Chinese population were moving in and finally establishing a clearly defined area to create a community after several years of disrupted efforts. The core of the Chinese community was set on and around Elizabeth Street, creating Toronto's first Chinatown. Prior to this, as Chan (2011, p. 35) describes, attempts to develop any sort of space for Chinese residents started south of The Ward on York Street, then moved to the southern edge of The Ward on Queen Street West between York Street and Elizabeth Street, and then created the space on Elizabeth Street. Every attempt was interrupted and mostly short-lived, forcing the residents to relocate as the city declared each area in need of redevelopment. The Ward became the most solid of the neighbourhood

establishment attempts, as the area around the Elizabeth Street and Dundas Street West intersection was recognized as the city's Chinatown until the mid- to late-1960s (Chan, 2011).

Similar to the Black community of The Ward a little over a half-century before, Chinatown was a core space to the Chinese population, but this is not to say there were walls around The Ward. Chinese people and businesses did exist elsewhere in the city. Although not in such a concentrated location, there were a number of Chinese-owned and -run businesses set up around Toronto prior to Chinatown becoming so defined. In the later years of the 19th century, the 33 Chinese people recorded as living in Toronto mostly, if not all, worked in the laundry industry around the city (Chan, 2011, p. 41). As more Chinese people came to live in Toronto, the variety of businesses increased, and as the Chinatown of The Ward became more distinct, the target clientele in and outside of The Ward became noticeably divided. For example, Chan (2011) states that “The restaurants in Chinatown served mostly Chinese food [...] The clientele were mostly Chinese and the few non-Chinese were predominantly Jewish,” whereas “Outside of Chinatown, Chinese mostly operated small cafés and hamburger joints [...] catered to Canadian – not Chinese – customers and served Western food” (p. 47). The Chinese community consisted of much more than laundries and restaurants, as The Ward was where much of the Chinese population at the time lived. There were residences there, as well as being where Chinese community associations and organizations operated, such as political groups linked to the Kuomintang political party in China and religious groups like the Chinese Young Men's Christian Institute (Wickberg, 1979). The Ward became a space where people of the Chinese community may have been read as “new” by those from outside of the community, but also a space where, at least for members of the community, things Chinese were just part of everyday

life. This sense of place, however, was unfortunately not entirely sheltered from laws, policies, and actions that specifically targeted Chinese people in racist ways.

Chinese people and people racialized as Chinese across Canada experienced and continue to experience racism both systemically and as individual attacks. As just one example of early government policy, from 1885 to 1923, there was a Head Tax in place requiring Chinese workers and their family members who landed in Canada to pay \$50 and carry a certificate to show the amount paid with the date and port of entry. Chinese people who were “diplomats, tourists, merchants, ‘men of science,’ and students” were exempt from paying the tax (Library and Archives Canada, 2021, “Chinese”). While incoming Chinese people were being taxed, European immigrants—those of the preferred “racial characteristics”—were being sought after through government advertisement of “financial inducements such as land grants [in the prairie/western part of the country] and transportation assistance” (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p. 62). The Head Tax was an intentional effort by the Canadian government to discourage Chinese people from entering Canada. As Stanley (2016) cites, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald stated he was “against a Mongolian or Chinese population in our country as permanent settlers” and that the Chinese were “an alien race in every sense, that would not and could not be expected to assimilate with our Arian population” (Macdonald as quoted in Stanley, 2016, p. 24; use of ‘Arian’ spelling from primary source). As years passed, when the government saw that the tax was not effective and the number of Chinese entering Canada actually increased, the government passed legislation in 1900 (enacted in 1901) to increase the tax to \$100 in 1901 and then again to \$500 in 1903 (Library and Archives Canada, 2021, “Chinese”). The Head Tax was a formal indication that although people racialized as Chinese could enter, were present, and lived as residents in Canada, complete with communities, homes, and jobs, their presence had conditions

that white people entering the country did not have upon them. By 1923, notably the same year Jewish immigrants were placed in the Special Permit Class, the Head Tax ended. The discrimination did not end and merely re-shaped as the federal government introduced the *Chinese Immigration Act*. The act banned the immigration of Chinese people to Canada and required that anyone racialized as Chinese, including those born in Canada, register with the government and obtain special permits for residing in Canada. Anyone failing to register was subject to fines, imprisonment, and/or deportation. This act did not end until 1947 (Chan, 2014; Stanley, 2011). Unfortunately, the financial cost and bureaucratic regulations for existing in the space called Canada was not the only racist barrier (racialized) Chinese people faced.

Media publications of the late-19th and early-20th centuries referred to the Chinese community as the ‘yellow peril’ (Chan, 2015, p. 40), lending validation to commentary that Chinese people were “physically and mentally an inferior race, and if allowed to come into the country without restriction [...] the white race would be driven our [sic] or be degenerated and degraded” (as quoted in Chan, 2011, p. 29). Levine (2014) highlights that some white Torontonians felt Chinese laundry owners did not deserve *public* customers because the Chinese-owned businesses supposedly did not contribute to supporting public enterprise or provide employment to Canadians. The Chinese businesses were supporting at least Chinese residents of the city—members of the public—but were distinguished from ‘Canadian,’ thereby *not* being included in ‘public.’ Additionally, the standards for the Chinese avoiding ridicule were never static. In one moment they were said to not be supporting the public because they did not employ Canadians (read ‘white people’), but then, in 1908, “Toronto’s city solicitor advised the Board of Police Commissioners to refuse licenses to Chinese restaurants that employed white women”

(Chan, 2011, p. 46). This city solicitor's advice was generally overlooked by those with the power to enforce it, but businesses and homes became troubled in other ways.

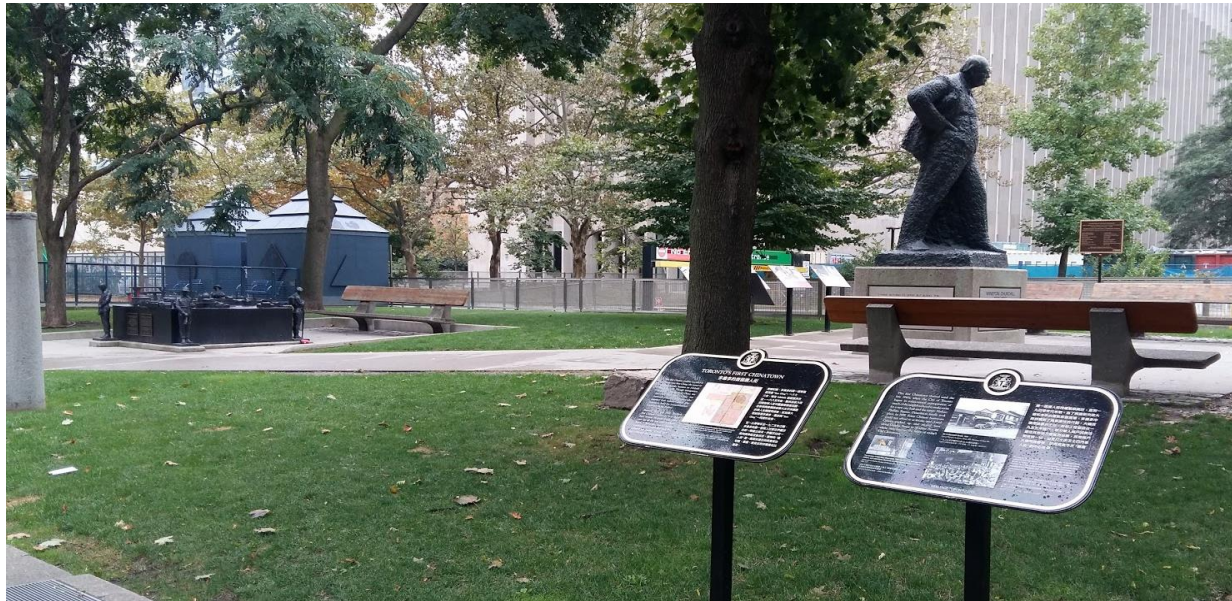
As mentioned earlier, the Chinese residents of Toronto twice attempted to create a recognizable neighbourhood for themselves before the Chinatown was established in The Ward. Each time, the city decided that the particular area the Chinese residents chose was in need of redevelopment, and so the Chinese people were forced to relocate (Chan, 2011). While the position of Chinatown in The Ward was more firmly established and stood longer than any previous efforts in Chinese community building, it, too, faced the same outcome of being pushed out. Starting in the 1940s, the City of Toronto began expropriating land from Chinatown in preparation for the construction of the current City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square. The construction was completed in 1965 and the square is now a common community venue where the city hosts concerts, winter skating, and cultural celebrations in the expansive concrete area. In 1967, Chinatown residents and business owners such as Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb (Chan, 2011, p. 110) led the "Save Chinatown" campaign in an effort to stop the city from taking over what little was left of the Chinatown after City Hall construction. Although the campaign was successful in that the city did not actively displace the remaining residents, there was fracturing of the community. The placement of Chinatown still shifted with a large number of the Chinese population relocating to build up what is now known as Toronto's Chinatown, running north-south along Spadina Avenue from College Street to Queen Street West and east-west along Dundas Street West from Beverly Street to Augusta Avenue. Once again, despite having set down some roots on Elizabeth Street, it was the Chinese community that just so happened to be in the place where city development *needed* to take place.

By continuously causing the Chinese community to relocate, the city (re)creates the “new-ness” of the Chinese presence in Toronto, always keeping them in the position of ‘temporary.’ At this point in time, there are numerous generations of racialized Chinese people in Toronto—and Canada at large—who are continuously read as “outsiders,” “new,” and, in some instances as people to be actively pushed out, evidenced through the racism experienced by Justine Yu. As shown by CBC News Toronto (2020, October 9), the Chinese Canadian National Council reports that there have been over 600 known incidents of anti-East Asian racism since the Covid-19 pandemic was officially acknowledged in Canada in March 2020. Almost one-third of the incidents included a form of physical assault and approximately 25% of the total incidents occurring in Toronto. Markings that indicate the historical presence of Chinese people in The Ward—markings that give them claim to the past and show them as belonging—are mostly erased, leaving only a few tokenistic markers to contradict racist views that racialized Chinese people can and should be removed.

In building Toronto’s City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square, markers of the Chinese presence in that space were literally demolished and paved over. The concrete of the towering building and the pavement that surrounds it ultimately erase this past. The only commemorations of the community’s existence are two plaques on the northwest side of City Hall in an area called the sculpture garden (Heritage Toronto, 2007). Each plaque is approximately 1.5 feet by two feet in size and is mounted to a pole approximately 4 feet high. Both present in English and Chinese writing a brief narrative of the “Toronto’s First Chinatown” that “was a bustling commercial and residential area” until “the City of Toronto began its controversial expropriation of much of the neighbourhood”. Although these plaques seemingly counter my position of the erasure of Chinatown’s history, they are small tokens and are also marginalized (see Image 16 below).

Image 16. Plaques commemorating Toronto's First Chinatown. Statue of Winston Churchill in background. Memorial for Canadians in Italian Campaign to the left.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



They are positioned under a tree on the backside of a bench that faces—thereby prioritizing—the overshadowing statue of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, standing 10 feet tall atop a four-foot-high pedestal and surrounded by plaques about the man. Additionally, not far from Churchill is a monument approximately two to three feet tall and approximately ten feet long on all four sides, put in place in 2016 as a “memorial to the more than 93,000 Canadians who took part in the Italian Campaign of World War II” (see Image 17 below).

Both the Churchill statue and the Italian campaign monument are large and imposing, requiring that people walking on the path walk around and therefore engage them. The plaques to Toronto's Chinatown are accessible, yes, but are set off to the side so that people may choose to engage with them or not. The commemorations of the British Prime Minister and the Canadian military maintain Canada's links to Britain (the colonizer) and the nationalism of the military, an institution that reasserts 'Canada' as a fixed and dominant entity, and as a saviour by attaining

Image 17. Monument to the Canadian soldiers who took part in the Italian campaign of World War II.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



“Peace Through Valour,” as the monument states. These markers articulate (with) the dominance of white, English-language markers in The Ward, while the two plaques for the Chinatown denote how people racialized as Chinese *used to* be part of the space but are not anymore.

Admittedly, people are not present in a space forever and inevitably move in and out of spaces, as I did while rollerblading through The Ward and as communities shifted in The Ward over time, and not everyone of the past can have a street or plaque commemorating them. The City of Toronto, however, predominantly maintains the names and images of a particularly white, English history. These white bodies of the past have also disappeared from the space, just like the historic Mississaugas, Black, Jewish, and Chinese peoples. Yet, the Whiteness remains

marked while Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour are excluded through marginalization and erasure from the social meanings of the present-day space.

Conclusion

Over the months of writing and revising this chapter, millions of people around the world, including thousands in Toronto, poured into the streets to march in protest against the policing and killing of Black bodies and the racisms that people who are racialized as Black experience every day. When I saw news coverage of a march in Toronto on May 30, 2020, with its end point in front of the Toronto Police Service headquarters on College Street—the northern border of The Ward—I began to ponder the ways that Black bodies were and continue to be controlled in that space. When the space was The Ward, it was where Black bodies were *expected* to be seen. While Black people lived outside of The Ward as well, the neighbourhood acted as a space for Black activity, but also for keeping the Black community contained from the rest of the city. This sort of containment was generally the same for the Jewish and Chinese communities. Today, although Toronto spans over traditional Indigenous territories, and The Ward was once home to Black, Jewish, and Chinese communities, the space is marked with the bedrock of a white, English, colonial history and authority. Such marking enables the presence of Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour to be read with qualification and to require justification. The protest marches reflect a desire to end the conditional belonging of Black and other racialized bodies. While I participated in a protest march of the same focus in Ottawa, the city where I now live, I did so in support of and solidarity with the people and communities who experience systemic and overtly targeted, sometimes physically violent racisms. Additionally, though, I participated because it was part of acknowledging myself in relation to those who experience racism, rather than because I feel excluded by racisms. Despite

defining myself as mixed-race and experiencing my own challenges because of that identity, I know that it is highly unlikely that my presence in a public space—whether in Toronto, Ottawa, or anywhere else in Canada—will be questioned by authorities because of the colour of my white-passing skin or the English I speak. I do not need to protest for my belonging. My presence is generally unquestioned—unconditional. What I have shown above are some of the structures and markings that exemplify how the unconditional and conditional belonging of differently racialized people in the public space of the present-day Ward was formed and continues today. The structures and markers contribute to (re)creating racializations and meanings that lend to exclusions and erasures of Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour as part of the sociohistorical geography of The Ward.

Based on Stanley's (2011; 2016) typology of racism that I follow, racisms are about racializing a person or group, excluding that person or group, and the exclusion having significant negative effects. To present my argument that The Ward today is a racist sociohistorical geography, I have aimed at showing how the different ways that the space is marked excludes and erases Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour, enabling the reading of these people and groups as "new" and/or "outsiders" to the sociohistorical space. In all the examples I discussed, it was not just people in general who were being shuffled around the geography. They were and are people racialized in different ways, but always (re)creating meanings of each racialization in relation to white as the standard and British as the foundation. The exclusions of Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour were and are not always a matter of being removed from sight, but rather a matter of them being read as not belonging and being controlled by the systemic powers over the spaces they occupy.

Racism shaped and continues to shape the sociohistorical geography that was The Ward. The markers of The Ward represent “official” histories, and although meanings of markers slip and become recreated, new meanings can be historicized and continue to articulate (with) representations of white, English dominance in a so-called public space (Hall, 1980). As Goldberg (1993) states, “these imposed and imagined histories freeze not only the racial Other but also those privileged into *given* identities, perspectives, and dispositions” (p. 206, emphasis in original). These histories are sometimes but not always in the form of statues and monuments, and also include the very design of the city space and the imposing towers. Little do we realize—or at least the “we” who feels they unconditionally belong—the majority of the markers that make up the discursive repertoire that is the discourse of the sociohistorical space of The Ward is much the stuff of banal, everyday racism (Essed, 1991). White, colonial dominance is embedded in and embodied through the material makeup of what is now The Ward.

The response to the racisms that I discussed above is not to simply change the street names and put up more statues and plaques representing excluded racialized people and communities, although these changes would not be discouraged. These changes alone, however, would fall short of creating a sociohistorical geography of antiracism, because antiracism is not just a matter of outnumbering the racist symbols. Nor should anyone expect that the systems that perpetuate racialized exclusions can be dismantled overnight. The tools and forms of exclusions are too complex and engrained in the ways of being for some sort of single-strike antiracist *coup d'état*. Antiracism must be understood in the plural and as being about naming, countering the normalization of, and ending racist exclusions (Stanley, 2016). However, because multiple racisms can and often do exist simultaneously within one setting, and each racism works differently, there can be no “one-size-fits-all” antiracism. Additionally, the creation of a

sociohistorical geography of antiracism is not a “once-and-done” process. Antiracism must be a repeated act. There can be starting points for creating antiracist spaces, but they must be recreated over and over to remain active. The purpose of this chapter was to take the first steps in antiracism, by naming racisms that often go overlooked, and by suggesting that these markers of colonialism and racist exclusion should not be *normal*. In the next chapter, I analyze where and how the Ontario Black History Society’s walking tour that takes place in and around the southern end of The Ward creates particular starting points for (re)creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies and making the inclusion of Black bodies the norm.

CHAPTER 5: THE ONTARIO BLACK HISTORY SOCIETY'S WALKING TOUR AS STARTING POINTS FOR ANTIRACISM

In early August of 2018, I participated in the Ontario Black History Society's (OBHS) walking tour in downtown Toronto. I was drawn to the act of a walking tour not only because of personal interest in the subject matter of Black history, but also because touring parts of the city struck me as engaging with the spaces where the content of the histories actually took place. I was initially intrigued to examine how the city space might be presented by the OBHS tour guides as a living museum with the everyday streets becoming ever-changing interactive exhibits. When I and two friends—both women of colour—met the OBHS tour guides¹—both women who identified themselves as Black—we embarked on a journey that began at a site in what was the southern end of The Ward. The journey continued through the streets for us to engage with six distinct sites, which I discuss in more detail below and that (re)marked the histories of Black people and community in the space we occupied. The tour guides focused on sites that exist between Jarvis Street and University Avenue (east-west) and Queen Street and King Street (north-south), which therefore presented a tour that overlaps with and is notionally connected to The Ward, but actually went beyond the understood boundaries of the historic neighbourhood. The tour uncovered a sociohistorical geography where the racialized Black histories of The Ward do not suddenly stop at the political lines drawn on the map.

Because of the ways the tour content was presented, I read the historic goings on *around* The Ward in relation to the Black community of The Ward. In the previous chapter, I argued that the space that was The Ward now remains a racist sociohistorical geography that maintains a

¹ Throughout this chapter, I refer to the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) tour guides without names or descriptions because I was granted permission by the OBHS Board of Directors to interview and identify only OBHS President Natasha Henry and OBHS First Vice President Channon Oyeniran. All other OBHS personnel must remain anonymous.

dominant bedrock of Whiteness and colonialism by marginalizing and erasing the historic meanings that included Indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of colour as part of the land and space. In this chapter, I show how the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) walking tour is a tool of antiracism as it actively constructs starting points for (re)creating meanings that disrupt the dominance of Whiteness and include Black bodies as part of the sociohistorical makeup of the space in and around The Ward. In short, the OBHS walking tour works to chisel cracks in the white, English bedrock (Grant & Stanley, 2014).

In a post-tour interview that I conducted with OBHS President Natasha Henry, one key message that Henry said she hopes the tour conveys to participants is that “we [Black people and communities] were here. We’ve always been here. We’ve contributed. We’ve faced oppression in this space. We’ve experienced freedom in this space.” Different elements of these hopes position Black people and communities in various ways. Black people and communities are declared as not “new” to the space. They are understood as historically oppressed but also resilient and asserting their own agency in the fight for emancipation, which suggests overcoming an oppressor. However, the emphasis on Black people and communities contributing, while important, speaks to a desire to see Black people and communities as part of the city-building process and therefore as rightfully belonging. This sort of inclusion follows that they then contributed to the colonial project that excludes Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories. Even antiracism can come with some unintended consequences. Underlying all these elements, though, the foundational aim of the tour is about the inclusion of Black people and communities within the historical narrative of Toronto. The inclusion of Black people and communities through the tour will not fully conquer anti-Black racism, nor any other forms of racism. The tour does become a combative act against exclusions of Black histories and

identities, and it starts a path to critical understandings of where and how racisms work, which is itself a crucial step in antiracism.

The way I identify and analyze antiracist efforts in relation to the tour is by considering the actions of the tour in three ways. The first is to recognize how the facilitation of the tour identifies racialized people and/or group(s) who have been excluded and often erased from the sociohistorical geography. Next, I look for how the tour and its guides work to name the actions and technologies, including my own, that perpetuate the disorientation (Puwar, 2004), exclusion, and erasure (Stanley, 2011) of the racialized people and/or group(s). Finally, I contemplate in what ways the tour is presented in relational ways such that I create and understand new meanings to the space that end the erasure of particular racialized bodies, thereby (re)creating a different, antiracist sociohistorical geography. In taking the tour and now analyzing the effects of the tour on how I read the sociohistorical geography in and around The Ward, I understand the walking tour as working to uncover and present histories of Black people and communities that were largely covered over and erased from the space. Furthermore, because of the ways the tour guides sought to show and promote personal connection to the sites, I recognize how the (re)creation of antiracist sociohistorical space hinges not just on the material markers that are present, but also the meanings that become (re)created by those who occupy and operate within the space.

To present and analyze the walking tour for the antiracist work it does, I begin with a description of the tour sites that were visited when I participated in the tour. Following this description, I discuss how the tour enacted antiracism, and also the challenges the tour faced in the pursuit of antiracism through historic Black representations. As I stated in the previous chapter, antiracism is not a “one-size-fits-all” act, and as I briefly discuss in this chapter, there

are racisms that the walking tour does not engage or disrupt. Rather than being shortcomings or failings of the OBHS, these unacknowledged racisms within the antiracist efforts highlight the complexities of antiracism. That there are unacknowledged racisms shows, if nothing else, how the antiracist work of the OBHS walking tour creates starting—not ending—points which can be taken up, learned from, and carried forward in the necessarily ongoing fight against racism.

General Description of Tour

In previously offering an analysis of *The Ward* as a racist sociohistorical geography, I followed Stanley's (2011; 2016) typology that frames racisms as exclusions. Antiracism, then, is about naming, disrupting the normalization of, and ending racist exclusions (Stanley, 2011; 2016). It is the act of ending exclusions that calls for more than merely pointing out various physical markers as problematic. Response to the racisms that I discussed in the previous chapter is not only about changing the markers to represent excluded racialized people and communities. Antiracism must be active (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016), and a walking tour insists upon active engagement with the spaces where racism is found.

The walking tour, as the OBHS representatives shared with me, was designed and is facilitated with particular aims in mind for educating and connecting to tour participants. As OBHS President Natasha Henry explained in her interview with me,

The purpose of the tour is really to capture and to share some of the local history of Black people in Toronto, particularly in the downtown area. That is where a lot of the early Black settlement began in Toronto, beginning with those who were first enslaved and subsequently when Freedom Seekers were coming in. But when we look at the makeup of downtown now, that history is not visible, and so, the intent of the tour is to inform the

public, to inform young people, that indeed Black people have a history going back to even before Toronto became named Toronto.

In other words, the purpose of the tour is to establish that the presence of Black people in Toronto is not “new,” and that Black bodies have always existed in the city. Not all Black people in Toronto have connections to the historic Black community of The Ward, and indeed some Black people are newcomers. The point, though, is that the reading of Black bodies as secondary to the space in relation to white bodies can be shown as incorrect. In addition to learning that these histories exist in the city’s downtown space, the OBHS also has a goal to help tour participants recognize their own existences in relation to the histories and the racisms, and to then have the ability to live in ways that might disrupt banal racisms within the cityscape. As OBHS Vice-President Channon Oyeniran added in a separate interview with me, the hope is for tour participants to “maybe see themselves, maybe how they thought of people or maybe recognize some of their own biases and stereotypes that they’ve had against maybe Black people.” The references to “themselves” and “they” are toward people who do not identify as Black, and more specifically, I think, toward white people. In looking at the comments from Henry and Oyeniran together, the intentions of the tour include deconstruction and reconstruction of participants’ racist and antiracist understandings of the sociohistorical geography, which connects to the racist sociohistorical geography of The Ward.

While I previously looked at The Ward within the lines of its constructed boundaries, and these boundaries remain important for locating the historic core of the racialized communities I discussed, the OBHS walking tour guides incorporated The Ward in ways that make the community more of a social idea. The location of the neighbourhood is understood, but the boundaries are fluid and porous. According to Oyeniran, although the walking tour prior to 2015

included numerous stops near The Ward, the specific inclusion of The Ward in the tour discourse began after a 2015 archaeological excavation of a section of the neighbourhood just north of the current City Hall. The excavation uncovered various artefacts that shed some light on the racialized and marginalized people who lived in the area. Oyeniran explained, “The Ward kind of came [to be presented in the tour] after the dig and we were able to take people around—especially with the City of Toronto, they now have a display at City Hall we can take people to as well.” The OBHS tour, in many ways, brought The Ward back to life as a space with the potential to become a tool for antiracism. The neighbourhood thus became a foundational point that articulated (with) all the histories presented on the tour articulated, whether they occurred in the political borders of The Ward or not. In this sense, The Ward took on additional social meaning that opened possibilities for problematizing and disrupting the simplification and erasure of Black histories in Toronto. These possibilities become evident through the six stops of the tour.

Stop #1. The first stop on the tour was inside the current Toronto City Hall. The featured marker of the region’s racialized Black histories in focus was not City Hall itself and was an historical display inside the building that was set in glass cases on either side of the building’s east main elevators. Accessing the waiting area for the elevator doors and therefore the display cases required passing a security table where a guard checked for weapons and other non-permitted items inside any bags or purses people were carrying. As our bags were being checked, one of our guides mentioned to the security guard that we were on a walking tour. The guard, thinking he was being helpful, suggested we go to the second floor to see more displays. He claimed that there was not much to look at by the elevators. Whether he was unaware that historical narratives were being presented by the elevators or he did not deem them worthy of

anyone's attention, I do not know, but the tour guides ushered my friends and me toward the display, rather than attempt to educate the security guard. The security guard's recommendation suggests an exceptionality to a tour engaging with Black history inside City Hall. The *normal* tours, it seemed, go elsewhere in the building and engage with narratives other than Black history or The Ward. Once beyond the security table, we were able to observe the glass cases that presented a brief history of a woman named Cecilia Reynolds and The Ward in which Reynolds lived and City Hall now stands.

The display presented Reynolds, a woman racialized as Black, as “a formerly enslaved woman who found freedom in Toronto,” positioning her as an example of people who populated The Ward, but not mentioning her lived experiences prior to arriving in Toronto (for a more detailed telling of Reynolds' life experiences, see Smardz Frost, 2017). Infrastructure Ontario (2018) states that as part of a partnered initiative between Toronto City Hall and Infrastructure Ontario that is said to span “over the next several years” (Infrastructure Ontario website, 2018), the display we looked at was part of a rotation showcasing artifacts discovered during an archaeological excavation performed by the Timmins Martelle Heritage Consultants. The excavation was in connection with the construction of the new Toronto courthouse on Armoury Street, northwest of City Hall, within the southwest quadrant of what was The Ward. The goal of the rotating displays was to “help share the story of Toronto's multicultural past” (Infrastructure Ontario website, 2018), of which Cecilia Reynolds was included.

If facing the elevator doors, the display case on the right-hand side showed a picture of the foundation of Cecilia Reynolds's house that was unearthed during the archaeological excavation (see Image 18 below). The display case on the left-hand side showed a map of The Ward (see Image 19 below) with an outlined area indicating the block in which Reynolds' house foundation

had been unearthed. In addition to the focus placed on Reynolds, the display included a list of names of people who also lived on the nearby streets. As best the archived records would allow, the displayed list included the names of streets the people lived on, the year each person took up occupancy, their name, their occupation, and an identity, which, on this list, was one of Irish, English, Scottish, Black, or Jewish. Within both cases were household items (see Image 20 below) that were found in and around the house's foundation. Accompanying the picture, map, and artifacts was a narrative describing the perceived significance of the items to the history of the area shown on the map. The description stated that "Home to many newcomers in the 19th and early-20th century, The Ward represents a rich legacy of urban diversity and mutual support that characterizes Toronto's many intersecting communities to this day."

Image 18. Foundation of Cecilia Reynolds's house.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.

Image 19. Map of The Ward.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.

