Skateboarding in Place: Creating and Reclaiming Namescapes Through Skatescapes

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Abstract: This exploration paper considers the sport/art/activity of skateboarding as it intertwines with spatial experiences, identities, and our personal and kinetic vernaculars. I try to understand what skateboarders, and Indigenous skateboarders especially, can teach us about alternative ways to understand space, place, and identity. I posit that skateboarding encourages spatial comprehension and landscape-use in particular ways, what I think of as a skatescape: a landscape as seen through skateboarders' eyes. Through a skateboarding media and art lens, I reflect on some ways in which skateboarding influences narratives of place and belonging. I then consider these personal narratives and attempt to broaden the definition of a skatescape and in so doing speculate on how we create, share, and navigate our unique and personal spatial languages through movement and presence. Finally, I reveal that appreciating Indigenous skatescapes has illuminated a blindspot in my settler psyche: that up until recently I had not acknowledged fully that each and every spot I have ever skated was and is Indigenous land.
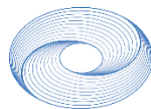
The defensive and disciplined city is not inevitable. It has the condition and possibility for change and flexibility (Smith and Walters 2992).

We knew that we had about five minutes of potential skateboarding until the security guard busted us at our long-coveted skate spot: a partially demolished, marine-themed exhibit for Expo '86. It was 1988 and I was 16 years old. My toponym, or place name, for that spot is "Wrexpo 86," an undulating remnant of an otherwise dismantled concrete and steel exhibit, and it was glorious: a smooth surface of teal-blue, rounded waves, comfortably skateable provided we avoided tetanus from the various talon-shaped and now rusted features poking up from the exhibit. The security

guard appeared to be middle-aged and apparently more suited to a weight room than a running track. Lucky for us the comically diminutive security booth sat at the outskirts of the enormous gravel lot. The Wrexpo 86 spot was far enough away from the booth to allow us several minutes of skating before we were busted. Lumbering toward us, the guard's unintelligible screams suggested regular occurrences of shooing away skaters. Upon approach the guard's arms waved violently about as if to scatter a murder of crows at a picnic. We cackled and squealed as we fled off in every direction to avoid capture. A murder of skaters is an apt description of our group that day. We had already descended upon various skate spots in Vancouver, from grimy and rough East Van back alleys to the relatively genteel and enticingly slick stairs at The Lions, AKA the Vancouver Art Gallery. We skated each spot, squawking with chatter and laughter, screeching our wheels and grinding our trucks and to the non-skater onlooker we flapped about in a kinetic vernacular unique to our species. All those spots felt like a preamble to Wrexpo 86, a high heat-score location but worth the risk. Peering through a ten-foot-high chain-link fence, we surveyed the scene carefully, debating how many minutes it would take to get caught by the security guard. In what seemed like seconds later we had all scrambled over the fence, a half-dozen or so of us, and sprinted for our lives towards the waves, tongues hanging out and tears of laughter streaming down our cheeks. That indelible memory is evoked by the Wrexpo 86 toponym and it reminds me of the gravity of emotions we can sometimes conjure through our personal namescapes, our idiosyncratic collections of toponyms.

Skaters comprehend and experience place in a particular way, what I think of as a skatescape: a toponymic web composed of skater-known names for skate spots and local knowledge of their particular suitability to certain tricks. I am curious about our personal namescapes and how they inform understandings of space, place, landscape, and narrative. Through a skateboarding lens I will explore these intersecting understandings to attempt to broaden the definition of a skatescape and in

so doing I hope to learn more about how we create, share, and navigate our unique and personal namescapes. I believe that namescapes, personal or otherwise, inform our ontologies or how we understand the worlds around us and our places within them. Thinking about skatescapes has also illuminated a blindspot in my settler psyche: up until recently I had not acknowledged fully that each and every spot I skated then and now was and is Indigenous land. For example, what I call Wrexpo 86, in Vancouver, was and is on Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaɁ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations' territories. Hanwakan Blaikie Whitecloud writes that "skateboarding is an Indigenous practice" (Isaac 59). I hope to learn more about what Whitecloud means and about the ways in which Indigenous skaters assert and celebrate presence on the land in places and ways that many settlers might not consider.

