COMMEMORATING FATHER PANDOSY:

Diversification of the Frontier Cultural Complex and Continued Colonial Erasure in Kelowna

Laura Mudde

> We maintain a belief that even small, symbolic, and everyday actions are significant and therefore need to be thought through carefully.[1]

In 2010, Kelowna celebrated the 150th anniversary of its colonial settlement through the establishment of the Oblate mission. Founded in 1860, today the mission is also known as the Father Pandosy Mission. The celebration of the sesquicentennial in Kelowna included the 2012 unveiling of a sculpture of Father Pandosy.[2] The statue adds to the already vast documentation of Father Pandosy as a symbol of pioneer Euro-American settlement[3] in the Okanagan Valley.[4] Besides the statue, Charles Pandosy is also commemorated through the Father Pandosy Mission, Pandosy Street, and Pandosy Village, all of which are named after him. Pandosy's mythification is part of a "frontier cultural complex" that rests on the erasure of Indigenous people.[5] Pioneer documentation of settlement, such as is seen in Kelowna and in frontier historical epis-

1 Keavy Martin, Dylan Robinson, and David Garneau, *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action in and beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 2.

2 "Pandosy Sculpture," https://sites.google.com/site/pandosysculpture/. I would like to acknowledge the artistic investment of Crystal Przybille in collaboration with the City of Kelowna and opinions expressed in this article about the artistic expression in Kelowna's and the Okanagan's public sphere are mine alone.

3 This refers to migration to and the staking of claims in the Okanagan in the 1850s by European and American immigrants before Canadian confederation and the imagination of this period that would become part of the Canadian frontier cultural complex.

4 Other documentation includes biographies, missionary reports, archival documentation, TV series, coverage in the Okanagan Historical Society Annual Reports, Wikipedia, City of Kelowna, Tourism Kelowna, Okanagan Heritage Museum, public display, and public mention of his name.

5 Elizabeth Mary Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

temologies that emerged in the 1950s, like elsewhere in Canada, is often accompanied by the partial or complete erasure of Indigenous presence.[6]

Interestingly, the Father Pandosy statue has a Syilx relief emblazoned upon its robe, complicating the pre-existing pioneer settlement story and frontier myth that dominates the public sphere in Kelowna. Rather than solely celebrating the Oblates and Charles Pandosy, the statue and its plaque include a relief of the Four Societies and the Trickster, referring to the Syilx Captikwl *On How Food Was Given*.[7] In this way, the statue offers an interpretation of Father Pandosy that includes Indigenous Syilx knowledge – something that was not often seen in earlier modes of pioneer remembrance.[8]

The inclusion of Syilx knowledge in Father Pandosy's statue arguably forms part of an attempt to diversify pioneer memorialization and the frontier myth in Kelowna's public sphere. On the other hand, this inclusion adds to the already established narrative. The statue's acknowledgment of Syilx epistemology is only partial, and it confines Syilx settlement and presence since time immemorial to the colonial interpretation of "settlement." It prompts an important question: How does the traditional Syilx knowledge included in the statue of Father Pandosy simultaneously deconstruct and reaffirm the pioneer history and frontier myth of Kelowna and, at the same time, both acknowledge and erase Syilx self-determination and land acknowledgment?[9] As Rickard

---

6 This research seeks to deconstruct settlement as a Westernized notion of Euro-Canadian settlement or civilization and, instead, promotes the notion of Indigenous and Syilx settlement as just as if not more legitimate occupation of a space that was deemed empty in the eyes of colonizers and frontier epistemology.

7 The Four Societies and the Trickster here refer to the Four Food Chiefs and Coyote. So as not to promote the appropriation of Syilx knowledge and Captikwl *On How Food Was Given*, I have chosen to refer to the imprint on the statue as the Four Societies and the Trickster, as put forward by Melissa K. Nelson, *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* (Rochester, NY: Bear and Co., 2008), in reference to work by Jeanette Armstrong, "Constructing Indigeneity: Syilx Okanagan Oraliture and Tmixʷcentrism" (PhD diss., University of Greifswald, 2012).

8 See also Martin, Robinson, and Garneau, *Arts of Engagement*, for the need for reconciliation through artistic expression.

9 Specifically that in line with the work of Indigenous activists and scholars of artistic intervention. "To acknowledge something is often to name that which has been previously ignored. To acknowledge – affirm, declare, assert – Indigenous territories and lands that we are guests upon (and often as uninvited guests) is to begin to name specific histories of colonization and continued non-Indigenous occupation of Indigenous lands. In this naming, a lot hinges on the language we use to describe how we occupy the lands we live and work upon. The way we name our positionality – as guests, uninvited, visitors, settlers, invaders, arrivants – speaks to how we understand the terms of occupation, and relationships to Indigenous peoples. A lot depends upon these specific word choices, but also upon our phrasing, the tone of our voices, and the time we take as we speak about how we occupy space, and whose space we occupy. A lot depends on how the specifics are named, and how these specifics express why

Figures 1-3. The Father Pandosy Mission 150th Anniversary Commemorative Sculpture. Life-sized bronze sculpture by Crystal Kay Przybille, Kelowna Public Art Collection, 2012. Photographs by the author.

Figure 2. The Father Pandosy Mission 150th Anniversary Commemorative Sculpture.

asks, "is it possible to view art that is emancipatory in its inception but anchored in a colonial intellectual apparatus?" And is it possible for public engagements to make viewers aware of those colonial epistemologies?[10] The remembrance and celebration of Indigenous heritage form part of a broader structure of settler-colonial remembering on the part of "the

we are naming these things in the first place." See Dylan Robinson, Kanonhsyonne Janice C. Hill, Armand Garnet Ruffo, Selena Couture, and Lisa Cooke Ravensbergen, "Rethinking the Practice and Performance of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement," *Canadian Theatre Review* 177 (2019): 20. In a similar way, the statue acknowledges Indigenous territory and lands previously ignored in the frontier myth of which Father Pandosy is a part. However, specifics are missing and dominant cultural considerations of location and the mythological dimensions of Father Pandosy also fail to acknowledge Indigenous territory and lands independent of contact or legitimization by non-Indigenous incoming settler-colonial groups.

[10] Jolene Rickard, "Aesthetics, Violence, and Indigeneity," *Public* 27, no. 54 (2016): 59.

Figure 3. The Father Pandosy Mission 150th Anniversary Commemorative Sculpture.

dominant culture."[11] The broader structure of pioneer accounts of history and settlement is fluid and is constantly reimagined through historical consciousness and epistemology.[12] The dominant historical epistemology in Kelowna, as seen in pioneer accounts of settlement in the area, often

---

[11] Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London: Verso, 1980), 38. See also Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

[12] Furniss, *Burden of History*; Susan Roy, *These Mysterious People: Shaping History and Archaeology in a Northwest Coast Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016).

fails to acknowledge unceded and ancestral Syilx territory. Public displays of memory often function within and through settler-colonial rhetoric, reasserting a frontier myth or "empty land" metaphor.[13] The dominance of the pioneer cultural interpretation of history at times also includes the naming and claiming of Indigenous heritage.[14] In this light, the Father Pandosy statue presents an interesting case study of the dominant public historical epistemology and the remembrance of colonial settlement in Kelowna.[15]

This article unpacks the temporal dynamics of the pioneer and settler-colonial imagination of the Okanagan and in particular of Kelowna by looking at the symbolic embodiment and remembrance of Father Pandosy. Following the work by, for instance, Elizabeth Furniss in the rural community of Williams Lake, this research looks at the Canadian frontier cultural complex as it is manifested in the remembrance of European and American settlement personified by Father Pandosy in what became Kelowna.[16] The period of the 1850s, when Father Pandosy was a pioneer figure, has been imagined and remembered differently through time, and his statue functions as the latest reimagining of frontier historical epistemology, this time in the 2010s. The deconstruction of Father Pandosy enables us to unpack the recent incorporation of Syilx motifs into pioneer interpretations of settlement history in the Okanagan Valley.[17]

This article looks at Father Pandosy as mediated through time in the public sphere. The analysis of Okanagan Historical Society (OHS) documents provides an overview of how Father Pandosy has been framed and remembered.[18] OHS documents, scholarship, and clerical

---

[13] The Doctrine of Discovery and the empty land myth have been long critiqued and continue to shape activism against this paradigm. See also Assembly of First Nations, *Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery,* January 2018, https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/18-01-22-Dismantling-the-Doctrine-of-Discovery-EN.pdf.

