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URBAN COMMEMORATIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:  
MONTREAL'S PERSISTENCE IN CENTRING SETTLER STORIES

Par

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**URBAN COMMEMORATIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:  
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*To all the formative people I've encountered throughout my life who encouraged curiosity, taught me different ways of knowing, and helped me practise critical thinking.*

*To all Indigenous Peoples of the world, your continued resistance, resilience, and unapologetically strong refusal of the settler state.*



*Wisdom of the universe by Christi Belcourt, 2014.*

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*“Well, all Land in Canada is Indigenous Land. It doesn’t matter if there is a national park or a city or a mine or a reserve on top of it, it’s Indigenous Land because Indigenous Peoples have relationships to it.”*

*Leanne Betasamosake Simpson talking with Glen Coulthard November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014*



## RÉSUMÉ

En 2020, la ville de Montréal a proposé une nouvelle stratégie de réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones afin d'accroître la visibilité des peuples autochtones et de soutenir leurs développements culturels dans l'environnement urbain. Cependant, Montréal demeure une ville colonialisme de peuplement ; les processus de dépossession, d'effacement et de marginalisation sont ancrés dans ses politiques urbaines. Compte tenu de ce contexte, comment deux des sept objectifs déterminés - accroître la visibilité et le développement culturel - s'intègrent-ils dans le paysage commémoratif municipal autochtone actuel? Cette thèse s'interroge sur ce que les commémorations visuelles de Montréal (un résultat du colonialisme de peuplement) révèlent de sa vision des peuples autochtones. Les résultats explorent la façon dont la ville commémore les peuples autochtones, leur histoire et leurs liens avec les terres non cédées dans le paysage urbain. Les commémorations autochtones à Montréal continuent de reproduire un regard colonial colonisateur qui fige les peuples autochtones lors des premières rencontres. Cela alimente les discours dominants qui dissocient les peuples autochtones des milieux urbains contemporains. L'absence de commémorations authentiques décrivant la présence et les histoires complexes des Autochtones constitue une autre couche d'"invisibilisation". Bien que les nouvelles tactiques de commémoration de la ville soient plus progressistes et corrigent parfois la rhétorique la plus déshumanisante des anciennes commémorations, elles continuent de centrer les récits des colons qui conviennent aux Montréalais blancs.

Mots-clés : colonialisme de peuplement; ville coloniale; commémoration critique; peuples autochtones; invisibilisation autochtone, effacement colonial; regard colonial; commémoration autochtone.

## **ABSTRACT**

In 2020 the City of Montreal adopted a new Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples with the goal of becoming a 'metropolis of reconciliation.' One strategic objective identifies commemoration as a means towards meeting this goal by highlighting the memory, history and heritage of Indigenous Peoples in public spaces. Taking as a premise that commemoration is an intentional act of recognition and plays an important role in the public memory and that commemorations are never neutral and often reproduce dynamics of power, this thesis asks what commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal's narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment? Importantly, this thesis also asks how, if at all, this narrative has evolved through time. Findings support the argument that although recent recognitions have evolved from centring the colonizing history of Montreal to focusing more on Indigenous Peoples, commemorations continue to support a narrative that serves the settler city of Montreal.

Keywords: settler colonialism; settler colonial city; critical commemoration; Indigenous Peoples; Indigenous invisibilities, colonial erasure; colonial gaze; Indigenous commemoration

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I was also profoundly influenced by geographer Nalini Mohabir during my Human Environments bachelor's at Concordia University. Her humane pedagogical methods will always stick with me; I thank her for not shying away from difficult topics and letting us sit in the needed discomfort. I also learned a great deal from my minor in First Peoples Studies. These classes deepened my knowledge about Indigenous Peoples through eye-opening, healing pedagogy –a contrast to the often cold and harsh setting of academia. Lastly, I would like to thank my research director, Nathan McClintock, who was always available and very resourceful. Thank you, Nathan, for the countless meetings and discussions, for your patience and your guidance.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

'Montreal' is the settler colonial name for the stolen Lands on which I reside. My institution, INRS Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, also sits upon these Lands, which rightfully fall under the guardianship of and belong to the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island / Canada. The unceded Lands I write about are also known as *Tiohtià:ke* in Kanien'kéha and Mooniyang in Anishinaabemowin. The Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples have deep ties to these territories and continue to be the traditional stewards of the Lands and waters. I recognize that this Land has served as a site of meeting, gathering, and exchange amongst Indigenous Peoples for millennia.

Land acknowledgements recognize that we exist in an ongoing settler state and question the legitimacy of the Canadian state's power over Indigenous Peoples and their territories. They also acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' longstanding resistance and immeasurable resilience. Importantly, many Indigenous thinkers have criticized Land acknowledgements as performative, especially in academic settings. I decided to include this acknowledgement because many non-Indigenous people remain ignorant of these politics and histories. I hope that this thesis might introduce them to one aspect of the important work of decolonization.

## POSITIONALITY

I am a non-Indigenous, white, settler, cis, woman who conducts research on issues affecting Indigenous Peoples. My parents and I were/are settler colonizers. My father is Quebecois of French descent, and my mother was born to English and Irish parents and raised in South Africa. Growing up, I heard about Apartheid (which my mother lived through in Johannesburg) and colonialism in the South African context. However, it took time and unlearning to recognize the horrors and genocide that took place in my own Canadian context. Completing a BA in critical geography and a minor in First Peoples Studies at Concordia University sharpened my critical analysis and spurred my interest in Indigenous perspectives. My relationship to and with the Land has become increasingly complex and layered. Through this research on settler colonialism, I grew more conscious and self-aware of the implications of being here and being Canadian. As a white settler on unceded Indigenous Land, my positionality of one of privilege which I want to use to actively critique, dismantle and rethink the systems of oppression that are still working against Indigenous Peoples. In a perspective of decolonization, social justice and environmental justice, I will work on ways the city needs to centre Indigenous people while finding ways of having a city that reflects their needs, desires and visions. To study Montreal then is to better understand my own relationship with Indigenous Peoples as a non-Indigenous person. I've been questioning why there is such an absence of Indigenous presence in the visual landscape of the city. It has become evident that systemic erasure is at many levels within the non-Indigenous lived experience in Montreal. Non-Indigenous people are mostly lacking severely in knowledge about Indigenous nations, culture, history.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AFNQL	Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador
CTA	Call to actions (from the TRC)
IRS	Indian Reservation Schools
IRSS	Indian Reservation School Survivors
RCAP	The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

## LIST OF REACCURING INDIGENOUS WORDS

Tiohtiá:ke	The Kanien'kéha way to refer to the Island of Montreal. The spelling is based on the Mohawk council of Kahnawà:ke.
Kanienké:ha	The language spoken by the Kanien'kehá:ka peoples.
Kanien'kehá:ka	First Nations peoples. Sometimes referred to as Mohawks, they are the "People of the Chert". They are the easternmost members of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy.
Mooniyang	The Anishinaabemowin way to refer to the Island of Montreal.
Anishinaabemowin	Also called Ojibwemovin or the Ojibwe language is the spoken by Anishinaabe or Ojibwe people.
Anishinaabe / Ojibwe	Group of culturally and linguistically related First Nations peoples concentrated around the Great Lakes



## INTRODUCTION

Canada is said to be in an era of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Finishing the eight-year consultative period, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) held its closing event in Ottawa in 2015. It presented an executive summary of the findings, including ‘calls to action’ (CTAs), recommendations to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. Canada’s main cities responded to the call to action through a variety of measures. The City of Vancouver proclaimed a Year of Reconciliation from between 2013 and 2014, becoming designated a “City of Reconciliation” when its Reconciliation Framework was adopted. The politics of reconciliation is a prominent framework (and policy tool) used by governments to think about and act on the impact of historical injustice on oppressed and marginalized groups within their societies marked by gross discrimination, such as post-apartheid South Africa and settler colonies like Canada (Little and Maddison 2017). Canadian municipalities are increasingly using reconciliation to engage with Indigenous heritage and public memory (Nelson and Godlewska 2023). Several cities followed Vancouver’s lead, declaring their commitment to reconciliation: including Calgary and Toronto. However, Montreal was slower to respond, adopting its 2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples only in 2019. The City claims that this public policy “stems from Montréal’s desire to become a metropolis of reconciliation” (City of Montreal, 2020). The Mayor, Valerie Plante, insists that ‘this is not a report we’re going to put on a shelf’, it is about orienting what needs to be done,’ (CBC News, 2020, para. 1).

Montreal is a settler colonial city. Defining a settler colonial city, according to Hugill, involves applying insights of settler-colonial theory to make ‘sense of the urban process in North America and other societies where colonists have “come to stay” and no formal process of decolonization has unfolded’ (Hugill 2017, p.1). The main theoretical insights from settler-colonial theory, as Hugill refers to theorists such as Wolfe (2006), is that settler colonists differ from other colonists in that they “come to stay” and are constructed “new” societies on the expropriated land base (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). In line with explanation, this thesis identifies Montreal as a settler colonial city.

Within this analytical framework, thesis draws on this reconciliation processes taking place in Montreal as an analytical and empirical point of departure to examine the City’s relationship to Indigenous Peoples as expressed through commemoration. Kahnawake Mohawk Council Chief Gina Deer noted that visible signs of reconciliation could already be seen in the addition of the great tree of peace to the Montreal flag and the renaming of Amherst Street to Atateken Street.

Deer was also present at the unveiling of the city's new strategy, identifying it as steps toward true reconciliation (CBC News, 2020: para. 11). But is it possible for the City of Montreal to speak about reconciliation while still living on unceded Land?

Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that the discussions about reconciliation are in fact about rescuing settler normalcy and securing the settler future. Indeed, questions on reconciliation only detract and delay from the questions of decolonizing, which for them means Land Back. Decolonization, in its true form, must take place first. It is not very surprising that the City of Montreal in its "2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation", does not mention Land Back claims as a tool for reconciliation. Therefore, this raises many questions surrounding this idea of a settler colonial state trying to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples. Can Canada, and for the purpose of this research, Montreal City, claim to be in a social political context of reconciliation or, following Tuck and Yang (2012), are actions made in the name of reconciliation 'move towards innocence', coming from settler guilt.

The use of the term 'reconciliation' in public policies, such as the City of Montreal, is consequently questionable. Is the use of the word 'reconciliation' simply a visibility ploy to show that the municipality is doing what is required of them following Canada's TRC report? Or could it be a marketing public relations plan using the idea of a city reconciling with Indigenous Peoples, creating a progressive identity to be projected locally and internationally. Particularly for cities, does using the term 'reconciliation' offer a way for municipalities to present themselves as being in tune with questions and social debates regarding Indigenous communities in and around their urban environment. Daigle (2019) writes about the spectacle of reconciliation taking place in post-secondary institutions, but the same can be said about public policies aimed at appeasing white settler Canadians at municipal levels of governance. This is done through what Daigle calls 'hollow performances of recognition and remorse' (2019, para. 1). These hollow 'spectacles' are removed from the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism on Indigenous Peoples in their everyday lives.

Relating this analysis to Indigenous presence on the island, commemorations reflect settler colonial spectacles and reconciliation mandates put in place, in this case, by the City of Montreal. This is not to analytically situate Indigenous communities in a position of victimization or passivity vis-à-vis the settler colonial state. Indigenous Nations have and continue to resist settler colonial states and their methods. They continue to assert their rights to these Lands. Rather Daigle's comments capture some of the perceptions of the settler colonial governance by Indigenous

Peoples. Instead, it is to highlight and point out the inherent tensions and contradictions associated with the reconciliation process. Indeed, Indigenous communities have been, and continue to be, actively involved in the commemorative processes on the island, including with the City of Montreal. Their political actions and resistance are largely responsible for many of the commemorations studied in this research, from the First Nations Garden to the recent toponyms and commemorations of the Great Peace. Their inclusion in the urban landscape is not only a matter of historical justice but also a recognition of their ongoing resilience and vital role in the fight for decolonization and the reclamation of their rightful place in public memory.

This research therefore looks at how a settler state, in this case the City of Montreal, produces an ongoing though changing narrative through commemorations to help shape its changing identity throughout time. Along these lines, this thesis looks at how the City of Montreal perceives its rapport with Indigenous Peoples on Tiohtià:ke, the island of Montreal, from the angle of recognition and commemoration. Commemoration, Radonić (2023) explains, provides a vehicle for contemporary identity and memory politics but is rooted in dynamics of power relations and struggles over authorizing hegemonic visions of the past.

The politics of recognition and reconciliation help guide this research by adding a diachronic analytical perspective. Diachronic analysis involves studying the changes and developments of phenomenon, in this case commemorations, over time, allowing us to answer questions such as: while Montreal aims to become a metropolis of reconciliation, is the commemorative landscape reflective of this political goal? And how do we understand the City of Montreal's Indigenous commemorations throughout time? The goal is to understand and interpret what commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal's narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment and the evolution of this through its history.

The City of Montreal writes that the history of Indigenous presence on Tiohtià:ke in Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) and Mooniyang in Anishinaabemowin, began some 5,000 years ago (Tremblay, 2016). From an Indigenous perspective however, the Kahnawákeró:non say that based on oral traditions like the Creation Story, Indigenous Peoples have been on these Lands for time immemorial (Mohawk Council of Kahnawá:ke, 2023). However, this long presence is not reflected in the visual landscape of Montreal or in its commemorative scene. Montreal, as a settler colonial city, has repeatedly erased Indigeneity by silencing Indigenous point of view, their histories and meanings of places (Guimont Marceau et al., 2023).

The focus of this research is on Indigenous commemorations considering evolving (in)visibility of Indigeneity in the urban landscape.

The City's *Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* materialized after Mayor Valérie Plante created the Commissioner of Indigenous Affairs position in 2018, appointing Marie-Eve Bordeleau to advise on Indigenous relations. The idea behind the strategy dates to when Bordeleau began her work and implemented a cross-cutting reconciliation strategy to improve the city's services for Indigenous communities and promote Indigenous culture (Olivier, 2020). Bordeleau clarified that the *Strategy for Reconciliation* takes into consideration the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 "calls to action" regarding reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples; the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan; the 2019 Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec (known as the Viens Commission); and the 2020 report by Montreal's public consultation office into racism and systemic discrimination to identify solutions and concrete policy initiatives for the City of Montreal.

The next section offers an outline of calls to reconciliation, action, and commemoration through the framework of this country's multiscale governance: Northern Turtle Island (Canada), Quebec provincial governance and Tiohtià:ke (the Island of Montreal). This overview serves to situate the focus of this research – examining the ways that the City of Montreal engages in commemorations across the island and what these ongoing actions of recognition can tell us about the City's perceived relationship with Indigenous Peoples and how this shapes the identity of Montreal – within the layered structure of governance across Canada and through the critical perspective of acknowledging that Canada's history has mainly been presented as a celebratory settler story (Pentland, 2021).

### **Northern Turtle Island (Canada)**

Curtis Clearsky, from the Blackfoot and Anishinaabe First Nations, suggests referring to Canada as 'northern Turtle Island' (Sia et al., 2012); "Turtle Island" is an Indigenous way of referring to the pre-colonial continent of North America (Bowra et al, 2021). Indigenous communities across northern Turtle Island are calling for more visual landmarks in ongoing discussions on reconciliation and reparation (Stimson, 2021). The goal is to help facilitate the healing process for community members (e.g., commemorations paying tribute to the survivors of residential schools).

Notably, public discussions and debates in the Canadian settler colonial context increasingly raise historical injustices. Indigenous groups and activists confront the federal government about contemporary issues like the unacceptable lack of drinking water in many First People communities (Council of Canadians, 2023).

Over the past fifty years, some governmental processes have attempted to increase the visibility of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. For example, Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 explicitly affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), established in 1991, studied the relationship between 'Aboriginal' peoples in Canada, the Canadian government, and Canadian society. Canada only gave its support to the UNDRIP in 2016, a decade after its passage.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which launched in 2008 and delivered its final reports in 2015, is the country's most prominent national reconciliation framework. It called the Canadian residential school system a government-supported form of "cultural genocide" (CBC News., 2023c). The TRC allowed those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of Indian Residential Schools to share their stories. Finally, TRC's # 43 call to action was for multi-level governing bodies to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples. In 2007 the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was voted in by most of the world's countries: 143 out of 193. Only four countries voted against the Declaration, including Canada. Murray Sinclair, former member of the Canadian Senate and First Nations lawyer who served as chairman of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2009 to 2015, stated that Canada must move from apology to action (Moran, 2015)

Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister of Canada at the time, issued a public apology in 2008 (CBC Archives, 2018). However, many saw Harper's apology to Indigenous communities for the wrongdoings on behalf of the Canadian government as rhetorical, a superficial performative political step towards recognition and reconciliation, leading some to call the TRC itself a 'circus' act that exploits Indigenous pain and trauma (Chrisjohn and Wasacase, 2009). Paul Bunner, the head speechwriter in the Prime Minister's Office at the time, indeed claimed that the Harper's apologies was a "strategic attempt to kill the story" (Barrera, 2015); the 'story' being the whole TRC and ensuing apologies by the Canadian government.

After the discovery of unmarked graves linked to residential schools, protesters in Winnipeg tore down a statue of Queen Victoria (BBC, 2021) and a smaller statue of Queen Elizabeth II. As residential school survivor Belinda Vandembroeck explains, such statues symbolize the ongoing effects of the colonial agenda (CBC News, 2023b). In 2021, the Canadian Government announced a \$20 million, highly visible Residential Schools National Monument in Ottawa to honour survivors and all the children lost (Government of Canada, 2022). According to the Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Stephanie Scott, such symbols are powerful medicine that can comfort survivors, keep their experiences at the forefront of collective memory, and honour survivors and their families (Scott, 2023). Scott reminds us that reconciliation begins with a commitment to truth-telling (which can be through commemorations). In this way, memorials can be part of the restorative mending process for Indigenous Peoples. Spaces that honour and celebrate Indigenous communities can also teach non-Indigenous people about Indigenous realities so that they might engage in conversations and expand their narrow views (Nerestant, 2022). However, as of 2024, there is still no permanent commemoration of the residential school period of Canadian history in Montreal.

## **Quebec**

As noted above, the 2019 Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress (the Viens Commission), emerged as part of the 94 Calls to Action contained in the Final Report of the TRC. This report was accompanied by serious allegations concerning government actions or inaction regarding Indigenous Peoples (Kelly, 2019). Geoffrey Kelley, the Quebec Liberal Party's Minister of Indigenous Affairs from 2014 to 2018, argued that the Quebec government aimed to adapt its policies and programs. For instance, it set up the program *Aide aux Autochtones en milieu urbain* (Assistance for Indigenous Peoples in cities) in 2016, to support Indigenous communities in urban settings across the province. Francois Legault, Quebec Premier when the Viens Commission deposited its report in 2019, issued a formal apology to the First Nations of Quebec. Legault explained that: "An apology is necessary and important, but it is not enough. We must understand the reasons that led to this situation, and from that foundation we must bring about change" (Cabinet du Premier Ministre, 2019, para. 6).

However, following on one of the 94 calls to action by the TRC, Nakuset, executive director of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, questions why the Quebec government has not designated

September 30 as an official holiday, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Kestler-D'Amours, 2021). The death of Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman, at the Centre hospitalier de Lanaudière in 2020 while being mocked by medical staff, effectively raises questions about the depth of change and reconciliation Legault is putting in place. The report into her death identifies and condemns systemic racism in health care and her death was discussed amid the wave of anti-racism protests. Yet, Legault's Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) Party continues to refuse to acknowledge that racism against Indigenous Peoples is systemic.

### **Tiohtià:ke (the Island of Montreal)**

Within this multiscalar governance context, to recognise the violence done to Indigenous Peoples and communities, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls for Canadian cities to actively respond to the recognised need for actions. This can be, for instance, through acts of commemoration acknowledging the experiences of residential school survivors (Robinson, 2020). Specifically, TRC call to action No. 79 encourages the commemoration of Indigenous Peoples guided by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and the members of the TRC Survivor Committee. This is done by incorporating traditional oral storytelling, memory practices, history and heritage values into commemoration projects. This endeavour is meant to preserve and present the Indigenous history and presence within urban public spaces in ways that resonate to Indigenous Peoples.

While this is progressively taking place, commemoration occurs in a settler colonial context where Indigenous Peoples continue to be dispossessed from their Land and excluded from urban spaces (Edmonds 2010; Guimont Marceau 2020; Guimont Marceau et al., 2023; Lévesques 2003). As I will discuss in this thesis, Indigenous representations in the city are entangled in a complicated relationship of hypervisibility and invisibility (Guimont Marceau et al., 2023). Even as the City of Montreal recognizes Indigenous Peoples as the original stewards of these Lands (Ville de Montréal, 2019), it still takes a great deal of effort, attention, and knowledge to note and commemorate their presence comprehensively. As I argue in chapter 4, official, visible commemoration of Indigenous people can contribute to a layer of invisibility through the lack of authentic portrayal. This invisibility arises from settler colonial logics that pushed Indigenous Peoples from their Lands, erased them from urban space, and promulgated racist depictions that stem from the white settler gaze. Drawing inspiration from Edmonds' (2010) claim that "(in)visibility" can be used to foreground the question of visibility and speak to the process of invisibilization in the commemoration projects of the City of Montreal.



Hypervisibility could be perceived as being on the other end of the spectrum in terms of representation in the urban landscape. However, hypervisibility is also a symptom of invisibilization as it usually is the result of a few representations of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment. One way hypervisibility is expressed, for instance, is through Indigenous tourism (Carr et al, 2016). An excellent example are the Vieux Montréal souvenir shops that commercialize representations of “indigenous culture”. Stores sell Indigenous-themed objects such as feather headdresses, leather-costumed Native princess dolls (Pocahontas), and miniature carved, wooden totem poles (CBC, 2017). The CBC report clarifies that while these goods are sold as authentic, they are in fact often made in China. Commodification of Indigenous culture includes the sale of ceremonial objects and craftwork, such as dream catchers, by non-Indigenous people. Moreover, this hypervisibility of Indigenous Peoples in Montreal is highly stereotyped for mass culture consumption through biased and racist perceptions. Furthermore, the city’s busy downtown and tourist destinations such as Vieux Montréal do not openly recognise the Indigenous Land they are built on.

Concurrently, the design of Montreal (and cities like it) also directly contributes to the invisibilization of Indigenous lives (Guimont Marceau et al., 2023). Racial profiling of unhoused Indigenous people in Montreal renders these communities both visible and invisible. The broader housing crisis forces Indigenous Peoples to move from Northern regions of Canada into cities like Montreal without safe spaces to inhabit (Curtis, 2021). Indigenous people make up 13 per cent of the unhoused population—more than five times the general population (CBC News, 2023a)—but their needs are not addressed in the same way as non-Indigenous people either by policy makers or media.

For instance, in recent years many unhoused Indigenous people have died after vital services were removed from Montreal’s Cabot Square, a longstanding informal Indigenous meeting place.<sup>3</sup> Another good example is how the City of Montréal installed new benches in Cabot Square marked with the words “REPOS 15 MIN”, telling users to limit their time on the bench to 15 minutes (Riaz, 2021). The time limit deters homeless people from some sedentary respite and sleeping on the benches. After these deaths (and no tangible response from the provincial and municipal governments), a group of Indigenous women began fundraising to inaugurate a semi-permanent shelter in Cabot Square. The activists have also pressured all levels of government to take concrete and urgent action to address this social problem.

## Source of questioning

This thesis analytically situates the City of Montreal's goal to be a metropolis of reconciliation, as articulated in its *2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, within this broader socio-political context of calls for greater respect and application of Indigenous rights and decolonization.

Montreal's *2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation* is articulated around seven strategic objectives which follow:

- 1) develop a government-to-government relationship within City institutions
- 2) improve the visibility of the Indigenous presence in the City of Montréal
- 3) support the urban Indigenous community
- 4) improve the feeling of safety of Indigenous people in Montréal
- 5) support Indigenous cultural development in the urban environment
- 6) support the economic development of Indigenous Peoples in Montréal
- 7) promote the protection of natural spaces and environments based on the 7th Generation Principle.<sup>1</sup>

The second and fifth objectives are specifically relevant to this thesis. To increase Indigenous visibility as prescribed in Objective 2, the City in collaboration with Indigenous communities plans to showcase Indigenous archaeological heritage linked to the island's history as expressed through urban landscape, design and toponymy (Ville de Montréal, 2020). On the fifth objective, the City states:

By recognizing historic ethnocidal violence, especially that stemming from the Indigenous residential schools and the Indian Act, which caused a strangulation of language and cultural transmission mechanisms, and by supporting the renaissance

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<sup>1</sup> The Seventh Generation Principle asks to think seven generations ahead and decide whether the decisions made today would benefit our descendants.

and the practice of Indigenous languages and cultures in Montréal (Ville de Montréal 2020).

Through the lenses of reconciliation and commemoration, and recognizing that Montreal is a settler colonial city, this thesis examines how the municipality's memorialization and commemoration of Indigenous Peoples shape narratives about the relationship between the City of Montreal and Indigenous Peoples on Tiohtià:ke and what this reveals about the place of Indigenous communities on the island.

## **Research Question**

The goal of this thesis is to examine the ways in which the City's memorialization and commemoration of Indigenous Peoples shape narratives about the relationship the municipality has with them, and what this tells us about the place of Indigenous communities on the island. Taking as a premise that commemoration is an intentional act of acknowledging the memory of people, places, events and ideas, and that commemorations are never neutral and often reproduce dynamics of power, a central question guides this research is: What do commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal's narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment? Importantly, this thesis also asks: Has this narrative has evolved through time, and if so, how?

In response to the latter question, I develop the following argument: while recent commemorations mark an evolution from centring urban history of colonizers to focusing on Indigenous Peoples, they nevertheless continue to support a narrative that serves the City of Montreal's legitimacy as settler colonial governing body. The City of Montreal's *2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, I will argue, is an attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity on the island through a set of evasions, or "settler moves to innocence" (Tuck and Yang 2012). In other words, the *Strategy* is another way to make reconciliation palatable to the settler colonial person living in Montreal, recentering whiteness in the pursuit of a so-called strategy to reconcile without concrete actions of decolonization.

## **Outline of thesis**

This thesis begins with a review of the literature (Chapter 1). The first section of the chapter focuses on settler colonialism as a process, how this unfolds across North America, and more specifically in Canada. I then move to Canadian settler colonial cities, followed by Montreal as a settler colonial city. The final section of the literature review addresses Indigenous commemorations in Canada. In Chapter 2, I present my methodology. I start with key concepts, followed by the analytical framework, before moving to methods and finally to research challenges. Chapter 3 presents my empirical results on the City of Montreal's commemorations of Indigenous Peoples. It offers an overview of the Indigenous commemorations found on the island of Montreal. The Chapter separates the data into three types of commemorations: Tangible, Toponymy and Identification which are later explained as categories. This is followed in Chapter 4 by my analysis of these findings in relation to the main research question and theoretical framework. I begin this chapter by explaining four analytical lenses which I then apply to four eras of Montreal's history. The Conclusion (Chapter 5) reiterates the main findings, explores the relevance of this research and outlines potential future research.

## CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines scholarship relating to Montreal as a settler colonial city. Recognising that the term 'settler colonialism' is both a mode of colonialism and an analytical framework, here I review literature on settler colonial processes in North America's urban settings. I later employ settler colonialism as an analytical framework in the next chapter (Chapter 2: Methodology). I begin by looking at scholarly contributions on settler colonialism as a mode of colonialism, and then at contributions examining settler colonialism as a process in North America. Next, I focus on settler colonialism as a process in North American cities, moving on to literature on historical and contemporary settler colonial processes in Montreal. Finally, I close this chapter by examining scholarship writing on commemoration of Indigenous Peoples in urban settings across Canada. It is important to note that this review of the literature reveals a significant gap: no publication, as far as I was able to find, focuses on commemoration of Indigenous Peoples in Montreal. This thesis is therefore an important step in addressing the lacking literature in this field.