Making places from spaces as personal process

Toponyms have an officious side when recorded, indexed, and codified in official state gazetteers like the British Columbia Geographical Names Office (BCGNO). Such bureaucratic bodies determine among other things what they deem as "official" names like "Mount Douglas" and "traditional" names like "PKOLS," the W̱SÁNEĆ name for same feature (BCGNO). Toponyms have an everyday practical utility too in that they indicate in words as opposed to numeric geocoordinates our shared labels for places within otherwise unnamed spaces. We can draw on French scholar and philosopher on everyday life Michel de Certeau's definitions to understand the difference between space and place. For de Certeau a place is a location in space, for example, a landscape or a landscape feature; a place, in being a location, offers a kind of "order" or a "stability" within the abstract "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables" of "space" (117). We might move through spaces from one place to the next and in so doing create what de Certaeu describes as "narrative adventures," our personal "geographies of actions" (116) that create "stories in the form

of places," stories that inform our personal "spatial syntaxes" (115). Unlike official or widely shared and understood namescapes, our personal namescapes and syntaxes—the unique language we use individually or within a select group to describe places—accrues idiosyncratically and unpredictably, based in part on our particular locational "perspective," for example, where we grow up or where we live. Locational perspective informs and is informed by our "'phenomenology' of existing in the world" (118), the way in which we experience and understand the spaces and places around us. Wrexpo 86 is in my personal skatescape and known only to a handful of people who were there at the time: it is a situational and ephemeral toponym compared to ones in an official gazetteer. Like so many of our personal toponyms, Wrexpo 86 will not likely proliferate beyond a small group of skaters' shared memories. Wrexpo 86 also evokes a fragmented sense of space and place, partly because it no longer exists and therefore cannot be re-experienced and partly because it is less a location and more of a feeling, a crucible of senses and recollections and a symbol of a certain time and a way of experiencing the world through the "performative force" (123) of skateboarding. de Certeau suggests that we should not expect accuracy or repeatability from our conceptions of place but an emotional union with our inner chronicler, our "palimpsest [of] subjectivity:"

> places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body. (108-09)

de Certeau implies a corporeal—"of the body"—and poetic reading of our personal toponymic compilations and intimates a visceral bond to certain memories associated with certain places. Testing the Wrexpo 86 toponym through de Certeau's reading, I feel my body remembering the exertions of running, the fluidity of skateboarding over the concrete waves, the frisson of fear as the security guard approached, and the relief of eventual escape. These body memories outweigh other memories like the exact layout of the site or its location relative to other cityscape features. Maybe

our personal toponymies and their attendant body-memories belong on the ecopoetic end of the toponymic continuum, with relatively abstract, locational memories on the opposite end.

J. Scott Bryson's discussion of ecopoetry gestures towards a possible definition of a personal toponymy in that we "are all making place" when we "approach the landscape surrounding us so that we view it as meaningful place rather than abstract space" (12). If, as Bryson proposes, "poems become models" (12) for how to understand the land, then skaters' tricks, how they interact with space and place, become models for understanding skatescapes. We can imagine skateboarding as a kinetic poetry that simultaneously writes upon and draws meaning from various features in what non-skaters might perceive as unremarkable urban terrains. The act of skateboarding reminds me, to draw on Bryson, of the "interanimation that exists between ourselves and the rest of the world" (15). Until recently I had been on a skateboarding hiatus, but I have come to realize all these years later that skateboarding has permanently altered the way I perceive spaces and places, particularly in cityscapes. My eyes seem drawn autonomically toward features like concrete curves at the bases of buildings, or certain arrangements of stairs, or clear lines visible down a cluttered sidewalk—all of them architectures inviting potential play.

