From Empire Avenue to Hiawatha Road: (Post)colonial naming practices in the Toronto Street Index

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Abstract: The paper combines critical toponymy, the linguistic landscape approach and postcolonial studies in order to analyse the odonyms of Toronto. After discussing the concept of street names as linguistic items in which hegemonic cultural discourses are codified by means of naming strategies that aim at representing national identity, the paper focuses on the dichotomy between centre and periphery in postcolonial contexts. The same binary system is retraced in the Toronto odonyms that commemorate, on the one hand, the Royal Family and other figures of the Canadian colonial past and, on the other, the Aboriginal cultures and languages of Canada.

Keywords: odonyms, Toronto, critical toponymic research, linguistic landscape, postcolonial studies.

Introduction

Naming is never a neutral practice since those who name always bestow some qualities and values on the named ones. This is even more so when naming is an act of domination and control through which a linguistic and cultural identity is forced upon someone who is identified according to the hegemonic discourses of a given culture. Such naming practices are still part of the discriminating strategies used to label minority groups in modern societies and were systematically adopted during the imperial expansions of the west to define colonial otherness from a Eurocentric perspective. The European colonial history of control and exploitation of other continents was supported by the production of new maps in which the unknown was made known to the western eye. Not only was a name given to what was nameless for the European explorer, but also what was already identified by an Aboriginal name was modified and accommodated to the European ear and mouth. Suffice it to mention the many North American toponyms deriving from Aboriginal languages that have been adapted to the English or French phonetic systems and integrated into North American cultures in such a pervasive way that they are perceived as English despite their history and etymology. For instance, how many people would think of Canada or Toronto as Aboriginal names when they travel to the country above the 49th parallel or as they walk on the streets of the metropolis on the shores of Lake Ontario?

This paper aims at analysing the street names of the City of Toronto from a perspective that, by combining Onomastics with the Linguistic Landscape approach, retraces in the odonyms of the city the signs of the colonial history of Canada and its recent multicultural policies. Indeed, reading the street names of Toronto as if they were a text is like questioning the colonial past of the city and its postcolonial legacy. For space and time reasons, the paper focuses exclusively on the juxtaposition of coloniser and colonised, i.e. the British Empire and one of its symbols (the Royal Family) and the Canadian Aboriginal communities. The study of the other languages and cultures of the Canadian mosaic that can be found in the Toronto odonyms is to be further investigated in other phases of a research project that aims at mapping the multilingual and multicultural street names of Canada and other postcolonial countries.

Theoretical and methodological background

From a methodological point of view, the paper builds on the theoretical encounter between Onomastics and Critical Toponymic research (Berg and Voulteenaho 2009; Felecan 2012; Rose-Redwood 2008), the Linguistic Landscape approach (Backhaus 2007; Gorter, Marten and Van Mensel 2012; Landry and Bourhis 1997; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael and Barni 2010) and Postcolonial Studies (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2002; Pennycook 1998). Such intersections allow to analyse odonyms not only from a Critical Toponymic perspective, but to place them within the postcolonial linguistic landscape as well. According to Critical Toponymy, naming plays a key role in

> [t]he colonial silencing of indigenous cultures, the canonization of nationalist ideals in the nomenclature of cities and topographic maps, the construction of commodified neoliberal urban landscape, the contestations over identity and place at the level of street naming, as well as the formation of more or less fluid forms of postcolonial identities. (Vuolteenaho and Berg 2009: 2)

Besides "dismembering […] cultures, identities, languages" (Palusci 2009: 278), such silencing practices are forms of spatial appropriation through language, i.e. "hegemonic acts of naming [that] transform polymorphous and uncontrollable 'space' into a finite system of neatly isolatable, stabilized and interconnected 'place'" (Vuolteenaho and Berg 2009: 10). According to Berg and Kearns, naming is a form of norming which "reinforces claims of national ownership, state power, and masculine control" (2009: 20). In other words, given the fact that places are socially and culturally *made* by acts of naming, toponyms are discursive spaces where geography is turned into history by means of commemorative names and acquires a symbolic function within the narrations and representations of a country. The assumption that colonies were a sort of *terra nullius* in need of being shaped by the civilising tools (and weapons) of the west justified the imperial enterprise of charting the world in which toponyms played – and still play – a pivotal role,