[14] As substantiated by Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), the recognition and political power of the dominant hegemonic structure to do this defies self-determination and agency for Indigenous people, redefining and subjectifying them through settler-colonial eyes.

[15] For the importance of understanding the power of myth, the book by Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), effectively shows people's inability to understand the complexity of history.

[16] Furniss, *Burden of History,* 16.

[17] The Father Pandosy Statue was complemented by a statue of Chief Swkncut in 2019. See "Chief Swkncut," https://www.kelowna.ca/our-community/arts-culture-heritage/public-art/public-art-collection-listing/chief-swkncut.

[18] Through the use of the UBC Library Open Collections and the search summons "Pandosy," "Father Pandosy," and related spellings, it was possible to assess the mention of his name, buildings, and other stories to which he is connected. Accessed March, 2019, https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ohs.

writing relating to the person and the image of Father Pandosy make up the pioneer history that shapes collective memory in Kelowna.[19] Like Karen Till's work, this study of Father Pandosy "focuses on the practices and politics of place-making, and how those practices mediate and construct social memory and identity," connecting public memory to settler-colonial identity.[20] Moreover, following Furniss's analysis, different periods of pioneer imagining become apparent in the constant reinvention of Pandosy in the 1920s, the 1950s and 1960s, the 1990s, and finally in the 2010s with the emergence of the statue.[21]

The main argument I make here is that the incorporation of Syilx motifs into a recent statue of Father Pandosy mitigates earlier erasures of Indigenous presence within the frontier history epistemology of Kelowna. However, the statue continues to situate Indigenous presence and culture within the settler-colonial interpretation of history, which erases pre-colonial Syilx settlement and denies the significance and legitimacy of Syilx knowledge and claims to territory. This case study of Father Pandosy critiques the discourse on settler-colonial–Indigenous relations and provides a historiographical consideration of the politics of commemoration.[22] This collective memory analysis aligns with the historically contingent critical commitment to study the symbolic embodiment of the pioneer presence in Kelowna.[23]

THEORIES OF MEMORY AND POWER

The analysis of collective memory deals with the presentation of memory and common knowledge as facts, defined by relations of power. To address the Father Pandosy statue more closely, we need to explore the factors that continuously shape and reshape settler-colonial collective memory in Kelowna, making it contested through time rather than a singular continuous epistemology.

---

19 In the words of Paul Chaat Smith, this case study "isn't about the good guys being bad, and the bad guys being good, but about finding new ways of seeing and thinking about the history that is all around us." See Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, 72.

20 Karen E. Till, "Hauntings, Memory, Place a Metro Stop," in *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 8.

21 Furniss, *Burden of History*, 3–26. See also Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian European Relations in British Columbia* (Burnaby, BC: Simon Fraser University, 1980).

22 Sara Ericsson, "Port Williams Students Propose Creative Solution for Halifax Cornwallis Statue," *Kings County News*, 9 April 2018, https://www.saltwire.com/news/provincial/port-williams-students-propose-creative-solution-for-halifax-cornwallis-statue-175701/.

23 Jeffery Barash, *Collective Memory and the Historical Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

According to Edward Said, there is considerable political power associated with settler-colonial collective memory regarding authenticity, the role of invention, and the influence of tradition, all of which shape collective historical experience.[24] The OHS plays a vital role in the representation of Father Pandosy, lifting him into the position of mythological pioneer, as do street names, the Kelowna Museum, and the Mission Heritage Site. Moreover, "the question [is] not only what is remembered, but how and in what form."[25] This question draws our attention to the ambiguous power relations inherent in distinctions emphasized in history writing and settler-colonial collective memory – power relations that often represent a singular dominant cultural narrative rather than the complexity of historical experience.[26]

In the words of Jeffery Barash, "if we are to interpret collective remembrance by vast groups in public life, it is necessary to precisely identify its relation to 'imagination.'"[27] The complexity of the politics of history and memory is lost in the statue of Father Pandosy. The mythological dimensions assigned to Charles Pandosy are a perfect example of the intersection of settler-colonial collective remembrance, historical narrative, and myth as it relates to pioneer settlement in Kelowna.[28] This intersection complicates the function of the statue and the representation of the Four Societies, the Trickster, and Father Pandosy himself. The commemoration and role of the statue as a public object make Father Pandosy relevant not only in the past but also in the present. The Syilx knowledge represented on Pandosy's robe awkwardly positions it both as a thing of the past and as open to the interpretation and collective memory of Indigenous–Euro-Canadian settlers in Kelowna – sanctified by the persona of Father Pandosy.[29]

This contemporary interpretation of the settler-colonial settlement narrative is a dominant "persuasive force," and interaction with historical periods in the public sphere is reshaped to fit present settler-colonial convictions.[30] The statue represents a "collectively retained memory … for historical understanding and tradition," itself fabricated into a single

---

[24] Edward Said, "Invention, Memory and Place," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 175.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Another important question for a statue and the relief of Syilx traditional knowledge is its purpose. Paul Chaat Smith, for instance, questions the role of museums and the contemporary expressions of Indigenous culture and identity as coming from a place or type of racism he calls romanticism. See Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, 17.

[27] Barash, *Collective Memory and the Historical Past,* 46.

[28] Furniss, *Burden of History,* 79–104.

[29] Barash, *Collective Memory and the Historical Past*, 48.

[30] Ibid., 2.

narrative.[31] This persuasive force is the persona of Father Pandosy, an accepted figure within the pioneer history, which, in turn, legitimizes Syilx knowledge through the depictions on his robe and other public commemorations of Father Pandosy in Kelowna. Although this depiction "engenders the possibility of bringing together past and present in view of the future," the asymmetry in the representation of Syilx unceded territory and presence reinforces an erasure of Indigenous presence on its own merit and legitimacy.[32] Although active engagement with Syilx knowledge and presence is to be applauded and was previously even more difficult to see, the symbolic embodiment of Father Pandosy seems unwarranted and unduly aggrandizing.

Apart from the depiction on the robe and the mention of Syilx epistemology (*On How Food Was Given*) depicted on a plaque accompanying the statue, we have to acknowledge the further context of the mission and the settler-colonial interpretation of history that dominates the location of the statue. Although the depiction of these symbols on the statue includes a new perspective, this minor inclusion still perpetuates erasure in public display. The dominant culture and frontier cultural complex do not do justice to the relative absence of Syilx control over either Kelowna's public history or the making of the statue. Although the influence and power of the statue might differ from that of a museum that includes only depictions of Indigenous peoples or histories, like a museum the statue reinforces a settler-colonial narrative dominated by Euro-Canadian interpretations of history. It simply appropriates an Indigenous narrative within that dominant culture.[33]

Despite the statue's artistic effort to be inclusive of Indigenous presence, settlement, and heritage, and its attempt to indicate a shift in the predominantly settler-colonial settlement narrative, it points to a more general absence of Syilx voices in the Okanagan and in Kelowna. According to Maurice Halbwachs, society thinks and acts according to totalities, which are often solidified in public displays that form and shape collective memory.[34] As such, for a long time the settler-colonial collective memory attached to non-Indigenous settlement in Kelowna did not allow for the settlement narratives of the Syilx peoples. Indigenous knowledge portrayed on the statue could be interpreted as a contestation

[31] Ibid., 2.

[32] Ibid., 3.

[33] For a critical reading of museums as sites of remembrance and deconstruction, see Jolene Rickard, "Absorbing or Obscuring the Absence of a Critical Space in the Americas for Indigeneity: The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 52 (2007): 85–92.

[34] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 44–45.

of the previous singular narrative of Euro-Canadian settlement of the 1950s to the 1990s.[35] However, it hardly contests the dominant cultural epistemology of the settler-colonial enterprise and it does not critically engage with embedded power relations.

TERRITORIAL ERASURE

Most of the information regarding Father Pandosy seems conflicted, and it is hard to find definitive material on him and his role in the Okanagan. What most historical accounts do have in common is the erasure of a "pre-Pandosy" time in Kelowna and the Okanagan before the 1850s. This erasure of the prior-to-colonization narrative, as symbolized through Pandosy, indicates an overall denial of Indigenous history. The pioneer settler framework that shapes the symbolic embodiment of Father Pandosy (and vice versa) does not do justice to the people, traditions, and culture that existed before Pandosy and that remain present in the Okanagan.

