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STÓ:LŌ MEMORYSCAPES AS INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

Stó:lō history from stone and fire

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Despite the complex and deeply personal ways that individuals interact with their environs to create memoried places, in North America all memoryscapes can be divided into two categories – Indigenous and settler. Settler memoryscapes by definition are part of the ongoing settler colonial process of displacing Indigenous people from lands and resources. Indeed, it is largely through the process of creating memories on and about geographies from which Indigenous people have been displaced that settlers come to regard themselves as belonging on a particular place and to a particular polity (i.e. Canada or the United States, but likewise in settler colonial spaces in New Zealand, Australia, northern Norway, Finland, and Sweden, and Argentina, among others). Beyond this, settler and Indigenous memoryscapes additionally differ in that while both settlers and Indigenous people attach and invest memories onto landscapes (so as to build and sustain associations with the land), Indigenous people also regard landscapes as sentient and as having memories of their own independent of living humans. In this chapter we focus on one particular Indigenous community, the Stó:lō Coast Salish of the lower Fraser River watershed in western Canada. Importunately Stó:lō knowledge-keepers reject the suggestion that they are anthropomorphising a landscape. Rather, seen through a Coast Salish cosmology and ways of knowing, the landscape animates humans, for it is in the stones, plants, and animals that memories and knowledge nest. And in the right circumstances, the landscape shares these memories with people and in so doing invests new historical understandings into human society.

Remembering and forgetting Indigenous and settler landscapes

A growing body of international interdisciplinary scholarship is seeking increasingly sophisticated ways to pull back the veil of settler colonialism to better understand, interpret, and articulate historic and current Indigenous relationships to the land (Harrison 2005; Brunn & Springer 2015). To varying degrees this historiography is informed by and reflects Indigenous ways of knowing, and even those that are less informed are aspiring to engage with Indigenous ways of knowing to better understand the consequence of the creation of colonial memoryscapes (Ingold 1993; Kelly 2015).

While Indigenous people needed no assistance in coming to recognise that pioneer settlement in North America was actually a 're-settlement' facilitated by an earlier process of Indigenous depopulation, non-Indigenous academics interested in Indigenous memoryscapes owe a debt of intellectual gratitude to scholars like Keith Basso, Cole Harris, Julie Cruikshank, and Lynn Kelly, for bringing this insight into

the academic mainstream (Basso 1996; Harris 1997, 2003; Emberley 2007; Kelly 2015). The mythologies informing the celebratory narratives of American Manifest Destiny and Canadian Dominion which depict re-settlement as 'natural' and 'inevitable,' likewise normalise the historic displacement of Indigenous people from their land and resources. The process underlying the ways in which settlers came to regard these spaces as their own thus reflects a convenient amnesia that memory studies has the potential to disrupt (Carlson 2011).

While academic and political attention has generally focused on rural and 'wilderness' spaces, historians such as Coll Thrush have highlighted the ways in which the creation of North American urban spaces likewise continue to be predicated upon the erasure and eclipsing of earlier Indigenous spaces. The settler politics of forgetting through the selective creation of settler memoryscapes, as Thrush has shown, was often facilitated through the creation of an urban settler aesthetic that appropriated Indigenous symbols and imagery to commemorate an Indigenous past through art that implied contemporary Indigenous consent (Thrush 2009).

Indigenous people together with allied scholars have in recent decades produced remarkable collaborations aimed at alerting settler society to the significance of Indigenous peoples' historical presence and ongoing special relationships with the lands and waters of their ancestors. Hugh Brody's insightful and accessible *Maps and Dreams* (1992) revealed how Indigenous memories of past activities on the landscape could serve as a counterbalance against the exploitative capitalist resource extraction that Canadian provincial legislation had facilitated over a territory that settlers widely regarded a *Terra Nullius* prior to their arrival. In the seminal *Wisdom Sits in Places* (1996), Keith Basso worked with Apache knowledge-keepers to interpret a landscape that was an archive of memory and a generator of meaning. Apache memoryscapes, he argued, are created through a process in which 'people are forever presenting each other with culturally mediated images of where and how they dwell. In large ways and small, they are forever performing acts that reproduce and express their own sense of place – and also, inextricably, their own understandings of who and what they are' (Basso 1996: 57).