CRACKING THE COLONIAL BEDROCK



Image 20. Bottles found during archaeological excavation in The Ward, including Cecilia Reynolds' house.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.



The photographs above show how the display used the house foundation, the bottles, and the map to represent The Ward as a place of historic people, indeed. The display describes how some of the people were Black people and people of colour. However, the display provides limited visual representation of these racialized people and temporally positions them in this space primarily in the past. Additionally, the written description of these people frames them as newcomers to a fully and unproblematically established city, as if the city were always there and was just waiting to welcome in new people (Hage, 2000). The old map of Toronto and no mention or visual of the land as Indigenous territory creates an illusion of permanence of the city. Such framing of the people in relation to the space, particularly the description that Cecilia Reynolds “found freedom in Toronto,” promotes the grand narrative of Canada as a European/British-founded place (Stanley, 2006) and, similarly to the bus shelter poster of Rajeev in the previous chapter, employs the ‘Canada-the-redeemer’ perspective (Roman & Stanley, 1997). Canada is shown as the country that saves people from the places in which they previously struggled. During the tour, although the historic presence of Black bodies in the space was established, thereby troubling readings of Black bodies as new, the positions of power held by settler-colonizers went unmentioned. After viewing and discussing the information and the visuals of the display—a discussion that I will unpack in the sections below—we walked out of City Hall to encounter the next stop on the tour.

Stop #2. Just after exiting City Hall, we stopped outside the front doors of the building, as the next site did not consist of a particular visual display, and it came in the form of our guides sharing another narrative with us that added to the narratives of and around the City Hall space. To the immediate west of City Hall is Osgoode Hall, which is home to the Law Society of Ontario (formerly Law Society of Upper Canada) and which we could see from our vantage

point standing in front of City Hall. Osgoode Hall, we were told by the tour guide, was where the trial of John Anderson took place in 1860 to decide whether or not he would be extradited to the United States. Anderson, our guide described as I summarized in Chapter 3, was a Black man who escaped American enslavement and, while still in the United States but making his way to freedom, had an altercation with a slave “owner” who was attempting to capture and return Anderson to a position of slavery. In the altercation, Anderson stabbed the man, which did not immediately kill him, but did lead to his death. After the incident, Anderson found his way to Canada and was a free man but was wanted for murder in the United States. Authorities in Canada discovered Anderson and arrested him. The case became whether or not the Canadian government (then under British rule) would send Anderson back to the United States to be tried for murder. Along with the support of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, Anderson was also assured legal support by the Canada West Attorney General (and future Prime Minister) John A. Macdonald, who “agreed to provide public funds to employ three attorneys for Anderson’s defence” (Reinders, 1975, pp. 74-75). In the end, it was deemed by the Canadian courts that Anderson was a free man who was defending his life when he stabbed the man, and there would be no cause to send him to the United States where he would be treated as property (for more detailed discussions of this case, see Boyko, 2013; Reinders, 1975). The tour guide told us that the larger rationale for the Anderson decision was that if Canada set a precedent of allowing American laws around slavery to be enforced within Canada—the “land of freedom”—no person racialized as Black would be safe from American enslavement. Once our guides finished the story of John Anderson and his trial for extradition at Osgoode Hall, we left the City Hall space and began walking to our next destination.

Stop #3. Along our walk to the next stop on the tour, one of the tour guides phoned the site's management office to confirm that the building was indeed open for us to view; it was. The building was St. Lawrence Hall, which is located at the intersection of King Street East and Jarvis Street, meaning we left the historic boundaries of The Ward. The approximately 1km journey southeast from City Hall to St. Lawrence Hall took us past all sorts of different buildings and signs and markers, not to mention a countless number of people. My friends and I were beginning to see it all as the streets that would have been walked and shaped by people like Cecilia Reynolds and John Anderson. Added to this new gaze was my pondering about the significance of the tour guide needing to make the phone call to ensure the building doors were unlocked. Although we walked with imagination of the streets as being occupied by the historic Black bodies introduced to us by the tour guide, the Whiteness rooted in the colonial bedrock was still dominant. The next chisel for cracking the bedrock—the histories inside St. Lawrence Hall—was conditionally available. The fort mentality (Donald, 2009) was at play as Black history narratives became part of the (white) possessed and controlled property (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

When we arrived at the building, outside the main entry doors and therefore accessible to anyone walking by was a plaque commemorating the building (see Image 21 below; Heritage Toronto 2017b). The plaque lists “abolitionist Fredrick Douglass [coming from the United States]” as one of the notable people who once attended functions in the hall, but that was the extent of the representation of the relationship between St. Lawrence Hall and Black histories. The brief mention of Fredrick Douglass visiting St. Lawrence Hall is a point of interest, at least to me who is familiar with Douglass and his abolitionist work, and it might trigger some people to ask why he was there. But the way this exterior plaque is presented, Douglass as a Black body

Image 21. Plaque outside of main entry doors at St. Lawrence Hall. There is no mention of how the building links to historic Black presence and activity in Toronto, aside from stating that Fredrick Douglass visited the building, which repositions Black bodies as coming from *somewhere else*.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.



is positioned as coming from *somewhere else*, not part of the historic and everyday population of the city.

After entering the building, the guides told us to first stop and read the large plaque on the wall of the building's first-floor foyer. It was here that we read a more detailed depiction of the strong links between the building and Black histories on local, national, and international scales. Once I was able to access it inside the building, I could see that the plaque (see Image 22 below; Canada Parks, n.d.) describes some of the history of the building, explaining that it was “an important venue for many African Canadian activities in support of abolition and the welfare

Image 22. Plaque inside main entry doors at St. Lawrence Hall. The plaque's description highlights the abolitionists' work in ways that reinforce the 'Canada-as-redeemer' perspective.

Source: Photos taken by author, 2018.



of refugee slaves in Toronto.” It continues on to highlight that “major abolitionist speakers including Frederick Douglass, Samuel Ringgold Ward and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper” were hosted in the Hall. According to the plaque, one of the first events held in the building following its construction was the 1851 “North American Convention of Colored Freeman,” which was a three-day convention co-organized by “Black abolitionist leaders Henry Bibb of Canada West and Theodore Holly of Vermont,” and attended by 53 delegates from Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean discussing “issues of slavery and Black emigration from the United States.” More specifically, the convention’s agenda included addressing “the effects of the [American]

Fugitive Slave Law, the fight against segregated schooling for Black children” and to where racialized Black people should be encouraged to relocate from the United States. Out of the options of Canada, the Caribbean, or Africa, the delegates determined that Canada was the best answer (For discussion on the Convention, see Bradburn, 2020; for published Convention Proceedings, see North American Convention, 1851).

The plaque’s descriptions is of the strong anti-slavery attitudes in Toronto and the conclusion that Canada would be the best place for Black people to move to may be true. Additionally, the mention of Henry Bibb as a Black abolitionist leader in Canada West does suggest an active historic presence of Black bodies. The complexity of antiracism, however, is shown through Toronto and Canada being framed as unproblematic in terms of anti-Black racism, yet again playing on the ‘redeemer’ perspective (Roman & Stanley, 1997). I recognize that plaques require concise language and narrative, making it a challenge to address the complexities of the historic context, and I am not suggesting that the framing of this history makes it ineffective as an antiracist tool. It is important to note, though, that the plaque evokes a particular form of antiracism. Historic Black presence is presented, thereby troubling the idea of Black bodies as new and contributing to antiracism. At the same time, however, this Black presence becomes a layer on top of the white, colonial bedrock.

Once we familiarized ourselves with the events that took place in the building and the historical figures who once occupied the space, the tour moved up the building’s main staircase to the third floor. After turning left off the staircase at the third floor, I and the tour group entered what seemed to be a sitting area outside a large set of doors. The walls of the sitting area were decorated with a number of painted portraits (for example, see Image 23 below) and sculpted busts of various racialized white men, all with white hair and who, judging from the style of their

Image 23. Painted portrait (artist unknown) of white man, seemingly of higher class, hanging on third floor of St. Lawrence Hall. There is no painting of Henry Bibb, the Black abolitionist leader from Canada West.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.



formal attire, lived around the time of the building's construction in the mid-19th century.

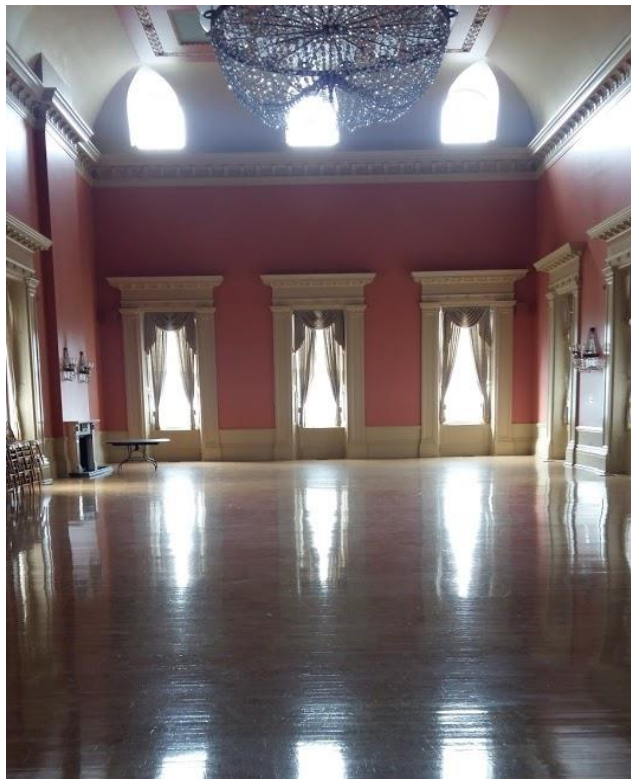
Through the painting in the photograph below, a prominent representation of the space becomes not just a white man, but a white man of a seemingly higher class for the time. While the building hosted such an important and historical convention in the battle against American slavery, therefore linking it to historic Black action against white supremacy, and the keepers of the building aim to make that history known through a plaque in the building's entryway, the representation of Whiteness remains centred. The OBHS tour is required to poke holes in the prominence of Whiteness by presenting the narrative of not only a Black history, but also a history of one of the first events ever held in the building. To provide some visualization for this narrative, we turned away from the portrait of the white man in the sitting area and towards the large set of doors.

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The doors opened into the grand hall (see Image 24 below), which, the guide told us, is where the North American Convention of Colored Freemen is thought to have taken place and where famous abolitionists spoke to audiences. I relied on the tour guides to inform me that the convention was held in this room. Although it made sense that this was the case, given the size of the room being able to accommodate the 53 convention delegates, there was nothing inside the large room or outside of it in the sitting area to acknowledge that the room was the site of the

Image 24. The Grand Hall on the third floor of St. Lawrence Hall. There is no acknowledgement inside the room or in the sitting area outside the doors that the Grand Hall was the site of the North American Convention of Colored Freemen. Without the tour guides to share this information, this room is merely a lavish section of the larger property.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.



convention. Without being informed of this narrative, the room would have been merely a lavish section of the larger building property. Because I did know the story, though, as our tour group entered the grand hall, I felt chills of excitement to be in the space where these abolitionists met to strategize the resistance of such a racist American institution. The room's maintained later-19th century aesthetics made it feel all the more real. I repeatedly whispered to myself that I was standing in a space where Frederick Douglass once addressed a crowd in the fight against slavery. The room was not set up with any furniture, and so it was in simple terms a large empty room, but I and my friends used our prior knowledge of the abolitionist movement, as well as the information we were given through the plaque and the tour guides, to bring to life in our minds the antiracist work that once took place there.

It was only after the tour that I reflected on my somatic response—the chills of excitement—and began to question why such a feeling was triggered by the idea of Fredrick Douglass but not another abolitionist like Henry Bibb, who was not a visitor like Douglass, but was someone who lived in Canada West. I realized that I had never heard of Bibb prior to the tour. I learned about Fredrick Douglass through my history education in school, saw him portrayed in films and television shows, and read his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1993/1845). I did not previously know about Bibb's own escape from enslavement, his creation of the newspaper *Voice of the Fugitive*, or his stance against using the *Common Schools Act* (1850) to implement separate schools for Black children (O'Farrell, 1985). The popularization of Douglass and not Bibb in my and perhaps other people's knowledge and discourse is a discussion that goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but what I will note here is that my familiarity with Douglass and lack of knowledge about Bibb speaks to the common Americanization of historic Black experiences.

Canada is shown as a destination point for some Freedom Seekers, making it a chapter in the story of American slavery. Dominant narratives of Black people in relation to Canada largely overlook Black people building lives and being active in the historic society of what is now Canada, so Bibb's experiences of leadership and action from within Canada remain silenced.

After several minutes of moving about the grand hall, taking in the details of the design, reflecting on the work the abolitionist speakers and the convention did, and considering how that work relates to that of the tour we were participating in, we left the room to examine more of the third floor of St. Lawrence Hall. In a smaller sitting room next to the grand hall, the walls were lined with portraits of men who over the years had worked in St. Lawrence Hall in various roles as community organizers. Not all, but the majority of the 20 portraits were from the 20th century (I estimate up to the late-20th century and am unsure of why it stops there). The people featured were mainly racialized white men; only two men on display were racialized as Black by the tour guide: Frederick Douglass and Bruce Bell, an entertainer and historical tour guide around Toronto. I am unsure of Bell's self-racialization and I would not racialize him as Black, but the tour guide made a sort of guess, as she saw Bell's dark hair combined with a lighter complexion and stated, "He could be Black." Linking the display of portraits to the painting I discussed earlier, despite the historic convention of so many Black leaders taking place within St. Lawrence Hall, most of the visual representation was of white men, maintaining the building as a space of Whiteness. After seeing all the pictures, we left the room, descended the stairs to the first floor, and exited the building on our way to the next stop on the tour.

Stop #4. Similar to our experience when leaving City Hall, when we left St. Lawrence Hall, we did not fully leave the vicinity of the building before the guide stopped to show us another plaque and share with us a narrative that constituted the next tour site. The guides

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showed us that only a few doorways west of the St. Lawrence Hall entrance, mounted on the exterior wall of a building housing two businesses, is a plaque in recognition of Mary Ann Shadd Cary, unveiled in 2011 by Heritage Toronto (see Image 25 below). Shadd Cary was an active abolitionist, doing work to counter slavery, support Freedom Seekers, and bolster Black lives in both the United States and Canada. She was a teacher, a writer and publisher, and in 1883, she was one of the first Black women to complete a law degree in the United States (for discussion of Shadd Cary's life and work, see Rhodes, 1999). Admittedly, at the time of the tour, the machinery shown in the photo was not present, but the photograph does illustrate just how easily the historical plaque can be blocked and/or overlooked, rather than causing the history to intervene and effectively make the history known to people occupying the space. As such, unless the plaque is actively engaged, as we did with the OBHS tour, it is tokenistic and becomes a literal layer on the side of a building property that adheres to the white, colonial bedrock.

Image 25. Placement of plaque commemorating Mary Ann Shadd Cary. The plaque is small and inobtrusive, making it easy to be blocked and/or overlooked, and mainly tokenistic. Without active engagement, it becomes a layer on top of the white, colonial bedrock.

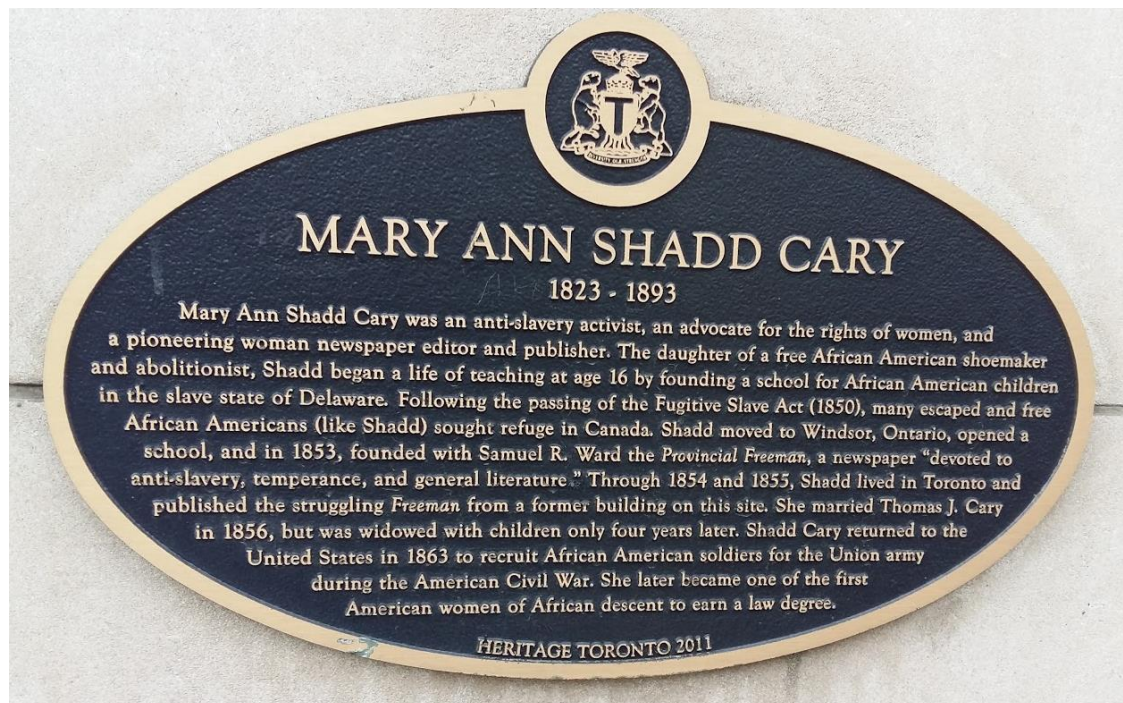
Source: Google Street View, 2019, June.



When we were able to observe the plaque, we saw Shadd Cary described as being born free in the United States, but someone who sought refuge in Canada after the passing of the 1850 *Fugitive Slave Act*, all the while being “an anti-slavery activist, an advocate for the rights of women, and a pioneering woman newspaper editor and publisher.” More specifically in relation to the spot where the plaque is on display, the description states that “Through 1854 and 1855, Shadd lived in Toronto and published the struggling *Freeman* [newspaper] from a former building on this site” (see Image 26 below). Shadd Cary was not living in Toronto at the time of the North American Convention of Colored Freemen, so stopping at the plaque was not about envisioning her contributing to the meetings. While the building that Shadd Cary worked in is no longer standing and has been replaced with a different structure, the tour guides asked our group

Image 26. Plaque for Mary Ann Shadd Cary.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2018.



to “just picture her in that time” and imagine her in that space, a Black woman working independently and for herself in the 1850s, challenging multiple social boundaries of the time and, some might say, that still exist today.

Like our introduction to Henry Bibb through the tour, Shadd Cary was positioned within Canada as the redeemer country (Roman & Stanley, 1997). The description on the plaque and the discussion on the tour showed Canada as the place to which she fled to be safe from becoming victim to the American institution of slavery, which did occur, but makes Canada the righteous country by omitting selected features about Shadd Cary. The plaque nor the tour discussion made mention of Shadd Cary opening a school, but did not address her opposition to the creation of separate schools for Black children through the 1850 *Common Schools Act* (Yee, 1997). If this point was mentioned, it would highlight complexities and racisms in the positioning of Black bodies in Canada. One might argue that because separate schools were not created in Toronto, Shadd Cary’s opposition to them was irrelevant in the sociohistorical geography of the tour. However, bringing the issue to light would establish both a context in which government policy created an option for control over Black bodies and the fact that Black people like Shadd Cary did not simply sit back and take it. Engaging with Shadd Cary’s plaque contributes to shattering understandings of Black people as new or as passively present, which, like the narrative of the North American Convention of Colored Freemen, is a form of antiracism. The plaque does not, however, problematize how or why Whiteness gained power to become dominant over Black bodies in the first place. As we endeavored to envision the sociohistorical space in Shadd Cary’s time, we carried on to the next site, which would have been brand new when Shadd Cary lived and worked in the area.

Stop #5. Walking west on King Street East, reversing some of our earlier steps for one city block, we then crossed the street and began traveling north. Immediately after turning up Church Street, at the corner of Church Street and King Street West we encountered the Anglican St. James Cathedral (see Image 27 below). On the front of the cathedral on either side of the entranceway were two banners taller than the entrance's archway to the building and that had WELCOME printed on them with the cathedral's logo against the backdrop of the LGBTQ+ rainbow flag. According to a church plaque we passed on our way to the cathedral entrance (see Image 28 below; Heritage Toronto, 1997), the cathedral we saw was the fourth church on that site and was built in 1853 to replace the previous church that burned down in 1849. The plaque

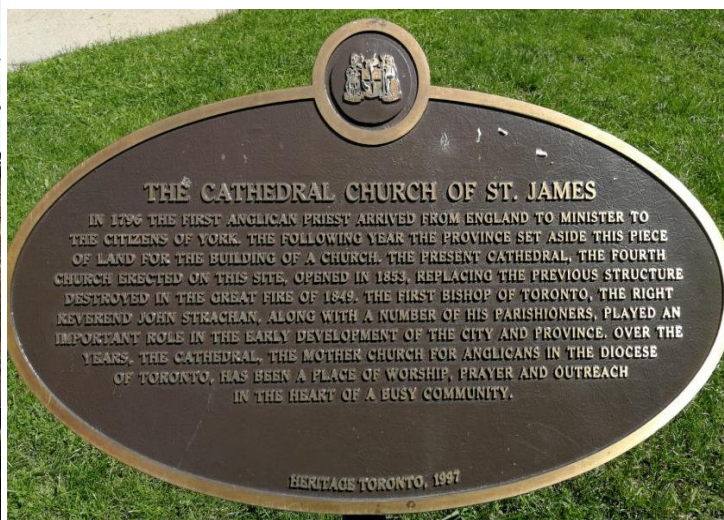
Image 27. St. James Cathedral.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019



Image 28. Plaque outside of St. James Cathedral.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



informed readers that the first Bishop of Toronto, the Right Reverend John Strachan, along with his parishioners, did much work out of the cathedral site, and was instrumental in shaping Toronto as a city. Given the location of the cathedral, Strachan's work was linked to and likely contributed to shaping the community in and around The Ward (for detailed history of Strachan, see Craig, 1976).

While my friends and I recognized that the church's age, location, and imposing size indicated that it was part of the sociohistorical environment in the area, we were unsure about what connections the church had to the histories specifically of Black people and communities. There were no markings on the in or outside of the building that made reference to historic or present services, activities, or events facilitated by or for Black congregants and community members. One tour guide clarified this uncertainty by stating that the cathedral did have a history of hosting weddings for racialized Black couples at a time when some churches would not.

As I now know and showed in the previous chapter, there were a number of churches in and around The Ward that had predominantly Black congregations, or were at least open to Black people attending services, but few of those remain standing. St. James Cathedral provided the tour with a site that could still be engaged. Whether or not the leaders and members of this particular church actively sought out racialized Black people in the past or now seek out people who identify with LGBTQ+ was not clarified. It did seem, though, that the church developed a reputation for opening its doors to people and communities who have historically and are now turned away from other churches. I do wonder how members of the Mississaugas of the New Credit would perceive the large WELCOME on the front of the church, as it would be an invitation—a form of permission—to enter and occupy space in the traditional territory from which their ancestors were pushed out. I may never know how members of the Mississaugas

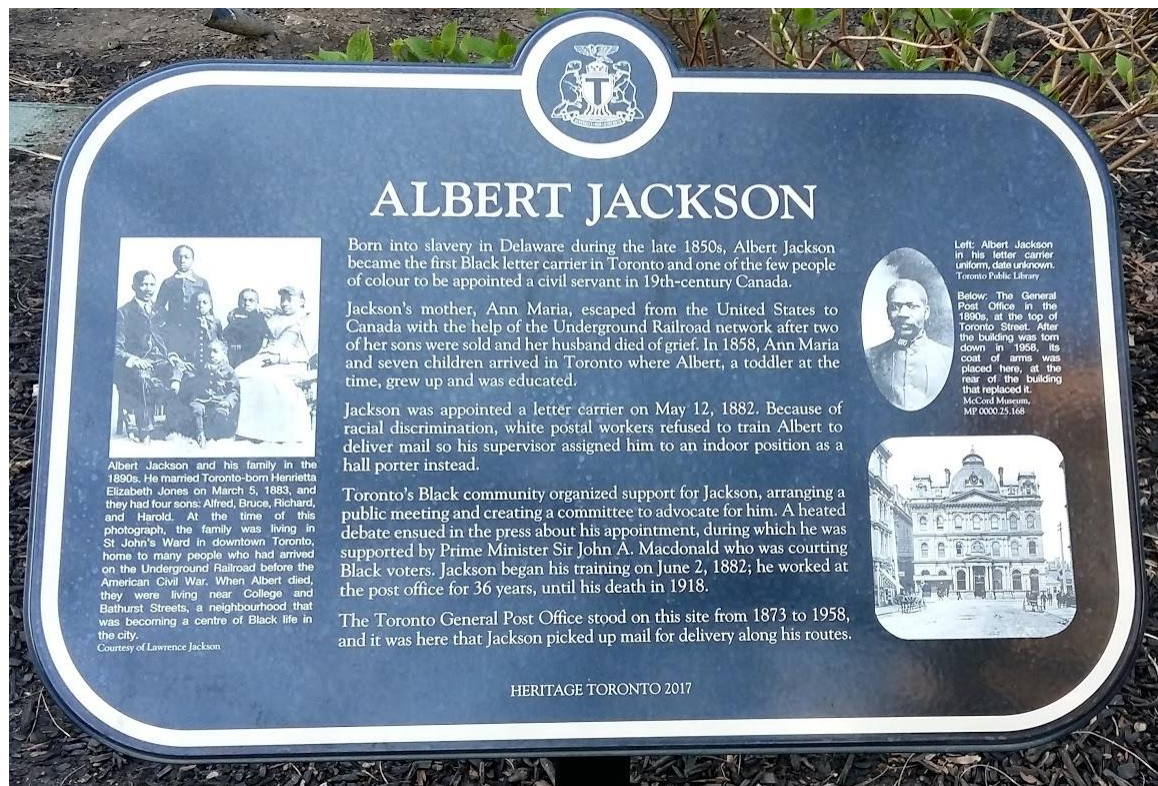
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would respond, but I can see the ways the church's efforts encourage the inclusion of excluded bodies while simultaneously maintaining the colonial fort (Donald, 2009) that continues to marginalize Indigenous knowledges and representations. After our interaction with the cathedral's historical and present-day markings, we carried on northward, crossing over Adelaide Street East and then turning east onto Lombard Street.

Stop #6. On Lombard Street, a small side street that spanned east-west between Jarvis Street and Victoria Street, we stopped at the plaque dedicated to Toronto's first Black letter carrier, Albert Jackson (see Image 29 below; Heritage Toronto, 2017a; for detailed discussion of

Image 29. Plaque for Albert Jackson.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



Albert Jackson, see McFarquhar, 2007). The street was rather devoid of people with the exception of perhaps five to ten pedestrians who passed by the tour group as we were stopped at the plaque, and only parked cars indicated that the street was at times occupied by higher volumes of people. The plaque, set in the edge of a garden near the sidewalk, was of similar height and size to the plaques I described in the previous chapter, standing outside City Hall commemorating the city's original Chinatown. Put another way, the plaque is small and unobtrusive; however, it was the small plaque that our tour guides gave focus to while ultimately ignoring a much larger symbol of colonialism that stood nearby.

As can be seen in Image 32 (see below), on the backside of the small garden, behind the Jackson plaque and leaning against the building that houses marketing, investment, and printing businesses, as well as a parking garage, was a stone sculpted coat of arms. The stone piece was once positioned above the main entrance of the city's main post office (for Jackson plaque, coat of arms, and surrounding area, see Image 30, Image 31, and Image 32 below). The sculpture was of the Royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom. The UK version is different from the coat of arms of Canada, which includes symbols of the Fleur de Lys, the maple leaf, and the Latin motto "A Mari Usque Ad Mare"—"From Sea to Sea." The United Kingdom's coat of arms does not include the French and Canadian symbols, and features the motto "Dieu et Mon Droit," translating to "God and my right". The motto comes from medieval English origins and is related to the belief in the divine right of kings. The choice of "A Mari Usque Ad Mare" in the Canadian coat of arms is borrowed from the seventy-second Psalm (Westfall, 1989), again linking the colonization of the land "from sea to sea" to visions of a divine plan. The presence of the mottos on the coat of arms suggests that the British empire and therefore the British occupation of what is called Canada was divinely ordained and, as such, natural and unproblematic.