Skatescapes explored

Skaters read urban landscapes in particular ways by virtue of their activity and practices. Helen Woolley and Ralph Johns observe that

> the individual elements within the landscape become important to skateboarders, as they utilize the concrete, asphalt and stone that are the essential building blocks of all cities, and in doing so inhabit the urban environment in a unique and creative way. (214)

It is in large part this creative use of what might be considered "banal urban locations" and architectural objects that defines a skatescape (O'Connor 1664). Born, as Ian Borden describes it,

"out of the dynamic intersection of body, board and terrain" (758) skateboarders perform tricks in reaction to specific features and obstacles. A set of stairs designed for walking becomes something to ollie up or down or to grind or tailslide along.[1] Some tricks can be performed on flat land while other tricks can be performed in skateparks, which have any number of skateboarding-specific features such as banks (curved embankments), hips (rounded features), and funboxes (a box-shaped feature with up to four ramps leading up to a flat top).[2] Urban or street skating, however, continues to thrive during the recent increase in the creation of skateparks across Turtle Island/North America.[3] For Vancouver, the "Downtown Skate Plaza Survey Report" shows the continued popularity of the aforementioned Vancouver Art Gallery despite the relatively recent construction of the nearby Plaza Skateboard Park (van Stavel). Part of the appeal in skating spots not designed specifically for skateboarding stems from a desire to react spontaneously and creatively to a given place's features, to attempt to unravel the puzzle of what types of tricks a spot will allow and to push this internal/external spatial dialogue in new directions.

Fig. 1. Cairo Foster pole-jams a traffic feature in Wellington, New Zealand/Aotearoa (Doubt, *Cairo Foster, Pole Jam, Wellington, NZ*, 2009, used with permission).

Fig. 2. Quinne Starr ollies into a bamboo-screened and otherwise banal architectural space in North Vancouver (Doubt, *Quinn Starr, Ollie, North Vancouver*, 2007, used with permission).

A skatescape is also defined by its capacity to encourage this spatial discourse: some spots offer a brief conversation while others demand years of repeated interactions—a ritual connected to place.

We can build on Paul O'Connor's characterizations of skateboarding to understand a skatescape as a site of ritual and performance. O'Connor submits that "skateboarding is fundamentally a performance" but also "an emergent lifestyle religion of ritualised play" (181). O'Connor's contention that "skateboarding makes holy places out of overlooked street corners" (288) suggests one way in which we could imagine our personal namescapes as sites of spatial reverence for places of import or particular memory. Like skatescapes, our personal namescapes often remain hidden from all but a select few. Jon Swords and Mike Jeffries offer support for this personal-namescapes interpretation when they observe that street skaters in particular find "their way through a city not always visible to the layperson" (280). In the palimpsest of public-city presence skateboarders share a particular imprint, readable through the act of skateboarding itself and the ways in which skateboarders commonly perceive place.

Skatescapes can, as Gregory Snyder suggests, encourage the formation of "subcultural enclaves" (168-70), or congregation spots for skateboarders and these spots and their toponyms can become "iconic" enough to motivate skateboarders to gravitate there, usually in order to "perform a trick at a place that will make them part of subcultural history"; moreover, their presence combined with the performance of "landing" particular tricks could add to an iconic spot's ongoing lore (198). Snyder reiterates O'Connor with the observation that "to skateboarders these spaces are quasi-sacred grounds saturated with the accomplishments of a very select group" (198). My experience as a street skater taught me that some spots remain secret to all but a select group, usually because fewer skaters equates to decreased chances for police or security guard harassment—as Snyder notes for many places around the world, "skateboarding is illegal, and many skaters," myself included, "have experienced various forms of mild and not so mild police harassment" (185). The *Findskatespots* website allows skateboarders to add and name skate spots in their city and an example from Saskatoon, with a toponym of "Traffic Bridge Ledges," notes the "Bust level" for this spot as "low"