In a more northern landscape, Julie Cruikshank's collaborative scholarship with Tlingit and Athabascan people (*Do Glaciers Listen?* 2005) contrasted science's materialist view of glaciers with those of local Indigenous people who see them as sentient beings. Northern Indigenous voices revealed for Cruickshank the ways in which landscapes become markers of human history, as well as of 'memory, stability, and change in human affairs' (Cruikshank 2005: 11).

The resistance to Cruikshank's analysis by empirical scientists provides a context for understanding the contestations that continue to capture global media headlines over clashes between Indigenous people and setter societies on the question of how to understand and manage human 'uses' of mountains across cultural divides (Kraft 2010; MacKinnon 2017). These discussions reveal that progress in building understanding and respect between Indigenous people and those who venture into their traditional lands is progressing at a rate that Indigenous people often find frustratingly slow.

When the Stó:lō leadership authorised a team that included the authors to produce *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas* in 2001 (Carlson et.al. 2001), we strove to not only create a reference tool that could help local Stó:lō community members and resource managers in the process of reclaiming land by restoring memories, but a work of artistic historical geography that could unsettle settlers by alerting the more than two million people living in Canada's Vancouver Lower Mainland region that the landscape that appeared familiar, that they thought they knew, that they claimed to remember, could in fact be re-situated so as to be unfamiliar, unknown, and not remembered. We sought, in other words, to disrupt a colonial memoryscape by addressing what Lorenzo Veracini later identified as settler colonialism's efforts to sustain structures of oppression designed to be invisible so as to provided settlers with a degree of comfort – and by extension privilege (Veracini 2014). We regarded this as a contribution to decolonising and re-Indigenising Canadian space and history.

Transformer sites

Indigenous people have profoundly local, deeply historical ways of remembering, interpreting, and understanding the creation of the places they call home. One of the Stó:lō Atlas plates (McHalsie et al. 2001) within the *Stó:lō Atlas* in particular was inspired by the *sxwoxwiyá:m* (ancient narratives of creation and transformation) that Stó:lō Chief George Chehalis (Sts'ailes First Nation) shared with anthropologist Franz Boas in 1884. In his conversations with Boas, Chehalis' described how the world that people recognise today was in large part the product of the work of Xe:Xá:ls, three brothers and a sister, who in ancient times traveled throughout the Coast Salish world permanently transforming people, animals, plants, stones, and water into their currently recognisable form.

The division that Westerners who arrived in the Stó:lō world drew between humans and everything else was not a part of Stó:lō epistemology. Prior to Xe:Xá:ls' arrival nothing had an entirely predictable physical appearances. People sometimes transformed themselves, and sometimes others, into animals or objects, and vice versa. Sometimes these transformations were consensual, sometimes not; sometimes they were morally guided by a desire to reward or punish, sometimes not. In making the contemporary physical expression of the formerly chaotic ancient world predictable, Xe:Xá:ls fixed spirits into a variety of physical forms. The result are ongoing kin ties between people and the environment. The heroic founders of Stó:lō tribal communities were transformed into particular animals and plants. At Leq'á:mel, for example, Xe:Xá:ls transformed a man into sturgeon, and as a result, all members of the Leq'á:mel First Nations regard sturgeons as their relatives (their ancestor's spirit is retained in all sturgeon). The ancestor of the Matsqui tribe was transformed into a beaver, and so on along the lower Fraser River.

Not everyone Xe:Xá:ls transformed founded a tribal community, nor were all transformations into animals or plants. A great elk hunter was turned to stone, located in the Fraser River near Yale, as was a great seal hunter on a lower stretch of the Fraser. A dangerous witch with a toothed vagina was likewise transformed into stone located along the edge of the Harrison River. And one of the tallest mountains in the region was formerly a kind and protective Stó:lō woman who had been married to Mt. Baker. When she returned to the Fraser River from her husband's home in the south, Xe:Xá:ls transformed her and her daughters into stone.

