PLACE MARKETING AND PLACE MAKING: TORONTO, TOURISM, AND THE FRACTURED GAZE

by

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Abstract

This thesis is an empirical and theoretical investigation into the changing trends in place marketing as it relates to urban tourism, particularly in the city of Toronto. It begins by exploring broader discourses to do with capitalism and creativity and their impacts on city space and people’s interactions with it and within it. These perspectives are then situated in the Toronto context, a city that currently embraces the notion of the Creative City, as promulgated by Richard Florida, which encourages the branding of the city for the purpose of stimulated economic growth and in which tourism plays an increasing role. Thirdly, it examines the theoretical implications of the prominent belief that tourism and place marketing are imperative for Toronto’s economic well-being. Official efforts at place marketing and place branding construct what John Urry terms the tourist gaze, and frame the city in particular ways to particular people. Fourthly, this thesis gives an empirical account of how the gaze comes to bear on the physical city space in terms of infrastructure and financing projects in the interest of creating a Tourist City. The penultimate chapter brings to light how the rise of new media has allowed for the greater possibility to puncture the traditionally linear narrative of the city with new voices, thus fracturing the monolithic gaze in some instances. The thesis concludes by questioning the implications of new media on the existing systems of city management and promotion, recognizing the ambivalence of new media and its potential to both challenge and reproduce current discourse.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. ii  
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................. iii  
Chapter 1 Thinking About Space and the City .................................................................................... 1  
1.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 1  
1.2 Thinking about Space .................................................................................................................... 2  
1.2.1 Thinking about City Space ........................................................................................................ 4  
1.3 Neoliberalization and the Post-Fordist City .................................................................................. 5  
1.3.1 The City as Growth Machine .................................................................................................... 6  
1.3.2 The City as Global ...................................................................................................................... 7  
1.3.3 The City as Creative .................................................................................................................... 9  
1.4 The History of Urban Tourism ....................................................................................................... 12  
1.4.1 Tourism as Taste Marker and Status Maker ............................................................................. 13  
1.4.2 Tourism as Fundamentally Capitalistic ..................................................................................... 14  
1.5 Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 15  
Chapter 2 Toronto and Becoming a Tourist City .............................................................................. 16  
2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 16  
2.2 History of Toronto ....................................................................................................................... 17  
2.3 The Toronto Conundrum ............................................................................................................... 18  
2.3.1 The Three Torontos ................................................................................................................... 19  
2.4 Toronto and Tourism ..................................................................................................................... 20  
2.4.1 The Toronto Plans ..................................................................................................................... 21  
2.4.2 Toronto’s Tourism Challenges ................................................................................................. 24  
2.5 Place Marketing: Building a Brand ............................................................................................... 25  
2.5.1 Becoming a Tourist City ........................................................................................................... 26  
2.5.2 Place Branding out of (Perceived) Necessity .......................................................................... 27  
2.5.3 Tourism Toronto ...................................................................................................................... 29  
2.6 Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................... 32  
Chapter 3 Place Branding and the Gaze ............................................................................................ 33  
3.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 33  
3.2 The Tourist Gaze ............................................................................................................................ 34
Chapter 1

Thinking About Space and the City

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is an empirical and theoretical investigation into the changing trends in place marketing as it relates to urban tourism, particularly in the city of Toronto. It begins by exploring broader discourses to do with capitalism and creativity and their impacts on city space and people’s interactions with it and within it. These perspectives are then situated in the Toronto context, a city that currently embraces the notion of the Creative City, as promulgated by Richard Florida, which encourages the branding of the city for the purpose of stimulated economic growth, in which tourism plays an increasing role. Thirdly, it examines the theoretical implications of the prominent belief that tourism and place marketing are imperative for Toronto’s economic well-being. Official efforts at place marketing and place branding construct what John Urry terms the tourist gaze, and frame the city in particular ways to particular people. Fourthly, this thesis gives an empirical account of how the gaze comes to bear on the physical city space in terms of infrastructure and financing in the interest of creating a Tourist City. The penultimate chapter brings to light how the rise of new media has allowed the greater possibility to puncture the traditionally linear narrative of the city with new voices, thus fracturing the monolithic gaze in some instances. The thesis concludes by questioning the implications of new media on the existing systems of city management and promotion, recognizing the ambivalence of new media and its potential to both challenge and reproduce current discourse.
1.2 Thinking about Space

This chapter introduces three key themes of contemporary city space that weave throughout the following chapters and offers a framework of thought in which to later position and think about the city of Toronto. The chapter begins with an introductory consideration of some perspectives about space, particularly city space. It proceeds to consider the political economy of the city, as shaped by processes of neo-liberalization and post-Fordist changes in production and consumption. Such transformations are occurring within a global context, whereby the perceived shrinking world and notions of increasing competition among cities and nations are at the forefront of new city management plans. The chapter concludes by highlighting the influential discourse of creativity, led by Richard Florida, which directly affects the political decisions made by those in office at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government.

In his 1967 Berlin lectures, Foucault asserts, “The anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time” (As quoted in Massey, 1992, p.65). By the late 1970s, the issue of space had become a key area of interest for academics across the social sciences and humanities, each exploring the ways in which, and levels to which, space shapes social life and vice versa (Massey, 1992). Especially in the wake of globalization and neo-liberalization, it would seem that space has come to play a much more dominant role than ever before in understanding the world.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) advocates for the conceptualization of space as a physical entity as well as a constructed one, manifested by our lived practices and the symbolic meanings and significance we assign to spatial formations. Marxist thought suggests that space is the geographic terrain upon which social relations and material social practices are lived. Both perspectives acknowledge that “It is not that the interrelations between objects [or people] occur
in space and time; it is these relationships themselves which create/define space and time” (Massey, 1992, p.79).

In *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, David Harvey suggests a matrix of spacialities using his own concepts of space compared with those of Lefebvre. Lefebvre most notably writes of space as: *material space* that is experienced in the physical sense; *representations of space* that is conceptualized by its reproduction; and *spaces of representation*, which are the lived spaces as created by both the material elements and the represented ones. Upon this framework, Harvey lays his own three conceptions of space, each overlapping with one of Lefebvre’s. He describes *absolute space* as the physical markers of space as each potentially being material, represented, or lived. Likewise, he includes *relative* and *relational space*, which incorporates *time* into the experience of space as well (2006, Figure 1A). Each of these interpretations recognizes space as a field upon which activity and flows of people, capital and products relate in different ways, with different interests.

Alternatively, Lewis Mumford describes the city as a theatre of social action, a space of drama and performance, in which humans act with purpose, together in groups and individually, cooperatively and with conflict, within various civic institutes or organizations. He writes that “the physical organization of the city may deflate this drama or make it frustrate; or it may, through the deliberate efforts of art, politics, and education, make the drama more richly significant, as a stage-set, well-designed, intensifies and underlines the gestures of the actors and the actions of the play” (1937, p.29). The possibility for drama, and simultaneous expressions of difference and similarity, is what makes the city such a dynamic experience. These many interpretations of space have laid the foundations for current conceptions of the city space and the people acting within.
1.2.1 Thinking about City Space

The city space, in particular, is an uneven terrain. It is socially constructed by the political, economic and social practices and structures that exist and change through time. Beyond its physical environment, social life shapes the experiences and memories of the space (Lefebvre, 1991). However, the extent to which actors are able to imprint themselves upon a space is hardly equal. City space is indeed fraught with struggles for power of all sorts; there is a constant dialectic between order in a given space and the chaos there as well (Massey, 1992). Such dynamic becomes an ever more pressing issue as the global population becomes more mobile and inevitably migrates towards the largest city centers.

In 1925, 25 percent of the world’s population worked in cities. By 2025, this number will grow to 75 percent (Middleton, 2010). The inevitable growth of most of the world’s city centres requires new plans by cities and nations alike to make certain that these cities are prepared to support and manage so many new residents. This includes ensuring that cities have a solid economic base that fosters growth from internal and external sources, and maintains a diverse portfolio of strengths.

Many cities are currently growing to international prominence, and so, enter into a sort of competition with other cities to attract new investment, whether from businesses or wealthy individuals or intellectuals, who all contribute to growing work opportunities or a more innovative workforce. One method of attracting such people and gaining international attention is by developing new tourism strategies to attract this type of visitor to the city as a sort of gateway to potential relocation. In analyzing cities around the world and their investment patterns, Greg Clark writes: “Today’s tourist is tomorrow’s student, is next week’s inward investor, global strategist or senior diplomat; they are the same people in different roles” (2007, p.26). With this is
mind, cities undergoing a brand transformation such as Toronto, which will be used as a case study, conceive of themselves as creative spaces of economic growth within a global context.

1.3 Neoliberalization and the Post-Fordist City

The 1970s saw the transitions from the old Fordist-Keynesian system to a new system shaped by neoliberal and post-Fordist processes. Whereas neoliberalization focuses on the deregulation of the market and privatization of formerly government-run industries, post-Fordism extends beyond the economic and institutional to influence the cultural organization and practices of society. In particular, it emphasizes the aspect of choice and product differentiation. Marketing practices cater to individual consumers based on their lifestyle and taste preferences as opposed to former social class distinctions. It urges new identity formations and the expression of such by way of personal consumption practices (Hall, 1988). Tourism, and the consumption of places, becomes yet another manifestation of the capitalist logic.

David Harvey equates the post-Fordist economy with the practice of flexible accumulation, which he defines by three trends. Firstly, flexible accumulation produces symbolic capital and thus encourages the constant consumption of luxury goods as an indicator of status. Such consumption habits and demands in turn shape the cities themselves by eliciting spatial and social segregation between those with more or less symbolic capital and wealth. Those with significant symbolic or financial capital come to wield more power within urban politics, on account of their economic power. Secondly, leisure and shopping experiences are increasingly encouraged by states that have redirected policy-making from social investment towards the mobilization of spectacle and mass consumerism. Lastly, these trends have led to a drastic increase in levels of income disparity and informal work activity (Amin, 1995).
The fall of the welfare state and rise of neoliberal governance brought about a shift from the managerial style of cities towards one of entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). The City works together with local actors, including financiers, property developers and local chambers of commerce, to accelerate economic growth and global interest in the city. This involves the development of an urban policy framework that prioritizes deregulation, privatization and competition, and comes at the expense of social spending for city residents (Haddock, 2010).

1.3.1 The City as Growth Machine

Since their early beginnings at the dawn of industrialization, modern cities have always been designed as spaces designed to maximize the economic, and social, possibilities for governments, businesses and the city’s population. In a world that is forever becoming more integrated and fluid, national borders are no longer most indicative of economic flows and trends. Cities have always spurred economic growth by way of commerce, trade and innovation. This continues to be the case today, with mega-regions, or groups of related cities, becoming the key drivers of economic growth, even surpassing that of entire nations (Florida, 2009).

A city measures its level of competitiveness by its economic, socio-political and infrastructural factors. The economic factors include such considerations as levels of innovation and creativity, investment, human capital and real or virtual connectedness. The socio-political factors include a city’s quality of life, diversity, decision making patterns and governance systems. Lastly, the city’s infrastructural factors have to do with the quality of place. This would take into consideration the quality and affordability of housing, presence of green spaces and parks, the safety and walkability of neighbourhoods, culture, education and the ease to which investment can be made in a city. Many of these are also stressed when considering the city as a creative space (Middleton, 2010).
In major cities across North America and Western Europe, the disappearance of the agricultural industry and, more recently, industrial jobs, have forced cities to invest in new avenues for economic growth. Having always been the economic hubs for nation states, cities have been designed as generators and managers of great national wealth. The city is in many ways, according to some, “a market commodity that can produce wealth and power for its owners, and [this] might explain why certain people take a keen interest in the ordering of human life” (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p.50). Cities are being built up as places for consumption: property developers and private-public partnerships work in tandem to improve and expand venues such as hotels, retail malls, convention centres, arenas (Urry, 2002). The city must look outwards to encourage people and organizations to invest in the city, and so, tourism becomes a link towards that.

1.3.2 The City as Global

According to Richard Florida, the world in the era of globalization has become spikier; cities across the globe are in competition with one another to become global cities. They no longer exist solely within the confines of the nation-state system, but rather, have emerged as independent competitors in the global economy. Cities, and the mega-regions they are a part of, are imperative to their nations’ economies. The growth derived from a city makes both the city and the nation it is a part of more visible to the global economy, thereby increasing interest for possible investment in these places (Florida, 2009).

Information communications technologies (ICTs) are truly propelling the movement towards an increasingly global world. Cities themselves are a part of this transition as financial, political and cultural centres for nations. The flows of people, money and ideas, to name a few, are in large part moving between cities. Increased connectedness and real-time exchanges of
information facilitate the planning and practice of tourism and cities work to integrate new technologies into their infrastructure and marketing efforts, as will be addressed in the following chapters.

Urry’s *The Tourist Gaze* was originally written in 1990, years before the internet and the mobile phone became staples of daily life in many parts of the world, primarily in the West. The compression of time and space has both led to, and been sped up by, the vast increase in the traffic of people through cities, for many purposes including tourism. It is with this shift in mind that Urry released the second edition of *The Tourist Gaze* to further emphasize the changing landscape of tourism and the effects of the global world, and thus global cities. Urry writes that “Relations between almost all societies across the globe are mediated by flows of tourists, as place after place is reconfigured as a recipient of such flows” (Urry, 2002, p.141). Establishing themselves as global cities, with the infrastructure and planning required to accommodate new people constantly moving through, is part of the evolution towards becoming a part of a new global order (Urry, 2002).

Globalization requires the *rescaling* of once-national issues. The demise of manufacturing in urban centers and the dominance of neoliberal thought and policy-making has resulted in national governments uploading powers to supranational organizations, or downloading responsibilities to more local levels of government, through a process of *glocalization*. This shift has made cities ever more independent actors at the local level and in the global sphere, and more susceptible to the impacts of changing global trends (Martin et al, 2003).

Erik Swyngedouw suggests that the dichotomy of ‘global’ and ‘local’ is not enough when understanding power distribution. Rather, it is the politics of scale that works to structure the socio-spatial trends at various geographic levels. In terms of how issues are framed and decisions
are made, the responsibilities and finances of various jurisdictions shape the city. The municipal, provincial and federal governments all play a role in these processes, as do civil society and private businesses. All of this is dependent on the scalar geographic organization of society at a given moment in time; these various processes and effects are seen at various levels of government and society. Swyngedouw writes:

Different scalar narratives indicate different causal moments and highlight different power geometries... Scale is, consequently, not socially or politically neutral, but embodies and expresses power relationships... [It] becomes the arena and moment, both discursively and materially, where sociospatial power relations are contested and compromises are negotiated and regulated (1997, p.140).

Where the governments are seen as ineffective, or where they cannot manage independently, there is opportunity for cooperation or contestation from citizen groups and private interests to take part in various discourses. Shifts in jurisdictions also correspond to the neoliberal tendency to move away from strictly defined central governments towards new forms of governance, made up of overlapping networks and partnerships that operate at various spatial scales (Amin, 1995).

1.3.3 The City as Creative

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer write of the culture industry as a monolithic force that serves to reinforce capitalism and its social structures by treating people as passive recipients of media in all its forms. More contemporarily, and in a less Marxian sense, the terms cultural industries or creative industries describe these same fields, which continue to have great influence in daily life. These cultural industries include those fields of production that allow for a greater amount of creativity than other industries, for example: music, film, broadcasting, graphic design, advertising and public relations. The cultural industries are, in fact, seen as the driving forces
behind urban redevelopment, and are acknowledged as such in many government documents to do with city management (Borden et al, 2004).

The cultural industries, and the people who work as part of it, are vital to urban economies and their continual regeneration. As such, they are increasingly important to the perceptions of cities and the assumed creativity of the city itself (Borden et all, 2004). The city works to foster creativity and to appear attractive to mobile, talented people who might choose to relocate and work in the creative knowledge fields. Cities that offer a wealth of work opportunities, a high quality of living and diversity are seen as most attractive and welcoming of newcomers (Gertler, 2001).

