

## The White Settler Colonial Landscape of Toronto's Wychwood Park

### Abstract

Mythologized as a former artist's colony, Wychwood Park is a gated community in midtown Toronto that encompasses fifty-eight homes built at the turn of the twentieth century. Wychwood Park's landscape plan is one of Canada's earliest examples of a garden suburb – a suburban design model derived from the turn-of-the-twentieth-century English Garden City movement. The Park boasts the highest concentration of Arts and Crafts domestic architecture in Toronto. Famous early residents included artists and art patrons who were instrumental in establishing what became the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Ontario College of Art and Design, and the Ontario Society of Artists.

In this dissertation, I argue that Wychwood Park is a white settler colonial landscape. This argument is informed by the idea of landscape as an actor in social and political processes, rather than a reflection of them. The physical landscape of Wychwood Park, and the extent to which it reflects the ideas and values that sustain settler colonial rule, are seriously interrogated in this project. I am interested in the ways that a neighbourhood like Wychwood Park can teach Torontonians something about how patriarchy and racism work and what it means to live in an environment shaped by gendered/racialized thinking and social organization. I am informed by Richard Schein's contentions that "discourses of racialized social relations work through landscapes"<sup>1</sup> and that landscapes are the sites in which racialized discourses become "materialized."<sup>2</sup> In this dissertation, I situate the patriarchal and racialized social relations of settler colonialism within the material landscape of Wychwood Park. This approach highlights Wychwood Park's engagement with the settler colonial project, addressing a gap in existing literature on the Park specifically and on Toronto history as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Schein, "A Methodological Framework for Interpreting Ordinary Landscapes: Lexington, Kentucky's Courthouse Square," *Geographical Review* 99, no. 3 (2009): 396.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Schein, "The Place of Landscape: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87, no. 4 (1997): 666.