### 1.1. Settler Colonialism as Process

Settler colonialism is a system of power perpetuated by settlers who represses indigenous people's rights and cultures by erasing them and replacing them with their own. Under this system, Indigenous people were (and are) dehumanized by paternalistic, racist, oppressive settler state policies (Steinman, 2012). This is an ongoing process. The settler goal is to seize Land and resources, establishing property rights through the settler colonial state in formation. Coulthard (2014) refers to Wolfe's central point that the primary goal of Settler colonialism is, "access to territory" (p.7). Wolfe (1999, 2006) argues that the desire for territory and settler emplacement renders Indigenous Peoples as obstacles and therefore need to be removed. This removal includes not only Indigenous Peoples but also their distinct ways of being and relating to Land. Settlers aggressively displaced Indigenous Peoples, forcing them out of their rich and sustaining territories (CRIAOW, 2021) and onto Reserve Land that could not provide a good quality of life (Todd, 2021). The notions and practices around displacement reveal the historical paradox that liberal democracies were founded using settler colonialism, genocide, and racial exclusion. Within this paradox, settler colonial states are less an achievement and more an example of genocidal destruction (Laczó, 2022). Contradictions, migration, and displacement are at the heart of settler colonial practices (Wolfe, 2006). In settler colonialism, the agenda is to control the Lands to exploit

the natural resources. Therefore, the focus is on the Land rather than in the indigenous labour (which is the case in other type of colonial projects). They displace the original inhabitants by geographical relocation, individual removals, assimilation, or killing (L. Hayes, 2020). Again, we see here how crucial displacement is as a settler colonial tactic. The colonizers don't go home but come to stay. They create their own nation-state to ensure their futurity and permanence. Removals and resource grabs are achieved through various forms of direct and indirect violence, including militarized genocide (Glenn, 2015) and policies making it harder to practise traditional ways of living. Erasure involves killing Indigenous people (Hinton and al. 2014) and/or making their lives impossible – for example by killing the dogs used for transport and hunting (Wachowich, 1999; McComber, 2007) – or by destroying food supply like bison (Taschereau Mamers, 2020).

In some cases, the colony eventually separates from the country of origin, like in the case of the United States of America, Argentina. However, cases like Canada or Australia will have a more nuanced separation as there are still ties with the original settler state: the United Kingdom. Some cases, like Algeria, the colony didn't separate from the colonial entity, and the country eventually, through years of continuous resistance, was able to gain independence. A current example of an ongoing settler colonial entity is Israel's expansion and takeover of Palestine through ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements, demolition of Palestinian structures, daily violence and continued inflammatory rhetoric by the Israeli state (Dana and Jarbawi, 2017).

## **1.2. Settler Colonialism in North America**

While the theory of settler colonialism arose through the work of Australian based scholars such as Wolfe in his *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (1998), focusing on relations between the Australian settler state and the publications of key anthropologists on Indigenous Australians and Lorenzo Veracini's *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (2010). In the latter, Veracini argues that settler colonialism is a resilient formation that rarely ends. Settler colonialism as a process is equally present in the Americas. Mamdani (2015), for instance, argues that the defining institutions of settler colonialism were first produced as technologies of native control in the USA and Canada. This began with the concentration of Indigenous Peoples in tribal homelands, first through US President Andrew Jackson's Trail of Tears and then under the orders of Presidents Lincoln and Grant in the mid-nineteenth century. The US was effectively, according to Mamdani (2015, p.610), the world's first settler colonial state. Indeed, settler colonialism is increasingly placed alongside the legacies of slavery when investigating the roots

of white supremacy as a constituent element of the country's founding (Horne, 2018; Montgomery, 2022).

In *Not "a nation of immigrants": Settler colonialism, white supremacy, and a history of erasure and exclusion*, Dunbar-Ortiz (2021) argues that white nationalism was inscribed in the US as a European settler-colonial expansionist project that relied on racialized slavery and the violent theft of Land from Indigenous Peoples. Dunbar-Ortiz, like Mamdani, recognizes the USA as the first full-fledged settler state in the world. Moreover, she explains, the national narrative misrepresents the process of European colonization of North America, claiming that the US government was mostly benign and benevolent and, importantly, that it was an anticolonial movement that overthrew British colonialism.

Olivier Hubert et Mathieu Paradis (Villeneuve, 2022) look at how in the 1960s, some Quebecois started using the term colonised rather than conquered, which was a way to claim a shared history with the Indigenous Peoples. This narrative serves as to change the position of the French settler from oppressors to oppressed. Dunbar-Ortiz clarifies that the national myth of the US being a 'nation of immigrants' erases the fact that the new settler state spent the next hundred years at war against the Native Nations in conquering the continent.

Dunbar-Ortiz's observations about national myth of immigration – that it was never about immigrants but about elimination and war - recalls Wolfe's point that settler colonialism is a structure not an event, with the end goal being the elimination of the indigenous people. Along these lines, Lytle Hernández (2017), for instance, uses a settler colonial lens to link the conquest of Native California and the incarceration of Mexicans, Chinese, and African Americans. Taking Los Angeles as her empirical case study, she argues that roots of the modern carceral state are embedded in the early processes of settler colonialism. Incarcerating is eliminating. Reséndez (2016), in other line of using the settler colonial framework as process of elimination in North America, highlights that the invisibility of the parallel system of bondage of Native Americans was as vast and degrading as that of African slavery. However, this system of slavery remains largely hidden and poorly understood, both as a phenomenon and as a mode of elimination.



### 1.3. Settler Colonialism in Canada

Like the USA, Canada is deeply entangled in the violence of settler colonialism and the elimination of Indigenous Peoples. For Barker (2009), Canadian society remains driven by the logic of imperialism. Canada continues to pursue colonial action against Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples' claims to Land and self-determination, however, consistently undermine the legitimacy of Canadian authority and hegemony. Simpson clarifies it as follows:

I'm not interested in a multicultural resurgence or an artistic resurgence as a mechanism for inclusion into the Canadian mosaic. I am not interested in a resurgence that continues to replicate anti-queerness and heteropatriarchy. I am not interested in a resurgence that replicates anti Blackness. I am not interested in inclusion. I am not interested in reconciling. I'm interested in unapologetic place-based nationhoods using Indigenous practices and operating in an ethical and principled way from an intact land base (Simpson 2017, p. 50).

Much as the US has the myth of a nation of immigrants, the dominant Canadian myth is one of benevolence. Gebhard and Denis (2022), for instance, examine the helping professions —education, social work, health care and justice — offered to Indigenous communities to argue that “white benevolence” - an attitude that intersects with settler colonial logics and paternalistic racism (p. 1) – to reinforce the colonial propaganda that Indigenous people need saving and to reproduces colonial narratives while upholding white supremacy Woolford (2015) identifies this relationship between so-called benevolence, settler colonial processes and the genocide of Indigenous peoples through the residential schooling system put in place across the country. Woolford argues that the residential schools were the means to eliminate Indigenous communities as obstacles to Land acquisition, resource extraction, and nation building. The added settler colonial goal was to transform Indigenous young into Europeanized colonial subjects.

Indigenous peoples were (and still are) see as the “other” in an all-encompassing group referred to as Indians. Bentley explains that word “Indian” reduces reality and complexities of Native society and culture into a single, all-encompassing binary depiction based upon two prevailing stereotypes: the “bad” Indian and the “noble savage.” This quote, often associated to Duncan Campbell, an extreme assimilationist who ran the Indian residential school system in Canada at its peak between 1913 and 1932, is used as evidence for the claim that the Indian Residential Schools constitute genocide (Facing History & Ourselves Canada, 2020). This is a form of non-encounter assimilation, as exemplified in a quote by Captain Richard Henry Pratt’s “kill the Indian in him and save the man” which describes the philosophy of assimilation (Bentley, 2012). Settler

Canadians have historically looked to governments to ‘fix’ the ‘Indian problem’ (Barker, Rollo, and Lowman, 2016), and many saw residential schools as way to do this. Many Indigenous Leaders, activists and politicians, on the other hand, have publicly called on the Canadian Government to recognize this IRSS as genocide (Raycraft, 2022).

Leanne Simpson (2017)—a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg storyteller, scholar, activist, and member of the Alderville First Nation—emphasizes that settler colonialism in Canada is not limited to the horrors of the past. Colonialism’s complex and overlapping processes maintain expansive dispossession of Indigenous bodies and Lands (2017, p. 45). Contemporary liberal values talk about reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, but never speak of the importance of Land or giving the Land back. She argues for radical resurgence and challenges to current neoliberal discussions and policies of reconciliation. Similarly, Audra Simpson (2014) examines the struggles to articulate and maintain political sovereignty of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, a reserve community on Montreal’s southern shore. The Kahnawà:ke Mohawks are part of the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy and have fought settler colonialism for centuries, insisting on the integrity of Haudenosaunee governance and refusing Canadian citizenship. Simpson clarifies that the Canadian practice of settler governance has visibly regulated its approach to fit with global trends of Indigenous rights and Human Rights. This marks a shift from overt violence to supposedly softer and kinder, caring modes of governing. This is violent governance with a language of care, on land that remains stolen (Simpson, 2023).

#### **1.4. Settler Colonialism in Quebec**

Literature on settler colonialism - colonialisme de peuplement or colonialisme d’occupation – written by Québécois about the process in Quebec is scarcer than literature on settler colonial practices elsewhere in North America. In 2021, the Université de Montréal hosted a workshop entitled “Settler Colonialism in Quebec: a blind spot of academic research?”. The organizers, Catherine Larochelle and Ollivier Hubert, clarified that the aim of the workshop was to survey the state of research in settler colonial studies, which is still in its infancy in Quebec (Villeneuve, 2022). Zishad Lak and Pierre-Luc Landry (2019) hosted a panel on “Settler Colonialism and Quebec and Franco-Canadian Literary Criticism” at the Association for Canadian and Québec Literatures. They concur that the term ‘settler colonialism’ in the Quebec and Canadian context, is very rarely mentioned in French (Francophone) humanities and social sciences. They mention Isabelle St-Amand (2015), Élise Couture-Grondin (2016) and Bruno Cornellier (2015) as being the exception.

Offering an explanation, Benhadjoudja (2022) argues that settler colonialism is largely taboo in mainstream Quebec academia, as it is in Quebec society. For Benhadjoudja, this taboo arises through the narrative, rooted in victimhood and survival, that Quebec is a nation colonized by first the British and then by Canada. The author's point is that the dominance of this narrative makes anti-racist and anti-colonial conversations nearly impossible.

Some literature looks at the topic of settler colonial practices in relation to the ideology of the Quiet Revolution and the nationalist ideology of "Maîtres chez nous" ("masters in our home" or "we are our own masters"). This concept is a response to public sentiments shared by French Québécois who felt like they were treated poorly by the rest of Canada (Peker, 2024), something René Lévesque himself acknowledged during an interview (Desbiens, 2015). Giroux (2020) claims that through this experience of oppression by the English, the Québécois people would (and still do,) relate to Indigenous Peoples and other racialized groups. However, their idea of liberation was to take "their rightful place in the seat of the oppressors". This, according to Dalie Giroux is what prevented the liberation of the Québécois people to be bound up with other marginalized groups. The quest of mastery being at the root of all independence movements, it was not about collective liberation, but rather for the Québécois people to take the place of the oppressors. 'Masters in our home' ignores that Quebec was a 'home' to Indigenous Peoples prior to their nation-building.

Desbiens and Deschamps (2015) conducted research on the cultural, geographical, and political aspects of the 1970s' James Bay mega hydroelectrical complex. They note that the 1970's slogan: « On est Hydro-Québécois », 'We are Hydro-Quebecois' draws together French-Canadian nationalist identity and this mega infrastructure project. As part of this nation-building movement, Hydro-Québec was identified as a project that could help the province gain more independence, power, and authority. The hydroelectric development in the North of the territory came to both reflect and fuel French Canada's aspirations in the South, in Montreal and Quebec City. The slogan helped Quebecois relate to the province's northern territory and to accept the exploitation of its resources (Desbiens, 2013). Hydro-Québec was mandated to take control of all areas with hydroelectric potential, but the new dams came into direct conflict with Indigenous communities because they were being built without any consent from the Innu who lived in and hunted the areas destined for flooding (Cassell, 2013). Nungak (2017) importantly relates that young Inuit and Cree acted when Québec began construction on the James Bay hydro project. Taking the Quebec government to court, they managed to obtain an accord that effectively became Canada's first land-claims agreement.

Along side Desbiens' (2013) in-depth research, Lacourse-Dontigny (2014) argues that *maîtres chez nous* – an essential settler colonial statement – incrementally shifted the relationship with Indigenous Peoples and Québécois people. While there is deliberate erasure and/or negation of the colonial history of 'Québécois land', new settler colonial projects such as Hydro-Québec make the myth of shared victimhood with Indigenous Peoples up for question. McWhinney (2017) demonstrates that nationalist attitudes in Quebec were initially hostile towards their Indigenous counterparts, this changed over time through recognition of Indigenous Peoples as co-colonized by the Canadian state. This shift from aggression to tolerance can be seen through historical moments like the historical moments such as the James Bay Agreement, the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, and the Oka Crisis. No longer were Québécois competing for sovereignty, they now promoted the narrative of a shared reality with First Nations of being colonized by Anglo-Canada. McGowan-Ross (n.d.) explains that Quebec actively compares itself with Indigenous nations along these lines. For instance, in the 1960s, the socialist magazine *Partis Pris* employed 'decolonial theory' to argue that Quebec was a "tribe without its reserve," (McGowan-Ross n.d., p.3) and under constant threat from British and American colonialism.

Leroux (2019) argues that ongoing colonial structures in eastern Canada are producing what he calls new "race-shifting" (from white to Indigenous), or "self-Indigenization" processes as White settlers claim "Indigenous" identity through 'Métis' or biologically mixed heritage, and thus deserve to be considered Indigenous. One of the group's leaders (who changed his last name to Maikan, which means 'wolf' in many Algonquian languages) stated that any second-generation Québécois is an "Aboriginal" (Curtis, 2018) We can see how this idea was one of the pillars of the formation of La Meute, an identarian group created in 2015 by two military veterans. Interestingly, the group uses Indigenous ideologies and symbols in their anti-immigration protests. Blouin (2022) recounts how La Meute even tried to appeal to Indigenous people by using a traditional wolf paw logo and including environmental issues within their militant agenda. These self-indigenizing efforts are used to claim innocence while promoting xenophobic, racist, far-right Québécois nationalist ideologies. The claim to innocence is to remove the responsibility of the violence of white French settler colonialists - after all, they are indigenous, too, in their view - while at the same time attempting to maintain hunting and fishing rights and prevent the repatriation of Land to Indigenous Peoples. In response, the then-Grand Chief of Kanasatake, Serge Otsi Simon, stated that European settlers who eradicated Indigenous identity through violence and Land theft can never appropriate the term "autochtone" (Indigenous) without whitewashing history (Curtis, 2018).

## 1.5. Urban Settler Colonialism / Settler Colonial Urbanism

Scholarship on settler colonialism's relationship with urbanization is relatively new (Hugill 2017). McClintock and Guimont Marceau (2023) argue that there is in fact growing attention to "settler-colonial urbanism". Attached to this, they note, is the perceived risk that this field of research could obscure Indigenous theories and practices. Effectively, Breux and Holden (2023) explain that in comparison to scholarship on the British settler colonies there is little literature on Indigenous realities in cities, even though more than half of Indigenous Peoples in what is known as Canada live in urban centres. Moreover, urban design renders historic and contemporary Indigenous lives and cultures in settler colonial settings invisible. According to Tomiak (2017) 'what is now known as Canada' – and the foundation of the production of urban spaces- can only exist through the historical and ongoing dispossession and displacement of Indigenous Peoples. Even though half of the Indigenous population in Canada lives in urban settings (Guimont Marceau et al., 2023), it can be a challenge to think about cities as Indigenous Land because cities are often seen as separate to Land (Edmonds, 2010). Simpson (2019) explains that centuries of settler colonial processes such as erasure and displacement. have negatively impacted the dynamic between Indigenous Peoples and cities.

Canada, as a country and its early provinces, emerged from an Act of British Parliament in 1867. The 1876 Indian Act aimed to suppress traditional governments, to assimilate First Peoples into the dominant white settler culture and, to this end, methods of erasure were employed. This included prohibitions on the use of their own languages, the practice their culture, and living according to their values and understanding of the good life (Joseph, 2018). Land not only became property, but it also became a way settlers would exclude "others" from a place (Blatman-Thomas and Porter, 2019). The Act was the driving force for the erasure of Indigenous people from and within urban centres, from the landscape to the culture to the people (Peters 2005). One way they were erased was through the reserve system, where Indigenous Peoples were forced out of their traditional Lands and moved onto reserves. Early on, some of these reserves were originally located within urban areas, as was the case in Vancouver and Victoria.

Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, who in 1911 said: "where a reserve is in the vicinity of a growing town, as is the case in several places, it becomes a source of nuisance and an impediment to progress" (quoted in Barman 2007, p.5). Stranger-Ross (2008) demonstrates that the Kitsilano and Musqueam reserves which were originally set up under The Indian Act were later

identified as special cases for dispossession. Indeed, in 1977, the Squamish Nation accused the federal government of failing to protect the Nation (Sterritt, 2019). The reserves were a way for the Canadian government to exclude Indigenous Peoples from cities as well as contain and control them. In 2002, the Nation regained a small section of the earlier reserve, today's Kitsilano Indian Reserve No. 6. On Vancouver Island, the city Victoria transitioned from being a mixed and fluid trading post to a racialized and segregated settler-colonial urban space built through the dispossession, removal, sequestration, and transformation of Indigenous Peoples and their removal off their Land (Edmonds, 2010). Edmonds (2004) identifies economic, legal, and demographic disparities created by the fur trade, treaty making, different terms of engagement with colonial labour systems as factors producing variations in racial and colonial formations in different settler colonial cities.

In "Toronto has no History", Freeman (2010) recounts that in 1884, during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Toronto's incorporation in 1834, citizens celebrated the city's close relations to British colonialism and imperialism. The 1884 commemoration celebrated the founding of the settlement in 1793, seeing its incorporation in 1834 as the city's "founding moment" and marker of the assumed "indigeneity" of settler-immigrants. The deed acquired from the Mississauga in the Toronto Purchase of 1787, on the other is regarded as irrelevant; the important date is when the 1834 Act of Incorporation which conveys Toronto's image as a modern Canadian city. Freeman further notes for the settlers, "The city stood in for the nation as a symbol of its future, and national history stood in for the region's local history...the national is what replaces 'the Indigenous'" (Freeman 2010, p. iii).

In *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities*, Edmonds (2010) argues that frontiers are not only rural, at the edges of occupied spaces, but exist within urban spaces. This is what she calls the colonial frontier, characterized by violence and conflict between settlers and Indigenous Peoples, existing not only in the "bush, backwoods, and borderlands," but also in colonial cities (2010, p. 5).

Porter and Yiftachel (2019) identify processes of urbanization as a distinct activity that literally builds the settler-colonial nation. From the start of settler colonialism, urban settlement was central to the making of European settler-colonial societies. Critically, they argue that urbanization continues to be a primary mechanism controlling the spatial and economic dispossession of colonized peoples. Simpson and Hugill (2022) explain that these three elements of the city – the

movement of commodities, capital, and people – need to be closely managed by settler governance bodies to preserve settler colonial relations in the city and wider territory. In this way, settler colonial urbanism is a policy of spatial management. Moreover, it is a system connected to other sites of global racial capitalist extraction and accumulation.

Importantly, however, cities in settler colonial states are also the site of Indigenous resistance. In what they describe as a palimpsest of colonialism and resistance, Léonard, et al. (2023) argue that for each new layer of colonial enterprises ‘added on’ in the settler city, there are corresponding layers of Indigenous presence and continuous place-making serving as resistance to these processes.

## **1.6. Urban Settler Colonialism in Montreal**

It is important to note that when conducting this literature review, I found few scholarly sources specifically on settler colonialism in Montreal, whether in reference to the municipality or the city more broadly. In the Conclusion (Chapter 5), I return to this important gap in the literature.

Nevertheless, a few key insights emerge from the scholarship on Montreal that I was able to locate. Cowen (2020), for example, argues that in the mid-Nineteenth Century, British elites pressed for the construction of rail across what was to become the Dominion of Canada. Consequently, Montreal became an important link for the transcontinental rail linking British colonies in the East and West. Montreal was remade by the rail networks and became a mustering station for the settlers flowing westward, which allowed for a new network of settler cities established through its construction. As Montreal became the official headquarters of the Canadian railroad, it became a vibrant financial centre linked to London’s financial networks and to capital produced on plantations in the Caribbean. Which illustrates the settler colonial city is part of wider logics of racial capitalism (Hugill and Simpson, 2022).

Writing on the same period, Poulter (2004), in *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land*, argues that new, ‘indigenizing’ identities were imagined and performed by urban Anglophone settler colonists in Victorian Montreal. As they participated in indigenous activities such as snowshoeing and tobogganing, they began to imagine themselves as “sons of the soil,” a new British type of native Canadian. As explained above, early urban settlement shapes the construction of settler colonial identity. Lamoureux (2023) examines how three guidebooks, written in Montreal between 1876

and 1892, contributed to identity construction in a settler-colonial setting. Through these guidebooks, he argues, Anglo-Montrealers laid claim to distinct urban places and instilled in them a sense of progress and modernity that would showcase 'their' city to the world. The ambition was to infuse the city's built environment with historical significance to reflect the new collective identity.

## **1.7. Indigenous Commemorations in Canada**

In this section of the literature review, I examine scholarship on Indigenous Peoples and commemorations across Canada, and specifically in Montreal. Over the past 10 years a growing body of work examines Indigenous commemorations. This is, partly, in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the 79<sup>th</sup> call to action regarding commemoration (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012 p.9). The 79<sup>th</sup> call is to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration through, firstly, representation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis on historic sites and monuments. Secondly, to revise the policies, criteria, and practices to integrate Indigenous histories, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history. And lastly, to develop and implement a national heritage plan to commemorate residential school sites, their histories and legacies, and the contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canada's history.

Indigenous commemorations have been absent from the nations' 'official' historical narrative in the public space (Pentland, 2021). Public mandates such as this call to action are pathways towards potential reconciliation as they seek to transform public memory (Lynch, 2023). The residential schools are a case in point as a chapter of recent history silenced for too long. There are finally more public discussions about the legacy of residential schools and ways to remember and commemorate across the country (Pentland, 2021; Herder, 2022; Korycki, 2023; Lynch, 2023).

Too often, Canadian commemorations emphasize the colonial nation building story at the expense of Indigenous perspectives. Centering and including Indigenous people is necessary in order to deconstruct the dominant settler colonial narrative in the commemorative landscape (Woolner, 2009; Gosse, 2023). Indeed, critical Indigenous commemorations confront us with questions about what it means to be Canadian, what we are commemorating, and what is often excluded from the commemorating landscape (Norris, 2021). At the municipal level, commemorations are part of the urban cultural landscapes shaped by settler colonial practices of racist exclusion (Stanley, 2020).



With limited research on critical Indigenous commemoration in Canada, the review of literature, does not only consider the three types of commemorations (Tangible, Topography and Identity which are explained in the next chapter) that I study in this research. Rather, what does appear are numerous publications relating to resistance and contestations surrounding commemorations of settler colonial leaders such as Sir John A. Macdonald which I address later in Chapter 5.

In the 1980s, in line with multicultural values, English-speaking Canada 'integrated' marginalized groups into national heritage narratives (Harvey, 2000). In fact, official policies and attitudes of multicultural 'tolerance' had the reverse effect of 'integration'. This is because more often than not it reinforced dominant Anglo-Canadian culture while appropriating Indigenous cultures in a role to underpin the main settler colonial culture. This forces Indigenous Peoples into the service of nation-building without fostering genuine respect or self-determination (Mackey, 2005). Freeman (2010) refers to how Chief Samson Green of the Kenhtè:ke Kanyen'kehá:ka community understands politics of recognition. For him, cities commemorate their founding stories, which is essentially honouring British and or French colonialism and imperialism, and this contributes to the erasure of the area's Indigenous past. The commemorations are exemplified celebrations of European future. He adds that commemorations can depict an idealized the Indigenous-settler relation which erases the role of local settlers in the dispossession of Indigenous Nations. In the same article, Freeman also observes that the commemorative celebrations in 1884 of the fiftieth anniversary of Toronto's incorporation turned on the settler-immigrants' assumed indigeneity, in that they were ultimately a celebration of the founding moment that legitimized the settlers as now being native to the area. Koch (2021) argues that indigenous movements in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, influenced by the civil rights movement in the USA, contributed to the deconstruction of old memoria, and national narratives of success. Examining the celebration of Canada's 100-year anniversary of confederation in 1967 and the 1967 Expo in Montreal as empirical case study, he highlights the discrepancy between the Canadian state's idea of "unity in diversity" at the time when the British Empire was disengaging from its former dominions.

In response to the TRC, municipalities are finding ways to revisit Indigenous commemorations and public memory in pursuit of reconciliation. However, settler cities are bound to perpetuate official national narratives of history and identity as they remain stuck in their colonial perspective. Nelson and Godlewska (2022) argue that the next step for public memory is to address settler ignorance by having commemorations that create "productive settler discomfort" and unsettle hegemonic narratives in Canadian cities. One way is to start with consultative processes with

Indigenous Peoples; the more they are involved with the telling of their stories, the more chances these municipalities have in truly changing the commemorative landscape. Parker (2023) mentions that in Nova Scotia there has been an effort to include Indigenous perspectives for commemoration in public spaces. Especially notable is the hiring of Indigenous commemoration professionals, who centre their perspectives in ongoing processes of reclamation of public spaces and toponymy.

Baloy (2015), who has done research on settler colonial spaces in Vancouver, asks us to consider how various forms of displays of indigeneity are experienced by non-Indigenous Peoples as spectacles to be observed possibly as cultural representations of indigeneity as a homogenous a-political concept. This is why it serves the settler state to deface figures like the Anishinaabe person. In Ottawa, a highly controversial monument underwent some changes after over 75 years of generating public debate. A bronze statue an Indigenous figure which infamously knelt at the base of the monument for Samuel de Champlain has been relocated in its original location but not in its original submissive position (Davidson, 2014). It will be in the newly renamed Kìwekì Point Park (previously known as Nepean Point). For a long time, the statue was for many a symbol of Canada's oppression of Indigenous Peoples. In June 1996, a protest took place at this monument to call out the stereotyped depictions of Indigenous Peoples, in this case a scout in a submissive position (Boswell, 2023). Davidson (2014), who studied what she refers to as the social lives of statues in Ottawa, says the Indigenous person in the original monument was dehumanized and reduced to serve as a "totem of an imagined Canadian past". In her opinion the (then) unnamed Anishinaabe person was commemorated as a symbolic casualty of European empires fighting over the stolen Indigenous Lands. The Indigenous figure now holds the name of Kichi Zibi Innini (Great River Man or Ottawa River Man). This is reflective of Quebec's tradition of instrumentalizing First Nations to reinforce commemorative processes in Québécois cities (Létourneau and Nootens 2023).

These commemorative changes involved consultative work with representatives from the two nearest Ottawa-area Indigenous communities, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation near Eganville, Ont. and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg near Maniwaki, Que (Boswell, 2023). While these changes have been made in the physical space, however, the Canadian Government still refers to this monument as the 'Anishinaabe Scout' and claim that the sculpture's intention is to demonstrate how "Aboriginal peoples" helped the explorer navigate the Ottawa River (Government of Canada, 2017).

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology of critically analyzing commemoration of Indigenous presence within the context of wider processes of urban settler colonialism. The chapter establishes the various dimensions of the research design, beginning with explaining key terms used in the research question. Next, I present settler colonialism as an analytical framework, before presenting the methods for answering my research question. Here I include an overview of the City of Montreal as case study, methods for data collection, and my approach to organizing and analyzing the data. I close by discussing limits to this research.

### 2.1. Key Concepts

To respond to the research question - What do commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal's narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment and how, if at all, has it evolved through time? - it is important to first clarify the following terms: Indigenous Peoples; indigeneity; and recognition and reconciliation.