> for they provide the means of filling ostensibly empty space (on maps) with meaningful points of interest. The use (and reproduction) of place names can thus be seen as a means of communicating (often ideological) meaning about place. (Berg and Kearns 2009: 26)

By destroying the connections between space and its first inhabitants, the imperial naming practices caused "the collapsing of the tropological relationship between signifiers and referents [which] enabled the colonial strategy of control and possession" (Russo 2010: 22). Not only was the landscape renamed and new towns and cites founded and chartered, but also the sense of identity and belonging of the Aboriginal people subverted and perverted for good. Indeed, besides forcing a new geography on their history and a new history on their geography, such naming practices "totalize[d] space by imposing hierarchical, often monolingual spatial nomenclatures" (Vuolteenhao and Berg 2009: 10), which resulted in the annihilation of their languages or the appropriation of their toponyms through a processes of linguistic borrowing that was based on adaptation and a form of 'linguistic cannibalism'. Such process is quite common in North America, where borrowed Aboriginal toponyms coexist along with place names that commemorate the national heroes and historical events of the country.

As a category of place names, odonyms work in a similar way since "they introduce an official version of history into networks of social communication that involve ordinary urban experiences that seem to be separated from the realm of political ideology" (Azaryahu 2009: 53). Such separation from hegemonic discourses is ostensible as street names

> intersect between urban space and official ideologies and mediate between political elites and 'ordinary' people. They communicate official representations of the ruling socio-political order. In particular, when used for commemorative purposes they inscribe an official version of history onto the cityscape […]. (ibid: 53–54)

In other words, street names and street naming are part of the narrations of the cityscape, where "history becomes a concrete semiotic reality" (ibid: 54). Moreover, because of their administrative functions, odonyms tend to be more or less stable over the years in order not to create confusion or ambiguity. As a consequence, their discursive components tend to fossilise as the 'story' they tell crystallises in time and space. In the case of colonial names, this means that it takes time as well as political and social awareness to change the legacy of the imperial past encrusted on the odonyms of a postcolonial metropolis. Both naming and renaming streets are discursive practices encoded on the map of the city-text. What differentiates the two acts is the linguistic and cultural point of view from which they are performed. As regards Canada, this has informed also the national narratives of an officially bilingual and multicultural country that is still looking for its legitimation. On the one hand, since odonyms are part of "the complexities of language policies in their relationship to colonial governance" (Pennycook 2007: 68), they are one of the sites of colonial knowledge production. On the other, however, "the renaming of streets in postcolonial societies has been interpreted as an ideologically tool to divest the landscape of its colonial associations and achieve political legitimation" (Yeoh 2009: 72). Such strategies of postcolonial abrogation of colonial discourses include the "written display of minority languages in the public space" (Marten, Van Mensel and Gorter 2012: 1) and, as far as odonyms are concerned, the replacement of old names with new ones.

I believe that together with Critical Toponymy, the Linguistic Landscape approach should be adopted to study odonyms as sites of discursive production because both postulate a dynamic vision of public urban space that better suits the analysis of street names

in postcolonial contexts. Scholars generally concur that the Linguistic Landscape is "the language of public road signs, advertising, billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings [which] combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (Landry and Bourhis 1997: 25). Backhaus furthermore distinguishes between Linguistic Landscaping and Linguistic Landscape, where the former "refers to the planning and implementation of actions pertaining to language on signs", while the latter "denotes the result of these actions" (Backhaus 2007: 10). Although both are necessary to have a full picture of postcolonial cityscapes, for time reasons I will focus here on the Linguistic Landscape only. Hence, I will adopt a synchronic perspective that is similar to that of a 'linguistic flâneur', i.e. someone reading a street directory and focusing on the coexistence of more languages within its street names. The Linguistic Landscape is indeed multilingual as

> values like patriotism and national pride directly impact on the use of official languages, ethnic allegiances that may find their paths to the public scene through tokens stemming from community vernaculars, commercial competition and allegiances to globalization that are imprinted in the use of present-day recognized *lingua franca*, i.e. English. It is here that one also finds expressions of conflicts between groups, and attempts to political bodies to 'maintain some order' by enforcing strict regulations. (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy and Barni 2010: xiii)

In other words, it is in such public space that the national and/or local discourses on shared cultural values and historical memory are linguistically codified at the crossroads of street names. In order to study such prismatic map of urban signs, Backhaus maintains that "[i]t must be clarified how to determine (1) the survey area(s), (2) the survey items, and (3) their linguistic properties" (2007: 61). The next section will outline these three points.