Syilx territory was already "settled" in non-Euro-Canadian terms but was rendered mostly invisible in the pioneer settlement narrative.[36] According to an interview with Syilx scholar, Elder, and knowledge keeper Jeanette Armstrong, "originally our people [Syilx] shared eight tribal districts that were very closely interconnected in terms of the different kinds of habitat that they resided in and the unique aspects that provided food and sustenance in those different areas of the Syilx territory."[37] This interconnection should be considered a settlement and accorded legitimacy, but this governing system of the Syilx peoples is invisible in most settler-colonial historical accounts of Kelowna,[38] which focus on Pandosy and the establishment of the Oblate mission.

Like Armstrong, Peter Carstens argues: "the Okanagan were never casual occupiers of land and in their seasonal movements they relied

---

[35] Edmond Rivere, *Father Pandosy: Pioneer of the Faith in the Northwest,* trans. Lorin Card (Vancouver: Midtown Press, 2012); Edward Kowrach, *MIE. Charles Pandosy, O.M.I.: A Missionary of the Northwest* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1991); See for example *Report of the Okanagan Historical Society* (hereafter *OHS*), nos. 1-75 (1936-2011), https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ohs/items/.

[36] I intentionally claim settlement as something that does not pertain only to Euro-Canadian encroachment and pioneer narratives of history. The Okanagan and Syilx territories are and always were forms of settlement with territorial bounds, governance structures, and religious and cultural practices independent of colonial determinations of settlement.

[37] Jeanette Armstrong, "Reciprocities: Kindness and the Land," interview by Lally Grauer, in *Lake: Journal of Arts and Environment* (Kelowna: Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, University of British Columbia Okanagan, 2008).

[38] Franz Boas and James Teit, *Coeur d'Alene, Flathead and Okanogan Indians,* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1930).

entirely on the understanding that they were the sole owners of the land."[39] Similarly, Verne Ray shows how "local autonomy is stressed throughout the Canadian Plateau."[40] This autonomy, signified through "tribal organization," is in itself an ascribed framework imposed upon Indigenous socio-political structures by European and American settlers, traders, missionaries, and later Canadian government officials.[41] Ray argues that such a definition of Indigenous political organization fails to acknowledge the complex and varied political organizations discernable in the Okanagan.[42]

Syilx political organization is strongly connected to the use of the land, and Armstrong describes it as based on reciprocity as taught by the Four Societies.[43] "This land took care of, fed, and sheltered our people for ten thousand years or more, as we measure time. So our people found the climate to be generous: a long growing season and a short winter, and the winters are quite survivable. Our people did use all of the territory."[44] The people of the Okanagan, according to Ray, had a system in which "the band [was] merely one unit of an expanded autonomous local group," making them part of one big village.[45] Around 1860 and after, European, American, and Canadian settlement imposed itself on pre-existing settlements,[46] and erasure of pre-existing settlements has been reinforced by settler-colonial myths ever since.

What is more, since that time the Okanagan has been marked by First Nations–Crown relations whose asymmetric power clearly favours settler-colonial encroachment.[47] According to Carstens, "the proposition accepted here is that although there was negotiation between the two parties, the relationships were nearly always asymmetrical and skewed by potential white hegemony and power in favour of the newcomers, on

---

[39] Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 50. See also Jeanette Armstrong, Delphine Derickson, Lee Maracle, and Greg Young-Ing, *We Get Our Living Like Milk From the Land* (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1993–94).

[40] Verne Ray, *Cultural Relations in the Plateau of Northwestern America* (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1939), 8.

[41] Ray, *Cultural Relations*, 8–9.

[42] Ibid., 11.

[43] Armstrong, "Reciprocities," 2008.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ray, *Cultural Relations*, 21.

[46] James A. Teit, 1864–1922, *Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, *Premier of the Dominion* of *Canada*, *From the Chiefs of the Shuswap*, *Okanagan and Couteau Tribes* of *British Columbia*, presented at Kamloops, BC, 25 August 1910, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, Victoria, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.65247/1?r=0&s=1.

[47] Ibid.

whose terms negotiation was initiated and proceeded."[48] Armstrong et al. and Carstens add that this political asymmetry had devastating effects as interventions and lies on the part of Canadian officials "altered the nature of Okanagan's chieftainship and leadership, fostered the growth of factionalism, and undermined many facets of Okanagan culture and values."[49] White hegemony was particularly devastating given that the Indigenous population had been diminished due to disease. Power relations thus continued to shift in favour of the non-Indigenous population.

According to Armstrong, disease meant: "We haven't suffered the physical violence that many others have suffered in terms of relocation and war; a lot of the legacy that you see that happened on the move, on the way westward. We were encountered on a much later date, and by that time Smallpox has really taken its toll and decimated our population, down to almost extinction."[50] Before the smallpox epidemic, there had been a vibrant trade among fur traders and Indigenous groups. Even before settler-colonial encroachment, the fur trade was known among Indigenous groups to be a source of wealth.[51] The narrative of disease among the Okanagan is glorified in the narrative of Father Pandosy, who is credited with vaccinating the Syilx. A closer look at that narrative suggests that the Oblate order itself most likely facilitated the spread of smallpox.

First Nations–Crown relations were facilitated by Christianity, which, in turn, facilitated the spread of diseases, which, in turn, facilitated the spread of Christianity. Christian orders successfully established vast networks on the continent, following disease epidemics while simultaneously exacerbating their spread.[52] As Daniel Reff points out, "epidemics of smallpox, measles, typhus, and other maladies spread northward from central Mexico in advance of the generally northward-moving mission frontier, decimating Indian populations and contributing to Indian interest in baptism and missionization."[53] With regard to Syilx territory, it is likely that the Oblate order in Yakima territory, Washington, had been in contact with the smallpox outbreak in the 1840s. According to

48 Carstens, *Queen's People,* 31.

49 Ibid., 31, 94, 118; Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land,* 5-37.

50 Armstrong, "Reciprocities"; Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land,* 49.

51 Armstrong, "Reciprocities"; Margaret Whitehead, *They Call Me Father: Memoirs of Father Nicolas Coccola* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), 28–30.

52 J. Percy Clement, "Early Days Of Kelowna And District," The Twenty-Third Report of the *OHS* (1959): 109-153.

53 Daniel Reff, *Plagues, Priests, and Demons: Sacred Narratives and the Rise of Christianity in the Old World and the New* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

Derek Pethick, "late in 1847 a Protestant missionary, Marcus Whitman, his wife, and twelve other wives were massacred by the Indians, possibly at the instigation of their medicine men, who felt their power was waning [due to] an outbreak of smallpox."[54] Notwithstanding the possible help and medical aid Father Pandosy might have brought to the Okanagan from Yakima, this occurred within a colonialist framework of epidemics and cultural assimilation.

According to Reff, the Jesuit missionary pursuit to baptize and "save" Indigenous people, together with the establishment of a vast religious network, came to define Father Pandosy's mandate.[55] According to Pethick, since the 1820s, "the Catholic Church was beginning to take an interest in the Pacific Northwest, and by 1840 the newly formed order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had several missions in the area."[56] The order represented by Father Blanchet was, according to Pethick, struggling to bring the gospel to fur traders and Indigenous peoples in this vast area, and, after the Yakima revolt, Father Pandosy was stationed in the Okanagan.[57] The Okanagan's economic importance was, according to Carstens, tied to the economic enterprise of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC).[58]

The fact that these economic ties between the HBC and the Indigenous peoples of the BC Interior predated the Oblate presence is denied and erased by clerical writings of the 1850s.[59] Further, documentation on the

---

[54] Derek Pethick, *Men of British Columbia* (Saanichton, BC: Hancock House Publishers, 1975), 121.

[55] Reff, *Plagues, Priests, and Demons*, 1.

[56] Pethick, *Men of British Columbia,* 121.

[57] Ibid.; Carstens, *Queen's People,* 45.