Among other things, Xe:Xá:ls created a distinctly local Indigenous memoryscape where plants, animals, and stones serve as mnemonic devices to remind Stó:lō people of both the ancient histories of transformation and the more recent histories (*sqwelqwel*) that have occurred on the landscape subsequent to the work of the transformers. Thus the landscape is populated with storied creatures and storied plants and animals who serve to remind people of their ancestral connection to the land.

These stories cut across one another and informed one another in complicated ways. The tribal origin stories that tie one group of Stó:lō people to a particular sub-region of the broader Stó:lō landscape serve to reinforce the autonomy of tribal collectives just as the fact that the animals and plants which carry the spirits of particular tribal founders grow and live throughout the broader region serves to remind Stó:lō people from all tribes of their interconnections to one another. Moreover, geographically fixed stones associated with certain transformer stories are particular to certain places. Unlike a beaver that regardless of its location throughout the broader Stó:lō territory can serve as a mnemonic of the origin story of the Matsqui tribe, the Elk Hunter and the Seal Hunter who were turned to stone need to be visited in situ for their anchored story to be shared in a fulsome way. Historically these stones' stories served to encourage and facilitate visits between in-laws and friends. The story of the kind protective mother mountain and her daughters, by way of contrast, is universally regarded as a shared super-tribal Stó:lō story not specific to any particular tribe, for on clear days they can be seen from anywhere in Stó:lō territory. The memory associated with that mountain and its peaks transcend particular tribes, for she is regarded as having been placed in that prominent position by Xe:Xá:ls so that she could see and look over *all* the Stó:lō people as well as the annually returning salmon of the Fraser river. Her presence and visibility are constant sources of comfort.

Knowing one's history

Knowing from where you come, and from whom you come, is a defining way that Indigenous people build identity in themselves and acknowledge it in others. Within the Stó:lō community, Elders describe people from high-status families by the Hal'qeméylem term *smelalh* – a word that translates as 'to be worthy/worthy people.' In 1995 Elder Rosaleen George, when asked to elaborate on the meaning, answered, 'to know your history is to be smelalh – that's "worthy". If you don't know your history (if you've lost or forgotten it), well then you are stexem – and that's "worthless."'[1]

Before colonial settlement in Stó:lō territory and the establishment of laws and practices aimed at alienating Indigenous land and resources, 'knowing one's history' was largely tied to knowing where one had a hereditary right to fish, hunt, and gather. At potlatch naming ceremonies, families transferred hereditary names that were linked to such sites across generations. High-status visitors validated the host family's rights to such valuable resources sites by acknowledging the correctness of the genealogical stories shared at the potlatch that tied people to places on the landscape. Likewise, in the past as today, worthy families share with their guests and relatives the stories of transformation that make them who they are as individuals, as members of tribal collectives, and as members of the broader super-tribal Stó:lō community.

Where memories rest

Indigenous historical narratives may function in ways differing from those circulating in Western society (Deloria 1994; Fixico 2003; Chamberlin 2003). Among the Stó:lō, for example, stories about transformation are not merely mnemonic narratives that people use to attach memories to the land. In 1995 Elder Bertha Peters shared with us a legendary transformer story that highlighted this fact, while simultaneously challenging Western chronologies associated with literacy's connection to colonialism and Western scientific ways of understanding non-human life:

> The Great Spirit travelled the land, sort of like Jesus, and he taught these three *siyá:m*, these three chiefs, how to write their language. And they were supposed to teach everyone how to write their language, but they didn't. So they were heaped into a pile and turned to stone. Because they were supposed to teach the language to everyone and because they didn't, people from all different lands will come and take all the knowledge from the people – because they wouldn't learn to write they lost that knowledge.
>
> When the first white people came, a white man raped this Indian woman. And she got syphilis. Then, when her husband *went* with her, he caught syphilis too. But they didn't know about these sicknesses, and so the man went up the mountain to die. He was laying there naked and a snake came up to him and ate all the sickness off his penis, then wiggled away. Then it ate three types of plants and got well. So the man went and ate the three plants and got well. So they knew a cure for this sickness, but they couldn't write it down, so they lost it.[2]