As part of efforts to stimulate creative industries and become Creative Cities, cities are increasing their focus on their tourism industries, which includes city re-branding and re-designing to attract new, and arguably a particular type of, tourists. Years ago, Jane Jacobs wrote that cities are like mines; huge, rich and diverse. A city’s resources will not diminish despite continual exploitation. Rather, “the same materials will be retrieved over and over again. New veins, formally overlooked, will be continually opened… The largest, most prosperous cities will be the richest, the most easily worked, and the most inexhaustible mines” (Jacobs, 1969, p.111). Some believe that there is a call then, for cities to become more creative in the ways they approach any issue, for cities are the thought leaders of the rest of their countries. In Toronto, the push to become a Creative City has become the driving force behind much of its own progress and development in the new millennium.

In recent years, globalization and de-industrialization in major Western cities have brought about a shift in the urban workforce, as seen by a decline in manufacturing jobs and a rise in service and creative jobs (Florida, 2004). From 1991 to 2004, the rate of growth for creative
work was more than three times that of the total Toronto-area workforce (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010). This new creative class is the fastest growing, and most profitable, sector in North America. People working in the field of arts and culture, including the sports and entertainment, publishing and heritage industries, grew more than nine percent between 2008 and 2009, from 81,400 people to 89,000 (Toronto Community Foundation, 2010).

Though they may be smaller in numbers than those in the manufacturing or service industries, the creative class carries much more economic influence, earning higher wages or salaries than their working counterparts. The creative class is made up of people with a larger disposable income that allows them to travel more freely and more often. These travelers are often more worldly and more educated: the very people who benefit, and benefit from, urban and cultural tourism.

Cities remain the major producers or innovators of cultural products. They are home to major corporations in creative fields such as film, television, publishing, music, advertising, and design. The originality and profitability of these businesses is seen as vital to a city’s competitive advantage in the global market (Gertler, 2001). With these industries all centered in cities, innovation and production becomes more geographically concentrated. In this way, cities like Toronto become more important arteries of financial and human flows to nearby municipalities that have fewer possibilities at attracting external capital.

Florida suggests that a city’s creative capital can be quantified using his Creativity Index, which measures: the Creative Class share of the city’s workforce; innovation, as determined by patents per capita; the city’s high-tech industry, using the Milken Institute’s widely accepted Tech Pole Index; and lastly, the city’s level of diversity, as measured by Florida’s Gay Index, meant to identify a city’s openness to different kinds of people and ideas. In sum, the city should have a
balance of the *Three Ts of Economic Development*: talent, tolerance and technology to be deemed *creative* (Florida, 2004). In his quantification of human creativity, Florida alienates people from their talents, passions and lifestyles, and instead assigns these attributes with a sort of arbitrary economic or cultural value.

1.4 The History of Urban Tourism

Tourism is primarily defined as the movement through space to enjoy a period of stay in another place, with the clear intention of returning ‘home’ after a relatively short period of time (Urry, 2002). The United Nations World Tourism Organization defines the tourist as simply one who stays away from home overnight (UNWTO, 2011). The places that the tourist visits are not directly connected with his or her paid work and often deliberately contrast it; amusement parks, art galleries and museums, sports games and monuments provide a series of attractions that envelope the tourist in new environments of pure enjoyment.

Tourism as a leisure activity has its roots in the 1600s’ social elite, and has always been a marker of status, as expressed through the conspicuous consumption of goods and services related and unrelated to travel. In 1840, tourism and photography emerged in the West in their modern form, more or less. It was at this time that the *tourist gaze* was developed that would shape the travel narrative and become a set part of western modernity (Urry, 2002). This will be further elaborated upon in Chapter Three.

As of 2002, ‘travel and tourism’ was the world’s largest industry and was projected to continue growing four to five per cent annually. It contributed at least 11.7 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and accounted for eight per cent of global exports and eight per cent of global employment. More than three quarters of travelers are from the world’s most developed nations (Urry, 2002). The United Nations World Tourism Organization records show
that in 2010, there were 940 million international tourists traveling worldwide, and this does not include those traveling domestically. In the next ten years, the number will likely surpass 1.5 billion tourists. Over 60 percent of international travelers do so for leisure or business purposes (UNWTO, 2011). This no doubt encourages cities to ensure that they are ready for the influx in visitors looking for new and interesting things to do and see during their stay.

1.4.1 Tourism as Taste Marker and Status Marker

By the second half of the 1900s, tourism had become even more telling of one’s character, finances and life experience. Indeed, Western middle class thought arguably privileges the ability to go away and not work, and sees it as beneficial to one’s health and overall well-being (Urry, 1995). Such travel experiences contribute to one’s cultural capital, which is achieved in part by economic capital, as well as a higher level of education, particular “refined” tastes, and a certain lifestyle that affords one the opportunity to venture beyond his or her own home (Bourdieu, 1993). Tourists visiting those places and immersing themselves in those spaces that are seen to be the most “worthwhile” or “important” may best achieve the quest for cultural capital. Such places are known through the various representations seen or heard about on television, on the radio, in books and magazines, and more recently, on the internet.

The post-Fordist era of capitalism has resulted in the symbiotic aestheticization of commodities and commodification of aesthetics. All sorts of everyday objects and infrastructure are beautified or embellished so as to add new interest to everyday life. Mass consumption of such products or images becomes a passive acceptance of capitalist values and consumerism, whereby consumers come to rationalize the appearance of all things in the capital marketplace. These consumption practices in turn make way for the commodification of culture and cultural
activities into cultural industries; consumers increasingly equate culture and leisure activities as being consumptive practices and thus spend accordingly (Urry, 1990).

1.4.2 Tourism as Fundamentally Capitalistic

Production of goods has evolved beyond tangible products to include the production of images and ideas that are bought and sold, and recognized as a part of a business’s brand-identity. Branding Toronto as a Creative City, as suggested by Richard Florida, applies to all areas of city life. In fact, Creative Cities are characterized by a high quality of life, which includes spaces for active public life, great social and ethno-cultural diversity, strong educational and research institutions, and support and encouragement for the arts (City of Toronto, 2003). However, while the term “culture” has been opened up to include the ordinary in all human societies (Williams, 2001), it has also opened itself up to the influence of the political and the economic forces so prevalent in capitalist society. As such, it has become in many ways, a resource for sociopolitical and economic interests, namely, the quest for cultural capitalism, or the accumulation of wealth and notoriety through culture and cultural production (Yúdice, 2003).

Considering the relatively high costs of transportation and accommodations at present, tourism necessarily requires its tourists to be prepared to spend a lot of money in order to enjoy the best of what the destination of choice has to offer, and construct themselves accordingly to facilitate this tourist performance. Regardless of any tourist’s budget, judgment calls are made when selecting which sights are most worthwhile to visit during a short period. As such, cities and their local businesses have much to gain from this decision making process. In an ever-shrinking world, there is pressure on cities to identify themselves apart from others, if for no other reason, than to ensure a constant and growing flow of people prepared to spend money in their city.
1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced many of the theoretical threads that will continue throughout this paper during the exploration of Toronto’s efforts to become a city that is all at once a Tourist City, a Global City, and a Creative City, seeing all three as key elements to ensuring financial growth and international recognition. In its critical view of the current political economy of capitalist-oriented cities and their adoption of creativity as a guiding discourse, this thesis will investigate how the creation and puncturing of the tourist gaze both reinforces and challenges efforts at place marketing and place branding, using the city of Toronto as an example.
Chapter 2

Toronto and Becoming a Tourist City

2.1 Introduction

Chapter Two introduces the city of Toronto and its changing socio-economic and political landscape. It discusses Toronto’s history as Canada’s largest economic hub, and its place within Canada’s national brand and alongside other international sister cities. This chapter explores the common narrative of Toronto as a livable city, and challenges the implications that recent political focus on external investment by way of tourism and cultural promotion have had on growing levels of disparity among Torontonians. As opposed to investing in the people living in Toronto, the city has adopted strategies to market the city internationally and create a brand for itself to attract tourists and external investment through the consumption of the city and its collective “culture”, which will be further discussed and problematized. Surely, cities are important to the cultural and economic development of modern nation states, and provinces, fostering collective ideas and constructing institutions to manage their production and reproduction. Like other cities with such economic strength and international appeal, Toronto benefits greatly from the tourism sector that has helped to market Toronto as an ideal city to invest in, both for work and for play. Tourism and the accumulation of cultural capital have encouraged a move away from a declining heavy industrial economy of the past, towards a cultural renaissance that may reposition the City of Toronto as a competitor in the imagined race to become the world’s Culture Capital (Jenkins, 2005).
2.2 History of Toronto

Toronto was originally settled in the late eighteenth century, and like much of Upper Canada at the time, was divided up into 200-acre lots. The rectangular street grid that emerged from the British land survey still exists today and continues to shape the ways in which the traffic of people and commodities flows through the city (Brugmann, 2009). Toronto was named and incorporated in 1834, by which point it had already established itself as market centre. By the early 1900s and during the height of Canada’s industrialization and agricultural boom, Toronto was a large manufacturer of farming equipment, processed food and clothing. The growth in business brought many head offices to settle along Toronto’s King Street, its main business district. Years later, suburban development, new highways, an international airport and a subway system spurred further growth and mobility within and into the city (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010).

By the late 1980s, Toronto had emerged as Canada’s largest city, in terms of both population and economy. It is currently the fifth largest North American city, with 2.6 million people residing there, and an almost equal number living in nearby areas. With more than forty percent of its population born outside of Canada, Toronto has arguably, more than any other global city, struck a balance of multicultural cosmopolitanism (Middleton, 2010). In 1998, the city of Toronto amalgamated six local governments from the former Metropolitan Toronto, and adopted the motto “Diversity our Strength” (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010).

Economically, Toronto is Canada’s powerhouse city. The City of Toronto contributes $140 billion to Canada’s GDP, about ten percent, and together with the Greater Toronto Area, approximately $269 billion, or twenty percent of Canada’s GDP. It is home to many national business headquarters, and has about 250,000 highly skilled employees currently employed in the
city. It is also home to the Toronto Stock Exchange, and is the third largest financial center in North America, after New York and Chicago (Middleton, 2010).

2.3 The Toronto Conundrum

Brugmann describes the city of Toronto as a *Great Opportunities City*. It appears to be successfully well-balanced. That is to say, it has a healthy economy, a strong level of civic participation, quality infrastructure and social welfare, and a talented and educated population. And yet, Toronto continues to come up below par in building the vibrant, global city it wishes to be (Brugmann, 2009). In recent years, the city of Toronto has been the subject of major efforts at place branding, as an individual city and as a major economic and tourist hub for Ontario and Canada as a whole. While tourism is by no means Toronto’s most profitable industry, it does act as a sort of gateway for many other industries to profit.

Toronto is in the unique position of being a truly global city, one that is often overshadowed by cities of similar size and that does not quite fit in with the constructed Canadian identity most familiar to the world. Despite being Canada’s largest and wealthiest city, Toronto is often hidden in the shadows of other major North American cities. Only a few hours’ flight away from major cosmopolitan centres like New York and Chicago, or European-inspired and artsy Montreal, Toronto may seem like a runner up in travelers’ thoughts of where to visit. It often comes up short in comparisons as being “almost like” its counterparts in various regards. Not quite as bustling as New York, not quite as artsy as Montreal, not quite as architecturally interesting as Chicago, Toronto seems to suffer from some level of an inferiority complex against its perceived key North American competition.

Toronto’s greatest perceived strength, from a marketing standpoint, is surely its diversity. With residents from all over the world, speaking hundreds of different languages, Toronto is a
cultural mosaic. That these residents live in relative harmony is notable. As such, diversity and multiculturalism have been the selling points of Toronto, at least on the surface.

2.3.1 The Three Torontos

Critics of the 1998 Toronto merger suggest that by excluding the suburbs of the more prosperous, and fast-growing, 905-region, the city lost an opportunity at collecting higher taxes. Instead, the municipalities included required growing social services as the population continued to grow exponentially. Toronto has essentially become too small to manage and fund effectively, and too large to respond to the needs of its most at-risk neighbourhoods. On account of this ineffectiveness, it would seem necessary to renegotiate increased roles of the provincial and federal governments in coping with issues such as rapidly growing population and growing wealth disparities (Gertler, 2001).

Capitalist societies are marked by struggles of all sorts along various identity lines, yet maintains a sense of coherence by the implementation of various regulation strategies, which are rooted in scalar relationships. Spatial scales are always changing; social, political, or economic issues are constantly negotiated in terms of their relevance and at which level of government they should be managed: local, national or multinational (Swyngedouw, 1997). Urban centers face a unique set of challenges that they may not be able to cope with on their own, without support from upper levels of government, or the private sector.

Despite its many accolades, Toronto faces the same challenge as many urban centers; that is, how to work towards a more sustainable city that benefits both tourists and residents. In 2006, J. David Hulchanski published Three Cities Within Toronto, which cites the growing disparity among Toronto’s neighbourhoods. The report tracks the changing wealth and population distribution in the city since 1970, and highlights the fact that while the city’s downtown core
continues to grow and prosper, mid-level income earners have shrunk drastically. Most startlingly, however, was the incredible growth in the number of low income neighbourhoods in the city. Between 1975 and 2005, low income housing grew from 19 percent of the city’s neighbourhoods to 53 percent, and extremely low income neighbourhoods grew from one percent to nine percent. Recent immigrants and people self-identified as being a visible minority make up well over half of those living in City Three, the poorest parts of Toronto (Hulchanski, 2006). In a city that prides itself on multiculturalism and equality of opportunity, these statistics are surely troubling.

Not only that, but whereas low income neighbourhoods were once found along main transit lines in the central city, they have since gentrified to be relocated northeast and northwest of the city in areas inadequately served by Toronto public transit routes (Holchanski, 2006). These poorer areas have been removed from sight in the city’s downtown core, thus making invisible to tourists the great disparities that exist in the city.

2.4 Toronto and Tourism

In 2008, the City of Toronto’s Tourism Development Director presented the results from Toronto’s Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Project (TPRTDP), a report based on a framework provided by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism that would develop recommendations for improving Toronto’s standing as a tourist city and its prosperity as such. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the findings would be incorporated into a strategic plan that would replace the former Five Year Plan the city had been operating under.

The project started in 2006 and was coordinated by members of Toronto’s Economic Development, Culture and Tourism (EDCT)- Tourism division, in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and one hundred tourism industry stakeholders. It was also supported by
members of all three levels of government, who also shared resources. The recommendations
given were in further support of those initiatives outlined in Toronto’s *Agenda for Prosperity: A
Prospectus for a Great City* (Ontario et al, 2008).

Among the recommendations, the Executive Director of Tourism encouraged Toronto’s
City Divisions, Agencies, Boards and Commissions to all work together in greater efforts to
support the city’s tourism industry, with special emphasis on Toronto’s many cultural offerings
and institutions. After all, researchers have found that a vibrant cultural landscape, rich with
history and promise for the future, plays a large part in people’s decisions about where to live and
travel (ibid.).

Like so many words in the English language, *culture* is fraught with opposing or unclear
meanings that have changed and continue to change throughout the course of history. For the
purpose of this paper, culture is to be understood most broadly as the combination of everyday
life, arts and learning that comes as a result of tradition and creativity, as proposed by Raymond
Williams (Williams, 2001, p.11). This definition should also incorporate the wide array of
contemporary cultural production of arts and mass media (Borden et al, 2004). It is this broad
understanding of culture that guides urban policies around culture and the arts, particularly when
considering their place in a city’s economic and social vitality.

2.4.1 *The Toronto Plans*

The power of urban governance resides in the ability to represent the spatial, social and
ideological forms of the city; those who can construct the discourse of the city, construct the city
itself (Amin, 1995).

