

Iconification and the Nationalized Inukshuk

By

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Abstract

This thesis explores the rise of the inukshuk as a Canadian national symbol beginning in 1994 and extending to the present-day and investigates how and why this rise has occurred. Theoretically framed in terms of Barthes' study on myth and Foucault's concept of power, the author offers an accompanying and complementary theoretical model for understanding the inukshuk's rise on the national stage. The process of *iconification* addresses the ways in which symbols come to be national, or *nationalized* through localised, repetitive, and increasingly meaningful uses by actors and agencies operating within the state. Commencing with the 1994 airing of the *Historica* Heritage Minute "Inukshuk", the author traces the iconic development of the symbol from its grassroots popularity in southern Canada's dominant culture to its nationalization in the Canadian political economy. Of specific interest is how the inukshuk operates as a fetish in the dominant culture; how it bespeaks a cultural desire to be indigenous; how it became a preferred symbol in the articulation of an updated national identity at home and abroad; and, how it's currently relevant as a poignant signifier of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. Moreover, the implicit connection between the symbol and Canada's colonial past and present operates as a spectre haunting all aspects of the nationalized inukshuk throughout this thesis.

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For Frank and Estelle, Jung Di Nie, Thomas, and Percy's Mail Truck

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Forward

Into the Mystic

The Heritage Minutes are a series of televised vignettes highlighting episodes of Canadian history. They have been aired on national networks since the early 1990s. Imagine the year is 1994 and you are watching your favourite television program, say, *Friends* or *Seinfeld* when, during a commercial break you view a *Heritage Minute* set in the North, featuring an injured Mountie and an Inuit group who are constructing an odd, stone monument. This monument is the inukshuk, widely recognizable in today's cultural landscape, but I imagine it was something of a curiosity to many of the viewers who watched the first airings of the Heritage Minute "Inukshuk."

While there is evidence that the inukshuk found its way into the consciousness of the dominant culture¹ prior to its airing, the Heritage Minute represents the first widespread, popular text relating to the stone formations. The *Minute* attempts to assign the inukshuk with some meaning that, in keeping with the Historica mandate, positions it within a larger national mythology (Hodgins 2003).

Originally aired in 1994, the Minute, set in the seemingly stark wilderness landscape of Baffin Island in 1931 conjures allusions to common tropes familiar to the colonial and national imagination: the Aboriginal, the North, the wilderness and the Mountie. The segment features an injured RCMP officer who is travelling with what appears to be an Inuit family. He is frustrated because they have stopped to build this peculiar monument; "an inukshuk," the Mountie remarks with curious incredulity.

¹ By "dominant culture," I am referring to a particular yet ambiguous imagining of Canadian national identity. Reproduced officially and unofficially under normalizing conditions of Anglophone whiteness, Mackey (1999) refers to this group as an "unmarked, non-ethnic, and usually white, 'Canadian-Canadian' identity"(20).

Narrating the Minute through his inner monologue, the Mountie observes of the monument: “I come across them miles from anywhere...maybe now I’ll find out what they’re for.” To which an Inuk youth translating the words of a member from his group responds: “She says...now the people will know we were here.”

The end of the Minute sees a close-up of the inukshuk, located at the forefront of the frame, while the party walks away, backs turned from the camera, towards the mountainous horizon of the background [figure 0.1]. The viewer is left with an encore of the Inuk youth’s words, applied with an echo effect that makes them seem distant and haunting: “*Now the people will know we were here.*” Text appears on the bottom of the screen framing the inukshuk as “A part of our heritage.” The screen then narrows to include the sponsors and contributors to the Minute (The CRB Foundation, Historica, the NFB, Actra and Power Corporation of Canada).

As I mentioned a moment ago, the Inuk’s voice seems haunting because it has been treated with an echo effect suggesting that he is speaking to the present audience from a remote past. Combined with the visual imagery of his group walking into the distance, the metaphor of a disappearing people becomes clearer. The inukshuk, then, stands as a monument to their vanishing existence, *their* heritage. However, the text below the inukshuk proclaims “A part of *our* heritage”[Emphasis added]. A first glance at this message alludes to Canadian notions of tolerance and pluralism expressed through the state’s promotion of official multiculturalism, that is, their heritage *is* our heritage. However, I suggest there are greater complexities at play.

While constructing their inukshuk, the family group is speaking amongst themselves; there are no subtitles. And viewers (assuming they are not fluent in

Inuktitut) are left to experience this event through the inner monologue of the injured Mountie and what the Inuk youth relates to him in English. If this was about Canadian plurality and tolerance, it stands that the audience would be privy to their conversation by way of subtitle – we are not – we are left to see this event unfold through the eyes of the Mountie. The Mountie, then, besides operating as an overt referent for the state and its historic administration of the North, functions as a metonym of the intended audience of the Minute, most of whom, I speculate, will be white and Anglophone.

Which medium? Which message?

In this sense, what or who does the inukshuk stand proxy for? A host of possibilities and ambivalences emerge: does it monumentalize the suggestive disappearance of the Inuit group? Is their disappearance a part of “our” heritage? Certainly, the echo in the Inuk’s voice leaves a haunting tone at the close of the segment. Moreover, this phrase has been repeated from earlier in the Minute; does this repetition suggest a return of the repressed? Finally, the past tense used in “we *were* here” suggests that “they” are no longer “here.” The allusion to colonial crimes, I argue, is implicit and duly ambiguous: where have they gone? Have they been “*lost in the terrible confusions of a changing world?*” (Burland 1973: 72). In this light, the Mountie (as representative of the state), stands as a stark yet subtle reminder of where they might have gone.

But what of the “we” in *now the people will know we were here*? Is the Mountie, and by extension, the audience, ostensibly connected to that “we”? While the viewer has no real access to the Inuit group (we are not privy to their conversations), the Inuk youth seems to be suggesting that “we” the audience might be connected to them through this

curious monument. From this perspective, the inukshuk seems to stand at once as an uncanny reminder of a violent colonial history, or possibly, an absolution from it. If there was no Mountie, the inukshuk would remain part of *their* heritage. Through his inclusion, the inukshuk offers the possibility an imagined past where Mountie and Inuk cooperate in their mutually assured survival. Such an implied reading attempts to elide the nation's colonial crimes from the narrative and absorb the inukshuk into the national mythology, and therefore, *our* heritage (Fletcher 2006). However, despite such an implied reading, the connections to colonization and forces of modernity persist and seem to continue to bring the viewer back to the Inuk youth's haunting and cryptic message. His message haunts this thesis.

Introduction

Disassembling an inukshuk

My journey with the inukshuk began as a passing curiosity in the summer of 2005. I was driving with my family on Hwy. 26, somewhere between Thornbury and Collingwood on the south shore of Georgian Bay, when we passed by a large brick inukshuk fronting a masonry yard. I commented to my wife, Danielle, that I had been seeing these “things” all over the place. She agreed, adding “I wonder what they mean?” To be truthful, I had no idea. The only reference I had for the stone monument was from the 1994 Heritage Minute which featured an Inuit family building an inukshuk and a curious Mountie observing their efforts. From that, I understood that inuksuit 1) were from the North 2) were from Inuit culture and 3) represented some kind of monument to their existence. Beyond that, I had no understanding of why they were so ubiquitous on the roadsides of southern Ontario.

As we drove on, I thought of other inuksuit I had seen: on highways, at cottages, in gardens; as a student of Trent University, I recalled the large inukshuk that stands at the main entrance to the Symons Campus. I had never questioned the monument before, because I took for granted the university’s connection to Aboriginal cultures (it houses the First Nations House of Learning). The Inuit monument seemed to fit the general myth of Trent as an academic institution at the frontier of the wilderness – a myth embodied by architect Ron Thom’s pre-Cambrian aesthetic.

I had concluded my final course at Trent earlier in the summer, a seminar in History focusing on the Canadian North. It had been a truly awakening experience, in many respects owing to the erudite instruction of Bruce Hodgins, an emeritus professor

who had devoted a career in the teaching and study of Canada's North. I blush, but in what I understand now as a moment of true colonial subjectivity, I saw the North as a great field of scholarship – a tabula rasa – opening up with respect to the question of Arctic sovereignty. To an emerging academic, the North offered limitless possibilities for study. It was later, on that drive on Hwy. 26, that I first made the connection linking the inuksuit I was seeing in the south of Canada to the question of Arctic sovereignty in the North. I remember commenting to Danielle that instead of planting flags in the North, “we” perhaps, were building inuksuit in the South in order to enmesh Inuit culture into our national culture. She responded, “maybe, but maybe people just like the way they look.”