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Image 30. Looking west on Lombard Street while standing at the plaque to Albert Jackson. Directive signs of parking lot and regulations presented in English only, and indicating the requirement to pay to occupy the space with a vehicle.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



Image 31. Looking east on Lombard Street while standing at the plaque to Albert Jackson. Street lined with building properties that perpetuate the colonial fort mentality (Donald, 2009) and the white possessive logic applied to the land (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



Image 32 (also Image 4 in previous chapter). Albert Jackson Plaque in the foreground. Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom—a marker of Canada’s colonial links to Britain—in the background.

Source: Photo taken by author, 2019.



According to a rectangular metal plate mounted to the base of the coat of arms, the coat of arms was “located above the main entrance of Toronto’s eighth post office which was erected on part of this site in 1872-1873 [...] and served as the main post office of the city until 1930.” While the guides made no reference to the large sculpture, my friends and I gave it some attention mainly because we felt it helped us imagine the material context of the Albert Jackson narrative that the guides presented to us. Additionally, observing the coat of arms and the surrounding area strengthened our understandings of how our encountering of the plaque did and did not challenge the racist sociohistorical geography.

The tour guides informed us that Jackson was born into slavery in Delaware, United States, and came to Toronto as a young boy with his mother after they escaped American

enslavement via the Underground Railroad. In similar fashion to the presentation of Mary Ann Shadd Cary's story, the guides told us that although the building was no longer standing, it was in that space that we stood where the main post office of Toronto was located. They created the picture, telling us it was there in 1882 that Jackson became the first person of colour to be employed as a letter carrier for the postal service. One guide described Jackson as the Jackie Robinson of the postal service, because Jackie Robinson was the first person of colour allowed to play for a Major League Baseball team. The guide added that much like Robinson's experience, Jackson breaking down the barriers that had kept out people of colour did not mean acceptance. Jackson, we were told, faced racism from his white colleagues. The white colleagues refused to provide Jackson with initial job training, and Jackson spent his first month working only inside the post office, rather than delivering the mail as he was hired to do. According to the narrative the guides told us and that is written on the plaque, the Black community of Toronto rallied around Jackson in support. Additionally, in hopes of gaining favour with Black people, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald—the same white supremacist Prime Minister who brought in the Indian Residential School system and fought against the immigration of Asian people to Canada (Stanley, 2016)—also showed support for Jackson. A month after being hired, Jackson was properly trained and began delivering mail in Toronto.

The presence of the plaque alone marks a layer on top of the bedrock because white, colonizing powers and systems are not questioned, but making the plaque active by engaging it through the tour does acknowledge the historic presence of Black bodies in Toronto and does challenge the image of Canada where Black bodies are new. Like the markers we looked at before this plaque, antiracism of a particular form is at play and should be embraced for the work it does, but should also be recognized for being only a contribution to antiracism and not a *fix-*

all. On the tour, while I was initially looking for the ways that the stops along the tour enacted antiracism by putting Black histories into focus and de-centring the dominant colonial and white narratives, it became clear that although there are different lenses to use when sharing a narrative, there is no easy separation of Black histories from colonial and white histories. This is not to say that Black histories can only be told in relation to colonial and white histories, but that there can be an intertwining of narratives. It is not a simple matter of moving the spotlight from one history to another. At the Jackson plaque, for my friends and me, as part of trying to envision the space where Jackson worked, observing the coat of arms—a marker of colonial presence—then became a part of imagining the space that Jackson faced each day.

As the photographs above illustrate, like the Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb plaques I presented in the previous chapter, the Albert Jackson plaque is surrounded and arguably overshadowed by the official markers and tools of colonialism and Whiteness. Again, the dominance of English is apparent, as it is the only language present and it is used in directive forms on parking regulation signs. The Latin motto on the Royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom is another language besides English, indeed, but it is used to represent the colonizing power and the continued Head of State for Canada. The buildings built up around the space are, for the most part, not those of neighbourhood businesses or residences. They are the products of large-scale development, framed as progress but continuously contributing to the domination of land that began with British colonization. The parking regulation signs and machines act as tools of control over how the space may and may not be used.

The OBHS tour's engagement with the Jackson plaque works to challenge the exclusion of Black bodies by making the plaque active and showing that the presence of and societal participation by Black people and communities is historical, not new, within Toronto. At the

same time, however, the Jackson narrative shows a contribution to, rather than a disruption of, the Eurocentric narrative of Toronto's history, as there is nothing about the Jackson history that problematizes the erasure of Indigenous histories and meanings within the space. Positively, though, Jackson's story becomes an inclusion of Black people and therefore a starting point—a crack in the bedrock—for destabilizing readings of Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour as “new” and/or “outsiders”. With the story of Albert Jackson told and our observations of the plaque and surrounding area taken in, the tour was complete, and we walked with our guides a block and a half southwest to the OBHS office on Adelaide Street East.

The end of the tour. The elevator in the building that houses the OBHS was refurbished but maintains the same technology used for the building's original elevator, meaning it still requires an elevator operator. There was no person stationed in the elevator for the entirety of the business day, but building employees were around to assist anyone wishing to take the elevator anywhere from the basement up to the fourth floor, which is the top floor. The tour guides found one of the people who could operate the elevator and we ascended to the floor on which the OBHS office is located. Upon arriving to the office, our group was introduced to the OBHS First Vice-President, Channon Oyeniran, and was briefly shown around the office space.

As the guides told us, the OBHS was established in 1978 by Dr. Daniel G. Hill and Donna Hill, along with other supporting organizers. In 1962, Dr. Hill was the first director of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and later became the chair in 1971; he founded the first human rights consulting firm in Canada in 1973; and in 1984 he was appointed Ombudsman of Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, 2015). He and Donna Hill are also the parents of Lawrence Hill, the award-winning author of *The Book of Negroes*, and Dan Hill, the award-winning musician. The OBHS office appeared to be not only a place where the

organization of Black history events took place; it was a place where much material from those events over the years was archived as historical artefacts, such as posters and pictures of the past peppering the walls of the office. It was also a place for providing various forms of literature for further research.

Many shelves were lined with books on various topics, people, and events in racialized Black histories, much of which was Canadian in context. The OBHS personnel invited our group to peruse the collection of literature and purchase any of the books we found to be interesting. At the same time, our tour guides brought out a small stack of books that were specifically focused on the sites and the spaces we engaged with during the tour. While I did not take a photograph to depict the collection of books—something that would be helpful for further bringing the experience to life—one example that a guide introduced us to was Karolyn Smardz Frost's 2017 book, *Steal Away Home*. The book is an in-depth historical narrative of the life of Cecilia Reynolds, from her being enslaved to escaping into Canada and making a life in The Ward, to then returning to the American South after slavery was abolished. As I read the book after the tour, it provided details that add to the histories I engaged with on the tour. It helped me to see the city space that was The Ward in nuanced, historical ways. There are no guarantees that tour participants will want to carry on with further research after the tour, or that they will purchase the recommended books, or that they will read the books even if purchased. In this type of introduction to the literature, though, the OBHS personnel were taking measures to increase the chances that tour participants like myself might see the opportunity and necessity for further reading to strengthen knowledges and positions in racialized Black histories and perhaps antiracism. Once my friends and I purchased the books we wanted, we thanked our guides and the rest of the OBHS staff for welcoming us and providing us with our walking tour experiences,

and then left the building. My two friends and I all agreed that we looked at our city surroundings through new inquisitive and critical lenses.

Antiracism at Work

As racisms are exclusions resulting in negative consequences (Stanley, 2011; 2016), they are, then, not about intentions and are about effects. Determining whether or not a person aims to exclude a person of colour might be part of understanding the actions that took place, but it does not change the results of that person of colour being marginalized. The perpetrator of the exclusionary act might not *be* a racist, in the sense of them holding values and beliefs that see a person in negative ways because of the way they are racialized, but their actions can still have racist effects. Using this same logic, it follows that just like racism, antiracism is also about the effects and not the intentions. Critics of antiracism work argue that it needs to be made more active (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016). They suggest antiracism has been used more as a buzzword, particularly by white people who claim to denounce racism, but do so in patronizing ways. These self-proclaimed antiracists do it *for* people of colour, and without deconstructing systems of Whiteness or their dominant positions within the system (Ahmed, 2004; DiAngelo, 2018; Hage, 2016; Leonardo, 2004; Macoun, 2016; Wise, 2011). If antiracism is to be relational and active, as it must be if it is to be effective (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016), then there needs to be recognition that in different sociohistorical contexts, the decisions for how to enact antiracism create particular forms of antiracism. My effort here is to acknowledge and analyze the particularities of antiracism in relation to sociohistorical geographies engaged by the OBHS walking tour.

Identifying the excluded people/group. In a broad sense, I did not need to participate in the walking tour to know which racialized group the Ontario *Black* History Society works to identify as being excluded and erased. However, the way the racialization of Black is presented

and recognized can change in different spatial and temporal contexts. Ibrahim (2014) posits that racialized Black people are always in the processes of *becoming* Black. He argues that factors that give meaning to what is Black are ever-changing. The label of ‘Black,’ however, remains the same, which means Blackness is always being re-made, never final. ‘Black’ becomes placed within what Ibrahim (2014) calls the *social imaginary*. He says this imaginary is an assemblage of ideas, a discursive or symbolic space in which racialized Black people are already constructed, imagined, assembled, and positioned. While the walking tour disrupts the banality of the markers and tools that continuously (re)position Whiteness as the somatic norm (Puwar, 2004), thereby highlighting an historic and not new presence of Black bodies in the sociohistorical geography, the historical racialized Black figures are, as Ibrahim suggests, constructed, imagined, assembled, and positioned in particular ways that align with a set window of the past.

Of the six stops on the walking tour—the Cecilia Reynolds and The Ward display at City Hall; the discussion of the John Anderson case occurring in Osgoode Hall; St. Lawrence Hall; the Mary Ann Shadd Cary plaque; St. James Cathedral; and the Albert Jackson plaque—five of them were spoken about in direct connection to Freedom Seeking and the Abolitionist Movement. Although a case could certainly be made for St. James Cathedral being a part of the Abolitionist Movement, with it being where sermons were preached to celebrants in the Emancipation Day parades in years past (Henry, 2018, August 1), the tour guides did not frame the church in this way, and they spoke of it in more general community terms. Aside from the church, the discussion at each stop placed each person and place in their lived experiences during and following their acts resisting American slavery. Presenting these particular narratives like this is not inherently positive or negative, as there are different possibilities and limitations with the presentation of any history, so I offer no critique of the OBHS work and whether the

decisions to share these stories in these ways are “right” or “wrong”. Instead, what I suggest must be considered and that I will discuss further are the effects of the tour’s discourse that positions these racialized Black people and places in relation to Freedom Seeking, abolition, and Black roots in Canadian history. While it might be argued that the tour guides were simply working with the narratives that are available in that space, it is important to note that their repeated emphasis of the historical Black people in relation to experiences of Freedom Seeking and the abolitionist movement (re)constructs Blackness in qualified ways.

One tour guide told our group that Cecilia Reynolds escaped enslavement at the age of 15 while taken on a trip to Niagara Falls, New York, with the woman who “owned” her. The tour guide said that when Reynolds was alone in the Cataract House hotel, some of the hotel staff spoke to her in secret and told her if she wanted to be free, she needed to go with them immediately. They said would take her across the river into Canada, which is what Reynolds did, then making her way to Toronto. Although the Cataract House hotel is no longer standing, it was apparently known as a border crossing point of the Underground Railroad. The City Hall display that incorporates Reynolds’ story of escaping enslavement did not include her actual experience of Freedom Seeking, but Freedom Seeking was presented as an example of a way many of the racialized Black residents of The Ward came to live in the neighbourhood. The tour guides offered the details of Reynolds journey, and it was on the note of where she first escaped enslavement that one of the tour guides began unveiling her own felt connection to the Reynolds narrative. The guide shared with our group that members of her own family were also Freedom Seekers and found their way into Canada around the same crossing point as Reynolds in Niagara Falls. In that moment, by relating her family history to Reynolds, and by us engaging in active

interaction with her, the tour guide ensured that we (the tour participants) felt a connection to the histories of Freedom Seeking.

In explaining the John Anderson trial, the guides told the story of Anderson's violent altercation with the man in the United States. The guides then broadened their focus and discussed Anderson's case in relation to all people who were racialized as Black at the time of the trial. They explained that in 1850, the United States introduced the *Fugitive Slave Act* that made it legal for racialized Black people who escaped enslavement to be captured and returned to a position of slavery as the property of the "owner" from whom they escaped, even when the formerly enslaved person was residing in a free state. At times, the "slave hunters" kidnapped Black people who were born free and had never been enslaved and took them to plantations where they were placed in bondage under the guise of being returned after attempting escape. Because escaping enslavement was against the law in the United States, if the Canadian government had returned John Anderson to the United States to face charges for an act of self-defence that was legal in Canada, this would have meant that United States law could be enforced in Canada. Any Freedom Seekers could then be subject to American law, captured, and returned to a position of slavery. The added fear would have been that the "slave hunters" could capture any person in Canada racialized as Black and claim that they were fugitives. As I mentioned above, the Canadian courts decided that Anderson did not break any law and therefore would not be extradited to the United States. The point here, however, is that although the tour guides' telling of these experiences and concerns established the historical presence of Black bodies in Toronto, thereby challenging readings of Black people as "new," the narrative framed in specific ways what it was like to be a Black body in Toronto during the mid-19th century. Whether they were born into slavery or born free, born in the United States, Canada, or

elsewhere, their freedom from enslavement and their unconditional belonging was not a given. Such a narrative on its own allows for the continued reading of Black presence as *permitted* and of white, colonial power as legitimate.

The story of Albert Jackson we were told was that he became the first postal carrier of colour in Canada, and that he came to Canada as a young boy after being born into slavery and escaping via the Underground Railroad. Chronologically, the story is obviously that he escaped enslavement first, arrived in Toronto, and then years later became the first postal carrier of colour, but the story was presented by the guides in the order that made Jackson's postal work the primary focus, and his early-life enslavement an added point of information. The addition of Jackson being born into slavery is an important experience in his life narrative, but is, in a sense, irrelevant to the point of him becoming the first Black postal carrier. Oyeniran commented to me in our interview, "he was just working. He's not like, 'Oh I'm the first Black person [to be a postal carrier]'. " In other words, being Black in Toronto was normal, and should be understood as such by non-Black people in the present time, but it often is not. As the Jackson narrative is presented on the tour in relation to the other tour narratives, the shared Black experience unfortunately includes remaining cautious of anti-Black racism. The experience, though, becomes not about intentionally seeking to break down racist barriers, and rather about working to create and maintain a life after escaping enslavement. The inclusion of the point that Jackson was once enslaved does offer a more complete narrative of his life, sure, but more notably here, the effects of including his escape from enslavement articulates with the other narratives and adds to framing Blackness in Toronto as having roots in freedom seeking.

The guides presented St. Lawrence Hall as the place where Black delegates met in 1851 to discuss combatting the *Fugitive Slave Act* and developing an effective fight for the abolition of

American slavery. The next stop after St. Lawrence Hall, the plaque for Mary Ann Shadd Cary, did not include a discussion of Shadd Cary ever being enslaved, because she was not. The guides did, however, show her as an example of someone who moved to Canada to be out of reach from the “slave hunters,” and also highlighted her work as a newspaper publisher as part of the abolitionist movement. Based on how I understood the presentations on the tour, which focused predominantly on a timeframe of the 1830s to the 1860s, to be Black in Toronto was to be a former Freedom Seeker and/or someone working with the abolitionist movement. These are highly important histories with which to engage, and any walking tour has time constraints that limit the information that can be shared. Again, I offer my commentary here not in judgement of the tour as insufficient, but in examination of the ways the tour simultaneously frames Canada and Toronto as places where antiracist action thrived but also where Blackness and Black people were and are disoriented (Puwar, 2004), excluded, and erased (Stanley, 2011) from the sociohistorical space.

The stories on the tour were presented as those of Black contribution, collaboration, and success after overcoming the adversity and barriers of racist attitudes and actions—a ‘happily ever after’ narrative—disrupting visions of Black people in Canada as “new” or as eternal victims. Through the tour, Black people and communities were shown as the forgotten contributors connected with—never outside of—the nation-building project, thereby extending the imagined community of English Canada to include Black people. Because Black people and communities did and do indeed contribute to shaping The Ward, Toronto, Ontario, and Canada, and because their histories should not be but are silenced, this framing of Black people and communities illustrates the general complexity of racisms. The nation state becomes reified and unproblematic, framing Black people as participants in the project of colonialism, legitimizing

said project, and therefore perpetuating the exclusions of Indigenous nations from their traditional territories. More specifically, framing historic Black people and communities in this way highlights the complexities of fighting anti-Black racism, because there is no single Black history or identity.

Not all people who are racialized as Black—whether self-racialized or ascribed—are connected to histories of Freedom Seeking and abolition in relation to institutions of American slavery. In my interview with OBHS President Natasha Henry, when I posed the question “What does it mean to be a Black Canadian?” Henry responded saying

There’s an ongoing, I guess shifting of that definition, because we’ve had waves of migration of Black people at different points in time, and so all of that contributes to rate who are Black Canadian ... going back to those who were first enslaved, you have Freedom Seekers primarily from the United States; moving forward, [19]50s, 60s you have a huge wave of people from the Caribbean; and ... during that time as well, but even more so more recently, people from the continent of Africa.

To the same question, OBHS First Vice-President Channon Oyeniran said,

It’s an identity that’s always changing, but definitely I think our historical background, our history kind of pulls us together. Again, whether you’ve been here for centuries or whether you’re from Jamaica and you came over here in the [19]60s, the one thing that draws us all together is that ultimately, we’re taken from the continent, brought to different places, if you were brought to America and your family came over in the 1800s, you were still coming from Africa, your ancestors ... Doesn’t matter who you are in life as a Black person in Canada, where you’re coming from, that history kind of draws us together.

Oyeniran's statement of "our history kind of pulls us together" evokes connection between Black people of the distant past and Black people of the present, which does not insist on direct connections to Freedom Seeking for all Black people, but does challenge notions that Black presence is "new" and conditional.

Looking at both Henry's and Oyeniran's responses together, the leaders of the OBHS are well aware and informed about the range of histories and identities that fall under the category of "Black history" and "Black identity" in Canada, and, in particular, Toronto. It is not a single linear history of one homogeneous group, but the group is collectively identified as 'Black' (Ibrahim, 2014). Within the context of the tour, though, the racist disorientations (Puwar, 2004), exclusions, and erasures (Stanley, 2011) that the OBHS tour guides identified and sought to reorient were of Black bodies, particularly of Black bodies that connect with and lay claim to histories of Freedom Seeking and abolition. Indeed, Black people with Caribbean origins do also connect to histories of enslavement and freedom seeking, so it is not only a matter of having connections to the Underground Railroad. However, not all Black people in Toronto share these historic links to freedom seeking and abolition. The shared experience for people racialized as Black, though, is that whether their familial presence in Canada reaches back for generations or they arrived yesterday, they are read in relation to essentialized meanings of Blackness (Ibrahim, 2014) that place qualifications and conditions on their presence. These complexities place limitations on what can be conveyed and examined in a single tour, and on the expanse of antiracist effects that can occur. The OBHS tour does, however, create antiracist starting points by challenging notions of Black people as "new" through presenting narratives that position Black bodies in that sociohistorical space nearly 200 years ago. With the group identified, part of

building antiracist spaces is to show and call out the technologies at work perpetuating exclusionary meanings.

Naming the ways of exclusion. I discussed in the previous chapter how the ways The Ward is marked creates a racist sociohistorical geography. Spatial markers—cultural representations—work to erase the presence of historic racialized communities and exclude Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour by enabling the reading of all as “new” and/or “outsiders” to the space. I recognized that in various ways, as a white-passing person, I operate within, benefit from, and therefore validate and perpetuate the dominant systems of Whiteness that are made banal. Enacting antiracism through the OBHS walking tour meant not only identifying which racialized people and groups are being excluded, as I discussed above, but also identifying the ways that the exclusions become (re)created. The tour guides placed most of their emphasis on reorienting the narratives of Black bodies in the space that we occupied. There were no overt declarations to say that specific buildings or signs were markers of racism, but this did not mean that the material and meanings of exclusion were completely ignored. Instead, the discussions of the histories were about what *used to* be there, which became telling of erasures unto themselves. Highlighting what used to be present incorporated at least a mention if not a full explanation of which material structures (dis/re)placed the past and (re)shaped the space.

Throughout the tour, as I described above, there were numerous sites where the tour guides asked us to look around and imagine the environment in which the featured people lived and worked. The act of imagining the space meant not only envisioning what the physical surroundings might have looked like, but also understanding the potential for social meanings different to those of the present-day space in which we stood. Part of this re-imagining required

recognition of what physical structures are now in place, which creates opportunity to consider what markers and meanings were given priority, and by whom or which authorities. In my discussion with Natasha Henry about the tour's engagement with the physical space and the ways that the histories of Black people and communities become covered over, she stated that "because as this world-class city, the evolution of this status and that label has resulted in the erasure of that history [of The Ward] ... Cities are built. Buildings are torn down. So you get that erasure." By saying this, she did not mean that the changes in the physical setting should be shrugged off as *just what happens*. Rather, she was acknowledging that these are the realities that the OBHS and the tour participants face and must navigate in finding ways to bring the past to light. Indeed, over the course of time, there are natural changes that occur to any physical setting, so there will always be an element of imagination and interpretation when envisioning the past and what it means for who is understood as belonging (Stanley, 2000). These erasures in and around The Ward due to human decisions, however, leave little to nothing in terms of material that allows people to envision the past that once was. The walking tour becomes a much-needed tool for educating people in ways that problematize the past and current downtown space as one of white British origins. The tour guides' discussions provided suggestions that one main cause of erasure of the historic Black people and communities in and around The Ward occurred through the physical changes to the space that literally buried evidence of the past.

At City Hall, the tour guides told us that the artefacts we were looking at in the display came from a neighbourhood that *used to* exist on the land where City Hall now stands. They did not go into detail of the city government's expropriation of the land, but did offer enough information to make the point that a history of a Black community was unknown to us because the banal presence of the government building took its place. On our way to St. Lawrence Hall,

the tour guide needing to call ahead to ensure the doors were unlocked suggested to me that although the physical building still stands, engaging with the histories of abolitionist work is conditional, thereby allowing for the disruption of erasures only at particular times. At the Mary Ann Shadd Cary plaque, we were asked to imagine Shadd Cary supporting the abolitionist movement by publishing her newspaper in a building that no longer stands. It should be noted that Shadd Cary also contributed to antiracism beyond her newspaper publishing. She presented active opposition to segregated schools, calling them “dark and hateful relics of Yankee Negrophobia” (as quoted in McLaren, 2004) and took on the role of teacher in classrooms with both Black and white students. Similar to the erasure that City Hall enacts, the histories of Shadd Cary and the newspapers published in this space by and for the Black community are excluded by being reduced to a single plaque on the exterior wall of the buildings that replaced the previous structures. These new buildings now house businesses that, from my observations of the external signage and the interior setup shown through large windows, offer no markers to identify that the space they occupy is or ever was one including the presence of Black bodies. On Lombard Street, where the Albert Jackson plaque stands in the garden accompanied by the overshadowing stone coat of arms sculpture, the tour guides again asked us to imagine the past, but this time envisioning the post office that Jackson would have worked with. It is perhaps ironic that as part of reorienting Jackson in that space, we were imagining a Canadian governmental institution and therefore one of colonialism and Whiteness. The institution, nonetheless, contributed to a social geography that Jackson engaged with as a Black man.

The streetscape around the Jackson plaque featured a parking garage, a multi-story building under construction, and a building that housed numerous private businesses (see Images 30 and 31 above). In helping our group to envision what was once present, the tour guides were

thereby pointing to what and who has been removed for the meanings given to the space. They were also highlighting what now stands in place, which are physical structures that align with meanings of colonialism and Whiteness as unproblematically foundational. The parking garage connects to the vehicles that drive on the grid-pattern roads that act as control mechanisms over use of the land. The building under construction exemplifies the continued push for development of the space. The private businesses become positioned in relation to the systems of ‘public’ and ‘private.’ All of this traces back to colonial systems of dominance. Actions such as recent Black Lives Matter protest marches that flood the streets and take over the authority of the grid (re)create meanings for city spaces that disrupt the dominance by (re)orienting, even if temporarily, the presence of Black bodies.

Walking tour participants may not always recognize the markers of colonialism and Whiteness around them as colonialism and Whiteness, and so they may not seek to actively overtake markers of dominance in the ways that protesters do. However, there is little denying that for so much of the history of Black people and communities that the OBHS tour guides sought to unsilence in the city space, the discussions require engaging the material that has (dis/re)placed representations of the narratives being presented. While there are no guarantees that antiracist efforts will produce antiracist effects (Stanley, 2014), positioning participants to see the ways certain markings are made prominent while disorienting and hiding others creates the potential for participants to understand their own connections to the past differently and identify racist erasures as relational.

My friends and I all agreed as we walked along the tour that we took for granted the presence of the buildings and structures that covered over the histories of Black people and communities. Even as people who identify as racializations other than white, and being people

educated about colonialism and racism in Canada, our conversations with the tour guides brought to light how normalized the city structure was to us. I quickly realized that the ways I saw and interacted with the city space prior to the tour—especially during the years when I lived and worked in Toronto—went largely unquestioned. This lack of questioning allowed the structures and my everyday engagements with them to continue the erasures of historic Black bodies. One need not identify as white to perpetuate Whiteness. The tour created opportunities for us to see and consider more critically the (re)production of sociohistorical space and meanings, and our places within it. As I saw the structures of the space having effects beyond their basic functions, I began to create new (to me) meanings for the material and the sociohistorical geography around me.

Creating new meanings. After identifying the historic group that was disoriented from the space (Puwar, 2004), as well as some of the forms of erasure that occur, Natasha Henry's hope that the tour makes historic Black lived experiences known brings to mind Puwar's (2004) call for examining approaches to troubling the disorientation and triggering the reorientation of bodies racialized as other than white. To engage with forms of 'reorientation' is to name banal tools of exclusion (i.e., spatial markers) and acknowledge that Black bodies in the space under examination are not new to the space. It is to (re)create discursive meanings that recognize there is an historic presence of Black people and communities there, and to realize that Black histories and people are not simply sitting in the margins waiting to be invited into the centre. As Henry stated, they are already present in the sociohistorical space; they need to be acknowledged as part of the sociohistorical makeup. This is not to say that it is in the hands of white people to decide whether or not to include Black people. That notion would continue the dominance of Whiteness, when Whiteness is the thing that must be disrupted. Rather, as part of this shift, those with

privilege and power must recognize and question their roles in maintaining systems of Whiteness (Macoun, 2016) that are hindering social transformation (Kobayashi, 2005). The walking tour acts as a catalyst for people to realize how the spaces of downtown Toronto that they occupy and operate within are those that perpetuate the erasure of Black histories existing under their feet and make banal the exclusion of Black bodies in the present.

In my efforts to examine how the tour works to highlight the relationality between the tour participants and the sociohistorical space, I asked Natasha Henry how the walking tour differs from a museum exhibit where the narrative content could be the same but would be delivered inside a single building rather than out in the city streets. She told me, “there’s something that really connects you to actually standing on the space and on the land.” She continued on to say the content of the tour “is opening up a space that is not necessarily the physical space, but ... it’s that social geography; we’re opening up that space.” Positioning the tour within the context of a sociohistorical geography, the antiracist work of the tour becomes relational, not just content that tour participants take in. It is then also my antiracist project in that I am an active participant within the sociohistorical geography, not just a passive observer. Using the descriptions and discussions that the tour guides presented, I recreated The Ward in my mind and highlighted new meanings for the space (i.e., a former Black community) in social terms. I then read the sites that exist outside of the boundaries in relation to The Ward as the central hub of Black community activity from the late 1830s to the early 1890s. The effects of this approach became two-fold: the presence of Black bodies in Toronto was reinforced as not being new; and understandings of Black bodies as being in an isolated place within the wider city space became problematized.

The historic neighbourhood of The Ward may have been recognized as the core space of various racialized communities at different times, including the Black community, but Black bodies were not sequestered within those blocks, banned from crossing neighbourhood lines. While anyone looking at the historic Black community as existing only within fixed lines might be acknowledging the existence of Black bodies in the past, they also perpetuate the Eurocentric grand narrative (Stanley, 2006) through notions of colonialism and Whiteness as the foundation of the city and the Black community as being a *permitted* anomaly. This vision would align with images of liberal multiculturalism (Sato & Este, 2018) where the inclusion of Black bodies is an *add'n 'stir* approach and systems of Whiteness remain untroubled.