In an attempt to map out Toronto’s future as a prosperous Creative City and great place to
live, the Toronto City Council adopted the *Culture Plan for the Creative City* in 2003. The Plan
was developed in consultation with City officials, private stakeholders and the general public. It outlines Toronto’s areas of success and areas in need of improvement and includes a strategy to encourage immigration and tourism to the city (City of Toronto, 2003). It stresses the role that culture and the arts play in keeping Toronto a competitive Global City. The City’s strong sense of character is seen to help attract and maintain newcomers to the city and strengthens the economy through trade, investment, and tourism. The plan includes 63 recommendations, including the creation of an Avenue for the Arts and approval for the Cultural Renaissance projects, which involves the remodeling of buildings such as the Royal Ontario Museum and Art Gallery of Ontario. It also calls for better preservation and promotion of heritage buildings, and the increased presence of, and participation in, cultural events throughout the city (City of Toronto, 2003).

The Culture Plan stresses the need for events and festivals to be held as often as possible in Toronto to attract visitors to a lively and vibrant city where something is always happening. This is especially true during the summer months, when the weather and tourism are at their peaks. In fact, cultural events such as music and theatre festivals, art shows, and restaurant and food promotions like Taste of the Danforth or Summerlicious, are now more popular than sporting events, which once drew larger attendance (Jenkins, 2005). Major arts festivals held in Toronto now include: Toronto Film Festival, Contact Toronto Photography Festival, Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, North by Northeast Music and Film Festival, Luminato, and Nuit Blanche. Despite these initiatives and growing attendance at city-sponsored cultural events, Toronto still lags behind many cities in terms of spending on culture and the arts and is falling short of its own goal. The ten-year Culture Plan aims at a $25 per capita investment into arts and culture; in its seventh year,
spending remains at only $18 per capita (Toronto Community Foundation, 2010). It remains to be seen how Toronto’s new, and far more conservative mayor, Rob Ford, will impact the remaining three years of the Plan.

Increasingly true in the global system is the need for an urban strategy for cities aimed at increasing stability by improving political, economic and social life in the city, and increasing equity, inclusiveness and sustainability within it (Brugmann, 2009).

In 2008, the Toronto Mayor’s Economic Competitiveness Advisory Committee presented its *Agenda for Prosperity: A Prospectus for a Great City*, and its supporting document, *Creative City Planning Framework*. In each of these documents, discussion of culture, creativity and profit weave together, such that they become entangled with one another and fused in their meanings. Culture enhances creativity, which spurs profitability, which is then reinvested in culture and the arts. All of this is seen to help build the city image, which is increasingly important in the 21st century as cities take a more central role in the world economy.

The *Agenda for Prosperity* highlights four main pillars of focus:

i) Proactive Toronto – Positive Business Climate and can-do attitude
ii) Global Toronto – Internationalization
iii) Creative Toronto – Productivity and Growth
iv) One Toronto – Economic Opportunity and Inclusion

(Toronto Mayor’s Economic Competitiveness Advisory Committee, 2008).

These divisions are inspired by a background report by Greg Clark, *Towards an Agenda for Prosperity: Toronto’s Place in the World*, which examines the practices of other world cities adopt to encourage growth. Namely, it found that global cities foster strong relationships between creative and cultural activities, finance and business services, power and influence and tourism,
and benefits from the synergies developed between these areas. Most notably, Clark writes: “Today’s tourist is tomorrow’s student, is next week’s inward investor, global strategist or senior diplomat; they are the same people in different roles” (2007, p.26).

2.4.2 Toronto’s Tourism Challenges

After the recent recession of 2008, the Canadian tourism industry has been slowly recovering. While still the third most visited country in the Americas after the United States and Mexico, Canada saw only a two percent increase in visits in 2010, compared to nearly 10 percent by the US (UNWTO, 2011). Any number of factors, including a weakened global economy, a devaluation of the American dollar and rising travel costs, can explain the recent tourism slumps in Toronto. Some of these are of course, out of the hands of those in charge of Toronto’s tourism management teams and stakeholders. However, when it comes to visitor satisfaction, there is much work that can be done to improve the tourist experience when they do visit the city. Less than half of visitors surveyed for a study by the University of Guelph for Tourism Toronto between 1998 and 2006 responded that they were “very satisfied” with their visit to Toronto in 2006, and less than twenty percent thought the city had exceeded their expectations. It was also found that the information services encountered and directional signage to be inadequate or unhelpful; surely not the features of a quality Tourist City. Overall, many guests left unexcited by Toronto and it has become evermore clear that Toronto must improve its tourist industries and image as a tourist city, which may only be achieved with a more cohesive strategy incorporating all areas of the tourism sector (Ontario et al 2008).

Recommendations made by the TPRTD Project include: the upgrading or public infrastructure, especially with regards to transit, which has been a great challenge for the city for some time now; the development of a common vision for Toronto and stronger management of
such, which would include more frequent, cohesive, cross-sector initiatives and fewer isolated projects with large time gaps in between; and an increased awareness throughout the city, among city servants, business owners and average citizens, about the importance of tourism to the local economy and the importance of facilitating more positive tourist experiences in the city. The most significant recommendation, which was adopted immediately after the report was released is the continuing “We’ve been Expecting You” motto aimed at fostering a city culture of hospitality across all sectors (Ontario et al, 2008).

2.5 Place Marketing: Building a Brand

The tourism marketer is not always able to take advantage of the opportunities that arise or see infrastructural recommendations realized. For all of the knowledge attained about the market and the development plans the tourism marketer drafts up, there is never one sole decision maker. The context in which they work, that is, the cultural, historical, social, economic and political climates, all weigh in on how a city’s development, and promotion thereof, takes shape (Holcomb, 1990).

The production of the city is a constant negotiation process across scales; municipal, provincial, and national governments, along with non-governmental agencies and organizations, build the city product into a single symbolic artifact. The consumers for whom the city is produced are the businesses, tourists and inhabitants who each occupy the space in unique, and possibly competing, ways. City residents or businesses without the mobility to leave the city space become forced consumers of the product that may or may not serve their own interests or needs (Haddock, 2010).

A city brand, especially for a hub city such as Toronto, is strongly weaved into a nation’s own narrative; the landscape of a nation is not defined by geography alone, but by the people and
places within it (Urry, 2002). The cultures and symbols of specific places, and the food, art, and sites consumed there appear to make up what it means to know or experience “Canada”, or be “Canadian”. Alan Middleton (2010) defines the national brand as the “unique, multidimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all its target audiences” (p.16). This definition may also apply to cities, which must develop their own brand independent from, yet in accordance with, the national brand. This branding process continues with the intention of: attracting inbound investment and tourism; increasing the credibility and confidence of investors; increasing political influence at the national and international levels; improving the number and strength of global partnerships with other cities and countries, public and private universities and research institutions; encouraging civic pride; and continually improving the strategy-development and execution processes by which the nation or city defines itself (ibid.).

2.5.1 Becoming a Tourist City

Like all things related to the city and its representations to the public, Toronto’s tourism industry, and those industries that influence and are influenced by it, must be heavily managed. As the largest city in both Canada and Ontario, the country, province and city have much at stake when it comes to how Toronto is portrayed to the world. Toronto is steadily proclaimed as a diverse, multicultural, urban centre filled with people eager to embrace new arrivals.

In 2005, Toronto was ranked twelfth in the Anholt Index of International brands. While its image as a warm and friendly place was its biggest strength, Toronto was found weakest in terms of activities for tourists. In the categories of “things to do” and “have you visited”, Toronto fell short and as such, carries a fairly weak identity as a tourist destination (Clark, 2007). Since that time, many of Toronto’s biggest cultural sites, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario and the
Royal Ontario Museum, have undergone huge renovations but have not yet seen significant attendance growth, perhaps on account of infrequent “blockbuster” exhibits (Economic Development, Cultural and Tourism Department, 2008). These renaissance projects will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

2.5.2 Place Branding out of (Perceived) Necessity

In his book, *The Tourist*, Dean MacCannell asserts that the sites frequented by tourists in the modern age have become like the objects of religious pilgrimages in a more traditional society (Urry, 1995). They are worshipped and adored with a reverence not often experienced in the everyday. As a result, these sites are imbued with more meaning than was perhaps intended or initially established. This is the case not only for tourist sites but also for the many encounters to be had throughout one’s journey.

Urban tourism is characterized by three features, all symbiotically tied; the tourist, the city, and the tourism industry. With rapidly changing communications technologies and media sources, it has become even more challenging to draw the always-elusive tourist. Dennis Judd and Susan Fainstein (1999) stress that ongoing city efforts at attracting tourists and subsequent changes to the city itself have become an imbedded facet of the political economy for any urban space, and no city can afford to ever stand idle. It is this attitude that motivates cities to re-think urban policy and use marketing strategies to market the city itself as a cohesive whole. A solid city brand, complete with a set highly recognizable signifiers, is key to ensuring strong and profitable bonds between the city, its tourism industry, and their shared tourists.

In essence, the city becomes a product, or set of products, that competes in a global market with other very similar products. Thus, it becomes crucial for a city to develop a solid brand for itself, by way of the constant and simultaneous processes of place making and place
marketing. To brand is the perpetual endeavor to bring the city, and all the collected images surrounding it, to the forefront in the minds of consumers; the investors, businesses, and tourists from around the world. Haddock (2010) stresses that the branding process “must be integrated into broader city policies, diverse programmes and infrastructural planning projects that function harmoniously within a shared framework” (p.23). This is precisely what the city of Toronto is aiming to do. Continuous competition with other cities is hardly a choice but a perceived economic imperative that exists as a zero-sum game; there may be a few winners, but there is sure to many losers. It is by all means, a fickle business.

The city traveler takes into consideration any number of things before deciding a destination: possible language barriers, length of the stay, length of travel time, the destination’s overall appeal, and how knowable that destination is (Harrison, 2003). Considering this, it is in the interest of cities to respond to such concerns from the outset of their marketing strategies.

The urban imaginary, Haddock (2010) explains, is constructed by the intertwining of internal and external images of the city. The internal image is that which is understood and replicated by local city actors. By contrast, the external image is conceived and represented by and for people and organizations that are not a part of the everyday cultures and activities of the city and as such, their representations of the city tend to be more ambiguous or simplistic. Nevertheless, the ‘metageographies’ constructed influence the ways in which particular spaces are acted upon. The city is mentally divided up and labeled according to where it is best or safest for tourists to visit; it becomes a space of representation (Lefebvre, 1991).

The images and stories shared are potential guests’ first impressions of a city, and despite beliefs to the contrary, these first impressions are invaluable. In their research, travelers rely on their own travel histories, as well as an array of travel literature that includes guidebooks, travel
sections of newspapers, articles from magazines, television programs, and internet sites (Harrison, 2003). As such, the city’s brand must incorporate a set of images and ideas that epitomize the city’s places, people and overall feel, while distinguishing itself from other similar cities.

At a glance, most North American cities appear indistinguishable from one another. It is the individual sites and senses invoked in particular locales that really give shape to the feel of a city. It is the individual markers that label city sites as sights to pay attention to, to really remember (Urry, 1990). Still, in its efforts to showcase itself, the city reduces itself and its many cultures into a singular form that may be easily represented and understood; this representation is largely one relating to the ideology of consumption, that is, how the city itself should be consumed (Miles, 2010).

In order to market itself and attract new investment, the city must encourage a high level of cultural production and consumption. This image of a rising cultural sector helps to build up the symbolic economy of a place, bringing it to the forefront of peoples’ ideas about the city and all there is to experience during a visit. It is the intangible wealth that exists in a place, beyond any one site. In consciously constructing an atmosphere of culture all around, cities produce culture for the masses and thus deride any semblance of authenticity, according to Theodor Adorno (Borden et al, 2004).

2.5.3 Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto is the official organization tasked with sharing Toronto with tourists, and works together with the public and private sectors to do so. Its stated goal is “the effective and efficient stewardship of resources designed to promote the Greater Toronto Area as a premier destination of choice for leisure travelers, travel planners, meeting delegates, meeting planners
and travel-related media” (Tourism Toronto, 2011, p.2). Tourism Toronto is made up of 1,200 individual members and has formed strategic partnerships with the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, and other businesses and government bodies, including the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation and the Canadian Tourism Commission. As a Regional Tourism Organization, Tourism Toronto has established a more direct relationship with the Province of Ontario and the Ministry of Tourism, which provide more funding through the newly introduced Harmonized Sales Tax (Tourism Toronto, 2011).

In terms of their budget, the 2011 fiscal year is focused on recovering from the sharp declines of the recession of late 2008 and 2009. This year will provide for further funding and greater focus on the Key Cities Initiative, which will focus public relations and marketing efforts on a set of cities that offer greater possibility for improved trade and tourism from these cities. Cities include major city centers around the world, especially ten major American cities. As well, Tourism Toronto will expand efforts in countries like Japan, Korea, and China, which has recently granted Canada Approved Destination Status. Overall, marketing efforts remain “on high-value customers with the ability to spend more and to influence and inspire other consumers. The LGBT community, as an example, remains an important upscale market for which Toronto is extremely well-positioned” (Tourism Toronto, 2011, p.25).

The “We’ve Been Expecting You” philosophy that was recommended in the TPRTD Project findings has been fully embraced by Tourism Toronto, and has been incorporated into much of their literature. It is seen as a vital component to increasing revisits to Toronto, and is a valuable part of a word of mouth marketing strategy. Further to word of mouth marketing, Tourism Toronto is working to make its website more user-friendly, and convenient, with the functionality for potential tourists to book much of their trip online (Tourism Toronto, 2011).
As previously discussed, Tourism Toronto creates the “Official Narrative” of Toronto in its many pieces of literature accessed online and physically throughout the city. Due to its visibility online and in the city, Tourism Toronto is seen as an authority on the city and the places that a tourist should visit. Touting certain sites on its webpage or sponsoring particular cultural events, Tourism Toronto continuously makes decisions about which events or sites to include in the prominent discourse surrounding the city. As with any city’s tourism agency, such practices are to be expected, but this does not mean they should not be challenged or contrasted with unconventional representations.

As the official voice for Toronto, Tourism Toronto aims at being inclusive, diverse, creative, Canadian, and distinctly Torontonian. But beyond adjectives surrounding creativity, multiculturalism and tolerance, what does it mean to be “Torontonian”? Having struggled with this debate for years and with a number of marketing agencies, Tourism Toronto recently hired Crispin Porter + Bogusky Canada as its new marketing agency. Its method is simple, and post-modern in thought: just let Toronto be. Sheley Brown, the CEO of Crispin Porter + Bogusky Canada, points out that “One of the things we’ve really learned, working on the brand that is the City of Toronto, is we shouldn’t try to define it. The second you start to define it, you’re actually cutting off an aspect of what the city really is, and therefore cutting off some people from the city and what it could mean for them… We can define what it’s like to experience the city, but we shouldn’t try to tell people what Toronto is, because Toronto will be for them whatever they make it. Our job is to make it as easy, as exciting, as interesting to consume the city as possible” (Houpt, 2011). Despite the rhetoric of an organic, all-inclusive city, the reality is that it is unlikely, and indeed inadvisable, that Tourism Toronto is truly able to define the experience of the city without defining it in the process.
2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a thorough overview of Toronto’s recent past and its perceived need for documented strategies to become a more tourist-friendly city with vibrant cultural offerings. It has introduced Tourism Toronto as the official organization with the mandate to promote the city and Ontario’s version of Toronto and bring it to the forefront in the minds of travelers. However, such efforts require the relocation of resources and attention, and risk redirecting city officials’ interests away from city building for city residents and towards city building for city visitors, thus shifting the balance of interests in the city. The consequences of this will be explored more fully in the coming chapters.
Chapter 3

Place Branding and the Gaze

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three provides the key theoretical basis for tourism discourse and focuses primarily on the concept of the tourist gaze, as touted by John Urry. Having presented prevailing ideas about the city, and introduced the city of Toronto as the case study of this thesis investigation, theories about tourism and the practice of tourism is better contextualized at his point in the study.