Beyond its explicit lessons about the need for Indigenous people to find ways of preserving traditional knowledge in the face of colonial incursions, and what it reveals about Mrs. Peter's historical consciousness pertaining to an earlier time when an Indigenous literacy preceded European contact (Carlson 2011), her story principally highlights memories of violent trauma and cultural loss in the history of Stó:lō people's relations with settlers. In terms of its potential to reveal insights into Stó:lō memoryscapes, what strikes us is that in telling the narrative Mrs. Peters did not share information that would allow us to locate the sites on the landscape where rapes had occurred, where diseases like syphilis had been caught, or the location of medicinal plant gardens such as that where the woman's husband had been cured following lessons learned from the snake. Rather, she seems to be suggesting specific ways of understanding the significance and

implications of colonial erasure and its role in collective forgetting by highlighting a particular Stó:lō way of remembering.

What was implicit in Mrs. Peter's telling of the narrative is explicit in Elder Aggie Victor's explanation of the rock's significance. When visiting the transformer stone on the occasion of an announcement that it was being protected from the threat of development destruction, Mrs. Victor explained to the gathered crowd that 'I want you young people not to forget that the spirits of those three chiefs is still in that rock.'[3] For Mrs. Victor, people who took the time to learn how to properly listen would still be able to hear from within the stone the voices of the three *siyá:m*.

The idea that memories and history can exist autonomously of human agents was additionally the focus of a conversation between Elder Peter Pierre (Katzie First Nation) and anthropologist Diamond Jenness in 1936. According to Pierre, seven spirit entities reside within each Stó:lō person. One of these is *smestíyexw* ('vitality' or 'thought'), which is responsible for a person's conscious thought (Pierre 1955). Pierre explained to Jenness that the sun provided *smestíyexw*, and unlike the spirits associated with people's soul or shadow, whose departure brings instant death, *smestíyexw*/vitality could leave the body for short periods.

Importantly for the purpose of this chapter, Old Pierre elucidated that *smestíyexw* is responsible for not merely vitality and thought, but also memory. An individual's *smestíyexw* literally has the ability to travel through the spirit world to locations that are considered *xá:xa* (sacred or taboo) and there acquire knowledge, or reacquire lost knowledge (forgotten memories).[4] A person's *smestíyexw*/vitality could also acquire power or talent (such as knowledge and lost memories) during its travels.

Elder Jimmie Charlie (Sts'ailes First Nation) explained in 1996 that knowledge and memories sometimes rested within stones and plants and other objects, and sometimes memories could additionally float about in areas frequented by a person who had carried them during his or her life.[5] People with the right gifts from the Creator and appropriate training from knowledge-keepers within their families acquired the ability to listen in special ways that would allow them to hear what others had forgotten. Jimmie's grandson Kelsey Charlie is one such person, widely renowned for his ability to find and bring back songs that have been lost or forgotten for decades and even generations.[6] He also has the gift of being able to remember songs after they come to him, and a reputation for generously sharing those songs back with the relatives and descendants of the people who originally sang them in earlier times.

In conversations Kelsey explains that he does not compose these songs, nor does he consider there to be a process of 'inspiration' at work in what he does in the way Western singers and songwriters often describe their own process of first articulating a song. Rather, when in the proper place on the landscape, and when listening the proper way, the songs come to him. He remembers them even though he has never heard them before, because the memories are nested in the landscape where he has 'picked them up.'[7]

Bending time and space

In Indigenous societies, time sometimes bends spaces in ways that settlers struggle to perceive, let alone appreciate. Most Stó:lō spirit energies vary in strength depending upon how far away they are acquired. Spirit memories are often acquired by Stó:lō people from locations that are near at hand for the simple reason that these are the places their ancestors knew and frequented; the memories and knowledge there are familiar and knowable. But as Peter Pierre explained to Jenness in 1936, and as remains a common understanding within the Stó:lō community today, memory and knowledge that are acquired from great distances hold the potential to be especially powerful, relevant, and meaningful, if for no other reason than that they are initially less predictable and thus potentially more dangerous.