("Traffic Bridge Ledges"). In other words a low "bust level" indicates to skaters a relatively reduced likelihood of being ticketed or hassled by security guards or police, compared to high bust-level spots—the findskatespots.com website indicates these spots with a designation of "After Hours Only," suggesting that to skate these spots, typically nearby businesses or institutions, during opening hours will result in probable ticketing or possible arrest.
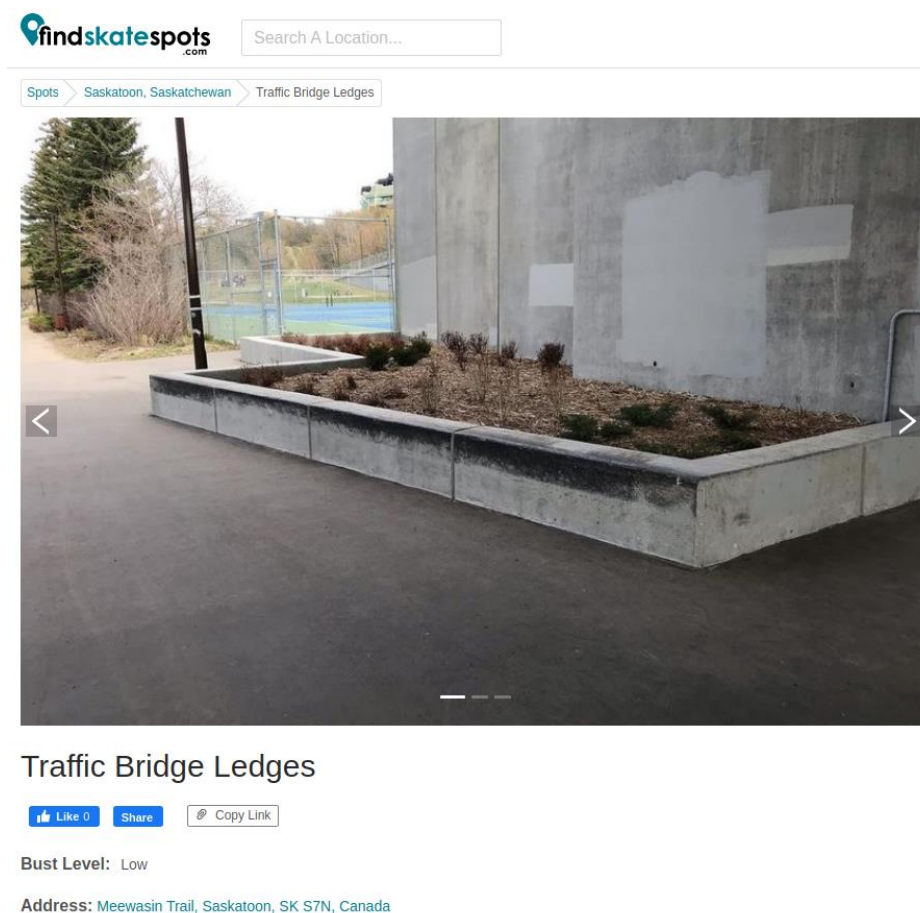

Fig. 3. A screenshot from the *Findskatespots* website; note the inclusion of a "Bust Level" designation (Traffic Bridge Ledges").

A discussion of skateboarding's legal complexion is beyond the scope of this paper, but we can focus on one aspect of a skatescape's perceived threat to what Matthew Atencio and Becky Beal

describe as the civic "logics of neoliberalism" (114) and that is the ways in which the performance of street skateboarding alters/improves or deforms/destroys its terrain depending on one's interpretation; Ocean Howell explains that

> skateboarders' use of street furniture and hand rails consistently causes minor property damage, which has spawned a secondary industry in the manufacture of architectural deterrents to skateboarding and the dissemination of anti-skate design expertise. (476)[4]