Guy Debord (1983) warned in the first clause of his Society of the Spectacle that “…All of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation.” Particularly with travel, where a certain level of knowledge and planning is required before departure, the representation first introduces one to the place they intend to travel. The overwhelming presence of images and common discourse surrounding a place begins to construct the place through the eyes of the tourism agency, or the brochure publishers, or the corporations with national headquarters there; it is most often the monetary stakeholders that construct the expectations to carry, the sites to see, and the feelings to feel. Eco and Sorkin write that, “Tourist sites are writ large with signifiers, where the representation (and hence the anticipation) of the experience is at least as important as it actuality” (as quoted in Fainstein & Judd, 1999, p.25). The tourist thus discovers a place first through the lens of these photographs and literature prior to recognizing, and perhaps even appreciating, the place where and when they are present.
3.2 The Tourist Gaze

The tourist gaze comes about through a collective process of representing and meaning-making on the part of tourism professionals, media of all sorts, and tourists themselves. It refers to the way in which a tourist destination is framed for tourists, prior to and during their visit. Although there is no single tourist gaze, cities like Toronto work diligently to construct a narrative that shapes the most prominent gaze of the city known to tourists. In particular, the tourist gaze is built upon the careful separation of tourist leisure and the non-tourist everyday and work life. The tourist gaze relies on the temporary break from routine so that a new and contrasting set of stimuli can engage the tourist senses (Urry, 2002).

The tourist gaze is characterized by three sets of dichotomies, which include the romantic/collective; authentic/inauthentic; and historical/modern (Urry, 2002). With respect to travel in the city of Toronto, the gaze is often focused on the modern and authentic culture of the city, as seen in its cosmopolitan and multicultural dynamism. Tourist locations are designed to be collective experiences and as such, the sites and commodities found are best enjoyed in the company of others, strangers or otherwise. This presence of other people, and other tourists, gives ambience and life to a space (Urry, 1995, p.131). These sensory memories help a tourist recall moments and places in time, and may influence the possibility for return. As such, cities do much to ensure that tourist spaces are maintained just so.

The gaze involves a level of anticipation on the part of the tourist; there is the fantasy of grandeur, of an intense sensual experience that cannot be achieved in the everyday. Such hopes are created and re-represented through media such as television, film and literature, which may or may not be directly linked to the tourist industry (Urry, 2002). These romanticized representations of travel are accumulated by the tourist and accompany him or her on the journey.
they take; through photographs, postcards and film, tourists continue the process of recapturing and reproducing the tourist gaze.

While Urry (2002) originally stressed the dichotomy of the collective and romantic gazes, he elaborates further on some of the gazes that are regularly constructed in the city:

1) The Collective Gaze: The site is given life by the presence of other people enjoying it as well; it is part of the collective consumption of place;

2) The Romantic Gaze: The object of the gaze is emphasized as being private and personal to the gazer. There is an air of solitude and spirituality of romance surrounding the site;

3) The Spectatorial Gaze: Tourists or gazers collectively glance at the site and collect sights in passing, often by walking or driving by and taking photographs;

4) The Mediatized Gaze: The site is collectively gazed at because of its fame as part of a media event or moment, perhaps as a backdrop to, or object of, a mediated gaze.

As with most images produced for the masses, much of the discourse surrounding holidays are hetero-normative and cater to the nuclear family. Three kinds of vacations appear most often: the family holiday, which features the mother, father and their two kids having a grand old time wherever they are; the romantic holiday that centers on a couple sharing an intimate moment despite likely being in a much crowded space; and the fun holiday, where happy singles can have a blast and catch the eye of another attractive, opposite sex, traveler (Urry, 2002). Those individuals or groups who do not fit into these limited vignettes are often left unrepresented in most tourist material.
3.2.1 The Second Gaze

As will be further discussed in Chapter Five, there is currently a moment of paradox being experienced, where heavily mediated actions and representations by governments and corporate entities are more frequently and more easily juxtaposed by alternative views that, in essence, puncture the narrative so long constructed and maintained.

Dean MacCannell suggests that beyond the tourist gaze, there exists a second gaze, which challenges the original moment of sightseeing. The second gaze is that which forces us to look at what is missing or hidden from any site or its shared representations. The second gaze recognizes the simple truth that “seeing is not believing” (MacCannell, 2011). In thinking about the second gaze, the tourist becomes more active in the process of constructing and interpreting meaning in a given place, of a certain site or experience. It gives more agency to the tourist and less to those states or corporations who build the original site and representation upon which the tourist gazes.

The second gaze may be further brought to light not only by the tourists themselves, but also by alternative sources for information about the city. Literature from private sources who with or without profit motivation may serve to highlight that which is obscured by the images so often produced of a place. Whether it is focused on new sites for exploration, or the behind-the-scenes happenings kept from tourist view, the second gaze, “looks for openings and gaps in the cultural unconscious. It looks for the unexpected, not the extraordinary, for objects and events that may open a window in structure, a chance to glimpse the symbolic in action” (MacCannell, 2011, p.210).

3.3 Tourism and Photography

The gaze, as Foucault suggested, is an act of seeing and analyzing power relations between the gazer and that which is being gazed at. Through the gaze, travelers have a lens
through which they view and experience a place, and can seemingly “exert control on the people and environments which are the subjects of their gaze” (Baker, 2010, p.6). This is especially true when considering the role that photography plays in capturing moments of one’s leisure time and travels.

Photography and tourism as we know them today developed around the later half of the 1800s alongside one another, each with its own level of influence on the other. In particular, for the purpose of this discussion, photography has been a significant tool for the tourist gaze. To take a photograph is a powerful thing; it is to capture a piece of reality, while keeping many parts obscured. It is, as Urry describes, an active signifying process whereby one’s physical environment is frozen and framed without full context, but rather, a set of signifiers that ask to be pieced together and made sense of.

Photography as a common practice has allowed for any photographer to capture an image that is then deconstructed and understood by all those with whom a photo or set of photos is shared. From this, certain ‘truths’ are formed, based on the images and what is seemingly known about them. This includes the understanding of what makes a site a sight. According to Roland Barthes, “Photo photography began with photographs of the notable and has ended up making notable whatever is photographed” (as quoted in Urry, 1990, p.139).

Many would argue that the availability of less expensive and more accessible cameras and methods for sharing photographs has led to a more democratized human experience. Photography makes it possible for many people to document their travel and has transformed how they travel. The amateurization of photography is especially stimulated by the development of the point-and-shoot digital camera; digital photography has allowed for, and indeed, encourages the constant documentation of one’s travels. It encourages photos of the mundane, the reshooting of
photos and the recreating of moments in order to get the shot ‘just right’; it allows tourists to shoot photos indiscriminately and edit the photos immediately or well after the moment has passed.

Travel and tourism become the means by which individuals search for the photogenic. According to Urry, they become accumulation strategies. Photographs preserve memories and act as proof of having been to places and seen the things worth seeing. These ‘things’ are familiar; they are what we see in the travel brochures, or hear about on radio advertisements, or see on television programs. The photography process essentially becomes cyclical, as we search to visually capture and save the very moments and memories that we have already seen countless times before (Urry, 2002). This process is accelerated with the ubiquity of social media and personal photo-sharing, as will be elaborated upon in Chapter Five.

The ubiquity of visual media has truly come to emphasize the role of the sight in our experiences and knowledge of the world around us. That which is captured digitally or on film and shared can lift ordinary sites to extraordinary sights, which become fleeting in a culture that is fueled by ever-quickening change (Urry, 2002).

In light of this, there is a continued effort to beautify the city. According to Richard Florida, a city’s pleasing aesthetic and physical environment help to boost one’s experience in it and their overall sense of satisfaction with a place. This phenomenon is known as the “beauty premium”, which economists believe to be the reason behind consumption choices and willingness to pay more for that which is deemed beautiful (Florida, 2009). The aesthetic appeal is further enhanced by the cultural energy present, which is what draws so many to city centers worldwide. Cities like Toronto invest large sums of money into create the look and feel of a city
space conducive to aesthetic beauty and a surface-level look of cultural vibrancy, as will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Tourism professionals, or those affiliated with the tourism industry, all play an active role in the production of the tourist gaze. Through government policies and marketing schemes, new objects and subjects of the tourist gaze are created and sold to growing numbers of tourists. As Jansson (2007) writes, “The tourist gaze has become more and more intertwined with the consumption of media images. Modern tourism has never involved any pure first-hand gaze, and is today governed by and measured against mediated representations created by the tourism industry by the culture industry at large” (as quoted in Munar, 2010, p.18). Tourist sites are marked as such and encourage tourists to congregate in these places to gaze at whatever attraction may be found in that particular place. This helps establish a collective tourist gaze and create a sense of community amongst tourists and sharers of the gaze (Urry, 1995).

3.3.1 The Power of Gazing

In certain spaces, it is the collective gaze and the presence of others with whom the tourist shares commonalities that makes a district desirable to visit. The preferred sites of different social groups may be divided along the lines of gender, ethnicity or areas of preference and depending on such reasonings, the sites visited and the impact on the people already inhabiting those spaces change with every new encounter (Urry, 2002). Ethnic enclaves such as Little Italy or Chinatown, for example, often attract those visitors of the same background, or those who share in a love for a particular cuisine, art style, or musical genre. In such defined places that exist in contrast to more everyday “Toronto culture”, there is also the tendency to make such experiences moments of “othering” by the act of gazing. The residents of the city are seen as being in the “natural habitat”, going about their daily routines, which may include
shopping in local ethnic grocery stores or working in the restaurants those tourists frequent. From these brief encounters in what would appear as non-tourist spaces, tourists can remember and give meaning to those areas as being separate from, and more authentic than, the larger city of Toronto by the photographs they take and the stories they tell afterwards. In some encounters that are more worrisome, there may be moments of judgment and gawking.

3.4 Post-Modernism and the Post-Tourist

In postmodernism, reality is reconceptualized; everything is a replica, or a text of another text, and these representations can often seem more real than the real. Lash writes “Modernism conceives of representations as being problematic whereas postmodernism problematizes reality” (Urry, 2002,p.77).

Postmodernism is anti-hierarchical and brings culture and commerce together; this relationship is especially evident in the analysis of the spectacle and the visual effects of it. The spectacular nature of the postmodern world is ubiquitous; photographs, film, postcards and guidebooks all capture the larger-than-life images of tourist sites and reproduce them within the overlapping frames of the aesthetic, the commercial and the popular (Urry, 2002). This collage of images is furthered illustrated by the accompanying narratives of memory, travel texts, stories or song lyrics that enrich a place with meaning ahead of the experience. This pre-existing knowledge of a place, however accurate it may or may not be, entices the post-tourist. One no longer has to necessarily leave his or her house to experience to partake in the tourist gaze; the immediacy of visual images and film of gazed at objects allow them to be gazed at, compared, contextualized, and gazed at again from the comfort of home (Urry, 2002). Tourism can occur virtually to some degree, allowing the virtual tourist to travel across time and space instantly and explore new places online perhaps in preparation for the physical trip, or perhaps not.
3.5 Tourism and Cultural Consumption

The business of place making and place marketing as aided by the construction of the tourist gaze is a multi-billion dollar industry that spends enormous amounts of money on campaigns designed to improve the city and its marketability. Cities are looking to attract many of the same tourists with the disposable income to spend on city sites and businesses (Holcomb, 1999). Because tourism is in large part meant as an escape from the everyday, cities must provide tourists with sites to see and things to do that keep their visits amusing, and thus worthy of the money being spent on such travel. In doing so, tourist cities promote themselves as *dreamscapes of visual consumption* (Zukin, 1995). In this way, cities become spaces for play, where consumption and leisure are intricately tied and where the gaze functions to uphold these practices.

The tourist gaze, especially in cities like Toronto that privilege elements of the Creative City, often uses culture as a lens through which the vibrancy of a city is showcased. Harvey asserts that cultural forms and the flow of capital have always been inseparable (1990). Stuart Hall writes about this,

> Culture has ceased to be, if it ever was, a decorative addendum to the ‘hard world’ of production and things, the icing on the cake of the material world… Through design, technology and styling, ‘aesthetics’ has already penetrated the world of modern production. Through marketing, layout and style, the ‘image’ provides the mode of representation of the body on which so much modern consumption depends (1988, p.28).

3.6 Conclusion

Sharon Zukin suggests that the city is to be analyzed both through the lens of its *symbolic economy*, which is concerned with the representations of the city and the power structures they uphold, and through the lens of its *political economy*, which focuses on the material conditions that result from processes of urban development and decision-making (1995). Chapter Three
suggests that the tourist gaze is an essential element in the construction of the city’s symbolic economy. Chapter Four will go on to argue that the materialization of the gaze and representations of the city have profound impacts on the city’s political economy and lived realities.
Chapter 4

The City Space, As Shaped by Tourism

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four examines the extent to which neoliberal ideology influences not only city policy, but also the physical city space. Driven by the promise of investment and profit, the city of Toronto, like so many others, is being reconstructed as a space that first and foremost welcomes capital from visitors and wealthy residents. This trend is led by city officials who approve and finance the changes, as well as private interest groups or corporations, who help develop and finance the space as well so long as there is sure to be a return on that investment. There has been the increased number of cultural festivals across the city that attract millions of visitors annually and remain considerably inexpensive for the city to produce both because of their temporary nature and the financial support they bring from private sources. These heavily managed images of the city reinforce the tourist gaze, and more critically, question the possibility for authenticity in the city and the existence of public moments or sites separate from the motivation for capital.

4.2 Changing City Space as Economically Driven

Cities are integral to contemporary neoliberal processes and are the setting upon which political-economic space is remade, by way of creative-destruction. The existing institutional and political system is destroyed by reform initiatives, which create a new system that places capital growth and commodification as central to a market-dominated social order. Neoliberal projects value such practices as deregulation of state control, privatization of public services and
encouragement of international capital mobility, all of which have dire implications for social welfare programs and organized labour (Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

Changing policy regimes, regulatory practices and political struggles of the past thirty years have further embedded neoliberal restructuring projects within urban society, and by way of different geographic scales. Such restructuring projects have not yet proven themselves to facilitate sustainable capitalist growth, yet they are imposed in place of the former Fordist-Keynesian social system (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Jeremy Rifkin warns:

Cultural rituals, community events, social gatherings, the arts, sports and games, social movements and civic engagements are all being encroached upon by the commercial sphere. The great issue at hand, in the coming years, is whether civilization can survive with a greatly reduced government and cultural sphere, and only the commercial sphere left as the primary mediator of human life (Rifkin, 2000, as quoted in Miles, 2010, p.75).

4.3 Rejuvenation Projects

In 2003, the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Plan invested $233 million in the Greater Toronto Area’s cultural infrastructure renovations. Funds from the federal and provincial governments were allocated to: the Royal Ontario Museum, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Ballet of Canada, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, Roy Thomson Hall, and the Ontario College of Art and Design (which only received provincial funding) (Jenkins, 2005). These institutions’ abilities to lure in greater attendance and profits than smaller, more grassroot venues that are not designated as municipal, provincial, or national landmarks, were reason enough for governments and private businesses alike to fund these projects, as the benefits of so doing would be mutually beneficial.

Many of the rejuvenation projects have centred around the downtown core, in particular
neighbourhoods or along the same streets. Together, they are a part of a larger picture and become symbols of a united city, ordered in such a way that the physical environment facilitates the social relations and performances that are expected and encouraged within that space (Mumford, 1937).

The cultural consumption that takes place in museums, galleries or theatres are indicative of the ways in which particular social groups make use of their non-productive time and spend their money to buy tickets, souvenirs and other such goods that are representative of one’s taste and abilities to afford such life of leisure, and perhaps, luxury. Such conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption indicates one’s social status and financial wealth (Veblen, 2008). In remodeling Toronto’s institutions most affiliated with the high arts, Toronto aims to attract a particular type of tourist, one with refined taste and the money to spend on a variety of costly shows and exhibits.