[58] Ibid., 48; see also Kathleen Stewart Dewdney, "Francis Xavier Richter," *The Twenty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1961): 78-101; Miss S. A. Hewitson, "The Hudson's Bay Company in the Similkameen," *The Twenty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1961): 127-129; Eric D. Sismey, "The White Lake Basin," *The Thirtieth Report of the OHS* (1966): 102; Marie Houghton Brent, "Indian Lore," *The Thirtieth Report of the OHS* (1966): 105-113; Eric Sismey, "The Brent Story," *The Thirtieth Report of the OHS* (1966): 129-134; Primrose Upton, "The History of Okanagan Mission: A Centennial Retrospect," *The Thirtieth Report of the OHS* (1966): 177-182; Eric D. Sismey, "Editor's Foreword," *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1971): 7-8; Rita (Marguerite) Kirby Coleman, "Keremeos Memories," *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1971): 28-32; Primrose Upton, "Father Pandosy Mission Restoration," *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1971): 41-45; Eric D. Sismey, "The Old Judge Haynes Home at Osoyoos," *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1971): 91-94; Primrose Upton, "Joseph Marty," *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1971): 113-114; Randy S. Manuel, "60-Mile Hike Traces Old H.B.C. Trail," *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the OHS* (1971): 146-148.

[59] Clerical writing and correspondence around the 1850s and 1860s reflects a push of the Oblate order away from semi-nomadic or nomadic lifestyles formerly promoted within the HBC policies toward church-oriented subsistence agriculture. See Duane Duncan Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites in the Settlement Era, 1860-1920" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1985), 37-61; William Mason, Records of the Oblate

Oblates of Mary Immaculate seems to strictly separate the HBC and the gold rush from the religious order.[60] The Oblates saw economics as guided by immorality and personal aggrandizement rather than spirituality.[61] In reality, of course, trade and religion were closely connected.[62]

According to Duane Thomson, Father Pandosy's influence was bound by his religious order and by the Roman Catholic introduction of socio-religious control. As Thomson explains, the order imposed an intricate system of socio-religious control in which counsellors and watchmen formed a network to report on the day-to-day business in and around the Oblate Mission.[63] This was known as the Durieu system.[64] As Carstens points out, this seems to have been a system of total control, the purpose of which was to delegitimize the Okanagan chiefs.[65] However, Indigenous resistance was notable: "The missionaries became frustrated over the seeming lack of sincere interest the Okanagan had for Christian teachings."[66]

The missionary pursuit of control, according to Margaret Whitehead, was also a quest for cultural assimilation, which, on the Northwest Coast, should be seen within the context of denominational rivalry between Protestant and Roman Catholic orders: "While in many parts of the colonial world missionaries of various denominations frequently socialized and assisted each other, this was not the case on the Northwest coast. It was essential for Catholic missionaries to save the Indians from the heresy of Protestantism (in the case of the Protestants, it was from 'papist ways') as it was to save them from 'paganism.'"[67] Moreover,

---

Missions of British Columbia, Oblate Historical Archives, St. Peter's Province Holy Rosary Scholasticate, Ottawa," Microfilm reels 705–712; Georgina Maisonville, "Reverend Father Pierre Richard," *The Thirteenth Report of the OHS* (1949): 83-89; British Columbia, *Papers Connected With The Indian Land Question 1850-1875* (Victoria, BC: Government Printer, 1876).

[60] HBC and gold rush related developments and land claims were denounced in favour of moral and political reform to supposedly support Indigenous peoples. See Georgina Maisonville, "The Establishment of St. Anne's (Catholic) Church in Penticton," *The Fifteenth Report of the OHS* (1951): 144-147; Miss D. K. Stewart, G. B. Latimer, and H. H. Whitaker, "Penticton Street Names Honouring Old-Timers," *The Fifteenth Report of the OHS* (1951): 198-202; E.W. Aldredge, "Why Okanagan History?" *The Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the OHS* (1975): 165-169; Reuben Ware, "Silhitza's Petition to Governor James Douglas," *The Forty-Second Report of the OHS* (1978): 53-58; and Jean Barman, "Lost Okanagan: In Search of The First Settler Families," *The Sixtieth Report of the OHS* (1996): 8-20.

[61] Mike Roberts (producer), Ken Marty (director), *Father Pandosy* (Kelowna, BC), CHBC Television, Okanagan pioneers and places, episode 207, 2000.

[62] Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 80-145.

[63] Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan"; Roberts, "Father Pandosy."

[64] Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land*, 13.

[65] Carstens, *Queen's People*, 50.

[66] Ibid., 19–20.

[67] Whitehead, *They Call Me Father*, 8.

with the Roman Catholic order establishing itself in the Okanagan, Whitehead, like Carstens, notes that different Indigenous communities in the Okanagan were hostile towards colonial cultural assimilation in ways that reflected which missionizing entity was encroaching.[68]

First Nations–Crown relations, the HBC's embrace of incoming traders, gold seekers, missionaries, government officials, and initially European and American and later Canadian settlers changed the demographic nature of the area. By the 1879s, the Syilx "harboured bitter feelings towards the growing white population, and particularly towards government officials," whose ways were not in harmony with either the Indigenous peoples or the environment.[69] Armstrong et al., Whitehead, Thomson, and others present evidence that Indigenous protest about the use and misuse of land, in collaboration with the Oblates, was common.[70] According to Whitehead, far from being heroic, all Father Pandosy could do was to mediate strained Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations.[71] Neither mediation nor the missionary practice of converting the Okanagan was very successful.[72]

FABRICATING HISTORY

The settlement of Father Pandosy and others around the 1850s and 1860s is framed as the "first settlement" of the Okanagan and Kelowna area,[73] despite pre-existing Syilx trading networks and active Syilx resistance. The OHS's writing of history had the power to significantly erase much of Syilx history. According to Percy Clement, a pioneer who is memorialized in the Kelowna public sphere and who wrote for the OHS, "the fact stands that the two missionaries met and founded a mission and school in the Okanagan, which did splendid work among the Indians and early

---

68 Ibid., 28.

69 Ibid., 30–31.

70 Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land*; Whitehead, *They Call Me Father*; Judy Thompson, *Recording Their Story: James Teit and the Tahltan,* trans. Judy Thompson (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2007). See also Teit, *Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier.*

71 Whitehead, *They Call Me Father,* 54.

72 Jean Barman, "Lost Okanagan: In Search of the First Settler Families," *Okanagan Historical Society* 60 (1996): 8-20.

73 This is apparent in a range of pieces across fifty-five volumes of the *OHS* from 1936 to 2011. See for example, F. M. Buckland, "Settlement at L'Anse Au Sable," *The Sixth Report of the OHS (*1936): 48-52; Judith N. Pope, "Sowing the Seeds," *The Sixth Report of the OHS* (1936): 200-203; Bernard Lequime, "Over the Penticton Trail," *The Seventh Report of the OHS* (1937): 17-20; Reg. Atkinson. "Early Penticton," *The Nineteenth Report of the OHS* (1955): 51-52; W. K. Dobson, "Canada's Okanagan," *The Twenty-Seventh Report of the OHS* (1963): 144-148; JPS. Assistant Editor, "Correspondence of Father Charles Pandosy Letter Number One: Preface," *The Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the OHS* (1982): 77-78.

white settlers."[74] Clement goes on to specify the pioneer settlement and pre-emption of land without acknowledging the pre-existing settlement of the greater Okanagan as Indigenous lands.[75] What is more, he only acknowledges Indigenous historical presence in terms of their population at the time of the establishment of the mission. "When Father Pandosy established the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, there were about 2500 Indians in this part of the interior, with Nicola, after whom the Nicola country was named, as their chief and sub-chiefs at the head of Okanagan Lake, Westbank, Penticton, etc."[76] In historical writing, the fabrication of Father Pandosy as hero is the start of the erasure of Syilx narratives and the promotion of settler-colonial collective memory.

With regard to BC history in general, Reimer analyzes the period between 1850 and 1950 in terms of creating the historical narrative, which Furniss also refers to as the frontier cultural complex.[77] This period is instructive for understanding the emerging collective memory and settler identity of Kelowna embodied by Father Pandosy in the 1950s. The "empty land" narrative that strongly emerged in the 1910s came about not because the land was actually empty but, rather, because non-Indigenous generations had not yet developed a satisfactory definition of land. "As with other colonies, the new non-Native society forming on the western coast of North America needed a history to define its own identity and to legitimate its recent dispossession of its Native inhabitants."[78] This making of history and a narrative of belonging by non-Native society is visible in the Okanagan in the OHS Annual Reports between the 1930s and the 1970s. The Annual Reports, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, actively use the Oblate mission and Father Pandosy to facilitate the origin story of Okanagan settler-colonial history as beginning in the 1850s.[79]

According to Reimer, part of this origin story of civilization and illegitimate occupation from the 1910s to the 1950s was the newcomer strategy of "indigenization," "whereby they [settlers] claimed that they

---

[74] Percy Clement, "Early Days of Kelowna and District," *Okanagan Historical Society* 23 (1959): 114.