#### 2.1.1. Indigenous Peoples

Considerable debate has been devoted to the question of defining of "indigenous Peoples". The term *Indigenous Peoples* has been referred to in international law (Sarivaara, Maatta, and Uusiautti, 2013) following of the most cited explanations of the concept given by Jose R. Martinez Cobo, the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in his *Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations*.<sup>2</sup> An understanding of the concept of "indigenous and tribal peoples" is contained in article 1 of the 1989 Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, No. 169, adopted by the International Labour Organization. The ILO No. 169

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<sup>2</sup> UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7 and add. 1-4. The conclusions and recommendations of the study, in Addendum 4, are also available as a United Nations sales publication (U.N. Sales No. E.86.XIV.3). The study was launched in 1972 and was completed in 1986, thus making it the most voluminous study of its kind, based on 37 monographs.

convention describes indigenous Peoples as those whose ancestors have lived in the area before the settlement or the formation of the modern state borders.

Cobo sets out the definition as follows:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system (Daes 2008, p.9).

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA were the only four countries – all of them settler colonial – to vote against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 after it was adopted by the UN in 2006. Canada only adhered to the UNDRIP in 2021.

To avoid homogenising all Indigenous Peoples, we need to refer to specific Indigenous nations, and to do so using the name they call themselves, for example Kanien'kehá:ka, instead of Mohawk. Using the term 'Indigenous Peoples' can itself be a form of invisibilization:

Before first contact on Turtle Island, we Native peoples were simply ourselves. We, of course, had identities, the names by which we knew, and still know, ourselves: Hopitu, Oceti Sakowin, Kanien'kehá:ka, Powhatan, Chahta, Anishinaabe, Beothuk. Explorers in search of the East Indies landed on our shores in the 1400s and called us "Indians"—a clear misnomer but one convenient lump to be exploited all the same. They bastardized our names to make them more understandable in their own languages of French and English — Iroquois, Mohawk, Coast Salish, Ojibway (Lefebvre and Elliott, 2022, para. 1).

Another element of debate and discussion is the creation of a binary between White settlers and Indigenous Peoples. Wildcat offers a helpful distinction between *non-Indigenous* and *settler*, with the latter referring "exclusively to populations that propagate settler colonialism" (Wildcat 2015, p. 394). Many Indigenous scholars refer to all non-Indigenous people as settlers due to their inherited position of power and general complacency. However, some scholars bring in a more nuanced connotation to the idea of settler vs non-indigenous. Indeed, what is a settler has been challenged by critical race scholars, such as Day (2018), who point out that the dynamic of Indigeneity and

white settler colonialism is increasingly open to questions of racialized migration. Tuck and Yang (2012) agree, pointing out that settlers are diverse, not just of white European descent, and include people of colour, even from other colonial contexts (Park and Francis, 2023).

### **2.1.2. Indigeneity**

Another key term used throughout this thesis is *indigeneity*. José Martínez Cobo (1986) defines Indigeneity as pertaining to communities and peoples who have ongoing historical connection to the societies preceding colonization, who developed in areas populated by these peoples and consider themselves distinct from other societal structures currently governing in the area. It is crucial to understand the term Indigeneity in its complex and diversified form; there is no singular, uniform Indigenous experience. Therefore, what is considered as part of indigeneity is subjective and requires non-Indigenous Peoples to deconstruct any concept of a monolithic group of Indigenous Peoples. In New Zealand for example, the term indigeneity has a relatively liberal definition that includes all that pertains to Maori culture, language and to the bloodline of Maori people (Sarivaara and al., 2013). Another key aspect of indigeneity is that it cannot be separated from the Land, the history and current politics surrounding the ideas of what it is ‘to be indigenous’ (Waldron, 2003). This again speaks to the idea that the term is specific to Indigenous nations. This term is more relational than ‘Indigenous Peoples’ and remains sensitive to the political challenges, needs, and aspirations of Indigenous groups (Barnard, 2006). Furthermore, it can be used to foreground the “essence” of being Indigenous (Baloy, 2016). However, some geographers consider the term politically and intellectually dangerous, as it may give a false impression of conceptual stability (i.e., not dynamism) (Cameron and al., 2013).

According to Baloy (2015), visible urban Indigeneity sits on a spectrum of spectacles (hyper-visible) to spectres (invisible). Invisibility may stem from the non-material and intangible character of some Indigenous cultural heritage (ICH), which rarely fits easily into western frameworks (Stevens 2017). On the one hand, Canadian government institutions are overwhelmingly materialist and fail to comprehend ICH. On the other, Indigenous communities may also be reluctant to share traditional knowledge and heritage with non-community members, given the historical context of colonialism. The lack of diverse Indigenous commemoration in the urban landscape reflects active decisions not to commemorate Indigenous stories from an Indigenous point of view. Indigeneity in commemoration can therefore become a superficial spectacle when it

is intended for non-Indigenous people (Baloy, 2015). Indigenous visibility in an urban context can thus become a 'holographic Indigeneity,' where Indigenous representations simultaneously create a hyper-visible state and invisible state. Indigeneity figures centrally in this thesis because my research is about the City of Montreal's depictions of Indigenous Peoples and their cultures. It is important to underscore, however, that this thesis is ultimately about the City's evolving understanding of and depictions of indigeneity, not those of the Kanien'kehà:ka, Anishinaabe, Atikamekw, W8abanaki, Innu, Inuit, or other Indigenous people who live here.

### **2.1.3. Recognition and Reconciliation**

Cutcher, Dale and Tyler (2019) point out that commemoration is bound up organizational recognition. Along these lines, the City of Montreal can be regarded as an institution whose politics of recognition sometimes produces commemoration. The City's Recognition Framework states: "Montréal strives to recognize people, property or events that have influenced its past. By awarding recognition, the city promotes its history, heritage, and culture, and strengthens its urban identity" (Ville de Montreal, 2022).

In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard (2007) draws on Frantz Fanon work *Black Skin, White Masks* to address the politics of recognition, arguing that the colonial state uses recognition to serve its purposes. He clarifies that through Fanon's analysis, 'recognition is not posited as a source of freedom and dignity for the colonized, but rather as the field of power through which colonial relations are produced and maintained (Coulthard 2007, p.17). In other words, recognition is a double-edged sword which appears to recognize, liberate, and enable, but that reproduces colonial state power through these acts. Coulthard (2007, p.3), following the work of Richard Day, says that "politics of recognition" is a means by liberal states to "reconcile" Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler state sovereignty through renewed legal and political relationship with, in this case, the Canadian state.

This form of politics of recognition demonstrates that methods of domination are not always as blatantly obvious as displacing Indigenous Peoples onto reserves and controlling all aspects of their lives. Taiaiake Alfred (2005) reminds us that domination is increasingly "invisible" as it lives in the fluid assemblage of politics. In other words, the colonial state – the City of Montreal, for example – continues to oppress Indigenous Peoples in more insidious, diffused ways that are less obvious. One example of this through projects of recognition where the colonial state is the

decisive power which necessarily impacts the ways of portraying First peoples (which is, in this case, the municipal government). By dictating the subjects and means of commemoration, the City remains at the commanding position of defining indigeneity in the space of collective memory (a term I will discuss in detail later).

Conversely, government discourses on reconciliation are often radically disconnected from Indigenous ideals (Guimont Marceau et al., 2023), a key factor is that the settler colonial state is unlikely to voluntarily dismantle itself for the benefit of Indigenous people. By way of example, Coulthard (2014) asserts that the Canadian liberal pluralist state makes an empty promise of recognition and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (see also Simpson 2017). Along these lines, Chrisjohn and Wasacase (2009) call the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) a 'circus'. For these authors, reconciliation is an attempt to revise history around the fiction that Indigenous Peoples and settlers once lived in peace and harmony. Since there is no substance to the Canadian government's recognition processes, Indigenous Peoples now seek to deepen their bonds through shared resentment and tangible action to regain their strengths, cultures, lands, and sovereignties (Coulthard, 2014).

Many scholars critique the idea of reconciliation as a whole and others say it is too early to talk about reconciling when there is still so much to repair in the relationship. Some will say that reconciliation is a part of the process of decolonization (Caldwell, 2020), but it is not decolonization. A post-secondary education sector, BCcampus, talks about this topic in *Indigenization Guide: Decolonization and Reconciliation* (Caldwell, 2020), which states that an actual decolonization process would be recognizable because it would mark a fundamental change in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, bringing an end to the effects of settler colonialism on Indigenous Peoples. Recognition and reconciliation do not do this in and of themselves.

## 2.2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical framework for this thesis draws on Settler Colonialism as an analytical framework that articulates well with a critical urban studies perspective. Settler colonial studies overlap with critical geographers' focus on socio-political structures, Land, space, territory, and power (Velednitsky et al., 2020). Critical geographers examine how racial capitalism underpins colonization and settler colonialism (McClintock, 2018) and position settler colonialism within space (often drawing on Lefebvre's critical theory of *absolute*, *relative*, and *relational* space). Urban space is a condition, medium, and product of social knowledge that reproduces reality (Carlos, 2022). Critical geography provides tools to observe the urban landscape and assess the missing visual presence of indigeneity as ongoing settler colonial oppressive forces continue to erase Indigenous people from the city, leading to the (in)visibilization of indigeneity (Edmonds, 2010; Guimont Marceau et al., 2023). Nevertheless, we need to understand North American cities as Indigenous spaces (McClintock and Guimont Marceau, 2022). Settler colonialism as an analytical framework, as well as insights from critical studies of commemoration, help us to do so.

### 2.2.1. Settler Colonial Analytical Framework

Emerging primarily out of the work of Australian scholars such as Patrick Wolfe (2006) and Lorenzo Veracini (2012) 'settler colonialism' is a theoretical framework emphasising the determination to erase Indigenous Peoples rather than see their subordination (Ostler and Shoemaker, 2019). Wolfe's key argument in *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native* is that settler colonialism is "a structure not an event" (Wolfe 2006, p.388). The concept of settler colonialism investigates how socio-political systems are shaped by ongoing removal and erasure of Indigenous Peoples to take the Land for use by settlers in perpetuity (Hugill 2017; Coulthard 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012; Wolfe 2006).

Settler colonialism and colonialism studies can be confused and understood to be one and the same, but Veracini (2011) reminds us of the importance of understanding the former as distinct from the latter. In both, colonialism and settler colonialism, colonizers arrive and assert their dominance; however, this is where the similarities end. This is an important distinction to make therefore when constructing theory and building new analytical frameworks.



In "Introducing settler colonial studies" (Veracini, 2011) explains that colonialism is an exogenous domination with two fundamental components: an original displacement and ongoing unequal relations. In this 'classic' colonialism (e.g., most colonies in Africa and Asia -- South Africa, Rhodesia, and Algeria are some exceptions), a small group of colonists occupy a land far from the colonial metropolis; they remain a numerical minority, but exercise control over a large Indigenous population (Weaver, 2000). Settler colonialism, on the other hand, is a distinct type of colonialism that functions as invasive settler societies aim to eliminate indigenous populations, and not solely oppress them, with a view to establishing a new distinctive identity and sovereignty. Veracini clarifies that settler colonialism is both a specific mode of domination – where Indigenous communities are targeted for elimination and erasure – and a political idea where migration and displacement are seen as a solution to rising contradictions (Laczó, 2022).

The ideological foundation of settler colonialism is *terra nullius*, the idea of empty land, which legitimized the erasure of Indigenous communities. For example, Wolfe (1999) examines how white settlers justified displacing Australian Aboriginal communities through the mythic principle of *terra nullius*, despite the obvious presence of Indigenous Peoples. Wolfe (2006) further explains how the expropriation of land can lead to genocide due to the tightly knitted relationship between life and land. The desire for land in settler colonial goals is different from colonising projects seeking labour; territory was "settler colonialism's irreducible element" (Wolfe 2006, p. 388).

Along these lines, critical Indigenous studies scholars use Indigenous perspectives on settler colonialism to understand processes of elimination and political struggle. As critical Indigenous theorists show, settler colonialism reiterates the ongoing nature of colonization (Konishi, 2019). Caldwell Wildcat, a member of the Plains Cree, defines elimination as:

[...] a project by settlers to destroy, contain or modify Indigenous societies so that a settler society can build on Indigenous territories, while also seeking to 'erase' or 'extinguish' the status of settlers as colonizers, and without entering a true partnership with Indigenous Peoples (Caldwell Wildcat 2015, p. 394).

Never-ending, intergenerational, low-level trauma stemming from this project results in high morbidity—in other words, a quiet genocide of Indigenous Peoples. The settler colonial project of replacing Indigenous populations is, furthermore, invested in 'settler futurity' (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández ,2013), which Baldwin (2012, p. 173) refers to as the "permanent virtuality" of the settler on stolen Lands. Referring to Baldwin's work, Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández explain that 'futurity' refers to the ways in which the future is rendered knowable

through specific practices. These practices of calculation, imagination, and performance impact the present to prepare for the future. Settler replacement projects are wholly concerned with settler futurity, according to the authors, and "this means the continued and complete eradication of the original inhabitants of contested land" (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013, p.80). From this perspective, the City of Montreal's *Strategy for Reconciliation* will not interrupt settler futurity because it ensures that the settler city continues to be palatable for most of its citizens, which continues to legitimize the settler governance; decolonization (and reconciliation) will thus remain a metaphor.

There is also some critique about the framework of settler colonialism being used mainly for English-speaking societies of predominantly white European settlers. This, according to Goebel (2016), explains why Latin America has rarely been observed under the lens of settler colonialism. Indeed, to delimit this analytical frame to Anglo colonial legacies risks overlooking other important perspectives which would add to the diverse colonial ideologies, such as those of the Spanish imperial world (Dahl, 2023).

### **2.2.2. Commemoration**

Commemorations focus on sites or regular events and are organised, maintained or sponsored by official bodies. This definition is relevant to this research as it examines acts of commemoration as carried out by the City of Montreal as the official governing body. Public commemoration – commemorations conducted by the state or sub-national institutions such as municipalities – emphasizes key people or events in a constructed common narrative, officially demarcating a story we are meant to remember. However, as the saying goes, only the victors get to tell the story; accordingly, urban commemorations reveal the dominant authority's political ideals and perspectives (Marschall, 2009). As such, commemorative settings and practices easily reproduce historical patterns of exclusion and marginalization (Cutcher, Dale and Tyler 2019)

The terms memory, place and identity take a central place in critical geography, as they focus on linkages between people, place, and culture (Drozdowski, De Nardi, and Waterton 2016). Sumartojo (2021) establishes that geographies of commemoration relate to dynamic relationships between place, memory, the state and its histories and people. This brings in the element of power and who gets to decide. The role of memory (both remembering and forgetting) is foregrounded in the social life and political culture of commemoration, but which imaginaries a city puts forth and

which are kept in the background (Rose-Redwood and Al, 2008). Critical geographers thus see commemoration as sites of power and contestation, and of struggles for power over historical narratives.

### **2.2.3. Collective memory**

Commemorations play a role in our social and political lives by contributing to the construction and maintenance of collective memory (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2008). Halbwachs (2020) reminds us that all memory is a social process. Human memory is always selective and operates within a collective, shaped by the various social groups to which we belong – family, community, religious, geographical, and so on. It is now largely accepted that memory is therefore a cultural phenomenon, not an individual faculty (Connerton, 1989). Commemorations construct and express discourses about the past in a material form that reflects social tensions, political realities, and cultural values (Foote and Azaryahu, 2007).

Public memory is communicated through the creation of public memorials, commemorations, the naming of streets, or public art. Such places of memory are also important for social actors and groups seeking to legitimize their identities and public histories (Rose-Redwood et al., 2008). Pierre Nora (1989) refers to all the cultural landmarks, places, practices, and expressions stemming from a common past as complex. These '*lieux de memoire*' exist in three senses: material, symbolic and functional. Geographers then analytically bring together memory and place to understand the production of collective memory and modern identities (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2006).

Collective memory is therefore an important concept when examining commemoration. A single geographical space may contain many different shared, “common” or collective memories, raising the question of *whose* collective memory is being commemorated. Collective memory, nationalism, and symbols are brought together via a social process marked by hierarchy and power to decide what and how to commemorate. Settlers have long produced “common” memories through material commemorations (sometimes including moments featuring Indigenous nations when they support settler commonality), yet in settler colonial spaces such as Montreal, what is deemed “common” in terms of memory, does not usually include Indigenous groups.

#### 2.2.4. Decolonization is not a Metaphor

Park and Francis (2023) note that the terms reconciliation and decolonization are often used interchangeably, whereas Indigenous scholars tend to differentiate between the two. Reconciliation refers to settler colonialist state initiatives to forge a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples without giving up substantive control of Land, while decolonization refers to initiatives that centre Land repatriation and structural change to dismantle settler sovereignty (Coulthard, 2014). This is what Tuck and Yang refer to when they argue that decolonization is not a metaphor: “until stolen Land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism” (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us that decolonization asks for disruption, for unsettling the status quo, and for Land back. Directed at white settlers, it is meant to spur a critical reflection that should leave those of us who are white settlers feeling uncomfortable and unsettled. The call for action is a call for change in public policies and the way governments think about and respond to requests from Indigenous Peoples. The authors critique how the message behind some calls for decolonization is about different social justice issues, leaving aside the thornier question of returning Land. Instead of addressing the request by Indigenous communities across Canada to return their Land, it is easier to address other topics such as consultation in government processes, recognition, reconciliation, or access to education and health services.

While these are important issues, the point is that they do not fundamentally alter settler colonialism. In fact, they dilute the concrete radical message behind decolonization which is about “the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (Tuck and Yang 2012). The only way for Indigenous communities to be able to practice their ways of life is through the Land, as context and as a process (Simpson, 2019).

Tuck and Yang (2012) call out the different ways that white settlers tend to react to calls for decolonization to assuage what they call “settler guilt”. They call it ‘moves towards innocence’ and identified six different possible ‘moves’ or strategies. These are strategies that settlers use to “relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up Land or power or privilege” (Tuck and Yang 2012, p.10). These include: *settler nativism*, where settlers claim to have a long-lost indigenous or chattel slave ancestor/ancestry; *settler adoption fantasies* where, for example, white men “go native” by adopting indigenous practices or “being adopted” into indigenous

family/community; *colonial equivocation*, where settlers describe various movements anti-oppression/anti-capitalist violence as decolonization; *decolonize/free your mind* and the rest will follow; *A(s)t(e)risk peoples*, where indigenous Peoples are either represented as “at risk” or as a \* in a large public data set; and *Re-occupation and urban homesteading*, where eco-activism/naturalism continue to reflect a colonial worldview (whereas actual decolonization would eliminate settler property rights and settler sovereignty).

These six moves towards innocence represent settler fantasies of ways to move around without addressing what decolonization entails (Tuck and Yang, 2012). The authors describe these moves towards innocence as easier paths to reconciliation that include objectives and plans that are easily digestible for white settlers. There is a form of anxiety attached to settler guilt, and this results in a premature attempt at reconciliation (Tuck and Yang 2012). Because of the strong desire to move towards innocence, settlers and the settler state will make all sorts of attempts to reconcile while ignoring many core requests, such as Land back, from Indigenous Peoples.

In conclusion, the analytical framework elaborated above identifies Settler Colonialism as the leading an analytical framework to be used to frame my research and answer my research question: What do commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal’s narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment? Importantly, this thesis also asks: Has this narrative has evolved through time, and if so, how? Importantly, I employ this framework within a critical urban studies perspective. Equally, I draw on critical geography tools to observe the urban landscape and assess the missing visual presence of indigeneity as ongoing settler colonial oppressive forces continue to erase Indigenous people from the city, leading to the (in)visibilization of indigeneity. The concepts of collective memory, commemoration and decolonization is not a metaphor complete the framework employed in this thesis.

## **2.3. METHODS**

### **2.3.1. Choice of a Case Study**

This thesis research involves a qualitative approach to study a single phenomenon in-depth -- commemoration -- and to study and understand Montreal as a particular place. This is a case-study approach to understand the City of Montreal's commemorative efforts and the resulting construction of a particular settler landscape of indigeneity. Commemoration, along with Montreal's distinctive geography, colonial history, and political characteristics, offer the opportunity to critically examine the relationship between municipal governing bodies (as state actors) and Indigenous Peoples in a Canadian settler colonial city. Drawing on the analytical framework described above -- of settler colonialism, commemoration and collective memory, settler futurity and settler moves to innocence -- I analyze three types of commemoration: tangible commemorations, toponymy, and identity. Along these lines, this case study draws inspiration from critical urban theory, as it emphasizes urban space as socially contested and ideologically influenced. As Brenner (2012) explains, urban space is politically and ideologically mediated, it is socially contested and it is therefore changeable through ongoing (re)construction as a site, medium and outcome of historically specific relations of social power. It is from this perspective that I consider Montreal and the city's Indigenous commemorations.

### **2.3.2. Inductive method**

This research employs an inductive method as there was little to no existing literature on the commemorations of Indigenous Peoples in Montreal written from a critical urban studies perspective. An inductive research method allowed me to identify patterns and develop theories based on my specific case study of the City's Indigenous-related commemorations in Tiohtiá:ke. As I describe below, the initial collection of data came from researching various governmental databases, especially those belonging to the City of Montreal. From there, I was able to gain an overview of what cataloguing of commemorations existed to date. This, in turn, guided my methods of data collection both online and in the field. Based on my findings, I was able to observe patterns that I used to classify and organize my data using the City of Montreal's recognition tools (described below). I was then able to categorize it in such a way that allowed me to identify four distinct historical eras and four analytical categories to guide my analysis. It is important to

understand how Indigenous Peoples have been commemorated in Montreal through time. This is done by using a diachronic analysis that entails looking at the evolution in ways of recognizing Indigenous Peoples, types of commemorations and the narratives that surrounded them directly or indirectly. In the early stages of my research, I was interested in looking at the commemorations from a perspective of recognition and reconciliation politics. While looking at older symbolic commemorations that depict Indigenous Peoples, it was evident that more recent Indigenous recognitions had been commemorated differently. The symbolism and the narrative of the new commemorations shows significant difference with monuments that refer to Indigenous Peoples as 'primitive' 'native' or 'savages'. I then was able to bring these four analytical categories into conversation with my theoretical framework.

### **2.3.3. Data Collection: Definition of Terms**

In 2022, the City came out with a Recognition framework (Division du patrimoine de la Ville de Montréal, 2022) as an inclusive, neutral and innovative tool to frame the gestures of recognition. As mentioned in Section 2.3.2 above, the City of Montreal's Recognition Framework includes five tools it uses to promote heritage, identity, and values: commemorative ceremony, tangible commemoration, toponymy, identification, and citation. As the outcomes are different forms of commemorations, these five tools play an important role in the processes in the politics of recognition in the City. The City of Montreal's Heritage and History department developed these recognition tools based on a recognition framework, which is explained on the City's website. It states that Montréal "strives to recognize people, property or events that have influence its past [and that] by awarding recognition, the city promotes its history, heritage and culture, and strengthens its urban identity" (Ville de Montréal, 2022). In a separate, francophone document, the City explains the recognition framework for those who wish to propose a subject for recognition.

Initially, I contacted Montreal's Commissioner of Indigenous Affairs at the time, Marie-Ève Bordeleau, to ask whether there was a catalogue of Indigenous commemorations listed with the City. She told me that her team was working on creating one but that no such extensive resource existed yet. However, there was a catalogue of Indigenous toponymy which could be accessed via the City of Montreal's website. To begin, I categorize the types of commemorations using the City's Recognition tools. As my research is only interested in permanent visual commemorations,

I ultimately use only three out of the five categories: tangible commemoration, toponymy, and Identification.

In the following section, I explain three out of five recognition tools that I used to categorize my data. For each of the three tools, I present the City of Montreal's discourse as well as how these three distinct types of commemorations are described in critical geography and critical commemoration studies. This will be followed by a critical analysis from a range of scholars. The goal here is to both recognize the ways that the City applies its methodologies through policy as well as to open the term for critical analytical thinking, essentially to unpack the concept in line with the research objectives of this study.

### *Tangible commemoration*

In its Recognition framework document, the City of Montreal defines tangible commemorations (*commemoration matérielle*) as permanent recognitions that are integrated into the city's built environment. The location of the commemoration is evaluated to ensure an appropriate setting based on current and history of the neighbourhood and/or specific site. The distribution of commemorations across the island of Montreal is also considered while making decisions for new commemorations. The type of material used is also evaluated to ensure coherence with what is being commemorated and the environment around it. The aim of these tangible commemorations is to recall facts, deceased persons or significant cultural practices using monuments, plaques, and physical markers on public property. Municipal actions to commemorate tangible heritage represent an important responsibility, since they leave a lasting mark on the territory. Where appropriate, they become part of the City of Montreal's public art collection as soon as they are installed. The various forms of intervention must therefore remain relevant and stand the test of time (Ville de Montréal, 2022).

Above is the City's way of defining tangible commemorations and the parameters and processes in place for the creation of new ones. What this perspective lacks, from a critical geographic perspective, are the power-dynamics at play. These materialized tangible commemorations are emplaced throughout the urban landscape as sites of memories that have been materialized. They are made by and are a part of the collective memory, discourse, and social interpretation of the past (Schein, 1997). Leclerc and Pires (2003) see tangible commemorations as necessary symbols for communities to have their collective memories anchored in the cityscape. Important to note that this means they are not neutral, they are produced by the dominant discourse of a



certain time. This serves the purpose of expressing a version of history and in turn legitimizes this specific version (Dwyer and Alderman, 2008). The interpretation by the social is of course embedded with racism, classism, misogyny, eurocentrism, settler colonialism and more which will inevitably impact what and how these tangible commemorations come to be.

Critical geographers will also question whether tangible commemorations are appropriate. For example, Canevaro (2019) draws inspiration from the way Homer (from ancient Greece) spoke about material commemorations. He found them to be a limited expression of memories, inferior to oral traditions or poetry which offer a more vibrant and comprehensive possibility to recognize and honour histories. Tangible commemorations are in fact a specific way and point of view in telling a story that is crystallised, making it more rigid and harder to stand the test of time (which is what the City claims it can do). For figures like the enslaved Marie-Joseph Angélique, who was accused of and executed for arson in Montreal in 1734 (Cooper, 2015), tangible commemoration can amount to another form of captivity, as Délice Mugabo (2023) asserts in her examination of Angélique's story. Emerging from a neoliberal politics of recognition and mode of governing, commemoration, she argues, is meant to address complex issues of historic erasure. Only certain versions of stories are made visible, however. Moreover, a tangible commemoration of an enslaved woman who tried to flee more than once is ultimately to capture her once again and to fix her in a space that she never wanted to be in.

### *Toponymy*

According to the City of Montreal, toponymy "expresses aspects of our culture and is part of our collective heritage" (Ville de Montréal, 2022). It is a practise that has been used for centuries and today it is the city council in collaboration with the boroughs that are responsible for place-naming. As part of a commemorative process and a habitual form of territorial marking, toponymy involves naming public places like streets or parks after a person, a group of persons, or a historical event that will have durability (Leclerc and Pires, 2003). From a critical toponymy perspective, place naming can also produce a form a linguistic settlement that produces settler places (Berg and Kearns, 2009).

Montreal states that in each era, the names given are the product of choices that correspond to the values at the time. In addition to orienting us in the city, the richness of toponymy lies in its ability to provide us with information the history and its unfolding. The name is then appropriated

by citizens throughout time. It is based on this knowledge, considering the various functions of toponymy and its fundamental principles, that the City intervenes in this rich and complex corpus.

The City places considerable emphasis on the durability of the name; much like the tangible commemorations, a name needs to be able to withstand generations. In terms of location, while it is preferable to assign a name to the most relevant borough, it can be difficult to associate, for example, a name of national interest with a particular borough. Not all decisions can therefore be based on local ties.

Critical toponymy examines the politics of place naming (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010), which are often implicated in the production of a racialized, gendered, and commodified landscape (Boyd 2000; Alderman 2008; Rose-Redwood 2008; Redwood et al. 2010) and provides important critical insights into Montreal's naming practices. The way Montreal presents toponymy is seemingly neutral in its process and result. It talks about history as though there is one universally accepted truth. This goes to show how Montreal still presents the idea that the narrative it presents is the only source of reality, past and present. However, place-naming is seen as inherently part of settler colonial processes where colonial powers use place naming to erase Indigenous stories and culture. Theft is integral to the settler colonial agenda; spaces are claimed to negate Indigenous ties and 'invent' new spaces of colonial possession (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010).