Still, tourist cities cannot dwell solely on a collection of high-profile tourist sites. Instead, they must cultivate an urban atmosphere that is conducive to tourism in a way that feels natural and uncontrived. City space is made to feel and appear creative, energetic, and fun. It is a space for leisure at any pace, to be consumed at any budget (Roost & Sassun, 1999).

Toronto boasts 750 cultural facilities that are located in each of its many neighbourhoods and offer a space for residents, and tourists, to explore their creativity and participate in the creation or consumption of various performances and exhibits (Toronto Community Foundation, 2010). Here, it would seem, culture of all sorts is celebrated and given a public platform. Despite this, there are concerns as to the hierarchy of participants, largely on account of varying admission costs. A look at the Tourism Toronto website would suggest which of these organizations are prioritized for tourists to visit.
4.4 Neighbourhood Revitalization

Guy DeBord writes that, “The society which rests on modern industry or superficially spectacular, it is fundamentally spectaclist. In the spectacle, which is the image of the ruling economy, the goal is nothing, development everything. The spectacle aims at nothing other than itself” (1983).

The city thus remains in a constant state of construction in order to continually serve the needs and preferences of wealthy stakeholders and visitors, for it is they who are seen to uphold the existing economy. To manage such construction and image-production, governments at all levels, as well as other public and private organizations, work to coordinate, subsidize and finance renovations and infrastructure development (Fainstein & Judd, 1999).

Tourist spaces are, for the most part, clearly marked as such throughout the city. In the labeling of particular districts, Toronto gives titles to these spaces and indicates how a tourist is meant to interact with and take in these areas. Whether the tourist is in the Financial District, Entertainment District or Garden District, there exist invisible perimeters that separate these spaces from one another and distinguish each area as unique. Space is thus divided up into themes, according to Urry, which may or may not have anything to do with the actual history or geography of the place (2002). Not only does each district have its own character, but some are quite successful at fostering a tourist bubble that shields tourists from the more inhospitable images of the city. Sites are promoted as exciting and unique, with the implicit message that the areas in which they are experienced are safe and comfortable. In this way, the city is meant to be more appealing to the tourist, who is spared from the realities of crime, poverty and urban decay found in more hidden parts of the city. The tourist imagination is filled with sanitized memories of the city’s cleanliness, character, and overall hospitality (Judd, 1999).
Current tourist cities are designed to ensure that their core caters to the tourist; luxury hotels and condos line the waterfront, while retail centres and entertainment complexes make up much of the city’s center. These spaces are walkable and are clearly marked to help visitors navigate their way through. As a result of maintaining the tourist bubble and creating a space in which the tourist is always the primary concern, there is sure to emerge tensions from those who work and live in these spaces, or those nearby, as there are few working-class residential areas in the tourist city itself. The tourist bubble limits the possibility for a more coalesced local community by essentially keeping residents out and businesses in (Judd, 1999).

For local city businesses, the primary objective is not the increase of tourists to the city, but rather, to maximize their share of those tourists and the money they will undoubtedly spend. Their investment in revitalization projects are determined by this rationale. In fact, many Business Improvement Areas such as those on Yonge Street and Bloor Street or along the Waterfront and Entertainment District are bypassing efforts to get municipal funding for renovations and instead looking to the local businesses themselves, as well as the provincial and federal governments, for financial support. These bodies are often seen to be more effective and quicker to act than the city itself (Agrell, 2011).

Though tourism tends to be most present in the downtown core, there is an increasing number of tourists venturing beyond the typical tourist areas. Toronto has many distinctive neighbourhoods, each with its own feeling and appearance. Business Improvement Areas are active in more than sixty districts, which help to encourage consumption and tourist spending in the area (Ontario et al, 2008). All seem to operate under the assumption that investment in infrastructure and promotion of the space as unique in its own particular way will be financially rewarding. They take up the notion of competition among cities and even among the
neighbourhoods within the cities. Rarely do these districts reach their financial goals; but with so many cities taking this same risk, city officials seem resistant to sitting on the sidelines for fear of being left behind (Logan & Molotch, 1987).

4.5 Consequences

While increased tourism surely generates profits for many, it also has tremendous adverse effects for many of the most vulnerable members of Toronto society. Promises of a trickle-down effect, as characteristic of capitalist ideology, does not bring equal benefits to all people, and in reality, often does more harm than good to many.

4.5.1 Gentrification

As one in a small number of strategies for a city to increase both its economic and symbolic capital, tourism efforts have the capacity to influence city communities in various ways. Tourism-related investment such as neighbourhood rejuvenation projects often drive home values upwards and usher new and more expensive amenities in (Fainstein & Gladstone, 1999). Tucked away in an otherwise unmemorable part of the city, the Distillery District is emblematic of Judd’s tourist bubble. Having been spared from demolition, the old distilleries of Toronto have been transformed into a space of nostalgia and consumption. Chic boutiques and specialty restaurants line the cobblestone streets that are brought up to date with pieces of modern art. Still, such transformations are not all as romantic as the Distillery District example for those inhabiting the gentrified spaces.

Over the years, Toronto has seen some of the highest levels of gentrification in Canada. Gentrification is characterized by the decline of affordable housing for rent, the displacement of the working class from the communities in which they lived, rising costs of housing, and the conversion of affected areas from places of production to places of consumption (Maarannen &
Walks, 2008). One such area has been Toronto’s Regent Park. Due to rising costs and inaffordability, residents are often forced to relocate further away from the city centre, moving northwards to the less-visible parts of the city as discussed in Chapter Two. Tourist centres are strategically cleansed of “undesirables”, yet areas that are not visible to tourists and do not generate much wealth for the city often become “centers of criminal activity, anomie, and physical decay” (Fainstein & Judd, 1999, p.23).

4.5.2 Job Creation in the Tourism Sector

Proponents of building up tourist industries in the city argue that jobs in tourism cost little to establish, yet produce wealth through multiplier effects, improving the city’s overall aesthetic, and providing more leisure facilities for residents as well. While some artists or creative workers are included in Florida’s conception of the creative class, privileged with well-paying jobs and flexible work schedules, others find themselves being creative in less financially profitable jobs or side projects, especially for those working in the tourism industry. With tourism patterns being increasingly unpredictable, and peak seasons in Toronto lasting only a couple months at a time, workers in the tourism sector often have to juggle multiple jobs all with part-time or temporary hours and a general sense of instability. They do not enjoy employee benefits, or real opportunities to climb the corporate ladder, as the saying goes. These jobs are often low-paying service jobs that in fact, remain quite gendered and racialized (Judd, 1999).

The argument is often made by some for the fact that in a world primarily organized by the principles of capitalism, a city, and indeed a nation, must take part in the worldwide competition to attract visitors. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world and more and more cities are marketing themselves as the best places to see. Though it is an unwinnable
competition, but to bow out would be to forfeit million of dollars annually to the local economy, a risk few city (or nation) leaders are willing to take (Fainstein & Gladstone, 1999).

4.5.3 Volatility of the Tourism Market

Investment in tourism does not result in social inequalities in and of itself. The jobs it produces, or the ways in which it affects how residents occupy (or do not occupy) city space are not predetermined. Rather, they are dependent on the larger structures and decisions made in regards to how that specific location is managed (Fainstein & Gladstone, 1999). What works for some cities does not inevitably work for others, regardless of how much money is spent. Cities around the world have injected millions of dollars into the construction of shopping centres and districts in the hope of encouraging consumption to no avail. Now derelict, many shopping plazas remain depressing reminders of poor investment decisions. The same can be said for so many sites designed to be the biggest and the best of their kind, only to be surpassed a short time later by something being constructed in other cities. In this way, cities are constantly playing catch-up with one another, each spending millions of citizen tax dollars not knowing what the return on that investment will end up being.

4.5.4 The Question of Authenticity

In the early 1970s, the idea of authenticity became an important part of the debate surrounding culture and modernity. Marked by the absence of commodification, the authentic is experienced in natural, untouched social relationships and spaces (Heath & Potter, 2004). According to Lash and Lury, the authentic relies on an origin of sort, whether a place, event or relationship (Lash & Lury, 2007). The authentic is often said to have an aura, which separates any cultural artifact or place from social life. It is original and unique, and came about organically or from pure creativity. One could argue that postmodern culture is hardly a display of this. In fact,
postmodernism by its very definition and premise is not authentic, and is in fact, anti-auratic (Urry, 2002).

While MacCannell writes that the tourist is in search for something true and authentic to cope with the alienation he or she experiences in their everyday life, the tourist will undoubtedly only ever find the staged authentic, that is a construction meant to please the tourist. MacCannell writes in *The Tourist*, “The existence of a back implies a certain mystification, a place where there are secrets, props or activities that might undermine the ‘reality’ of the front. Inevitably, the mere possibility of a ‘back’ gives rise to a sense that the ‘front’ is manufactured and artificial” (1976, p.97). MacCannell uses Goffman’s metaphor of the front and back stage to suggest that even the back is staged to great degree; the true back will never be made visible to the tourist. Tourist spaces, by virtue of the fact that they are meant for tourists, are organized around a staged authenticity. According to Harrison, the gaze of the travel enthusiast is unavoidably one that measures every encounter by the level of authenticity, as defined by the tourist him or herself (Heath & Potter, 2004). Such authenticity can then be quite subjective and reflect the entire city, particular places, or the people encountered there in one’s mind.

Still, post-tourists recognize the absence of a real authentic, and in fact delight in it. John Urry describes the post-tourist as one who “finds pleasure in the multitude of games that can be played and knows that there is no authentic tourist experience” (1995, p.140). There is an element of play in the tourism process that exists for the postmodern tourist that is less evident in tourism of the past.

In line with this idea, is the belief of Erik Cohen that, “Mass tourism does not succeed because it is a colossal deception, but because most tourists entertain concepts of ‘authenticity’ which are much looser than those held by intellectuals and experts” (as quoted in Heath & Potter,
There is an element of ‘play’ in the tourism process that exists for the postmodern tourist that is less evident in tourism of the past; the suspension of belief and a fairly loose expectation for authenticity help to maximize the current tourist experience (Miles, 2010).

The post-tourist appreciates the endless number of choices available to him or her as a consumer of places. They are not necessarily bound by categories of high culture or authenticity, but instead focus on the possibility for pleasure, experience sharing, learning and destinations that are both mainstream and more alternative. Itineraries or group travel guides are not necessary, as the post-tourist has at their disposal multiple resources for arranging their trip, some of which are described in Chapter Five. For the post-tourist, according to Urry (2002), “the world is a stage and the post-tourist can delight in the multitude of games to be played” (p.91). These games legitimate the fact that the tourist is not experiencing any one authentic encounter with the city, but rather, accepts his or her position as an outsider, embraces it, and performs accordingly. Still, there are repeated moments of ‘enchantment’ for the tourist, in which he or she is faced with a fleeting glimpse of authenticity, before getting caught up again in the fast-moving urban-industrial cityscape and allowing oneself to be ‘re-enchanted’ by something new (Miles, 2010).

On the city stage, expectations collapse, and the post-tourist is immersed in the city without a fixed identity as such, often looking and behaving like a tourist, and often not.

4.6 Cultural Festivals

Single events such as arts festivals held in the city are not the primary drivers of tourism, but when incorporated into the discourse of the city together with other events and efforts taking place, ideas of the city and its larger context are cultivated, shared and reproduced (Holcomb, 1999). It is with this in mind that the City of Toronto has really begun to foster the growth of
various cultural festivals such as the newer Luminato Festival and Nuit Blanche, and longstanding summer festivals such as Taste of the Danforth and Pride Week.

Arts festivals often take place over the course of a few days or weeks and thus, fit flexibly into any tourist itinerary. They also offer a wide variety of sensory experiences: food, music, performances and visual art are often all incorporated in some way into the festivals, and as such, offer the tourist many choices in terms of what to experience and when to experience it. Many of the features in these festivals are free to participate in and appeal to the masses, while others charge fees for tickets or passes for participation, often at set times and for those with more particular or niche interests; tourists choose the days and sites that work with their schedules and budgets.

Toronto’s many cultural festivals are incredible opportunities to celebrate the community and attract people to it, but obviously require significant financial support from both the public and private sector. Though run as non-profit events, stakeholders are increasingly demanding business reports detailing the expected and actual economic impacts, including taxes generated and jobs created.

One of the biggest benefactors is the Ontario Tourism Ministry’s Celebrate Ontario fund, which provides $20 million annually to help in making festivals across the province more profitable. According to a May 2011 report from Festivals and Events Ontario, the province’s 1,700 annual festivals generate a total of $2.3 billion for regional GDPs, $1.1 billion in taxes, and 52,700 full-year job equivalents (Lewis, 2011).

4.6.1 Festivals as Money-Makers

Recent years have seen a drastic decrease in the average spending per household in the Toronto region since the recession (Toronto Community Foundation, 2010). It is perhaps with
this in mind that arts and cultural festivals have been promoted as a unique, and comparatively inexpensive, way to enjoy the city without spending large amounts of money at once on tickets. Designed as low cost and often organic-feeling happenings, attendees are easily drawn into a sphere of further consumption; dinner, drinks, and show paraphernalia are often purchased as part of the urban consumer’s pass time without second thought (Zukin, 1995).

The Luminato Festival, for example, showcases the arts in Toronto with installation pieces set up around the city and performances or presentations by many international artists. In its first four years, Luminato has brought in over $550 million in visitor spending, with $45 million being spent on accommodations and food alone (Lewis, 2011).

### 4.6.2 Festivals on the International Stage

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) has been proven to contribute upwards of $54 million annually to the Canadian film industry, and about $200 million in GDP (Lewis, 2011). Attracting millions of international visitors, as well as hundreds of celebrities with their entourages, TIFF receives plenty of press coverage and is one of Toronto’s greatest opportunities to step into the international spotlight.

In the summer 2011, the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) were held in Toronto. The event, to be viewed by 700 million people, brought further attention to the city of Toronto, with as many as 700 international media covering the event and sharing their impressions of Toronto with the world. That the world’s second largest film industry chose to hold its largest event of the year in Toronto is notable and helps the tourism industry in so many ways, especially considering that India is the second fastest growing market for tourists, according to Tourism Toronto’s spokesperson, Andrew Weir (Flavelle, 2011). The “Bollywood Oscars”, as they are commonly known, is a chance for South Asian culture to be promoted
outside of Toronto, into more American and international travelers. It also brings together many interests from across Toronto, Brampton and Mississauga (Tourism Toronto, 2011).

Aided by funding from the Government of Ontario and corporate donations, primarily by its largest corporate sponsor, CIBC, the event also drew in Canadian residents from outside of the GTA. Overall, the event was expected to draw about 40,000 tourists to the GTA over the week that IIFA was in town. The festival was also expected to result in $26-30 million being spent by tourists and event organizers on things such as hotel accommodations, food, security, and other expenses (Flavelle, 2011).

4.7 Private-Public Partnerships

Toronto’s Culture Plan relies on cooperation from all three levels of government, as well as support from the private sector and general public. With regards to financial support, however, it has come to be expected, according to Elcior Santana, that “Culture for culture’s sake” is not enough to ensure funding, unless expected to directly or indirectly provide for greater monetary return. Social investment in cultural production or institutions is determined by their utility and ability to draw in consumers or participants. Still, decision makers have acknowledged the importance of investing in local culture so as to foster a more satisfied civil society that may host and participate in new political and economic developments (Yúdice, 2003).

With increasing economic pressure to compete with other cities for capital investment, cities experiment with neoliberal practices such as place-marketing, urban redevelopment projects, and public-private partnerships, with the intention of fostering city space to encourage market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices (Brenner and Theodore, 2002).
Having been officially sponsored by an outside corporation, Caribana, now the Scotiabank Caribbean Carnival Toronto, creates around 6,800 jobs, mostly in the Toronto area. Guests to the event spend upwards of $300 on average, which would include food, travel and accommodations (Lewis, 2011). Scotiabank is also the primary sponsor of Toronto’s Nuit Blanche Festival, Buskerfest, and Cavalcade of Light, as well as numerous others. In this way, they have effectively branded these festivals and claimed ownership over street festivals that were intended to be equal, open and collaborative celebrations of art in the city.