The tour guides used the framework of The Ward as a familiar spatial structure. They then expanded the boundaries in ways that told histories as belonging to Black communities who were and remain part of multiple intertwined sociohistorical systems of meaning, rather than histories merely *about* racialized Black communities as determined by “official” institutions. Social meanings attributed to historic Black people and communities stem from our own social imaginaries which, as Ibrahim (2014) argued, see Black people in already constructed ways. In the context of the walking tour, our social imaginaries were shaped by the tour guides telling us that the Black people and spaces we were imagining were people brave in escaping enslavement, intelligent in strategizing for abolition, ambitious in publishing newspapers, and even what some might call “ordinary” when taking on a job as a postal carrier simply to support a family. These were dynamic people who in both significant and subtle ways shaped the physical and social geographies that I occupied on the tour, but who are often marginalized in discussions and markers of who built the city. As I listened and learned about the histories, I felt the effects of the tour in my “reinterpretation of the space,” as Natasha Henry called it in our conversation.

I did not sign up for the tour with intentions to uncover how I activate the markers and meanings that tell me I belong while disorienting Black bodies. As I was so ardently seeking out tools of antiracism and considered myself a staunch antiracist, I wanted to examine which and how histories of Black people were being reoriented. However, I did not identify or perhaps was in denial of my beneficial relationship with Whiteness throughout the tour. I recognized the dominance that excluded Black histories, and I saw my participation in the tour as part of reorienting Black bodies, but I failed in the moment of the tour to confront the ways I enacted and even embodied Whiteness. Despite advocating for critical engagement with relational antiracism, my initial sense of inquiry towards the tour was not about my own positionality, and instead included questions of: whether or not a Black history tour was automatically antiracist or just assumed to be so; as well as whether the tour would be facilitated to include Black histories as part of the mainstream grand narrative of Canada or to challenge that narrative entirely.

When I asked whether creating different meanings in the space meant interjecting Black histories into the nationalist narrative or using the Black histories to disrupt the grand narrative of Canada (Stanley, 2006), Henry suggested that

It's a multi-pronged approach. It's giving, curating a specific space for the voices that continue to be silenced and marginalized or excluded from the national narrative, but it ... also is about disrupting that narrative and also inserting—I don't want to say forcefully—inserting those narratives into the national narrative. So you're problematizing this idea of how Toronto has come to be defined, how Canada is defined, and really getting people to question that, and I think critically, about that, out of a specific and focused look at Black life in Toronto.

Racisms are not simple. Henry's response reiterates the point that disrupting exclusions of Black people and communities can be complex, with some approaches unintentionally perpetuating nationalisms that exclude other racialized people and groups so that Black bodies are seen as being included. Inserting Black narratives into the national narrative, as Henry states, reasserts the nation state of Canada as a given. Although the aim is to disrupt exclusions of Black people and communities—indeed an antiracist goal—the narrative continues to be Eurocentric and colonizing, thereby maintaining the exclusions of Indigenous people, groups, and meanings. Redefining Toronto and reading it with different meanings is an active process that every person is connected with, whether they know it or not, especially when (re)creating meanings of inclusion includes setting parameters that also exclude others. One's active or passive engagement will (re)create meanings that enact different effects: reassert the Eurocentric grand narrative that excludes Black bodies; perpetuate the grand narrative with a Eurocentric core while interjecting Black narratives only in relation to the Eurocentric history; or disrupt the grand narrative entirely, de-centre Whiteness, and de-essentialize racialized histories and identities. However, creating new meanings for an antiracist sociohistorical geography, I now realize, requires not merely good intentions and also necessitates deconstructing and reconstructing positions for myself in relation to the spatial creation and other bodies existing within it. I will return to this point in the next chapter, and for now consider that this recognition of one's place within a space and the active process of (re)creating meaning does not occur by accident. There are challenges to those who seek to make antiracism active when they encounter other people who may not be actively racist but are unaware of antiracist efforts taking place.

Challenges to this work

While on the walking tour, the guides both wore OBHS t-shirts, but beyond this apparel, our group did not carry anything to indicate that we were on a tour of any kind, let alone one of Black histories. We certainly did not have an “Antiracism in Progress” sign to inform passersby of the work the tour aimed to do, and we had numerous interactions with people during our journey that, if nothing else, caused me to differently consider in what ways the tour does and does not work to create antiracist effects. The query to which I continuously returned was whether or not my efforts to (re)create an antiracist space would actually determine it to be an antiracist space if people around me were not also actively (re)creating the same antiracist space. While the material makeup of a space, the labels we give it, and even the ways we describe and discuss a space, can create a sense of fixity and permanence, people’s presence in and engagement with a space is always in flux. The meanings attached to a space become (re)created each time a person engages with a space, which means constantly (re)creating a space. This (re)creation, however, is not only done by one person in relation to the physical makeup of the space. It is also done in relation to the presence of other people and the meanings that they also (re)create with the space. With no known intent to counter the potential for us to enact antiracist meanings, some people we encountered had other understandings for the spaces we occupied during the tour.

As I described earlier, at the first stop on the tour inside Toronto City Hall, accessing the display case required us to pass through a security checkpoint where the guard offered advice that our tour group venture to the second floor to see what he deemed to be more interesting features. The guard’s mere presence was symbolic of the control of bodies in a so-called public building. Arguments might be made that the security checkpoint is not in place to police particular bodies, and it is instead there to ensure safety of the people and security of the

technologies that maintain the city's operating systems. The very system, however, is one that assumes the rights of settler colonizers' control and reasserts Whiteness every day by continuing to claim authority over Indigenous lands (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). The guard—who was a person of colour—was tasked with protecting Whiteness; he contributed to ensuring that City Hall—a main control centre for the colonizer's fort (Donald, 2009)—remained unchallenged as a piece of property to be used and controlled in particular ways (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). The interaction with the guard was but a moment in our tour journey, and we were not there to disrupt Whiteness by pointing fingers at the guard. The work of the tour was to reorient Black histories with the city space. Neither our tour guides nor anyone in our group chose to clarify with the guard that the elevator display was our intended stop, or that we disagreed with his assessment that there was “not much to see” near the elevator. I simply made mental note of the systems of power that add to the multifaceted presence of racism that the tour must navigate.

Over by the elevators, after the guides shared the narrative of Cecilia Reynolds, while my friends and I were peppering our guides with questions and comments about the history on display and the personal connections they felt with the narrative, we were interrupted. A racialized white woman who, based on the identification badge hanging from her belt loop, worked in the building asked us all with a tone more of command than actual request, “Can you move your conversation away from the elevator?” Clearly frustrated, she told us with a huff, “I missed my elevator because you were talking in front of the doors.” Feeling flabbergasted by this abrasive encounter, my friends and I were at a loss for words, but one of our guides calmly told the woman that we were on a tour. The woman then saw my friend's camera and, no doubt thinking like the security guard that she was offering help *and* moving us from the space, told us

that we should move over to another area of the building's lobby where we could use some of the displayed art as a *better* background for photographs. She then walked into the open elevator that had arrived and left us standing in the space, questioning whether or not the displays of history were really working to inform public audiences of silenced Black histories.

While still standing by the display, in brief discussion after the woman left the space, we all agreed that the confrontation with the woman was an experience with racism. One guide told us that unfortunately she encounters this type of racism often, and she declared that people like the woman did not understand what we were doing by taking the tour and engaging the display. Although the woman's actions and words pointing to *better* backgrounds were encouraging us to ignore and, in effect, continue the exclusion of histories of Black people and communities, this was not the racism we focused on. Rather, our recognition of racism taking place was in the white woman attempting to assert dominance by claiming the space as being meant for her convenience and dictating where people of colour should and should not exist. Because I am most often racialized as white by other people, there are those with whom I shared this story—including many students in teacher education courses, the majority of whom were white—who argue that my white-passing presence shows how the woman confronting us may have been rude, but not racist. Naysayers generally tell me that she was approaching a group of people where some but not all just happen to be people of colour, and so her intentions of excluding people of colour cannot be confirmed. The effects, however, were that people of colour were being pushed out. Whiteness—the white woman declaring her position in a space where she worked for a system claiming authority over colonized land—was being framed as being of higher importance than a tour group attempting to enact antiracism.

The woman's lack of recognition that Black women, women of colour, and I could be engaging with the space in ways beyond her own imaginings may stem from the fact that this so-called public building, inside and out, is largely marked in ways that reify notions of the white, English bedrock. Varying forms of décor—temporary markings—are merely layered on top, only a minimal amount of which represent Indigenous people, Black people, and/or people of colour. On the day of the tour, in the central area of the building known as the rotunda, there were many posterboards displaying primary school students' artwork. On other days, the rotunda is used for other visual displays, such as that of award-winning photography or a Greek Canadian history project. The display cases by the elevators are on rotation, so will eventually be replaced with other visual projects. If the displays around City Hall show racialized histories, they are temporary and not integral to the official operations of the space, meaning they can be and are passed by without becoming part of the everyday discursive repertoire (Tator, Henry, & Mattis, 1998). The white woman's reading of our position within and use of the space was that we were out of her sense of *norm*, and we were therefore “new” and/or “outsiders” to the public space. Despite this negative interaction, we continued the tour and maintained our active engagement with reorienting Black histories and (re)creating antiracist meanings in the sociohistorical geographies. The potential for challenges, however, did not stop at City Hall.

As I mentioned earlier in the “Stop #3” description, during our walk to St. Lawrence Hall, one of the tour guides made a phone call to the Hall's offices to make sure the building was unlocked and that we would be able to access the inside. On the face of it, the phone call was an act of clarification, ensuring that the tour guides would be able to deliver the tour they intended. What the need to telephone ahead indicates, though, is a potential barrier to actively reorienting histories of Black people and, therefore, a challenge to (re)shaping the space in antiracist ways.

Had the building been locked, we no doubt would have engaged with the narrative while standing outside the building, similar to the ways that the story of John Anderson was presented from outside Osgoode Hall, of Mary Ann Shadd Cary was shared from the sidewalk in front of where her office used to be, and of Albert Jackson was told from beside the garden in the place where the post office once stood. However, in addition to placing conditions upon accessing Black histories, the uncertainty of being able to enter the building reminds me that the building, even when it is being engaged for antiracist purposes, is still property that adheres to the fort mentality (Donald, 2009). It reasserts the bedrock of colonialism and Whiteness, covering over and excluding meanings that the space is traditional Indigenous land. Indeed, in terms of the Black histories we sought to interact with, access to inside St. Lawrence Hall would not make or break our access to the history in some way. As Natasha Henry said earlier, though, “There’s something that really connects you to actually standing on the space.”

Being able to enter the building of St. Lawrence Hall and walk around in the grand hall gives meaning to the 53 delegates at the North American Convention of Colored Freemen in 1851. The antiracist work being done through this historic convention was not that of any small, covert organization meeting in secret in some back room. The convention delegates occupied and centred themselves in the discourse of the room, creating a space where Black bodies could feel belonging in a place couched in a geography of Whiteness. There was racism in Toronto in the past, and there is now in the present, but the racialized people subjected to racisms were not and are not tiptoeing around, hoping to be welcomed to the discussion table by those privileged by Whiteness. St. Lawrence Hall was an antiracist space, but this meaning is reduced to something of the past, merely marked on a plaque, but with potential to be (re)created in the present through active antiracist engagement linked to the antiracist past. My being able to enter the space

created an opportunity to understand the presence of Black abolitionists in ways that would have been unlikely, or at least less powerful, if the guides had shared the history with us while standing outside on the sidewalk.

Challenges to (re)shaping an antiracist sociohistorical space can include (re)creating meanings that are unknown, ignored, or countered by other people in the same physical space. Additionally, barriers can be found in attempts to access the spatial markers that will articulate and therefore reinforce antiracist meanings within an otherwise racist geography. As I considered the interactions and experiences that seemingly hindered the process of (re)creating antiracist space, I began to wonder if a space would only be antiracist so long as people who seek to enact antiracism are present. I contemplated if racist meanings are the standard in the places of a modern state (Goldberg, 2002) while antiracist meanings last only as long as they are actively applied. If racisms are about exclusions (Stanley, 2011; 2016), one might conclude that antiracism is about mere inclusion, but, as is evidenced by my description of the encounter with the woman by the City Hall elevators, inclusion is not sufficient. There was nothing in City Hall stating that Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour could not be present, and the white woman did not tell the women I was with to leave the building. She actually told us other places within the building where we should reposition ourselves, so in that sense, there is inclusion. However, this inclusion is conditional, in that it is based on the reading of racialized bodies and the comfort of white control. As such, and because both people and time move, making meanings applied to the material space unfixed, markers of representation—a form of inclusion—are helpful but insufficient for ensuring antiracist meanings become discursive. There must be tools to make the markers active and (re)assert the antiracist meanings. These tools can include technologies that cause markers to intervene in everyday life that makes racisms banal,

and they can include agents of antiracism—people—who communicate antiracist meanings. Although there are limitations to the antiracist effects of the OBHS walking tour, the tour guides are nonetheless agents of antiracism. Their presentations of Black history actively and intentionally destabilize readings of Black bodies as present only in qualified and permitted ways. Grant and Stanley (2014) suggest that racist representations are like wallpaper, patterns that keep repeating to the point of becoming banal, unnoticed, part of the background (like wallpaper), until antiracist resistance by the excluded produces wrinkles, ripples, and holes that poke through the paper exposing the underlying structure of racism. The paper can be patched, meaning racism can be restored if left untroubled, and antiracists must continue to poke as many holes as they can as often as they can. As a sociohistorical geography is the combination of material space and social meanings, finding ways to actively (re)create antiracist sociohistorical geographies requires continuously enacting changes to both the material space and social meanings.

If racism made banal is the status quo, as it seems to be, it is not inherently so. The markers and meanings of Whiteness in downtown Toronto were and are (re)created by people, but become repeated and articulate (with) each other, making the dominance widespread and normalized. Disrupting and ending racisms is a complex process that, in part, requires changing the dominant meanings (re)created in the sociohistorical spaces people occupy. Part of the complexity of the process occurs because different racialized bodies become disoriented (Puwar, 2004), excluded (Stanley, 2011), and erased from a space in different ways. Reorientation cannot be the same for all excluded racializations. There is no “one-size-fits-all” antiracism, and I must acknowledge that the OBHS walking tour’s focus on reorienting Black bodies does not address other racisms within the same space.

Racisms not being addressed

As I showed in the previous chapter, histories of Black people and communities in and around The Ward are not the only racialized histories that exist in the downtown space. The technologies of Whiteness and exclusion—the grid pattern asserting control over the movement of bodies; the distinction of public and private property; the prominence of the English language; the portrayal of people of colour as new—work and articulate racist meanings in changing ways for different racializations. For this reason, naming and disrupting all racist exclusions in the span of a single walking tour is a challenge, to say the least. To thoroughly examine the antiracist work the walking tour does, it is important to also acknowledge the racisms it does not address.

During the tour, there was no mention of us being on Mississaugas of the Credit territory, or that the expanse of the Greater Toronto Area occupies the land of several Indigenous nations. The existence of Toronto as a city was not problematized. The meanings given to the city space were those that acknowledged racism occurred there, but not those that showed racism to be a tool for how the city came to be. Perhaps because of the temporal context that the tour focused on, the guides spoke of the city as an established and accepted sociohistorical space of which Black bodies contribute(d) to shaping. Discussions on the tour did not include questioning the presence and assumed authority of the governmental systems on Indigenous land. Only past government decisions pertaining to histories of Black communities were critically presented by the guides.

When at the first stop of the tour, inside City Hall, one guide mentioned that City Hall was positioned on land that used to be occupied by a Black community within The Ward. The meanings that I understood coming with this information was that the building was covering over Black histories. We were not informed, however, that at the time that City Hall was constructed,

although there may still have been some Black residents in The Ward, the neighbourhood was more widely recognized as Toronto's Chinatown. It was the Chinese community that was largely displaced. Moreover, our group did not discuss the time when The Ward was known as a Jewish neighbourhood, which took shape as the Black residents began relocating to other parts of the city. There are connections between different racialized histories within the same physical space that can be highlighted, and these connections can be found in a small number of publications about The Ward (see Chan, 2011; Lorinc, McClelland, Scheinberg, & Taylor, 2015). Discussions on the OBHS walking tour, however, isolated histories of Black people and communities in and around the neighbourhood.

I mentioned earlier in this chapter that the tour identifies excluded histories of Black people and communities particularly connected to Freedom Seeking and abolition. Based on conversations with Natasha Henry and Channon Oyeniran, the OBHS personnel is aware of other histories of Black people and communities, such as the enslavement of Black bodies in Upper Canada, the Black soldiers who fought for the British in the War of 1812, or the wave of migration of Black bodies from the Caribbean to Canada in the 1960s. If, for the sake of manageability of the tour, the OBHS chooses to focus on a particular era of histories of Black people and communities, it seems understandable to me that they would not attempt to address the exclusions of other racialized histories, even in relation to the histories connected to Freedom Seekers and abolitionists. This limitation of the tour's scope is indicative of the complexities of racisms and antiracisms, as well as the need for antiracisms to be always ongoing.

Conclusion

Not every person who participates in the OBHS walking tour will consider how their qualified selves contribute in the (re)creation of space as racist or antiracist. Some may not even

contemplate how the content they are learning can shift the way they see and interact with the sociohistorical geographies in which they exist. A lack of acknowledgement does not equate to a lack of influence upon the (re)creation of a space, as people occupy and use the space; however, making antiracism active (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016) is more effective—perhaps only possible—when people recognize themselves and their own agencies in different (racist) contexts. To participate in the tour positioned as a bystander and see the narratives as merely *interesting histories* does not break down racisms. It assumes that some people’s knowledges, identities, and experiences can be removed from racist moments, spaces, and systems. It perpetuates perceptions of racism being only in the past, rather than part of a past that shaped the present; and it allows room for racisms to persist.

Enacting antiracism requires recognition that essentializing people, histories, or geographies enables harmful exclusions, and that there cannot be a master set of antiracism practices to be applied in any context. One must understand that racisms shape and are shaped by social geographies and the histories behind them. The shaping process is never final because people and the meanings they mediate with a material space are never static. As Stanley (1998) argues, “In order to be successful in fostering new meanings and possible ways of being, anti-racist pedagogy needs to create conditions that allow for the telling of these other stories and the exploration of non-nationalist historical frameworks” (p. 43). Creating these conditions is not a *once-and-done* endeavor and is done through everyday antiracism (Pollock, 2008), as well as continuous (re)evaluation of one’s racialized positionality (Kobayashi, 2005) within a sociohistorical geography of racism. Engaging with sociohistorical geographies of antiracism every day is to attack racisms in their context, disrupting visions of a homogeneous, static space and destabilizing banal certainties of differently racialized people’s places within or outside of it.

Building antiracist sociohistorical geographies is not a *fix-all* against racism, because the geographies are never final and must be re-created as racisms and spaces change. Helping people question the roll of racism in a space, however, can contribute to the critiquing of that space. This questioning, day by day, can disrupt the banality of colonizing and white-centric meanings that enable the continued reading of Black bodies as disoriented from the space (Puwar, 2004).

The work of the OBHS walking tour is not going to solve racism once and for all, and no one from the OBHS made such declarations. The hope, as Channon Oyeniran told me, is that tour participants “can make that mental note and then say, ‘ok, this [Black] person was here. I know that that space was here. Let me try and picture it. Let me maybe do some more research.’” For the purpose of this study, I did just as Oyeniran hoped, and I did more research. What I learned was not only more details of the sociohistorical space of and around The Ward, but also the various ways I was able to live in the city of Toronto and, at times, occupy the space that was an historic Black community, all without me knowing the history or having to justify my own belonging in the space.

By reorienting just some Black bodies and histories in the space, the walking tour pokes holes in the wallpaper of racism (Grant & Stanley, 2014) or, as I put it, makes cracks in the colonial bedrock. The effects of such cracks can be complex and have some unintended consequences because the OBHS narratives that reorient Black people and communities with a space often articulate (with) dominant structural racisms. Indeed, the narratives challenge the exclusion and erasure of Black presence in histories of Canada, thereby claiming space as part of the nation-state and nation-building process. In short, the histories presented on the tour show how and why Black people belong. The effects of such work, though, is that while Black people and communities become included, the narratives reproduce exclusions of histories of

CRACKING THE COLONIAL BEDROCK

Indigenous, Asian, and Jewish people in the same space. This observation is not to critique the OBHS efforts, but rather to show how antiracist efforts are set within the dominance of white supremacy. The colonial bedrock is dynamic. Where it becomes cracked in one place, it reasserts itself in another. This dynamism is why antiracism must be active and ongoing. The cracks that are created unveil starting points where people can begin to see how they do and do not contribute to maintaining the bedrock, as well as how and where they can continue chiseling. The next question to ask, then, is what results when the bedrock is full of cracks.

CHAPTER 6: IMAGINING (RE)CREATING THE WARD AS AN ANTIRACIST SOCIOHISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

Since beginning to write this thesis, numerous incidents have triggered a sharp increase in societal demands—not mere requests or suggestions—for systemic antiracist changes to be implemented by those in the positions of legal and political power. The volume and intensity of these demands continue to grow. They represent an increasing expanse of people employing their own agency as a form of active resistance against racisms and other forms of discrimination and injustice. Such agency reflects a continuing shift from marginalized people showing resistance through their resilience toward resistance from people of all identities and positions. There is still much room for growth in this shift, but it is apparent. Through Black Lives Matter protests (CBC News, 2020 June 6), news stories of students experiencing racism in schools (Waberi, 2020 July 9), online video conferences (e.g., York University’s Faculty of Education Summer Institute’s Five-Part Webinar “Conversation on Anti-Oppression”), and a range of other social media forums (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), calls are being made not only for justice against acts of police violence victimizing Black and Indigenous bodies across North America (Gollom, 2020 June 10), and also against racist attacks on Asian people being scapegoated for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (CBC News, 2020 October 9). The calls are more broadly for an overhaul of the racist systems that structure and govern society. Of particular interest to me are the efforts taken to see the removal and replacement of racist markings from varying geographies.

Specifically in Toronto, Andrew Lochhead started the petition to change the name of Dundas Street (Gollom, 2020 June 12). Although the name to replace ‘Dundas’ has at this time not been selected, the City of Toronto responded by voting in favour of the change, which will be taking place in April 2022. Michael Valpy called for Russell Street through the University of

Toronto campus to be renamed after Dr. Ursula Franklin (Mok, 2020, July 3). The city again agreed for the change to take place, although other streets in Toronto bearing the Russell name remain. Janaya Khan led Black Lives Matter Toronto in bringing to light the racism in naming a street after the Jarvis family (Errett, 2016 May 7). General news reports and social media exchanges in recent years have covered debates and protests around renaming Ryerson University (Cyr, 2020 October 8). In May 2021, the Yellowhead Institute—the First Nation-led research centre at Ryerson University—presented an open letter stating that the institute’s students and faculty would be removing the Ryerson name from their email signatures and social media handles and replacing it with ‘X University’ (Xavier-Carter & Sachdeva, 2021 June 1). In June 2021, protestors toppled the statue of Egerton Ryerson (CBC News, 2021 June 6). Then, in August 2021, as I worked on final revisions to this thesis, Ryerson University board of directors announced that after grappling with the history of Egerton Ryerson’s role in creating the Indian Residential School system, the university would be changing its name (CBC News, 2021, August 26). At the time of my writing, the new name had not been announced, but the important point to note is that some people are working to change the discourse at least in small ways. In the same vein as the calls and actions for removing the Ryerson name and statue, activists have been seeking the removal of a statue of John A. MacDonald from the grounds in front of the Ontario Legislative Building (Warmington, 2020 September 1). Each of the names and images under scrutiny are linked to racisms such as the enslavement of racialized Black people, the abuse and murder of Indigenous people, and the political and economic exclusion of racialized Asian people. Statements on the comments section of the online news stories indicate that some members of the public maintain an historical consciousness that continues to centre colonialism as *their* history and these people are therefore not in favour of removing the names and statues.

However, these historic racisms evidence a sound rationale from those who carry a different sort of historical consciousness—one where they recognize and feel the connections between themselves and past and present racisms (Grant & Rogers, 2018)—and who do want to remove and replace certain names and markers from the cityscape. The question remains, however, whether removing statues, street names, and other forms of commemoration creates an antiracist sociohistorical geography, and if so, how.

In a CBC news story that addressed the calls for material changes to the spaces of Toronto (Gollom, 2020 June 12), York University professor Carl James stated that the “most important issue here is not wanting this to be a performance.” James added that the focus needs to be on “the extent to which these actions, these changes, produce real cultural change, where we can see a different kind of society that’s more inclusive and responsive to the realities of racialized people.” I am examining how such (re)shaping processes work. In the previous chapters I identified the area of Toronto that was The Ward as a racist sociohistorical geography, and I examined the ways the Ontario Black History Society creates starting points for (re)forming an antiracist sociohistorical geography in and around The Ward. In any type of space, meanings are not fixed and so a space is never final, always being (re)produced (Lefebvre, 1991). Consequently, an antiracist sociohistorical geography can never be finished.

To reiterate a point I make throughout this thesis, there is no “one-size-fits-all” or “once-and-done” antiracism. Thus, I contend that an antiracist sociohistorical geography is always in a constant state of becoming. It is created and re-created through people’s varying systems of meaning and their relationally embodied ways of occupying and engaging with the past, antiracism, and space. There are complex and ever-fluctuating relationships between material, discourse, and somatic belonging (Fairclough, 1992; Puwar, 2004), and yet people who feel

unconditional belonging rarely question why this is so unless their status quo is disturbed.

Creating a space that counters racism must be one where the material and discourse continuously intervenes in people's banal, routine actions that quietly and often unknowingly reassert meanings of Whiteness and colonial ownership, thereby excluding Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. Efforts for (re)creating an antiracist sociohistorical geography can be seen already being done through what I call *guerilla-style spatial (re)marking*, and then are complemented by the work of *official groups*. This is not to say that the antiracism box can be checked and we can all sit back and watch racism dissipate. Rather, I look to these efforts not just for what they are doing, but for their significance: what can be learned, added to, and (re)created for antiracist spaces as a process. In understanding the relationships at play and the processes at work, I can more effectively imagine how antiracism might be made active by changing—not excluding—my feelings of belonging as I rollerblade through The Ward.

Guerilla-style Spatial (Re)marking

Calls to bring antiracism to the fore for reshaping sociohistorical spaces can come in a variety of forms. Some are conveyed by imposing unofficial but noticeable re-markings of a space. Others are made through more official channels, highlighting the racisms of official systems and providing recommendations for what is needed to remove the racisms. To begin with the unofficial actions, I present examples of what I call *guerilla-style spatial (re)marking*, which refers to actions taken by activist individuals or groups that seek to draw attention to, disrupt, and sometimes replace spatial markers of colonialism and Whiteness. To do so, they use methods such as protest-painting (pouring red paint or spray-painting commemorative markers) and statue removal, as well as imposing antiracist markers. They take such action all without

consultation or permission from the government that, in discursive legal terms, are supposed to approve such changes.

In recent years, historians and what seems to be an increasing number of history-minded members of the public have been battling in the “statue wars,” a term coined to mark the debates and protests around the place(s) of statues—particularly of white men known for enacting racisms—in marking and teaching histories. In response against the removal or protest-painting of statues of these historic figures, racists and apologists alike often suggest that these acts erase and/or disrespect history. They tend to overlook the protest-painting actually disrupting the banality of the statues and pushing people to articulate their forms of historical consciousness.

News stories reporting on instances where statues were covered in paint or removed from their perches by protestors show that it is the active engagement with the statues that triggered the education about history they are meant to provoke. For example, in June of 2020 in Baden, Ontario—a small community of around 5000 people set between Kitchener and Stratford—protestors poured red paint over a statue of John A. MacDonald. The Wilmot Township council whose jurisdiction includes Baden stated that they did not intend to remove the paint (Simpson, 2020, CTV News online). One township councilor told the reporter, “I knew very little about the history of John A. Macdonald and have spent the last 48 hours doing a crash course and learning” (Simpson, 2020, June 23). This sort of ignorance of the past exemplifies how the Macdonald statue and so many other statues and markers of colonizers become unwaved flags (Billig, 1995), largely unnoticed by those who feel that they belong, but a glaring reminder of exclusion for many Indigenous people and people of colour. Another news interviewee, identified as “an Indigenous [person] who lives in Wilmot Township,” declared that “The point of the red paint is a statement, a very strong statement at that [...] Until we can discuss what that

statement means and the weight that it carries [...] it shouldn't be hidden and it shouldn't be washed away" (Simpson, 2020, June 23). These types of actions challenge the *norm* that some (usually white) people do not recognize as problematic. Ensuing debates often involve arguments around whether the protest actions amount to vandalism of public property and disrespect of history, or if the actions are actually justified and even necessary for sparking more active engagement with the past and critique of the present.