The settler state takes control of the process of place-naming to legitimize their claim over the Land. This takes the form of imposing new names on places with existing Indigenous names and histories. But in some cases, settler states will even appropriate Indigenous languages to use according to their own toponymic rationale (Herman, 1999; Grounds, 2001). By taking control of toponymy, the settler state erases Indigenous stories and other cultural and geographic references. In this way, it serves as a tactic supporting Land theft. It erases Indigenous ties to the Land from the dominant settler discourse. By putting in place European names -- first French, and later, English -- Montreal was able to create narratives of its own homeland-building that was and still is situated within the white settler colonial logic of place (Mugabo, 2023).

There is also a phenomenon referred to as "toponymic cleansing" that arises in reaction to colonial place-naming. This is where names imposed by a colonial force and are 'foreign' to the land are removed to bolster nationalist projects (Azaryahu and Golan, 2001). This happened, for example, in countries on the African continent after they gained their independence. From a postcolonial perspective, toponymic cleansing is seen as a method to reclaim pre-colonial place names (Yeoh,

1996). Alderman and Inwood (2017) describe this phenomenon in the United States from a spatial justice framework, where they see renaming as part of method of the (re)appropriation and production of urban space to reflect a certain community, but they also point to the limitations of such a process, as marginalized are often unable to participate fully in these renaming processes within the very (often local) governmental systems that oppress them. In the context of Montreal, the use of Indigenous words in more recent toponymic commemorations cannot be seen as toponymic cleansing as the settler state is still the governing power. While there has indeed been an increase in Indigenous visibility in the urban landscape, it is a process that operates via the settler state.

Montreal claims to be a metropolis of reconciliation and has increased the involvement of members of Indigenous communities on committees charged with decision-making power over toponymy. The involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the place-naming processes permits a more authentic and meaningful use of Indigenous words and their cultural references. Indigenous presence can be made more visible by inscribing it into toponymy and public spaces (Native Montreal 2017). However, some academics caution that counter-toponymy and commemorative place-naming may simply transform marginalized groups into symbols of national redemption to ease white guilt (Mugabo 2023). This is why it is important to remain critical of this type of commemorative process. It is a limited and controlled way to address issues of centennial erasure, as the settler state continues to have the final say on toponymic procedures.

### *Identification*

The City of Montreal developed identification recognition, a category for intangible heritage, following the passage of Quebec's Cultural Heritage Act in 2012. This new provincial law provided municipalities power to designate elements of intangible heritage. Identification commemorations formally recognize knowledge, expression and practices handed down from generation to generation and constantly recreated. It also includes commemorations of a deceased historical person, an event, or a historical place to encourage the knowledge, recognition, and transmission of such key heritage components. These types of commemorations are designed to help Montrealers identify with their city (Leclerc, 2010).

The category of Identification is what is deemed worthy of legacy but serves as an alternative form of recognition for requests of tangible commemorations or toponymy received by the city. To be considered by the City, the identification recognition in question needs to be of a remarkable

element of intangible heritage pertaining to Montreal's identity or history. It must also be of interest to the city. Finally, the project needs to present itself in conditions that would be conducive to its transmission to the public; in other words, it must not be a polarizing subject and, again, must stand the test of time.

In the critical geographic literature, intangible or immaterial commemorations tend to be associated with heritage rather than with commemoration or recognition. Identification commemorations are often referred to as part of traditions, knowledge, and culture. Park (2011) mentions the importance of shared national memory as a form of intangible heritage to reaffirm ethnic and cultural affinities. This type of commemoration would then hold a lot of importance and benefit for Indigenous Peoples who feel disconnected to their cultures in urban settings like Montreal due to the purposeful erasure of Indigenous belonging (Porter, 2020). According to Gandhi and Freestone (2008) international awareness of practices and policies surrounding indigenous commemorations has evolved, but these changes have had negligible impact on settler colonial societies. Cities are integral spaces for heritage commemoration, but practices remain rooted in colonial values and ideas.

For this category of recognition, I bring into the discussion the work of archeologists who claim that their discipline looks at the nature of what is material and how it gives us insight into the cultures set in the past but that explain our present day. According to them, archeological elements are key contributors to the study of heritage. To them, "heritage is inevitably more intangible a phenomenon than tangible, and yet that its intangibility needs to attach to something tangible in order to exist at all" (Carman, 2009). In the context of Montreal as a settler-city, it is important to look at archaeology as it looks at Indigenous presence that long pre-dates the settler state. Archaeological sites are spaces of memories of objects and memories of activities which are rich of knowledge that merit recognition.

#### **2.3.4. Data collection: Tangible Commemoration**

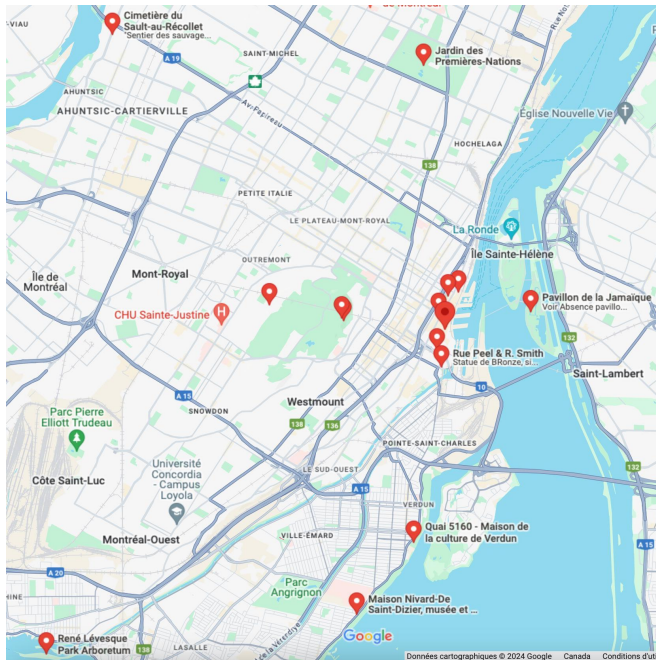
For the tangible commemorations category, as well as for the Identification category, I had to initially see what governmental websites have databases that might list commemorations. I started by browsing various websites to understand what resources existed. I undertook a document analysis of public policy documents, media sources, and academic sources. I also consulted existing governmental (federal, provincial, and municipal) databases for plaques, statues,

monuments, archaeological sites, and public art. A first website to consult is the *Répertoire culturel du patrimoine du Québec* which does not use the same categories as the City of Montreal's recognition tools. Only two categories from their advanced search correspond to my research: *patrimoine mobilier* and *plaques commémoratives*. I was able to select the authority of said commemoration as the City of Montreal. The equivalent at the Federal level is the Canadian Heritage website for public art and monuments. The use of these federal and provincial sites was helpful as they refer to heritage sites and list the authority as the City of Montreal. This was a criterion of selection, the tangible commemorations needed to have a clear indication that they were owned by the City of Montreal.

Another source for tangible commemorations is the Art Public Montréal catalogue which is managed by the City of Montreal. The site has a search bar, but the only indexing is based on the artwork's material rather than grouped or catalogued by subject or theme. By typing in 'autochtones' or 'Indigenous,' for example, only two results came up. Searching for all Indigenous related artwork was therefore very labour-intensive as I had to go through all the art listed on the website. Once I found an art piece that related to Indigenous people in the title or description, the second step was to ensure it was owned by the City of Montreal. Thankfully that information can be found on each page of the artwork. I then added each result to a document grouping all tangible commemorations together.

I also verified federal heritage websites to see if any commemorations owned by the city could be found there, but no commemorations resulted from that search. Finally, on a few occasions, I was able to find commemorations by searching for information on other commemorations in the grey literature; delving into the research of each commemoration revealed other commemorations that had not been registered in the governmental websites but that were relevant to my thesis research. In total, I was able to find thirteen tangible commemorations that fit my criteria. These multi-sourced research methods allowed me to situate various commemorations in time and space. The lack of a catalogued list of different types of commemorations, meant I needed to find the information from a variety of website, some from governmental websites (at all three levels) and some through various website of museums, attractions, tourist, neighbourhood, arts and more. They also provided some contextualizing information which did not always appear near or on the commemoration itself.

Next, I used the list of commemorations to create a map indicating the location of each commemoration. See **Figure 2.1** below:



**Figure 2.1 Tangible Commemorations identified on Island of Montreal**

Source: Clara Cobbett Labonté

This map identified where I could visit Tangible commemoration in person, gather data and take pictures. The aim of this field work was to see if any additional information could be found in situ. In some cases, there were things written that was not presented on the websites, or the geographical context provided additional information that could help me interpret the commemoration. In all, in situ visits allowed for a more comprehensive collection of data on each individual tangible commemoration.

### 2.3.5. Data Collection: Toponymy

Data collection for toponymic commemoration is very straightforward since the City of Montreal already maintains an "autochtone" index within their online catalogue of the City's toponymy. For this category of commemoration, each placename has an explanation, a date of designation and the district in which it is located. This information is in an Excel document. The City has a total of forty-five toponymies classified under *autochtone*. One of these, however, had no explanation of

how it was related to Indigenous Peoples. I therefore excluded it from my dataset, leaving me with a list of 44 toponymies in total. There are seven toponymies that do not have a date of designation and one that only specifies that it predates 1683. While I have included these figures within my dataset, they are not part of my data analysis as they likely predate the founding of Montreal.

### **2.3.6. Data Collection: Identification Commemorations**

Identification commemorations are based on the City of Montreal's description of this category. The data for these was collected in the same manner as the tangible commemorations but related either to a physical site or what could be described as a cultural experience. Only three commemorations corresponded to these criteria.

### **2.3.7. Organising and Analyzing the Data**

To better understand the data collected and to place it within a specific historical and socio-political context, I created the table below, which allowed me to identify the four different eras of analysis elaborated in Chapters 3 and 4. By organizing the data into this table, I was able to see whether certain types of commemoration tended to be produced during a period, and if particular commemorative themes predominated under a particular head of state. All commemorations were grouped in chronological order, with the type of commemoration and the head of the political party in power at each of the three main levels of government. For analytical purposes, Montreal's history was divided according to four distinct political leaders. This allowed me to examine the evolution of ways Indigenous Peoples were commemorated through the City's history. This analytical framework afforded a way to examine and understand the evolving political and social climates of each period and how these shaped processes of commemoration. This being said, I recognize that this division can create a disconnect and an illusion of separation in the City's history. Of course, I recognize the impact of different social climates is not restricted to certain dates and the result of a certain commemoration may have come from many years prior to its inauguration.

**Table 2.1: Indigenous commemorations in context of the political parties in power at the three levels of governments in Canada, Quebec, and City of Montreal**

Commemoration	Date	Type	Prime minister and party - Federal	Prime Minister and party - Provincial	Mayor - Municipal
Rue de Canseau (Saint-Léonard)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Rue de Gaspésie (Saint-Léonard)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Rue Hochelaga (Ville-Marie and Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Rue de Magog (LaSalle)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Parc de Mohawk (LaSalle)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Rue d'Oka (LaSalle)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Rue du Saguenay (Saint-Léonard)	n.d.	Toponymy	-	-	-
Ruelle Chagouamigon (Ville-Marie)	> 1683	Toponymy	-	-	-
Monument à Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve	1895	Tangible	Mackenzie Bowell (Conservative)	Louis-Olivier Taillon (Conservateur)	Joseph-Octave Villeneuve
Rue du Fort-Lorette (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	1925	Toponymy	William Lyon Mackenzie King (Liberal)	Louis-Alexandre Taschereau (liberal)	Charles Duquette
Parc Hochelaga (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	1930	Toponymy	Richard Bedford-Bennett (Conservative)		Camillien Houde (Conservateur)
Maisonneuve érige une croix sur la montagne (and more)	1931	Tangible			
Art Dec Central Pavilion of Montreal Botanical Gardens	1933	Tangible			Fernand Rinfret (Parti libéral du Canada)
Parc Ahuntsic (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	1948	Toponymy	Louis St-Laurent (Liberal)	Maurice Duplessis (Union National)	Camillien Houde (Parti Conservateur)
Rue de Biloxi (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	1950	Toponymy			



Rue de Mobile (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	1950	Toponymy				
Deux murales	1956	Tangible			Jean Drapeau (Parti civique)	
Avenue Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	1956	Toponymy				
Place Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	1956	Toponymy				
Rue de Matane (LaSalle)	1959	Toponymy	John Diefenbaker (Conservative)	Paul Sauvé (Union nationale)	Sarto Fournier (Parti libéral du Canada)	
Rue de Cabano (LaSalle)	1960	Toponymy		Jean Lesage (Libéral)		
Rue Pontiac (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1961	Toponymy				Jean Drapeau (Parti civique)
Rue Saraguay (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1961	Toponymy				
Rue Donnacona (Ville-Marie)	1962	Toponymy				
Rue Riel (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1962	Toponymy				
Terrasse Sagamo (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	1966	Toponymy		Lester B. Pearson (Liberal)		
Rue de Saguenay (LaSalle)	1966	Toponymy				
Kwakiutl	1967	Tangible	Johnson (Union Nationale)			
Rue Oka (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1975	Toponymy	Pierre Elliott Trudeau (Liberal)	Robert Bourassa (Libéral)		
Parc Régional du Bois-de-Saraguay (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	1984	Toponymy	John Turner (Liberal)	René Lévesque (Parti Québécois)		
Chemin des Iroquois (Lachine)	1986	Toponymy	Brian Mulroney (Conservative)	Robert Bourassa (Libéral)		
Rue Panis-Charles (Rivière-des-Prairies-Pointe-aux-Trembles)	1987	Toponymy				Jean Dore (Rassemblement des citoyens de Montréal)
Cheval à plume	1988	Tangible				

Site archéologique de la Chapelle-Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours	1996	Identification	Jean Chretien (Liberal)	Lucien Bouchard (Parti Québécois)	Pierre Bourque (Vision Montréal)
Plaque du Belvédère Kondiaronk	1997	Tangible			
Belvédère de Kondiaronk (Ville-Marie)	1997	Toponymy			
Signatures of La Grande Paix de Montréal	2001	Tangible		Bernard Landry (Parti Québécois)	
Place de la Grande Paix-de-Montréal (Ville-Marie)	2001	Toponymy			
First Nations Garden	2001	Identification			
Parc Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	2007	Toponymy	Stephen Harper (Conservative)	Jean Charest (Libéral)	Gerald Tremblay (Union Montréal)
Rue Myra-Cree (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	2008	Toponymy			
Parc du Quai-de-la-Tortue (Verdun)	2011	Toponymy			
Belvédère du Chemin-qui-Marche (Ville-Marie)	2012	Toponymy			
Rue du Chinook (Saint-Laurent)	2012	Toponymy			
Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier	2012	Identification			
The White Pine - Montreal City's flag	2017	Tangible	Justin Trudeau (Liberal)	Philippe Couillard (Libéral)	Denis Coderre (Équipe Denis Coderre pour Montréal)
Archeologies	2017	Tangible			
Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne (Côte-de-Neige-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce & Outremont)	2017	Toponymy			
L'étreinte des temps	2018	Tangible		François Legault (CAQ)	Valerie Plante (Projet Montréal)
Dans l'attente...While	2019	Tangible			

waiting					
Rue Atateken (Ville-Marie)	2019	Toponymy			
Avenue Skaniatarati (Lachine)	2019	Toponymy			
Sentier Tetewaiánón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh (Ahuntisic-Cartierville)	2020	Toponymy			
Centre Sanaaq (Ville-Marie)	2020	Toponymy			
Tsi niion kwarihò:ten (Our Ways: Peel's Trail)	2023	Tangible			

There is an important caveat regarding this table and time periods associated with each commemoration. The data reflect the official inauguration dates of the commemorations. I recognize, however, that there are necessary political and administrative processes leading to the moment of commemoration. In other words, there is a delay between the time that a commemorative project is conceived and the time of its inauguration. Therefore, if a commemoration was inaugurated at the start of a political leader's time in office, it is possible (even likely) that the process was initiated under a previous leader. This was the case for Rue Atateken, for example. The process initially started under Mayor Denis Coderre, who first removed the name Amherst during his leadership. It was then under Valérie Plante's tenure as mayor that the street was renamed Atateken. Such processes vary in time and may take longer when consultative processes, particularly those involving Indigenous Peoples, are in place.

## 2.4. Research challenges

Unfortunately, there is no single centralized or consolidated list of Montreal's various commemorations. The only existing catalogue is for toponymy which can be searched by theme. This gave me the option to extract all toponyms that the City of Montreal considers to be related to Indigenous Peoples. However, even using this tool, I found that some toponyms had no explanation of a certain name's relation to Indigenous cultures. Other names had very vague links to Indigeneity. For the other two types of commemorations, tangible and identification, it was impossible to ensure a comprehensive list of all municipal commemorations.

Another challenge was determining what should be considered a municipal commemoration, as it was not always clear how the commemoration came to be. I therefore only included commemorations that are currently owned by the City of Montreal, as this was information that could be found on sites like Art Public and Patrimoine culturel du Québec. As the City of Montreal's website on public art only groups the Municipal Art Collection by physical location and by material, it was impossible to search by theme. Since the art is not thematically categorized, websites proved unhelpful in understanding the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the City. Therefore, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, I had to go through each item myself determine via the title or description whether it was an Indigenous commemoration. The site of Art Public offers varying degrees of information about each item which means that some information needs to be sourced elsewhere to obtain more background about each commemoration and its surrounding narrative. A lot of Indigenous art was not considered in this research as they are not owned by the City and therefore cannot be considered as a municipal commemoration. A few of the tangible commemorations were purchased by the City after being created, further blurring the lines around what should be considered a municipal commemoration, and whether to be considered as such, it needs to have been commissioned by the City from the outset. However, I chose to consider all public art purchased by the City as formal commemorations. Such works of art are currently owned by the city, and through that act of purchase, the City made them formal municipal recognitions.

Lastly, commemoration processes are rapidly changing, in line with the City's goal to become a "city of reconciliation." New commemorations were added (and removed) over the course of this research, posing an additional challenge to identifying which data to use.

Lastly, I need to mention my positionality as a non-Indigenous, White settler with embedded settler colonial biases. I also chose to focus my research on commemorations put in place or owned by the City of Montreal as I did not feel like I had authority or the necessary insight to comment or research Indigenous ways of commemorating across the Island. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there are many forms and ways and types of commemorations that may exist that fall outside of this research. I am therefore cautious and aware about the potential of my research to efface Indigenous perspectives on the role and impact of municipal commemoration.

## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS – MUNICIPAL COMMEMORATIONS OF INDIGENEITY

Within the intricacies of Indigenous-settler relations, I examined the commemorations and the existing narratives surrounding them to better understand the City of Montreal’s recognition of Indigenous nations. This chapter unveils the findings derived from my exploration of three different forms of commemorations across the city of Montreal: Tangible commemorations, toponymic commemorations and identification commemorations. These findings allow me to examine the unilateral relation from the perspective of the dominant settler state, towards the Indigenous Peoples over the years.

### 3.1. Tangible Commemorations

As a reminder, tangible commemorations are permanent recognitions integrated into the urban environment (Ville de Montréal, 2022). According to the City, this category commemorates significant events, people, or cultural practices using monuments, commemorative plaques, and other physical markers in the public domain. Table 4.1 lists all the tangible commemorations sampled in this project.

**Table 3.1: Tangible commemorations with ties to Indigenous Peoples on the Island of Montreal<sup>3</sup>**

Number	Name	Form of Commemoration	Authority	Made by	Location	Date
3.1.1	Monument à Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve	Monument	City of Montreal	Louis-Philippe Hébert	Place d’Armes	1895
3.1.2	Maisonneuve érige une croix sur la montagne (and more)	Painting	City of Montreal	Robert Pilot	Mount-Royal Chalet	1931
3.1.3	Art Dec Central Pavilion of Montreal Botanical Gardens	Mural art	City of Montreal	Not found	Botanical Garden’s main building	~1933

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<sup>3</sup> Information sourced from the City of Montreal’s websites and the Patrimoine Culturel du Québec

3.1.4	Deux murales	Mural paintings	City of Montreal	Robert La Palme	Botanical Garden's main restaurant	1956
3.1.5	Kwakiutl	Totem	City of Montreal	Henry Hunt and his son	Parc Jean-Drapeau	1967
3.1.6	Cheval à plume	Sculpture	City of Montreal	Miroslav Frederik Maler	Parc René-Lévesque	1988
3.1.7	Plaque du Belvédère Kondiaronk	Plaque	City of Montreal	Not found	Belvedere Kondiaronk	1997
3.1.8	Signatures of La Grande Paix de Montréal	Engraved stone	City of Montreal	Not found	Place Royale	2001 (uncertain)
3.1.9	The White Pine - Montreal City's flag	Flag	City of Montreal	City of Montreal	n.a.	2017
3.1.10	Archaeologies	Sculpture	City of Montreal	Yann Pocreau	Maison de la culture Verdun	2017
3.1.11	L'étreinte des temps	Sculpture	City of Montreal	NCK Inc, Atelier du Bronze Inc, WAA Montréal	Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne Park	2018
3.1.12	Dans l'attente...While waiting	Sculpture	City of Montreal	Nadia Myre	Bonaventure Park	2019
3.1.13	Tsi niion kwarihò:ten (Our Ways: Peel's Trail)	Bronze statues	City of Montreal	Mc Snow and Kyra	Peel Basin	2023

### 3.1.1. Monument à Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve

This 1895 statue by Louis-Philippe Hébert celebrates the memory of Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve and Montreal's other principal founders (GrandQuebec, 2015). It was proposed by a group of Montreal citizens hoping to commemorate the founding of Montreal for the city's 250th anniversary celebrations (Gouvernement du Québec, 2013). The monument is emblazoned with a quote from Maisonneuve :

Il est mon honneur d'accomplir ma mission  
Tous les arbres de l'Île de Montréal  
Devraient-ils se changer en autant  
D'Iroquois

(It is my honour to accomplish my mission  
All the trees on the Island of Montreal  
should turn into so many  
Iroquois)



**Figure 3.1 : The quote on the Monument à Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

Restoration work was last undertaken on the monument in 1990 by Les Métalliers Champenois, with financial support from John Labatt Limited (City of Montréal, 2005). However, no recontextualization was added to the project—the late-nineteenth-century text has been left intact for one hundred years.

Other figures from Montreal's early years—Jeanne Mance (French settler, co-founder of the City of Montreal, nurse and founder of the Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal), Raphaël-Lambert Closse (close ally to Maisonneuve, trader, sergeant major, and commandant of Montreal), Charles Le Moyne (soldier, trader and first seigneur of Longueuil)—stand at Maisonneuve's feet. An Indigenous man is also depicted but, unlike the three settler figures, he is unnamed (simply referred to as an "Iroquois"). It is unclear whether this man represents an ideal type or was a historical person.



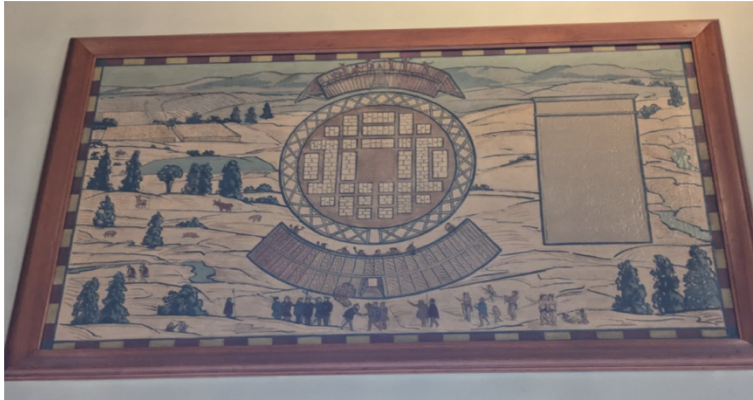
**Figure 3.2 : Iroquois man at the Monument à Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

### **3.1.2. Maisonneuve érige une croix sur la montagne (and surrounding paintings)**

The Chalet du Mont-Royal—situated at the top of Mount-Royal near the Belvedere Kondiaronk—was built in the early 1930s and is decorated with mural paintings depicting key moments of Montreal's history under the French regime (Ville de Montréal, 2023). The intent was to have seventeen paintings made by various renowned artists to represent the evolution of the city and the mountain it surrounds (Ville de Montréal, n.d.). The selected contributors included a variety of artists from Montreal's fine arts community in the 1930s (Ville de Montréal, 2023). However, none of the paintings are by Indigenous artists, despite six of the works of art featuring Indigenous people (Art Public, n.d.).





**Figure 3.3: “Hochelaga” (Cartier 1535) painting in the Mount-Royal Chalet**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

One painting by Paul-Émile Borduas depicts a sixteenth-century map of Hochelaga, the Iroquoian village visited by Jacques Cartier in 1535 (Figure 3.3). The image features about fifty longhouses, surrounded by gardens of corn, beans, and squash; at the bottom of the painting, French settlers are being greeted by the Iroquois. This painting by a Quebecois man depicts an open, friendly, and uncomplicated first encounter characterized by harmony and peace between the Indigenous people and the early French settlers. This feeds into a widespread “good colonization” narrative, which posits French exceptionalism in contrast to that of the English settlers in the West and South of Quebec.



**Figure 3.4 : “Départ de Lasalle pour le Mississippi” painting in the Chalet du Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.5 : “*Dollard des Ormeaux meurt au Long-Sault*” painting in the Chalet du Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.6 : “*Cartier atterrit à Hochelaga*” painting in the Chalet du Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.7 : “*Cartier visite l’Agouhana*” painting in the Chalet du Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.8 : “Cartier sur le Mont-Royal” painting in the Chalet du Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.9 : "Maisonneuve érige une croix sur la montagne" painting in the Chalet du Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

In another painting (Figure 3.9), completed in 1931 by Robert Pilot, Maisonneuve erects a cross on Mount Royal in 1643 to thank the Virgin Mary for intervening to stop a disastrous flood (McCord Museum, 2011). Here, the founder of Montreal is surrounded by other settlers, a priest, and the raised cross. Two nameless Indigenous men kneel in a subordinate position behind Maisonneuve; they are drawn using the colonial “imaginary Indian” visual language—bare-chested with feathers in their hair (Merson, 2014).

We can see how all the paintings are about the period of the first encounters. Often with the settlers in a position asserting power and the Indigenous men (only men figure in these paintings) are behind, sitting in more subordinate positions. Although these paintings are by various artists, the power dynamics and the period depicted are common threads.

### 3.1.3. Art Deco Central Pavilion of the Montreal Botanical Gardens

The Central Pavilion of Montreal's Botanical Garden (Figure 10) was envisioned by botany professor and Catholic monk Frère Marie-Victorin and designed by architect Lucien Kéroack. It was one of twenty Art Deco public buildings commissioned by Montreal Mayor Camillien Houde during the Great Depression (Burnett, 2023). Houde was Frère Marie-Victorin's former student and provided the funds necessary for the pavilion's construction in 1932 (Reuben, 2019). The company who worked on these visual architecture design Lemay (n.d.) explains that the public building generated imagination and solidarity in a time of crisis.



**Figure 3.10 : Murals on the main building of the Botanical Garden of Montreal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

Bas-reliefs sculpted by Joseph Guardo and Henri Hébert encircle the top of the pavilion. The bas-reliefs show people and animals in contact with indigenous plants and nature. Two reliefs include Indigenous people. The first, titled *Le bouleau* (birch tree), features a man in a canoe dressed in regalia including a big, feathered headpiece. The other bas-relief named *Le maïs* (the corn) shows a woman in a stereotypical 'traditional native' outfit picking corn in a field.



### 3.1.4. Deux Murales

The restaurant in Montreal's Botanical Garden has two murals (Figure 3.11) by Robert La Palme, a great Canadian political caricaturist (Art Public Montreal, n.d.). The larger mosaic sits at the entrance, while its partner is further back in the main dining room. The former depicts the first meal of Jacques Cartier's initial voyage in 1534; both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people seem to be enjoying the festive event.