4.8 The Commodification of Culture and Place

According to George Yúdice (2003), “Culture has transformed the very logic of capitalism” (p.17) and its use as a resource subject to the market has significantly marked the postmodern age. Images are not only commodities, but make up the basis of tourist markets and collective identities. Tourism is both the display of economic capital and cultural capital, as embodied by the understanding and appreciation of works of art, and knowledge of the places and people that make up city life (Urry, 2002).

Sharon Zukin writes, “Culture is both a commodity and a public good, a base- though a troubling one- of economic growth, and a means of framing the city” (1995, 113). Once open to investment and accumulation, culture becomes like any other resource, tangible or intangible, valuable for tourism, arts and crafts, and other cultural endeavours that celebrate heritage and community. By enriching the city with myriad restaurants, art shows, sports events, and other leisure and tourist possibilities, urban life in Toronto has been infused with ongoing activity brought about by both public and private efforts. The satisfaction of tourism is the anticipation itself, as the tourist seeks constantly for exciting things to do and see in the city. Like any consumer, the tourist is always engaged in a dialectic of newness and insatiability (Urry, 2002).
In such a fast-paced pursuit for pleasure, holidays in the city become less about the creation of collective memory or discovery, and more about immediate gratification and sign-collecting. The camera technology has so transformed the tourist experience that it can capture both the ordinary and extraordinary to the effect that more sites can be seen and more moments recorded, to be shared and revisited numerous times over.

For Appadurai, these acts of consumption organize social life; the rituals with which we engage create a sense of time and memory according to our consumption of cultural products (Silverstone, 1999). Although once seen as separate from time spent enjoying shopping, sport, architecture or culture, tourism’s defining characteristics are melding into other areas of urban social life, causing these fields to be increasingly interrelated (Urry, 1995). As a result, the tourist gaze becomes wrapped up in these new layers of social meaning, such that it becomes intrinsic to the contemporary social experience, as travel and tourism are made present in all sorts of representations and forms of consumption (Urry, 2002).

Tourism has been historically linked to leisure and capitalism, and as such, Baudrillard asserts, “We are at the point where ‘consumption’ has taken over all life, where all of our activities are tied together in the same combinatorial mode, where the avenues of satisfaction are laid out in advance, hour by hour, and where the ‘environment’ is totalizing, climate-controlled, domesticated and enculturated” (as quoted in Heath & Potter, 2004, p.273). Reality as we know it is little more than spectacle and simulacra, and the tourism industry builds itself upon such presumptions. Tourist hotspots are heavily mediated, sometimes enclosed or guarded, perfectly manicured and cleaned. They are maintained with the tourist in mind; they are not natural and do not exist free of the gaze.

To offset the crisis of overproduction that is inevitable in capitalism, workers are
transformed into consumers so that they may enjoy the leisurely pleasures tourism offers (Heath & Potter, 2004). Tourism has always been an act of consumption; tourists consume places, people and cultures, and goods such as souvenirs. Tourism occurs in the liminal moments outside of everyday life; it reinscribes the apparent division between work and leisure encouraged by modernity (Urry, 1995).

Traditional media such as painting or sculpture were traditionally valued for their cultural or aesthetic worth, as determined by their particular meaning in a society. In modernity, media are transformed into things, without a necessary cultural value, but with a use and exchange value (Lash & Lury, 2007, p.8). In this way, cultural artifacts are incorporated into the sphere of cultural commodities. The culture industry has expanded globally, and as Scott Lash and Celia Lury describe, the relationship between culture and capitalism is:

Less a matter of the base determining the superstructure than the cultural superstructure collapsing, as it were, into the material base. Hence goods become informational, work becomes affective, property becomes intellectual and the economy more generally becomes cultural. Culture, once in the base, takes on a certain materiality itself. Media become things. Images and other cultural forms from the superstructure collapse into the materiality of the infrastructure (2007, p.7).

Global tourism is growing at a rate of four to five percent annually. As the largest industry in the word, travel and tourism makes up about eight percent of all employment, and 11.7 percent of the world’s GDP (Urry, 2002). It is little wonder then that in efforts to maintain such statistics, and garner a piece of the proverbially pie, cities infuse culture and everyday life with elements of the spectacular to such degree that they become commodities in and of themselves.

Many tourist attractions are shaped by ideas about culture, and for cities, this becomes a
great business opportunity. Investment in cultural products such as food, art, music and theatre builds a city’s *symbolic economy*, the images and spaces that attach themselves to the entire city brand (Zukin, 1995). For a city like Toronto, with a strong heritage and sense of diversity, culture has become a key factor in Toronto’s ability to stand apart from other major cities. Past economies relied on large-scale cultural amenities such as theatrical productions, museum or art exhibits, or professional sport events as the City’s show of culture. Today, creative economies have stepped outside that box to include activities or amenities like food festivals, concerts in the park, and independent art exhibits, which tend to be more accessible and less costly to take part in (Florida, 2005). Toronto is seeking to balance both approaches in order to attract mass appeal; its goal is to increase attendance, as well as financial support. Lively culture and lively economy have become increasingly co-dependent, and the increasingly segmented market demands even mainstream sources of information to provide alternatives that allow the tourist an escape from tourism, albeit a false one.

Local governments work with businesses in the tourism industry to market and brand their city (or country, region, township, etc.) as an ideal tourist destination. While this has traditionally been a one-way communication through print media, television or radio, the internet has in many ways reshaped tourism marketing. Most notably, as will be elaborated upon in Chapter Five, Web 2.0 and its emphasis on new social media sites offer great potential for more interaction amongst tourists and tourism enthusiasts (Munar, 2010, p.1).

Still, Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (2002) write:

On the one hand, whereas neoliberal ideology aspires to create a ‘utopia’ of free markets liberated from all forms of state interference, it has in practice entailed a dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all aspects of social life… On the other hand, whereas neoliberal
ideology implies that self-regulating markets will generate an optimal allocation of investments and resources, neoliberal political practice has generated pervasive market failures, new forms of social polarization, and a dramatic intensification of uneven development at all spatial scales (p.352).

4.9 Conclusion

By way of strident efforts at creating a tourist city, Toronto has focused on creating the city as a space for consumption and fun, and has done little to foster any sort of civic engagement or service for Toronto residents. This chapter has shown that in focusing its plans in more central areas of the city, the City of Toronto has further alienated many now-former downtown residents. Adopted policies surrounding wealth promotion and tourism growth have impacted the physical city space and the ways in which people engage with it and within it. Still, there is the increasing desire by many tourists to go beyond the cleaned up path, into the areas that are seldom seen in promotional literature, and frequented by hip locals. The post-tourist trend is further propelled by the abundance of blogs, websites and social networks that facilitate city exploration, as discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 5

New Media and the (Re)Creation of the Narrative

5.1 Introduction

Technology has an unprecedented presence in the daily lives of many people around the world and has undoubtedly amplified the speed at which people communicate across vast distances. Technology is even more influential in urban life and urban space as a whole. This chapter contemplates some of the ways in which new social media has influenced changes in the ways place marketers like Tourism Toronto build their narrative of the city, and the alternative voices that use their social networks as platforms for puncturing the official narrative to represent new possibilities for travel in Toronto. This would include the proliferation of independent blogs and websites, as well as the social networking sites that encourage users to share their activities and locations within the city.

5.2 Technology and Travel

Harvey writes about the time-space compression of today: “As space appears to shrink to a ‘global village’ of telecommunications and a ‘spaceship earth’ of economic and ecological interdependencies… and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is… so we have to cope with an overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds” (1990, p.240). In this way, Marshall McLuhan’s forecast of the dissolution of time and space is growing ever nearer.

As highly populated areas of great wealth and creativity, cities are most often the birthplaces of new technologies and the greatest sites for their use (Borden et al, 2004). Recent developments in technology and programs to be used with such portable devices as tablets and
smartphones seem to encourage a more location-based social connectedness. Making use of GPS technologies and the ubiquity of social networking sites, businesses and individuals are increasingly embracing location-based services as a means of communication and sharing with others. Such technologies have accordingly transformed the ways in which people travel. Not only can one book entire trip transportation, accommodations, and sightseeing online, but one can do so on-the-go and with the help of others in his or her online communities. These online communities and the potential for new democratized ways of sharing pieces of the city encourage a new layer for consideration when thinking about urban tourism. New players in the online world are renegotiating the once-linear narrative of the city that was once told almost exclusively by city officials and marketers.

5.3 The Changing Practice of Travel

In the mind of the Western tourist, travel is romanticized in numerous ways; as a personal voyage, an exploration, a spiritual journey, an escape, a chance to ‘find oneself’, a learning experience, and so forth (Harrison, 2003). In order to make the most of their travels and achieve their intended purpose for travel, many tourists do a significant amount of research to select and prepare for their urban holiday. What was once a matter of consulting with a guidebook or two has now become a potential maze of credible (and less credible) sources giving advice and reviews of both popular and obscure city sites.

As capitalism has evolved from being more organized to more disorganized, culture has become de-differentiated from daily life, and tourism and travel have been reconfigured accordingly (Urry, 1995). This de-differentiation, which collapses barriers between people, places and ideas is characteristic of postmodernism and brings about new possibilities and ways of conceptualizing the world. In the process, the postmodern subject has also transformed. This can
be attributed, according to Urry (1995), to “new technologies of transportation, novel ways of socially organized travel, the growth of an aesthetic of reflexivity, the development of ‘interpretation’ in the tourism industry, changes in the nature of consumption, and the ‘end of tourism’ per se” (p.150). There emerges a rejection of mass tourism and the pre-packaged, generic, holidays of years past as a diversity of preferences and possibilities are increasingly expressed. Indeed, the new post-tourist strives to go beyond the typical tourist sites to explore parts of the city that are less publicly known and promoted, and that carry with them a level of authenticity that the post-tourist knows, and appreciates, that the mass sites cannot retain. In this way, the post-tourist adopts a flâneur-like role, wandering through the city not as a local, nor as an identifiable tourist. The post-tourist tries to “fit in” to the city surroundings, gazing at the city moments in a secretive state, removed from the dominant tourist rhetoric and overbearing images so often found in the city’s busiest spaces (Crawshaw & Urry, 2003). This attempt at blending in is in part helped by the widespread use of smartphones, which put all necessary travel information into the palm of one’s hand.

5.4 Tourism Toronto and Social Media

In 2010, Tourism Toronto embraced the great public relations possibilities to be found online. Recognizing the potential reach especially with younger travelers with high disposable incomes and a penchant for more do-it-yourself style traveling, it ramped up its online presence and began chasing the ever-elusive distinction of “cool”, by making itself more visible and offering more individualized images of the city and its niche characters.

One such example was the commissioning of the production of the viral video, Michael Cera’s Toronto, which features famed Canadian actor, Michael Cera, to promote both the city and a movie he was filming in Toronto at the time. The video portrays Cera as a hip Torontonian
insider and gives a first-person account of the coolest places in the city. In this way, Tourism Toronto uses an indie-actor with an assumed level of credibility as a thought-leader for young travelers looking for the cool things to see in Toronto beyond the mass-marketed sites. As one of its stated objectives for its 2011 budget, Tourism Toronto aims at increasing the Toronto region’s presence in popular online media, and therefore, popular culture, to build the city as cool by way of cool people who attract and influence other cool people in their online communities (Tourism Toronto, 2011).

For the past two years, Tourism Toronto also partnered with Tourisme Montreal in a joint online campaign to encourage cross-city tourism with the slogan “It’s Okay to Cheat Your City”. As well, other videos have been posted to Facebook and YouTube that feature visitors’ reactions after experiencing various iconic sites or events across the city, with the caption “Toronto Looks Good on You” (Tourism Toronto, 2011).

Beyond the other videos Tourism Toronto released on YouTube, Tourism Toronto focused on getting stories about Toronto written in internationally-accredited sites such as the Huffington Post and Daily Candy to feature stories about Toronto and its cool, eclectic vibe. More recently, it partnered with the BBC/ Lonely Planet to feature similar stories. These stories are found beyond the Tourism Toronto homepage and often appear with the Tourism Toronto logo in site, making the articles appear independent and trustworthy in their promotions of particular areas or locales.

Tourism Toronto’s focus remains primarily on increasing tourism from a set of Key Cities with high levels of wealthy urban travelers, as well as retaining “loyal customers” in nearer markets. Twice a month, Tourism Toronto relays its e-newsletter, Tourism Now, to more than 2,500 tourism industry leaders, partners and government workers with information about
upcoming events, tourism trends and statistics. This is yet another example of the ways in which Tourism Toronto strives to stay visible and strengthen its online presence in the sight of influential industry insiders (Tourism Toronto, 2011).

5.5 Technology and the Post-Tourist

This is the time of post-tourism, as Urry defines it:

The post-tourist is that tourist who is in search of new and exciting places; who seeks alternative sites and attractions; who independently researches his or her prospective destination; and who most importantly, de-differentiates tourism from leisure, culture, retailing, education, sport and hobbies (Urry, 1995, p.151).

Without having to leave the comfort of home, the post tourist can take part in the tourist gaze by way of TV programs or advertisements, movies or the internet for the purpose of trip-planning, or for the mere enjoyment of the imaginary. The visual representations of places can be gazed upon as though the post tourist were actually there, compared with memories or knowledge of other places, contextualized within these frames, and further gazed upon (Feifer, 1985). These mental collages of sites, sights, and senses exist as stock photos in our minds, indexed such that they may be easily dragged out of the files in which they are stored and related to what we are experiencing at the given moment it is recalled. These old and new memories may remain separated or fused together, to be filed and indexed once again (Rojek, 2003).

The post tourist recognizes the changing trends in tourism and the emergence of the multitude of voices found in cities. The post tourist embraces the new array of choices that come about because of increased voices being heard; they are able to explore cities’ major sites as well as lesser known ones, its high culture and its underground arts scene all in one visit.

Most importantly, is that the post tourist does not take him or herself too seriously.
Maxine Feifer cites *playfulness* as a key descriptor of the post tourist, who recognizes his or her ability to travel wherever, however, and whenever he or she so chooses (Feifer, 1985).

With an abundance of literature available to aid in the planning of any trip, and with the internet as a primary tool for making necessary plans and reservations, the post-tourist may go about organizing a trip as thoroughly or loosely as he or she prefers. While many tourists find themselves fully immersed in the sites and senses of the spaces they visit, the post-tourist knows full well at all times that he or she is a tourist, taking in only one part of a much larger place and discourse that surrounds it. Thus, the post tourist recognizes the existence of multiple gazes and the impossibility of one, authentic tourist experience.

It is the post-tourist to whom cities such as Toronto market themselves to, as the vibrant cosmopolitan life offers a vast selection of mainstream and alternative attractions, all of which can be found in travel literature and nowhere more so than the internet.