Toronto and the *Toronto Street Index*

Toronto is the largest metropolis in Canada and the most multicultural one by far. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) stretches over an area of 7,124 sq km and is home to 6,054,191 Torontonians (Census 2011). It is divided into 25 municipalities grouped in five main regions, i.e. the City of Toronto, Halton, Peel, York and Durham. With a population of 2,615,060 (43.2% of the entire GTA's population), the City of Toronto is the largest municipality and the survey area for this paper. According to the 2011 Census, 19,270 citizens of Aboriginal descent (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) live in the City of Toronto (0.8% of the whole population). As far as languages are concerned, English is spoken as a first language (L1) by 51% of the population, while the other official language of the country – French – is spoken by 1% of Torontonians. Whereas 3% of the inhabitants of Toronto speak multiple first languages, 45% of them speak a non-official language as their L1. The following table summarizes the top–15 non-English languages spoken in the City of Toronto in 2011:[1]

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[1]   The data have been taken from the City of Toronto official website at http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/index.htm (last accessed June 2013).

Table 1. Top–15 non-English first languages spoken in the City of Toronto (Census 2011)

Non-English first language	Number of speakers
Chinese varieties other than Cantonese and Mandarin	91,210
Cantonese	83,955
Italian	71,725
Spanish	70,760
Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	70,465
Tamil	61,600
Mandarin	59,820
Portuguese	58,175
Persian (Farsi)	41,905
Urdu	38,005
Russian	36,950
Other languages	36,650
French	32,665
Korean	31,135
Greek	29,020

The survey items for this analysis are the odonyms listed in the *Toronto Street Index* published by Toronto City Planning in April 2010 as part of the Zoning Bylaw Project. The 196-page document, which is available online at http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2010/agendas/committees/pg/bgrd/2010-04–21-address-streetindex.pdf, is a list of about 11,000 odonyms, which are the corpus of this paper. As for the linguistic properties and functions of these items, they "provide the user of the city with spatial orientation […], designate locations and pronounce certain thoroughfares as distinct urban units" (Azaryahu 2009: 53). Moreover, they can be considered quite stable over time and are official top-down signs, i.e. they are issued by public authorities specifically appointed to name urban streets.

Although one would not expect that the street names of Toronto would mirror the percentage of languages shown in Table 1, it is quite interesting to notice that the amount of odonyms in a language other than English is rather paltry. According to Census 2011, 49% of those living in the City of Toronto identify themselves as migrants, and 33% of them arrived on the shores of Lake Ontario between 2001 and 2011. My point here is not that odonyms should mirror the percentage of the languages spoken by the communities of migrants living in Toronto – shop signs are a way better corpus to study in this case. At the very same time, however, the fact that English is employed in about 98% of the street names of the most culturally and linguistically diverse city of Canada is a little bit at odds with the multicultural and multilingual representations of the country. Nevertheless, given the particular nature of odonyms – especially the fact that they tend to resist change for practical and administrative reasons – I believe that from a postcolonial point of view it is more interesting to focus either on the relationship between hegemonic and minority languages in metropolitan street names (Linguistic Landscape) or on the naming practices adopted whenever a new street is named (Linguistic Landscaping).

As a matter of fact, such practices may give voice to the current narrative strategies of national representation and inclusion of Canada's cultural and linguistic diversity, while

a comparison between the existing odonyms and the new ones may show the direction the country is taking as far as language policies are concerned. On the other hand, the postcolonial practices of renaming streets that are disturbing symbols of imperialism may lead to a re-elaboration of Canada's colonial past, especially as regards its Aboriginal communities. In other words, since odonyms are among the slowest elements of the linguistic landscape to keep up with cultural and linguistic changes – unless we are dealing with brand new districts that need to be named from scratch – I think that it is more productive to focus on the relationship between colonisers and colonised, i.e. the British and the Aboriginal people of Canada.[2] In order to analyse the colonial and postcolonial discourses codified in the Toronto odonyms, the next section will focus on the relationship between the street names linked to the centre of colonial power, i.e. Great Britain, and its most pervasive symbol – the Royal Family – and the names that still bear the traces of the Aboriginal languages and cultures of Canada.