**Figure 3.11 : *Deux murals* - public art in the Botanical Garden of Montreal's restaurant**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

The second mosaic illustrates a series of tavern meals from the colony's earliest days to the late nineteenth century. The middle of the mural is dominated by a cauldron, with Indigenous people seated with their food to the left and settlers and their goods on the right. This narrative reifies an uncomplicated and idealized vision of Montreal's past.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.1.5. Kwakiutl

The 1967 International and Universal Exposition (commonly known as Expo 67) allowed Canadians to present themselves as an imagined nation to the world (Rutherford and Miller, 2006). Indigenous people pressured the federal government for their own Expo pavilion to share their histories and cultures, and talk about colonialism and contemporary challenges (Dagenais,

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<sup>4</sup> Both murals depict many Indigenous people but are not mentioned on the Art Public Montreal website

2017). The Indians of Canada Pavilion (like many others) was later demolished; today only grass, trees, and the "Kwakiutl totem pole" (Figure 3.12) remain in its place.



**Figure 3.12: The Kwakiutl totem at the site of the Expo 67 Indian's Pavilion in Parc Jean-Drapeau**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

The totem was carved by Henry Hunt, a renowned Kwakwaka'wakw woodcarver and artist (Native Art Prints, 2023). Kwakwaka'wakw people traditionally lived along the northeast coast of present-day Vancouver Island and the upper mainland of British Columbia. The six mythological figures depicted on the totem are emblematic of several Kwakwaka'wakw groups and do not refer to any specific lineage. This type of West Coast Indigenous art is often used to represent Indigenous Canadian art, at times even becoming a stereotype of itself. While this public art was created by Indigenous people, it does little to commemorate the specifically Kanien'kehá:ka Lands upon which Montreal sits.

### 3.1.6. Cheval à Plume

Miroslav Maler first studied art in his native Czechoslovakia before completing an MFA in sculpture at Columbia University in New York in 1977. Maler later wanted to honour the presence of First Nations and recognize their status, the origins of the first settlers, the ownership of the Land, and the Lachine uprising (often referred to as the *massacre de Lachine*). This effort resulted in *Cheval à plume* (Figure 13.3), a sculpted horse's head with a feather made of red-painted stone attached to the top to represent the Indigenous spirit. The feather used as a monolithic and exotic accessory referring to "indigenous culture".



**Figure 3.13: Cheval à plume in Renée-Lévesque Park, Lachine**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

### 3.1.7. Plaque du Belvédère Kondiaronk

The Kondiaronk lookout is a large, paved semicircle in front of the Chalet du Mont Royal plaza overlooking downtown Montreal. A stone balustrade lines the periphery. Originally built in 1906, the overlook was officially named the Belvédère Kondiaronk on 21 June 1997 after being previously known as the Belvédère du Mont-Royal. by Mayor Pierre Bourque. One year later, a plaque was installed (Figure 3.14) to honour Kondiaronk, the leader of the Huron-Wendat Nation and one of the main architects of the Great Peace of Montréal in 1701. The plaque reads:

On National Indigenous Peoples' Day of June 21st, 1997, Montreal's mayor Pierre Bourque in the presence of René Simon, chief of the indigenous community of Betsiamites and Ghislain Picard, chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, officially named the Mount-Royal belvedere: Kondiaronk. The new name was

in honour of the chief of the Huron-Wendat Nation of Michillimakinac. The Chief Kondiaronk is remembered as much for his talents as an orator as for his skill as a military and political strategist. Most of all, he is recognized as one of the principal artisans of the Great Peace of Montreal and his determinant role in the treaty.



**Figure 3.14: Kondiaronk Plaque at the Kondiaronk lookout on the Mont-Royal**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

The Treaty ended decades of conflicts between the French and their allied nations in the Great Lakes region and the five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Chief Kondiaronk, who wielded influence over other chiefs and commanded respect from the French, was decisive in the peace process. He died during the negotiations, two days before the treaty was signed.

### **3.1.8. Signatures de La Grande Paix de Montréal**

The Treaty of the Great Peace of Montreal was signed in a place generally known as Place d'Youville. More recently, some have called it "Place de La Grande Paix de Montréal" (Ville de Montréal, 2023), while other sources suggest the Place de La Grande Paix de Montréal is merely a portion of the larger Place d'Youville (Pointe-À-Callière, n.d.).





**Figure 3.15 : Replica of Indigenous chiefs' signatures for the Great Peace of Montreal Treaty**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

The art piece relevant to my research is in the centre of the plaza. It is the engraving of the stone (Figure 3.15) showcasing the signatures of seven Indigenous chiefs who were part of the signing of the Great Peace Treaty. This engraved art piece is slightly elevated compared to the rest of the plaza due to the archeological path that is situated right below it and belongs to the Pointe-à-Callière museum. These engravings are almost illegible, adding an element of physical erasure to this commemoration.

This stone, commemorating Indigenous chiefs' signatures, shines a positive light on important figures who were part of a monumental moment in Montreal's history. However, the commemoration does not include any explanation, so a visitor would need to do their own research to learn more about this important event. While the names of these Indigenous leaders are commemorated, the lack of contextualizing information contributes to forms of invisibilization. Most visitors would benefit from learning more about these men and their nations to have a better understanding of their impact and implications in the important treaty.

### **3.1.9. The white pine – the City of Montreal's flag**

Montreal's flag features a white pine at the centre of a red cross, surrounded by symbols of the city's historically dominant European communities: a French fleur-de-lys, Irish shamrock, English rose, and Scottish thistle (Figure 3.16).



**Figure 3.16 : The Montreal City flag at City Hall with the white pine in its centre**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

Unlike the European symbols surrounding it, the white pine—only added in 2017—is an Indigenous symbol that represents peace, harmony, and concord.<sup>5</sup> In Haudenosaunee stories, the white pine also recalls the ‘Tree of Peace’, which the Five Nations planted after banding together. The white pine was added to the flag by an advisory committee appointed by the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), made up of members from various First Nations in Quebec (Kanien’kehá:ka, Anishinaabe, Innu) and a representative from the *Centre d’histoire de Montréal* (Montreal’s History Centre). The Canadian Heraldic Authority—the federal service responsible for creating coats of arms, flags, and badges—also attended the committee’s meetings (Ville de Montréal, 2022).

The symbolic addition was confirmed exactly ten years after the ratification of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007 (although Canada did not sign the Declaration until 2010). The flag now centres the “contribution of the Indigenous

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<sup>5</sup> The pine is also the only Indigenous plant featured in the City’s coat of arms.

people to the City of Montreal” (i.e., how Indigenous Peoples can contribute to Montreal’s identity, but not the City’s presence on Indigenous Land) (Corriveau, 2017). This process evidences an increasingly ‘politically correct’ relationship between the City and Indigenous Peoples but fails to acknowledge past wrongdoings. While Mayor Coderre stated that adding the white pine was necessary in the process of reconciliation (Corriveau, 2017), little else has been done to address settler colonialism’s devastating impacts on Indigenous Peoples across the island.

The addition of the white pine was well-received by Indigenous communities. The Chief of the Kahnawake band council, Christine Zachary-Deom, explained, “For us who have been forgotten for so long, it is very moving to now receive this support” (Corriveau, 2017). Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), agreed that it was a tangible step in recognizing Indigenous Peoples as the founders of Hochelaga (Radio-Canada, 2017). For many, the new flag represented hope that the important connection between Indigenous Peoples and the unceded First Nation Land was finally recognized.

### **3.1.10. Archéologies**

The commemoration called *Archéologies* by Yann Pocreau (Figure 3.17) is a sculpture made from a 5,000-year-old projectile, copper, and a fossil. It invites the public to experience the changing nature of the Verdun River’s banks (which once extended beyond their current boundaries) and revive the memory of peoples who once walked the Land. The description and visual analysis of this work in Art Public (n.d) does not explicitly mention Indigenous Peoples. However, I have included it because it is associated with the tag ‘autochtones’ on the Art Public website.<sup>6</sup> The artist used the vague term ‘*peuples*’, so the connection to Indigenous Peoples is only confirmed by the website metadata.

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<sup>6</sup> Strangely, it is the only art piece that is under the tag ‘autochtone’ on the Public Art website, when there are clearly other art pieces clearly linked to Indigenous Peoples.



**Figure 3.17 : *Archéologies* at the Maison de la Culture de Verdun**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

### **3.1.11. L'étreinte des temps**

The sculpture *L'étreinte des temps* (Figure 18) is a public art project placed in Tiohtià:ke Otsirà'kehne Park on Mont-Royal's northern slopes near Outremont. It is shaped like a weeping willow, a majestic tree that symbolizes togetherness and protection. Its branches reach to the ground in an embrace that interweaves successive cultures, knowledge, and eras on Mont-Royal (Ville de Montreal, n.d.). The project was a collaboration between the *Société des archives affectives*, artist Nadia Myre, and Malaka Ackaoui of the landscape architectural company WAA (Ville de Montréal, n.d.).

Myre was selected, in part, because she had previously worked with the *Société* and (mainly) because she is Indigenous, a member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation of Quebecoise and Anishinaabe (Algonquin) heritage. The organization recognized that “the mountain is so closely linked to the territory and to history that [they] had to enter into a dialogue with someone from the First Nations” (Clément, 2017). It is unclear whether other members of Indigenous communities and organizations were consulted on the project.





**Figure 3.18 : *L'étreinte des temps* at Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne Park on *Thequenondah* (Mont-Royal)**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

The City's explanations about the piece centre recognition and reconciliation. The sculpture was intended to celebrate human and cultural encounters. It tells a story of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people came together instead of focusing on the importance of *Thequenondah* (Mont-Royal) for the Kanien'kehá:ka people or recognizing how settlers have occupied and transformed the mountain.

### **3.1.12. Dans l'attente ... While waiting**

Another piece by Nadia Myre, *Dans l'attente* (Figure 3.19), commemorates the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal and the Indigenous chiefs who signed it. Her artistic practice and ethos are participatory, aimed at raising discussions about identity, resilience, and the politics of belonging (Art Public, n.d.). The figures of her work are chosen for their historical significance and visual richness.



**Figure 3.19: *Dans l'attente...* (While waiting...) in Bonaventure Park**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

There are already many commemorations of The Great Peace of Montreal, revealing a fascination with this act of peacemaking over three hundred years ago. Despite its infamy, the peace was broken multiple times by racist laws, expulsion, genocide, and ongoing settler colonial practices. However, this singular episode of history is conducive to settler reconciliation narratives and bypasses the violence and disruption still affecting Indigenous people. Adding yet another Great Peace commemoration in 2019 failed to diversify the topics/people being commemorated for and by Indigenous people and potentially advanced a revisionist agenda.

### **3.1.13. Kanawakón:ha (water life) - Tsi niion kwarihò:ten (Our ways: Peel's Trail)**

This multimedia art piece is comprised of two sets of two bronze statues, one in French and one in English. Each set has an accompanying plaque with the corresponding podcast (Figure 3.20). The sculptures evoke aquatic life (all that inhabits the river) and the general importance of water. This commemorative site is part of a larger project called *Tsi niion kwarihò:ten* (Our Ways: Peel's Trail). It creates a heritage trail along Peel Street to commemorate the Iroquoian presence on the Island of Montreal with several bronze sculptures (Ville de Montréal, 2023). They invite reflection on and bring together different Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. The project was born out of a desire to tell the story revealed by an archeological excavation (2016 to 2019) of Indigenous settlements on the corner of Peel and Sherbrooke Street West (Ville de Montréal, 2023).

In the associated podcast, Ka'nahsohon (Kevin) Deer, a Kanien'kehá:ka elder from Kahnawá:ke and keeper of stories, gives thanks to the waters in the Kanien'kéha language. This represents a

multi-modal commemoration of indigeneity and gives non-Indigenous people an opportunity to hear spoken Kanien'kéha (for the first time). The podcast then features artists Mc Snow (Kahnawá:ke) and Melissa Mollen Dupuis (Ekuanitshit). Both speak on the origins of life, the importance of water, and how humans are only one part of a complex nature. This challenges the settler colonial worldview, which sees the world as human dominion. In the Indigenous view, all spirits should be respected equally. Therefore, these bronze statues are essential for reconciliation and foreground a different worldview than that of the settlers. Such forms of commemoration expose Montrealers and tourists to the Indigenous belief systems and ways of life that have taken care of these Lands for millennia.



**Figure 3.20 : Kanawakón:ha (water life) bronze statues on the *Tsi niion kwarihò:ten* (Our Ways) trail**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

These tangible commemorations of Indigenous Peoples in the city of Montreal come in different forms: paintings, statues, plaques, engravings, sculptures and more. This variety is consistent across time, yet other changes are noticeable. In the older commemorations, the focus of the commemoration is on the colonial story and therefore, only refers to or mentions Indigenous nations or people as supporting features of the settler narrative. We can think of the statue of Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve where "the Iroquois" remains nameless close to the base. Another example is of the Kondiaronk plaque where there is very little background to explain who the chief himself was. Although the plaque is named after him, what is engraved is focused on his efforts for the Great Peace treaty in 1701. Again, the focus here is largely about what that meant for the settlers to sign this agreement. The narrative associated with more recent commemorations is

much less focused on the settler side of the story and offers an Indigenous perspective. This is especially true of the commemorations that came after the TRC. Here we can think of the Kanawakón bronze statues in the Peel Basin or the Sculpture L'Étreinte des temps on the Mont-Royal. In both cases indigenous artists were part of the commemorative processes which surely affected the meaning and intent behind the commemoration, allowing for the focus to centre more on Indigenous worldviews. I will comment more about this evolution of the commemorative narrative in the next chapter.

### **3.2. Toponymy**

The City of Montreal claims that toponymy has two main purposes: to locate and honour. Place naming not only serves to recognize aspects of culture and collective heritage but also has an emotional aspect and helps to provide a sense of belonging to the community (Ville de Montreal, 2022). On its webpage on Toponymy, the City describes the use of place naming to “reflect the richness of our heritage” and to preserve “the memory of major people who have marked history and reminds us of now-vanished realities”.

Some Indigenous words have contested meanings or are translated differently in French and in English. Also, the spelling of these Indigenous words using the Roman alphabet can vary from one nation to another even if the language is mostly the same. For example, the name Tiohtià:ke is often understood as meaning “where the currents meet” but the city of Montreal translates the word as “where the group separates”. This is to say that all indigenous words or words with indigenous origins that are described in this section, may have contested meanings or origins which is an important caveat to keep in mind.



**Table 3.2: Toponymic commemorations with ties to Indigenous Peoples on the Island of Montreal<sup>7</sup>**

Number	Name	Naming of	Date	Indigenous connection
1	Rue de Canseau (Saint-Léonard)	Street	n.d.	From <i>kamsok</i> (Mi'kmaw)—“Beyond the cliffs”
2	Rue de Gaspésie (Saint-Léonard)	Street	n.d.	From <i>gaspé</i> (Mi'kmaw)—“End of the world”
3	Rue Hochelaga (Ville-Marie & Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Street	n.d.	From <i>Tiohtià:ke</i> —An Iroquoian village
4	Rue de Magog (LaSalle)	Street	n.d.	Potentially from <i>namagok</i> or <i>namagwôttik</i> (W8banaki)—“Lake with salmon and trout”
5	Parc de Mohawk (LaSalle)	Park	n.d.	From Mohawk (English)—The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation
6	Rue d'Oka (LaSalle)	Street	n.d.	From <i>okow</i> (Algonquin)—“walleye”; references a historical chief
7	Rue du Saguenay (Saint-Léonard)	Street	n.d.	From <i>saki-nip</i> (Unspecified)—“water source”
8	Ruelle Chagouamigon (Ville-Marie)	Street	Before 1683	The name Chagouamigon recalls a trading post established on the shores of Lake Superior around 1660.
9	Rue Ottawa (Ville-Marie)	Street	1863	From <i>Odawa</i> (Algonquian)—The Odawa Nation
10	Rue Pontiac (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal)	Street	1897	From <i>Pontiac</i> (Odawa)—The name of a chief and loyal friend to the French
11	Rue Winnipeg (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Street	1911	From the Cree language, the word <i>Winnipeg</i> means dirty or muddy water in reference to the Winnipeg River
12	Rue d'Yamaska (Le Sud-Ouest)	Street	1911	From <i>Yamaska</i> (Unspecified)—“a rush offshore”
13	Rue Saranac (Côte-des-	Street	1912	References a lake in the New-York but no

<sup>7</sup> All the data from this table was collected in the toponymic resources and data of the City of Montreal under the : *Répertoire historique des toponymes montréalais*

	Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce)			explanation in the Cities' catalogue as to why is it categorized under "Autochtones". Outside sources relate the word to the Abenaki word for "staghorn sumac cone".
14	Rue du Fort-Lorette (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	Street	1925	A reference to the Sulpician mission intended to keep Indigenous people away from the city.
15	Parc Hochelaga (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Park	1930	The Iroquoian village of Tiohtià:ke
16	Parc Ahuntsic (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	Park	1948	From <i>Ahuntsic</i> (Huron)—A legendary young Huron man who supposedly travelled with the Frenchman, Father Nicolas Viel.
17	Rue de Biloxi (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	Street	1950	To mark the 250th anniversary of the "discovery" of the Mississippi estuary. Biloxi is a city in Mississippi, named after the nearby bay. The name originates from the Sioux Nation (Lakota). The name is thought to mean "first people".
18	Rue de Mobile (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	Street	1950	In celebration of the 250-year anniversary of Mobile Alabama. The name comes from the distortion of the name of a local indigenous community: The Baubilas.
19	Avenue Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Avenue	1956	A Métis leader and founder of Manitoba. He was a central figure in the Red River and North-West resistance
20	Place Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Square	1956	A Métis leader and founder of Manitoba. He was a central figure in the Red River and North-West resistance
21	Rue de Matane (LaSalle)	Street	1959	Divergent interpretations: From <i>mtctan</i> (Mi'kmaw)—"beaver pond" From <i>maliseet</i> (Wolostoqey)— an area like the spinal cord through the vertebrae From <i>mattawa</i> or <i>mattawin</i> (Unspecified)— "meeting of waters"
22	Rue de Cabano (LaSalle)	Street	1960	Perhaps from <i>wabano</i> (Anishinabemowin)— "witcher"
23	Rue Pontiac (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	Street	1961	An Odawa chief, a loyal friend to the French
24	Rue Saraguay (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	Street	1961	From <i>Saraguay</i> (Unspecified)—"float path"

25	Rue Donnacona (Ville-Marie)	Street	1962	From <i>Donnacona</i> , the chief of the village of Stadacona in Québec
26	Rue Riel (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	Street	1962	A Métis leader and founder of Manitoba. He was a central figure in the Red River and North-West resistance
27	Terrasse Sagamo (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	Street	1966	<i>Sagamo</i> (many Indigenous languages)—grand chiefs; a homage to the Huron and Algonquin chiefs Ahahotaha and Mitouimeg
28	Rue de Saguenay (LaSalle)	Street	1966	<i>Saki-nip</i> (Unspecified)—"water source"
29	Rue Oka (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	Street	1975	From <i>okow</i> (Algonquin)—"walleye"; an Algonquin chief.
30	Parc Régional du Bois-de-Saraguay (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	Park	1984	From <i>Saraguay</i> (Unspecified)—"float path"
31	Chemin des Iroquois (Lachine)	Path	1986	From <i>Iroquois</i> — the Mohawk of Kahnawake living across the Saint Lawrence
32	Rue Panis-Charles (Rivière-des-Prairies-Pointe-aux-Trembles)	Street	1987	A soldier from the Pawnee Nation who rebelled against the French settlers who enslaved Indigenous people from the Pawnee Nation. Panis was also a way to refer to an enslaved Indigenous person.
33	Belvédère de Kondiaronk (Ville-Marie)	Overlook	1997	Chief Kondiaronk from the Huron-Wendat Nation.
34	Place de la Grande Paix-de-Montréal (Ville-Marie)	Square	2001	A treaty signed between France and thirty-nine Indigenous nations in 1701 in Montréal.
35	Parc Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Park	2007	A Métis leader and founder of Manitoba. He was a central figure in the Red River Resistance and North-West Resistance
36	Rue Myra-Cree (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	Street	2008	Co-founder of the Mouvement pour la paix et la justice à Oka et Kanesatake
37	Parc du Quai-de-la-Tortue (Verdun)	Park	2011	The name "La Tortue", believed to be of Kanien'kehá:ka origin as it refers to many places on the South Shore named that way by them
38	Belvédère du Chemin-qui-Marche (Ville-Marie)	Viewpoint	2012	A way to describe the Saint-Laurence River that was often associated with Indigenous

				Peoples (unspecified)
39	Rue du Chinook (Saint-Laurent)	Street	2012	The Chinookan people of the US Pacific Northwest and British Columbia
40	Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne (Côte-de-Neige-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce & Outremont)	Park	2017	The name in Kanien'kéha means: Where the band splits up (Tiohtià:ke) and Where the fire is
41	Rue Atateken (Ville-Marie)	Street	2019	From <i>Atateken</i> (Kanien'kéha)—“men and women” or “brothers and sisters,” referring to relationships and equality between people
42	Avenue Skaniatarati (Lachine)	Avenue	2019	From <i>Skaniatarati</i> (Kanien'kéha)—“across the river”; the name given to Lachine since Kahnawake in Kanien'kéha.
43	Sentier Tetewaiánón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	Path	2020	From <i>Tetewaiánón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh</i> (Kanien'kéha)— “path of the messengers”
44	Centre Sanaaq (Ville-Marie)	Cultural and community centre	2020	From <i>Sanaaq</i> (Inuktitut)—“to create and to make out of your hands”; in reference to a book by the same title.

The following sections investigate nine of the 45 names, which I have selected because they are spatially dispersed across the island and chronologically representative of different moments in Montreal's history. All the nine names are tagged as 'indigenous' and have detailed information on the website.

### 3.2.1. Rue de Canseau

The City of Montreal claims that the street 'Canseau' comes from the Nova Scotian town named Canso located on Chedabucto Bay on the northeast coast. In the City's directory, the claim is that the town's name comes from the Mi'kmaq word 'Kamsok', which means “beyond the cliffs.” We can see here a perfect example of how an Indigenous word can be used for place-naming by settlers in different areas and how this resulted in the evolution of the word with different spellings. Another interesting finding for this street name is that there is the lack of information on the Quebec Government's Commission de toponymie website, which states that the meaning and the origin of the street name have yet to be determined (Gouvernement du Québec, 2012)

### **3.2.2. Parc Ahuntsic**

This toponym references the legendary story of a young Huron, converted by the Recollet missionary Father Nicolas Viel, who perished with the priest in the waters of the Rivière des Prairies. In 1942, Father Archange Godbou refuted the legend and pointed to '*Auhaitisque*', a nickname used by the Hurons to describe a Frenchman who arrived in 1619 (Ville de Montréal, n.d.). In other words, there was no young Huron. Despite this new information, the park was still named 'Ahuntsic' and perpetuates the story of a fictitious young Huron man who converted to Catholicism. Indeed, even Duplessis who was mayor of Montreal when the park was renamed used the legend of Ahuntsic as a reason for naming the park after him, building on the idea that French settlers had positive and mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous people (Robbins-Larrivée, 2013).

### **3.2.3. Chemin des Iroquois**

The name Chemin des Iroquois suggests that this pathway has a connection to Indigenous Peoples, but the City's directory explains that the path's name comes from the "Iroquois Yacht Club" which was founded in 1927 (Plaisanciers Lachine, 2020) and later became the Lachine Yacht Club. This is an example of the shortcomings of the directory because although it is classified as an Indigenous toponymy, there is no information as to the use of the name Iroquois in the first place. Did the Yacht Club use the name because it was on the other side of the River from Kahnawake or simply because of its exotic appeal? Unfortunately, I was not able to find an explanation either while doing my own research about the yacht club. This path refers to the Haudenosaunee but lacks any type of explanation as to why the path was named after them. So, although the City's directory classified it under Indigenous, the real commemoration is for a Yacht Club that belonged and was used by white men.

### **3.2.4. Rue Myra-Cree**

Situated in Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the street Myra-Cree is named in honor of the Kanien:kehá:ka journalist, writer and radio host (among other roles) Myra Cree. She was born in Kanesatake in 1937. Coming from a line of Haudenosaunee chiefs, she was the daughter of Chief

Ernest Arirhon Cree and granddaughter of the Great Chief Timothy Arirhon (Centre des mémoires Montréalaises, 2022). Myra Cree was the first woman news anchor on the *Téléjournal de Radio-Canada* in 1976 and later was the host of the radio show *Second Regard*. In her text “*Miroir, miroir, dis-moi...*” she recounts how the Oka Crisis (also known as the Kanesatake Resistance) did not start in 1990, but rather when the Canadian government unilaterally decided to move the Mohawk community to a reserve in Ontario in 1890, a decision her grand-father opposed by staying much of his community in Oka (Saint-Armand, 2010). She was one of the founding members of the *Mouvement pour la justice et la paix à Oka/Kanesatake*, created in the summer of 1990, an organization created to bridge the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people in the Montreal area and to help resolve the crisis peacefully. The following year, she collaborated on a voluminous work entitled “*Les langues autochtones du Québec*” with a text on the future of the Mohawk language (Larmarche, 2005). Myra Cree played an important role in the preservation of the Kanien’kéha language and culture of the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation. She received recognition throughout her life, including the Judith-Jasmin prize for her journalistic work, and she was named Knight of the *Ordre national du Québec* in 1995. In 2008, three years after her death, she became the only Indigenous woman in Montreal to have a street named in her memory (Centre des mémoires Montréalaises, 2022). Unlike other important public figures recognized in the Montreal toponymy, however, the information about Myra Cree found in the City’s directory is remarkably limited.

### **3.2.5. Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne**

In 2017 the park located on the summit of Outremont, on the northwestern flank of the Mont Royal is renamed Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne. The name was unveiled in June 2017, as part of Montreal's new desire to be seen as a metropolis for reconciliation, as well as on the year marking the City's 375<sup>th</sup> celebrations (Ville de Montréal, 2023). The version of the city's flag (see 4.1.9) was also part of that initiative and was inaugurated a few months later, in September. The new name pronounced “jo-jah-gueh otsi-rah-guh-neh”, was chosen by the three Montreal-area Kanien’kehá:ka communities of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne. The meaning behind the Kanien’kéha name Otsira'kehne is the original name for the village that the French transliterated as Hochelaga. It means “around the fire, on the island where the group separates” (Radio-Canada, 2017). The then mayor of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve who was also responsible for sustainable development, the environment, large parks and green spaces on the

executive committee of the City of Montreal, stated that this was part of a process of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, aimed at recognizing their continued place in the history and development of Montreal. The initiative of Montreal as a metropolis of reconciliation is also aimed at establishing an ongoing dialogue between the City and Indigenous communities. This is also the location of the sculpture *L'étreinte des temps* (see section 4.1.10).

### 3.2.6. Atateken Street

This downtown Montreal Street was initially named after the British general Jeffery Amherst, who was commander-in-chief of the British forces during the Seven Years' War, after which Canada's colonial governance passed from France to England. Amherst has been honored through many different forms of commemorations across Canada even though his legacy is not unanimously appreciated, due to his brutal policies towards Indigenous Peoples. Amherst is well known and a controversial figure for his policy regarding Indigenous Peoples. In July 1763, Amherst wrote:

*Could it not be contrived to Send the Smallpox among those Disaffected Tribes of Indians? We must, on this occasion, Use Every Stratagem in our power to Reduce them.*

Later that month, wrote:

You will do well to try to inoculate [sic] the Indians by means of blankets, as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race.

These acts of biological warfare were a method of ethnic cleansing Indigenous populations during Pontiac's War<sup>8</sup>. The war failed to prevent British troops from moving in and was said to be the most successful First Nations resistance to the European invasion. It forced British authorities to recognize Indigenous rights still observed today (Marsh, 2015).

Getting rid of the street name Amherst was part of a wave of tangible actions enacted by the City in 2017 in the spirit of reconciliation, as explained by then-mayor Denis Coderre (Corriveau, 2017).

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<sup>8</sup> Peter d'Errico, a professor emeritus of legal studies at the University of Massachusetts (located in a town named after the general), found a letter by Gen. Amherst saying, "You will do well to try to inoculate the Indians by means of blankets, as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race" (Gill, 2017).