5.5.1 **Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Travel**

It seems to be the case that new technologies are adopted by the young and tech-savvy. Traditional tourist guidebook series, such as Lonely Planet, have developed thorough websites that provide users with a wealth of information about destinations across the globe. As the world’s largest publisher of travel guidebooks and travel-related digital media, it is owned by the British Broadcasting Corporation and is a trusted source for many independent travelers. Lonely Planet writes fondly of Toronto and features quite a few articles about the city, including tips about how to spend short trips to Toronto and which “hot spots” are most ideal for young travelers (Lonely Planet, 2011). There are multitudes of similar sites, each specializing in, or featuring, different aspects of different cities, providing numerous “Best Of” or “Must See” lists, which tech-savvy and adventure-seeking tourists often consult prior to or during their trips.
5.6 The Power of Blogs and Independent Travel Websites

Zukin writes that the symbolic economy of the city involves two systems of production that are simultaneously imperative for a city’s material life: the production of space, through capital investment and development of cultural meaning, and the production of symbols, which requires and maintains the currency of commercial exchange and the language of shared social identity” (1995, p.23). Through media literature, including a website specific to tourism, the City of Toronto communicates its brand through text and images that provide tourists with a set of tools with which they may navigate through the city. Maps, photos, and reviews all aid a tourist in making decisions about places to see, and time and money to spend. Jansson writes, “media use both takes place and produces space through texture… Accordingly, new media might be used either for intensifying the touristic experience of a place, or for blurring the touristic qualities of texture” (2007, p.8). The representations of the city, as seen time and again in various media, build themselves in the minds of the tourist such that the symbolic space is known to some degree even before the material space experienced. Photographs and images of beautiful hotels, sleek monuments, an abundance of shopping boutiques all encapsulate tourism in a realm of its own, apart from the ordinariness of the everyday and of home. Those moments where reality peaks through and the magic is revealed as created and unnatural, are moments of decapsulation, which the tourist industry as a whole seeks to avoid (Jansson, 2007).

Travel texts are central to the planning experience for most travelers, says Harrison. Travel books and internet sources help to plan out trip itineraries and determine which attractions to visit. Especially with internet blogs and websites dedicated to tourism, there is an opportunity for travelers to at least feel as though they are uncovering non-touristy sites to visit and gain meaning from (Harrison, 2003, p.179). However, there is a great degree of interpretation that the
tourist must engage in while reading these texts. Much of the material is promotional, and intends to attract potential customers by highlighting the “best” parts of a destination, those places that often offer the most spectacle, where other tourists may or may not be, and which often have many associated costs with them. Travel marketers construct the gaze in this way, and often gloss over the “less desirable” elements of a given space, including high levels of poverty or crime rates, low visual appeal, or those everyday places that are not especially interesting for visitors to the city. In this way, tourists become part of the myth-making process, according to Selwyn. Their experiences are in large part constructed from preconceived myths and fantasies about place and people, which are continuously produced throughout the travel process, preceding even the formal planning of the trip (Harrison, 2003).

Guidebooks and, more recently, the internet play a large role in the planning of any trip for most people. Harrison writes that the “true creative genius of the tourist came from taking what was read in these books and sharing it into their own individualized experience” (2003, p.113). In many cases, post-modern travelers look for sites that are less commonly seen by tourists, in an effort to be less tourist-y, or less cliché. Tourists make use of traditional guidebooks and the internet to research the many possibilities available to them, mixing and matching sites to see in a mélange of grand monuments, national museums, independent galleries and hidden gems, all according to personal preference and time schedule. Many of these options can be found on Tourism Toronto’s website, or for the more daring traveler, on a wider variety of blogs or unofficial accounts of the city, uncensored by city officials or their affiliates.

For the tourism industry, a tourist in Toronto includes the many Toronto suburbanites or day-trippers who visit the city for short stays and engage with Toronto life as an outsider: those who come for Nuit Blanche, or to go shopping on Queens Street West, or go for drinks at
Panorama- all with the intention of experiencing life in the city and returning home that very day. It is this group of people that many of the internet resources help most. They are most likely to visit again, each time looking for new, and possibly cutting edge, places to visit. For them, as for any other tourist, the city is an exciting escape for the senses, and can often cut the monotony of daily life. BlogTO is especially useful for the day tourists, who are likely to be more familiar with the city, and who have already participated in the traditional travel sites and activity in the city.

5.6.1 Differing Narratives: Tourism Toronto vs. BlogTO

Jansson writes that:

Touristic textures are produced in order to encapsulate an experience of liminality- a time-space that separates leisure from work; the extraordinary from the ordinary. The media saturation of late modern society might, on the one hand, provide resources for the intensification of touristic experiences- a fulfillment of the encapsulation process. On the other hand, mediatization can break this magic, abolishing the boundaries between tourism and everyday life, leading to decapsulation (2007, p.19).

The two sites compared herein, Tourism Toronto and BlogTO, were created with very different intentions, by very different groups of people. In their mission statement found online, Tourism Toronto asserts:

Tourism Toronto is the official destination-marketing organization for Toronto’s tourism industry. Tourism Toronto focuses on promoting and selling the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travelers. Officially operating as a not-for-profit agency; Tourism Toronto has over 1,000 members and is a partnership of public and private sectors.

Our mission is to be the authoritative source for greater Toronto region tourism knowledge, providing unparalleled industry insight and opportunities to our members and visitors, resulting in a rich destination experience for all concerned
Conversely, BlogTO claims:

*BlogTO is a web site about Toronto written by a group of obsessed artists, musicians, photographers, politicos, advertising and media types, dancers, tech geeks, food lovers, aspiring film directors, fashionistas and people for the ethical treatment of animals. We hope you like us. We really hope you like us (www.blogto.com).*

As an organization made up of professionals dedicated to improving tourism in Toronto, Tourism Toronto operates as a business, with the goal of giving clear and concise information to potential tourists in an easy-to-navigate format and with the opportunity to make their plans instantly, with a “Hotels and Packages” link provided on the website’s homepage. It is invested in both private and public interests. When navigating this site, tourists feel like a tourist: with headline phrases like “Be here”, “Be captivated”, or “Be transformed”, the tourist is given instructions about how to perform their tourism upon arrival (www.seetorontonow.com).

BlogTO, on the other hand, is an independently run site that is a collaborative effort by the Toronto *culturati* from all fields. The site has become increasingly popular, especially in its use by Torontonians and locals, and is a go-to site for information about all issues Toronto. It offers popular as well as alternative information about Toronto, often revealing many of the city’s hidden gems that tourists can easily miss and that many crave. The homepage reads as a News Blog, with article briefs about a variety of city issues, as well as featured events, artists, restaurants and the like (www.blogto.com). Upon entry to the site, the tourist is embraced not as a tourist, but as a Toronto insider, or at least someone looking to become one.

New media is valuable to tourists in the same way a traditional guidebook once was, though likely more so. It provides more opportunities for details and efficient planning, and offers
a variety of perspectives. In doing so, it “make[s] touristic representations more negotiable, and ready for immediate transmission or sharing” (Jansson, 2007, p.20). For example, Tourism Toronto offers a “Plan Your Trip” option on the website, where tourists may select the “type” of visit they want to enjoy in the city. The Suggested Itineraries offered include: Day Trips, Fun for All Ages, Great Escapes, Hear the Sights, Sentimental Journey and Toronto for Two (www.seetorontonow.com). These suggestions are not limited to the Downtown core, but also encourage visits to the GTA and beyond, using Toronto as an artery to improve tourism to other local cities as well. These excursions are segmented based on tourist interests and expectations of the city, with attractions varying from high profile sites like the CN Tower to low-key areas like Unionville Main Street, where guests can stroll along and relax at their own pace. These calmer sites also offer a break from the hustle and bustle of the city and emphasize the intense activity of Toronto in contrast to a town less than an hour away. While theorists like Harrison write that tourists are getting away from the pre-packaged tours and trips, suggested itineraries are a flexible way for tourists with little time or experience to develop their own schedule, to work around one that is already provided. In this way, generic itineraries can be easily tweaked and personalized. For as Jansson explains, “Some tourists (in the bourgeois class) may be post-tourists most of the time, and many tourists may be post-tourists some of the time, but these circumstances do not equate to the historical demise of the modern touristic consciousness” (2007, p.15).

Because increased tourism to the city is not the main priority of BlogTO, this site approaches Toronto sights from a different angle: site users may select from a list of interests, for example, theatres in a particular neighbourhood in Toronto to visit and a list of possibilities will appear. Or, there is an archive of “Best of Toronto”, which includes list of favourite places to shop, best places to have a particular food, best festivals and so forth (www.blogto.com).
The sights suggested by Tourism Toronto and BlogTO largely overlap, but in many areas, BlogTO offers a great deal more selection of spots. For example, a search of “Art Galleries” on both sites brought a list of 18 galleries on Tourism Toronto, located within the Greater Toronto Area. BlogTO provides a list of 64 galleries, all of which are south of Toronto’s Bloor Street! In its “Best Art Galleries” list, BlogTO lists ten galleries, none of which are mentioned on Tourism Toronto (www.seetorontonow.com and www.blogto.com). It can be seen here how the tourism industry, as represented by Tourism Toronto, seeks to direct tourists to those sites that not only generate the most profit from tourists, but also sites that best exemplify “Toronto Culture” or “Canadian Culture”. The Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario, both of which are part of the Toronto Rejuvenation Projects, as well as the Native Bay of Spirits Museum, are all featured on the main “Arts and Culture” page of Tourism Toronto, and have at their core an attachment to the Canadian identity and culture. They are sold to tourists as true, or authentic, displays of Canadian art, culture and history.

Tourism Toronto’s website is the primary source for visitors looking for an all-encompassing experience of Toronto and is the first site listed on search engines. Its main webpage and associated links are avenues for creating a tourist gaze for the city. While its website offers a clear visual representation of Toronto’s most popular features and is widely used, Tourism Toronto’s attempts at using new media, such as social networking sites or location-based services, which have grown incredibly in popularity, has lagged behind private initiatives.

5.7 Technology Shifts

For tourists travelling on their own, without a tour group, the possibility of having maps, site recommendations and photo-sharing capabilities at one’s fingertips is especially appealing and the ubiquity of smart phones and strong communications infrastructure are increasingly
making such practices part of the norm of city life. Debord would suggest that these technologies, like the ones developed years before, are based on isolation. Indeed, the economic system as a whole is seen to be one of a *circular production of isolation*, in which “the goods selected by the spectacular system are also its weapons for a constant reinforcement of the conditions of isolation of ‘lonely crowds’” (1983, Clause 28). Yet these technologies also have the potential to connect people in new and exciting ways.

Recent changes in internet website development and use are best summarized by the term Web 2.0, which has as its two main features *user-generated content* such as blogs and elements of *social networking*, like website functionality links with sites such as Twitter re-tweets or Facebook recommendations. These advances are changing the ways in which people search, read, interpret, disseminate, and make use of information shared online, and necessarily impact tourist behavior as well as practices by city managers (Marindis & Sigala, 2010). These new capabilities for users are further accentuated by more portable internet devices such as tablets and smartphones.

Recognizing the ubiquity of mobile devices such as smartphones and more recently, tablets, in urban settings, cities and their businesses are providing more wireless zones and better communications infrastructure to make possible the easy use of portable internet technologies. Interesting to note is that countries with the highest smartphone ownership, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, China, India and Japan, are also countries targeted by Tourism Toronto and its Key Cities Initiative (Gartner, Inc., 2011). Taking into account the higher cost of smartphones and their data plans, this seems to speak to the trend that Toronto aims at attracting tourists with both economic and cultural capital, who help to build up the aspired to image of ‘cool’ that Toronto seeks.
5.7.1 Wi-fi Access

Many cities such as Toronto are equipped with up to date communications infrastructure, and ensure quality cell phone reception and service in nearly all areas. Those individuals with data plans for their tablets or cellular devices can thus access the internet from nearly anywhere in the city. Today, the communications infrastructure would also include a considerable number of spaces that offer wireless internet, sometimes for free and other times for fees and with password protection. Businesses, especially cafes and restaurants, often offer free wi-fi for patrons. While more accessible and not dependent on data plans, these wi-fi services still only benefit those with the technological devices and knowledge necessary to take advantage of these services.

5.7.2 Smartphone Usage

International cell phone use in recent years has soared in numbers, with smartphone consumption showing the most growth. In 2010, mobile devices sold globally was reported at 1.6 billion units. Smartphones account for 19 percent of the purchases, showing an increase of more than 70 percent from 2009 (Gartner, Inc., 2011). With local and international phone and data plans from provider companies, good communications infrastructure and increasing wi-fi zones across the city, many urban tourists are sure to bring their smartphones with them on their travels and make use of the many capabilities on them.

5.7.3 Portable GPS Usage

Arguably, technological advances and the increased possibility to access information quickly and from more sources have led to a change in relationship that we all have with space. With the growing use of GPS technology, physical, paper, maps and a pre-planning of routes are in the process of becoming obsolete for many.
According to a study by the Pew Research Centre as part of its Internet and American Life Project, more than a quarter of American adult cell phone owners use their phones for the purpose of getting directions or recommendations about places online. More than half of smartphone owners use these same services (Pew Research Centre, 2011). With such a safety net available to many, there is perhaps the increased possibility for tourists to travel as flâneurs in the sense that they may wonder through the city streets beyond those that are clearly marked for tourists and into more inhabited areas of the city or even its deserted areas. Indeed, such unplanned travel has given a sense of security to tourists who can explore the city without the fear of getting lost. In its more social function, GPS technology in portable devices with internet capabilities like smartphones and tablets allows for the instant sharing of users’ whereabouts on their social networks.

5.8 Prevalence of Social Networking

Social networking has been an incredible phenomenon for many people around the world. With the startups of Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and Twitter in the early years of the twenty-first century, online social networking sites have become some of the most widely used sites worldwide. Presenting new ways to connect and share lives with friends and family across the globe, many people incorporate their social networking practices into the way they travel and share thoughts and memories, no longer only with friends and family, but their virtual relationships too. Considering most users of social networking sites of all sorts are fairly young, they tend to have “grown up” in a sense, with social media and a separate set of expectations with it comes to travel and technology than those tourists of past generations. While check-in practices are yet to be fully embraced, those who do participate in it are often some of the most tech-savvy and trendy people, likely to travel and be opinion leaders. Max Gladwell describes these users as
location and smartphone natives, having lived though and experienced the changing trends and democratization of information via the internet. They may not yet be the highly desirable consumerist travelers of today, but they will certainly be the consumerist travelers of tomorrow and cities are planning ahead accordingly (2011).

Though they began as projects to connect people, businesses quickly adopted their use to connect their business with customers. Through “Likes”, “Fan Pages” and “Mentions”, businesses can have their names all over these widely used sites based on users’ positive, or negative, views of their brands. By increasing their online presence through tools such as these, businesses benefit from free advertising and the opportunity to engage more visibly with their consumers. This is especially advantageous for businesses operating in the cities where people travel and consume their products or services, and becomes even more so with the rise in prominence of location-based services.

5.8.1 Instant Photosharing

One of the key elements of modern tourism is the collection of memories, both one’s one and those of others’. The photographs seen in travel literature and popular media embed many travelers with a sense of already knowing the places that they visit or will visit. Because of this, many people find themselves on the constant lookout for photo-worthy moments or sights to be captured and shared as proof of being somewhere, and appreciating being there. The visual images reflect tourists’ excitement. The ways in which moments are photographed indicate both the present experiences and how travelers want to remember those experiences. Crawshaw and Urry suggest that after the travelling is over and the tourist returns home, he or she still has the visual reproductions, which are injected with verbal commentary and new social significance. In
This process is further accelerated by social media and smartphone technologies that allow photographs to be immediately uploaded and shared online. Tourists who choose to practice this “play and display” sort of travel engage others’ in their travel. As to whether this is a new democratized form of narration or merely self-indulgent affectation is debatable. Either way, the instant sharing of photographs has added a new dynamic to urban tourism that cities and businesses cannot ignore. Through these new and widespread visual narratives from social media users, the city, its people and its businesses can be captured and shared in both favourable and unfavourable ways without any form of censorship.

5.8.2 Instant Location Updates and Social Networking

Coupled with the practice of real-time sharing of pictures is the real-time sharing of location. In the past few years, location based services such as the smartphone applications Facebook, Foursquare, and Gowalla have grown in popularity and usage, though remain far less used than older social media forms (Pew Research Centre, 2011). Early users have embraced the fun in participating in these displays of location and are sure to motivate others to join in as well.