[75] Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk From the Land,* 39.

[76] Clement, "Early Days of Kelowna," 115.

[77] Chad Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784–1958* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); Furniss, *Burden of History*, 11-22.

[78] Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 3.

[79] See for example; F. M. Buckland, "Peon," *The Fourteenth Report of the OHS* (1950): 35-43; Denys Nelson, "Father Pandosy. O.M.I.," T*he Seventeenth Report of the OHS* (1953): 57-66; H.C.S. Collett, "The Restoration And Rededication Of The Father Pandosy Mission," *The Twenty-Second Report of the OHS* (1958): 9-14; Observer, "Okanagan Heritage Lectures," *The Twenty-Eighth Report of the OHS* (1964): 125-127; Mrs. E. M. Daly, "Pioneers," *The Twenty-Eighth Report of the OHS* (1964): 134-135; Mrs. T. B. Upton, "Kelowna Branch Report," *The Thirty-Second Report of the OHS* (1968): 12-14.

belonged in their newly colonized land[s] and that they belonged to them."[80] History writing is employed to make Indigenous belonging and legitimacy disappear in favour of settler-colonial belonging.[81] The settler-colonial belonging and imagined settler-colonial collective claim to territory renders Indigenous knowledges and peoples invisible.[82] The obsession with the written historical tradition as legitimization for presence and occupation ignores and delegitimates unwritten and non-Euro-Canadian traditions. The history of Kelowna follows these underlying tendencies.[83]

History-making in British Columbia also reveals how Indigenous groups became the subject of British-American differentiation. As Reimer points out, Americans supposedly sought to exterminate "Indians" while, in response, the British were seen as "saving the savages" from the Americans, thus portraying Britain as the benevolent colonizer and solidifying the legitimacy of British occupation of the region above the 49th parallel.[84] It is as part of this narrative that the OHS Annual Reports of the 1950s and 1960s link Father Pandosy and subsequent colonial settlement with the legitimization of Euro-Canadian settlement in the Okanagan and Kelowna and the erasure of Syilx presence and prior settlement.[85]

MYTHOLOGIZING PANDOSY

The dominant narratives pertaining to Father Pandosy as the pioneer settler were created within asymmetric power relations and entailed the erasure of other narratives.[86] One question that emerges when considering the work of Armstrong et al. is: Why did Father Pandosy become the symbolic embodiment of Kelowna's identity rather than, for instance, Father Grandidier?[87] According to Armstrong et al., "the Oblate priests who had set up a mission near Kelowna were trusted by many Chiefs of the Okanagan." Here "priests" refers to Father Grandidier and his 1874 petition against settler-colonial encroachment into the Okanagan territory.[88] The erasure of the Oblate presence beyond

80 Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 7.
81 Ibid., 12–13.
82 Armstrong, "Constructing Indigeneity," 213.
83 Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History,* 18–25.
84 Ibid., 20.
85 Ibid., 19–20.
86 Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land.*
87 Ibid., 49.
88 Ibid., 49–51.

Father Pandosy entails the erasure of the land encroachment questions raised by Grandidier, which are conveniently left out of public displays of pioneer commemoration.

Other narratives less prevalent in contemporary commemoration are the discovery of gold, the subsequent gold rush, and the smallpox epidemic that affected the Okanagan people.[89] According to Carstens, "the land-based fur trade and the gold rush both forged economic, political, and social ties between the Okanagan and the worlds of colonial and settler power, and incorporated the Okanagan [more directly] into a wider economy and society."[90] Contrary to this, the OHS and other clerical and history writing in the 1950s predominately focus on the empty land narrative and the mythologizing of Father Pandosy.[91]

What is left out of the settler-colonial frontier myth, and what has gained most attention, is what Carstens explains as the increased economic activity that brought a change in social, economic, and political relations, which led to a large amount of immigration between 1890 and 1950. The Oblate mission was affected by these economic incentives. "Activities related to the fur trade, the gold rush, and missionary endeavor … were all in pursuit of 'commodities' whose nature and value were predetermined: furs, gold, and souls … Missionaries were not directly concerned with material profit, and their aim was to convert *les sauvages,* thereby removing them, symbolically, at least, from their traditional context."[92] This perceived need to remove Indigenous peoples from their traditional context was a powerful weapon in opening up the area for settlers, and, contrary to popular belief, this attempt was actively resisted by Indigenous Okanagan chiefs.[93]

Rather than the narrative of collaboration, resistance, and Syilx knowledge, we are presented with the narrative of Father Pandosy as related to us by Rivere and the OHS.[94] These accounts, which are

---

89 Ibid., 44–49.

90 Carstens, *Queen's People,* 30.

91 Georgina Maisonville, "Reverend Father Pierre Richard, O.M.I., 1826-1907," *The Thirteenth Report of the OHS* (1949): 83-89; Denys Nelson, "Father Pandosy, O.M.I.," *The Seventeenth Report of the OHS* (1953): 57-66; J. Percy Clement, "Early Days Of Kelowna And District," *The Twenty-Third Report of the OHS* (1959): 109-153. See also Rivere, *Father Pandosy*; Kowrach, *MIE. Charles Pandosy*; Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan."

92 Ibid., 30.

93 Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land*, 44–66; Thompson, *Recording Their Story,* 28–29.

94 Rivere, *Father Pandosy*. Sixty-eight out of seventy-five issues of the *OHS* published between 1936 and 2013 produce and reproduce this narrative of Father Pandosy. See for example, Robert M. Hayes, "Haynes – Moore Story deserves to be Told," *The Sixty-First Report of the OHS* (1997): 80-83; Primrose Upton, "Pandosy Mission Field Day," *The Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*

memorialized in the dominant public expression of pioneer settlement in Kelowna, mostly ignore Indigenous presence or only relate it to the mandate of the Roman Catholic Church. They actively promote Father Pandosy's dramatic journey, which is marked by his suffering hardship, fleeing from war, and, barefooted, coming to the rescue of the "savages." According to Rivere's account, Father Pandosy was a gentle man with a big heart who, because of the Cayuse war in 1853, had to leave behind his "dear children" the Yakima.[95] Edward Kowrach's account describes Father Pandosy as a man of great honour and endurance.[96] "He ministered for many more years in the intermittent violence of frontier life, of extremes of climate and inadequate food and housing and medical care."[97]

What is more, the Oblates viewed themselves as non-intrusive and benevolent actors, as is seen in Father Pandosy's correspondence. His position as a man of the church made him observe the incoming Americans and Europeans as a threat: "It is as I feared, the Whites will take your country as they have taken over other countries from the Indians."[98] This account ignores the fact that Father Pandosy was himself part of and partial to the encroachment of the "Whites" as he was a white Frenchman who had been sent to the Okanagan for the purpose of erecting an Oblate mission.

Contrary to the romanticized 1960s OHS narrative, in which Father Pandosy seemingly decides to go to the Okanagan himself, Kowrach claims that the Oblate order stationed him there against his will.[99] The OHS narrative frames him as a great leader and as a godsend to the Okanagan. In contrast, Kowrach stipulates that Father Pandosy was a cog in a settlement process that had already been initiated through the fur trade, the gold rush, and settler migration to the Okanagan.[100]

It seems that the heroism that popular narrative bestows upon Father Pandosy and his role in the settlement of the Okanagan erases not only Indigenous peoples but also Pandosy's own narrative. According to Father Pandosy, "the Indians of this area and the (White neighbors) are very few in number and in all appearances are a sorry people," and he himself was

---

of the OHS (1971): 131-135; Judith, N. Pope, "Sowing the Seeds," *The Sixth Report of the OHS* (1936): 200; G. C. Tassie, "Some Place-Names," *The Tenth Report of the OHS* (1943): 34-38.

[95] Rivere, *Father Pandosy,* 62.

[96] Kowrach, *MIE. Charles Pandosy.*

[97] Ibid., 5.

[98] Ibid., 78.

[99] Ibid., 115.