He wanted to send a clear message of the changing times (Radio-Canada, 2017). Ghislain Picard, head of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, welcomed this symbolic action, as the name Amherst was an insult to Indigenous Peoples and their history (Corriveau, 2017). Picard claimed that there are pages in our collective history that we need to turn, and pages that we need to forget (Radio-Canada, 2017). Dinu Bumbaru, who was the policy Director at *Héritage Montréal* said he understood how today's society views certain figures from the past differently and that this meant questioning certain forms of recognition. However, in an interview with RDI, he said he found it questionable to hastily settle toponymic issues just a few weeks before an election. Two years later, with the guidance of Montreal's Indigenous toponymy committee and after a year of consultations, the Plante administration selected the name rue Atateken (Ville de Montréal, n.d.). Atateken (which is pronounced a-da-dé-gan) means 'brothers and sisters' which invokes the notion of relationships and equality between people (Ville de Montréal, 2023). It also means 'group of people or nations with shared values,' says Hilda Nicolas, who was director of the Kanesatake Cultural and Linguistic Centre for 26 years and head of the toponymy committee formed by the City in 2016 to come up with a Kanien'kéha name for the street (Niosi, 2019). Hilda Nicolas also points out that using a Kanien'kéha word helps preserve and promote the Kanien'kehá:ka language and culture, which are "on the verge of extinction". She hopes that all Montrealers will make the new toponym their own (Bélair-Cirino and Noël, 2019).

### **3.2.7. Avenue Skaniatarati**

*Skaniatará:ti* means 'across the river' in Kanien'kéha which where the borough is situated from the perspective of Kahnawake, on the other side of the St. Lawrence. This is the first street name in the Kanien'kéha language in Lachine-Est. The name in its simplified form – *Skaniatarati* – was approved by Montreal's Indigenous toponymy committee (Ville de Montréal, n.d.). The unveiling took place on National Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2019. "We have the potential to do great things together," said Kahnawake Band Council Chief Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer during the unveiling. "We must first acknowledge the past, celebrate the present and look forward to a positive future" (Croteau, 2019). Unlike other Indigenous street-names, a nearby park will have a plaque explaining and contextualizing the Kanien'kéha word. Mayor Maja Vodanovic felt it important that Lachinois learn about the importance of local culture and history. Other symbolic acts took place during this event between Chief Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer and Mayor Vodanovic as part of a



desire to come together and work on ways to tell the stories of the Land and the people (Radio-Canada, 2019).

### **3.2.8. The Tetewaianón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh path**

This little path in the Ahuntsic-Cartierville borough is perpendicular to the Henri-Bourassa boulevard and is situated in between the old Sault-au-Récollet cemetery and Mont-Saint-Louis high school. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, settlers used paths like this one, that were traced by Indigenous Peoples, to get from the mission to Ville Marie (Digital Museums Canada, 2024). The paths were also said to be used for hunting and trade and would have been a designated communication route linking Fort Lorette to the fortified town, passing through the unceded Lands of the Sulpicians (Ville de Montréal, 2020). In June 2020, during the National Indigenous History Month, the City of Montreal officialised the path name Tetewaianón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh which means “messenger path” in Kanien'kéha. The new name was approved by the City's Indigenous Toponymy Committee and Montreal's Executive Committee. A contextualizing plaque is located at the start of the path (Esseghir, 2020). Prior to that, the name *sentier des sauvages* – path of the savages – is said to have existed in oral tradition since the creation of the Sulpician mission. Many paths that were originally traced by Indigenous that are a part of a vast network of trails, of which became present-day roads and highways (Ville de Montréal, n.d.).

### **3.2.9. Centre Sanaaq**

Centre Sanaaq will be a community centre in downtown Montreal. The borough of Ville-Marie, with the support of the Institut du Nouveau Monde, has worked with its citizens to define and develop this community-led project to meet their diverse needs. It will include a performance and exhibition hall, a library and community spaces. The Centre aims to reflect the cultural diversity in the area and will offer rich and varied programming. It will also offer a collection of printed and digital books in French, English, various Indigenous languages, Farsi and Cantonese. The centre will be in front of Cabot Square, an important location for Indigenous people in Montreal especially the Inuit. The city hopes the Sanaaq Centre will serve as an additional space for members of these indigenous communities (Ville de Montreal, 2024). The centre's name Sanaaq references a 1950's novel by Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk which was the first ever written in Inuktitut. Her work continues to inform and help understand Inuit life (Holdsworth, 2023). Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk was only twenty-two

years old when she first started teaching missionaries Inuktitut in Nunavik (Northern Quebec). It is while she was writing down sentences in Inuktitut syllabic for the Catholic missionaries that she started writing her book *Sanaaq*. It tells the story of an Inuit family negotiating the changes in their community after the arrival of the *qallunaat*, the white people (Ville de Montréal, n.d.). The title character is a strong, independent determined woman who gives readers her Inuit perspective. Another reason the Centre is named Sanaaq is due to the root word *sana* in Inuktitut meaning ‘to make, to create, to work, to carve or to labour’, specifically by hand. Thus, the name Sanaaq reflects the community coming together to create their shared space (Ville de Montréal, 2020). That being said, Makivik - an organization mandated to protect the rights and the Avataq cultural institute, have both accused the Plante Administration of cultural appropriation due to improper consulting methods with the Inuit community (Teisceira-Lessard, 2021).

### 3.3. Identifications

The ‘Identifications’ commemoration category is the most nebulous of the three. Identifications formally recognize intangible heritage (e.g., deceased historical figures, events, or sites). However, they are less static than statues and plaques—they often consist of experiential sites that actively promote knowledge and transmit heritage elements (Ville de Montréal, 2022).

**Table 3.3: Identification commemorations tied to Indigenous Peoples on the Island of Montreal<sup>9</sup>**

Name	Form of commemoration	Location	Authority	Date
Site archéologique de la Chapelle-Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours	Archaeological site	Musée Marguerite-Bourgeoys Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours	Ministère de la Cultures et des Communications & the City of Montreal	1996
First Nations Garden	Public garden	Montreal’s Botanical Garden	City of Montreal	2001
Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier	Archeological site	Parc de l’Honorable-George-O’Reilly	Ministère de la Cultures et des	2012

<sup>9</sup> Data in this table comes from the City of Montreal’s websites.

			Communications & the City of Montreal	
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### 3.3.1 Site archéologique de la Chapelle-Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours

The *Site archéologique de la Chapelle-Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours*<sup>10</sup> commemoration site is not easy to access. You need to pay an entrance fee to the Chapelle-Notre-Dame museum and then wait for a guide to accompany you to the archeological area. Furthermore, there is no clear information about the archeological either outside or within the museum. I only discovered the site by searching the Indigenous category on the Patrimoine du Québec website (and I was alone on the tour).

Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours was built in 1771 to replace the previous chapel that burned down in 1754. The guide explained that the Indigenous portion of the archeological site (Figure 3.21) was found while digging up the remains of the original chapel. The site is said to date back to the Middle Woodland (2400-1000 BCE) period and was classified as a *site patrimonial* in 2014. About four hundred objects have been recovered (Government of Quebec, 2013). There is very little on-site information about the Indigenous presence, and the guide clearly knew less about the Indigenous portion of the archeological site than the other sections.

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<sup>10</sup> Although the main governmental authority of this archeological site is at the provincial level, the website of the *Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec* (2013) mentions that the municipality can also exercise certain power in relation to this commemoration.



**Figure 3.21: Indigenous archeological site located under the Notre-Dame-de-Bon-secours Chapel**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

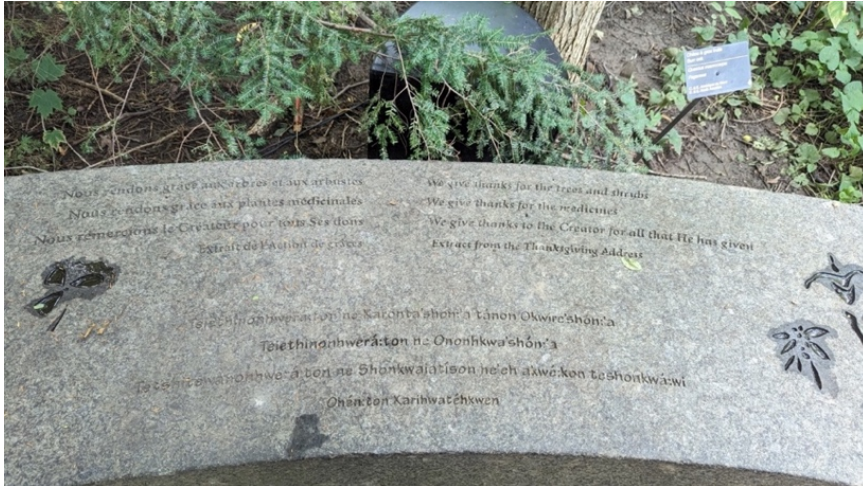
Overall, the museum's discourse centres on the founding of Montreal, the life of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys,<sup>11</sup> and the early history of the chapel site. The tour only shows anecdotal elements associated with an Indigenous settlement, including piles for housing foundations and a fireplace area (a circle of stones).

### **3.3.2. First Nations Garden**

In 2001, the First Nations Garden was inaugurated at the Botanical Garden of Montreal as a place for knowledge and encounters between cultures. This was another Indigenous commemoration associated with the third centenary of the Great Peace of Montreal (City of Montreal, 2021). However, despite its name, the garden promotes settler narratives about the many points of convergence between settlers and Indigenous communities. Indigenous Peoples can enter the Botanical garden free of charge.

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<sup>11</sup> Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, the first teacher in the colonial settlement of Ville-Marie, was the founder of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.



**Figure 3.22: A monument giving thanks in several Indigenous languages at the entrance of the First Nations Garden.**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.23: Informational section of the First Nations Garden**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023



**Figure 3.24: Information about key plants in Indigenous cultures**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

The garden features two main sections: one on plants and another on knowledge and practices. The plant section is divided into three main ecosystems, each associated with a particular way of life (Ville de Montréal, 2014). The second section features exhibitions that honour important plants for Indigenous Nations. The space is inviting and informative about Indigenous botanical traditions. A committee of First Nations representatives was formed to guide this project to ensure it authentically honours, commemorates, and shares Indigenous knowledge.

In 2023, the City of Montreal, in collaboration with *le Centre d'amitié autochtone*, planned to host sweat lodge ceremonies at the First Nations Garden following requests from some members of Montreal's urban Indigenous communities (Martin, 2023). This type of initiative shows the multifaceted benefits of such a space, where knowledge can be shared, and traditions can be upheld and practised in an urban setting. However, as Philippe Meilleur, Director of the Centre d'amitié autochtone, notes, the Botanical Garden's admission fee precludes access for all, and the garden fails to fully embody First Nation concepts without a waterway (Villeneuve, 2018).

### **3.3.3 Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier**

Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier in Verdun, along the St. Lawrence River, is an example of early French regime rural architecture (Figure 3.25).





**Figure 3.25: Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier sits atop a major Indigenous archeological site**

Source: Cobbett Labonté, 2023

However, the foundations of the house, built in 1710, sit atop the largest archeological site on the island, dating back more than 5,500 years (Ville de Montréal, 2023). Starting in the mid-2000s, a program to restore and enhance the Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier provided an opportunity to carry out archaeological work in the park. Tremblay (2018) explains that stone tools, pottery shards and pipes from various periods were found along a historical riverside portage trail (now 100 metres inland) where people fed and rested, tended fires, dug pits, built structures, and even buried the dead. With free admission to the museum, this archeological site is more accessible than others. Yet, there is very little information about the original Indigenous presence or the critically important Indigenous archaeological project.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

This chapter presents a qualitative analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter. In what follows, I established important themes, patterns and categories that will permit me to answer the main research questions guiding this study: what do commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal's narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment? This thesis also asks whether and how the narrative has evolved throughout time.

The chapter is structured as follows. Drawing on the analytical framework established in Chapter Two – settler colonial theory; commemoration; collective memory; and the important work from Tuck and Yang: “decolonization is not a metaphor” – I begin by presenting and explaining four theoretically informed analytical lenses: fixed settler temporality, the white settler gaze, settler moves to benevolence, and perpetuating settler dominance. These four lenses serve as analytical tools to interpret the data and to ascertain patterns running through the commemorative landscape. They guide my analysis of commemoration across different eras in Montreal's history. Accordingly, I have organized the data into four eras: Montreal New Metropolis (~1850s - 1950s); Reshaping and Renaming Montreal (mid 1950s - late 1980s); Montreal – a New Millennia (1990s - early 2000s); and Montreal - Metropolis of Reconciliation (2008 - present day).

Each era will provide insight about the City's representation of Indigenous Peoples through commemorations at given points in time. From the previous chapter, we can see that when all three types of commemorations – tangible commemorations, toponymy, identity – are brought together as a set of data, patterns emerge about how Indigenous people are represented, presented, talked about. And, as this chapter demonstrates, these representations of Indigenous people within and through official commemorations is not straightforward, it varies from one commemoration to the next. This variation arises through the numerous ways Indigenous Peoples are being referred to, ranging from being a general nuisance to the settler colonial agenda and values, to being brave overseers of the Land and water. This interpretation of the data for this study takes place while recognizing that controlling the narrative and interpretation of history, values and relationships is a powerful tool used by states and governing bodies in nation-making.

An important note here relates to the overlapping of different expressions of settler colonialism. Indeed, as explained by Veracini (2011), these different eras separated by distinct mayors in Montreal's history cannot be inextricably sealed off from one another. Rather, they are understood



as layers of settler colonial policies and views that undoubtedly intersect. Therefore, while the use of these four eras is for analytical purposes, we must understand how they exist in complex relation to one another and part of the whole history of the city.

In what follows, I interpret commemoration during these four eras using the four analytical lenses. The following table below explains these two analytical axes – theoretical lenses and historical eras – as the structure shaping my analysis of the data. I begin by explaining the analytical lenses, then discuss each historical period.

**Table 4.1: Analytical framework – four lenses and four eras.**

<b>FOUR ANALYTICAL LENSES</b>			
<i>(Applied over the four historical eras below)</i>			
1) Fixed settler temporality	2) The White Settler Gaze	3) Settler moves to Benevolence	4) Perpetuating Settler Dominance
<b>FOUR HISTORICAL ERAS</b>			
~1850s - 1950s	mid 1950s - late 1980s	1990s - early 2000s	2008 - present day
1) Montreal New Metropolis	2) Reshaping and Renaming Montreal	3) Montreal - a New Millennium	4) Montreal - Metropolis of Reconciliation

## 4.1. FOUR ANALYTICAL LENSES

### 4.1.1. Fixed Settler Temporality

This first analytical lens identifies the ‘stereotypical’ Indigenous person as a central figure in tangible commemorations dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. ‘Fixed settler temporality’ draws on archetypal representations of Indigenous people reproduced in commemorations, art, literature, media, entertainment, etc. For example, one of these stereotypical images is ‘the native’ or ‘noble savage’ who appears bare-chested with feathers in his hair. Another is the Indigenous person presented as the ‘warrior’, opposing settler explorers and adventurers. Or, on the other hand, Indigenous women are shown as beautiful objects of desire, available to White men and ready to

betray their communities to ally with settlers. Such what I refer to as 'settled temporality' essentializes racist portrayals at the time of the first encounters which are easily recognizable as a stereotype. There are other racist *clichés* of Indigenous Peoples, such as lazy, alcoholic, lying, etc., unrelated to a specific period but, rather, are transversal representations. What is important here are the stereotypes created during or after the first European encounters with 'the native'.

Rifkin (2017) asks: "What does it mean to say that Native peoples exist in the present?" Changing the term 'native' to 'Indigenous', he raises the crucial point that Indigenous Peoples cannot be understood as dynamic and changing while assuming that they do not inherently belong to a present shared with non-Indigenous people. Settler time plays an important role, he clarifies, in maintaining settler colonial structures and, I argue, by holding Indigenous people captive through commemorative representation. With this analytical lens, therefore, I am referring specifically to representations that place and keep – or *fix* -- Indigenous people in a temporality prior to or outside of settler 'modernity'. There are many definitions of modernity, but Weber's helps explain the tension between 'tradition' and 'modernity'. For Weber (Seidman, 1983), modernity means replacing traditional worldviews with a rational way of thinking based on the European Enlightenment ideals. In this understanding of the term, pre-industrial societies, such as those of Indigenous people of North America at the time of contact, tradition acts as a brake on positive change. The moment of the first encounter is one of the meetings of tradition – Indigenous people – and modernity – in the form of settlers coming from European countries, which is the theme of this settler temporality in which Indigenous Peoples are fixed in.

If Indigenous people pre-date or are 'outside' of modernity, then the Indigenous person is equally outside of the modern urban environment we associate with cities. As we are reminded by Mays (2023), narratives are a key component when analyzing urban space, which is inherently rooted in the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples. In the case of this research, the narrative I'm interested in is shaped and strengthened by the commemorations of the settler colonial state that aims to legitimize its actions in the past, present and future (I will return to this idea of securing the settler colonial future when discussing my last analytical lens). The notion of fixed temporalities in the commemorative landscape can be explained by the need to maintain the idea that settler colonialism and its negative impacts on Indigenous Peoples are a thing of the past, which feeds into this idea that settler colonialism is an event in the past rather than an ongoing process. When we conceive Indigenous people as figures of the past it not only places them within a settler timeframe (with vague notions of what came before and what came after), it also maintains

Indigenous Peoples in a marginalized place. This in turn, makes it easier for settler society to continue with Land theft and the erasure of the original stewards.

My data reflect that more than half of the tangible commemorations in Montreal, all three Identification commemorations and more than a third of the toponymy refer to a time-period prior to the seventeenth century.<sup>[1]</sup> The commemorations largely represented indigeneity as something of the past, particularly from the Nouvelle France period (Guimont Marceau et al., 2023). This period lasted from the arrival of Jacques Cartier in 1535 to the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. As Néméh-Nombré (2023) argues, the idea of 'New France' inaugurated the colonial settlement project and implied the beginning of colonial violence, dispossession, and genocide. The City of Montreal has had a succession of mayors aim to present Montreal as 'modern', 'international', 'global', 'contemporary' and who seemed to equate Indigenous person as "figures" of the past, incompatible with dominant ideas of Montreal as the 21<sup>st</sup> century city. We see this in Montreal's commemorative landscape which draws on racist, stereotypical representations of Indigenous people as perceived by white settlers, situated in the time of the first encounters. Indigenous Peoples are thus neither a part of the modern city, nor a part of its future. Rather, they are relegated to the past, left as minor or marginal background historical characters in a history of settler colonial exploration and adventure.

#### **4.1.2. The White Settler Gaze**

Building on Fixed Settler Temporality, the second critical lens – The White Settler Gaze – relates to the *how* the storyteller tells the narrative. In this case, the City of Montreal as a white settler colonial entity which tells its story, one that is entangled with Indigenous nations, through commemorations. Most commemorations about Indigenous people in Montreal were conceived by non-Indigenous people. The urban landscape is dotted with the stories of and by white settler society, told for the white settler and framed through white perspective.

As a theoretical construct, the white settler gaze, draws on the white gaze, which, as Said (2003) argued, creates an exotic, romanticized appeal of the other. The term 'white gaze' is credited to black American intellectuals and writers, including Toni Morrison, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin, who resisted racist tropes about blacks in America (Pailey, 2019). The 'white gaze' refers to the experience that the presumed onlooker – of art works, commemoration, media, etc. – is someone who identifies as white. It also refers to the lived experience of people of colour who

often feel obligated to consider the white observer's reaction to their works, art, etc., shaping the outcome. Morrison explains it as follows:

I'm writing for black people in the same way that Tolstoy was not writing for me, a 14-year-old colored girl from Lorain, Ohio. I don't have to apologize or consider myself limited because I don't [write about or for white people] — which is not true, there are lots of white people in my books. The point is not having the white critic sit on your shoulder and approve it. (quoted in Hoby 2015)

The white critic is omnipresent in multiple spheres of society and politics. Pailey (2019, p. 733), for instance, points to its central presence in development as Africans have thoroughly internalized the 'white gaze' where whiteness is situated as "the primary referent of power, prestige and progress across the world.". Griffiths (2012) reminds us, as another example, that mass media images created through the white gaze produce categories of Indigenous people (2012). In *White Gaze, Red People*, Hollinshead (1992, p.43) argues that the 'White' gaze of the tourist system presents "sedimented historical explanations of indigenous culture" which are stale stereotypes and partial realities.

Mugabo, a Black feminist geographer, demonstrates how the 'white gaze' dictates and captures commemoration through the example of Marie-Joseph Angélique. She was tortured until she confessed, then sentenced to death. In 2012, the Mayor of Montreal, Gerald Tremblay, named a place for Angelique as a gesture that collectively reaffirms Montrealers values of tolerance, inclusion, and equality. This is based on the idea that Angélique was treated as an outcast and giving her a place (literally a fixed anchored space) is a way for Montreal to repair the wrong committed against her. As previously mentioned, the commemoration of Marie-Joseph Angélique is another way of capturing her and for white settler society to use her, this time as a symbol of national redemption (Mugabo, 2023).

This brings our attention to the fact that tangible commemorations, such as plaques, places and statues, are always fixed in space and that White settler governance not only decides what is remembered and how, it also dictates where it will be immortalized spatially. Commemorations are anchors—they remind us of which narratives settler society has deemed important and worthy of memorialization over time and place. The urban space becomes a landscape of these chosen stories, anchored throughout the city via monuments and other commemorations, recounting and reinforcing the desired story directed by the 'white gaze' that serves the settler society. The white settler gaze in this way produces a biased version of history—a story the City wants memorialized.

Commemoration has often been shaped by ‘colonized remembering’ (Stanley, 2020) where histories are selectively told to reinforce colonial power and suppress marginalized voices. To move toward decolonization and antiracism we must critically re-examine these narratives (Lynch, 2023). This involves reaching out to marginalized communities to create new commemorative practices and ensure that future memorials reflect inclusive, restorative, and truth-telling processes.

Rose-Redwood et al. (2018) remind us that commemorative pieces remember the past through a selective social geographic construction. They are key components of dominant narratives or a particular audience and a specific purpose, in this case, from the settler colonial municipal government of Montreal. The commemorations showcase carefully selected stories by and for the white settler, which creates a very limited narrative on Indigenous communities. Thought and effort has gone into what to reveal and what to hide (Gillis, 1996). For example, certain important Indigenous archeological sites were never commemorated because they were not seen as valuable, important, or relevant to the story of the city. Some were even perceived as dangerous to the fiction of *terra nullius*, which validated the Doctrine of Discovery and Western colonialism and imperialism, because they challenge the idea that these Lands were empty or not used by Nations in a systematic way.

#### **4.1.3. Settler Moves to Benevolence**

This third analytic lens draws on Tuck and Yang’s (2012) concept of ‘settler moves to innocence’, which I address in the previous chapter. Rendering decolonization a metaphor, they argue, makes possible a set of evasions -- “settler moves to innocence” – that attempt to assuage settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity. However, as an analytical lens, I have changed ‘innocence’ to ‘benevolence’. ‘Settler moves to benevolence’ captures what I perceive, as a Quebecoise woman, to be the use of benevolence to evade accusations of settler colonialism and to reconcile guilt while securing the Quebec nation’s futurity.

The use of the term ‘benevolence’ instead of ‘innocence’ is rooted in the widely held narrative that French settlers got along well with the Indigenous nations, that the French treated Indigenous relatively well and that its model of colonization was based more on cohabitation and cultural exchange than on outright conquest and assimilation. Moreover, the narrative lays the blame of the suffering caused to Indigenous communities on the British Empire. By extension, blame lies

with English Canada and the federal government. Quebecois people understand themselves as historically being in a joint struggle with Indigenous people against British imperialists and domination by English Canada. British imperialists were the common enemy of both and did not understand the culture of or integrate into the mixed societies of Nouvelle France.

The narrative of a “colonized” Quebec took hold in the 1960s when Quebecois began to refer to themselves as colonized (rather than conquered) by the British (Villeneuve, 2022). Mills (2010), in *The Empire Within*, explains how the wave of decolonization that took place in Asia and Africa from the late forties to the early 1960s had a major impact on many Quebecois activists. They related to this idea of a shared struggle with Indigenous Nations as both being colonized by the British Empire. They imagined themselves as part of a broad, transnational movement of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist resistance. Many commemorations across the Island depict moments of this good relationship, whether *Ahuntsic* (see section 4.2.2) who was commemorated in multiple ways, or the *Great Peace of Montreal*, also commemorated repeatedly and in many ways, strengthening the narrative that the white French settler was ‘a good and benevolent colonizer’ who had a (mostly) good relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

This association between colonizer, settler colonialism and benevolence are not new. Literature identifies debates linking the idea of ‘benevolence’ to violent colonizers and empires (Midgley 2010). Schrauwers (2020), for instance, demonstrates that early nineteenth century Dutch utopian social experiment in pauper relief through domestic settler colonialism, known as the ‘Colonies of Benevolence’. Globally, the so-called civilizing missions of Europeans were seen as benevolent, even charitable, moves by imperial powers to bring the benefits of their advanced society to the ‘uncivilized’ (Pomeranz, 2005). Schwartz (2013) outlines France’s “civilizing mission” to transmit their culture around the world, including to Nouvelle France, in a gesture of transnational inclusion. ‘Benevolent’ British Quaker settler colonial families took part in the Nineteenth Century Tasmanian genocide (Bischoff, 2020). Often contrasting itself to its southern neighbour, Canada has successfully promoted an identity of ‘benevolence’, with qualities such as kind, peaceful, tolerant, multicultural nation which is an image that erases the ongoing embeddedness of settler colonialism (Midzain-Gobin, 2021) and the violence required to eliminate Indigenous Peoples (Kwan, 2020) claim and retain the Land upon which the country lies. Memmi (1957), in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, remarks, however, that “the benevolent colonizer can never attain the good, for his only choice is not between good and evil, but between evil and uneasiness” (1957, p.87).

Tuck and Yang (2012) claim that without addressing the issue of stolen and unceded Indigenous Land, all other acts are meant to appease and create a narrative of reconciliation. 'Moves to innocence' permit settlers to not only avoid the need for and pain of actual decolonization, but to justify this avoidance in steps that bestow credit. 'Moves to benevolence' by the Quebecois enable them to not only co-identify as victims to British Empire then and the Rest of Canada now, but also maintain that French settlers had a benevolent relationship with Indigenous people. These accounts of settler sympathy, generosity, and acts of kindness towards Indigenous Peoples, while diverting the focus of the fact that the need for benevolence arose from Indigenous displacement. This 'move to benevolence' facilitates the same avoidance of decolonization as do 'moves to innocence' identified by Tuck and Yang (2012). As I will argue later in this chapter, the City of Montreal uses commemorations to continue to build on this myth of benevolence.

#### **4.1.4. Perpetuating Settler Dominance**

This final analytical lens employs the theoretical insight that "settler colonizers come to stay; invasion is a structure not an event." (Wolfe 2006, p. 388). The colonizers don't go home but come to stay, creating a new nation-state as they displace Indigenous Peoples. Kauanui (2016) underscores that taking settler colonialism as a structure challenges the idea that dispossession is a 'done deal', consigned to the past rather than an ongoing process. As Bruyneel (2020) explains in relation to this reality, settler colonial invasion of Indigenous Lands is constantly reproduced in settler societies (such as Canada). Settler futurity attempts to demonstrate that 'Native-European' relations are a thing of the past and that telling Native history as the past ensures the white future (Anderson in Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013).

To say that invasion is a structure, not an event, is therefore to say that the goal of Indigenous displacement and elimination not only continues as settler state projects but shapes most political, economic and social processes and institutions. On Turtle Island an example of the ongoing struggle can be seen with the Wet'suwet'en people's resistance of the exploitation of natural resources across the Lands they look after. This, Bruyneel points out, raises the question 'of how to trace and analyze the development, legitimization, and maintenance of the colonial structures in these societies' (Bruyneel 2020, p. 145).