Skatescapes then could also be defined by the extent to which they reveal physical evidence of property damage. While some might see this damage as legally punishable, others might see it as a type of rebellion against civic, capitalist dominance, a "practice which can be seen to disrupt the consumptive logic of the city" (25). Perhaps one way to understand a skatescape is to see it as a site for "deformance," a creative realm, to draw on textual scholars Lisa Samuels and Jerome McGann, within which "the passage from performance to deformance is easily negotiated" (34) by skateboarders. As with Bryson, Samuels and McGann suggest a curious resonance between written poetry and skateboarding's kinetic poetry: their portrait of "poetic deformations" evokes skateboarding's architectural deformations—smoothed-down and waxed curbs, marks on hand rails, tail-slide marks on benches, and so on—as a type of "poiesis" that expresses a new interpretation of place (36). In this latter reading skateboarding's deformance is a personalization of place, its physical markings evidence of a particular type of use, a humanization of place akin to an ancient city's stairs worn to concaves by millions of passing footsteps. Furthermore, the more often a skate spot is deformed through repeated skateboarding sessions the greater the likelihood that its toponym is performed among skateboarders, making some skate-spot toponyms world famous. Snyder remarks that "the most famous DIY spot" in skateboarding is "Burnside," which began as an illegally built series of interconnected transitions and obstacles under Burnside Bridge in Portland, Oregon (193). Burnside was already famous to me and my fellow skateboarders by the mid-1990s and its

toponymic suffix of "side" has been borrowed by similar DIY projects, including "SixSide" in Lekwungen territory, under the Parson's Bridge, just outside of Victoria; the six in SixSide name mirrors the nearby Six Mile Road and Six Mile Pub. SixSide began as "Victoria's Super Secret New Skatepark" but has since grown in scale and prominence to become "a micro-Burnside" (Morrison).[5] Famous skate spots like SixSide are legitimized bodily through performative acts of skateboarding in place, not through abstract, codifying toponymic bodies like the BCGNO.

Cartography and toponym scholars Brian Tucker and Reuben Rose-Redwood discuss the "performative speech acts" that promulgate place names (196). This "performativity" of toponyms, their repetitive and reiterative sociocultural and political use, gradually normalizes toponyms such that they "acquire the appearance of being '"natural"'" (17), at least to the cultures and populations of their origins and maintenance. Skatescapes illustrate one type of performance among many potential alternative spatial and namescape orthodoxies. To draw on Tucker and Rose-Redwood again, skatescapes are "transboundary" in nature; by "rescaling of several local places into a singular 'transboundary' space through the act of naming" (204) skate spots, skateboarders iterate conceptually their own kind of skateable terrain, a skate-state mostly invisible to non-skaters and with no discernable central authority or legitimizing power. In so doing skatescapes disrupt at once the logic of "conventional"[6] namescapes and, as Simon Irvine and Sophie Tayson observe, skateboarding disrupts the normative "logic of the city" and in two ways, the second of which seems to echo Tucker and Rose-Redwood:

> first, by reinventing the city as a *terrain* on which to practice particular skills; and second, by moving across geographic demarcations, such as suburbs, treating all built environments as a *single* terrain. (25)

In this imagined, single terrain skaters forge connections between their micro-cultural and kinetic identities, what Irvine and Tayson describe as "a skilled identity that escapes the codes of

consumption" (25). In skatescapes, identities, practices, and skate-spot places entwine so that "what becomes important to the skater is not how the 'Hard' spaces demarcate and place, but how they may be used to practice/perform new skills" (25).[7] I can confirm this personally and anecdotally: skateboarders will skate anywhere that is skateable regardless of its location; skateboarders "move across urban and suburban areas which traditionally divide the rich from the poor" (25).

As Whitecloud and others relate, Indigenous skateboarders reconceptualize what settlers might traditionally understand as the divide between settler and Indigenous territories. Julie Nagam, writing in response to the recent cross-Canada art exhibit *Boarder X*, states "that concepts of Native space are linked to Indigenous stories of place" through the lens of "various board cultures" like surfing, snowboarding, and skateboarding (44).[8] Nagram emphasizes "the importance of understanding the criticality of Indigenous politics and relationship to place" and that the Indigenous artists/skateboarders in the *Boarder X* show, for example, are part of a "counterculture" that is "rewriting colonial narratives through skateboarding" (45). Through an Indigenous performative force, Indigenous skateboarders are reinscribing and *newly* inscribing "landscape as a spatial text" (Tucker and Rose-Redwood, 197) in particular ways.