When I returned to Peterborough, I conducted an informal poll amongst friends and acquaintances as to their first memories of the inukshuk. Overwhelmingly, the refrain of the Heritage Minute's last line: *now-the-people-will-know-we-were-here*, kept entering into the conversation. Asked whether they had any memories prior to the Heritage Minute, people's responses were generally “no,” except for a friend from Vancouver who said that there was an inukshuk at English Bay, possibly left over from Expo '86. Many people were able to tell me that recently, they had seen inuksuit constructed lakeside at cottages, or alongside the highways that took them to their cottages; of the inukshuk that had been constructed by Toronto to commemorate the Pope's 2002 visit to World Youth Day; the inukshuk that had recently been chosen as the Vancouver 2010 Olympic logo; or the inukshuk that a mechanic friend of mine had built from the parts of an abandoned snowmobile he had found on a nature hike. “How did you know how to build it?” I asked. He replied, “Simple, it looks like a person: a pair of

legs, a pair of arms, and a head, it's not too difficult to put together.” “*Why did you build it?*” I asked. “I thought it would look cool,” he said, “for hikers to come upon this thing out in the wild.”

I was torn between my belief that there was something larger lurking behind the recent popularity of the inukshuk and Danielle's opinion that *sometimes a cigar is just a cigar*. It was during this period that I decided that I would try to understand and explain the inukshuk's rise in the southern consciousness, through a formal academic study. Since I have engaged in this investigation, I have come to the belief that, like the layers of an onion, there are many “truths” that underlie the inukshuk's popularity.² As I peel back these layers throughout this thesis, I demonstrate how the popularized inukshuk resonates within the Canadian political economy and the dominant culture in many ways: as a curiosity, a commodity, a decoration, a monument, an image, an idea, as a medium, as a body, as a fetish object, as a myth. Like Daniel Francis' *Imaginary Indian*, the inukshuk “is almost anything [dominant culture] wants it to be”(1992: 86) In identifying the monument's versatile malleability, I argue that this relatively new national symbol is part of a much larger historical discourse. A discourse relating to the ongoing construction of dominant settler culture and how Aboriginal symbols are mobilized to affirm the centrality of that culture within the national identity.

² When I began my Masters in 2006, I still had little knowledge on the inukshuk, except for my original conclusion that it was somehow linked to the question of Arctic sovereignty. Over the last two years I have been consumed by all things inukshuk: I see them everywhere; at every turn, I seem to spy inuksuit at a gas stations, in liquor stores, at grocery markets, government buildings, friends' cottages, in my own garden. I warn my readers that after reading this thesis, they may also be stricken with this affliction which I term, somewhat in jest, as *shukaphilia*.

The simple task of defining the inukshuk

What is an inukshuk? This is a complex question given that there are, at the outset, two different kinds of inukshuk at play throughout this thesis. There is the *Inuit* inuksuk (that is the inuksuit found in throughout the North, belonging to Inuit culture and society) and what I call the *nationalized* inukshuk (that is the inukshuk that through its grassroots popularity in dominant Canadian culture has come to occupy a presence in the political economy of the nation). Where there are some similarities between the two, there are far more differences, or variations. Spelling is a noticeable and readily accessible one: in Inuit culture, the stone monument is spelled *inuksuk*. In dominant culture, it is commonly spelled by the more phonetic *inukshuk*. In both cases, the plural is *inuksuit* (although in dominant culture, it is sometimes pluralized as inukshuks). As a matter of clarification, I refer to the symbol throughout this thesis by its popular, southern spelling – inukshuk – except as it has appeared in quotations or is being used in a specific Inuit context where, out of respect for Inuit culture, I use the preferred Inuit spelling (inuksuk). In this sense, I am again taking my lead from Daniel Francis who, in writing *The Imaginary Indian* (1992) cited the controversy surrounding the term “Indian” to which he responded: “I use the word Indian when I am referring to the image of Native people held by non-Natives”(9).

As an Aboriginal symbol that has been absorbed into the national story, and as a white, male member of the dominant Canadian culture, I am sensitive to the ways in which a “conclusive” or anthropological definition of the Inuit inuksuk might be read as a contribution to its ongoing appropriation. Thus, I am hesitant to engage in a lengthy study of the Inuit inuksuk from this perspective. Moreover, I am hesitant to define “the”

Inuit inuksuk because there is no singular definition of the symbol in Inuit culture; there are many forms and styles of inuksuit found throughout the North and their meanings and applications are extremely complex and diverse (Hallendy 2000).

Dr. Peter Irniq, a former commissioner of Nunavut suggests:

Inuksuk is a marker on the land; it is a voiceless structure on the land built by Inuit thousands of years ago. Inuksuk is a pile of rocks, it's a marker on the land normally built along good fishing places, good seal hunting places, good caribou hunting places. So inuksuk is built for survival on the land and by the sea.

-Dr. Peter Irniq former Commissioner of Nunavut from *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*.

In this thesis, I am not interested in fleshing out the “real” inuksuk. Rather, I am motivated by exploring how the nationalized inukshuk has been defined and exploited by dominant culture. Put more succinctly, I offer Irniq’s definition, not to give a concrete explanation to the inukshuk, rather, to use it as a starting point for understanding how the Inuit inuksuk fuels or nourishes the dominant culture’s mythic use of the nationalized inukshuk.

In this vein, I define the nationalized inukshuk in terms of myth, a myth that dominant culture has distilled, condensed, reduced in one sense from the Inuit inuksuk and in a larger sense, from romantic and one-dimensional notions of Aboriginal culture (Francis 1992). However, for the time being, I want to concentrate on this myth as it relates to the Inuit context; I will connect the nationalized inukshuk to the larger concept of Aboriginality later in this introduction.

Following a Barthesian model, I want to begin by providing a brief semiological schema in order to set the stage for a deconstruction of the myth that is the nationalized inukshuk. Building on Saussurian linguistics (in Barthes 1981), which asserts that a sign is represented by a signified (idea or concept) and a signifier (image), Barthes contends that the mythic sign, which he terms *the signification*, is similarly constructed with a signified

and a signifier. However, while the linguistic sign is based on an idea (signified) and an image (signifier), the mythic signified is characterized by Barthes as a *concept* and the mythic signifier is comprised of two halves consisting of *the meaning* and *the form*. I will discuss the mythic signified or *concept* later in this section, however it is important first to understand the ways in which the mythic signifier (being the meaning and the form) relate to the signification of the nationalized inukshuk.

Barthes stresses that the mythic signifier is not an abstract image such as a linguistic signifier; the mythic signifier relies upon an already established linguistic sign from which it draws its essence. In the case of the nationalized inukshuk, that sign is the Inuit inuksuk and it is this sign that comprises the *meaning* of the mythic signifier. Barthes contends that the meaning has a rich history, it is already complete, it contains a system of values (1981: 117) and in the case of the nationalized inukshuk, the meaning (Inuit inuksuk) provides the myth with an already established recognisability and history. We can derive a sense of this meaning from Irniq's definition – stone formations; assembled on the land as markers; a technology of Inuit culture used over a long period of history. It is this seed of truth that the myth flourishes from.

Moreover, according to Barthes, the meaning is the end of the linguistic sign and the *form* is the beginning of the mythic signification. The form of the nationalized inukshuk, the departure point for the myth, requires the meaning to justify its own existence yet robs it (the meaning) of much of its history and context; it impoverishes the Inuit inuksuk's truth, value and complexity (1981: 118). To illustrate this point, the inuksuk in Inuit culture is a polysemic sign; it has many different appearances and applications, or as an overarching linguistic sign, contains many different signifiers and

signified. However, myth producers in dominant culture have reduced its meaning as I show in this thesis, to a singular *form*, that of the “stone man” complete with head, legs and outstretched arms. This is the image which dominant culture now recognizes as “the” inukshuk. I argue that the Inuit inuksuk has been drained of its variety, of its polysemic complexity; the many variances of the inuksuk concept have been rendered into one manageable form. In this light, it is interesting to note that the “stone man” form of the nationalized inukshuk is not an inuksuk at all: it is more properly termed in Inuktitut as an *inunnguaq*. While an inuksuk “acts in the capacity of a human,” inunnguaq are simply structures that resemble the human image. (Hallendy in Brean 2005: A1).³

The form of the “stone man” “puts [the Inuit meaning] at a distance, it holds it at [its] disposal” (Barthes 1981: 118). If he were deconstructing the inukshuk myth, Barthes might suggest that the form of the nationalized inukshuk, the “stone man,” impoverishes the complexity of the Inuit inuksuk, but retains in it a sense of its *Inuit-ness*. Moreover, I argue that this sense of *Inuit-ness* is put at the nation’s disposal through its use as a national symbol, a symbol which bespeaks Canada’s Northern mythology.

Analogous to colonization, the relationship between form and meaning is one of parasite and host. That is, the form relies on the “truth” of the meaning to authenticate its presence.⁴ Such a comparison to colonization cannot be broadly applied to the semiotics of myth. However, I evoke the parallel here because I am arguing that the myth of the

³ The misrepresentation of Aboriginal cultures and identities can be traced as far back as Columbus who mistakenly referred to the Arawaks of the Caribbean as *Indians* (D. Francis 1992).