Indeed, this is one of the main reasons that northern 'coastal raiders' used to be such a concern for Stó:lō people. These hostile strangers entered the Stó:lō riverine world without kinship ties, without local spirit guides, and with warrior spirit power that was unfamiliar and strange. If successful they stole away young girls as slaves and took them to distant places to be exploited without the benefit of family and ancestor

spirits to comfort and guide them. Today, contemporary Elders and knowledge-keepers raise a concern over the Canadian government's child foster and adoption systems wherein Stó:lō children deemed by social workers to be 'at risk' are apprehended and placed in the care of non-Indigenous families. Among the objections Stó:lō people raise is the concern that children relocated outside of the Stó:lō homeland are by definition being denied the ability to interact with the locally grounded ancestral spirits that populate the Stó:lō memoryscape.

Sonny McHalsie, one of the authors, explains that 'When I leave the territory I don't feel my spirits are with me.'[8] When required to journey beyond the borders of the geographic range of his ancestors, McHalsie is careful to inform the spirits of his intentions through prayers which explain why he is going, where he is going, and when he intends to return. While away, the disconnection causes him to feel vulnerable. The return home is always a cause for rejoicing and relaxing. Then McHalsie engages in further conversations with his ancestral spirits to remind them of where he has been, why he was absent, and the purpose and value of his journey.

The further away one has to travel to obtain *swia'm* spirit power (the type Peter Pierre described as 'talent' and explained was often indistinguishable from the memory spirit of *smestíyexw*) the stronger that spirit power's manifestation. While all animals, plants, and stones have *smestíyexw* and *swia'm* that they might decide to share with humans, certain spirit entities exist only in the mystic *xá:xa* (sacred or taboo) realms, where they reside at varying distances from humans. A person (or at least a person's *smestíyexw* spirit) has to make the perilous journey into the *xá:xa* dimension in order to encounter such a spirit.

However, a person who has undergone intense and prolonged purification and received proper hereditary training need not necessarily travel bodily across a physical geography in order to find and acquire memories and knowledge. Dotting the Stó:lō landscape are invisible mystic portals that render spaces immediately adjacent to one another that a settler Canadian might consider distant and apart. Although they cannot be found on government-produced maps, for those who know the history, have the training, and know where to look, the tunnels are real. Successful travel through these dangerous tunnels is almost instantaneous. As such, the tunnels bend time and space to make locations, spirits, and memories that might otherwise appear far apart actually close together.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, technologies such as steam locomotives, automobiles, airplanes, telegraphs, and ultimately satellites and the internet transformed the way humans traveled and how they acquired knowledge from distant places. People no longer needed to travel great distances to communicate and share knowledge face to face or even to wait weeks or months while written text were transported from one locale to another. Instead, knowledge increasingly enabled someone to acquire something from strangers from distant locations in ever shorter periods of time.

Such changes were interpreted by nineteenth-century Stó:lō people through the cosmology discussed earlier. Consider, for example, the oral histories still circulating in the Stó:lō community that describe one of the two colonial-era governors (either James Douglas or Frederick Seymour) having made a promise in his capacity as representative of the Crown that the Stó:lō would be compensated for the alienation of lands outside of their reserves. Further, consider that a delegation of Coast Salish Chiefs led by Joe Capilano of Squamish to London in 1906 to visit King EdwardVII reported that they had secured the King's confirmation of the Governor's earlier promise to address the issue of Aboriginal title. As we have argued elsewhere, the fact that no archival documents have been found confirming the promise need not imply that the promise was never made (Carlson 2005). The fact that members of the 1906 delegation were trained in communicating with ancestral spirits may well mean that, to an extent that is not appreciated by Westerners, the Coast Salish received confirmation of the Crown's promise not from EdwardVII but from Edward the Confessor (the first Edward) while visiting his tomb in Westminster Abbey – contemporary newspaper accounts describe how affected the delegates were upon discovering Edward's tomb within the Abbey (Carlson 2005).