More and more statues of historic figures who enacted racisms are being toppled from their pedestals by groups of protestors, and these seemingly impromptu acts might qualify as guerilla-style *unmarking*, contributing to antiracism, but these are not the acts I focus on here. The removal of markers that perpetuate racist meanings adds to the disruption of Whiteness, but there is another necessary step in the process of creating an antiracist sociohistorical space. That added step involves putting markers and systems in place that contradict and crack the bedrock of colonialism and Whiteness, in part by making known the presence of historic racialized people and communities. As I stated earlier in this thesis, Indigenous people and people of colour are not sitting on the outside waiting to be invited in. People of these identities participate in society and do so while navigating and pushing back against the various systems and acts that work to exclude them. When Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb owned and operated her restaurant in The Ward, her success with her restaurant did not mean she was safe from racisms. Her restaurant might actually be seen as a form of countering racisms. Her agency was her resistance and a crack in the colonial bedrock. Looked at this way, removing statues should not be understood as clearing the space to welcome Indigenous people and people of colour. This would be a perspective of Whiteness (Hage, 2000). Their presence in the spaces of Whiteness has persisted despite being pushed aside, covered over, and seemingly erased. Their historic agency continues

today. This presence must be made known, thereby destabilizing perspectives that position Black people, Indigenous peoples, and people of colour as *outside* everyday society. To begin examining acts of guerilla-style (re)marking that destabilize Whiteness and make known the historic presence of excluded groups, I first look to three examples of guerilla-style spatial (re)marking. One example is from Europe and two are from Toronto, and I examine them for how they help to historicize social spaces and shift discourse so as to acknowledge the past in antiracist ways.

In 1996, artist Gunter Demnig installed his first *stolpersteine* (stumbling stone or block) in Kreuzberg, Germany (Stolpersteine, 2021). For the Stolpersteine project, Demnig installs in the sidewalk outside of a home a concrete block that is covered in brass-plate and is roughly the size of half a brick used on the exterior of houses. Each block is inscribed with “Here lived” along with the name of a person who lived in the home and who was a victim of the terrors that the Nazi regime inflicted on the people of Europe. The streets of Germany are not named after Nazi leaders, and there are no statues of Hitler standing in public spaces, so these types of racist markers need not be removed. Demnig’s stumbling stones are named as such because the stones are installed to protrude slightly higher (less than half a centimetre) than the material of the sidewalk so that people’s everyday walking is interrupted as they *stumble* over the past. While people are not actually tripping and falling over the stones—the aim is not to injure people—the stones “are supposed to provoke people into thinking about what happened to individuals and families during the Nazi era. Families were torn apart and STOLPERSTEINE can at least bring them back together symbolically” (Stolpersteine, 2021, FAQ Section; emphasis in original).

The presence of the Nazis and the horrors of the Holocaust may have been denounced in the space long before the stumbling stones were put in place—I do not know for certain—but a

denouncement alone does not continuously and actively disrupt positions that ignore or support the historic racisms. It also does not automatically equate to the reorientation of the people who were forcibly removed because of the ways they were racialized as Jewish. Demnig's art started as an illegal act. The installation of stones made alterations to public infrastructure without official permission, all while playing the roles of ensuring racisms of the past are not forgotten and of reorienting Jewish bodies with spaces across Europe that were under Nazi occupation. The more stones that are installed, the more positions that deny the Holocaust or align with Nazi beliefs become uninhabitable (Grant, 2014; Hall & Jhally, 2002; Neiman, 2019), and the more articulation of anti-Nazism occurs.

Stolpersteine began as a guerilla-style (re)marking of a sociohistorical space. It now carries forward through a legal procedure that includes receiving permission from the family of the person for whom the stone is being installed, as well as permission from the municipal government of the community in which the stone is being placed. According to the Stolpersteine project website (2020), cities that do not grant permission for the stumbling stones are rarely against the goal of commemorating the victims and do encourage other forms of commemorative markers. Denial of permission mostly occurs only because they are concerned that the names of the victims in the stumbling stones will be trampled over, showing disrespect. The point, though, is that what started as Demnig's guerilla-style (re)marking was not condemned by the powers that be. Although not taken on by municipal governments as official acts, it is now a contribution to antiracist markings that city governments condone and even encourage. This developing experience of (re)marking can also be found in other examples from Toronto.

Beginning in 2013, scholars and activists Hayden King and Susan Blight led actions of guerilla-style (re)marking by covering selected Toronto street name signs with stickers bearing

Anishinaabemowin words. The stickers were meant to contribute reminders that, as Blight said in a news interview, “indigenous [sic] people were here—are still here” (Andrew-Gee, 2015 June 2). The act of posting the stickers sought to provoke people’s thinking about the links between past and present (Seixas, 2012), as well as how those temporal contexts are connected to people’s understanding of their everyday spatial context. As reported by *Toronto Star*’s Andrew-Gee (2015 June 2), in January 2013, the activists covered the Queen Street sign where it intersects with Spadina Avenue with the name *Ogimaa Mikana*, which translates to “Leader’s Trail”. The act was intended to honour the female leaders of the Idle No More movement that protested injustices against Indigenous peoples. In March 2013, the activists re-marked Indian Road where it intersects with Bloor Street West with the name *Mikana Anishinaabe*, meaning “trail of the Anishinaabe.” This re-marking name refers to the language group to which the Mississaugas and other Indigenous nations belong. Where College Street intersects with Bathurst Street, they changed the signs for College Street to *Gikino’amaagegaming*, which was intended as a direct exchange of names because the English translation is “place of learning”. Lastly, on June 2, 2015, the activists placed street name stickers of *Ishpadinaa* and *Gete-Onigaming* over Spadina Road and Davenport Road, respectively. *Ishpadinaa* is the Anishinaabemowin word for “a place on the hill,” and, as one might surmise, was anglicized (Casagrande, 2013) to create the ‘Spadina’ name that is officially used today. *Gete-Onigaming* translates to “at the old portage,” which traces back to when the placement of Davenport Road was a trail used by the Mississauga of the Credit to move between the Humber River and Don River.

All the re-signing done by Hayden and Blight took place without permission from the Toronto city council, and that was their intention. As Blight stated, “We kind of like the element of surprise” (Andrew-Gee, 2015 June 2). The aim was for people to take notice of the

Anishinaabemowin language because, Blight declared, “There’s a kind of erasure that happens, and a kind of alienation that happens [to Indigenous peoples and history]” (Andrew-Gee, 2015 June 2). The guerilla-style (re)marking through the imposed Anishinaabemowin street names potentially and ideally creates effects of reorienting the Mississauga of the Credit people with their traditional land. Whether this effect occurs or not, though, the signs still have the effect of disrupting positions that believe the Mississauga of the Credit people are not part of the sociohistorical makeup of the space. Covering the official English/anglicized street names with Anishinaabemowin becomes more than an add-n-stir act of inclusion, and instead contributes to making the maintenance of the Eurocentric grand narrative uncomfortable.

A recent guerilla-style action taken to shed light on the racisms perpetuated by Toronto street names took place in late August 2020. An anonymous activist created plastic plaques and posted them at various Toronto intersections to present the racist histories of the namesakes of respective streets. For example, the written content on a plaque posted at Jarvis Street starts with, “William Jarvis enslaved six people in York around the turn of the 18th century: Moses, Phoebe, Sussex, Kitty, Prince, and another woman (name unknown).” These plaques feature the emblem of a raised fist, generally understood as a symbol of fighting for social justice. More specifically, the emblem is often aligned with historic Black civil rights activists such as the Black Panther Party and American 1968 Olympic sprinters John Carlos and Tommie Smith, and now recognized as the sign of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The facts that these plaques are made of plastic, were strapped to poles and fences, and include the symbol of the BLM movement, as opposed to being made of metal, cemented into the ground, and including the City of Toronto logo, suggest that these plaques were posted in a guerilla style without the city’s prior knowledge and approval. The plaques show not only what racisms were perpetrated by the

person or people for whom the streets are named, but also show, to the extent that the plaque creator was able, the names of the people who were victims of the racism. These plaques naming the historic people who were enslaved re-humanizes them, bringing about their realness and connection to the space, rather than maintaining portrayals of them in abstract terms as ‘slaves.’ Additionally, the plaques contribute to problematizing any collective remembering (Wertsch, 2002) of Canada as the land of freedom, the supporter of Freedom Seekers, and the country ever-against the enslavement of human beings. Slavery did exist in what is now Canada (Henry, 2018; Trudel, 1960). Enslaved people were included in complex ways in the project of colonization that began and now continues to develop the city of Toronto, as well as Canada at large.

While plaques and monuments tend to fade into banality over time, the response of media coverage indicates that these unofficial plaques gained initial attention, and social media posts show that they certainly made racists feel uncomfortable. In an August 26, 2020, video shared on Twitter by Ross Murray (Twitter handle @themurrayman), a white man is shown admitting to spray-painting the BLM-related plaque at Baby Point Crescent. The man stated that his spray-painted message of “Boo-hoo. Fuck off” was “trying to tell Black people, ‘ya, you were oppressed. I’m sorry. It’s not my fault.’”² The response from the man doing the spray-painting conveys a particular form of historical consciousness. He is aware of racisms of the past, but his spray-painting and denial of responsibility for the past suggest that he does not see a connection between those racisms of the past, the space he occupies, and himself. According to the Baby Point plaque, Jacques “James” Baby “enslaved at least 17 Black and Indigenous people in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Canada.” While responses such as the one above do exist, other white residents who live near the sites of the signs responded with more appreciative

² At the time of completing this thesis, online responses to this Twitter post remain, but the original post with the video has been removed.

Twitter posts. For example, Douglas Orme (Twitter handle @douglasorme) posted, “I live in the Baby Point area. I had no idea about the Baby family's slave ownership. More history, more context, more compassion. Right on to the anonymous person who did this!” Whether the responses are for or against the imposed plaques, racist exclusions from everyday markers of colonialism and Whiteness are being identified and disrupted, and this is key in building antiracism.

These responses show that antiracist guerilla-style spatial (re)marking does not equate to an immediate eradication of racism; antiracism is an always ongoing process, and there are no guarantees (Stanley, 2014). However, all the (re)marking actions articulate with each other, with the calls for renaming streets like Dundas Street, Russell Street, and Jarvis Street, and with voices that abhor the continued violence and murder of Black and Indigenous bodies by the police. Regardless of individual responses being positive or negative, the (re)marking contributes to bringing racism to the surface. It makes racism identifiable and challenges official powers to take a stance, thereby pushing for positions of power to shift so that antiracist action—not liberal multiculturalism—becomes recognized, accepted, and even encouraged, as opposed to being a controversial topic in political debates.

The common element throughout these three examples of guerilla-style (re)marking is what Blight called “the element of surprise”. The effects of these (re)markings highlight the need for antiracism to be active (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016) by interrupting the banality of Whiteness and ensuring that positions and structures of everyday racist exclusions and erasures become uninhabitable (Grant, 2014; Grant & Stanley, 2014; Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997). This does not mean that official changes should be presented without prior consultation with the people who live and work in the spaces where antiracist change is implemented. Rather, the

“surprise” would be for anyone who maintained lenses of Whiteness for their understandings of sociohistorical geographies and their place(s) within them.

For some people, changes to material and power will require adjustments to new and/or additional meanings that bring about realizations of what they took for granted in their feelings of belonging within a space (Maynard, 2017). For others, these changes will be perceived as an affront to what they know to be *the(ir)* history, their sense of belonging, and even their sense of ownership of a space. The latter response, while conveying a stronger sense of tension and confrontation than the former, is an effective outcome, nonetheless. This is a response from a position that is not couched in mere ignorance and is one that vehemently argues to maintain the tools that support the project of colonialism and therefore racism. People who hold this position may not overtly state any ill feelings toward Indigenous people, Black people, or people of colour. Their resistance to change, however, conveys a message that holding on to their sense of comfort and unproblematic belonging is more important than acknowledging and disrupting exclusions of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour. The tension and confrontation are signs of destabilizing positions of comfort maintained through exclusions of variously racialized people; the tension and confrontation are sometimes part of the antiracist process. In either case, whether the former or latter response, positions of unquestioned dominance and privilege become destabilized. The discursive formation built by and for Whiteness becomes reworked not so that inclusions of marginalized bodies occurs through exclusions of racialized white bodies, but, instead, so that the (re)creation of an antiracist space becomes a space where all racialized identities can belong. To belong, however, is not the same as being *permitted*, and creating an antiracist sociohistorical geography also requires changes in official structures, positions, and dynamics of power.

Official Groups

Complementing and articulating (with) the work done by guerilla-style spatial (re)marking, there are official groups (e.g., organizations, commissions, units) that contribute to naming and calling for the end of ongoing racisms perpetrated and perpetuated by the various levels and sectors of government within Canada. For my purposes here, I recognize groups as ‘official’ when they are created through channels of the governing and legal systems such as national, provincial, and/or municipal governments, or the legal courts. As such, official groups differ from non-governmental (NGO) and volunteer organizations that might receive government support, because official groups were created for the purpose of informing governmental bodies of necessary changes by and within governmental and societal structures. NGOs, on the other hand, can voice concerns, but are left with hopes rather than assurances that those in power will listen and respond.

Indeed, official groups as I describe them here are built on the legitimacy of the state system that itself is built on racist exclusions. However, in relation to the racisms named, each group provides recommendations for implementing changes to structures of power, which is to say they emphasize how they envision changing the state system from within and making racist positions uninhabitable (Grant, 2014; Grant & Stanley, 2014; Hall in Hughes, Spencer, & Jhally, 1997). Critics of both the creation of these official groups and my argument for the antiracist roles they play may cite Audre Lorde’s (2003) declaration, “For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change” (p. 27), suggesting that one cannot rely on the racist state to do sustainable, ongoing antiracist work. In other words, the belief is that there can be no real antiracism without an overhaul of the systems built on racisms. A complete

dismantling of these systems would be welcomed, and anything short of that does come with challenges to restructuring power dynamics, but I recognize that total systemic change does not happen overnight. By looking at these official groups that work within the system in relation to the unofficial work of the guerilla-style (re)marking that challenges the system, I understand there to be new ways of making historically marginalized people and communities the leaders of official change, holding those in positions of power accountable. The house may not be fully dismantled, but there are renovations occurring using tools (i.e., the official groups) that were previously not part of the work.

While some groups cast a wide net, taking on all forms of racism and discrimination they encounter, other groups focus on countering the racisms experienced by people of specific racialized identities. In the following section, I present three examples of these groups and their calls for change, each of which operates with different scopes and foci. After presenting the work being done in the three examples, I discuss how they complement the guerilla-style (re)marking, and I examine the significance of their efforts in the (re)creation of an antiracist sociohistorical geography. The first is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and its 2015 report and Calls to Action. The second is the Ontario Human Rights Commission and its 2020 report on anti-Black racism perpetrated by the Toronto Police Service. The third and final example is the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and a 2019 report from the Unit's Partnership and Accountability Circle.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was created in 2008 as a result of the class action settlement, the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*. It was tasked with gathering and documenting the histories and ongoing effects of Indian Residential School (IRS) system that removed Indigenous children from their homes (i.e., families and

communities) and forced them into so-called schools run by Christian religious leaders. The children were to be educated to forget their Indigenous culture and assimilated into white Canadian society. As shown through the stories shared by many Indigenous people who survived IRS, practices of assimilation employed by the schools' personnel equated to forms of physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse (Legacy of Hope, 2020). In May 2021, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation told media that during the survey of the land at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School (1890-1969) in British Columbia, the remains of 215 children were found buried (Dickson & Watson, 2021 May 27). Since then, the grounds of former residential schools across Canada have been and continue to be searched for unmarked graves of children forced into the IRS system. At the time of writing this, the latest news reports following the search for unmarked graves showed that just over 1300 graves had been confirmed (Hopper, 2021 July 13), but as the search is ongoing, tragically, I expect the numbers will increase. The IRS system began in 1831 and officially ended in 1996, but the trauma experienced by the Indigenous children, families, and communities left painful lasting effects (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy*).

The TRC was meant to begin a path of healing and (re)building relationships between Indigenous nations and the people, spaces, and systems of Canada. In 2013, as part of the TRC's mandate, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) was created and is hosted by the University of Manitoba. Along with becoming an archival centre where IRS Survivors and the general public can access the documented experiences and material gathered during the TRC's process, the NCTR also works to create broad networks of universities, colleges, and community organizations to continue reconciliation through formal and informal forms of community and individual education. In 2015, the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation*

Commission of Canada was released with 94 Calls to Action that outlined to the Canadian government necessary changes to structures and practices at the national, provincial, and municipal levels if reconciliation is to occur.

The TRC Report was written with the expectation that the Calls to Action will be applied to all areas within what is now Canada. This does speak to the connected nature of the many sociohistorical geographies people are part of, but I aim to keep my focus narrowed to Toronto and more specifically to the space that was The Ward. I will not review all 94 Calls to Action here, as they are inevitably extensive even in their summarized forms, but I do draw attention to a small selection of the Calls that specifically pertain to education of the public, spatial markers, and the control and development of the land. Call 66 states that the TRC “call[s] upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, Volume One: Summary, p. 245). Call 79(i) recommends “Amending the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, Volume One: Summary, p. 291). Call 82 states,

We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the [Indian Residential School] Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, Volume One: Summary, p. 292)

Accompanying Call 66, 79, and 82 and adding to the recommendations for sources of information and education for the public, Calls 84 and 85 outline the belief that “National public and private broadcasters must provide comprehensive and timely information and services to Aboriginal people and the Canadian public” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, Volume One: Summary, p. 293).

These Calls are about representation and efforts to include Indigenous people and nations in the creation of public knowledge and memory. The City of Toronto, which is the capital city of the province of Ontario, stated that in response to Call 82, Anishinaabe artist Solomon King is creating a sculpture that the city aims to install as a permanent fixture in Nathan Phillips Square by the year 2022. The planned sculpture will be of a large turtle, be titled “Restoration of Identity,” and will feature the names of the 17 Residential Schools that existed in Ontario (Draaisma, 2019 July 29).

Call 92 in the TRC Report is addressed to the corporate sector of Canada, and states that the corporate sector should

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights,

Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, Volume One: Summary, p. 306).

I highlight Call 92 because while it pertains to the corporate sector, which is easily recognized for its connection to the economy, the TRC also correctly draws a strong link to the control and use of land, which is especially applicable in a space like downtown Toronto. Construction of towering buildings for the expansion and addition of more businesses and condominiums is all part of the corporate sector.

According to the TRC Call to Action 92, Indigenous groups should be consulted and involved in the decisions for where, how, and if office buildings and condominiums should be erected. Given the City of Toronto's official acknowledgement of the city being on the traditional territory of multiple Indigenous nations, the honorary presence of those Indigenous nations' flags outside City Hall, the large Medicine Wheel alongside the TORONTO sign in Nathan Phillips Square, and the announced upcoming installation of the "Restoration of Identity" sculpture in response to Call 82, I expect that the city government would also adhere to Call 92. Unfortunately, if the involvement of Indigenous nations in the development of land for the corporate sector occurs at all, there is little to no public awareness promoted by the city government. No doubt some people will argue that the land is no longer Mississauga of the Credit territory because in 2010 the federal government of Canada paid \$145-million to the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation to compensate for the poor payment of the land in the 1805 *Toronto Purchase Treaty 13*. This argument would push the idea that the First Nation should have no more say about the land than any other citizen of Canada. The Mississaugas,

however, do not observe the monetary compensation in the same way. In 2010, then-Chief of the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation Bryan LaForme stated that the money was “a good start for us” (Reinhart, 2010 January 27). Although it was not overtly labeled as such, the \$145-million appears to be understood by the Mississaugas as more reparation than compensation, suggesting that the Mississaugas—and other First Nations whose traditional land is now overrun by the expanse of Toronto—still expect Toronto to adhere to Call 92. While all the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action can and should be applied to all places across what is now Canada, because it uses a national scope, it can be seen as broad and therefore challenging to implement in specific contexts. Other official groups narrow the lens of their work so their findings and recommendations are more focused.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) was created in 1961 “as an arm’s length agency of government” (OHRC, n.d., “About the Commission”) and reports to the Ontario legislature through the Attorney General of Ontario. It is tasked with preventing discrimination and playing a lead role in the assurance and development of human rights in Ontario. The OHRC’s mission statement states that they work “to promote and enforce human rights, to engage in relationships that embody the principles of dignity and respect, and to create a culture of human rights compliance and accountability” (OHRC, n.d., “About the Commission”). It adds to this statement in saying, “We accomplish our mission by exposing, challenging and ending entrenched and widespread structures and systems of discrimination through education, policy development, public inquiries and litigation” (OHRC, n.d., “About the Commission”). While the OHRC has a provincial scope, making it also broad, its investigation into forms of anti-Black racism perpetrated by the Toronto Police Service (TPS) brings to light

specific changes necessary within the context of Toronto and therefore the sociohistorical space formerly known as The Ward.

The OHRC began a public inquiry into racial profiling and discrimination (read racism) by the TPS against Black people in November 2017. As of July 2020, the OHRC received from investigators Wortley and Jung the reports, *Racial Disparity in Arrests and Charges: An analysis of arrest and charge data from the Toronto Police Service* and *Use of Force by the Toronto Police Service*. OHRC then published *A Disparate Impact: Second interim report on the inquiry into racial profiling and racial discrimination of Black persons by the Toronto Police Service*. The reports stated that while Black people represent only 8.8% of Toronto's population, they make up 32% of all charges laid by the Toronto police. Many of these charges are withdrawn or do not result in conviction, meaning the police are arresting and charging many Black people for crimes and violations of which they are innocent. Additionally, Black people represent 32.2% of cases involving police firearms, 36% of cases involving police use of pepper spray, 57.1% of cases involving a police dog, and, compared to the general population, Black people are 4.4 times more likely to suffer a head injury and 4.7 times more likely to have a Taser used against them during interactions with the police. There are further statistics that highlight the targeting of Black people and communities. These examples here are just a snapshot of the picture showing "that the time for debate about whether systemic racism or anti-Black racial bias exists within the Toronto Police Service is over" (OHRC, 2020, p. 12). The evidence in the reports strongly shows that systemic changes to police services are necessary.

As part of the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement and in response to the disproportionate amount of police violence against Black and Indigenous people and communities, 'Defund the Police' has become a rallying cry at in-person protests and through

social media platforms of activists calling for change to policing structures. While some people go so far as to suggest that police services should be abolished, the more common message I observe is that there should be a restructuring of which public services should be responsible for attending to different requests for assistance (Giwa, 2018; Yousif, 2021 April 25). For example, if someone reports a robbery or if there is an active shooter situation, indeed, perhaps the police should be involved. But when a call is made by someone asking for a wellness check to be done for a loved one who struggles with mental health issues, the police should not be the only respondents to the situation. Mental health professionals such as a social worker should take the lead. CBC journalist Alex Cooke (2020, June 23) reported that between April and June 2020, at least four people—all people of colour—died across Canada during what were supposed to be wellness checks, and three of those four people died after being shot by the police. Cooke states that the CBC network conducted an analysis and found that between the years 2000 and 2017, of the 461 deaths that resulted from police action in Canada, 70% of those people suffered from mental illness and/or substance abuse problems, and there was an over-representation of Black and Indigenous people.

The OHRC differs from the TRC in that it has not yet provided clear recommendations for antiracist changes to be implemented, but it does state that such recommendations will be provided when the final report of the public inquiry is completed. Moreover, this particular investigation by the OHRC places only Toronto policing under the microscope and in need of change, rather than looking at systems of the City of Toronto as a whole. This is not to say that the OHRC is suggesting that other systems of Toronto are clear of racism. The OHRC stance on the entire city is not declared. I point out the specific focus on police only because with a different scope comes different effects on alterations to discourse. While changes to policing will

have ramifications on all elements of a discursive formation, the primary aspect to change will be with the racialized inclusions and exclusions in and by the discursive legal systems and structures within a sociohistorical geography. It is also important to address the other elements of a discursive formation (i.e., social, cultural, economic) more directly. The City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) unit takes on the role of bringing to light anti-Black racisms in a wider range of facets within the specific context of Toronto society.

Beginning in 2016, the City of Toronto set out to address the presence of anti-Black racism within the systems of the city. Toronto Mayor John Tory took the municipal government's first step by meeting with Black leaders in the city, who collaboratively provided Tory with three main principles on which to base further action: 1) build on existing research and recommendations; 2) partner with the community; and 3) engage young leadership in the process (City of Toronto, 2017, p. 5). The city's approach to battling anti-Black racism was divided into four phases. The first was to launch the "Toronto for All" campaign to help educate members of the public in naming and challenging anti-Black racism. The second phase was to review the research and recommendations on anti-Black racism in Toronto going back 41 years. The third phase was to host 41 community conversations where community members spoke about their ideas for what actions should be taken by the city. Following the conversations, the city hosted workshops in which community members were given a draft of an action plan and asked to offer their critiques. In phase four, representatives from the city government and leaders from Toronto's Black communities collaborated to create plans and resource priorities for moving forward. The ultimate product of this initiative is the *Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism*. The City of Toronto began the implementation of the action plan in 2018 and declared that the plan would be spread out over a five-year term, each year seeing a progress report for the

past year and a work plan for the year ahead. The action plan's 22 recommendations and 80 actions are focused around five priority areas: children and youth development; health and community services; job opportunities and income supports; policing and the justice system; and community engagement and Black leadership.

The official group that is in place to ensure that the action plan is effectively implemented is the Partnership and Accountability Circle (PAC), which exists within the Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) unit. The PAC "is informed by African values, principles and practices and reflects the diversity of Torontonians of African descent" and consists of "12 Torontonians [representing various Black communities in Toronto] with diverse lived experiences, education, professional expertise, and historical knowledge of anti-Black racism in Toronto" (Partnership and Accountability Circle, 2019, EC6.13 Appendix B, p.1). The role of the PAC is not primarily to call out racisms *per se*—the city sectors and systems experiencing anti-Black racism were identified through the four-phase process. The PAC is seemingly meant more so to offer insight on when, where, and how to effectively implement antiracist efforts aligned with the five priority areas. The PAC acts as a platform from which to provide critical Black leadership that ensures the City of Toronto's attempts at countering anti-Black racism are designed and implemented for continuous and adaptive effects, rather than being imposed as token *once-and-done* actions that appear appropriate but are insufficient.

As part of the CABR unit's mandate, the City of Toronto committed investments adding up to just over \$1.2 million put toward "Toronto's Black arts and culture community and business sector to address the systemic economic, social and cultural exclusion facing Black communities in Toronto" (City of Toronto, 2020a, Confronting Anti-Black Racism: Cultural & Economic Investments to Confront Anti-Black Racism). Of the investment, approximately

\$300,000 is supposed to be used in partnership with the Toronto Arts Council “to support the Black arts community with initiatives designed through consultation with the Black arts community” (City of Toronto, 2020a, *Confronting Anti-Black Racism: Cultural & Economic Investments to Confront Anti-Black Racism*). This funding, of course, is only one sector of the various areas of Black art, culture, and business to be supported. I highlight it here because it has potential to parallel with the TRC Calls 79 and 82 that recommend the involvement and representation of Indigenous peoples in decisions, creation, and installation of historic monuments and markers.

In providing funding support for the Black arts community, there is opportunity for Black artists to contribute to (re)marking the sociohistorical spaces of Toronto through their art. While the documentation on this funding does not specify in what ways or if the city will put Black artists’ creations on display, it would be a missed opportunity if the art—visual, auditory, and/or performance—was not made available to the public. Presentations of art could be a way of both sharing with the public what the funding was used for and adding to the discursive repertoire to build the city’s antiracist discourse. Given that the city announced its adherence to TRC Call 82, and its commitment to countering anti-Black racism, it seems logical to expect that the support of Black artists is not so they can create even more markers of Whiteness. Rather, supporting Black artists creates potential for them to contribute markers that disrupt Whiteness in similar ways that guerilla-style spatial (re)marking does through surprise. The difference that should be noted would be that the municipal government is contributing to the creation of the surprise, instead of only being able to respond to it after the fact, exemplifying the city government’s ongoing changes for antiracism.