Skateboarding as Indigenous presencing[9]

For settlers and settler skaters it is important to remember that one persistent colonial narrative holds Indigenous Peoples and settler understandings of Indigeneity in what Mark Rifkin describes as a "simulacrum of pastness," that is, an "attempt to freeze Indigenous persons and peoples into a simulacrum of pastness, a fantasized construction of Indian realness cast as immanently tied to a bygone era" (7). The "simulacrum of pastness" denies Indigenous modernity in order to maintain the myth of a colonial "conquering" of the land. Indigenous skateboarders challenge this aspect of colonialism by being a presence in current, urban environments and in so

doing teach and remind settlers that these environments are *also* thriving Indigenous spaces.[10] When I reread, through Rifkin, Whitecloud's assertion that "skateboarding is an Indigenous practice" (59), I can understand that to (re)claim a skatescape is to also (re)claim a timescape, to impose, as *Boarder X* curator Jaimie Isaac defines it, a temporal and kinetic "thrivance"—a thriving *in* place through skateboarding—that challenges colonialism directly (16). Borden sees skateboarding as "an activity in which a certain newness is born from knowledge, representation and lived experience enacted together" and as "an activity which refutes architecture as domination of the self" (23). Issac suggests to me that skateboarding is an activity that refutes the colonial domination of the Indigenous self by "enacting a cultural continuum of active presence through contemporary ways of being on the land," which "challenge[s] conformity, stereotypes, and [the] status quo" (13). Indigenous skateboarders, as Isaac relates through Annika Amelie Hellman, challenge "the common belief that skateboarding belongs to skaters with a 'white middle-class background as a homosocial and hegemonic group'" (16). For Issac, the *Boarder X* art exhibit has personal relevance for a collision of reasons. Growing up skateboarding, Issac says "I was often told, 'you're good… for a girl,' a back-handed compliment paralleled by, 'Oh, you're *Native*?!' Well, you're one of the good ones" (14). Isaac turned these intolerances into motivation to continue skateboarding and surfing and found that each act of "being on the land and water" awakened Issac to a universal "human and earthly fragility," while providing a reminder "that nature and time are precious" (14).

In an answer to the question of "how do skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing relate to Indigenous ways of being?," Isaac points to the roots of surfing in Hawai'i, an Indigenous practice "for millennia, going back over 1500 years" and "existing before European contact" (15). Skateboarding, which developed from surfing, continues to redefine itself in a variety of ways, from tricks to technological innovations, yet it maintains its core element of being a relational practice of body to land. Åsa Bäckström describes the "sensory emplacement" effects of skateboarding as a

"kinaesthesia," a "multisensory experience" which facilitates "a fruitful way of bridging the mind–body divide," one that enables skaters "to view the body as un/knowing, rendering it both knowing and not knowing simultaneously" (752). Skateboarding seems to provide, and it certainly did and does for me, an inner and outer space of one's own, a way toward alternative self-definition through practice and creativity. Artist and *Boarder X* contributor Amanda Strong, as a young person "growing up in rural Ontario," relates that

> skateboarding was an expression and release from conformities. As an Indigenous girl—I was constantly asked if I was a boy or was told I looked like one because of my choices of how I wanted to move. The board and wheels were but a modern vessel to travel and time that transported me into a zone where it didn't matter who or what I was—it was a move to break free from the costumes. (56)

Fig. 4. My picture of Amanda Strong's *Maashchii (to move)*: a diorama of a kickflip (skateboard trick) over a stack of pallets, as part of the *Boarder X* show in Nanaimo, British Columbia, in 2020.[11]