⁴ As I will discuss later in the introduction, it is a similar process to that of indigenization whereby the settler attempts to become the indigene (Goldie 1989).

inukshuk stems from a colonial legacy that has followed the state into the present and that the use of this Inuit symbol is part of a long-standing tradition of the appropriation of Aboriginal cultural materials by the dominant Canadian culture.

While Irniq's definition offers us an idea of the meaning upon which the form relies, I want to provide another definition that illustrates the ways in which the signification of the nationalized inukshuk operates in dominant culture. Julie Kinnear, a Toronto realtor who uses the inukshuk as her corporate logo defines the inukshuk as follows:

An Inukshuk: [plural: inuksuit], is an Inuit word that literally translated means "stone man that points the way." Inukshuks [sic] are stone cairns that were erected by Inuit at prominent locations throughout the barrens to serve as guideposts or markers.

Inukshuks can now be seen in people's gardens and yards, on the shores by their cottages, out front of condominiums, in the boardroom. There are stunning pieces of art in all shapes & sizes, from silver coins to mini rock figurines, to gorgeous oil paintings.

Our Toronto realtor team has chosen the Inukshuk to symbolize our business. We are here to guide you safely and comfortably through the sale and/or purchase of your cherished asset, your home (Kinnear 2008).

Here, the mythic signifier in the form of the "stone man" retains its meaning of the inuksuk, but only barely. Yes, it is connected to Inuit culture, and yes, it serves that culture as marker. However, emptied from the meaning are all of the various complex representations of inuksuit and the contexts to which they are applied in Inuit culture; here, the form does not require a deeper understanding of the meaning: it is enough to connect the "stone man" to its culture of origin before departing into the *concept*.

As a reminder to the reader, the concept is the mythic signified (Barthes 1981: 118). According to Barthes, the mythic signified, or concept, transcends the impoverished meaning by providing a new history, a new reading and new truths; it is "a chain of causes and effects, motives and intentions" (ibid.) linked to the original meaning

by the form. While the form puts the meaning at its disposal (that is, the “stone man” resembles the Inuit inuksuk) the concept puts the form at the user’s disposal who invests in it a new set of values, meanings and emotional responses intended for a specific audience. That audience, I suggest, is the dominant Canadian culture. In Kinnear’s definition, the “stone man” draws an immediate connection to the past, by alluding to the Inuit meaning of the inuksuk before establishing the relevance of the inukshuk within her own Canadian culture. It is in this notion of “cultural relevance” that the concept may be decoded.

Beyond its seeming realism as a historic, Aboriginal technology, Kinnear’s inukshuk is a symbol of leisure and recreation (cottages); a decoration (gardens and yards); a symbol of economic power (the boardroom); and, a commodity (stunning pieces of art in all shapes and sizes). Moreover, the inukshuk, aligned as it is with Kinnear’s own business ethos at the end of her definition, symbolizes her company’s desire to ensure safe passage through the housing market. In all of these cases, it has been removed from the Arctic tundra and *relocated* within the economic and cultural landscape of suburban southern Canada and articulates a new set of applications, values and ideas.⁵

While Kinnear’s concept of the nationalized inukshuk bespeaks leisure, décor, power, commodity and economy, I will argue in this thesis that various actors and agencies throughout the state have conceptually invested or linked the inukshuk with national narratives that are central to the idea of Canada. By national narratives, I am referring to the persistent themes, stories or myths that are employed in the service of defining an idea of nation; in defining a sense of national identity. Perhaps the most

⁵ It is with a hint of tragic irony that I raise the haunting spectre of Inuit relocation by suggesting that the inukshuk has been relocated from a specific Inuit context to that of the Canadian political economy and the dominant culture at large.

obvious are Canada's connection to the idea of North (Grace 2001) and its romantic relationship to Aboriginal cultures (Francis 1992; Mackey 1999). Beyond these constant myths so central in the national imagination lies another set of narratives important to the nation state. These narratives can be largely organized under the rubric of *national values*. I will argue that the myth of the nationalized inukshuk serves the national interest by articulating values commonly considered "Canadian" in nature: hospitality, friendliness, tolerance and diversity. I will address these values at length later in this introduction and throughout the thesis, however, I introduce them here in order to locate their semiotic relevance within the mythic signified.

Having explored the mythic signifier (form and meaning) and the mythic signified (concept) of the nationalized inukshuk, I want to consider the mythic sign, the *signification*, as a whole before I close this discussion on the semiotics of the nationalized inukshuk. According to Barthes, the signification is purpose driven: it defines and informs subjectivity. Myth is filled with intention: it notifies and plainly states fact in a repetitious manner (1981: 124). Returning to Kinnear's definition, we can see that it is instructive, telling her culture as to what this symbol means, where it can be found, and why it is important from her unique, local perspective. However, it is important to distinguish that Kinnear is not producing a myth. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, the nationalized inukshuk was already a well established signification in the national landscape before her use of it.⁶ No, Kinnear is perpetuating the myth; reproducing it for her own ends yet reinforcing its presence within dominant culture: In Kinnear's advertisement the inukshuk exists, quite matter-of-factly in cottage country, in

⁶ In fact, I argue that the 1994 Heritage Minute, a project intent on producing Canadian myth (Hodgins 2003) was the *transmisión de savoir* of the inukshuk to dominant culture.

boardrooms, in gardens and art galleries. The immediate audience members targeted by her advertisement are potential clients; and these clients will largely come from dominant Canadian culture. In evoking the myth of the inukshuk, its form, meaning and concept will already resonate with them in some way. Kinnear is, as Foucault might suggest, “not only [power’s] inert or consenting target; [she is] also the elements of its articulation”(1980: 98).

Kinnear’s perpetuation of the inukshuk myth demonstrates how the form and meaning of the inukshuk alternate between notions of *Inuit-ness* and those concepts relating to leisure, power, decoration and commodity. However, Kinnear’s use of the inukshuk suggests a much larger consequence when studying this myth as it has manifested throughout the culture. The signification of the inukshuk already tells the intended subject, as Kinnear’s ad implicitly yet plainly states, “This symbol is *ours*.” But what does the myth of the nationalized inukshuk intend to tell us about *ourselves*? If myth, as Barthes suggests, is purpose driven, and defines and informs subjectivity, to what end is the inukshuk myth being employed and by whom? Returning to the Heritage Minute, the question resurfaces: how and why has this icon become *a part of our heritage*?

Studying the inukshuk

As I suggested in the previous paragraph, the questions motivating this thesis are *how and why* the inukshuk has come to occupy a place of prominence within the Canadian national imagination. Put more succinctly: *how* is it that the inukshuk has come to be recognized within the dominant culture as a popular national symbol in such a

short period of time? Perhaps more importantly, *why* has the inukshuk become a symbol that has assumed a place in the national iconic pantheon, seen on the display shelves of souvenir shops and trading posts alongside totem poles, spirit catchers, loons, beavers, moose, Mounties and miniature decorative canoe paddles? In this thesis I explore the production and propagation of the inukshuk myth in dominant culture, and seek to deconstruct that myth. However, in investigating the production and propagation of the inukshuk, I am also interested in how nations produce discursive networks of narratives and use symbols to tell national stories and construct national identities that affirm the centrality of the dominant culture.

This study is situated within a larger field of recent scholarship that has engaged in the deconstruction and critique of national identities, symbols, narratives, myths and the overall project of nation building in Canada (Shields 1991; D. Francis 1992; McKay 1994; Mackey 1999; Nelles 2000; Jessup 2001; Osborne 2001, 2006; Grace 2002; Hodgins 2003; M. Francis 2004; Fletcher 2006; Payne 2006). I am specifically interested in understanding how the construction and appropriation of an idealized Other in colonial and post-colonial societies is connected to the identity of the dominant culture and how this is related to the nationalized inukshuk.

In exploring how the nationalized inukshuk articulates notions of tolerance, diversity and multiculturalism, I turn to Eva Mackey's *House of Difference* (1999) which investigates the myth of multiculturalism and suggests that it "has as much to do with the construction of identity for those Canadians who do not conceive of themselves as 'multicultural', as for those who do"(3). According to Mackey, the myth of multiculturalism was produced in part, as a means by which Canada, through the

metaphorical “cultural mosaic,” could differentiate itself from what was viewed as the homogenous “melting pot” of the US.

Of relevance to this idea is the fictional narrative of Canada’s benevolent relationship with Aboriginal peoples: “Canada’s mythologized kindness to Aboriginal people was an important element in the development of the notion of difference from the USA – a difference that was tied to the idea of Canadian tolerance”(14). I follow this argument by suggesting that various actors and agencies operating within the state, most notably Citizenship and Immigration Canada, former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, former Cabinet Minister Pierre Pettigrew, and the Vancouver Olympic Committee (VANOC), have employed the inukshuk to signify notions of a tolerant, diverse and welcoming Canada. In other words, the inukshuk is used as the vehicle by which such putative Canadian values may be articulated.