These official groups use approaches that differ greatly from guerilla-style spatial (re)marking, in that these groups are not themselves imposing unofficial markers on a physical space. There is, however, still an element of *surprise* with the idea that they are still actively calling out where, why, and how antiracist action is required, which adds pressure to government to act to dismantle exclusions. The guerilla-style (re)marking contributes to antiracism work, but is not on its own enough to make effective and sustainable change, and these official groups can complement the guerilla-style efforts. Both approaches promote a discourse that destabilizes the structures of Whiteness that have long been discursive and taken as a given. With each interjection of guerilla-style (re)marking, the markers show people where racist meanings persist in the material of a sociohistorical geography. They bring attention in a strategic *add 'n' stir* approach, imposing antiracist markers here and there, and are perhaps never done with expectations of the specific interjected marker to remain in place in an official way. They are, however, put in place with the seeming hope that they will poke a hole in the banality of Whiteness (Grant & Stanley, 2014) and trigger those in power to make changes.

The official groups complement the guerilla-style (re)marking because the official groups do less of the hands-on work of actively (re)marking space, but they do incorporate the voices of people experiencing racism when making governments accountable for responding to racisms. The groups represent the excluded people as they critique and inform official decisions for effective antiracist actions. The acknowledgment of and consideration for the recommendations of these groups by no means equates to a complete system overhaul. Importantly, though, the interactions between these groups and the people in positions of power, all under the umbrella of undoing racisms, indicates a slow-but-sure shift in who influences the choices made for systemic change.

Antiracist Sociohistorical Geography is Always Becoming

Through my ongoing engagement with scholarship that examines the ways spaces become created, marked, and given meaning, and especially through my experience and continued analysis of the OBHS walking tour, I gained a lens for reading all geographies and myself within them. It is a lens that will continue to be refined, but one that I could not put down if I wanted to. With every street sign I read, every statue I pass, every flag I see, I am reading the space that I occupy. I know that I am doing so through my own eyes, experience, knowledge, historical consciousness, and feelings of comfort, safety, and belonging, but my iterative critical reading of everyday spaces is part of my own agency and my push for resistance against racisms. Reading spaces like this and experiencing the affect—the feelings created—is something that everyone does. Unlike me, however, who is intentionally examining how this reading takes place and what work it does for creating exclusion and belonging, the vast majority of people, I expect, are unaware that this reading is happening within themselves. What they see and feel, for better or worse, is just *normal* and understood as “just the way it is.” However, the lenses they use to make meaning of the world are not all the same. People’s experiences are always in relation to themselves. People come, people go, people change, and that movement unveils the instabilities of “just the way it is,” so meanings cannot be fixed and final. Thus, there can be no blanket antiracism that applies to all people and for all time, even within a designated space. No single combination of markings will forever ward off racism. Anyone taking up the work of implementing antiracist changes, whether material or systemic, must be ready and willing to employ their efforts over and over as resistance arises and meanings change with the movement of people.

Another important point I came to recognize through my analysis and must now remember is that when I declare that antiracism is not a “once-and-done” nor a “one-size-fits-all” endeavour, it is not as such merely because anti-Black racism is not identical to anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, or other racisms. Even within the encompassing term ‘anti-Black racism,’ for example, there is no fix-all formula, as this singular form of racism still consists of great complexities. I see that efforts of bringing to light histories of slavery and abolitionism within Canada may help to show the long-time presence of Black bodies, but not all Black people are linked to these histories, so this representation does not equate to belonging for all Black bodies. When I see that the guerilla-style spatial (re)marking does not alone actively deconstruct government systems or that the official groups have the influence to inform but not the official power to dictate decisions and enforce consequences for continued racist systems, I should not view these efforts as *not enough*. Instead, I must consider them as moving pieces that work in relation to each other, as well as individually and collaboratively in relation to people, toward the building process of an antiracist sociohistorical geography. Rather than arguing that these contributions are not wiping out racism and that they should therefore be replaced with something new, their work should be looked to as something to contribute to and build on, as they are necessary parts to the whole antiracism process.

The (re)creation of an antiracist sociohistorical geography is an always ongoing process that must begin somewhere but is never finished, always in a state of becoming, and needs to be part of a larger political project if it is to become understood in discursive ways. The (re)creation of such a space can and indeed has started with guerilla-style spatial (re)marking and the work done through action such as the OBHS walking tour, but these forms of selected and interjected change cannot be the only way antiracism is enacted. The significance of official groups such as

the TRC, the OHRC, and the CABR unit is not just that racism is being recognized as systemic, but that the groups represent long-overdue acknowledgement by those in power that racism is an issue that needs to be addressed in and by the system itself. The official-ness of the groups shows an acknowledgement and engagement by those in power with multiple systems of meaning in place within a social space that through(out) history has been made to appear singular with dominant meanings of Whiteness. The groups represent a systemic move toward a ‘both/and’ approach. They show opportunity where the colonizer and white-centric power dynamics can be reconfigured and can open claims to belonging by people of all racializations, rather than a continued ‘either/or’ perspective that perpetuates a ‘Whiteness versus Black, Indigenous, and people of colour’ relationship. To be clear, though, an antiracist sociohistorical geography needing to be part of a larger antiracist political project does not mean that the official groups take over from the work of the guerilla-style (re)marking. Rather, all the work needs to be ongoing to push toward antiracism. The discourse that underlies all systems and structures is malleable and will bend with changing meanings in society. All the antiracist efforts are required to shift the discourse.

The notion of people of all racializations being able to feel that they belong should not be misconstrued as a space of equal representation of all people. As Vipond (2017) illustrates through his history of the Clinton School in Toronto—known as a Jewish, then European, and then Global school—the one constant we can count on, whether we like it or not, is change. Representations will also change over time. As such, and with consideration for the movement of people (Clifford, 1997), there can be changing levels of belonging to and within a space. Some people may feel more belonging to a space than others, but that should not mean that people should only feel belonging in one space. People can live in cultural centres (e.g., Chinatown or

Little Jamaica) and feel a sense of attachment to the space due to features such as familiar food, shared language, or even because they feel that the majority population of the space *looks like them*. The focus should not be on dismantling cultural communities in some sort of “colourblind” attempt at erasing lines between people. Rather, antiracist efforts need to work to disrupt the ways various racializations become marked and read as different from who is *supposed* to belong in a given sociohistorical space. For example, if a Black family moves into a neighbourhood where the majority of the population is white, there is no denying that the Black family will be in the minority in terms of racialized identities in the neighbourhood. However, antiracism should make uninhabitable any positions from the white neighbours that they belong but the Black family does not.

In the study, *The Three Cities Within Toronto*, in which Hulchanski (2010) examines the income polarization of neighbourhoods of Toronto from 1970 to 2005, one clear indicator of how the city is segregated is by “race”. The areas with the lowest income are shown to be the areas with the sharpest increase in the percentage of people of colour over the 35-year span. While Hulchanski’s (2010) look at the divisions of Toronto offers a more complex breakdown than just the observation that financially poor areas are occupied predominantly by people of colour, this simplified point does suggest that there are barriers to people of colour claiming a place and/or being shown that they can belong in financially affluent spaces. According to Hulchanski’s study, since 1970, the area that was The Ward has transformed from a “Very Low Income” area (more than 40% below the city’s average income) to a “Middle Income” area (20% below to 20% above the city’s average income), with projections to become a “High Income” area (more than 20% above the city’s average income). While these statistics might appear to some people as positive economic development of the city space, the problem is that

Hulchanski's study also shows that the populations of "High Income" areas have an average of only 11% Black, Chinese, or South Asian people. Perhaps an element of antiracism is to recognize the relationship between racism and economics (Hall, 1980) and to dismantle socioeconomic hierarchies. With or without that dismantling, though, one aim needs to be the disruption of perceptions of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour within affluent areas as anything other than people who achieved financial success. Notions that anyone of such racialized identities living in affluent spaces is an anomaly rests on understandings that white people are expected to be there—they belong—while the presence of other racialized bodies is conditional and qualified.

Belonging is not necessarily about claiming ownership over a space and is more about not feeling excluded or only being *permitted* to be present within the space. Belongingness, however, is not a binary where a person either belongs or does not. There are levels and forms of belonging that are felt within a space, which means there are levels and forms of exclusion that are also felt. For example, I spent the years of 2013 to 2016 living in Prince Edward Island (PEI) on the east coast of Canada. My paternal grandfather was born there and lived on the island until the age of 17 when he moved to Ontario. When I lived there, I had a PEI driver's license and a PEI license plate on my car. I worked at the Charlottetown Farmer's Market and at a local pizza shop. I played softball in a beer league, made friends with people born and raised in PEI, participated in community organizations and activism, and in many more ways became part of the community. It was my home, and no one ever told me to leave (some even asked me to stay). Despite all of this—including having a familial history on the island—I was often reminded by people born and raised in PEI that I was a CFA (Come From Away) and could never lay claim to being an "Islander". I will not attempt to present a discussion of island culture and identity, or to

illustrate all the different levels and forms of belonging I can think of, and rather, I use my experience of living in PEI to exemplify the idea of levels of belonging. I saw myself and was seen by others as an active participant in the island community, and so in many social contexts, I felt that I belonged. There were, however, other people who lived similarly to me who were born and raised there and therefore were read by other islanders as having a stronger belonging than I did. I was not excluded from living on the island and there were no laws or social etiquette that set parameters on my existence in PEI, but my belongingness had levels. For all people, these levels of belonging fluctuate in relation to context and how they become read by others as *fitting*, which suggests that antiracism can never be static and finished, because exclusions also fluctuate.

In a space like The Ward, where various racialized communities existed throughout history, the meanings of and within the space changed, and will continue to change. Antiracism should not equate to making particular racialized groups feel a sense of belonging but not others. Creating meaning in the space with markers of those historic racialized communities might lead some people to feel stronger belonging to the space than others, but for everyone, the markers should contribute to disrupting the dominance of Whiteness that enables the reading and exclusion of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour as “new” and/or “outsiders”. Because change is inevitable and people will always read spaces in relation to themselves and their form of historical consciousness, efforts to create an antiracist sociohistorical geography are not guaranteed to be effective forever, or even at all. Nothing changes, however, without active antiracist attempts. The recommendations and work of guerilla-style spatial (re)marking and of the official groups must continuously be considered, taken up, and adapted with aims of (re)creating and (re)asserting antiracist meanings.

The upcoming installation of the “Restoration of Identity” sculpture appears to indicate the City of Toronto’s adherence to the TRC’s Calls to Action. The installation should be acknowledged as a step in adding markers that indicate the presence of Indigenous peoples in the sociohistorical geography. At the same time, the sculpture, much like the Medicine Wheel alongside the TORONTO sign, keeps Indigenous presence isolated to the City Hall/Nathan Phillips Square space, and does not name the Mississauga of the Credit as the traditional keepers of that land. Rather than dismissing the effort as mere tokenism and liberal multiculturalism (Sato & Este, 2018), however, it is important to understand the shift in political discourse that occurs through the City’s support for the work that the sculpture can do and how the TRC Calls to Action provoke antiracism, even if the Calls are only taken up in limited ways. The act of installing the “Restoration of Identity” sculpture, which memorializes the victims and honours the Survivors of the IRS system, requires an acknowledgement—a naming—of a racism. It lends to a disruption of opinions such as current Canadian federal Conservative Party leader Erin O’Toole’s, that Residential Schools were “meant to try and provide education” but just went badly (Gilmore, 2021 December 15), or former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s, that Canada has “no history of colonialism” (Midzain-Gobin & Smith, 2021 March 28).

When the TRC Report was released, the City of Toronto had a choice of whether to implement the Calls to Action, thereby making the IRS system part of the official discourse, or not implement any of the Calls, which would have placed the municipal government in the position of perpetuating anti-Indigenous racisms. Although only a single act, erecting this sculpture will become a small example of departure from liberal multiculturalism (Sato & Este, 2018) because while it celebrates Indigenous identity, particularly the Survivors, it also brings to light racisms that were inflicted on Indigenous peoples. The sculpture’s antiracist effects and its

prominence in the official discourse are apparent and will provide a symbol to which people can point as a call-back to accountability if the city's government veers from the course of reconciliation. However, it will be, in the end, a single sculpture in a sea of Whiteness, and one that pedestrians can stop to see, but not one that actively intervenes in the banality of discursive colonialism. For this reason, the City must implement more Calls to Action with which symbolic changes like the sculpture can articulate.

As an example of what implementing another Call could look like, with so much corporate and material development continuing to take place in Toronto, there is ample opportunity to bring Call 92 to fruition. The city government could conduct consultation with and obtain consent from Indigenous peoples prior to economic development, ensure Indigenous access to jobs and training, and provide ongoing education in the corporate sector about Indigenous histories. So far, though, there has been no noticeable action. There are myriad options for involving Indigenous peoples and communities in these forms of development, whether it is marking the material structures with Anishinaabemowin names; declaring a part of the property land as Mississauga of the Credit land and having Mississauga representatives included in property design; disseminating a percentage of the property tax revenue to the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation; hiring Mississauga representatives to conduct sessions that educate corporate personnel about the land they are occupying; or many other practices. Not all these options can be accomplished without at least some restructuring of power, but that is the point. The TRC Calls to Action are targeted at those in the positions of power, and they provide an outline for tangible, ongoing antiracist changes.

The OHRC report on the Toronto Police Service removes any opportunity Toronto citizens and government might take to suggest that racisms perpetrated by police are occurring

somewhere else. The CABR unit is, by its very existence, admission from the government that racism did and does occur in Toronto. Much like the TRC Report, through the process of creating the OHRC report and the mandate of the CABR unit, racisms are named, the need for systemic change is made known, and the onus is then upon the government to disrupt and end the racist targeting and exclusions of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour.

Certainly, the government altering systems such as policing, for example, does not automatically remove racist attitudes held by individual people. However, the people holding those attitudes would not have the actions like the targeted policing of Indigenous and Black bodies as perceived evidence supporting and justifying their views. The Toronto Police Service claims “to serve and protect” the community—it is the slogan portrayed on their vehicles.

Overrepresentation of Black bodies being stopped and arrested sends a message that Black people are criminals and the (white) community is being protected from them. Changes to policing such as redistributing funding to support more appropriate services so that Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour are no longer overrepresented in situations of confrontation and violence with the police would create a different discourse in terms of social, economic, and legal views, structures, and practices.

In response to the OHRC report on anti-Black racism enacted by the Toronto Police Service, the Toronto Police Service Board (TPSB) released the *Police Reform Report*. The report includes 81 recommendations for changes to policing, “including the expansion of mobile crisis teams, implementing a plan to equip officers with body-worn cameras, creating non-police alternatives to community safety, providing the city’s auditor general increased access to Toronto police force’s \$1.2 billion budget as well as increasing training on anti-Black racism” (CBC News Toronto, 2020 August 18). The OHRC criticized the TPSB’s report and provided a

written deputation (OHRC, 2020 August 18) outlining the necessary elements that are missing from the TPSB recommendations. The OHRC's two overarching calls to action are:

- 1) the OHRC calls on the TPSB, TPS, and City of Toronto to formally establish a process with Black communities and organizations and the OHRC to adopt legally binding remedies that would result in fundamental shifts in the practices and culture of policing and eliminate systemic racism and anti-Black racial bias in policing.
 - and
 - 2) the OHRC calls on the government of Ontario to establish a legislative and regulatory framework to directly address systemic racism and anti-Black racial bias in policing.
- (OHRC, 2020 August 18)

The OHRC states that changes should include consent decrees, which would be an agreement between the TPS and the provincial government to employ independently monitored and legally enforceable reforms. From such an agreement would follow that police are held accountable for their actions through investigations and, when necessary, consequences imposed by independent bodies, not the police service itself. Other changes called for include “amend[ing] the provincial Use of Force model so that officers are required to use de-escalation techniques and tactics, whenever possible, before resorting to use of force” (OHRC, 2020 August 18). Furthermore, the OHRC declares that calls from Black communities for defunding, decriminalization, and demilitarization should be addressed, rather than pushed aside as arbitrary or unrealistic—inconvenient. The OHRC asserts that “Black communities must be involved at every step of the solution, including prioritizing which recommendations need immediate attention through formally binding mechanisms and measurable benchmarks” (OHRC, 2020 August 18).

Without more concrete plans and timelines for implementations of changes, without the step-by-step involvement of the community, and without the legal accountability to bring in changes, any recommendation from the TPSB, even those that would be welcomed, have no guarantee to take place. Dismantling systemic anti-Black racism then ultimately remains just an idea with the option to be enforced. A new repertoire making up discourse that is created by and for Black people and communities, as well as by and for Indigenous people and people of colour, could disrupt essentialized and racist meanings that understand Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour to be in positions of deficit and/or criminal activity. Such understandings maintain hierarchies built around and for Whiteness (Razack, 1998).

The TRC, OHRC, and CABR unit bring antiracism into the official discourse by putting governments in the spotlight to acknowledge and explain their decisions for (in)action. Effective action should include not only the naming of racisms they are combatting, but also plans for continuous disruption of the racisms. Guerilla-style (re)marking can and likely will continue to surprise the government with starting points for more antiracist action that, to be effective, requires further shifting in the political discourse. This shifting might occur through new official groups or adjustments to the relational dynamics within and between existing groups, but ultimately through revamped power structures. The surprise of the guerilla-style (re)marking and the calls for responses to it act to highlight the relationships between the material (i.e., the markers, buildings, and infrastructure), the discourse (i.e., the social, economic, cultural, legal, and political), and somatic belonging and exclusion.

None of these elements of the relationships are static and are ever-changing; creating an antiracist sociohistorical geography is not as neatly formulaic as ‘guerilla-style (re)marking leads to creation of official group which leads to antiracism.’ The public reactions to the (re)marking

will not always be the same, and so the incentive for the government to respond by creating and/or working with any official groups will not always be there. Additionally, while acts of (re)marking may at times garner louder public support than rejection, in other times, forms of rejection may also speak high volumes, not necessarily in numbers but in the power of representation. If efforts to change material and discourse for the end goal of somatic belonging results in feelings of white fragility and white rage about a felt exclusion by white people, it is possible that the fragility and rage can manifest in forms of racist guerilla-style (re)marking. If there was never racist pushback, antiracism would have become dominant long ago. This is not to say that the work of antiracist guerilla-style (re)marking and official groups is for naught. Rather, this is the reason antiracism is never a “once-and-done” effort, and why an antiracist sociohistorical geography is always in a state of becoming.

Looking at the work done by guerilla-style spatial (re)marking—sparking attention to racist exclusions and possibilities for antiracist disruptions and reorientations of the excluded groups—and then examining the ways the guerilla-style work is taken up and expanded upon through the official groups, does highlight the possibilities of an antiracist sociohistorical geography in the making. More than that, though, it is indicative of how the space can be (re)created, and it is the process that can be extrapolated within the wider city and that can be conceptually transferrable to other spaces. There may not be a “one-size-fits-all” antiracism, but there can be similar components in the process of building an antiracist sociohistorical geography. The Ontario Black History Society walking tour in many ways works similarly to the guerilla-style (re)marking, with each tour highlighting specific markers and histories that point out where antiracisms can and should be enacted. Additionally, though, the walking tour also

acts as a bridge to connect the guerilla-style (re)marking and the work of the official groups in terms of discourse and people recognizing where and how antiracism can be implemented.

The tour guides did not discuss with my friends and me any examples of guerilla-style (re)marking or any groups like the TRC, OHRC, or CABR unit. The tour did, however, change the way I read the sociohistorical geography and myself within it. It re-introduced me to the city space in and around The Ward in ways that showed how markers can and do articulate with each other. I learned to see how the markings and structure of the city, whether official or through guerilla tactics, were not simply decisions and acts done by somebody else, but were connected to me, because I occupy, connect with, and feel forms of belonging in the city space. As a result, when acts of protest painting and (re)marking did occur, I began to better see that rather than being a number of individualized examples, the acts of guerilla-style spatial (re)marking speak not just to a single historical narrative, but to the sociohistorical setting in which the narrative began and is now perpetuated. The tour presented a context for me to recognize and understand in relation to what some of the official groups are working toward. Through that understanding, the tour helped me to see myself in connection to the sociohistorical geography in need of a different dominant discourse. Perhaps the most difficult change in order to enact a stabilized antiracist sociohistorical geography is to deconstruct the entire system of Whiteness and build new structures on which racism cannot stand. The OBHS walking tour's 'antiracist starting points' that I discussed in the previous chapter can indeed begin with the historical people and events featured on the tour. More broadly, though, the starting points are also in reference to beginnings of a shift in the ways I perceive, talk about, and occupy the city space. The starting points help me see how and why I need to contribute to and not resist building new systems and structures. The (re)creation of such a space anywhere requires active engagement from the

various levels and facets of society that occupy and make meaning within the space, and this includes recognizing and purposefully structuring my own engagement.

A discursive formation like Whiteness is not easily disrupted, because it is so entrenched in the systems and structures of society—particularly Western society—and an antiracist shift requires a new societal discourse. A new discourse means changes to not only what is being said but also to the dynamics of power between those who are talking. A politics of antiracism is not a government-imposed trickle-down antiracism. It means a continuous (re)creation of space such that people are positioned in relation to and correlation with each other. People then become positioned not in terms of racialized hierarchy (Razack, 1998) or nationalism (Grant & Rogers, 2018; Hage, 2000), but as people with their own varying systems of meaning and their own embraced racialized identities stemming from the past, all of whom are now occupying the same (historically) colonized territory. With such visions of the relationships between the material, discourse, and somatic exclusion and belonging, of the role that ‘surprise’ plays in (re)shaping those relationships, and of the necessity for an antiracist sociohistorical geography to be understood as always becoming, I can imagine myself experiencing The Ward as an actively antiracist geography that changes but does not exclude my feeling of belonging.

Another Rollerblade Through The Ward

Just as I examined The Ward as a racist sociohistorical geography by reflecting on my days of rollerblading through the city space, I now examine what the space would look like as an antiracist sociohistorical geography. To do so, I imagine my experience of rollerblading through The Ward as an antiracist space. I imagine this rollerblade as a way of continuing to look for and create more cracks in the colonial bedrock. In this imagination, I rollerblade on the traditional territory of the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation, and this should be made known. I

rollerblade through the space of historic Black, Jewish, and Chinese communities, and this, too, should be made known. In connection to these points but in a more general scope, no person of any racialization, whether they acknowledge their connections to the histories or not, should be read as existing within The Ward only in qualified or conditional ways. Positions and systems of dominant Whiteness are disrupted and impossible to uphold. Exclusions of Black bodies, Indigenous bodies, and bodies of colour are no longer banal or acceptable at all. The markers of the antiracist sociohistorical space meet me with surprises, causing me to take notice of the forms of Whiteness I previously took for granted (Maynard, 2017) and to re-learn how to navigate the city streets. Antiracism is discursive, as each marker I encounter contradicts any rationale for exclusions and connects Black bodies, Indigenous bodies, and bodies of colour to the space in social and historic ways.

Fundamentally, what I imagine here is an attempt to shift people's historical consciousness and change people's embodied experiences with the sociohistorical geography of The Ward. One aim is indeed to (re)shape the space so white(-passing) people do not take their presence for granted. Another aim, however, is to (re)shape things such that Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour do not experience somatic dissonance because of official, systemic markers and structures. No single chapter can include every possible change, and even if it could, I cannot know for sure that people who experience somatic dissonance will then feel belonging. The changes necessary to produce feelings of belongingness and enact antiracism may be different things for different bodies. The rollerblading journey I imagine represents possibilities, not certainties, within a particular context—a situated and partial moment—that will inevitably be (re)created.

As I rollerblade, I am experiencing the antiracist sociohistorical geography in that moment and through my own lens. I move toward and through The Ward as a mixed-race, white-passing, cis-gender, heterosexual, able-bodied man who is fluently literate only in English, but these identities no longer position me in a place of dominance. The meanings that other people made before I rolled into the space and will make after I roll out of the space might be different than the meanings I read in my particular moment of presence, perhaps stimulating or challenging their feelings of belonging in ways that I do not or cannot feel. Additionally, although not all, much of what I observe and mediate meaning with is material, which on its own might be seen as superficial and therefore insufficient for enacting antiracism. I must consider how the material is linked to the systemic and how the material can be indicative of systems endeavouring to be actively antiracist, not just paying lip service. Because an antiracist sociohistorical geography is always becoming, I can only speak to the effects I experience and feel at the time as I rollerblade. The structures and meanings of the space can and will change as people move in and out of the space, and they will (re)articulate (with) the structures and meanings of neighbouring spaces. The grid structure of the paved streets remains, not because it is impossible to remove or even because it would take a long time to accomplish such a change, but because the crucial element in (re)creating antiracism is in the meanings the streets convey. They physically and socially connect The Ward to the rest of the city, illustrating even more why antiracism must be ongoing and why who has the power to make those meanings dominant cannot be representative of Whiteness.

The markers that operationalize the space appear somewhat different, as traffic signs no longer feature words. For example, the STOP sign is still a red octagon, but it does not have the word “STOP” written on it. Just like a ‘Yield’ sign or stoplights that are just coloured lights, the

red octagon remains a directive symbol, but does not include a word in the language made dominant through colonization. Additionally, the speed limit signs no longer have “MAXIMUM” written on them. Ironically, these signs have been replaced by the model used in Europe, Australia, and the United Kingdom, and the number of the speed limit (e.g., 60) is posted on a white background with a thick, red border to the sign. Like the red octagon, this wordless sign becomes commonly understood, and the dominance of English is not perpetuated through banal directive signs. The removal of English does not on its own result in the somatic belonging for historically excluded bodies, as this change alone equates to an act of “colour-blindness.” However, such removal can contribute to shaking the stability of colonial cultural representations. Although these changes seem small, they become part of a shift in the repertoire of discourse (Tator, Hanry, & Mattis, 1998).

I rollerblade the same directional route through the streets that I did when Whiteness was dominant, but I do not enter the space that was The Ward by crossing over Yonge Street, connecting with Edward Street, rolling across the intersecting Elizabeth Street, and then turning left on University Avenue until I reach Dundas Street West. The names of the streets have been changed such that languages of the various historic racialized communities are represented. Because the land is the traditional territory of the Mississauga of the Credit, all street names are in Anishinaabemowin, but some street names are shown in other languages as well. Toronto, like many cities, is a place navigated by major intersections (e.g., “meet me at the corner of ...” when the destination is actually a smaller street nearby), so I read Anishinaabemowin as being of heightened emphasis because the major streets are named with only Anishinaabemowin words. On the connector (not major) streets, on each street name sign, I read both Anishinaabemowin and another language for the street name, such that the languages of the historic people and

communities of The Ward—even a few in English—are represented. With street names alternating between a variety of languages (e.g., Anishinaabemowin, Chinese, Yiddish, English, Gaelic, Italian, Creole), the result may or may not be that the speakers of these languages feel a stronger belonging to the space. The multiple languages, however, still articulate meanings that English-language and Whiteness are not the standard (Baldwin, et al., 2011).

The selection of the languages and names for streets is not done through a process of community members submitting petitions and suggestions to a group of government representatives who then contemplate and *permit* a language and name. That process would allow the government to continue claiming inclusion while still maintaining Whiteness as the foundation (Ahmed, 2012). To mark this antiracist sociohistorical geography, the government of the City of Toronto created funded roles where representatives from communities that have been historically excluded are tasked with creating street names in the language of their community. The ways that a person is selected to represent their community goes beyond the scope of this thesis, as different communities have various leaders connected to varying community institutions (e.g., ministers in churches, directors at community activity centres, owners of local businesses). There are politics involved that would require further ethnographic investigation for me to understand. This complexity highlights the ongoing nature of an antiracist project because even within a recognized community, there is nothing static and singular, which shows all the more why the ways a community is represented through spatial markers should not be determined by a white-dominated bureaucracy.

However they came to be designated, these representatives do not execute their work through their own personal lenses. Rather, using practices closer to direct democracy, the representatives organize opportunities for community members to share their memories of

community spaces (Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016), voice their opinions, make their suggestions—including arguments against changing the street name at all—and then actually vote on the outcome. The inclusion of sharing memories contributes to the potential for marking spaces with what Worcman and Garde-Hansen (2016) refer to as *connective* as well as collective memory. Community members sharing their stories helps to connect people to the past and to each other, as there become links between individual stories. These links then become understood as a shared past remembered by community members—not imposed through a grand narrative—and can be represented through spatial markings. I know that as I rollerblade across streets, the names of streets and the languages in which they are written appear as such because of decisions made by people who were previously under-represented and excluded in official processes. As this community-engaged process shows, street names do not have to be permanent, so if the makeup of populations change and the people feel unrepresented, the process can be revisited to intervene in and disrupt felt exclusions.