Seen through this lens, the Salish Chiefs sojourn to London by steam engine and steamboat constituted a great journey across a vast landscape to a strange and foreign place where *smestíyexw* could be acquired

from appropriate ancestral spirits. This, we think, provides a context for Chief Capilano's exasperation when speaking with a journalist from the Vancouver *Province* newspaper four years later when he observed that just because Westerners observe Indigenous people does not mean that they understand them: 'They tell you things they have heard, but they do not understand them. If they have seen them they do not understand them, for white men go about with a veil over their eyes and do not think as we think' (Morton 1970: 36).

Memories through fire

Indigenous memoryscapes can be both dangerous and comforting. In the early 1990s, Elders and education workers in the Sumas First Nation were seeking to better understand recent youth suicides. They were aware of oral traditions that identified a large cedar tree in their community as the 'hanging tree.' Contemporaneous archival research that the authors of this article were then conducting had helped bring back into people's consciousness the story of a 14-year-old Stó:lō boy named Louie Sam who in 1884 had been abducted from provincial police custody by a mob of Americans and lynched on Canadian soil (Carlson 1996). Archival evidence generated by Canadian undercover detectives suggested the boy had been framed for the murder of an American shopkeeper and that the lynching was orchestrated by the real murderer to prevent Louie Sam from testifying through a translator in the Canadian courts. People in the Sumas community wondered if the 'hanging tree' was the site of the lynching, and if so was Louie Sam's spirit potentially lingering in the vicinity? Could his spirit's ongoing sorrow and suffering as the victim of settler colonial violence be causing inadvertent harm to contemporary youth and perhaps contributing to suicides?

What also emerged from the archival records, however, were detailed coroner reports describing the precise location where Louie Sam had been lynched – at a site 152 metres north of the Canada/United States border, and a full eight kilometres away from the 'hanging tree' at Sumas. The apparent contradiction between the oral history and the archival records was a concern. For answers the Stó:lō turned to their ancestors. A ritual burning ceremony was organised with two purposes: firstly, to contact the spirits of Louie Sam and his mother to let them know that the contemporary community had not forgotten them; that the living cared for them, and would continue to help ensure that they rested in peace. The first goal, thus, was providing knowledge to the spirits. The second objective was to request knowledge and memories from the spirits. Was there a connection between Louie Sam and the 'hanging tree'? The Stó:lō ritualist started a sacred fire just before dawn. Cedar was used to kindle the fire, the crackling designed to drive away spirits so as to create an open spiritual space. Coniferous wood (that does not crackle) was then placed on the fire to create a portal through which the specific spirits of Louie Sam and his mother could be contacted. Eventually food and clothing were placed on the fire to feed and comfort the spirits. The ritualist then silently communicated with the spirits.

Such ceremonies take several hours, after which a meal is shared where the ritualist conveys the information learned from the spirits with the community. In this case several messages were received. Among them was confirmation that Louie Sam and his mother felt comforted, and they expressed that no one needed to worry that they might be causing harm to contemporary youth. Another was that the hanging tree was indeed associated with Louie Sam. But not as the site where the boy's body had been hanged, but rather where Louie Sam had been *hung*. The spirits confirmed that Louie had indeed been lynched on a tree just north of the American border line (as the archival records described) but that immediately afterwards his body had been cut down and returned to his family. It was late February, the ground was frozen, and so the family was not able to immediately perform the Christian-style internment ceremony that Stó:lō people had recently adopted. So, following ancient tradition, Louie's body was wrapped in blankets and hung in the branches of the old cedar tree in the Sumas community where it would be safe from animals until the ground had thawed sufficiently to allow for a burial.

Conclusion

Despite the alienation of lands and the imposition of government regulatory practices and policies, Indigenous people like the Stó:lō continue to 'make memories' on the landscape of their ancestors in ways that are intimate and profoundly meaningful. As with all people everywhere, they come to know places in complex ways. They go to places, do things, and then associate memories with those places. Such memories play an important role in grounding them and connecting them to place. Indeed, Indigenous memoryscapes are not radically different from the ones that numerous settlers Canadians and Americans have also been making over the same North American physical geography for the past two centuries.