In understanding the romanticization and subsequent commodification of the inukshuk in dominant culture, Daniel Francis (1992) provides an ideal starting point suggesting a historical precedence for this commodification. That is, just as real Indians were “disappearing” they became romanticised and commodified by settler culture. In this vein, Francis suggests “advertising created a whole new concept for the Imaginary Indian. Suddenly images of the Indian were appearing on the pages of mass-circulation magazines, on billboards, on the shelves at the local supermarket. The Imaginary Indian became one of the icons of consumer society”(175).

This bears a peculiar resemblance to the Heritage Minute. I argue that the genesis of the Inukshuk myth begins with the Inuit group in the Minute *disappearing* into the horizon, backs turned from the camera, leaving behind a cultural relic: The Inukshuk – A

Part of Our Heritage. It can be argued that the use of the inukshuk as a logo for various Canadian companies like Kamik Boots and Inukshuk Wireless emerges from a similar phenomenon to that which Francis outlines, that it has “become one of the icons of consumer society”(1992: 175). Further, the use of the inukshuk as the Vancouver Olympic logo has ensured its ubiquitous appearance through its repeated manifestations in the advertising campaigns of a host of corporate sponsors who are licensed to use the Olympic logo.

Moreover, Francis argues that the use the Imaginary Indian as a commercial icon appeals to dominant culture because it relies upon an Indian “that belong[s] to history...they are thoroughly exotic and otherworldly”(188) and further argues that the exploitation of the Imaginary Indian rectifies “a persistent sense of alienation in North America ever since the first Europeans arrived here[...] there has...been a strong impulse among Whites, less consciously expressed perhaps, to transform themselves into Indians”(189-90). I pursue how this sense of alienation is linked to the inukshuk in the first chapter when I explore the notion of indigenization (Goldie 1989).

Peter Hodgins (2003) provides considerable help in my understanding and deconstruction of the inukshuk myth through his study of the Heritage Minutes. Echoing Francis’s assertion of the dominant culture’s desire to be Native, Hodgins argues that the Heritage Minute “construct[s] a sense of autochthony and national identity among Canadians” (244). If Hodgins is correct in his appraisal of the Heritage Minute, the “we” in “now the people will know we were here” becomes explicitly connected to the collective “we” of dominant culture.

The *Minutes* were themselves intended to produce myth (Hodgins 2003: 9). “Inukshuk,” I assert was the entry point of the inukshuk myth into the national imagination. That is, it was the *transmisión de savoir* of the inukshuk myth from the myth producers of the *Minute* to the culture at large. Hodgins quotes Patrick Watson, the producer of the *Minutes* as stating: “We’re not really doing documentaries here, we’re making myths”(in Hodgins: 9). Watson’s admission is particularly relevant to my study on two levels: the first is that because the Heritage Minute “Inukshuk” represented the first substantive appearance of the symbol in popular culture, it can therefore be seen as a myth of origins. Secondly, as a product of what Watson describes as “myth making” the inukshuk featured in the Heritage Minute came to popular culture premeditated and pre-packaged with its own mythic language and structure.

In addition, Hodgins argues that the cultural producers responsible for the Heritage Minutes project constructed a narrow, “preferred reading” of their message betraying a motive behind their mythmaking. The project itself was implicitly hegemonic and ideological, Hodgins asserts, “in its intent to append selected subaltern memories to the national narrative and [it was also] politically conservative in that it [sought] to construct major past and social contradictions as having been reconciled in the present”(2003: 12). I will establish that the nationalized inukshuk has been inscribed with such values as tolerance, diversity and hospitality, values which elide historical episodes of relocation, residential schools and other colonial crimes. In this light, as a producer of myth, the Heritage Minute project can be judged as a success in its ability to empty the inukshuk of its history, to purify it and to make it innocent (Barthes 1981).

While this thesis is indebted to (amongst the other scholars I have cited) Hodgins, Mackey and D. Francis, the focus of my study is the rise of a particular, iconic symbol and its function as a mnemonic device, orienting a sense of identity in the national landscape (Osborne 2001). My study builds upon earlier scholarship on the inukshuk by Christopher Fletcher (2006). In his paper, presented at the 2006 “Images of the North” conference in Reykjavik Iceland, Fletcher considers the recent rise of the inukshuk in the national and global landscape. He asserts the notions that representations of the inukshuk, as, for example, the new symbol of Library and Archives Canada, has the effect of extending Canada’s national history into a larger, seemingly timeless pre-history; that the inukshuk is being increasingly deployed as a monument of national commemoration; and, subtly connects the inukshuk to the growing debates surrounding Arctic sovereignty. Moreover, Fletcher’s work, questions the ambivalence of the Heritage Minute’s textual message “The Inukshuk: A part of our heritage,” arguing that the message is intended to situate the inukshuk within Canadian culture, and, by extension, Canadian history. I consider and develop these notions from various perspectives and localities and am grateful to his provocative contribution to the study of this particular symbol.

Methodologically, I am inspired by the scholarship of Margot Francis whose “The Strange Career of the Canadian Beaver”(2004) published in the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, provides a cogent analysis of the rise of the beaver in the early colonial and later, national imagination. Through a consideration of various materials, Francis is able to trace the “symbolic beaver” from the earliest colonial texts, and connect its popularity to discourses relating to gender, race, class and commodification. She argues that “an

image which became an icon of nation-building has also mediated the conflict between differently racialized, gendered and classed groups from the time of early colonization to the contemporary period”(2004: 210-11). To this end, Francis uses materials as wide ranging and diverse as early colonial texts, early Modern fashion styles, commercial symbols, stamps, currency, political caricature, and the beaver-as-slang to demonstrate how various discourses intersected with the symbolic beaver throughout its history. Ultimately, Francis offers a stunning analysis of the rise and use of a particular and iconic national symbol that reveals its complex links to power.

Francis offers me a template that describes the ways in which the values and identity of the dominant culture came to be inscribed onto a national symbol over a lengthy period, by a wide range of actors and discourses and that the symbolic beaver came to embody values worthy of emulation in colonial and later national society. Values such as industry, discipline, social hierarchy, masculinity and cleanliness were mobilized to “[establish] [the beaver] as a benign and authentic image of the Canadian nation”(2004: 210).

However, lurking behind the benign beaver, is a darker history that relates to colonial projects of Othering, and to colonial crimes. Francis explores this side of the beaver by teasing out the beaver’s connection through slang, as a derogatory term from female genitalia:

the subterranean language of slang is the logical underside of the beaver narratives found in more “legitimate” representations. For if Canadian national symbols have mediated the nation-making process for European settlers who needed to identify themselves as the authentic and deserving owners of this “new” land – unlike those whom settlers found here, Aboriginal people, and unlike those who could not be trusted with full citizenship – women – then the language of sexual slang provides a suggestive indicator of the place of these “others” in the emerging dominion (210).

My study similarly finds a dark side to the inukshuk. Like the benign beaver, the “friendly” inukshuk is haunted by a colonial legacy that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples through a variety of criminal enterprises throughout the history of Canada. While the inukshuk may be employed as a symbol of Canadian values, its ongoing use serves conversely as a quiet witness to this dark legacy. In this sense, though the *beaver-as-slang* provides an oblique or *suggestive* connection to this notion of haunting, I will weave it throughout my text and explain this idea more explicitly through a psychoanalytic lens.

While my study in many ways mirrors M. Francis’s, the larger rationale behind this project is to examine how power is exercised through the construction of national symbols; how symbols like the inukshuk are intended to convey a sense of wholeness, of identity, through myth, and how the *iconification* of the inukshuk presents “a study of power in its external visage” (Foucault 1980: 97). My term iconification offers a methodological concept where I can combine both Foucauldian notions of power with Barthian notions of myth and contribute to the scholarly lexicon that examines national symbols.

Iconification is a useful term because it alludes to the active process of conferring iconic or symbolic status onto an object with the intended purpose of defining a subject. My definition of iconification does not presume a deliberate construction, nor does it consign a symbol’s reification to specific actors. It is not a term which seeks to examine the exercise of power from a central position, rather it is “concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary...in its more regional and local forms and institutions”(Foucault 1980: 96) In this sense,

iconification in my mind is not about conspiracy or deliberate meta-strategies. Like myth, it is necessarily deniable, necessarily ambiguous, it hides in truth: “Myth hides nothing and flaunts nothing: it distorts; myth is neither a lie nor a confession: it is an inflexion”(Barthes 1981: 129).

The iconification process therefore relies on coincidences, influence and repetition for its nourishment; on both the independence and interdependence of individual actors and agencies operating within the spheres of power in the interest of “discover[ing] how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted though a multiplicity of organisms, energies, materials, desires...”(Foucault 97). Thus, the conclusions that I draw do not locate a conspiracy, the ubiquity of the inukshuk can only be circumstantial; there is no “smoking gun” save for the coincidental, repetitious, and meaningful process of iconification itself.