Street name signs play a crucial role in mapping an antiracist sociohistorical geography, but after an initial unveiling, the *surprise* can wear off, and the street name signs alone become insufficient and somewhat superficial. To make their effects more active and ongoing, every time I stop at an intersection with a crosswalk light, along with the electronic beeping sounds used to inform people with visual impairments of when it is safe to cross the street, there is a recorded voice that says first in the language(s) of the street name and then in English, “safe to cross [enter street name here]”. Admittedly, I am reluctant to provide a more concrete example because I am not fluent in any languages besides English, and I do not want to misrepresent any language and culture through an incorrect translation. With such a feature, because of the deeply entrenched effects of British colonialism, English is the common and repeated language, but it is

not afforded the same privilege of being the primary language, as it is always after the language(s) of the street name. In addition to the audible presentation of the street name, the city developed a smartphone app so that people who do not read or speak the languages on the recording can select their preferred language and see and hear the city mapped in the language they desire. With these changes, as I rollerblade through this space, my presence is not suddenly be excluded by the various languages used in naming streets, but while I can still feel that I belong there, my English literacy no longer allows me to take my presence for granted. It is not necessary that I develop fluency in any of the languages on the street name signs, but I need to learn at least the names of the streets. The interaction with these languages helps to shift my historical consciousness and expand my discourse beyond English, thereby putting a crack in the discursiveness of English and Whiteness (Grant & Stanley, 2014).

Not yet at The Ward but on my way to it, I pass the school that was formerly named Jarvis Collegiate Institute. I see that the school and Jarvis Street—the major street on which the school is located—have been renamed, with the street name being in the Anishinaabemowin language. On the corner of the intersection where the school stands, I see a group of students (around Grade 7 or 8) and their teacher gathered around a statue near the edge of the sidewalk. The statue is of a woman I racialize as Black with the name Phoebe and the words “Enslaved by provincial secretary and registrar of Upper Canada William Jarvis” engraved on the base of the statue. At other corners along the north-south street are similar statues, but with the names Moses, Sussex, Kitty, Prince, and Name Unknown, respectively presented in commemoration of the people William and Hannah Jarvis enslaved. The group of students and their teacher is indicative of the Ontario Social Studies Curriculum having been adapted such that learning about histories of Black people and communities is now part of the curriculum expectations. Histories

and communities of Indigenous nations and people of varying racialized identities and cultures are also now core elements of the curriculum, rather than just optional examples that educators may or may not choose to reference. Additionally, emphasis is now placed on students examining the class content in relation to their communities, thereby helping students understand and contemplate connections between the past, their present (Seixas, 2012), and their racialized selves (James, 2017)—their own historical consciousness and their role in (re)creating collective remembering (Wertsch, 2002; Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016). The Eurocentric grand narrative that bolsters nationalism is no longer the main focus of social studies and history education, which means that the past is no longer presented as a large, abstract, and static thing to which students do not relate.

For people who are not students actively engaging with the statue of Phoebe, the other statues like it in the city, and the history they present, the statues are not blocking the pathways of the sidewalks but protrude enough such that I and other people walking or rollerblading must shift our line. The statues *intervene* in routines of everyday commuters like me and make known that enslaving Black bodies was a legal practice in what is known as Canada. They interject into and re-shape the banal space, making these histories a part of my cultural meaning mediation (Wertsch, 2002). Unlike statues of white, male politicians and/or military leaders, these statues provide a brief narrative of people who were not in official positions of power but who were nonetheless part of shaping the space and social memory of the past and therefore the present (Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016).

Zig-zagging my way through the grid pattern, moving southwest and into busier pedestrian spaces, I cut across the campus of what used to be Ryerson University, but that has been renamed. Moving across the campus grounds on a small street that was named Gould Street

but has been renamed in both Anishinaabemowin and another language that is not English, I roll under three of 17 arches constructed over sidewalks at various corners. Each arch has a variety of words and languages engraved on them. The statement repeated on each arch says,

In accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 82, these arches were designed, created, and installed in collaboration with Indian Residential School Survivors and their organizations to be publicly accessible and highly visible Residential Schools Monuments that honour Survivors and all the children who were lost from their families and communities.

The collaboration with Survivors creates an opportunity for their stories to be told, as much as they wish to tell, so that these histories become socialized (Worcmán & Garde-Hansen, 2016) and part of the discursive discourse (Tator, Henry, & Mattis, 1998), challenging the racist views of colonialism and genocide deniers.

At the peak point of each arch is the name of a residential school that operated in Ontario, and the years that it was used. There are words written in different Indigenous languages—I think corresponding to the Indigenous language of the area where each school was located—but I am unable to read the words, as I am not literate in any Indigenous languages. Along the pillars on either side of each arch are the names of the children who attended the residential school shown on the arch. Included with each arch are two maps, one on each pillar of the arch. One map has a 'You are here' point on Toronto and has another point showing where the residential school named on the arch was located. The other map has the same location points on it as the first map, but the places on the map are shown as Indigenous nations' traditional territories. The names on the map are the names given to the area by the Indigenous nations, written in the various Indigenous languages used in each territory. Showing the location of Toronto and the

residential school on the same map disrupts any feelings people have of being distanced from the IRS, as if it was something that happened *over there* and *not here*. The arches contribute to connecting people and places. They act as evidence that all people who occupy the land and spaces of Toronto, Ontario, and Canada are linked to the recent past and the ongoing legacies of the Indian Residential School system and the broader project of colonization.

Similar to the statues of the enslaved people, the placement of the arches at corners is strategic because these are the places people stop while waiting for traffic to clear before crossing the street that is now named with a language that could be but is less certain to be English. Additionally, the words written in Indigenous languages align with the years on the arches and tell me that these languages are not *new*. The listed years remind me that the residential schools are hardly of a *distant* past. For that reason, and perhaps of greater importance, I realize that I have always lived in a time and place where survivors of the IRS system also exist. I read the names of the schools and the names of the children not as something I am disconnected from, but as people I share space with and who were victims of something from which my family members and I were spared because of how we are racialized. I recognize that I have never been victim to violent hatred like the children named, all because of their identity. Rather than think, “I’m lucky that didn’t happen to me,” I think about how the people who governed and shaped the spaces in which I now feel so comfortable—some of whom I could conceivably cross paths with on the street—were those who allowed these children to suffer under the guise of education.

If people read these arches, they do so through their own relationship(s) that link the past, present, future, and themselves (Seixas, 2004; 2012). Not everyone reads these arches in relation to themselves in the ways that I do. In comparison to the population of Toronto, a small

percentage of the people travel through the university campus as I do on my rollerblades, so these arches cannot work alone. Additionally, despite being positioned in such strategic ways so as to be in the paths of pedestrians, these arches may fade into banality and become just part of the scenery. This potential occurrence would exemplify the need for continuous active (re)creation of antiracist spaces. If there is no more surprise factor, change is required. In this moment as I rollerblade, however, the repetition of the arches reminds me over and over of these horrendous histories and their ongoing legacies. As I pass under the final arch in my path, reach the western edge of the campus, and approach what was Yonge Street—now named with an Anishinaabemowin word and the new name being heard as the crosswalk indicates it is safe for pedestrians—I roll across the road that marks the eastern border of The Ward.

The former Yonge Street, even without its colonial-era name, is still lined with stores and restaurants, many of which I can see sell food and products representative of a range of cultures and languages. On the front of some of the businesses, I see that the owners have opted to post a sign that reads “This establishment is on the traditional territory of the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation,” and each sign has the City of Toronto logo on it. The decisions to post the sign shows me that reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is still needed, as Indigenous land is still seen as legitimately “owned” by non-Indigenous people (Moreton-Robinson, 2015), not held in common by all people. Also, as not all businesses post the sign, not all people acknowledge the ongoing effects of colonization. Because the signs have the City of Toronto logo on them, the signs do, however, confirm to the public that the municipal government is adhering to TRC Call 92(i). The city government now transfers a percentage of the property taxes that are paid by the business landowner to the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation, all as part of ongoing reconciliation.

Just from the point where I crossed the street, I can see a restaurant of Thai cuisine with the Thai language presented in the window and on the sign outside (I recognize it after having spent half a year living in Thailand); one of Mexican food, also with Spanish language made prominent (I will leave for another time the discussion of how Spanish being Mexico's national language is the result of colonization); and a bookstore where the front window displays newly released children's books by Black and Indigenous authors addressing themes of racialized identities, spirituality, antiracism, and more that generally centre ideas that are not Euro-/white-centric. As part of the bookstore's front-window display, there is a single red dress hanging as part of the movement to honour and call for continued investigation into murdered and missing Indigenous girls and women.

While the cultures, languages, and racialized identities represented through these businesses are not all historic communities of The Ward, they do represent a rejuvenation of the presence of shops and restaurants owned and operated by Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour within buildings owned and maintained by Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour. They appear as a call-back to the past, representing a continued resistance to racism by letting their very participation and success in society be an act of cracking the bedrock. In the second half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, when The Ward was viewed in particular racialized terms, there were a variety of businesses belonging to the neighbourhood's community members. Now looking at the restaurants and shops, I do not know if the people who own and work in these establishments also live in this area, but the mixture of businesses and residences I pass tell me that there is no longer a clear distinction of "rich" and "poor". I see the wider city in this way as well, as I know this rejuvenated neighbourhood is one of many throughout the city. I expect that many of the people who own the businesses—the

bosses—identify in racialized ways that align with the products they offer. This might be a poor assumption. However, even if I am wrong, through the articulation of the businesses, the official street names, the languages presented, and the memorial arches, although there is nothing to tell me that my white-passing and English-speaking body is an outsider, Whiteness cannot be read as dominant.

Given the variety of racializations, languages, and cultures represented in the area, I do not expect to witness or experience another encounter like the one on the OBHS tour where the white woman told our group to move because she missed *her* elevator (see previous chapter). The colonial bedrock is cracked with each business that is owned and operated by people of colour. The white, entitled sense of belonging and ownership is made uninhabitable. In this setting, all bodies can find a sense of belonging but cannot claim it over other people. Unfortunately, there are stickers on the doors that show me I am not permitted to enter these businesses while wearing rollerblades. This sort of barrier is disappointing but not racist. I am hungry though, so I look to the varying street vendors where I can purchase food. There are produce stands offering a variety of fruits and vegetables, many of which were imported from locations in tropical climates, such as mangoes from Mexico, bananas from Costa Rica, and oranges from Florida. There is a food truck that sells poké bowls—a dish I know as Hawaiian—and another truck with samosas, which are traditionally a South Asian snack but have been adopted by some African cultures as well. And there are still hotdog and sausage stands that were popular in the streets of Toronto even before antiracist (re)shaping began. I decide that for the ease of eating while rollerblading, I will purchase a samosa and a canned soft drink. To pay for the snack, I use currency that no longer features the images of former prime ministers (all

images of men) and the Queen of England, all of whom are white and leaders in colonial-originated systems.

Now with my samosa and soft drink, I continue west on the street formerly named Edward Street, but that now has a name from the Mandarin language (a language from China). The name is written in Chinese characters and Hanyu Pinyin, which is the Romanized spelling of Mandarin words. This street has less vehicle traffic, which is preferable to me, especially as I approach the street formerly known as Elizabeth Street and now called Emancipation Street. The sidewalks of Emancipation Street have a glow to them because the city adopted an adapted version of the *stolpersteine*, so I prefer to rollerblade on the road and not the sidewalk, lest I fall from my rollerblade wheels catching on the brass-plated stones. The stumbling stones in The Ward could feature the names of people who were victimized by the Nazis, as people may have moved to Toronto to escape the horrors of World War II in Europe, but mainly the names feature people of the historic racialized communities of The Ward. The OBHS walking tour showed me a small number of plaques in and around The Ward commemorating notable figures of the Black community such as Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Albert Jackson. They should be acknowledged, but these plaques are easily passed by without engagement, making this type of commemoration an act of tokenism, rather than part of the main discourse of the space. The stumbling stones installed throughout The Ward are an ongoing form of individuals presenting their memories, while the stones become a physical and visual representation of both collective and connective memory (Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016). Although there are stones installed all throughout the area that was The Ward, Elizabeth Street (now Emancipation Street) was a main street of The Ward, so there are many people and community businesses to be remembered. It makes any attempts to insist on Whiteness as the norm to be a bumpy and unstable journey.

As I near the end of this street and approach what was once University Avenue and now is a street with an Anishinaabemowin name, I can see emergency response vehicles at the corner. There is a Black man who appears to be presenting behaviour that I read as part of a battle with mental illness (unfortunately, even in an antiracist sociohistorical geography, mental illness still exists). While police officers who I read as a Sikh male and an Asian female are present, they are not taking the lead in the situation. Rather, the police are backup support for a mental health professional, who I read as a Muslim woman, speaking with the Black man, attempting to ascertain what he is struggling with and what type of assistance he requires. The city government has implemented the OHRC calls for policing reform so that “A non-police response to distress calls related to mental health, addictions or homelessness” (OHRC, 2020 August 18). In 2021, led by Toronto’s executive director of social development Denise Campbell, the City of Toronto committed \$11-million dollars to a pilot project to create non-police crisis response teams that include “a mix of community nurses, harm-reduction workers, and people trained in de-escalation” (Thomson, 2021 June 29). The pilot project was initially implemented in only “Toronto’s northeast and northwest—two underserved areas of the city—with the goal of adding two more by mid-2022, including a unit to service the Indigenous population” (Thomson, 2021 June 29).

‘Non-police response teams’ does not mean police are not present at all, but that they are only secondary (and ideally unnecessary) support to the primary responders, who are mental health professionals trained to de-escalate incidents, including those that involve weapons. The police are present as a last resort to detain the man struggling with mental health *only* if he reveals and attempts to use a weapon against others. If the police do become involved, they are held accountable for any actions they take, which can potentially be investigated by a committee

independent from the police service. This restructuring of the police and the creation of the community team came about as a result of the involvement of representatives from historically marginalized and over-policed communities and all levels of reform. Just like the street naming process, the community representatives are not just token individuals. They are tasked with organizing communications between the community, the municipal government, and the community team administration, thereby ensuring a clear exchange of community needs and provided services. This pilot project was found to be successful, as the appropriate community services provided the support people needed in varying crisis scenarios and the incidents of police violence significantly decreased. As such, the community non-police response system was expanded to all parts of the city. The work done by police is now part of a dynamic community team and not the default response unit.

Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour are able to travel (e.g., rollerblade, cycle, walk, drive) through the streets just as I do without feeling the need to prepare justification of their presence or feeling discomfort that they might be stopped by police and told they *fit the description* (Cole, 2020; Ibrahim, 2014). This power held by the police to harass and enact violence upon Black people, Indigenous peoples, and people of colour was a power over the geography, policing who belonged in the space and who did not (Maynard, 2017; Razack, 2002). It would not cease simply because the public said it is unfair, not nice, racist, or even illegal. There are new policies and structures in place where police still exist, but as part of a wider team designed for community health (Giwa, 2018). This means that no longer are the police the main service present in the area while other services (e.g., Emergency Medical Technicians and Social Workers) appear only when called to an emergency.

The police officers who are Sikh and Asian and the mental health professional who is Muslim I see at the corner attempting to help the Black man could just as easily be Cree, Latinx, white, or any other racialized, cultural, religious, and gendered identities. As members of the community team, they reflect the communities that they come from and that they serve. The mandate of this team is to build community relationships, which means making community engagement the primary act, and not showing up only on the lookout for suspicious activity, which is an approach to policing that too often targets Black and Indigenous males. Additionally, in creating these teams, there is outreach and support for community members to become involved, whether they become members of the community team, or they are supported in taking leadership roles with a community team service board. A community team service board acts similarly to the role of a police service board, which was a group of civilians tasked with meeting with police leadership to set objectives and priorities for the police. The difference in function between a community team service board and a police service board is that the community team service board works with the varying service specialties that each community team member provides.

While I rollerblade through The Ward, I do not see police officers driving through the streets or parked at the curb, only stepping out of the vehicle to stop and question someone who is simply out for a walk (Cole, 2015). Instead, as exemplified by the community team's response to the man suffering from mental illness, I see community team members engaging with people and building awareness that the team is there to serve the community, not merely police it. I understand the presence of the community team as meaning that the city and the province recognize the complexities of human existence and the strains on social, mental, and economic well-being that come at the hands of racism. I roll past the community team helping the Black

man, knowing that the team members' knowledges, some of which will stem from lived experiences as racialized people, might help them to assess and understand some of the man's living situation. They will not make assumptions and snap judgements that escalate tensions and lead to violence.

Continuing on my way past the scene with the community team and traveling south on the former University Avenue (now named with an Anishinaabemowin name), I can see that the centre island that divides the northbound and southbound traffic lanes is now entirely covered in soil, grass, bushes, and a row of trees. The traffic island previously had some trees and concrete boxes in which flowers were planted, but the concrete boxes and brick pathways were removed to maximize the greenspace and biodiversity. Although positioned through official decisions and not the natural cycle of reproduction that occurs in a forest, the trees, grass, and soil, represent a small effort taking place in spaces around the city to revive the land after being paved over and dominated for generations. In between the trees and standing above the height of the bushes are large, poster-sized images as part of a "People of This Land: Then and Now" project done in partnership with the Toronto Ward Museum. The project builds on the Ward Museum's 2017 project "Block by Block," which was an online project with people contributing photographs and stories of their families who lived in The Ward (Keung, 2017 October 11).

On the traffic island, there are historic images of the people who lived in this space at different times prior to when the current City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square were completed in 1965, and then images of people in the present who are linked to the historic figures. Some of the historic images are photographs while some are artistic depictions, due to the lack of photographs for the earliest time periods. For example, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation contributed sketches that depict historic Mississaugas people living in their traditional

territory, which was before photographs were available. Next to that image is a picture of a group of what I understand to be Mississaugas teenagers. There is a photograph of Jean (Toy Jin) Lumb outside of her restaurant, Kwong Chow, in The Ward. Next to that is a photograph of Lumb's daughter Arlene Chan, who is now an author of publications on the histories of Chinese communities in Toronto, including of that in The Ward. There is a photograph of Albert Jackson with his family (the same photograph used on his plaque; see Image 30), and next to that is a photograph of some of Jackson's descendants. The display of images represents yet another opportunity for people to present their memories so that the history of the space continues to be (re)created and representative of the individuals who (re)shape it everyday (Worckman & Garde-Hansen, 2016). The "Then and Now" project contributes to blurring lines and making connections between the past and the present. It shows varying racialized people of the past in the sociohistorical geography—not just generally in the city—and shows them as connected to the present through their descendants, thereby not being "new".

Because of the route I am traveling, I only see the display on the traffic island, but I know that there are other projects similar to the "People of This Land: Then and Now" that the city now provides funding support for. The city's efforts to provide funding to Black entrepreneurs and artists as part of the work by the Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit expanded to fund projects that help people of all racializations to present their stories and show racialized histories of Toronto as extensive and unfinished. For example, in an updated form of the *Speaker's Corner* of the 1990s, which was a public video-recording booth in Toronto where people could record themselves sharing jokes, comments, and ideas and have the recording broadcast on television, the City of Toronto now has a section on its website devoted to sharing videos people record on their phones or computers. People are encouraged to contribute in any language their

stories, comments, and ideas about their experiences and memories in Toronto. All videos are saved and archived on the website and a daily selection of them are shared through Toronto's social media platforms, such that the videos become a form of social memory technology (Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016). In addition to these videos, the City of Toronto also supports the *Myseum of Toronto* initiative, which started on a donation basis and enables people to “showcase the history, spaces, culture(s), architecture, and the people, that represent Toronto's unique place in the world” (Myseum of Toronto, 2021, “About Myseum”).

The Myseum project creates spaces where people can tell their stories, whether about themselves or about people, places, and/or events they feel are historically significant. After those stories are initially shared, they are saved on the Myseum website, exemplifying the connected and ongoing nature of different histories. Yet another example of people sharing their stories through social memory technology (Worcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016) is the website *Alternative Toronto*. The site is “a digital archive and exhibition space that documents the history of alternative communities in the Greater Toronto Area from 1980 to 1999” (Alternative Toronto, 2017). The site's focus is “on local resistance cultures in politics and the arts that were rooted in radical, grassroots and do-it-yourself movements, and we're especially interested in materials that bridge both spheres” (Alternative Toronto, 2017). Generally, the site acts as an archive where people create their own collections of artifacts. These collections are then viewable by anyone who visits the site. Items in the collections are linked to a location on a map of Toronto, highlighting past cultural representations throughout the city that may crack the colonial bedrock and that certainly tell histories different from the grand narrative (Stanley, 2006). While I do not see the work of *Myseum* or *Alternative Toronto* presented on my rollerblading route, I know they exist and articulate with the “Then and Now” project to disrupt

the certainties of Toronto's past and challenge ideas of the past being finished (Grant & Rogers, 2018).

As I continue down the street, I look around to ensure I am not going to run into pedestrians, and I see a woman who I racialize as white running and waving in hopes that a streetcar will wait at the stop long enough for her to board. Watching the woman run and comparing her travel to my rollerblading, I am reminded that no person is static, whether in the sense of physical makeup and movement or in the sense of mental, intellectual, or emotional growth and change. Every person can be understood as a traveler, always in a state of becoming (Ibrahim, 2014) in relation to what Clifford (1997) calls their constructed and intertwined roots and routes. As I rollerblade through The Ward, I see the space through a lens of traveling and developing antiracism in relation to my reading of myself within the space, but I do not exist in and travel through The Ward isolated from other people. We (other people and I) all came from somewhere to occupy the sociohistorical geography in various and changing ways. Whether we enter the space from somewhere outside or we are born and raised in the space, there was a time when we did not exist there but other beings did. There is nothing inherent or finite about one's place within a space. We all shape and are shaped by our temporal, spatial, and relational ways of being within a discursive formation that structures the setting (Donald, 2009).

With this perspective of all people as travelers, and with consideration for antiracism to be active (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2016), I ponder more deeply when I pass the streetcar transit shelter and see an interactive screen. With the screen, while waiting for their transit, people can learn about historic and present populations that exemplify connections between people within the area of the city in which they are. It is a technology of social memory (Worckman & Garde-Hansen, 2016) and a tool for collective remembering (Wertsch, 2002), helping people develop

their historical consciousness by linking their current sense of place to other times and other people (Grant & Rogers, 2018). This screen is in the area that was The Ward. The visuals presented start by identifying the land of The Ward as Mississauga of the Credit territory. People can also input where they were born and find out points such as if their place of birth is the traditional territory of any Indigenous nations. There are also other options for the person to input to find information that shows them how they are connected to other people of the past and present within the sociohistorical space. The program on the screens uses census information such that if the person inputs a language, the screen tells them how many people of the past also identified as speaking the language and when the language was first recorded as being present in The Ward. Another option is that a person inputs another country—perhaps the country they identify as their ancestral roots—and, as data allows, the screen tells the person when people from that country first arrived in The Ward. In the same sense, a person can select a racialized identity and the screen provides the statistics of when people of that racialization were first recorded as present in The Ward. The interactive screens are a way for people to make spatial, temporal, and social connections to the past and present. They allow for the presence of white, English-speaking people to be acknowledged while also contradicting narratives of white and English as first and other racializations and languages appearing only later (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Stanley, 2006).

The placement of the screens at transit stops (i.e., bus shelters and subway stations) does perhaps not garner the same *surprise* as stumbling stones or street names that force people to engage with varying languages. However, they are positioned in places where thousands of people stop every day while they wait for their transportation. Such positioning puts the screens in the paths of everyday space. The screens are another repeated marker of the Mississauga of

the Credit territory and forms of relational education for people in and of the space. This type of program does lack the ability to de-essentialize and problematize the issues of racializing people and ascribing particular meanings to said racialization, so it is only yet another piece in the process of shifting discourse and (re)creating an antiracist sociohistorical geography. It does, however, present opportunity for easy but active engagement with the historic space.

The transit stop with the interactive screen marks the end of my rollerblading route. This chapter, of course, is an exercise in imagining what an antiracist sociohistorical space *could* look like. It is a goal I hope to see come to fruition, but antiracist efforts have no guarantees (Stanley, 2014) and are never finished, so I hold no illusions that this single chapter will be the solver of racism. What I describe above is an imagined journey, as some of the features along my route do not (yet) exist. Furthermore, even if the features became a reality just as I portrayed them, my narrative presents an antiracist moment, and not the exact meanings I will always encounter, read, and feel in The Ward. This does not mean that what I imagine is without value. I imagine it, yes, but it represents a variety of antiracist meanings that can be (re)created. In comparison to the ways I previously described The Ward as a racist space, the changes I imagined above all work together to disrupt the certainty of the white, British colonizer bedrock on top of which other markings and representations are layered. There is no finite bedrock, as people, material, and meanings are always in flux. This fluctuation suggests that the power dynamics produced by the ‘insider-outsider’ and ‘new-old’ binaries can be dismantled and new societal structures can be created, over and over when necessary. My imagined rollerblading is indicative of how an engagement with the relationships between material, discourse, and somatic dissonance and belonging should and perhaps must consider the movement of people. Space is always in a state of becoming, being (re)created and never static (Lefebvre, 1991) because people are never static.

CRACKING THE COLONIAL BEDROCK

The goal, then, must be to develop a politics of antiracism that underpins the movement—the changing—of people and space, unblocking pathways and spaces for all bodies.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Since conducting this research, I cannot help but count the number of Canadian flags I see as I look out the window of my apartment or go for a walk around downtown Ottawa, the capital city of Canada. I usually lose count because there are so many. I often catch my inner voice saying “English” and “French” as I pass by the names of the streets are almost all English or French names and languages. I watch tourists take photographs of the parliament buildings and the many statues of white, male political and military leaders on and around Parliament Hill. While driving through the villages that pepper the Ottawa Valley outside the city, I see slogans on village welcome signs that say, “Where Ontario Began”. What does it mean to *begin* a province (politically, legally, economically, socially, geographically)? Does this historical beginning suggest *terra nullius* prior to the province? And who decided that Ontario should be formed? I could go on, but my point is that the colonial bedrock and the systems that (re)cement it are not unique to the spaces of Toronto. The flags, street signs, tourists, and more have been part of the sociohistorical geography I occupy for as long as I have lived in the city, but I did not previously question their presence and the effects they have. I now see all of this in terms of racisms and antiracisms because of what I found through this research.

Because of this study, I no longer feel able to travel through any community spaces—rural, urban, suburban, etc.—without critically observing and considering the ways the geography is marked, how it is used, which languages are represented, which bodies are and are not occupying it, how I feel in relation to it all, and what meanings are mediated between myself, other bodies, and material along the way. I see the structures and markings that appear permanent or temporary, repeated or one-offs. I recognize in these relations who has the power to maintain or change it all. My embodied experiences as a mixed-race, English-speaking, white-

passing man have changed. The racialized and gendered identities I claim (i.e., mixed-race and male) carry different meanings in changing contexts, not only because of how I feel but also because of how others see me in said contexts. As the space is (re)created, so am I (Ibrahim, 2014). Where previously I likely would have accepted my unquestioned presence as the way things should be, I now see that lack of questioning as a comment on how I am read by people as fitting the somatic norm (Puwar, 2004), despite the way I identify in racialized terms. I more easily recognize where and when I enacted and unfortunately sometimes still enact Whiteness. Importantly, my felt changes extend beyond just recognizing the markers and the ways I am read that previously enabled me to take my presence for granted—my palace of mirrors (Puwar, 2004). I have awareness of how my relationship(s) to shaping sociohistorical geographies shift when systems of power are changed and when different cultural representations are removed and/or replaced. I see and feel when the discourse changes, and I (re)learn how I read myself and others within fluctuating spaces. (Re)creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies is not merely something that I see *should* be done, and it is something I am part of and must actively do.

When I began this project, all I had in mind was that the Ontario Black History Society offered a walking tour, the walking tour could be seen as a form of education, and that examining the tour for its educational practices could be informative and important for seeing history education in different and antiracist ways. I did not initially think about the tour as being an active part of a wider sociohistorical geography. Upon participating in the tour, I started to not just understand conceptually but to see and feel how history and spaces are not final or singular, and the everyday ways they are (re)asserted or changed. Through my study, I argued that an antiracist sociohistorical geography is always necessarily unfinished and in a state of becoming. Being necessarily unfinished should not be perceived as a belief that racism is permanent, as Bell

(1993) argues. Old racisms are often re-created in new ways, and new racisms are developed, not always with malicious intent but certainly with negative effects (Stanley, 2011). These fluctuations suggest that racisms are complex and not simple to end. The forming and re-forming of them show that they have beginnings and can have endings, but as people move in and out of spaces, meanings can be (re)created or changed.