But Indigenous memoryscapes differ in important ways from all the memoryscapes that settlers have draped over the land. The differences are both epistemological and ontological, and while they assume intimately local expressions, the conflicts that emerge have global commonalities. In Ireland, people with deep ancestral memories continue to clash with developers and archaeologists over the issue of how best to interpret and protect 'fairy forts' – rock formations which locals believe were created by spirit entities, archaeologists assert were built by ancient humans, and developers see as impediments to highway and urban development (Cheallaigh 2012). In Canada, similarly, the highly publicised conflict between the Ktunaxa First Nation and developers over whether or not a mountain was just a geological rock formation with suitable slopes for the development of a 6,000 unit ski resort or a sacred site that would be rendered spiritually vacuous by economic development reached the Supreme Court (MacKinnon 2017). And recently in Malaysia, Canadian tourists intentionally violated Indigenous customs and beliefs when they stripped naked and urinated on the peak of a sacred mountain. In this instance, occurring as it did in a country where Indigenous people were not a marginalised minority but the governing majority, the settler tourists found themselves jailed for 'desecrating a holy site, insulting a culture and – last but not least – causing a deadly earthquake' (Miller 2015).

Within the Stó:lō world, people recognise that they are related to the landscape by virtue of their ancient common origins with the region's stones, plants, and animals. In the Stó:lō cosmology, therefore, these 'things' are not merely places that can trigger memories, but rather places where memories and knowledge nest independent of human agency. Places and things, in the Stó:lō cosmology, are sentient; but they are not sentient in a way in which settler Canadians can ever fully share. Settlers may come to love the geography and call it home, but they will never have the ancestral connections to the land that Stó:lō enjoy for the simple fact that they arrived too late. Xe:Xá:ls had already completed his work long before the fur traders, gold miners, farmers, longshoremen, stockbrokers, and vegan gluten-free bakers arrived.

Settler colonialism has the power to eclipse Indigenous memoryscapes by challenging and contesting Stó:lō ways of knowing as well as by alienating lands from Stó:lō people through the seemingly never-ending expansion of simple title holdings and government regulation. What a settler society might regard as a process of building places for creating memories often poses challenges to Stó:lō people because of their tendency to damper Indigenous memory transfers. Stó:lō Grand Chief Steven Point, for example, explains that ancestral spirits sometimes have difficulty communicating with the living because of the interference caused by asphalt and concrete. It is for that reason (among others) that big cities like Vancouver can be dangerous places for Stó:lō people. Prolonged visits to such environments, Point explains, can result in Stó:lō people becoming disorientated, confused, and susceptible to unhealthy temptations and malevolent forces. 'In Vancouver you don't have connection with the earth; with the soil,' Point explains, and so 'the spirits have a hard time talking to you. As Native people we need that connection.'[9]

Settler colonialism creates settler memoryscapes in numerous ways, some of which involve industrial workspaces associated with such activities as blasting rocks, consuming mineral resources, harvesting trees, and paving streets. Such actions inevitably make it harder for Indigenous people like the Stó:lō to hear their ancestors' voices and to find and retrieve ancestral memories. This highlights for many settler Canadians what are perhaps largely invisible implications of the ongoing alienation of Indigenous people from their

land and resources. As settlers and as scholars, our aspirations are, therefore, perhaps best directed at working with Indigenous people to try and better understand the complexity of the Indigenous relationships with the land so that we can position ourselves to more properly respect them. That is one way in which the study of memoryscapes can contribute directly to settler colonial decolonisation.

Notes

1 Rosaleen George in conversation with Keith Carlson, May 1995.
2 Bertha Peters in conversation with the authors, 20 September 1995.
3 Aggie Victor in conversation with Sonny McHalsie, July 1992.
4 Peter Pierre explained that if not returned within a reasonable period, a person without *smestíyexw* goes crazy and dies.
5 Jimmie Charlie in conversation with Keith Carlson, November 1996.
6 During the years when the potlatch and tamanawas dance were banned, songs that had been prominent with families sometimes ceased to be sung until they slipped from human memory.
7 Kelsey Charlie in conversation with Keith Carlson, May 2011.
8 Sonny McHalsie in conversation with Keith Carlson, 31 October 2003.
9 Steven Point in conversation with Keith Carlson, July 1995.

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