Centre and periphery in the imperial and Aboriginal odonyms of Toronto

The representation of colonial otherness stems from the binary system of juxtaposition between centre and periphery that defines the margins in relation to the centre of power. Despite the collapse of the British Empire and the subsequent independence of its dominions and colonies in the 20th century, such dichotomous relationship is still maintained within institutions such as the Commonwealth of Nations, which, notwithstanding its networking role, reiterates the relationship between the centre and its manifold peripheries. Walking in the streets of downtown Toronto and looking for the names of its streets, for instance, is like reading the traces of that power, which I believe is expressed at its most through references to British aristocracy and the Royal Family – we should not forget that the British monarch is still the Head of State of Canada.

Although this paper does not aim to be a quantitative study of the odonyms of Toronto, the fact that many of the most important thoroughfares of the city centre are named after historical figures of the colonial era is quite self-revealing. Being the oldest part of the metropolis, it has also been the first to be named, which means that many of its odonyms date back to the time when Canada was a Dominion. It is no surprise, then, that its streets are a celebration of the British Monarchy and a glorification of the heroes of the Empire. What is interesting for us today is the fact that they are still there to remind us of Canada's colonial heritage. The discursive power of such odonyms emerges also in the descriptions of their history in *Toronto Street Names: An Illustrated Guide to their Origins* by Leonard Wise and Allan Gould (2000), in which history and geography intertwine:

> Street names provide a highly visible record of Toronto's history. Each day as we walk, cycle or drive through the city, scenes from history flash by. At Yonge we see the Queen's Rangers cutting through the bush when the town of York was founded in 1794. On Davenport a column of Natives follows an ancient route from the Don River to the Humber. Jarvis recalls a tragic duel when a headstrong 18-year-old met his death. Roncesvalles shows us future residents of

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2   There is no need to say that the other linguistic and cultural minorities of Canada deserve to be studied from an odonymic point of view as well. This, however, would require more than one paper and is thus only mentioned here.

Toronto fighting in Spain against Napoleon's troops. At Montgomery we see rebels with pitch-forks confronting the armed militia during the Rebellion of 1837. At the Gardiner Expressway we observe an early Metro Council meeting dominated by the first chairman, Fred Gardiner. Toronto's rich history has been intricately woven into the names of our streets. From the early 10-block settlement on the lakefront laid out by Governor Simcoe in 1793 to the sprawling megacity of 2000, Toronto has spread inexorably into the surrounding countryside, level-ling ravines and paving over streams. And every step of development is reflected in our street names. (Wise and Gould 2000: 9)

Such narratives build on the idea that odonyms tell a story that is hidden in their etymologies. In the introduction to their book, Wise and Gould mention the First Nations along with the Queen and Governor Simcoe. The coexistence of coloniser and colonised in the street names of the city centre, however, is illusory as the presence of the latter is marginal. Out of about 350 street names listed in the book, only six have direct connections with the First Nations, i.e. Huron Street, Indian Road, Tecumseth Place, Tecumseth Street, Spadina Avenue and Spadina Road. While the origin of the first four is quite obvious, the latter two are a good example of adaptation and assimilation. Spadina, in fact, "is derived from Espadinong, an Indian [sic] word meaning a little hill" (Arthur 2003: 291) and was chosen in the 1830s by William Warren Baldwin to name the street that led to his mansion on the top of a hill.

The traces of Canada's imperial past, on the contrary, are everywhere, especially in the odonyms of the main streets of downtown Toronto. Even though the names of the figures that contributed to the conquest and government of the Dominion of Canada are pivotal in the discourses on national representation, in this paper I focus on the names that directly connect to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, i.e. the names that, by evoking the Royal Family, celebrate the centre and simultaneously mark the marginal position of the ex-colony. The following table gathers the most important ones:

Table 2. Royal and imperial odonyms in the *Toronto Street Index*

Toronto royal and imperial odonyms	Description
Albert St	Prince Consort Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1819–61), Queen Victoria's husband
Alberta Ave	Princess Louise Caroline Alberta (1848–1939), Queen Victoria's fourth daughter
Balmoral Ave	Balmoral Castle, one of the Royal residences in Scotland
Bathurst St	Henry Bathurst, 3rd Earl of Bathurst (1762–1834), Secretary of War for the Colonies (1812–1827)
Brunswick Ave	Caroline Brunswick of Wolfenbüttel (1768–1821), Wife of King George IV
Buckingham Ave	Buckingham Palace, official royal residence in London
Clarence Sq	Prince William Henry (1765–1837), Duke of Clarence, King William IV in 1830
Cook Rd	Captain James Cook (1728–1779), British explorer and cartographer