Drawing on Baldwin's concept of the 'permanent virtuality' of the settler on stolen Land (2012, p. 173), Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) explain that 'futurity' refers to the ways in which,

“the future is rendered knowable through specific practices (i.e. calculation, imagination, and performance) and, in turn, intervenes upon the present through three anticipatory logics (i.e. pre-caution, pre-emption and preparedness)” (Baldwin 2012, p. 173). A settler colonial state is unstable because it is based on theft of Land, elimination of the Indigenous communities and needs to be validated through origin stories and foundational myths. The settler state faces ongoing resistance and contestation and will therefore pre-empt and be prepared to secure itself.

This is where I analytically draw a connection between commemoration and settler colonialism in Montreal. The City of Montreal uses commemoration to uphold the status quo, employing buzz words like ‘Metropolis of reconciliation’ while attempting to secure a settler futurity. This is what Tuck and Yang (2012) refer to as the fantasy where the ‘Native’ transfers their Land, their knowledge, and the very essence of Indigeneity to the settler for safe keeping. In turn, this allows for the settler state to rebrand itself to continue to seem progressive and aligned with growing concern for social justice and Indigenous rights, while continuing to exist as it is and exert governance over stolen Lands. To move from a settler colonial perspective, Indigenous commemorations must not only challenge and re-frame Canadian history, but also explore how Indigenous Peoples can assert their presence through their own commemorative practices (Groat and Anderson, 2021).

This lens does not negate that some recent commemorations have been welcomed by Indigenous communities. Indeed, there is a noticeable change in what is being commemorated and how it is being done. Indigenous people are clearly part of the commemorative process now more than ever. If we take the example of the *Tsi niion kwarihò:ten* (Our Ways) Peel’s Trail, it is a beautiful project that promotes Indigenous visibility and a multifaceted Indigenous worldview. The first installation, near the Peel Basin, has sculptures that are made by an Indigenous artist and includes a podcast with a storyteller who is also Indigenous and who speaks Kanien’keha. The display does not centre settlers or settler related history. It is a refreshing and welcome form of recognition within the city’s commemorative landscape. This analytical lens nevertheless allows us to examine the ways that commemorations like this one represent new ways that the settler city uses Indigeneity to present itself as forward-thinking, appeal to the masses and assuage social tensions and criticism. Already existing and future commemorations offer an opportunity for Indigenous communities and the City of Montreal to collaboratively re-examine and authentically retell Canada’s history in a decolonized way (Gosse, 2023).



## 4.2. FOUR ERAS OF ANALYSIS

In this section, I apply the four analytical lenses elaborated above to four eras within Montreal's history. Interpreted through the analytical lenses, each era provides insight into the City's representation of Indigenous Peoples through commemorations at given points in time. I have defined these periods as : Montreal New Metropolis (~1850s - 1950s); Reshaping and Renaming Montreal (mid 1950s - late 1980s); Montreal – a New Millennia (1990s - early 2000s); Montreal - Metropolis of Reconciliation (2008 - present day).

The goal in creating these four temporal divisions is to demonstrate how the City of Montreal's governing apparatus and leadership, particularly its elected mayors, have not only used commemoration to construct a narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment but also how this narrative has evolved over time. Analyzing commemorations across these four eras allows us to see that while recognitions have evolved from centering urban history of colonizers to focusing on Indigenous Peoples, municipal commemorations continue to support a narrative that serve the City of Montreal's legitimacy as settler colonial governing body.

In the following section, I will go over the structure of each era and how it helps answer the main question of this these which is: what commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal's narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment. And, if that narrative evolved through time. Firstly, each section has an argument stating how this section contributes to the overall thesis of this research. A brief section explaining the logic of each era followed by a short historical context to provide insight on governance as well as some important insight on the social climate of the time. Then an analysis for each era using the four analytical lenses previously explained. Finally, a short conclusion and reflection of change in the narrative of commemorations surrounding Indigenous Peoples.

### 5.2.1. Montreal a new Metropolis (~1850s-1950s)<sup>12</sup>

The *Constitutional Act, 1791*, divided the original Province of Quebec into two provinces: Lower Canada and Upper Canada. Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) were merged in 1841 to form the Province of Canada, also known as the United Province (1841 - 1866). From 1844 up until 1849 Montreal was its capital. In the years that followed, Montreal expanded both in size and in population partly due to fundamental changes in its transportation and industry (Linteau, 2009). By the 1820s, Montreal's population had surpassed that of Quebec City. By 1850, Montreal was a major economic centre. The continued improvements of the navigation system in the Lachine Canal and the establishment of a railroad allowed for an easy shipping of merchandise from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. These infrastructure developments strengthened the city's status as a growing commercial North American urban centre (Drouin, 2017).

Montreal's population tripled from late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to 1910 (Linteau, 2009). In the 1900s, following the expansion of the railway and navigation systems, new industries and manufacturers established themselves in the city. Montreal had also become an important Canadian financial and banking centre by this time (Drouin, 2017). The Bank of Montreal, the Bank of British North America, the Merchants Bank of Canada, Molson Bank, the Royal Bank of Canada, the Provincial Bank of Canada, the Laurentian Bank and many others all opened offices in what is now known as Vieux Montreal (Drouin, 2017).

The 1929 Wall Street stock market crash and the Great Depression had a tremendous impact on employment; almost a quarter of Montrealers had to rely on private charity and state aid in the early 1930s (MacLennan, 1984). While Montreal was Canada's largest urban centre, population declined during this period as many Montrealers left for more remote regions of Quebec. With the onset of WWII, however, Montreal's economy renewed as it becomes a major manufacturer of ammunitions and other war goods (Moos, 2018).

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<sup>12</sup> Note about commemorations prior to the first era. There are 8 commemorations (all in the form of toponymy) that existed prior to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are marked either as n.d. or prior to 1683 in the City's catalogue of toponymy. These names all originate from Indigenous languages and may have been used by Indigenous people prior to the settlers occupying the Land that is now called Montreal. For this reason, they will not be a part of the analysis.

Influenced by settler colonial stereotypes, commemorations inaugurated during this period draw heavily on racialized, simplistic, representations of often submissive or passive Indigenous people. The commemorations begin the narrative that underpins the City of Montreal's legitimacy as settler colonial governing body through the depiction of these 'first encounters'.

During this time, ~1850s-1950s, Montreal expanded and became a metropolis. Montreal officially became a city in 1832. The city's growth was directly linked to trade through the opening of the Lachine Canal, Montreal was the capital of the United Province from 1844 to 1849. The political goal was to present the city as a key North American urban centre (Linteau, 2009). When looking at the commemorations inaugurated during this period (see Figure 4.1 below), we notice a theme of the City looking to recount its founding story by looking back to the so- called 'first encounters' : Jacques Cartier's arrival in Hochelaga and Maisonneuve's implementing the settler agenda are used to present and define Montreal through an origin story.

Numéro	Commemoration	Date	Type
1	Monument à Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve	1895	Tangible
2	Rue du Fort-Lorette	1925	Toponymy
3	Parc Hochelaga	1930	Toponymy
4	Maisonneuve érige une croix sur la montagne (and more)	1931	Tangible
5	Art Dec Central Pavilion of Montreal Botanical Gardens	1933	Tangible
6	Parc Ahuntsic	1948	Toponymy
7	Rue de Biloxi	1950	Toponymy
8	Rue de Mobile	1950	Toponymy

**Figure 4.1: List of commemorations inaugurated in the first era**

Source: Clara Cobbett Labonté

Commemorations inaugurated during this time recount stories about the first encounters between the French settlers and the Indigenous people, in particular the Kanien'kehá:ka people. The focus is on recounting Montreal's founding story as from the 17th Century. In total, there are eight commemorations between 1895 and 1950, with the monument of Maisonneuve being the only one prior to 1925.

First, these commemorations reveal the persistent way in which Indigenous Peoples have been 'fixed in time' in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They further demonstrate how, even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City of Montreal continued to represent Indigenous people in this way. It is not only

that Indigenous people get fixed in time, but the time conveyed is simplistic, apolitical and devoid of issues such as the Seven Years War between the British and French Empires. In these commemorations, the 'native' is situated at the time of the first encounters, placed within the founding myth of the settler state, which does not in any manner capture the complexity of the period. The commemorations do not reveal, for instance, the continued resistance of Indigenous people and struggles for their sovereignty. As Belshaw et al. (2020) explain, the geopolitics of New France were complex and continually in flux. This is not reflected in the commemorations.

Instead, the City of Montreal, through its white settler gaze, chose to commemorate Indigenous Peoples as a homogeneous group, both submissive to white French settlers and nameless. In both depictions of Maisonneuve (in the painting: *Maisonneuve érige une croix sur la montagne* and the Maisonneuve monument) he is the important male figure; the leader, the founder and first governor of Ville-Marie. In the painting, Maisonneuve faces the priest, who is erecting the cross, the Indigenous men are sitting on the ground, also looking up at the priest. The white settler gaze places the white man as superior and the 'Indian man' as subordinate, giving in to Maisonneuve's stature and command. The monument shows Maisonneuve at the top of the column, his eyes fixed on the horizon, holding the flag of the king of France. At the foot are four people linked to the history of the foundation of Montréal. Three are actual people, the fourth is an anonymous Iroquois warrior who has no name. This nameless Indigenous symbol is used to validate Maisonneuve's power and command. The white settler gaze creates a narrative that the Indigenous person only exists as part of the white settler story and, in this case, a mythical origin story of Montreal. Indigenous people exist as an appendage to the white settler's agenda and agency.

The white settler gaze also creates a stereotypical image of the 'Native' as seen in the bas relief on the Botanical Garden administrative building. A bare-chested man wears a headpiece in a canoe to represent the birch tree. Next to him the 'Native' woman picks corn with two long braids in her hair. There may be nothing inherently wrong with these depictions at surface level. They are, after all, in a Botanical setting, representing birch and corn. However, it raises questions when these are the images reproduced in the 1930s as part of the administrative building. Like the Orientalism described by Edward Said, the 'other' in these pervasive images is constructed for the eyes of the outside observer. The often racist and romanticized stereotypes are inspired by and contribute to a worldview of exoticism, but at the same time are simplistic and unidimensional. The actual Indigenous person is a threat, must be eliminated and chased off the Land, but an ideal type of that person/group is placed on a building to effectively symbolize and bear witness to

settler colonial expansion and success. The commemorations tell the one-sided and incomplete (even factually wrong) story of the first encounters and the struggle for Land, sovereignty and way of life.

This first era thus reveals how the white settler gaze creates a fixed timeframe, situated around the first encounters and the arrival of the French settlers. Two hundred years after its founding and as it was becoming an important economic centre in North America, Montreal recounted this myth. By doing so, Montreal anchored these stereotypical, limited, racist depictions of Indigenous Peoples, allowing them to exist solely as people who were supportive of the settler colonial agenda.

#### **4.2.2. Reshaping and Renaming Montreal (mid 1950s - late 1980s)**

The next period coincides with the era of Jean Drapeau as Mayor of Montreal. Drapeau, who was in power for almost three decades, is remembered as the mayor who brought grandeur and grandiosity to a city in decline. Under Drapeau, Montreal became an 'archetypal' city of the modern era (Kaufman, 1999; Lortie, 2004) as he reshaped and renamed the city. Drapeau embarked on a program of urban change on a monumental scale. A new metro, comprehensive expressway network to align with its status as global city during the 1960s (Perl et al., 2015), skyscrapers, underground shopping promenades, and the 1967 World's Fair (which was also a celebration of the centennial of Canada), Place Ville Marie, Habitat 67, the Olympic stadium and the Biosphere. Montreal of that era is an example of the architectural, urban, and social transformations that many major Western cities underwent in the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century (Fortie, 2004). The change was in the built environment but also in the geography of Montreal itself. Indeed, the soil that was removed to create the metro system was used to create l'Île Notre-Dame entirely and enlarge l'Île Saint-Hélène (La Roche, 2017). In 1969, Drapeau also attracted a major league baseball team, the Montreal Expos, to the city. Drapeau also wrote personal letters to celebrities, inviting them as his personal guests to spread the good word about the city (McKenna, 2019).

By the 70s, with Montreal no longer the country's economic capital, Toronto took over as the leading Canadian metropolis. In reaction, during his campaign to be re-elected, Drapeau famously says; "*Laissons Toronto devenir Milan, Montréal sera toujours Rome*" (McKenna, 2016). Milan, like Toronto is the economic capital, but Montreal is Rome, central to country's identity and

connectivity; "All roads lead to Rome", after all. Montreal attracts tourists from all over the world, offers charm, beauty, old world European charm. For Drapeau, Montreal may not have been the most rich or populous city, but it remained pivotal as a North American metropolis.

During this era, Montreal is presented as a 'modern' city on the global stage through major international events and redesigning the city on a remarkable scale: Expo 67, the Metro and the underground city, expressways, huge commercial developments, arts complexes, public housing projects. While Montreal was being rebranded, redesigned, and presented to an international public, it drew on some Indigenous tokenism. But more notable is the absence of tangible commemoration and an unusual use of commemoration of toponymy in relation to the other three periods. As the city was being redesigned through major infrastructure development, the use of Indigenous words – manifested through tokenism – was a method to naturalize the white settler.

Not only did former Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, reshape the city of Montreal in preparation for major international events such as Expo 67, the 1976 Olympics and the *Floralies* exhibition of 1980, he also renamed many parts of the urban environment. Indeed, nearly a third of all the Indigenous toponymy from the City's catalogue emerged during Drapeau's mandates as Mayor. See Figure 4.2 below.

Numéro	Commemoration	Date	Type
1	Deux murales	1956	Tangible
2	Avenue Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	1956	Toponymy
3	Place Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	1956	Toponymy
4	Rue de Matane (LaSalle)	1959	Toponymy
5	Rue de Cabano (LaSalle)	1960	Toponymy
6	Rue Pontiac (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1961	Toponymy
7	Rue Saraguay (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1961	Toponymy
8	Rue Donnacona (Ville-Marie)	1962	Toponymy
9	Rue Riel (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1962	Toponymy
10	Terrasse Sagamo (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie)	1966	Toponymy
11	Rue de Saguenay (LaSalle)	1966	Toponymy
12	Kwakiutl	1967	Tangible
13	Rue Oka (Pierrefonds-Roxboro)	1975	Toponymy
14	Parc Régional du Bois-de-Saraguay (Ahuntsic-Cartierville)	1984	Toponymy
15	Chemin des Iroquois (Lachine)	1986	Toponymy

**Figure 4.2: List of commemorations inaugurated in the second era**

Source: Clara Cobbett Labonté

Considering that there are forty-four examples of Indigenous-related toponymy (eight of which predate the founding of Montreal), the fact that thirteen of these new place names were instated under Drapeau is significant. As Drapeau rebuilt the city, he renamed many of the streets. In what follows, I aim to understand why Jean Drapeau chose Indigenous words or references while remodeling the city to present it to the world. Also, I'll examine how tokenism is used in these international-facing events and urban transformations, as ways to 'indigenize' a settler city.

In building the 'modern Montreal' of the Twentieth Century, Drapeau conveyed the idea that Indigenous Peoples and modernity do not go together. Looking at the above list of toponymies, there doesn't appear to be a thematic thread linking them. Three refer to Indigenous leaders who either fought the British Empire and/or had established some form of connections with French settlers. Pontiac (whose name was in fact Obwandiyag) was an Odawa chief and leader of a

coalition of native nations opposing British rule during the so-called Pontiac Rebellion (Marsh, 2006). Louis Riel is a hero in Quebec, a defender of the Catholic religion and French Métis culture in Manitoba (Stanley, 2024). Donnacona or Chief Donnacona of Stadacona, near present day Quebec City, is believed to have had a close relationship with French settlers, helping many survive scurvy during the winter. In these three cases, the commonality is the reported positive relationship these three people established with French settlers and their shared resistance to the British empire, accounts that have been questioned for their historical integrity (see, for instance, Sanders, 2017). Again, we can recognize the fixed settler temporality where the recognition of Indigenous Peoples is situated centuries ago during the 'First Encounters'. The analytical lens of the 'settler moves to benevolence' can also be applied here. Celebrating these three 'allies' cements the narrative that the French settlers had a good relationship with Indigenous Peoples, that they were good colonizers in contrast to the British.

The ten other toponymies are from Indigenous languages or stem from Indigenous words. There is no clear indication as to why these names were selected. Pierre Bourque remarked that Drapeau brought Montreal into the Modern Age (Kaufman, 1999). However, it does not seem like Indigenous Peoples were part of his vision. There is hardly any documentation of Jean Drapeau that relates to Indigenous Peoples. This suggests that Indigenous Peoples were left out of the recognition processes of place-naming. Without the comprehensive involvement of various Indigenous Nations, the commemoration of/about them only perpetuates a settler colonial logic. Why use Indigenous words in a new 'modern' city's toponymy with no public statements or records about the intentionality of the commemoration?

This leaves the impression that these words, like those of the previous era, are in reference to the founding myth and that there was no real desire to include Indigenous Peoples in this new modern city. Another hypothesis to explain the use of Indigenous words is that they contribute to the narrative of a common history with Indigenous Peoples as a way of securing settler futurity. The use of Indigenous language for place-naming helps to legitimize and bind Montreal, the modern settler city, to these stolen Lands. It follows a long tradition of settlers using Indigenous names for stolen places as previously mentioned. Indigeneity served Jean Drapeau by allowing him to present Montreal as a legitimate city with settler colonialism as an event limited to the past, with Indigenous Peoples equally relegated to that past, part of the city's history rather than included in Drapeau's new-fashioned, trendy and global urban centre.



The rare information pertaining to Mayor Drapeau and tangible commemoration relates to Expo 67. Initially, Indigenous Peoples were not invited to participate in the world exhibition, *La terre des Hommes* (Man and His World), It is a bitter irony that the original people of the Land were not invited to an event organized on their Land. After exerting pressure on the Federal government, Indigenous peoples were granted a place in the event and had their own pavilion – the Indians of Canada Pavilion - where they were able to share their histories and cultures, but also to talk about colonialism and their difficult living conditions in current times (Dagenais, 2017). Rutherford and Miller (2006) argue that the Indian Pavilion was unique in its assertion of the portrayal of Native/Newcomer relations. It was groundbreaking to have access to a global stage to voice their experience as colonized peoples (Degré, 2022).

Museum and digital Asset Archivist Katie Ferrante (2020) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) explains that in 1968 Drapeau was inspired by a collection in Art of the Kwakiutl Indians at UBC's Museum of Anthropology and invited the museum to present a major exhibition of its First Nations collection as an extension of the Expo 67. In the end there was a substantial presentation of Indigenous cultures at the World Expo. However now, the only remaining feature of the Indian Pavilion of the Expo 67 is the Kwakiutl totem. Almost 80 years later, the totem showcases a typical art form of Indigenous Peoples from the West Coast of Canada. Drapeau did not ask Indigenous groups expelled from Montreal, living in reserves on the outskirts of the city, to show their art. Rather the West Coast art was used to showcase a particular palatable representation of Canadian 'Indian' art at an international exhibition. Expo 67 was not about a Canadian city's relations to Indigenous Peoples, but, rather, about showcasing this international Canadian city. Without much context to accompany this tangible commemoration, there is an element of homogenizing Indigenous Peoples; a visitor could easily leave thinking that all Indigenous cultures make totems. The totem is left on its own, as the 'Indian Pavilion' was demolished, with only a plaque nearby with very limited information that help contextualize it. As is, the commemoration feels incomplete and tokenizes Indigeneity. One can wonder why it was not maintained and used as an opportunity to continue to commemorate Indigenous Peoples from across Canada and especially the nearby First Nations living around Montreal.

To conclude, a large portion of Montreal's Indigenous toponymy came into being during the Jean Drapeau era. While this appears to promote the visibility of Indigenous cultures in the city, it does so in a way that serves the settler city through tokenism. There is no indication that Jean Drapeau consulted Indigenous Peoples as part of this renaming scheme. There are no public records on

these toponymies, on their choice and reason for the change. What appears is the fixed settler temporality of including the names of three supposed Indigenous allies to French settlers. The major development and infrastructure transformations undertaken across central Montreal under Drapeau represent a period when the City is most silent about its relations with Indigenous Peoples. When it came to presenting Montreal to the world in Expo 67, the Federal government, under pressure from First Nations, ultimately had to request the inclusion of the Indians of Canada Pavilion.

#### **4.2.3. Montreal - a New Millennium (1990s to early 2000s)**

The next period of interest begins in the years before the new millennium. Pierre Bourque of Vision Montréal served as mayor of Montreal from 1994 to 2001. As a young man, Bourque worked for the City of Montreal as a landscape coordinator for Expo 67, then as head of the exterior gardens of the Botanical Gardens and in 1976, was appointed chief horticulturist for the City of Montreal. He was also the key lead in the *Floralie* exhibition of 1980 (Gouvernement du Québec, 2019). It comes as no surprise then that his vision while being mayor of the city was to make Montreal into a big garden.

In 1990, the Kanesatake Resistance (also known as the Oka crisis) offered a different vision of Land use. A 78-day standoff between the Kanien'kehá:ka and Sureté du Québec, Quebec's provincial police force, and eventually the RCMP and Canadian Army, resulted from the proposed expansion of a golf course and development of townhouses on sacred burial grounds and disputed Land in Kanesatake (de Bruin, 2013). While not on Montreal Island, Oka is recognized as a crucial moment of Indigenous resistance because it exposed the historical formation of the founding myths of Canadian national identity. The event also highlighted Indigenous efforts to challenge those myths (Kalant, 2004). It is telling that there is no official commemoration for the gains made by the People of the Longhouse in Kanesatake, but that there are multiple commemorations for the mythical 1701 Great Peace of Montreal.

On two separate occasions, the City of Montreal decided to commemorate Indigenous Peoples solely on their participation in aiding the settler colonial state. The 'Great Peace of Montreal' provides the perfect opportunity for this narrative of benevolence where the French settlers come together with Indigenous Nations to sign a peace accord. The Great Peace of Montreal is used

repeatedly from the perspective of the white settler gaze as the main story of Indigenous Peoples keeps them in that fixed temporality of the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

For this era, five out of the seven Indigenous commemorations inaugurated between 1990 and 2007 relate to the treaty signed in 1701. See Figure 4.3 below.

Numéro	Commemoration	Date	Type
1	Rue Panis-Charles (Rivière-des-Prairies-Pointe-aux-Trembles)	1987	Toponymy
2	Cheval à plume	1988	Tangible
3	Site archéologique de la Chapelle-Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours	1996	Identification
4	Plaque du Belvédère Kondiaronk	1997	Tangible
5	Belvédère de Kondiaronk (Ville-Marie)	1997	Toponymy
6	Signatures of La Grande Paix de Montréal	2001	Tangible
7	Place de la Grande Paix-de-Montréal (Ville-Marie)	2001	Toponymy
8	First Nations Garden	2001	Identification
9	Parc Louis-Riel (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	2007	Toponymy

**Figure 4.3: List of commemorations inaugurated in the third era**

Source: Clara Cobbett Labonté

The Great Peace of Montreal was commemorated six times in total on the island of Montreal, which is 10% of all Indigenous commemorations in and by the city. Accordingly, this section examines both the numerous ways this event was commemorated as well as varied types of commemorations. The lens of ‘settler moves to benevolence’ is central in understanding why this specific moment was commemorated repeatedly, the last time being in 2018.

A few years after the confrontation, in 1996, to help ease tension and work on the government’s relationship with Indigenous Nations, the federal government declared June 21st National Indigenous Peoples Day (originally called National Aboriginal Day). A year later, in 1997, the City of Montreal, instead of addressing contemporary issues in their relations with Indigenous Peoples, twice commemorated Chief Kondiaronk, the Wendat chief who was one of the principal brokers of the peace treaty: via a plaque and through a toponymic change. The Belvedere on Mount Royal was renamed in honour of Kondiaronk, and part of Place d’Youville was renamed as Place de la Grande-Paix-de-Montréal.

In 2001, to mark the tricentennial celebration of the Great Peace treaty, the City of Montreal again recognized this historical moment with three separate commemorations. The first was toponymic, with a Square named *Place de la Grande-Paix-de-Montréal*. Also located in that space is a tangible commemoration of the engraved signatures of the Indigenous chiefs involved in the treaty. On top of that, to mark the 300th anniversary, a First Nations Garden was inaugurated at the Botanical Garden. This seems to have been a very personal way for Bourque to be involved in the commemorative process.

The story of the Great Peace of Montreal can be read through the four analytical lenses: fixed settler temporality, the White settler gaze, settler moves to benevolence, and perpetuating settler dominance. Celebrated and seen as a victorious moment where the French were able to conclude a peace agreement with the Five Nations Haudenosaunee (Jaenen and McIntosh, 2019), the official story is that the agreement, a peace treaty signed in 1701 by the Governor of New France, Louis-Hector de Callière, and 39 First Nations communities, marks an abiding memory anchored in Montreal. The Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Archaeology and History Complex, was named in homage to Louis-Hector de Callière as 'great defender of Montreal' (Pointe-à-Callière, n.d.).

The Quebec government interprets it as evidence that the French had a different position to Indigenous Peoples than did the British, enabling France to extend its military presence across North America and pursue trade and exploration without hindrance (Bureau du Québec à Ottawa, 2021). The *Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes* in Ottawa explains it as follows:

The peace agreement showed that France could take an approach to First Nations relations that differed from Britain's, and enabled it to extend its military presence across North America during the following half-century. Trade and exploration could resume without hindrance (Bureau du Québec à Ottawa -2021, para. 5).

The flyer, *The Great Peace of Montréal: a story of peace between nations*, states that the peace agreement shows that 'Québec has a long-standing tradition of respect for the Indigenous Peoples that can be traced back to 1701, when Montréal was the setting for an event that changed the course of history' (Bureau du Québec à Ottawa, 2021, para. 1).

One could argue that recognizing such an important treaty that marked Montreal's history and commemorating it the year of its three hundred years celebration is habitual commemorative practice. However, I would argue that this event was also recognized in 1997, four years prior and again in 2018. Also, many other moments in Indigenous history could have been recognized like

the Kanesatake resistance in 2000 marking a ten-year celebration. There is no such commemoration. Perhaps because it reminds the settlers that Indigenous Peoples are not relics of the past and perhaps because it speaks of their on-going resistance to the colonial state.

This fixed settler temporality frames the commemorations of the Great Peace of Montreal, as well as those of Chief Kondiaronk, in a fixed past of three hundred years ago. 'Settler time' consigns Indigenous Peoples to a motionless past while inserting them into the present to normalize non-Indigenous histories, geographies, and expectations (Rifkin, 2017). What this means within the context of the Great Peace is that racist depictions of Indigenous Peoples are used in contemporary commemorations to fulfill the White settler's gaze and confirm a new iteration of the settler colonial structure.

To continually commemorate the Great Peace of Montreal is revisionist as it focuses solely on the portion talking of coming together. It puts the emphasis on the peace agreement which provides the tools for the settlers move to benevolence. Indeed, what is celebrated through the commemorations of the Great Peace of Montreal is the end of decades of conflicts between the Haudenosaunee Nations and the French which marked a turning-point in the relation between them (Pointe-à-Callière, n.d). This makes it seem as though from that point on, Indigenous Peoples (because they often do not specify which Nations) and the French got along well and lived harmoniously. This not only helps the image of the settlers who now move into this image of the good and benevolent people, it also provides the foundation to ensure settler futurity. These commemorations create the narrative that there are no contemporary conflicts with Indigenous Peoples, which legitimizes the settler state, which in turns perpetuates settler dominance and governance. Through different means of communication, in this case commemorations in the urban landscape, the city arranges the retrospective gaze that recasts the past in the service of its future (Arbona, 2004). There is nothing more important for a settler state to secure its future and continue its mode of dominant governing.