I rely on an understanding of myth and genealogy as a framework to which I can execute a study of iconification. I have already defined myth from a Barthian perspective, however I want to define how the notion of genealogy applies to my study. Foucault suggests “a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges...to render them, that is capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse”(Foucault 1980: 85). There is an additional tactic at play here: archaeology, that is the excavation of subjected knowledges (85). Sherrill Grace’s *Canada and the Idea of North* (2001) employs similarly, an archaeological methodology in her research that is useful to my study:

An archaeological approach to the discursive formation of North allows me to take the following conditions into account: the living, processual nature of all discourse and the dynamics of knowledge, which is not static but shifting [...] the transdisciplinarity of

discourse, which is always crossing boundaries, intersecting, overlapping, duplicating, and reinforcing (or resisting) domains of knowledge and of power, and the analogies, at times the homologies, between and among disciplines and institutions that facilitate corrections and comparisons [...] Thus *an* archaeology of the discursive formation of North isolates for study those sites where the relations of power and knowledge work to construct identities over time and in a certain real and imagined space: North (27).

However, Grace's study concerns the North as an idea, a concept, a discursive formation that exists in many different forms and manifestations. Iconification is not applicable here because there is no icon *per se*. Nor would the term iconification be relevant for other conceptual symbols such as multiculturalism (Mackey 1999), the Folk (McKay 1994) or the Imaginary Indian (Francis 1992). When I speak of an icon, I am referring here to the Oxford English Dictionary definition as "An image in the solid; a monumental figure; a statue"(OED Online 2008). Thus, the term applies directly to the study of those representations that manifest on the display shelves of the souvenir shops: the totem pole, the Mountie, the beaver, the light house, the canoe, the spirit catcher, and in this case: the inukshuk.

In this study, I excavate various materials, discourses and concepts related either directly or indirectly to the inukshuk so I may challenge the unity of the myth through the ways in which it has been articulated. A genealogical/archaeological method allows me to assemble a wide range of materials and assemble them outside of their isolated or local meanings (which are of course, significant) so that I may identify a larger collective process whereby meaning is made. To return to the realtor Kinnear, yes, she is using the inukshuk to sell homes, but as I demonstrated, she is contributing to a much larger concept – she is reinforcing the inukshuk as a symbol of dominant culture, its essential Canadian-ness.

I use iconification as a means of explaining how a wide range of materials perhaps coincidentally, emerge from different corners, from various outlets, yet, despite

this obvious lack of organization or intention, serve to implant the symbol within the national consciousness and designate specific meanings to it. In the second chapter, for example, I draw from a wide range of materials: political speeches, coins, stamps, posters, teaching aids, Olympic and corporate logos, to demonstrate how they articulate Canadian notions of hospitality, diversity and tolerance. Taken separately, these materials are merely potsherds, fragments of a larger effort behind which the myth of the inukshuk takes hold. Taken cumulatively, the whole pot takes form: the materials I excavate will demonstrate convincingly that the inukshuk has become a symbol of how the state desires itself to be seen: as tolerant to minorities, as culturally diverse, as a nation whose values and history are as old as the rocks that construct the inukshuk's form: as autochthonous.

In applying an archaeological and deconstructive methodology, the materials I have excavated suggest that a myriad of discourses (which constitute the mythic signified) intersected during a particular time in which the inukshuk began to stand in as the nexus point of these discourses; in this sense this is what iconification is: **The advancement, not necessarily intentional, of a particular symbol that connects interrelated discourses at a particular time in a particular space.**

Who is the inukshuk?

While my research question deals with the how and why of the inukshuk, there is a third sub-question that surfaces throughout this thesis, or rather, haunts it: the question of *who*? In this sense, I am interested in who is included in this myth, who may be excluded or over-shadowed, and the relationship between the two. I am most struck by

the grammatical articles “we” and “our” as they have been applied to the inukshuk. Who is the “we”? In the first chapter, I attempt to unpack the Inuk youth’s message “now the people will know *we* were here,” followed by the Heritage Minute’s cryptic textual message “The Inukshuk – A part of *our* heritage.” I am most concerned with the implications of who “we” are (dominant culture), and explore in what respects the inukshuk is part of “our” heritage? Following Fletcher (2006), I argue that the inukshuk, for all intents and purposes, has become part of *our* heritage, and when an inukshuk is constructed in the south, it is saying *we* (dominant culture) *were here*. Thus, an Inuit symbol is transformed, *iconified*, into a national symbol.

In the second chapter, I identify how notions of tolerance and diversity have been inscribed upon the inukshuk and suggest that the “we” of the inukshuk, here, reproduces implicit liberal notions of inclusion (Mackey 1999). Moreover, the nationalized inukshuk is an attempt to naturalize the national story into a much larger historical panorama, an *ur-history*, as old as the inuksuit in the North (Fletcher 2006). In this sense the equalizing forces of liberalism absorb Inuit identity into the national identity and thus *their* heritage, *their* history, becomes, echoing the Heritage Minute, *a part of our heritage*.

The persistent questions of who is “we” and “our” present an ongoing problematic in my understanding of the inukshuk: one that is wrapped in notions of past and current efforts of colonization and in that respect, those crimes perpetrated by the state against the Inuit inhabitants in the North (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Grant 2002) This question resurfaces in the third chapter when I explore the construction of an inukshuk on the disputed Hans Island, where, in combination with the raising of a Canadian flag, an inukshuk was built bearing a plaque that read: “O Canada, we stand on guard for

thee”(Humphries 2005). Again, the question becomes, who are the “we” that stand on guard for Canada – and who are the “they” that we are defending against?

Three accounts of the inukshuk’s rise

This thesis offers, through the chapters I present, three different yet complementary genealogies relating to the inukshuk myth, for consideration by the reader. Each chapter identifies various discourses, circumstances, articulations, theoretical considerations and material representations that contribute to an understanding of the inukshuk’s rise on the national stage. Taken separately, they demonstrate how the inukshuk has manifested in popular dominant culture, in the national political economy and in the debate over Arctic sovereignty. Taken as a whole, the chapters demonstrate the inukshuk’s overwhelming strength and plasticity; its connection to the overarching myth of Aboriginality that is central to the identity of the dominant culture. Most importantly, they demonstrate how the ongoing iconification of the inukshuk represents a continuity in colonial practices relating to the appropriation of Aboriginal symbols for use in identity construction and the sanitization of colonial history. To this end, the iconification of the inukshuk serves most importantly to attempt an erasure of this colonial history by situating or naturalizing the national story within a much larger history spanning not 141 years, but millennia. The effect is a synthetic yet seemingly natural attempt at a national indigenization. In this light, it is interesting to note that in 2004 Library and Archives Canada, the repository of Canadian history, adopted the inukshuk as its official symbol (Fletcher 2006).

The first chapter explores the inukshuk's rise as a southern symbol, that is, how it has resonated in, especially, the dominant culture of southern Ontario, how it has appeared in the recreational wilderness spaces and, more specifically, it asks why this has happened? The conclusions I derive from my first chapter draw from discourses that relate to antimodernism, indigenization and the fetish. In this sense, the inukshuk appeals to a desire by the dominant culture to construct monuments that connect them to a "primitive" past, one that connects both builder and witness to the monument *naturalizing* their relationship with the land. Both the antimodern and indigenizing motives that propel the inukshuk's popularity bespeak a cultural fetish rooted in a desire to perform and celebrate the settler-invader's knowledge of and ability to mimic an "Aboriginal" past.

I use the definitions of antimodernism offered by Queen's historians Ian McKay(1994) and Lynda Jessup (2001) as being, according to McKay: "a release from the iron-cage of modernity." And, according to Jessup, "[...] a longing for the type of physical and spiritual experience embodied in [...] imagined pasts," in order to locate the inukshuk phenomenon in the recreation wild, the very places the dominant culture goes *to get away from it all*. Moreover, I excavate evidence from newspaper articles, radio call-in shows and children's literature, to demonstrate how antimodern impulses to connect physically and spiritually with imagined pasts, intersect in the inukshuk, and resonate with the culture at large.

This desire for connection is closely related to another symptom within dominant Canadian culture: the desire to be connected to the land, to be settled, or, as Terry Goldie (1989) puts it "the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous." This phenomenon,

characterized by Goldie as *indigenization* and Margaret Atwood (1995) as *the Grey Owl Syndrome* adds another layer to the ways in which the inukshuk resonates within the dominant culture: the construction of an inukshuk, a symbol alluding to Aboriginality, allows members of the dominant culture to act out or perform an “Aboriginal” ritual in the construction of an “authentic” Inuit monument. Taking their lead from the Inuk youth’s haunting message from the Heritage Minute, southern inuksuit declare on behalf of their builders from the dominant culture: “*We* were here! *We* built and left this monument in the wilderness for people to find...” The inukshuk then has a double function hailing the witnesses who encounter those monuments in the south telling them that someone from their own culture built this Aboriginal monument – a cottager, a hiker or a camper for example. I argue that the mimicry of Aboriginal “culture” through the appropriation and construction of inuksuit in the south speaks to this desire to possess an *authentic* and possessive connection to the land, a connection that Aboriginal peoples were romantically believed to have had. Moreover, like the meaning and the form of the mythic signifier, the specific Inuit context and cultural ownership of the inuksuk gets replaced with a vague sense of Aboriginality, the symbol, relocated and reproduced in the south, is reinvented as the cultural property of the dominant culture.