Empress Ave	Alexandrina Victoria (1819–1901) Queen of England (1837–1901) and Empress of India
George St	George IV (1762–1830), King of England
Hanover Rd	House of Hanover, Royal dynasty
King St	George III (1738–1820), King of England
Marlborough Ave	John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722) English general
Melbourne Ave/Pl	William Lamb, Lord Melbourne (1779–1848) Prime Minister of England (1834 and 1835–1841)
Nelson St	Horatio Nelson (1758–1805), Naval hero
Palmerston Ave/Blvd/Gdns/ Sq	Lord Henry John Palmerston (1784–1865) Prime Minister of England (1855–65)
Pembroke St	William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (1580–1610) Lord Chamberlain under James I (1615–1625)
Prince Arthur Ave	Prince Arthur William Patrick Albert (1850–1942) Queen Victoria's third son
Prince Andrew Pl	Andrew, Duke of York (1960-) Queen Elizabeth II's second son
Prince Charles Dr	Charles, Prince of Wales (1948-) Queen Elizabeth II's first son
Prince Edward Dr	Edward, Earl of Wessex (1964-) Queen Elizabeth II's third son
Prince Philip Blvd	Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (1921-) Queen Elizabeth II's husband
Prince William Crt	Prince William (1982-), Duke of Cambridge Queen Elizabeth II's first grandson
Princess Anne Cres	Anne, Princess Royal (1950-) Queen Elizabeth II's first daughter
Princess Margaret Blvd	Margaret, Countess of Snowdon (1930–2002) Queen Elizabeth II's sister
Queen St	Formerly known as Lot Street, renamed in 1844 in honour of Queen Victoria
Queen Anne Rd	Anne (1665–1714), Queen of England (1701–1714)
Queen Elizabeth Blvd	Elizabeth Alexandra Mary (1926-), Queen of England (1952-)
Victoria St/Blvd/Ave	Alexandrina Victoria (1819–1901) Queen of England (1837–1901) and Empress of India
Victoria Park Ave	Alexandrina Victoria (1819–1901) Queen of England (1837–1901) and Empress of India
Wellesley Ave	Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769–1852) General during the Napoleonic Wars and PM (1828–30)
Wellington St	Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769–1852) General during the Napoleonic Wars and PM (1828–30)
Windsor Ave	House of Windsor and/or Windsor Castle

The list includes neither general 'titled' odonyms like Baroness Crescent, Baronial Court, Earl Place, Earl Road, Earl Street, Prince Street, Princes Boulevard and Princess

Avenue, which nevertheless evoke British aristocracy, nor the names of Canadian historical and political figures such as John Graves Simcoe, the first Governor of Upper Canada (1791–1796). Along with the monarchs, generals and prime ministers of the past, also the members of the current Royal Family are celebrated in the street names of Toronto, albeit, for some of them, in small and peripheral thoroughfares like drives and crescents. Such inclusion, however, creates a metaphorical connection with the United Kingdom on a historical and geographical level which functions as a constant reminder of the colonial system of the past. This is reinforced by odonyms like Colonial Avenue, Colony Road, Dominion Road, Empire Avenue, Imperial Street and Kingdom Street, which truly embody the dichotomy between centre and periphery that gave birth to the Dominion of Canada.

Compared to the number of English street names, in fact, the little amount of odonyms that refer to Aboriginal people (about 0.75%) reiterates the condition of political, cultural and linguistic marginality bestowed on the first inhabitants of Canada during and after the colonisation of North America. The following table lists the odonyms of Aboriginal origin in the City of Toronto and classifies them according to the type of name, i.e. anthroponyms (A), toponyms (T), zoonyms (Z) and other names based on objects (O). The English term *Indian* is an exception and has been included here because of its obvious connection with the Aboriginal people of Canada:[3]