[100] Ibid., 116.

not eager to stay in the Okanagan.[101] Despite all this, Father Pandosy has come to be seen as the founder of what would become Kelowna.[102]

Interestingly enough, and against what one might assume from the public commemoration of the establishment of the mission and of Father Pandosy as a heroic figure, the mission erected in 1860 closed in 1896. It is only sixty years later, in 1954, that the OHS initiated the mission's repurchase, restoration, and preservation.[103] And it is only after 1966 that the site came to be known as the Father Pandosy Mission. The OHS restoration and preservation initiative, and the claim to Euro-Canadian settlement through pioneer storytelling, seems to be tied up with the post–Second World War revitalization of the mission and settlement. Through this revitalization the children and grandchildren of the members of the first settler-colonial generation in Kelowna, who died off between the 1930s and the 1950s, attempted to honour them. Since then, the settler-colonial narrative that accompanies this revitalization has come to define public commemoration in Kelowna.

ERASURE OF CO-EXISTENCE

The 1950s OHS commemoration project erases the complexity of political, economic, and social structures that existed before a shift in power relations between newcomers and Indigenous peoples occurred. History writing and the image of Father Pandosy that favour pioneer interpretations of the Okanagan Valley erase the time before the influx of immigration that tipped the demographics in favour of a non-Indigenous majority. According to Thompson, summarizing the work of James Teit, "the Okanagan as a whole was recognized by others as a distinct people."[104] The designation of the Okanagan as a distinct people, especially given the trade context, hints at the interrelationship between the Okanagan and incoming traders. This interrelationship, according to Carstens, is reflected by the Syilx headmen, who often held high positions pertaining to trade in the area.[105]

Unlike the story about the pioneer settlement after Father Pandosy, the period before the 1860s reveals a more reciprocal relationship between the Okanagan and the newcomers. This reciprocal relationship is finally

---

[101] Quoted in Ibid., 118; Carstens, *Queen's People*, 49.
[102] Mac Reynolds, "The Scenic and Succulent Okanagan," *Maclean's* (Feb. 1, 1953): 18-19, 35-37.
[103] "Father Pandosy Mission and Heritage Park," http://fatherpandosy.com/.
[104] Thompson, *Recording Their Story*, 16.
[105] Carstens, *Queen's People*, 16.

picked up by historians and the OHS in the 1990s. According to Jean Barman, "one of the most fundamental assumptions about the settlement of the Okanagan Valley has been its identification with Whiteness." However, this identification was imposed by the increasing control of the church and increasing white immigration.[106] Before the emergence of church control, Barman maintains that interracial marriages and co-existence were the norm.[107] Similar to Barman's, Shirley Louis's research shows the interrelatedness of Indigenous people in the Okanagan and the incoming settlers in the early stages of contact.[108] And, like Thomson, Barman argues that, due to a lack of white women, marriages between non-Indigenous men and Indigenous women were common between the 1840s and 1880s but that this diminished with incoming waves of white migrants and increasing church control.[109] "As economic circumstances improved, so the pressures for men in this second group to discard an aboriginal partner in favour of her white counterpart became enormous."[110] This meant a white man would retain land granted through his previous Indigenous partner, while entering marriage according to Catholic sacrament. The emergence of church control and pioneer settlement stories in the Okanagan erased Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations. Unfortunately, like their predecessors, many of the 1990s historical accounts of these relations do not address the changing power dynamics, the eventual displacement of Syilx epistemologies, and white encroachment on unceded territory.

These historical writings and shifts in settler-colonial documentation between the 1950s–60s and the 1990s link us to a settler-colonial collective memory that either strongly polarizes American, European, and Canadian settlement and Syilx settlement or erases Syilx presence and title in favour of the frontier cultural complex.[111] As Barman argues, Father Pandosy is not only symbolic but also a real person who "initiated [more] non-aboriginal settlement, [and] enthused almost immediately that: 'Already we have a white family near us – it is probable that others will present themselves before winter, or at least at the beginning of the season.'"[112] Contrary to Father Pandosy's earlier personal correspondence, in which he bemoaned encroachment, he promoted Christian marriages

[106] Barman, "Lost Okanagan," 8.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Shirley Louis, *Q'sapi: A History of Okanagan People as Told by Okanagan Families* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 2008), 7.
[109] Thomson, "History of the Okanagan"; Barman, "Lost Okanagan," 10.
[110] Barman, "Lost Okanagan," 11.
[111] Furniss, *Burden of History,* 3–137.
[112] Barman, "Lost Okanagan," 8.

and, according to Louis, was part of the Oblate order that sought to "civilize and convert the Okanagan, learn their language and supervise their would-be flock until they became loyal and devout Christians."[113]

THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY PANDOSY

The sesquicentennial celebration in Kelowna foregrounded the colonial establishment of the Oblate mission in 1860.[114] The 2012 sculpture of Father Pandosy symbolizes this celebration and the 150 years of settler-colonial occupation of unceded and ancestral Syilx territory. *Kelowna Capital News* summarizes the 2010s interpretation of history as part of the frontier cultural complex in connection to "local history, such as the fur trade, gold rush, and Okanagan First Nation culture … symbolizing his [Father Pandosy's] role in the establishment of agriculture and settlement in the valley."[115] The statue and its plaque add to the frontier cultural complex and narrative of the Euro-American pioneer settlement of the Okanagan Valley, which has now shifted to cultivating fruit orchards.[116]

The project of the statue and the 2010s memorialization of the Oblate Father was initiated by a collaboration between the City of Kelowna Public Art Program, the OHS, Crystal Przybille (who constructed the statue), and "local agencies and organizations to consolidate support for the project."[117] As quoted on the City of Kelowna website:

> The artist says the 2m tall statue is intended to stand for generations to publicly inspire awareness and contemplation regarding Okanagan Valley history, both of Euro-Canadian and Okanagan First Nation/Syilx. It will enhance a sense of local identity and encourage us to consider how circumstances in our Valley came to be so.[118]

According to the website, the incorporation of imagery related to the Four Societies and the Trickster occurred after communication with Westbank First Nation to ensure and "encourage awareness and contemplation of Syilx culture, and the impact settlement has had on it."[119]

---

113 Louis, *Q'sapi*, 19.

114 There is no real consensus as to whether the mission was established in 1859 or 1860; it appears that 1859 was when Father Pandosy wrote the letter regarding pre-empting the spot for the mission and that 1860 was when the actual construction began.

115 "Special Anniversary Celebration for Father Pandosy Heritage Site," 29 July 2010, *Kelowna Capital News*, https://issuu.com/kelownacapitalnews/docs/30_july_2010.

116 Furniss, *Burden of History*, 16–22.

117 "Father Pandosy Mission," https://www.kelowna.ca/our-community/arts-culture-heritage/public-art/public-art-collection-listing/father-pandosy-mission.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

This statue is a more recent public commemoration that now seems to align Syilx presence with pioneer and frontier writing on Father Pandosy both as a person and as a symbolic representation of settlement in Kelowna.[120] The artistic representation of the Four Societies and the Trickster on the statue is a nod to Syilx culture.[121] It can be argued that Syilx-based collaboration on the statue forms part of the diversification of collective settler memory in Kelowna's public sphere. The inclusion of Syilx knowledge as a new part of the frontier cultural complex, which acknowledges the input of Syilx knowledge keepers, is also visible in the new displays in the Kelowna Museum.

The question that emerges, however, is: To what extent does the application of traditional knowledge become appropriated by the statue? The way in which the statue claims the involvement of the Four Societies and the Trickster through artistic interpretation could be argued to be appropriative, even though it was the result of communication with Syilx band members.[122] Following Susan Roy's analysis, the complexity of this agreement regarding the artistic expression of the origin story might be subject to a political strategy that, in light of the sesquicentennial, offers the potential "to reshape representations of dominant history for their [the Indigenous community's] own purposes."[123] Nevertheless, apart from reclaiming agency and political considerations, the question remains one of power, of whose history is being reshaped, and of what is not being addressed.[124] Moreover, the political slippage within the

[120] Seen, for instance, in the naming of geographical space, such as Pandosy Street, the commercial area Pandosy Village, and so on.