I explore this notion of indigenization by comparing how it has manifested in Canadian literature and non-fiction. By juxtaposing Farley Mowat’s short story “Walk Well My Brother” with Norman Hallendy’s *Inuksuit: Silent Messengers of the North* (2000), I locate expressions of this “impossible desire” (Goldie 1989) in the narratives of both fiction and non-fiction. I will argue that like Mowat’s protagonist, Hallendy’s work betrays many of the same antimodern/indigenizing tendencies that I have located in the

early popularity of the inukshuk throughout the chapter and that it speaks to how myth works to define subjectivity.

Dominant culture's relationship with Aboriginal culture has historically been a problematic one. Hiding behind the romanticization of Aboriginal culture and symbols in the national imagination (D. Francis 1992) lies the repressed knowledge of the effects of colonization: the colonial crimes perpetrated by dominant settler culture against the Aboriginal Other. The popularized southern inukshuk, then, has a double meaning in that it produces a sense of pleasure in the builder/witness, a pleasure connected to antimodernism and indigenization, a pleasure that disavows the darker chapters of Canada's colonial legacy, while at the same time, by standing as a constant yet subtle reminder of it. In this sense, the inukshuk operates as a fetish (Freud 1959), offering tactile and scopic pleasures that compensate for a sense of lack in the settler's inability to truly be settled or Native, while at the same time, always already leading the builder/witness (dominant culture) back to a repressed memory of colonization. As Freud suggests, "the horror of [colonization] has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of the substitute"(154).

My second chapter investigates how this inukshuk fetish has been capitalized upon within the political and corporate spheres of the state, and maps the production of the inukshuk myth across a wide field of evidence deriving from government agencies, bureaus, ministries, corporations and the Vancouver Olympic Committee. I demonstrate that the rise of the nationalized inukshuk occurs, conveniently, at a time when the federal government was attempting to rebrand itself both domestically and abroad (Pettigrew 2000, 2001; Nimijean 2005). This branding initiative was based upon strategies

employed to realign and rearticulate Canadian values as a means of promoting an updated national image, an image geared specifically to improve Canada's global competitiveness (Pettigrew 2000, 2001).

To demonstrate this process, I survey various literatures relating to the rise of the brand state and situate the inukshuk within Canada's efforts to redefine itself on the world stage (van Ham 2001; Nimijean 2005; Rose 2003). One of my principal protagonists in this story is Pierre Pettigrew, who, as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, outlined diversity as a core value, Canada's "unique advantage" underlying its competitive edge in the global marketplace (2000). Appearing almost simultaneously with Pettigrew's message, the inukshuk emerges on the national stage articulating diversity and its associated terms of tolerance and hospitality. To some, this may appear to be coincidence or perhaps a conjectural leap on my part to associate the inukshuk with the government's various efforts to update the national story. Returning to my earlier comments about the coincidental nature of iconification, and assuming for a moment, the iconification of the inukshuk is meaningfully coincidental, its repeated use by various actors and agencies on the national stage nonetheless continually reaffirms the core messages being produced, those of tolerance, diversity and hospitality.

I account for the popularity of the inukshuk and the effectiveness of its message through Michael Billig's (1995) concept of banal nationalism:

In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, the reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is constantly waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building (8).

It is the constant "flagging" (Billig 1995) of the inukshuk; whether it be on government buildings, monuments to veterans, coins, stamps, teaching modules, Olympic logos; the

ongoing promotion of the inukshuk as a national symbol has the effect of embedding the inukshuk myth within the national consciousness, providing “a natural and eternal justification, [giving the inukshuk] a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact”(Barthes 1981:143). In the first chapter, I use antimodernism, indigenization and the fetish to explain the grassroots popularity of the inukshuk when it is found “in the rough” that is, in gardens, cottages, roadsides, the wild etc. The notion of flagging, that I employ in the second chapter, however, is crucial to understanding how the government’s various uses of the inukshuk have institutionalized the symbol and aligned it with their own brand identity. I make the distinction that the inukshuk in the first chapter is small “c” Canada, whereas the in the second chapter it comes to embody capital “C” Canada

The third chapter returns to my initial curiosity about the inukshuk described at the beginning of this introduction, and explores the ways in which the symbol is connected to the question of Arctic sovereignty. Specifically, I focus on the construction of an inukshuk in the summer of 2005 on Hans Island, an island whose ownership has been disputed between Canada and Denmark. The top-secret military exercise codenamed “Exercise Frozen Beaver” executed the removal of Danish flags and the planting of a Canadian flag on the island (Humphreys 2005: A1). Moreover, an inukshuk was also built to augment the exercise’s intention of gesturing Canada’s sovereignty over the island.⁷ It has been argued that this specific exercise has long reaching implications concerning Canada’s Arctic sovereignty: Carnaghan and Goodie (2005) suggest that the

⁷ The exercise name “Frozen Beaver” provides an interesting intersection between two national symbols, namely the beaver and the inukshuk. The importance of the inukshuk to the mission was obscured somewhat by the evocation of the symbolic beaver, however, in later memos concerning the mission, the exercise was renamed “Operation Sovereign Inukshuk” (Humphries 2005)

Hans Island exercise was necessary to demonstrate Canada's ability to protect its jurisdiction throughout the North.

The question arises, why was the inukshuk built on Hans Island and what role might the inukshuk play in Canada's efforts to protect its sovereignty as Arctic spaces become increasingly contested by other nations? A clue to this answer might lie on the plaque affixed to the Hans Island Inukshuk which bears the message "O Canada! We Stand On Guard For Thee" (Humphries 2005: A1). I suggest that this plaque not only frames the inukshuk as *Canadian*, but that the pluralized article of "we" serves a metonymic function of pressing those other inuksuit found throughout the North into an army of silent sentinels, standing on guard for their nation.

The chapter proceeds with an investigation of some of the methods that have been historically employed by the state to assert its sovereignty in the North. The use of flags, crosses and stones as a means of territorial demarcation has a long history in Western cultures (Seed 1995; Cook 1993; MacMillan 2006). I frame the chapter around a broader understanding of Western colonial practices relating to rituals of sovereignty assertion. Overwhelmingly, the evidence shows that Canada has relied upon mainly non-militaristic means to assert and protect its title in the North. The lack of a strong military presence in the North suggests Canada has asserted its sovereignty by means of a strategy that I characterize as *soft-sovereignty*. Resembling the notion of soft power (Nye 2004), I suggest that soft-sovereignty relies upon three-R's to carry out this strategy: Rhetoric, Research, and Relationships. In terms of rhetoric, there is a long history of Canadian posturing with regards to the region. This is traced from Diefenbaker's "Northern Vision" campaign in 1958 right up to the current Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, who

chose in his first press conference to admonish the US Ambassador for disputing Canada's title to the fabled Northwest Passage.

Canada also has a long legacy of conducting scientific research and mapping projects in the Arctic, strategies that are explicitly tied to shoring up Canada's claims to the territory (Jones-Imhotep 2004). I show that the inukshuk is implicitly connected to the strategies of technologization and mapping with respect to the North. To return to the relationship between the form and meaning of the mythic signifier, the inukshuk myth again taps into the Inuit inuksuk's vast historical and symbolic reserve: the inukshuk is itself a mapping technology, and to return to my discussion on the semiotics of myth, the meaning again lends itself to these discourses that comprise the *concept*. This connection between technology, mapping and science can be best seen in current meteorological experiment being conducted in the north is using weather stations called *Inuksuit*.

The federal government's relationship with and governance over the Inuit of the North has also been crucial to this notion of ownership (Grant 2002; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Berger 2006; Byers 2008). This relationship has wrested on the state's ability to demonstrate its control over its Northern subjects in matters involving justice and administration (Grant 2002), and in its ability to position Inuit peoples in areas that affirmed the Canadian presence in the North (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Berger 2006, Byers 2008). With respect to the relocation of Inuit communities to the high Arctic, it has been suggested that the policy was implemented, in part, to use Inuit as "human flagpoles" underscoring Canada's sovereignty claims to the North in the Cold War (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Byers 2008). I argue that, owing to the visibility, protest and assertiveness of Aboriginal groups who have brought such crimes as the residential

school program into national focus, the inukshuk has been used to replace these human flag poles, standing as proxies attesting to a human, Canadian presence in the North. However, like the inuksuit in the south of Canada, the Hans Island inukshuk operates in a double capacity, both as a symbol of Canadian Arctic sovereignty and as an *embodiment* of its tragic legacy of colonization and relocation in the North. I suggest that this process of turning the human flag poles to stone is symptomatic of the Medusa's gaze of colonization whereby Aboriginal subjectivity is reduced by the state to a singular, static and manageable form. I liken this process to Daniel Francis' argument concerning the representation of the "cigar-store Indian" and its effect of impoverishing the Aboriginal emotional experience, in dominant culture, to that of wooden stoicism (1992: 86).