Artist and *Boarder X* contributor Bracken Hanuse Corlett parallels Strong's sense of skateboarding as an anti-conformist activity. Corlett relates that "growing up in the 80s and 90s, I viewed skateboarding as a counterculture that went against the conservative values that preoccupy North America" (26). Corlett's piece for *Boarder X* is entitled *Potlatch or Die*, a play on the skater mantra "skate or die," as Corlett explains, "a phrase originally coined from a late-80s video game"— Corlett describes his piece as a "launch ramp . . . adorned in a skull and copper figure that connote our ceremonial practice in the Big House" (26). In part and through the use of skulls, Corlett's ramp speaks back to the Potlatch ban "between 1885 and 1951 in Canada," as "the use of skulls was a key reason for the church placing bans on our ceremony and it was a complete misunderstanding of their use" (26).[12]

Fig. 5. Bracken Hanuse Corlett's "launch ramp," entitled *Potlatch or Die*, as part of the *Boarder X* show in Snuneymuxw Nation territory, Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Corlett finds a way to marry a reclamation of Potlatch and ceremonial history, as well as cultural history and continued practice, through contemporary skateboarding, which demonstrates skateboarding as an Indigenous practice.

Whitecloud, on Indigenous histories of skateboarding, notes that "using a board to enhance the experience of the land began with the First Peoples who surfed, the Polynesian people of Hawaii," adding that "today this practice continues in concretized urban and rural landscapes" (59). Whitecloud should know: among other talents and practices Whitecloud is the filmmaker who directed and produced an insightful documentary series called "True to the Land: Indigenous Skateboarding."[13] The aim of these short films, as the audio introduction announces, is to "examine

life on reserve through the lens of skateboarding." Whitecloud splices clips of Indigenous skateboarders doing tricks with interviews and audio clips of the skaters reflecting on skateboarding and being Indigenous, as well as some of the histories and social issues affecting the reservations and surrounding lands. Throughout the series Whitecloud spotlights the rich interrelationships between land, skateboarding, identity, and Indigeneity and he portrays a range of experiences, from skater Dre Lafreniere's pride at being sponsored by a local shop to Cody Houle's reintroduction to Long Plain First Nation—as Whitecloud describes it, "like too many Indigenous youth, they've had to work through growing up adopted," observing that "a skatepark can be a connection to an unfamiliar home." Whitecloud, Issac, Strong, and Corlett's works and words encourage me to reflect differently on Linda Tuhiwai Smith's words in *Decolonizing Methodologies*, to consider ways in which Indigenous skaters' kinetic "counter-stories" are also "powerful forms of resistance which are repeated and shared across diverse indigenous communities" (2). Whitecloud's films remind us of the importance of having spaces to practice and grow a sense of connection to place through skateboarding, which is something to which all skaters can relate, Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

Skateboarding's desire lines

In "Desire Lines and Defensive Architecture in Modern Urban Environments," Naomi Smith and Peter Walters ask the following question: "If the right to the city is a matter of 'spatial justice', then how do those marginalised by defensive architecture or merely space designed for only one purpose attain some measure of justice?" (2986). I have shown in this brief inquiry that skateboarders ask us to consider this question in new ways and to question how those marginalized by defensive architecture and colonialism, in the case of Indigenous skaters, attain some measure of social justice. I believe that skateboarders make particular and often invisible "desire lines," their own "unsanctioned" routes "outside of those prescribed by abstract place makers" (2987).[14] I have

characterized the iterative discipline of skateboarding as both a practice and a spatial territory and as a challenge to Western toponymic and spatial mores. Like "the more material desire lines of muddy tracks in a grassy field," skatescapes are also "reminders that the overwhelming logic of top down construction of public space is not the last word" (2992). While sprinting across Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations' territories toward Wrexpo 86, I knew only a desire to skate that spot, fleeting as the session was, and I could not have conceived at the time that we were following our own desire lines, our way of imprinting our personal and skatescape narratives onto place. This memory, however, reflected through the ideas and words of the artists, skaters, scholars and others in this paper has educated me to think differently about where I skated then and where I skate now, in ləkʷəŋən (Lekwungen) territory.[15]

Notes

1 For a basic introduction to skateboarding tricks see "Skateboarding Trick," in *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Skateboarding_trick&oldid=1029418671.