The constant state of becoming—the ongoing re-creation—of a sociohistorical geography is done through this (re)creation of meanings. These meanings are mediated and become (re)created through the engagement between people and material (Werstch, 2002). To understand how this ‘becoming’ does and can occur requires understanding how racisms work in changing contexts. It is on this point that I see my thesis contributing something new to antiracist thinking and action. Even when scholars talk about ‘race’ being a social construction and always becoming (Ibrahim, 2014), suggesting that racialized identities cannot be essentialized, issues of racism continue to be presented in a simple and fixed one-on-one battle format (e.g., white versus Black; white versus Indigenous). While framing racism in this way does allow for a more focused and outcome-based antiracist approach, it overlooks the complexity, relationality, and interconnectedness of racisms. Attention to these traits unveils two main aspects that need to be incorporated into views of racism and antiracism.

As I have said throughout this thesis, racisms and antiracisms are dependent upon spatial and temporal context, but the people, material, and meanings of a context are never static in their positions nor fixed in their beings. They are in motion. The context is ever-changing. It may be aggravating to learn that, because of these fluctuations and re-creations of meanings, antiracist efforts are never finished. To pretend that we—all people—do not grow, change, move, and influence the everyday sociohistorical spaces we occupy is to fall short in developing antiracism

that corresponds to the ways people exist. Yes, the hope is to create a world where racism of any kind is no longer something to worry about. However, even if we eliminate a form of racism, the antiracist work must continue, so as to ensure that the racism is not re-created in new ways, and that other racisms in the same context are not reproduced.

The interconnectedness of racisms is an issue that is perhaps understood, but is not seen as a significant consideration in the development of antiracisms. Indeed, there are racisms, plural (Stanley, 2011), so it follows that there need to be antiracisms, plural. Yet, just because, for example, anti-Black racism is not the same as anti-Indigenous racism does not mean that the two are isolated from each other. As I discussed at the end of Chapter 5, it is possible that antiracist efforts to reorient one excluded group can actually reproduce racist exclusions of another group. The depth of white supremacy within Canadian society makes it such that this reproduction of exclusions is challenging to avoid. Recognizing this occurrence is crucial for examining where and how racisms become re-created and in maintaining at least hope if not persistence in creating more and more cracks in the colonial bedrock. This effect of white supremacy, in many ways pitting one racialized group against another in a fight for inclusion, is precisely why effective antiracism requires all people to work relationally to critically and continuously (re)create sociohistorical geographies where positions of racism are uninhabitable (Grant, 2014; Hall & Jhally, 2002).

To develop and begin modeling these perspectives incorporated into antiracism, I illustrated how the colonial bedrock is made banal and Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and bodies of colour are shown as *outsiders* or *new*. I inventoried and historicized where and how racist exclusions were and are (re)asserted through articulations of cultural representations in and around The Ward. I identified and analyzed the ways the Ontario Black History Society's

walking tour exemplifies creating cracks in the colonial bedrock, thereby identifying starting points for developing antiracist spaces. And I imagined what an antiracist sociohistorical geography could look like. Throughout all of this, I noted and considered the repertoire of words, images, languages, and practices that combined as a discourse (Tator, Mattis, & Henry, 1998). My main finding is that efforts to make inclusions of various racialized groups in dominant discourse can contribute to naming and perhaps troubling particular racist exclusions, but do not automatically disrupt systems and structures that (re)create exclusions. To deconstruct these powers, antiracism must incorporate ongoing disruptions of dominance over space. Before delving into what broader implication my research has, I first acknowledge that, as with any study, there are challenges in what I present in this thesis.

Challenges

The overarching challenge in my writing and arguing that antiracist sociohistorical geographies are always in a state of becoming is that this thesis is written by me (only one person) and does have an end. As such, throughout the writing process, it has been difficult to use a single and finite medium to model the ways an antiracist space is continuously (re)created through multiple lenses, experiences, and embodiments, all working simultaneously and in relation to each other as part of the mediations of meanings. While writing this thesis, not all spatial markings in Toronto, throughout Ontario, or across Canada have remained the same. Protestors have toppled some statues of dead, white, male politicians known for racist acts. The Toronto municipal government is addressing some calls for street name changes. The Canadian federal government continues to say it is committing to meeting some of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. Pockets of antiracist shifts are taking place, and this is good, but Whiteness remains dominant. It is not manageable for me to track every crack

that is made in the colonial bedrock and wonder if the next crack will be the one that causes the bedrock to crumble. My writing would be never-ending. Ideally, my work here will contribute to more people recognizing when the cracks are occurring, and also help people see how they can create the cracks themselves.

Another challenge connected to me in relation to fighting racisms is that because I am so often read as white, I do not and cannot experience the exclusions felt by Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour. I can only speak to the meanings that I understand, the racisms and (potential) antiracisms that I see, and the relationships I feel to people and material around me, in different spatial and temporal contexts. The lens I use for examining racisms will always fall short of feeling the somatic dissonance experienced by Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour. I do not wish to experience such somatic dissonance, and no person should have to feel that, but I will always be learning from a position of white privilege what markers and structures can trigger such a feeling of exclusion. My hope is that whether or not other people see and feel the meanings that I do, my work can help them to recognize and critically consider how they constantly (re)create sociohistorical geographies by the ways they read themselves and others in relation to each other and the cultural representations around them.

Pertaining more to my work than me as a person, another challenge is with my attempt to employ antiracism when it has been critiqued for ultimately being ineffective (Hage, 2016). As I described in Chapters 1 and 2 here, and in various places throughout the thesis, scholars and activists have been engaging in conversations, debates, and actions for decades, arguably over a century, working to develop antiracist understandings and approaches. And yet, racism is still around. If racisms are linked to colonization and white supremacy, though, there have then been forms of racism in North America (not to mention other parts of the world) for hundreds of

years. White supremacy has for so long been deeply engrained in society that it will take longer than preferred to crumble to bedrock. Rather than give up and suggest that antiracism is a lost cause, I continue to use it because antiracism is what happens when people counter racism. It is a process and a project. If we abandon antiracism, the racisms that do still exist and that have been re-created will be left unchallenged and be permitted to spread. Antiracist changes can and do happen. The challenge to antiracists and to me in my work is that while the goal is to make racism uninhabitable, the deep history of racism makes it so that there is no template for what this ‘uninhabitable’ would look like in a discursive form. Through this thesis, and particularly Chapter 6, I attempted to imagine such a place and space where historical consciousness, cultural representations, and societal systems are all underpinned by antiracism, theoretically making it so racism is not supported, is not welcome, and is in no way normalized. What I imagined, though, was only a moment through my own lens. I cannot claim it to be *the* model space where racism is uninhabitable, leaving this particular challenge unconquered. If we can ever know what this ideal looks like for any given space, it will only be found by continuing to actively work through and with antiracism.

The scope of my investigation also presented a challenge. Within the expanse of what is called Canada, the space in and around what was The Ward is indeed quite a small point on the map. Following anti-essentialist antiracism perspectives (Stanley, 2014), I emphasized that there is no *one-size-fits-all* antiracism, and antiracism must be enacted in relation to respective spatial and temporal contexts. I therefore was and am not seeking to generalize and suggest that the racisms and antiracisms in and around The Ward are the same as anywhere else. Nevertheless, it remains an ongoing challenge to place so much focus on the histories and cultural representations of this small area and also show transferrable concepts and processes for

(re)creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies in spaces of different regions and territories across these colonized Indigenous lands. The common element between all places of what is called Canada is a history of colonization and dominant systems of Whiteness—the colonial bedrock. How the bedrock can be cracked will depend on how it is (re)cemented in different contexts. In all contexts, though, cracks in the bedrock do not just appear, and they must be actively created, but this comes with logistical challenges.

Changing the repertoire that makes up discourse (i.e., re-marking spaces with different cultural representations; forming new official antiracist government and community groups; transforming education systems to match communities) comes with financial costs. For example, when Toronto city council voted to remove the name ‘Dundas’ from all city-governed places (e.g., street name signs, subway stops, public parks), the council announced that removing the name and replacing it in these places would cost between \$5.1-million and \$6.3-million over a two-year span (Draaisma, 2021 July 14). These dollar figures do not even account for how the name-change will affect individuals who have businesses and homes with ‘Dundas’ as part of their names, addresses, and products. Moreover, removing ‘Dundas’ is only one of 60 names brought to the attention of the city council for considerations of being changed for similar reasons (Patton, 2021 June 28). While I am not going to do the specific math on this, it is safe to say there would be a lot of money and details involved.

I acknowledge that throughout my study, and specifically as I imagined The Ward as an antiracist sociohistorical geography, I offered little account of these logistics. Admittedly, I wrote as if money was no object, and I primarily discussed potential and perhaps ideal spatial and systemic changes and their antiracist effects. The details of how spaces become (re)marked and how much it costs need to be factored in, but they will be different from place to place. I

showed little consideration for the cost of changes, the limits imposed by time, or the restrictions of laws or procedures. I showed so little consideration to these factors not because I am ignorant to them or think they do not matter, but because we first need a vision of what antiracist sociohistorical geographies could look like and how they work to disrupt racisms. My aim was to present what is possible and why the possibilities should be examined for their antiracism work before worrying about financial aspects. Antiracism will never be bolstered and made discursive if it is continuously met with short-sighted attitudes that the necessary changes will “cost too much” or will “be too disruptive” to the flow of the community. These perspectives are just Whiteness trying to maintain itself. Despite these challenges, my work does open paths for the future development of research and education practice. Cracking the colonial bedrock can and must take place in systems and settings beyond the city of Toronto and its municipal government. Yes, I focused on The Ward, but there are takeaways that need to be examined and applied in other settings.

Implications for Future Research and Education Practice

Enacting disruptions of racist sociohistorical geographies can include acts such as the guerilla-style (re)marking of space that I described. Such re-marking challenges the imposed structures and authorities over Indigenous lands that were carved up into blocks of public and private property by colonial and white dominance. The disruptions should include the development of official groups that work within governments to provide voices of historically marginalized and excluded peoples, holding governments accountable for underpinning societal systems and structures with antiracism. Even more than that, though, there are relationships between the (re)creation of antiracist sociohistorical geographies and the various forms of education people experience that must be mobilized to strengthen the potential for antiracism to

be the dominant and discursive discourse of any given space. To make antiracism discursive, these new lenses and embodied experiences that I describe—one’s antiracist historical consciousness—must be felt and operationalized by more than just me or a small number of people. However, not everyone can or wants to take on a research study as I have. Nor is everyone able or interested in participating in walking tours of racialized histories, if there are any provided in a given community. To make antiracism ongoing, active, and the norm, it needs to be integral to the systems and spaces where people learn. Spaces of learning include schools, but they also include the wider community and world. Antiracism education takes place, at least in part, in the relationships between school and community (James, 2017).

I have shown through this thesis how making antiracism discursive can work in Toronto, where the histories and populations consist of a wide variety of racialized identities. Such population make-up lends to perspectives that antiracism is obviously necessary in these spaces, and indeed it is. The (re)creation of antiracist sociohistorical geographies, however, should also be given attention in different spaces and places where populations are seemingly *all white* and overt and targeted racisms are not as prominent. Further research is needed to examine how the concepts and processes of (re)creating antiracist sociohistorical geographies work in community spaces that are different in structure, history, and population, than The Ward and Toronto (e.g., small towns, rural communities).

Future research. In the “Racialized social geographies” section of my Conceptual Framework chapter, I presented work by Peake and Ray (2001). I reiterate their point here that in the national imaginary, the *real* Canada “lies beyond the nation’s largest cities in the countryside and small towns (also overwhelmingly white)” (p. 180). While teaching in a teacher education program and discussing histories of racisms and racialized communities in Canada, numerous

white teacher candidates told me that they were unaware of the historic racisms because they come from a “small, white town” where “there is no racism”. Hearing this sentiment from the teacher candidates did not suggest to me that they were apathetic about racism and antiracism. Many of the people who held this view of their hometowns wanted to learn more about antiracism. Their statements told me that they did not see themselves or their communities—their sociohistorical geographies—as linked to racisms.

There are several lines of inquiry that stem from this perception that where Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and/or bodies of colour are not visible, racisms are not occurring. My research in this thesis establishes a starting point that can be borrowed from and built on to understand racist and antiracist spaces anywhere. The sociohistorical geography of small, (sometimes) rural communities are (re)created in ways that can be drastically different from those of large urban centres. Nonetheless, all communities of Canada are situated on traditional Indigenous territories, so when and how did these smaller communities become dubbed “white towns”? Why is it that people may consider these communities to be without racism? From my experience as someone who grew up in one of these small towns, I know there are often Indigenous people, Black people, and/or people of colour who do live or spend time in these communities, albeit in smaller numbers than white people. With community members whose presence contradicts the certainty of the community being all white people, what enables these teacher candidates or anyone who shares these views to continuing racializing the community as white? And looking more broadly at the communities, why might it be that the majority of the population has been and remains white? These sorts of questions and many more all require a range of research to be done, and I hope to address them in time, but they all link back to the understanding of the (re)creation of sociohistorical geographies. They all connect to the ways

people learn to read and make meaning through the relations between themselves, other people, and the cultural representations. If reading spaces, making meaning of relations, and (re)creating sociohistorical geographies are learned, then my work has implications for antiracist pedagogies in social studies and history education.

Education practice. Sociohistorical spaces are forums of social studies education in broad terms, in that the systems, structures, and markings of a space teach people about how they should and should not, can and cannot occupy and operate within a given space. The features of a space teach people how to read people's different identities and see them as those who naturally belong or those who are *new* or *outsiders*. With this awareness, social studies and history education inside the classroom can be designed to help students recognize their relationships with (re)creations of social meanings in everyday spaces within their own communities. Antiracist pedagogies can be developed such that educators show students how racist exclusions are not just about individual actions and are historical; are connected to each of them in different ways; and are (re)created or disrupted by them in banal ways. Educators can guide students in developing and implementing an antiracist historical consciousness, even when students live in "small, white towns". This outcome is something I have witnessed as a result of my own adoption of these education approaches.

As I worked through my analysis of my findings, part of my process in finding what worked for organizing my discussion was to present the different my ideas to new audiences. Sometimes these audiences were at academic conferences, 'lunch-n-learn' gatherings, or in teacher education classrooms where I was invited as a guest speaker. The questions I received, the suggestions I was given, and the critiques and criticisms pressed upon my arguments all combined in helping me adjust, massage, and sometimes fully change my conclusions. I sought

to convey an overall message would guide people in seeing differently the world around them and themselves in it. From one particular presentation to a group of teacher candidates, I was shown the response to my work that told me my study can have positive and meaningful effects.

Using the photographs from my study, as well as the spatial markers within the university classroom, I spoke to the teacher candidates about spaces being sociohistorical geographies; about how cultural representations mark the space that (re)assert the racisms of the colonial bedrock; about how there are or can be markers that put cracks in the bedrock if they are made active through our engagement with them; and about how there is no *one-size-fits-all* or *once-and-done* antiracism. At the end of my presentation, I fielded some questions, thanked the class for having me in, and then the period was over. A week later, the professor for the class told me that the students asked for me to come to their class again. The students had more questions and were, in fact, feeling uncomfortable in processing what I shared with them. I was curious and asked the professor what the discomfort was about. They told me that some of the students came to the next class and expressed, “I can’t unsee this. Everywhere I look now, things that used to just be normal, I see symbols of racism and colonialism. I don’t know what to do with this.” I did return to the class and speak with the teacher candidates again. We talked about the idea of their discomfort being a part of the antiracism process. I suggested that their identifying of racist exclusions enables them to disrupt the normalization of racisms by teaching future students to read their sociohistorical geographies in critical and antiracist ways. As I spoke with the teacher candidates, I held my casual-educator composure and tried to offer what guidance I could in helping them find their ways forward in antiracism, but in my mind, my excitement was rising. I kept thinking, “This is it! It’s happening! This is the goal!” The goal was and is that my research

contributes to people developing their own antiracist historical consciousness to read and (re)create spaces in antiracist ways.

While speaking with the teacher candidates in that classroom, I was witnessing a transformation that modeled why education is such a crucial factor in the (re)creation of antiracist sociohistorical geographies. At least some of the teacher candidates were beginning to see the spaces around them and their selves within those spaces through a lens of antiracist historical consciousness. Their expressed discomfort and their questions to me about what they can do with their new knowledge showed me they were seeing themselves as connected to the historical cultural representations and were seeking ways they could make antiracism active. This transformation, however, was not inherent or inevitable. It did not occur spontaneously, nor would it be complete after just two discussions with me. Just as I did in my study and as any other person would, the teacher candidates had to learn to begin (never finish) shaping their lenses in antiracist ways. They had to build their understanding that more than just seeing the repertoire of discourse differently, they are part of creating the discourse. If teacher candidates can do this and understand the transformation they are making, there become possibilities that these future educators of the primary and secondary levels can implement the ‘antiracist sociohistorical geographies’ concepts and approaches with their own students.

People constantly (re)create meanings for the spaces they occupy, and these meanings have effects for which bodies are read as having (or not) power and which bodies are read as belonging or being conditionally present. The discourse used in a space (re)enforces which meanings and bodies are seen as dominant. If the discursive meanings change, so does the discourse and, in turn, so can the dominance. The change in meanings, which is to say making antiracism discursive, will not occur on its own; people create meanings and so must learn the

process and their potential for making antiracism core to everyday spaces. Education systems need to guide students in learning to read their embodied experiences in relation to the historical landscapes around them and the articulation of cultural representations marking the landscape. Indeed, it would be ideal for all people to develop an antiracist historical consciousness, and some people will do so through their own experiences, but addressing antiracist sociohistorical geographies in schools takes a systemic approach. Helping primary and secondary school students develop their own antiracist historical consciousness and recognize how they participate in (re)creating sociohistorical geographies can include but should not rely on them taking walking tours. If antiracism is to become discursive, it must be embedded in societal systems. Social studies and history education can be the optimal forums where antiracist shifts gain strong momentum.

Students can be shown how to trace the histories of the meanings they take for granted as permanent. They can learn to find the histories that disrupt or *crack* the dominant meanings. They can begin to understand their embodied roles and relationships in maintaining or disrupting different meanings. Through this social studies and history education, students can understand, form, and socialize not just a collective memory but a connective memory (Worrcman & Garde-Hansen, 2016). This sort of memory work departs from students learning historical content through formulaic investigation that feels disconnected from them. Forming connective memory means *doing* history in ways that guide students reading the relations between their racialized selves, other racialized bodies around them, and the spaces they occupy, all as historic but always being (re)created. This approach is antiracist as people's racialized identities remain crucial in their embodied relationship with the past, but particular (white) bodies cannot be read as belonging more than others. Indigenous bodies, Black bodies, and/or bodies of colour being

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read as *new* or *outsiders* becomes uninhabitable. When people can learn to continuously (re)create antiracist sociohistorical geographies, the colonial bedrock crumbles, Whiteness is no longer the norm, and people of all racializations are read as unconditionally belonging.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

University of Ottawa Office of Ethics and Integrity – Certificate of Ethics Approval

19/02/2019

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number

S-01-19-2124

Titre du projet / Project Title

(En)countering Socio-historical
Geographies of Racism:
Developing a Pedagogy of
Antiracist Historical
Consciousness

Type de projet / Project Type

Thèse de doctorat / Doctoral
thesis

Statut du projet / Project Status

Approuvé / Approved

Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

19/02/2019

Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

18/02/2020

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher

Mark CURRIE
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Affiliation

Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education
Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education

Role

Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

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Appendix B



Université d'Ottawa

Faculté d'éducation

University of Ottawa

Faculty of Education

Overview of Research Study

(En)countering Socio-historical Geographies of Racism: Developing a Pedagogy of Antiracist Historical Consciousness

Researcher:

Mark Currie, PhD Candidate in Education
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Telephone:
Email:

Researcher's Supervisor:

Dr. Timothy J. Stanley
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Telephone:
Email:

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of the education practices used by the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) toward developing antiracism in relation to understandings of social and historical spaces presented during the OBHS historical walking tour in downtown Toronto.

Participation: To volunteer to be interviewed for the study, you must have taken part in the OBHS's walking tour in downtown Toronto, as a tour participant, a tour guide, or a tour creator. Participation will consist essentially of one session of approximately 30-60 minutes during which I, Mark Currie, will ask you questions and seek your responses. The interview will be scheduled for your convenience. I will ask if I may contact you for a potential follow-up interview of up to 30 minutes, but you are not obligated to agree to this, and may decline my request even after permitting me to contact you again.

Risks: Participation in this study will entail you responding to questions about your perceptions of the relationship between antiracism and the walking tour. The questions may cause you to feel you are sharing reflections and insights. I assure you that every effort will be made to respect these reflections in writing and reporting the research.

Benefits: Participation in this study will provide information to history and antiracism educators and researchers to guide learners to see personal connections with social and historical space around them in antiracist ways.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: I, Mark Currie, assure that information you share will remain strictly confidential. Unless you grant me permission to use it, your name and professional position will not be used in any reporting of the research. The contents of the interview will be used for the writing and dissemination of my PhD dissertation.

Conservation of data: Any audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in a secure manner on a password protected computer. Hard copies of transcripts and notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be destroyed after five years.

Voluntary Participation: You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. If you withdraw, all data gathered up to your withdrawal will be destroyed.

If you want to volunteer or have any questions about the study, you may contact me (Mark Currie) by phone, email, or in person, and/or my supervisor by phone or email.

If you have any ethical concerns regarding your participation in this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

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Appendix C



Université d'Ottawa

Faculté d'éducation

University of Ottawa

Faculty of Education

Consent to Participate in Study Ontario Black History Society Representative Participant

Research Study: (En)countering Socio-historical Geographies of Racism: Developing a Pedagogy of Antiracist Historical Consciousness

Researcher:

Mark Currie, PhD Candidate in Education
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Telephone:
Email:

Researcher's Supervisor:

Dr. Timothy J. Stanley
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Telephone:
Email:

Study's Source of Funding: This study is funded by the researcher, Mark Currie, using the Admission Scholarship funds awarded to him upon his acceptance to the PhD in Education program at the University of Ottawa.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study *(En)countering Socio-historical Geographies of Racism: Developing a Pedagogy of Antiracist Historical Consciousness* conducted by Mark Currie for his PhD in Education.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the effects of the education practices used by the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) toward developing antiracism in relation to understandings of social and historical spaces presented during the OBHS historical walking tour in downtown Toronto.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of one session of approximately 30-60 minutes during which I will be interviewed. The interview is scheduled for a date, time, and place that are convenient for me.

Risks: I understand that since my participation in this study will entail that I respond to questions about the relationship between antiracism and the OBHS historical walking tour, it may cause me to feel that I am sharing personal and professional reflections and insights pertaining to my professional role with OBHS. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to respect these personal and professional reflections in the writing and reporting of the research.

Benefits: My participation in this study will provide information to history and antiracism educators and researchers to guide learners to see personal connections with social and historical space around them in antiracist ways.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that, unless I permit otherwise, the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I am aware that my name and/or professional position will not be used in the reporting of the research without my permission. The contents of the interview will be used for the writing and dissemination of the researcher's PhD dissertation.

Conservation of data: Any audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in a secure manner on a password protected computer. Hard copies of transcripts and notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be destroyed after five years.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Please initial one:

- ☐ I AGREE to have my interview responses audio-recorded
☐ I DO NOT agree to have my interview responses audio-recorded

Please initial one:

- ☐ I GRANT PERMISSION for my name to be used in any reporting of this study.
☐ I DO NOT grant permission for my name to be used in any reporting of this study.

Please initial one:

- ☐ I AGREE to be contacted for a follow-up interview of up to 30 minutes if the researcher requires clarification or elaboration on any of my responses.
☐ I DO NOT agree to be contacted for a follow-up interview if the researcher requires clarification or elaboration on any of my responses.

Please initial if you agree:

- ☐ I AGREE to have the data used for completion of the researcher's dissertation work.
☐ I AGREE that the data may be used for any publications and/or presentations as part of the dissemination of the dissertation work of the researcher.

(Optional)

☐ I know someone with experience with the OBHS historical walking tour who could provide a contribution to this study. I am willing to provide this person with this study's information letter so they can contact Mark Currie if they choose to be interviewed.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the student and/or his supervisor at the numbers mentioned above.

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If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Mark Currie of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Dr. Timothy J. Stanley. I understand that by accepting to participate I am not waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Contact Information:

(Email) _____ and/or (Telephone) _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D



Université d'Ottawa

Faculté d'éducation

University of Ottawa

Faculty of Education

Consent to Participate in Study Public Participant

Research Study: (En)countering Socio-historical Geographies of Racism: Developing a Pedagogy of Antiracist Historical Consciousness

Researcher:

Mark Currie, PhD Candidate in Education
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Telephone:
Email:

Researcher's Supervisor:

Dr. Timothy J. Stanley
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Telephone:
Email:

Study's Source of Funding: This study is funded by the researcher, Mark Currie, using the Admission Scholarship funds awarded to him upon his acceptance to the PhD in Education program at the University of Ottawa.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study *(En)countering Socio-historical Geographies of Racism: Developing a Pedagogy of Antiracist Historical Consciousness* conducted by Mark Currie for his PhD in Education.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the effects of the education practices used by the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) toward developing antiracism in relation to understandings of social and historical spaces presented during the OBHS historical walking tour in downtown Toronto.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of one session of approximately 30-60 minutes during which I will be interviewed. The interview is scheduled for a date, time, and place that are convenient for me.

Risks: I understand that since my participation in this study will entail that I respond to questions about the relationship between antiracism and the OBHS historical walking tour, it may cause me to feel that I am sharing personal reflections and insights. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to respect these personal reflections in the writing and reporting of the research.

Benefits: My participation in this study will provide information to history and antiracism educators and researchers to guide learners to see personal connections with social and historical space around them in antiracist ways.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I am aware that my name will not be used in the reporting of the research. The contents will be used for the writing and dissemination of the researcher's PhD dissertation.

Conservation of data: Any audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in a secure manner on a password protected computer. Hard copies of transcripts and notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be destroyed after five years.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Please initial one:

☐ I AGREE to have my interview responses audio-recorded

☐ I DO NOT agree to have my interview responses audio-recorded

Please initial one:

☐ I AGREE to be contacted for a follow-up interview of up to 30 minutes if the researcher requires clarification or elaboration on any of my responses.

☐ I DO NOT agree to be contacted for a follow-up interview if the researcher requires clarification or elaboration on any of my responses.

Please initial if you agree:

☐ I AGREE to have the data used for completion of the dissertation work researcher.

☐ I AGREE that the data may be used for any publications and/or presentations as part of the dissemination of the dissertation work of the researcher.

(Optional)

☐ I know someone who has previously participated in the OBHS historical walking tour and think this person would provide a beneficial contribution to this study. I am willing to provide this person with this study's information letter so they can contact Mark Currie if they choose to be interviewed.

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If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the student and/or his supervisor at the numbers mentioned above.

If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Mark Currie of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Dr. Timothy J. Stanley. I understand that by accepting to participate I am not waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Contact Information:

(Email) _____ and/or (Telephone) _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E



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Interview Questions

(En)countering Socio-historical Geographies of Racism: Developing a Pedagogy of Antiracist Historical Consciousness

Researcher:

Mark Currie, PhD Candidate in Education

Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Telephone:

Email:

Researcher's Supervisor:

Dr. Timothy J. Stanley

Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Telephone:

Email:

- 1) What led you to want to engage with the OBHS and its walking tour?
- 2) What do you think people learn from the histories being presented by this history society/organization?
- 3) Do you feel personally connected to the histories being presented by this history society/organization? Why? Why not? How so?
- 4) How do you see the outdoor walking tour as influencing your engagement with the histories compared to an indoor museum exhibition of the same historical material?
- 5) How do you think the setting of this activity (i.e. walking tour) affects the ways you understand and connect with the histories being presented by the OBHS?
- 6) Do you see the city space around you differently after the walking tour? If so, how so?
- 7) This society focuses on Black Canadian history. What does it mean to be Black? Black Canadian?
- 8) What connections, if any, do you see between the histories presented by this history society and the history of Canada as you know it?
- 9) How does this experience teach people about racism?
- 10) How does this experience teach people about antiracism?