New symbols – old problems

I want to conclude this introduction by discussing how this thesis potentially contributes to a scholarly landscape that interrogates national symbols, nation-building and national identity. In many ways, this study is indebted to – and relies upon – the scholarship of so many who have come before me: my work, I hope, is a worthy reflection of these past efforts. I have attempted to add new scholarship to these discourses by providing a methodological concept, iconification, that I hope will aid future scholars engaged in exploring how and why symbols come to take their place on the display shelves of the souvenir shops.

However, in mapping the rise of an emerging Canadian symbol, I have learned that as tolerant and diverse the nation tries to imagine itself, as much as it attempts to outdistance or publicly atone for the brutal and oppressive regimes of the past, the ways

in which the inukshuk has been iconified demonstrates that the nation is still very much a practicing colonial power.⁸ Granted, the state no longer engages in many the overt criminal behaviours of the past that bespeak colonial force. But the symbols it chooses, the ways in which they are presented, the narratives that they evoke, serve as subtle yet telling indicators of the extent to which the colonial legacy still lingers in the corridors of power and radiates into the culture at large. Foucault offers a methodological caution that is useful here: “[T]he important thing is not to attempt some kind of deduction of power starting from its centre and aimed at the discovery of the extent to which it permeates into the base...One must rather conduct an *ascending* analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms”(1980: 99). I have started, then by interrogating the inuksuit built in provincial parks, at cottages, and in my own garden.⁹ I have examined the use of inuksuit on the most mundane and quotidian of objects, coins, stamps, posters, uniforms, wine bottles. Even the inuksuit explicitly used in service to the state are not as coercive or forceful as policy or legislation: they are not explicit expressions of power. They are implicit and subtle. And the implications of using the nationalized inukshuk whether it’s found in my garden or at the entrance of Library and Archives Canada is that we are simply telling a story that is not ours; it is obscuring a history that that we don’t want to know; it comes from a legacy of appropriation, exploitation and romanticization of Aboriginal cultures in Canada. If my study

⁸ I write this introduction in the wake of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Residential School apology. An apology for Inuit relocation is still outstanding.

⁹ Having returned from a vacation last year, I discovered that my father, who had been house-sitting, had built an inukshuk for me in my front garden “to serve as a muse while I write this thesis.” I am grateful to my father’s intentions, if not a little ambivalent and sensitive as to the inukshuk’s presence on my front lawn.

demonstrates anything, it is that the inukshuk, in terms of our colonial past and present, is sadly, *a part of our heritage.*

Chapter One

Antimodernism, indigenization and the fetish: Exploring various resonances of the inukshuk within dominant Canadian culture

It is now a moot point whether the old ways of the Eskimos have any meaning. They may even face the day when their old world will be abandoned for a more hospitable environment. All is changing, but the children of the ancient hunters have carried on some traditions and still make beauty. However, to understand this world of the modern Eskimo artist we must make a voyage into the past, indeed to *a very distant past when our own ancestors were fighting the perils of an Ice Age* (Burland 1973: 7). [emphasis added.]

The Myth of Primitivism

I want to begin this chapter by providing a brief account of the rise and popularity of Inuit art, and locate the inukshuk within a powerful longing present in the cultural imagination of the dominant Canadian culture, manifest in the market for what has been characterized as exotic, primitive or folk art. I am interested in why such a longing exists, and through this chapter, explore how the notions of antimodernism, indigenization and the fetish inform a cultural thirst for primitive objects. It is through these notions and desires that I explain the grassroots popularity of the inukshuk in southern Canada.

I will provide thorough definitions of the notions of antimodernism, indigenization and the fetish as the chapter progresses, but first, it is important to establish the ways in which I consider the concept of primitivism and primitive art. Susan Hiller (1991) notes that “Modern nations, particularly former colonies, use the myth of primitivism whenever they display the arts of their decimated, indigenous minorities as symbols of a national identity”(283). Quoting Graeburn, Hiller suggests “The concept of primitive art is a Western one, referring to creations that we wish to call

“art” made by people who in the nineteenth century were called “primitive” but in fact, were simply autonomous peoples who were overrun by the Colonial powers”(12). From this, I view primitivism and primitive art as a Western contrivance, explicitly connected to the Western colonial enterprise and central to the construction of national identities and modern identities. I connect the nationalized inukshuk as it has been used by actors and agencies within Canada to Hiller’s view that the myth of primitivism is used by modern nations, especially former colonies in constructing national identities.

In discussing the notion of cultural colonialism, Coutts-Smith (1991), in part, frames the market for primitive art as an:

ambiguous cultural activity residing in the artificial ‘airport-art’ constructs of Navaho jewellery and Eskimo stone-carvings, whereby bureaucratic political institutions are *inventing* art forms on behalf of subservient and internally colonized peoples (1991: 30).

While somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Coutts-Smith’s contention that primitive art is often controlled and managed by agencies of the state is particularly useful when considering the circumstances that led to the creation of the trade in Inuit art in the 1950s and the state’s later efforts to *iconify* the inukshuk. I will deal with the state’s iconifying efforts at greater length in the second chapter; first, I want to explore how primitivism and the inukshuk are connected to the dominant culture at large. Building upon the insights of Hiller, Graeburn and Coutts-Smith I put forth the view that the notion of primitivism illuminates the ways in which the inukshuk myth resonates in Canada.

Concerning “Eskimo” Art

The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter is from *Eskimo Art*, written by British anthropologist and ethnographer, Cottie Burland (1973). The copyright date

suggests that by 1973, “Eskimo” art had reached widespread popularity in the West, widespread enough to justify the publication of a monograph on the topic.¹⁰ Burland’s work provides a rich historical document on the both the past and 1970s present of Inuit art and culture as seen through Burland’s Western gaze; rich because it provides a rather unreflexive account of the creation and management of the Inuit art market that demonstrates some prevailing myths surrounding Inuit culture and the popularity of their art. Most notably, those myths suggest a vanishing Inuit way of life, the progressive and beneficial conditions of modernity, and the implicit connection between the two:

In recent years the world of the Eskimo has changed radically. New weapons for the hunter, new propulsion for boats and sledges, and new concentrations of population have meant new needs [...] A market has opened for the sale of Eskimo carvings; a friend came among the people to instruct them how to expand their simple graphic art into the production of beautiful lithographic prints. The natural ability of the people has made possible a new source of income [...] The Eskimos now stand at a cross-roads of culture, for the old life has nearly disappeared. They know well that their ancestral ways are going for ever. Many realise the value of entering a world culture with its education, trade and technology (7).

While progress, Burland suggests, is changing Inuit life for the better, there is still a way in which the “modern” Inuit can connect with their past: artistic expression. In this light Inuit art is both art and artefact; traditional art made by modern hands, the modern consumer and artisan connected to what Burland describes as *a very distant past*. But this market is from a *nearby present* and I will make the argument that under Federal administration, Inuit-art-as-traded-commodity was a limited cultural expression afforded to the Inuit. More precisely, the Inuit are permitted to have a past as long as it benefits the state.

I want to draw a parallel between this process and the construction of the Folk in Ian McKay’s *Quest of the Folk* (1994). McKay describes how middle-class, urban,

¹⁰ In fact, a keyword search of “Eskimo Art” on the Carleton Library database offers many publications on the topic especially in the late 1960s and 1970s.

cultural producers in Halifax, like Helen Creighton and Mary Black, attempted to disguise Nova Scotia's rural poverty and economic alienation (brought about by conditions of urbanization and industrialization). They did this by *manufacturing* a romanticized Nova Scotian "Folk" for consumption by modern and urban audiences.

[C]ultural figures develop[ed] "the Folk" as the key to understanding Nova Scotian culture and history [...] [How] cultural producers, pursuing their own interests and expressing their own view of things, constructed the Folk of the countryside as the romantic antithesis to everything they disliked about modern urban and industrial life (4).