All of these applications encourage users to share with others their location by “checking in” using the GPS technology on their smartphones. Foursquare, Gowalla and others often allow users to leave comments about the places they visit in a sort of forum for other users. In turn, they are able to search for places near their current locations and access the reviews previous visitors have left. For Foursquare, “checking in” extends beyond letting people know where they are. Users are engaged in a game to collect “badges” and become “mayor” of places frequently visited. For tourists, location based social networks are yet another layer in their experience of a
city that can indeed bring further interconnectivity. Beyond online textual exchanges, users can physically meet other users in nearby sites if they so choose, depending on their personal privacy settings on the application and their personal comfort in meeting strangers especially considering possible safety issues.

In these ways, location based social networks help tourists navigate the city with the help of others who are either residents or visitors to the city and who may have a more genuine opinion than an official source such as Tourism Toronto or the locales themselves because of the detachment from economic gain. This is not to say that businesses do not monitor what is being said in these networks, or give their own feedback anonymously; they most likely do. But without their business name to the comment, they carry the same weight or credibility as anyone else who has participated in the ongoing discussion. If businesses do receive negative coverage by users, it is also in the businesses’ interest to try and rectify any issues before negative comments can be repeated on other sites or by other users (Marindis & Sigala, 2010). This same approach is often taken on other sites as well, including Facebook and Twitter.

Considering the possibilities to connect, please and appease customers, businesses also use location based services to advertise. Unlike Twitter mentions or Facebook fan pages, a customer who checks-in to a place of business proves their liking of that place. Especially for those users who tend to be opinion leaders in their field of work or in friendships, this proof may be significant in convincing others to frequent that place as well. To encourage this checking in, tech-savvy or tech-engaged businesses offer discounts or benefits to users who announce their presence there, thus motivating users to do so too. In this way, checking-in is the next step after sharing photographs or status updates about one’s location. It offers yet another way to display
cultural capital, but like many others, it is only available for those who can afford to pay for such technologies.

5.8.3 Tourism Toronto and Trending Toronto

Despite its best efforts to adopt more viral or application-based technologies that have surpassed more traditional web usage, Tourism Toronto has missed the mark. New technologies and early users are strides ahead; Tourism Toronto finds itself playing catch-up.

Until recently, Tourism Toronto had not integrated location based technology into its site or social networking pages. In fact, even its attempts at embracing new social media have been largely lackluster. Its Facebook and Twitter pages are not actively used by many “Friends” or “Followers”. In fact, when compared to the friends and followers numbers for blogs like BlogTO and Torontoist, Tourism Toronto has far fewer.

This is not to say that Tourism Toronto’s efforts should be overlooked. In June 2011, Tourism Toronto launched its newest effort called Toronto Trending. Accessible through Tourism Toronto’s main webpage, the site monitors where people are checking in and what they are writing and sharing about the places they visit. Toronto Trending aims to show, online and in real time, what is going on in the city at ground level. Using a satellite-view of the city, it visually maps all of the Check-ins happening in real time. It also defines these Check-in locations by type of location: restaurants, stores, bars/ clubs/ lounge etc. (Houpt, 2011). This trend towards mapping one’s social life emphasizes the role of place in daily life, and is yet another way to assert a level of cultural capital. Not only has it come to matter what one does, but also it is with whom and where one is at the time of their doing that is telling.

According to research conducted by Crispin Porter + Bogusky Canada, Tourism Toronto’s new marketing agency, Toronto’s biggest challenge in terms of attracting and re-
attracting visitors to the city is that “Toronto is a wallflower whose sweetest charms usually stay hidden from visitors” (ibid.), echoing the same struggle that Canada itself often faces in pinpointing its identity on the world stage, as described in Chapter Two.

On Twitter, Toronto Trending captures what people are saying about Toronto when they include the hashtag reference #torontotrending (ibid.). And herein lies the challenge. For Tourism Toronto to really integrate itself into peoples’ travels online, it relies on a level of conscious participation from travelers to tag and hashtag #torontotrending to network outwards to get to new users not already familiar with the company. This dependence on such a calculated and coordinated user experience is antithetical to the more organic trends of social networking that are more common and much quicker. For most Twitter users, or social media users in general, tweets or posts have to be short and instant to warrant both sharing and reading. Not only is “#torontotrending” a difficult tag to remember on-the-go, it’s also fairly lengthy considering Twitter’s 140-character limit.

In the end, the Toronto Trending initiative is the newest approach by Toronto’s marketers to reach out to people living in and visiting the city by offering a useful and meaningful overview of the city that comes, in large part, from other users themselves.

5.9 Forums for Interaction: From the Screen to the Streets

In an effort to attract more visitors to their sites, both Tourism Toronto and BlogTO network with social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. These sites, which act as micro blogs, or visual stories about the city are all a part of efforts to encourage more user participation and interaction, and to create stronger relationships with the people the city or site is looking to attract. Through mini videos involving Toronto citizens, or re-tweets from other sources, and the ability for users to post on the walls, both Tourism Toronto and BlogTO have
embraced the many possibilities of the Web 2.0 world (www.facebook.com, www.twitter.com, www.youtube.com, and www.flickr.com). Both websites also allow for user comments, with BlogTO currently initiating a “Talk!” page, where users may post comments and interact with one another through the website (www.seetorontonow.com and www.blogTO.com). Researchers have found that such user interactions democratize the creation process of online tourism materials. Content once solely generated by organizations are becoming increasingly open to user participation and involvement in producing not only comments, but actual articles and reviews as well. User contribution has become more valuable to any website (Munar, 2010). With the growing popularity of BlogTO and its promotion of the city’s more obscure attractions, one wonders what the future holds for these alternative spaces. It is likely that there very nature would be transformed by their inclusion in Tourism Toronto website, a loss of credibility or obscurity that gives them the very character that keeps their local patrons coming.

5.10 Puncturing the Gaze

With the implementation of the Culture Plan and the rise of new media, the way in which tourists experience Toronto space and culture is being transformed. Culture as a highlight of Toronto city life has become a tourist attraction in itself. The tourist gaze is both intensifying and multiplying, such that there are a number of narratives of the city being created by professionals and non-professionals alike, as seen by Tourism Toronto and BlogTO. These narratives coalesce in writing an interweaving and overlapping story of Toronto culture and tourist locales. When used together as tools, such sites help the tourist navigate the city, framing it in varying ways and transforming the tourist gaze each time.

Through the use of new media technologies, tourist attractions can be instantly mapped, recorded, and even interacted with, as in the case of new augmented reality apps for cell phones,
for example. These technologies allow for instant connection and communication amongst travelers, and also allow for them to share their travels through websites like Facebook, Youtube or Flickr, all of which are linked to both Tourism Toronto and BlogTO’s websites. In this way, technology further intensifies tourists’ ability to collect and recall gazes, which is increasingly important to modern travel experiences (Harrison, 2003).

5.11 Conclusion

While this chapter is focused on new media, it does intend not to be technologically deterministic or utopian. Social media use brings with it its own set of challenges and social changes that may or may not be for the best of many in society. It is in many ways a luxury that not all can afford, both financially and in terms of the time necessary to really engage with it. Though social media such as blogs are now platforms for many new voices to be heard, they all are not equal in their significance, nor are their users.

Roberts writes: “The further the city is abstracted and virtualized, the further it undermines the anthropological dimensionality of urban space (the city as lived space), hastening the process of fragmentation, dissolution and time-space compression. … The cognitive rendering of a city as merely the sum of its semiotic parts, each delivered in a cacophonous (or rapturous) assemblage of visual sound-bites…” (Roberts, 2010). Tourism Toronto has attempted to thread these voices together through Toronto Trending, but to do so undermines and inconveniences the online voices that use social media for independent reasons, not necessarily as a conscious attempt at creating a new gaze for the city. Like conversations with people in shared physical spaces, they are conversations that take place in virtual ones. It is this fragmentation of voices shared with differing intentions that makes them so powerful in giving a city its dynamism and
which shed light for tourists about some of the people who actually inhabit or interact with the spaces of Toronto, within and beyond marked and marketed tourist spaces.
Chapter 6

Concluding Thoughts

6.1 Review

In summary, this thesis has been a multifaceted exploration into the related themes of capital, tourism and the city and their intersections with culture and creativity. It has investigated the symbolic and physical production of the city by government officials and private interests, as well as the changing trends in cultural consumption by tourists.

Chapter One gives an overview of theories about space and the city as an economic growth machine working within a global context. It introduces creativity as the buzzword that cities such as Toronto have come to embrace as a wealth-generating strategy that embeds culture and the arts into the capitalist system even further than they had been previously. Tourism is seen to take place in these conditions; it both influences and is influenced by the city’s socio-economic and political composition.

Taking into account the perspectives from Chapter One, Chapter Two introduces the city of Toronto as a growing global, and creative, city with a newfound commitment to further pursue its identity as such. The various Toronto plans adopted by council and supported by the provincial and federal government, as well as Tourism Toronto, all serve to underscore the primary goal to become more global, and more creative in the downtown core, investing in tourist zones, despite the severe disparities facing the city in its outer neighbourhoods.

As shown in Chapter Three, the seeming disappearance of spatial barriers in a globalized world has hardly diminished the importance of space. Rather, “Heightened competition under conditions of crisis has coerced capitalists into paying much closer attention to relative locational
advantages, precisely because diminishing spatial barriers give capitalists the power to exploit minute spatial differentiations to good effect” (Harvey, 1990, p.293). It is this perspective that dictates the imperative to market cities to new and international travelers more aggressively than ever before. It also calls for a more streamlined and carefully managed city image, thus creating the monolithic gaze that Chapter Five suggests may be either fractured or further reinforced by the rise of social media.

Chapter Four stresses the impact that policies meant to promote culture and tourism in Toronto have had on the physical make up of the city. Toronto’s plans discussed in Chapter Two are manifested in the city’s recent physical developments articulated in Chapter Four. Sharon Zukin warns that, “If entire cities, led by their downtowns, continue to be ghettoized by public rhetoric and private investment, the dream of a common public culture will fall victim to an empty vision” (1995, p.265). More and more often, the city as a home for millions is being rewritten as a playground for millions more, where leisure and consumption are the primary activities and where civic engagement and social well-being are secondary to the interests of capital and aesthetic appeal.

To add another layer to the theoretical and empirical chapters on tourism and Toronto, Chapter Five explores the influence that new media, particularly social media, may have on many individuals’ tourism practices and behaviours. Independent blogs and websites have risen in prominence as credible sources for the discovery of things to do and see in the city, often for niche interest groups looking to find the city’s many hidden gems. In many ways, these sources challenge the more generic tourist suggestions from the official City website or that of Tourism Toronto, and indeed encourage these sites to adopt new ways of promoting the city and drawing travelers to their services. As well, new portable technologies such as smart-phones and tablets
have given new importance to space as a sort of social currency. The real-time act of posting announcements of one’s location and photographs publicly are displays of cultural capital that are free advertisements for locales with the potential to elicit either positive or negative reviews from the visitor directly, or someone in his or her online communities.

6.2 Final Thoughts about Creativity

Despite the many shortcomings of thinking about creativity as an economic asset, the discourse of creativity in this way has had profound impacts on the current state of Toronto’s created identity. In its power to reshape the city, as witnessed in this paper largely though the lens of tourism, the practiced promotion of creativity for economic gain requires being taken seriously as a city’s strategy of development. Yet creativity in the Floridian sense remains so vague and all-encompassing that the claim to foster the creative class in the creative class is hardly measurable, as nearly any career or practice may be in some way deemed creative so long as it fulfills the economic goal of profitability. In this way, certain artists, namely those who do not make much money from their craft, are either excluded from the creative class all together, or else do not reap the same monetary or symbolic benefits as those who are a part of the more profitable cultural industries Florida describes.

6.3 Final Thoughts about Tourism

Though focused on tourism within the city of Toronto, trends in tourism in one area of the world is sure to influence others. John Urry stresses the interconnectedness between ‘tourism’ and the ‘global’; a city that embraces tourism embraces all that is global. The continual tourism-related flows of images and people across vast distances are part of a global hybrid, considered as such because “it is made up of an assemblage of technologies, texts, images, social practices and so on, that together enable it to expand and to reproduce itself across the globe. This is analogous
to the mobilities of other global hybrids, such as the internet, automobility, global finance and so on, that spread across the globe and reshape and re-perform what is the ‘global’ (Urry, 2002, p.144). In the places they occupy and the activities they participate in, tourists participate in the consumption of the city, spending money to enjoy the city’s many pleasantries. While the city offers things to do at a variety of price points, it is the places and events that stand to make the most money that are often most promoted and fostered by the city as culture continues to fuse with capital.

6.4 Final Thoughts about New Media and the Fractured Narrative

As all aspects of city life become de-differentiated from one another, John Urry suggests that the end of tourism has arrived, whereby “tourism is nowhere and yet everywhere” (1995, p.150). Travelers in the city are ever more ambiguous; they cannot be marketed to as a collective group, they do not travel in the same large groups to the same mass-marketed sites as they one did. Instead, the tourist in Toronto is meant to be an “insider” and is marketed to as such, by both mainstream and alternative city advocates.

User generated content and information shared through new media are growing at exponential rates; they have the potential to reach huge numbers of people instantly and influence these users’ tourism decision-making and general conceptualizations of the city. These independent perspectives each bring a new gaze upon the city and may overlap with or challenge the gaze produced by the city of Toronto, and those gazes produced by other users. While they may not bring total equality for residents, or integrate tourists completely into the city, or even provide any real difference in the material lives of other users, these social media technologies do present the platform for new voices and performances in the city and do have the potential to engage people in new ways with each other and the space they occupy, however briefly.

87
New media has the potential to facilitate major social upheaval, as witnessed most recently for example in Iran’s Green Revolution or the Arab Spring, but it does not work in different cities with the same results. The technology is ambivalent: it is shaped by its users and their goals. New media offers new forums for interaction and new ideas to be exchanged, but it also reinforces hierarchies of information once appropriated by those with power.

By helping the tourist to become an insider by boasting about alternative locales as well as sights for the masses, the city and Tourism Toronto appropriate the character and material from independent sources and look to new media to reinforce the city brand, even if that means shifting from mass-marketing to more niche-marketing. In so doing, the city of Toronto actually attempts to weave the fractured gaze together again, making room for some once-alternative visions and bringing them into the Tourism Toronto brand umbrella. Though this does not stifle opposing literature, it does appropriate many voices and bring them into the collective voice it aims to construct.

6.5 The Bigger Picture for Cultural Studies

When contextualized in the larger picture beyond Toronto, and beyond Cultural Studies, the tendencies by many cities to use these same neo-liberal strategies at place production and place promotion are worrisome for a number of reasons. To focus a city’s resources on external capital by way of unpredictable industries such as tourism is to also neglect or lessen the assurance of social services for the city’s residents. When a city cites tourism as a method of job creation, it is often the case that such jobs are low-paying, temporary, part time, and/or gendered. When a city invests in its arts and cultural industries, and claims creativity and authenticity, it is critical to identify where the profit margin lies and who is allowed to be creative in these supposed creative industries. When entire neighbourhoods are rejuvenated in the name of
aesthetics and increased travel and spending in these areas, it is essential to look beyond the new building facades to recognize the change in the people now inhabiting these spaces and the absence of others. While tourism has increased cultural exchange to an unprecedented degree, it has necessarily also transformed the very cultures that participate in it. As a practice that has always been tied to a certain level of financial wealth and flexibility, tourism has embedded these same characteristics in the places it reaches. The gaze has been constructed to reinforce these aims, in any city in different ways.

The findings herein cannot be applied to every city, but there is surely overlap by many. Regardless of place, the moment it becomes acceptable to reshape the city in the interest of tourism and external interests is also the moment that residents will be implicated in the transition, for better or worse. As Doreen Massey suggests, “The spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics” (1992, p.84). The city space and its management shape the social makeup of the society just as much the social impacts the spatial. It is this symbiotic relationship that determines how the space is shared and remembered for others. It is for this reason that issues of tourism, place marketing and the commercialization of culture are so problematic for Toronto and so many other cities worldwide; those who are invisible in visually reproduced city spaces become invisible in the city itself and its memory.
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