2 Freestyle skateboarding, a flatland discipline, also has a number of specific tricks; see *The Freestyle Knowledge Base*, "Tricks," http://freestylekb.com/wiki/index.php?title=Category:Tricks.

3 Newline Skateparks lists hundreds of parks across Canada; see *New Line Skateparks*, "Projects," https://www.newlineskateparks.com/projects/?all=1. The Skatepark Project's US map shows hundreds more; see *The Skatepark Project*, "Skatepark Map," https://skatepark.org/skatepark-map.

4 John Carr describes cities' efforts to construct or modify architecture to deter skateboarding, noting these changes, in addition to legal and regulatory campaigns, as "passive measures to 'skateproof' public and private urban furniture—for example, by welding blocks on hand rails or benches—so as to preclude skating. John Carr, "Legal Geographies," 995.

5 See also *Sixside DIY - Vancouver Island - Victoria, BC*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoMiysumNC0 for a look at its current configuration.

6 I place "conventional" in quotes to signal, first, that conventions are relative and, second, to flag that the namescape from which this paper is written is within a Western spatial paradigm in which "indigenous space has been colonized" (Smith 53).

7 Irvine and Taysom employ Tranick to define "hard spaces" as follows: "'Hard' spaces can be thought of as objects such as office blocks, shops and shopping centres, houses and apartment blocks, roads, gas lines, and foot-paths" (24). By contrast, "soft spaces" are "areas such as parks, designated swimming areas, trees along footpaths, and the sky" (24).

8 Learn more about the *Boarder X* show on the *WAG* website: https://boarderx.wag.ca.

9 I borrow the term "presencing" from Sandrina de Finney's definition, which builds on

"Leanne Simpson's (2011) notion of 'presence' as a form of decolonizing resurgence" to propose that presencing can manifest in a number of ways. See Sandrina de Finney, "Under the Shadow of Empire: Indigenous Girls' Presencing as Decolonizing Force."

[10] For more on the connections between skateboarding, Indigeneity, and land reclamation, see "How Indigenous Skateboarders Use Their Boards for Creative Expression and Land Reclamation," https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/how-indigenous-skateboarders-use-their-boards-for-creative-expression-and-land-reclamation-1.5755310.

[11] For another image of this installation, and a description, see Strong, "Maashchii (to move)," in *Boarder X*, 56.

[12] Corlett emphasizes that "the Potlatch keeps us moving forward and is needed to continue practicing our dances, songs, protocol and language" (26).

[13] All "True to the Land" films are available on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) *YouTube* channel: https://www.youtube.com/c/AptnCa/search?query=True%20To%20the%20Land%20Indigenous%20Skateboarding.

[14] Smith and Walters define desire lines as "deliberate and at times subversive patterns which reimage and redraw the relationships within and between places through the physical act of walking" (2988), and I would add skateboarding.

[15] See https://www.songheesnation.ca/community/l-k-ng-n-traditional-territory.

Appendix

Here are some suggestions for further reading or viewing. Some of what is presented here appears in

the notes section, but I gather it all here for the sake of convenience:

- *Boarder X* show on the *Winnipeg Art Gallery* website: https://boarderx.wag.ca

- Hanwakan Blaikie Whitecloud's docuseries "True To the Land: Indigenous Skateboarding—
  Opaskwayak Cree Nation," episode 1 [APTN *YouTube* channel]:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cWZ4YNDEZM

- "'Joe Buffalo,' Surviving the Horror of Residential Schools by Skateboarding" [*New Yorker*
  YouTube channel]: https://youtu.be/Gb9_OEzPEpY

- *Nations Skate Youth* website: https://nationskateyouth.com

- 7 Generations Cup, an Indigenous hosted pro skateboard contest, June 10-12, 2022, at the
  Langley Events Center in Langley, British Columbia: https://www.7genskate.com

- Colonialism Skateboards: http://www.colonialism.ca/about

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