[121] However, this in itself points to a more complicated relationship, one that Audra Simpson describes as one that is marked by complicated relations of power that requires "a study in difficulty, a study of constraint, of contradictions," and how actors within those relations are at times marked by "the very deliberate, willful, intentional actions that people were making in the face of the expectation that they consent to their own elimination as a people, that they consent to having their land taken, their lives controlled, and their stories told for them," which gets into even more complex considerations of intercultural relations, communication, and artistic expression. See Audra Simpson, "Consent's Revenge," *Cultural Anthropology* 31, no. 3 (2016): 327–28.

[122] In the words of Audra Simpson, "let's not pretend that there is an even playing field for interpretation." See Simpson, "Consent's Revenge," 328.

[123] Susan Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia's 1966 Centennial Celebrations," *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002): 58. doi: https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i135.1638.

[124] About the complexity of recognition, consent, and refusal within settler-colonial-Indigenous relations, please see, among others, Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Audra Simpson, "Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship," *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue* 9 (2007): 67– 80; Robert Nichols, "Indigeneity and the Social Contract Today," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39, 2 (2013): 165–86; Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

symbolic homage to Syilx presence in this statue could function as a token of pioneer acknowledgment of Syilx presence without any further restructuring of predominantly settler-colonially imagined public space in Kelowna.

Despite the effort to include Indigenous perspectives, the personal and symbolic embodiment of Father Pandosy and the display of traditional Syilx knowledge remain ambiguous.[125] Remembrance seems to be structured by settler-colonial naming and claiming of Indigenous heritage within the public space of the Okanagan Valley, and this only partially acknowledges unceded and ancestral Syilx territory.[126] The reflection of Syilx history and presence since time immemorial independent of pioneer persona or storywork is nearly non-existent.[127] The majority of public instalments, instead of being based on Syilx knowledge, focus on pioneer narratives, and any place for Syilx acknowledgment seems to occur only if promoted or verified by and within that pioneer framework. The ambiguity, however, is that this claiming indicates the failure of the colonial policies of which Father Pandosy was a part and that were meant to eradicate Indigenous epistemologies.

Although a more inclusive commemoration of Euro-Canadian-American settlement in the Okanagan is to be applauded and, to some extent, mitigates the earlier erasure of Indigenous presence, the statue of Father Pandosy continues to situate Syilx culture, history, and presence within the frontier cultural complex.[128] An analysis of the OHS Annual Reports reveals how pioneer remembering practices started in the 1950s and 1960s with regard to the Father Pandosy Mission.[129] The OHS, through its influence on the landscape and its connection to the city of

[125] This ambiguity is described by Selena Couture as follows: "Acknowledgement can be a pointer that indicates there is another world of knowledge and way of being that is other than the one that is currently naturalized in a colonial site. It is especially important to make this effort in places of cultural power – including Canadian theatrical places that, in relation to the last fifty years of nation-state identity building, are also implicated as sites that construct and maintain colonialism." See Robinson et al., "Rethinking the Practice and Performance," 28.

[126] Interestingly, there is arguably more attention paid to non-Indigenous heritage in the form of, for instance, a Japanese garden.

[127] Many a vineyard, orchard, and public sign refer only to a Euro-Canadian settlement history.

[128] It also points to what Audra Simpson, among many other Indigenous critical scholars and artists, calls out as structured by "settler publics that presume in time with the settler colonial project that there is the disappearance or imminent disappearance of Indigenous peoples and their knowledge, along with their land, a disappearance that is being momentarily preserved." See Audra Simpson, "'Tell Me Why, Why, Why': A Critical Commentary on the Visuality of Settler Expectation," *Visual Anthropology Review* 34, no. 1 (2018): 61.

[129] H. C. S. Collett, "Restoration of Father Pandosy Mission," *The Twenty-Second Report of the OHS* (1958): 9-14; "Minutes Of Annual Meeting," *The Twenty-Third Report of the OHS* (1959): 41-46; Kay Cronin, "Lawrence Guichon," *The Twenty-Seventh Report of the OHS* (1963): 124-126; "Addendum to Minutes of Annual Meeting, May 8th, 1967," *The Thirty-First Report of the*

Kelowna, can be seen as having actively shaped part of that city's official memory. In other words, Pandosy and the mission were reintroduced and institutionalized within the official pioneer memory practices of the Okanagan region.[130]

According to Martin Murray, processes such as these are "imbricated with dominant political discourses; official memory decides which events, figures, and sites are worth remembering, and which narratives are appropriate or authentic."[131] The naming of public spaces in Kelowna and the Okanagan, as well as the statue of Father Pandosy, are part of the dominant political discourse. As Murray argues, a top-down sanctioned collective memory "aims to affirm the righteousness of a nation's birth," where the assemblage of monuments and memorials typically "employs the story of ennobling events, the triumphs over oppression and adversity, and recalls the martyrdom of those who gave their lives in the struggle for national desires." In contrast, bottom-up artist expressions "are often at the forefront of initiating projects to publicly remember trauma, that is, to combat institutionalized forgetfulness."[132] The statue of Father Pandosy takes up an ambiguous space as the claiming of the Four Societies and the Trickster depicted on the statue can be interpreted as both justifying and defying the righteousness of the pioneer narrative's claim regarding the settlement of the Okanagan. The statue offers the potential for a more politically conscious collective memory in the Okanagan and Kelowna, in line with the unceded and ancestral territory of the Syilx people, but it also allows for visitors and the public, in a neocolonial manner, to again relegate Syilx people to the past.[133]

Another paradox is the connection of the Father Pandosy statue to the sesquicentennial celebrating Kelowna's 150th anniversary. According to Vera Zolberg, displays of historical events are institutions of national commemoration, and the interaction of different groups represents divergent interests in public narrative construction.[134] The sesquicentennial reflects a celebration of non-Indigenous settlement in an unceded and ancestral Syilx space. The statue of the Oblate Father and the presence of the Four Societies and the Trickster ambiguously hail an Indigenous

OHS (1967): 8-20; "Minutes of the Annual Meeting," *The Thirty-Second Report of the OHS* (1968): 9-23.

[130] Martin Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting: Challenges for the New South Africa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 153.

[131] Ibid., 146.

[132] Ibid., 154.

[133] Ibid., 157.

[134] Vera Zolberg, "Museums as Contested Sites of Remembrance: The *Enola Gay* Affair," *Sociological Review* 43, no. 1 (1995): 69.

and Syilx presence. The sesquicentennial, based on documentary evidence and historical writings, is inherently settler- or pioneer-centred and presents a version of history and the present that benefits those in charge of the display. The "newer" historical representation of Kelowna through the statue, the Father Pandosy Mission, and museum displays does include Syilx history and presence – but only when these are in line with the pioneer settler storytelling pertaining to the sesquicentennial and settlement in the Okanagan.[135]

Centenaries are meant to keep settler legitimization alive. According to Jelena Subotić, centenaries "serve to construct historical memory through specific political programs, by creating historical across-time associations with historical figures and pivotal events, making time and history appear constant, linear and inevitable."[136] The historical figure of Father Pandosy in the city of Kelowna makes settler claims seem constant and relegates Syilx presence and claims to the past to a time before "settlement." In line with Halbwachs, Subotić argues that "commemorations – and centenaries as especially visible forms of commemorations – are important not only in maintaining a stable sense of self-identity but also in creating the self, to begin with."[137] Kelowna's identity and the symbolic embodiment of Father Pandosy are a settler self-identity and their function is to claim Okanagan space and legitimacy.

Moreover, this legitimacy is based on the careful selection of those narratives that fit the settler public consciousness or mnemonic framework. In line with Subotić, "historical memory, then, is no longer about the past but is very much about a particular contemporary political project it supports and maintains."[138] The reinvention of Father Pandosy, most notably in the 1950s, served the contemporary need for a collective history of Kelowna's Euro-Canadian settlement.

The statue, as a display of making historical memory, reaffirms the settler and pioneer narrative of lawful presence in the Okanagan and Kelowna. The "new" aspect of this settler narrative is the added Syilx narrative represented by the Four Societies and the Trickster, which slightly alters the public narrative. A critical interpretation of this alteration could be that the assumed heroic nature of the Pandosy statue allows for Syilx presence in a settler narrative that otherwise erases

---

[135] Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 107.

[136] Jelena Subotić, "Terrorists Are Other People: Contested Memory of the 1914 Sarajevo Assassination," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63, no. 3 (2017): 371.

[137] Ibid.; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory.*

[138] Subotić, "Terrorists Are Other People," 372.