Table 3. Aboriginal odonomys in the *Toronto Street Index*

Native odonyms	Type	Native odonyms	Type
Abitibi Ave	A/T	Micmac Cres	A
Algonquin Ave	A	Muskoka Ave	T
Algonquin Bridge Rd	A	Nahanni Ter	T
Apache Trl	A	Nantucket Blvd	T
Assiniboine Rd	A	Napanee Crt	T
Athabaska Ave	T	Navaho Dr	A
Calumet Cres	O	Neepawa Ave	T
Canuck Ave	A	Niagara St	T
Cariboo Ave	A	Niantic Cres	A
Caribou Rd	Z	Nipigon Ave	T
Cayuga Ave	A	Nipissing Dr	T
Cherokee Blvd	A	Niska Rd	A
Chesapeake Ave	A/T	Nootka Cres	A
Cheyenne Dr	A	Nottawa Ave	T
Chicoutimi Ave	T	Nottawasaga Crt	T
Chippewa Ave/Cres	A	Nunavut Rd	T
Cree Ave	A	Ojibway Ave	A
Dacotah Ave	A	Omaha Ave	A
Donnacona Cres	A	Ontario Dr/St/Place/Blvd	T
Hiawatha Rd	A	Ononabee Ave	T
Hirons St	A	Ottawa Rd/St	A/T

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[3]   The etymology of each odonym has been omitted for space reasons. Most Aboriginal anthroponyms and toponyms in Canada derive from Algonquian and Cree languages.

Huron St	A	Pawnee Ave	A
Huronia Gt	T	Quebec Ave/St	T
Indian Grv	-	Roanoke Rd	T
Indian Lane	-	Saskatchewan Rd	T
Indian Mound Cres	-	Saskatoon Dr	T
Indian Rd	-	Skagway Ave	A
Indian Road Cres	-	Sonoma Way	T
Indian Trl	-	Spadina Ave/Rd	T
Indian Valley Cres	-	Tacoma Ave	T
Indianola Dr	-	Tahoe Crt	T
Iroquois Lane	A	Tecumseth Pl/St	A
Keewatin Ave	T	Tepee Crt	O
Kenora Cres	O	Topeka Rd	T
Klondike Dr	T	Toronto St	T
Madawaska Ave	A	Tuscarora Dr	A
Manhattan Dr	T	Wabash Ave	T
Manitoba Dr/St	T	Wascana Ave	T
Manitou Blvd	O	Winona Dr	A
Mewata Gt	O	Yukon Lane/Pl	T
Michigan Dr	T		

The majority of the Aboriginal odonyms of the City of Toronto are either toponyms (34) identifying geographical places in North America or anthroponyms (31) referring to tribes or historical figures such as Donnacona (the sixteenth-century chief of Stadacona, modern Quebec City), Hiawatha (the legendary Native American leader) and Tecumseth (a Shawnee war chief). In a few cases, i.e. Abitibi, Chesapeake and Ottawa, the odonym may refer both to a toponym and an anthroponym. There is only one example of zoonym, namely caribou, which has been borrowed via French. Most of the Aboriginal odonyms in the City of Toronto are well established in North American culture as they are commonly used to refer to places, people and historical events, which means that they are not perceived as a foreignizing element on the city map. On the other hand, I think that the three odonyms that commemorate the Aboriginal historical figures challenge the indistinctiveness of tribe names and identify a specific and unique element of Aboriginal history. In other words, whereas general toponyms and anthroponyms confine Aboriginal culture in a blurred historical past and geographical place, the unique identities of Donnacona, Hiawatha and Tecumseth are given the chance to stand out along with those of other national 'heroes'. Thus, from a discursive point of view, individual odonyms are stronger than collective ones. Unfortunately, the majority of Aboriginal odonyms are nevertheless located outside the central area of Toronto and coincide with small and secondary thoroughfares.

Conclusion

The road from Empire Avenue to Hiawatha Road is still a long one to walk as the odonyms of the linguistic landscape of the City of Toronto reflect positions of power and

hegemonic discourses that celebrate Canada's imperial past and its connections with the United Kingdom and the Royal Family. Although the First Nations are partially given voice through less than 1% of the odonyms of the city, the distribution and typology of these thoroughfares relegate this minority to the margins of the cityscape. In order to question the (post)colonial dichotomy between centre and periphery it is necessary to expand the scope of this research and include the Greater Toronto Area and the new neighbourhoods and streets that are constantly built and named. Along with geographical extensions, I believe that a cultural one is also necessary to include the manifold multicultural and multilingual voices of Canada. As for this paper, it is possible to conclude that the odonyms of downtown Toronto codify discourses that glorify Canada's colonial history and marginalise the cultural legacy of the First Nations. In other words, the data suggest that as far as the odonyms of Toronto are concerned, the First Nations are still in the background of the Canadian cultural and linguistic mosaic.

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