Javier Arbona (2016) talks about the invisibility of uprising and resistance in public spaces of the city. He speaks of his own understanding of the concept "anti-memorial" which he sees existing beneath the collective memory produced by the city which exists in space and covers other forms of memories of resistance. In other words, by choosing to commemorate a certain space in a certain way, the settler state can make invisible memories of resistance. The stories of Indigenous Peoples being told by the settler state is an indication of how sites of memories are pacified to be

legible to and for the Montreal settler citizens. Therefore, it is important to look at commemorations as meticulously chosen pieces of a narrative that the city wants to tell. On the three-hundred-year celebration of the Great Peace of Montreal, the city opened a First Nations Garden. It is a space that aims to present the close bonds First Nations and the Inuit have always had with the plant world. A big portion of the garden already existed under the name Ecological Group and was an attempt to rebuild five Québec forest ecosystems. After a bit of rebranding, it was then presented to showcase how still, after three hundred years, the French and the Indigenous Peoples continue to uphold a harmonious relationship. The Botanical Garden states that rather than presenting the particularities of each nation, the Garden highlights the points of convergence between these peoples (Ville de Montréal, 2014). This again shows how the white settler gaze tends to homogenize Indigenous cultures and present them as a singular group.

This section shows us how settler colonial strategy focuses on a palatable portion of history, revised to suit the desired identity at the time. The continuous commemoration of the Great Peace of Montreal showcases all analytical lens: fixed settler temporality, the white settler gaze, the settler moves to benevolence as well as perpetuating the settler dominance. What could be overlooked as the commemoration of a tricentennial celebration, is in fact a well calculated way to keep alive a narrative that serves the settler state in many ways.

#### **4.2.4. Montreal, Metropolis of Reconciliation (2008- present day)**

The final period relates to the 2008-2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), its report and the way the City of Montreal has responded to its calls-to-action (CTA). The TRC brought into the public discourse the atrocities Canada committed against Indigenous Peoples. The TRC's final report was released in December 2015 and included 94 Calls to Action (CTAs), or recommendations on how to address this legacy and move towards reconciliation. The 94 CTAs are aimed at all levels of government, including for municipalities. In examining this era, I discuss how the Montreal's processes and narratives of commemoration have evolved since the TRC.

Three different mayors held office during this period: Gerald Tremblay (2001–2012), Denis Coderre (2013-2017) and Valérie Plante (2017 - present). Tremblay was implicated in construction corruption scandal and resigned as a result. In her 2015 report, Justice France Charbonneau concluded that corruption and collusion were widespread in the province at municipal levels where businesses teamed up with white collar workers to create a seamless system. The Charbonneau

Commission also highlighted that that organized crime had infiltrated the construction industry. In the wake of the scandal, Coderre presented himself as a mayor ridding Montreal of corruption and collusion, not unlike Jean Drapeau. However, he was himself questioned on accusations of corruption. Current Mayor Valérie Plante was elected in 2017 on a platform foregrounding to better represent Montrealers, to offer a sustainable future, a more inclusive city and family centered neighbourhoods (Projet Montréal, 2017). In that electoral platform, there was no mention of Indigenous Peoples.

However, only a year later, Valérie Plante and her party created the position of Commissioner of Indigenous relations, a position that Marie-Ève Bordeleau filled. In 2020, her administration presented the 2020-2025 five-year plan Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Included among the strategy's objectives is to improve the visibility of the Indigenous presence in the City of Montreal. One way to achieve this goal is through archaeological heritage, design and toponymy. Between 2016 and 2019, archaeological excavations in the downtown Rue Peel area uncovered remnants of Iroquoian history. Radiocarbon dating indicates that the site was occupied between the years 1350 and 1460. As previously mentioned, Plante makes clear in the Strategy her desire for Montreal to become a metropolis of reconciliation (Ville de Montréal 2020). A key step in improving the City's relationship with Indigenous Peoples was by appointing the first Commissioner for Indigenous Relations in 2018.

As part of a desire to address reconciliation, recent commemorations have involved Indigenous Peoples as part of the decision-making processes. These commemorations are not focused on settler stories in the same way the three other eras are. However, I nonetheless argue that these commemorations continue to serve the settler City of Montreal by making the city look progressive and with the times. Not only is this used as a marketing tool to secure settler futurity and perpetuate settler dominance, but it is also using Indigenous participation to validate the commemorations. These are acts of benevolence, of demonstrating that the City seeks collaboration with its Indigenous allies while not changing the terms of reconciliation. See Figure 4.4 below

Numéro	Commemoration	Date	Type
1	Rue Myra-Cree (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve)	2008	Toponymy
2	Parc du Quai-de-la-Tortue (Verdun)	2011	Toponymy
3	Belvédère du Chemin-qui-Marche (Ville-Marie)	2012	Toponymy
4	Rue du Chinook (Saint-Laurent)	2012	Toponymy
5	Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier	2012	Identification
6	The White Pine - Montreal City's flag	2017	Tangible
7	Archeologies	2017	Tangible
8	Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne (Côte-de-Neige-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce & Outremont)	2017	Toponymy
9	L'étreinte des temps	2018	Tangible
10	Dans l'attente...While waiting	2019	Tangible
11	Rue Atateken (Ville-Marie)	2019	Toponymy
12	Avenue Skaniatarati (Lachine)	2019	Toponymy
13	Sentier Tetewaianón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh (Ahuntisic-Cartierville)	2020	Toponymy
14	Centre Sanaaq (Ville-Marie)	2020	Toponymy
15	Tsi niion kwarihò:ten (Our Ways: Peel's Trail)	2023	Tangible

**Figure 4.4: List of commemorations inaugurated in the fourth era**

Source: Clara Cobbett Labonté

In 2017, for instance, the City redesigned its flag and coat of arms to include a white pine tree at its centre. The white pine is symbolic of the Indigenous Peoples, representing peace, harmony, and concord. It is the only indigenous plant element in the city's coat of arms. In 2018, the City of Montreal created a Commissioner of Indigenous Relations tasked with guiding and advising the city and the mayor on all aspects of relations between Montreal and Indigenous communities. This includes promoting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; developing training for city employees; and designing a reconciliation strategy for the city with internal partners based on a *paradigm shift*, including an “*Indigenous reflex*” in the city's policies and action plans (Therrien, n.d.). In 2020, three years after being elected mayor of Montreal, Valérie Plante presented the *2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* with the claim that Montreal has the desire to become a global metropolis of reconciliation. One of the seven objectives in that plan was to work on improving the visibility of the Indigenous presence in the City of Montreal.

In her speech on June 24th, 2024, in honour of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day / Fête Nationale du Québec, Valérie Plante shared that she wants to shine a light on “our history”, “our beautiful



French language” and “our identity in a spirit of unity” (Plante, 2024). Despite promoting Montreal as a metropolis of reconciliation, she did not once mention Indigenous Peoples in her speech. The content of the speech would suggest that celebrating Quebec is about celebrating its dominant culture. In fact, Plante’s speech that day closely echoed that of Quebec premier Francois Legault, given the same day. Legault, however, made a nod to Quebec’s First Peoples:

The Fête national is a time to reflect on how far we have come as a nation over the past 400 years. We remember pioneers like Samuel de Champlain, Jeanne Mance and Marie de L'Incarnation, who founded a French-speaking nation in North America with the help of the Indigenous Nations (Legault 2024).

Plante’s speech reveals the incoherences of and fragmentation within settler colonial state politics. On the one hand, there is a certain conformity to the nation-wide ideals of reconciliation that followed the TRC report in 2015. which are manifest in the City’s *2020-2025 Strategies of Reconciliation*. On the other hand, the Mayor of Montreal speaks of spirit of unity while remaining silent on how Quebec is a nation built on stolen Lands. It is a paradox to highlight and celebrate settler colonial identity that excludes and comes at the expense of Indigenous people while at the same time promoting reconciliation. This contradiction shows how solidifying a Francophone settler colonial metropolis is a much greater priority for Plante than reconciliation. This reflects, in sum, the politics of the City in relation to Indigenous Peoples. While commemorations during this era are more inclusive and the result of consultations with Indigenous Peoples, they continue to reflect this overarching settler state political vision. Coulthard (2014) reminds us that settler-colonialism is an ongoing social relationship embedded in political, social, and economic systems that still deny Indigenous claims for recognition and self-determination. Commemorations of Indigenous Peoples neither give Land back nor foster self-determination.

During Gerald Tremblay’s time as mayor of Montreal, five new Indigenous related toponymies came to be. In 2008, a modern-day figure of Indigenous history was finally commemorated: Myra Cree. Michelle Lamouche, former Chief of the Kanesatake Council, proclaimed that Cree was proud a member of her community who represented them well, and for this, was being honored in Montreal. She stated it was usually people from other communities who were recognized (Guilbault, 2017). These comments were in relation to Myra Cree being commemorated in the *Place des Montréalaises* which was supposed to be inaugurated in 2022 but, as of summer 2024, has not yet happened.

This new toponymy reflects a change from Indigenous Peoples systematically being fixed through commemoration in a settler temporality. This street name honours an indigenous woman who had a lasting impact on journalism and radio, and thus brings Indigenous Peoples into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as part of modern, urban society. Later, under Plante's governance, five new toponymies were introduced: the Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne park, Rue Atateken, Avenue Skaniatarati, Sentier Tetewaianón:ni Iakoiánaka'weh, and finally the name of a future community centre in Ville-Marie, Centre Sanaaq. The City claims that these are all part of its desire to better the relationship with Indigenous Peoples and move towards reconciliation. The change of name from Amherst to Atateken was very publicized and well received by many Indigenous leaders and activists and, indeed, contributes to increasing Indigenous visibility in the urban landscape. However, as critical geographers (Alderman, 2016; Masalha, 2015; Williamson, 2023) remind us, place-naming articulates a white settler colonial logic of place and (re) naming. Indeed, toponymy is used by settler states to tell contested histories. It is a way to legitimize the settler story upon stolen Lands while also taking possession of the Lands through the very process of renaming. In other words, renaming reinforces their settler claims to the Land and 'legitimizes' their settlements (Williamson, 2023).

The practice of (re)renaming places using indigenous languages, while still operating on stolen Land, in this way resembles a settler move to benevolence. Such commemoration gives Indigenous Peoples the opportunity to name a street on their own Land, while the settler state simultaneously perpetuates its dominance and secures its futurity as such. As Mugabo (2023) says, the use of Marie-Joseph Angélique for toponymy serves to transform her into a symbol of national redemption. I argue that the efforts made by the City to indigenize its toponymy thus serves a similar purpose. By offering small gesture, such as changing the name of a street to a word in an Indigenous language, the City of Montreal gets to perform their *mea culpa*, in a tangible, yet small way. It is an easy, low "cost" way for the municipality to wipe away its ongoing role of ethnic cleansing and dispossession as a settler state. Montreal uses such acts of commemoration to market itself globally as a reconciliation metropolis. This amounts to what Daigle (2019) calls a "spectacle of reconciliation" which is, at its core, performative. These new Indigenous-related toponymies are thus more about giving the impression of reconciliation while continuing to dispossess Indigenous Peoples from their Land.

In 2017 another monumental commemoration, the white pine, symbol of Indigenous Peoples, was placed at the centre of Montreal's new flag. Former Mayor Denis Coderre announced that the

initiative came as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNDRIP and would allow the city to start its new chapter toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (The Canadian Press, 2017). The white pine represents harmony and symbolizes the Haudenosaunee Tree of Peace. Placing the white pine on the Montreal flag clearly reflects the City's aim to include Indigenous Peoples as central to the city's identity. The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), participated in this commemorative process, marking an important aspect of the recognition processes common to this era. For many Indigenous Peoples however, the flag is a "triumphalist symbol of colonial violence and occupation" (Coulthard and Hern, 2022). Therefore, it's possible that some would see that as insult over injury, to have a significant symbol of Indigenous culture placed in the centre of the flag that represents the dispossession of your people. Mugabo's (2023) critical commemoration work calls into question the focus on representation and inclusion, arguing it is now one of the preferred modes of neoliberal governance. Coulthard (2014) also speaks to this, adding that the politics of recognition seek to temper Indigenous claims of Land Back and self-determination by absorbing them into symbolic acts that are sanitized governance regimes, palatable for the white settler gaze. In other words, they are moves to benevolence as they provide an image of the state working with Indigenous Peoples to better their relationship, while ignoring any demands that question the legitimacy of the settler state or respect and enact the claims made by Indigenous communities.

In sum, the City of Montreal, during this era of Truth and Reconciliation, addresses issues of Indigenous erasure by making certain chosen and calculated aspects of Indigenous cultures visible in the urban space. However, this is more about improving the City's image rather than trying address the systemic erasure that comes from being a settler city. The urban fabrication of mythical Indigeneity is consistent with Montreal's settler dreams of benevolence (Wark, 2021) and innocence (Tuck and Yang, 2012), and brushes under the carpet the fact that Montreal continues to be a settler colonial city. This section has demonstrated an evolution in the objects and processes of Indigenous commemorations following the TRC. The way Indigenous Peoples are involved in these different forms of recognitions has helped shift commemorations from centering settlers to Indigenous Peoples being at the centre of their own commemorations. This is an improvement as that was not always the case and not all representation has the same value and effect. However, these commemorations continue to be acceptable to the white settler gaze. I argue that the Municipality's desire and plan to become the Metropolis of Reconciliation is more self-serving in a way to display a progressive identity rather than really looking at ways to make significant changes and reparation in the later goal of reconciliation. The City of Montreal continues

its existence as a settler colonial governed space. I have argued that these commemorations serve as performative acts of reconciliation while claims of Land Back and self-determination are continuously ignored. Montreal is in a phase of performing reconciliation in ways that are both tame and in alignment with the white settler colonial gaze and, by doing so, conveys an image that appears progressive while continuing to operate as a settler colonial urban space.

### **4.3. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS**

This chapter demonstrated this claim along four analytical lenses - settler temporalities, settler gaze, settler benevolence, and settler futurity – used to study four historical eras. Many, if not most, of these commemorations analyzed in this chapter also partake in material and metaphorical layers of erasure. Because settler colonialism is an ongoing process in Montreal, as in other North American cities, the City's references to Indigenous Peoples contribute to their invisibilization. While the City of Montreal promotes reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples on a discursive level, the relationship continues to be shaped by ongoing settler colonial interests and an evolving white settler colonial identity. The older commemorations dehumanize Indigenous Peoples while the more recent commemorations have integrated Indigenous Peoples into the commemorative process in response to white settler colonial calls for reconciliation. Put differently, Indigenous Peoples exist through the settler gaze in the City of Montreal's visible commemorations.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated one aspect of the Indigenous commemorative landscape of Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal). Specifically, it has examined how the City of Montreal has recognized and commemorated Indigenous Peoples and how such commemorations have shaped the City's narratives of itself. As this research has demonstrated, commemorations are intentional ways of acknowledging the memory of people, places, events, and ideas. In other words, commemorations are story-telling tools that help build a city's identity. They play an important role in public memory by telling curated versions of stories. These tools, however, are strategically chosen to construct a desired image, and, in the case of Indigenous commemorations, serve to accompany the settler story, serving, as Tuck and Yang (2012) would describe it, as moves towards settler innocence. Following the 2008-2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), indigeneity is being translated into commemorations as part of the Canadian politics of recognition and serves as a symbolic step towards reconciliation.

The purpose of my research is to critique the ways the city has limited the existence of Indigenous perspectives in the commemorative landscape. However, I do not intend to minimize the continuous pushback from all Indigenous communities, towards the ways settler colonial cities try to erase them. The existence of some of these commemorations is a feat in it of itself. Although the state may at times use reconciliation as a neo-liberal box to tick, it does not take away the agency of Indigenous Peoples and their powerful fights against their colonial oppressor in demonstrating they have and will continue to be the stewards of these Lands. An important note, therefore, is that many of the Indigenous commemorations that figure in the Montreal landscape exist due to the political actions and resistance processes of Indigenous Peoples and their organizations. The variety and evolving commemorations of Indigenous Peoples not only reflect the political and societal changes taking place in Montreal but come as well from the ongoing pressure and demands made by First Nations people. Examples like the First Nations Gardens, the Great Peace commemorations and recent toponymic changes are all fruits of Indigenous resistance.

As Montreal strives to become a metropolis of reconciliation, the current Projet Montréal administration under Mayor Plante's adopted the *2020-2025 Strategy for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* to increase Indigenous visibility. One of the ways it does this is through commemorations. However, Montreal is a settler colonial city. For Wolfe (2006) settler colonists

differ from other colonists in that they “come to stay” and are concerned with the construction of a “new” society on the expropriated land base. This is the profile of Montreal, a settler colonial city of initially both French and British settlers and now resolutely Quebecois.

With that in mind, this research has examined how a settler state, in this case the City of Montreal, produces a narrative of benevolent association with Indigenous Peoples through commemorations, helping shape its changing identity throughout time. To do so I examine the ways that the City of Montreal recognizes Indigenous Peoples across the island and what these ongoing recognitions tell us about the City’s perceived relationship with them. Importantly, commemorations are never neutral, but, rather, are intersections of memory, power, identity, and performance. This thesis thus asked what commemorations tell us about the City of Montreal’s narrative of Indigenous Peoples in the urban environment. Additionally, this thesis provided a diachronic look at the way indigeneity has been presented in the municipal’s commemorative landscape. This provided an overview of how Indigenous commemorations have evolved to serve the desired narrative of the settler colonial city in different time periods. The findings speak to the wider Canadian context and other countries forged from aggressive settler colonialism.

In response to the research question, this thesis has argued that although recent recognitions have evolved – from centring urban history of colonizers through stereotypical, fixed-in-time representations of Indigenous Peoples to those that are more inclusive and less blatantly racist -- the commemorations continue to support a narrative that serves to underpin the City of Montreal’s legitimacy as a settler colonial governing body. My analysis of four distinct eras, read through four analytical lenses, have supported this claim.

To summarize, in the first era, from the late 19th century to mid 20th, was when Montreal celebrated 200 years of existence as a colonial entity and became an important North American economic centre. Some commemorations at the time are made to honour Montreal’s founding and these recognitions depict Indigenous Peoples using backwards imagery, stuck in the centuries predating the actual commemoration. Indigeneity is portrayed as only existing in a fixed temporality of the First Encounters. I also argued that Indigeneity exists in the commemorative landscape as a feature of the settler story and is mobilized as a tool to recount stories supporting the Montreal’s founding myth or origin story. Indigenous Peoples, in this era, did not exist beyond the white settler gaze. In other words, aside from Indigenous Peoples being used to tell the settler story of Montreal, they were largely invisible in the urban landscape. Essentially, they only existed

in the commemorative landscape through the eyes of the French settler and to support and validate the colonizers' story. This gaze produced limited and stereotypically racist depictions of Indigenous Peoples, who remained unnamed, absent, savage bodies serving white society.

The second era was defined by Jean Drapeau's long tenure as mayor of the City of Montreal. Between 1956 and 1986, a large portion of Montreal's Indigenous toponymy was implemented. However, there is no official narrative around these changes. Indigenous Peoples were not part of Drapeau's politics or vision, nor Drapeau consider Indigenous Nations when rebuilding the city and hosting international events. The absence of the "Indian Pavilion" in Expo 67's original plans is illustrative of this. While these new place names were Indigenous words or of Indigenous Peoples, I argue, these new toponymies served as tools to naturalize the French *Québécois* settler on these Lands. During this period, Montreal presented itself on the global stage as a model 'modern' city. The changes to the toponymic landscape told a safe and exotic origin story by using indigeneity. Indigeneity has a nostalgia factor, an appealing element of difference, a "spice" that makes the city's story interesting. It is also a way to legitimize the settler City of Montreal as owner of the Land through the narrative that there were once "Indians" living here, but with the arrival of the French settlers, the city naturally moved into a state of modernity. This was a way for the world to appreciate the exotic allure of the homogenous "Indian". During this period, Montreal showed how the white settler gaze, through commemoration, is entangled in an almost obsessive recounting of the founding myth. My examination of commemorations from this era also reveals a French settler desire to appear benevolent towards Indigenous Peoples, in contrast to the British conquerors who followed. In this way, these commemorations played a central role in creating a *Québécois* national identity, and to distance itself from the rest of (English) Canada,

The third era spanned the late 20<sup>th</sup> century up until 2008 and was characterized by settler colonial state's efforts to appease public opinion by creating palatable stories through commemorations. Indeed, during this period, the City fixated on versions of historical events that were revised to fix the dominant narrative. During this period, the Great Peace of Montreal was commemorated on multiple occasions and in a variety of ways in Montreal's public space. Again, these iterations showcased Indigenous Peoples in the fixed temporality of 300 years ago, erasing them again and again from the modern urban reality. Also, through this story, Montreal bolstered a narrative of allegiance between French settlers and Indigenous Nations, in which the French and the Indigenous Peoples got along and were able to live together in peace. This constitutes, I have argued, a settler move to benevolence, which feeds a narrative that is still very much alive in

Montreal, and in Quebec society, in general: that the French were “good colonizers”. This also helps perpetuate a dominant settler view that the current relationship with Indigenous Peoples is decent, and that it never truly was that bad. By keeping this narrative alive, the settler city anchors itself to a glorious historical moment, one that both legitimizes its existence on these Lands and secures its future.

Finally, the era of reconciliation began in 2008 with the Truth and Recognition Commission and continues into the present day. Commemorations inaugurated during this period are very clearly shaped by the municipal response to the TRC to find new ways to connect to and reconcile with Indigenous Nations. This era demonstrates the greatest evolution in terms of both style of Indigenous commemorative landscape in Montreal and the underlying intentions and processes. Commemorations that have been inaugurated during this period demonstrate the inclusive and consultative processes that took place between the City of Montreal and Indigenous communities. These have allowed for Indigenous perspectives and voices to be centered in the multiple forms of recognition expressed in the commemorations. Indigenous voices in public sphere have generally responded positively to these new commemorations, stating that they represent tangible actions towards a path of reconciliation. The addition of the pine in the centre of the Montreal flag, for instance, is a great example of these processes and this is reflected in the positive response from Montreal’s Indigenous communities. However, despite these changes and ‘improvements’, I argue that these commemorations continue to appeal to the white settler gaze. Moreover, they reveal a new face of settler moves to benevolence and are a means to securing settler futurity. What is being commemorated are ultimately apolitical; the new commemorations don’t raise controversial topics that risk unsettling the settlers. Tuck and Yang (2012) describe this kind of decolonization – or reconciliation in this case - as a metaphor. In other words, reconciliation cannot only be the easy act of commemoration through a beautiful statue or words. The Peel Trail is such an example of beautiful commemoration that is established on stolen and unceded Lands of Montreal. The Peel Trail’s first stop is a commemoration of the Kanien’kehá:ka’s ties to *Kaniatarowanéhne* or *Kahrhionhwa’kó:wa* (the Saint Lawrence River). On the one hand, such commemoration does present aspects of Indigenous stories and culture, I have argued here, however, that while it does a better job commemorating indigeneity, it also allows the City of Montreal to present itself on the global stage as progressive. I’ve further argued that these newer commemorations serve as performative acts of reconciliation to deter attention from more polarizing claims, such as “Land Back”. Eventually, these new commemorations still constitute settler moves to benevolence, which, in turn, help secure the settler state. By doing the bare



minimum to address goals to increase Indigenous visibility, the City carefully chooses what is should “un-erase” of the Indigenous ties to the Land on which Montreal was founded.

### **5.1. Relevance of research**

This research has highlighted the lack of research in this academic field. There is very little on Indigenous commemoration and even less in the Canadian context; literature on the topic is practically non-existent for Montreal. When looking for more focused research on specific types of commemorations, whether toponymy, tangible, ceremonial or other forms, the documentation is scarce. Research on Montreal as a settler city and the ramifications this has on Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous communities, and their relationships with the settler state, is wholly lacking. More knowledge on the relations between settler cities and Indigenous Peoples from a critical geography perspective will better guide municipalities as they are work on paths to reconciliation.

Early in the thesis I mentioned writing to the first Commissioner for Relations with Indigenous Peoples, Marie-Eve Bordeleau, to ask her if a list of Indigenous commemorations existed. She replied that there was currently no directory of all the municipal forms of recognition and, consequently, no such list existed. This was – and continues to be – astounding. How can a city like Montreal not have compiled a list of commemorations in association with Indigenous communities? This lacuna demonstrates the ingrained settler colonial vision of the City of Montreal. However, she did imply that a cataloguing was currently taking place along with the adoption of the *Cadre d'intervention en reconnaissance*. This suggests that the city is (or was in 2022) actively working on the agenda of Indigenous visibility through commemorations. Once this is done, it will help people gain a better understanding of the municipal Indigenous commemorative landscape. This, in turn, will increase visibility and help reverse the history of marginalization and invisibilization. It could then be used as a tool to create walking tours and other incentives to guide people as they visit these commemorations. These two aspects, both empirical and theoretical – responding to the important gap in scholarship to the lack of classification and available data set of municipal commemorations relating to Indigenous Peoples – point to the relevance of my research to current societal and academic debates.

## 5.2. Potential Paths for Further Research

This master's thesis has revealed several potential paths for future research. The results of my research point to a promising research agenda that could contribute to adding to the literature on settler colonialism in Quebec, in general, and in Montreal, in particular. More detailed empirical research, for instance via a doctoral project on commemorations in Montreal would potentially lead to unearthing more data. This would help bridge the gap on intersections between Indigenous Peoples, state visions and power, commemorations, collective memory, and settler colonial identities.

A change in the island's commemorative landscape could also arise from public conversations on the removal of violent commemorations. For instance, the Mohawk Mothers have been demanding that the cross on *tekanontak* (Mont-Royal) be removed as it is a constant reminder of the atrocities committed against them: dispossession and the violence from the Christian Church.

Following this same logic, there is a lot of research underway worldwide on the removal of controversial colonial figures such as John A. MacDonald, a statue of whom was toppled a few years ago in Montreal. This leads to conversations about the different ways these controversial people and events should be commemorated, and whether monuments to them should be revised or taken down. Research in Montreal could look at specific monuments which have long histories of being vandalized. As I was finishing this research, the monument for Queen Victoria was vandalized in protest of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec's investment in Israel, another settler-state, which is actively committing genocide against the Palestinian people. Monuments and how they are perceived throughout time are indicative of social climate and help understand what is seen as important for different groups of marginalized and oppressed people. Future study could therefore be an opportunity to investigate the colonial commemorative landscape and the ongoing violence it evokes, along with the resistance that wants the landscape changed. This is the other side of the commemorative story and would contribute to a more comprehensive and inclusive view of how Montreal tells its settler colonial story. Studying the commemorations of colonial figures like Dollard des Ormeaux, for example, would reveal how, in comparison to these celebrated settler colonial figures, there really is a lack of commemorations of actual Indigenous Peoples tied to these figures through state action. It would be one way to demonstrate Indigenous erasure.

Finally, Tiohtiá:ke is not and never will be reduced to its settler colonial identity, it was and remains Indigenous unceded Lands with Indigenous landmarks, places and practices that are shared between Indigenous Nations. Additional Indigenous perspectives and knowledge would add much needed varied epistemologies and methods to the academic research. In the context of recognition and commemoration, for example, a study in which Indigenous Peoples, from various communities, speak on what would be significant ways of honouring them in the urban landscape, would be beneficial, provided such a study would be of interest or relevant to these communities.

For this thesis, I had initially tried to study “missing” commemorations in the urban landscape. This came from the idea that indigeneity was not readily visible in Montreal, and specifically not in the commemorative landscape. This led to me question what might be commemorated. For example, significant events like the Kanesatake Resistance (Oka Crisis) are non-existent in the landscape of municipal recognition. This very recent and visceral collective memory has not been given new life through a commemoration. Given the magnitude of this historic moment in the modern history of Montreal, one would expect some sort of commemoration of it. Another example of missing commemorations are the ones related to multiple archeological sites, some of which are only very minimally commemorated. The discoveries – of the Hochelaga village, for example – are extremely significant, yet the City’s website commemorates archeology of settlers, with only a tiny portion focusing on the unexpected discoveries related to Indigenous Peoples and dating back hundreds (if not thousands) of years. Other archeological sites are simply not commemorated at all, adding to of erasure of Indigenous history in Montreal. This shows the various levels and methods of erasure of thousands of years of Indigenous presence. This type of research would require having in-depth conversation with various groups of Indigenous Peoples to shed light on what they perceive as “missing” commemorations, which I believe would provide rich information as to what has been erased by the settler colonial states. Commemoration shapes identity, public memory, and sense of belonging. Despite the work is has done to secure settler colonialism and settler futurity, it can also be a tool to repair some damage caused by systemic erasure of Indigenous Peoples by settler-cities.

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