Syilx knowledge. Contemporary history as memory- or myth-making regarding Father Pandosy "serves to flatten the complexity, the nuance, the performative contradictions of human history [and] presents instead a simplistic and often univocal story."[139] Although the Syilx presence on the statue could function to oppose the dominant narrative of Father Pandosy and Kelowna's identity, the asymmetric power relations of history and memory making would seem to negate this.

DISCUSSION

Part of the settler narrative connects commemorating Father Pandosy to a sense of belonging and a definition of property and ownership. According to Halbwachs's explanation, pioneer settlement could be seen as "the representation of a limited piece of land and of the village [as] etched very early in the mind of its members."[140] This indicates a constant fixation on the soil, pre-emption, and the possession of allotted space that is supposedly empty.

Similarly, Edward Said argues that geography is socially constructed and manipulated based on a desire for conquest and domination.[141] In recollecting the legitimacy of being on the land, Halbwachs notes that this is the "only … framework that counts – that which is constituted by the commandments of our present society and which necessarily excludes all the others."[142] This exclusion, as embodied by Father Pandosy, leads to the active erasure and denial of settlement narratives that fail to corroborate the legitimacy of Euro-Canadian settlement.

Collective memory, moreover, makes people – through the constant reiteration of the narrative of pioneer settlement – ever more convinced of the truth and prestige of that origin story.[143] The pioneer settlement on unceded territory in Kelowna and the Okanagan necessitates myths that are based on pioneer identity and its relationship with the soil, thus ensuring a collective identity framed within an "unending cultural struggle over territory."[144] Following Halbwachs's explanation of feudal times, as well as Reff's explanation of the religious context of pioneer settlement, one could argue that pioneers and colonial settlers believed in their right to stake pre-emptions and to colonize land under the mandate

[139] Duncan S.A. Bell, "Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity," *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2003): 75.
[140] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 65.
[141] Said, *Invention, Memory, and Place,* 180–81.
[142] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 50.
[143] Ibid., 51.
[144] Ibid., 82; Said, *Invention, Memory, and Place*, 182.

of the BC governor, the church, and the Crown because "they believed that their group was the most precious and irreplaceable – and also the most active and beneficent – part of the social body."[145] To keep up this image of legitimacy, collective memory and identity fuse past and present to legitimize the dominant narrative.[146] This fusion glorifies the past in the present through a shared understanding of belonging and being connected to the soil, thus actively forgetting and erasing anything that preceded the pioneer settlement narrative.

Kelowna's origin story is thus tied up with the image of Father Pandosy as the father of the city, and it is celebrated through commemorative narratives.[147] In analyzing this incomplete origin story and the commemorative narratives attached to it, the symbolic embodiment of Father Pandosy, the Four Societies, and the Trickster can be used to critically reimagine public displays and collective memory. This critical reimagination should enable us to take better account of the forms of structural and epistemic violence that are part of the public history of Kelowna and the Okanagan.[148]

An additional consideration is the complexity of the remembrance of both Indigenous knowledge/heritage and Euro-Canadian knowledge/heritage. As Karen Till shows, "new, yet historical and commemorative [acts] communicate conflicting social desires – to remember and to forget violent national pasts that still linger in the present."[149] It is precisely these conflicting desires that benefit from a more critical unpacking of the public sphere to deconstruct pioneer notions of first settlement, civilization, and other ideological discourses that are represented by Father Pandosy and that are in opposition to their Indigenous counter-parts.[150] Even though the Pandosy statue can be seen as a partial critique, it also reaffirms narratives of pioneer settlement in Kelowna that are grounded in the marginalization and appropriation of Syilx people by the Canadian state and the church.

The statue and its portrayal of Syilx knowledge point to the need for a more complete and more drastic reinterpretation of Kelowna's settler-colonial public space. Collective memory, in connection with historical writing, is a fluid concept that is bound to change with new ways of com-

---

[145] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 126; Reff, *Plagues, Priests, and Demons.*
[146] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 129.
[147] Ibid., 130–37.
[148] Robinson et al., "Rethinking the Practice and Performance," 20.
[149] Till, "Hauntings, Memory," 8.
[150] Similar questions of acknowledgment and the metaphor of inclusion for the sake of inclusion are discussed in Robinson, Kanonhsyonne, Hill, Ruffo, Couture, and Cooke Ravensbergen, "Rethinking the Practice and Performance," 20–30.

Figure 4. Chief Swkncut. Life-sized bronze sculpture by Crystal Kay Przybille, commissioned by the Westbank First Nation, 2019. Photograph by the author.

memorating. According to Halbwachs, "we preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated."[151] The settler-colonial collective memory and symbolic embodiment of pioneer narratives through Father Pandosy's statue are tied to a collective identity that is continuously interpreted and reproduced, as may be seen in the OHS and other frontier epistemologies. This statue, rather than simply displaying the settler-colonial representation of Father Pandosy as a carrier of Indigenous knowledge, provides us with the impetus to

[151] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 47.

argue that the representation of Syilx epistemologies in Kelowna does not go far enough.

Rather than merely sparsely reflecting Syilx identity, culture, and presence, the Okanagan and Kelowna should reimagine public spaces and deconstruct various personifications of pioneer settlement.[152] Even though, as Said argues, this connection between memory and identity "is frequently, if not always, manipulated and intervened in for sometimes urgent purposes in the present," and even though there is a clear asymmetry of power, these sites of public memory and manipulation can be turned into positive opportunities for reclaiming Syilx unceded public space.[153] Even though Halbwachs argues that, in "people of the past, whose life and actions are now immobilized … the most painful aspects of yesterday's society are forgotten," this immobilization does not have to be permanent. [154] An Indigenous historical resurgence in the Okanagan public sphere should go further than the Father Pandosy statue and its counterpart Chief Swkncut (unveiled in 2019). The collective memory and its embodiment in statues can be a site of critique and a reshaping of that memory.[155] An important part of this involves deconstructing Father Pandosy as a mythological creature of "first" settlement. Some of this work could be started by taking into consideration the Chief Swkncut statue.[156] Positioned by the lakefront and the visitor centre, this statue commemorates the Syilx chief as a critical agent who was active in the same historical period as Father Pandosy. More critical research into this statue and its significance for decolonizing and deconstructing dominant versions of public history in Kelowna should be explored.[157] Indigenous

[152] For research on public memory and commemoration by the dominant culture and artistic intervention, please see, among others, Janna Graham, "Museum Acrobatics: Artistic Intervention and the Work of Cultural Studies," *Cultural Studies* 17, no. 6 (2003): 843–55; Ariane Berthoin Antal, "Artistic Intervention Residencies and Their Intermediaries: A Comparative Analysis," *Organizational Aesthetics* 1, no. 1 (2012): 44–67; Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012); Tim Hall and Iain Robertson, "Public Art and Urban Regeneration: Advocacy, Claims and Critical Debates," *Landscape Research* 26, no. 1, (2001): 5–6; Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017).

[153] Said, *Invention, Memory, and Place,* 179.

[154] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 51.

[155] Ericsson, "Port Williams Students."

[156] For a visual of the 2019 statue, please see https://www.tourismkelowna.com/industry/industry-news-centre/post/westbank-first-nation-and-city-of-kelowna-unveil-chief-swkncut-monument/.

[157] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* 42. See also important work in conflicted public memory politics, including but not limited to: Philip Joseph Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Furniss, *Burden of History*; Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition*; Sharon Wall, "Totem Poles, Teepees, and Token Traditions: 'Playing

legitimacy and presence should not be contingent on a pioneer figure such as Pandosy but, rather, should be seen as legitimate in their own right.[158]

In conclusion, this study proposes some considerations for reimagining public space and commemoration in the city of Kelowna. The Pandosy statue is only one small part of what needs to be reimagined, along with street names and historical sites of remembrance, to unpack the partial and political representation of pioneer settlement narratives. The attempted erasure of Indigenous knowledge on the part of the church and the state has not succeeded. Deconstructing public memorializing could be the first step towards reimagining public space by and for Syilx and Okanagan people in Kelowna.

Indian' at Ontario Summer Camps, 1920–1955," *Canadian Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (2005): 513–44; Gerald Robert Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); Cheryl Teelucksingh, "Toward Claiming Space," in *Claiming Space: Racialization in Canadian Cities* (Waterloo,ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 1–18; Sunera Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

158 Armstrong et al., *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land*.