We can deduce from the following passage in Burland's text that Inuit art was similarly "developed":

Art came suddenly [to the Caribou Eskimos] in 1960, when Mrs. Edith Dodds, wife of a Northern Service Officer stationed among them at Baker Lake, thought that it would be a helpful thing to start a handicrafts class for the Eskimo women in the lonely and disheartened group. After a while she met James Houston who had stimulated Eskimo art as a source of income among the people of Cape Dorset on Baffin Island (70)

Thus, the market and industry of Inuit art and, by extension, the Inuit past as expressed through their art, was created and managed by state actors.¹¹ In the case of the "Caribou Eskimos" in the 1960's, Burland relates that the state sent crafts development officers, arts officers, who trained Inuit artisans and found markets in the South to sell their art. This intervention, Burland optimistically suggests, would ensure a favourable future for peoples who had had a difficult recent past:

The Caribou Eskimos had survived, and had escaped the heart-searching miseries of pauperism by producing work of their own which could help them earn a living in the modern world [...] So in modern times a tribe of hunters who had been lost in the terrible confusions of a changing world have found a new footing which promises to be a stepping off point to a more secure future (72)

Burland (quite unreflexively) highlights these tensions surrounding modernity, lamenting that the Inuit are *lost in the terrible confusions of a changing world*, before departing on the paradoxical notion of progress and opportunity in this changing world. His text

¹¹ For a more comprehensive account of the formation of the Inuit art industry, see Igloliorte (2006).

elides the culpability of the state in its efforts to colonize Canada's North, efforts that displaced and administered over cultures that continue to populate it. This returns to Graeburn's definition that the art of autonomous peoples overrun by colonial forces was framed as primitive by the invading culture. In Burland's work, we see how the art form he is considering emanates from a very distant past. One could argue he is alluding to a primitive past because, he contrasts it with the modern present that the Inuit have supposedly embraced.

According to Burland, the market for Inuit art and sculpture emerged from Canada's North in the 1950's. It was during this same period that Inuit groups were being coerced, forcefully or otherwise, by the state, to abandon their ancestral lands. They were relocated to federally administered communities that were socially organized around "Western ideas about the family, work, community and social relations"(Tester and Kulchyski 1994: 3). The market for Inuit art, then, occurred in tandem with the federal government's efforts to relocate and colonize the Inuit and create a new model for Inuit economic sustainability. However, Burland does not contextualize relocation and the creation of the Inuit art market in a negative manner. Instead, he frames it in terms of opportunity, suggesting the Inuit "have accepted offers of help [from the 'white man'] and, with much reticence, have adopted new ways"(7).

The period from the late 1930s through the early 1960s was an era in which the Canadian state underwent "A structural shift as it entered a period of welfare state reform [...] Inuit were profoundly affected by the changes that accompanied the introduction of a Canadian version of the welfare state"(Tester and Kulchyski 1994: 3). Burland's quote at the beginning of this paragraph cites "offers of help"

from white southerners speaks to a notion of a benevolent and paternal (Payne 2006: 11-12) welfare state. I invoke the paternal dimension of the welfare state specifically in this context for, as Tester and Kulchyski note, “During this period they [the Inuit] were portrayed by the popular media as ‘innocent and malleable children’”(3) In the sense, Burland suggests a white father, characterized by the author as a “friend,” was dispatched to Canada’s eastern Arctic: “In 1951 the Canadian Government sent James Houston to Cape Dorset with the avowed purpose of encouraging the local population to produce carvings and paintings for trade”(76). Despite the compassionate tenor of Burland’s comments, this quote is useful because it establishes that the market for Inuit art was contrived and managed by the federal government during the period of relocation and under the increasingly paternalistic auspices of the welfare state. Payne highlights this notion by arguing, in her study of Inuit representation in the Still Division of the National Film Board’s Photographic archive, that:

[B]enevolent southern interventions, particularly government initiatives that attempt to improve life in the North, are emphasised [through pictorials]. Pictorials on Inuit art, for example, consistently highlight the role Euro-Canadians played in developing a market and guiding the production of prints and carving [...] In such photostories, cultural interactions between the south and north are telling. They [...] present Euro-Canadian figures (who notably, are almost always male in photostories of the time) in the process of mentoring native peoples (2006: 11-12).

Reflecting on Burland’s text allows my discussion on primitivism at the beginning of this chapter to be brought into focus. I suggest that the creation of the Inuit art industry, as detailed by Burland, echoes Coutts-Smith’s contention that “bureaucratic political institutions [*invented*] art forms on behalf of subservient and internally colonized peoples”(1991: 30). Moreover, Burland’s representation of the “Modern Inuit” as embracing the technological, capitalistic and cultural practices of the West serves to contextualize Inuit art within that of a traditional, yet all but vanished *primitive* culture,

primitive in comparison to Western notions of the Modern. The connection between modern Inuit art and, using Burland's words, *a very distant past*, bespeaks the ways in which, according to Hiller, "Modern nations [...] use the myth of primitivism whenever they display the arts of their decimated, indigenous minorities as symbols of a national identity"(1991: 283).

While Burland does not discuss the inukshuk at length in his monograph, nor does he explicitly connect Inuit art to the Canadian national identity, his text suggests that the art market, created and managed as it was by the federal government, evoked a sense of primitivism that was connected to the idea of the historic and increasingly vanishing traditional Inuit way of life.¹² In the following sections, I explore other notions that fuel this myth of primitivism in the cultural imagination of dominant Canadian culture and consider how the inukshuk myth was born from the myth of primitivism and from the widespread popularity of Inuit art.

A is for Antimodernism...

The first of these notions relating to primitivism is antimodernism; a concept that at its core, critiques and disavows such perceived tensions surrounding modernity such as urbanization, industrialization, class conflict and "over-civilization"(Jessup 2001: 132).

¹² The inukshuk, while only now a part of the stock and trade of Inuit art, makes a brief, obscure appearance in a full page photo framed with the following text: "Stone men are found in northern Canada, particularly in the region of the Boothia Peninsula. Their purpose is not clear, but was probably connected with hunting the caribou. Probably Dorset culture"(16). The opposite page displays a stencil print of Inuit building "Stone images," by an Inuit artist named Kiakshuk; clearly, the "stone images" are inuksuit. The author's ignorance around the monument demonstrates an overall lack of knowledge about the inukshuk and helps to support my claim that the inukshuk did not substantially enter the national imagination until the 1990's. The inukshuk's popularity, however stems from this market for Inuit art and the tactile and visual relationship with the exotic.

Ian McKay (1994) defines antimodernism (in part) as, “an intensely individualistic thirst for an existence released from the iron cage of modernity into a world re-encharmed by history, nature, and the mysterious”(xv). Lynda Jessup (2001) broadens this definition by observing how antimodernism is:

in effect a critique of the modern, a perceived lack in the present manifesting itself not only in a sense of alienation, but also in a longing for the types of physical or spiritual experience embodied in utopian futures and imagined pasts. As such, it embraces what was embodied in pre-industrial societies – in medieval communities or ‘Oriental’ cultures, in the Primitive, the Traditional, or the Folk (3).

Both McKay and Jessup offer informative case studies relating to the antimodern, and this study of the inukshuk. Jessup’s “Bushwhackers in the Gallery: Antimodernism and the Group of Seven”(2001) provides much of the foundation for the theoretical approach to antimodernism and nationalism that we will come to see in the nationalized inukshuk. Her main argument is that while the Group of Seven positioned itself as antimodern in its desire to capture an aesthetic based on an “authentic” representation of the “Canadian” wilderness, the Group’s work did nothing to critique the social realities of modernity. Jessup contends that this was a “modernizing antimodernism”(138). Working with museums and galleries, the Group promoted “an exclusive aesthetic opinion [and] helped to reformulate the cultural authority of the Anglo-Canadian elite”(ibid.).

In both Jessup and McKay’s critiques, we see compelling parallels with Burland’s text on “Eskimo Art.” Cultural production comes to be managed by the state; a modern industry with modern actors producing traditional or seemingly traditional artefacts that allude to romantic notions of a “very distant past”(Burland 1973). However, what is perhaps most striking, vis-à-vis the inukshuk is Jessup’s argument that through their aesthetic, the Group of Seven successfully constructed an “autonomized past” that

embodied a symbolically recognizable, essentially “Canadian” landscape; autonomized in the sense that the Group’s Canadian landscape *appears* to have existed before an historical and ideological “Canada.” The myth of the Group of Seven, then, lies in their perceived *distillation* rather than *manufacture* of a Canadian essence (2001: 141-2). In this light, the Heritage Minute constructs a similarly distilled essence of a national landscape, the North. It is a mythic landscape reliant on an imagined, primitive past, physically experienced by the injured Mountie. The Mountie as I have described, is a symbol of the modern state of Canada’s administration of, and control over, the North. Moreover, his whiteness serves to metonymically connect with the intended audience located within the dominant culture. The inukshuk, then, stands as a material embodiment of that imagined past that connects its builder, whoever that might be, to a prehistoric Canada. Framed as a national myth, *a part of our heritage*, Canada’s history by way of the inukshuk is ostensibly as old as the monument itself and the act of constructing an inukshuk reproduces and reifies this account of a seemingly timeless national history.

Invading the Canadian Landscape: mutant Canadensis

Linda in Burlington: I do really enjoy seeing them. We have a cottage and people put them out on the points and as you go by, you know, in your boat you see them. I really do like them...all the way up the highway you see them on the sides of the road [...] See I would never follow an inukshuk [...] it’s Canadian that’s all it means to me, it doesn’t mean “go this way.”

Rita Celli: *Have you ever built one yourself?*

Linda in Burlington: Yeah, we were in Britain a couple summers ago and we were hiking in the Cotswolds and they have those lovely dry stone walls. We came to a section that was down [...] and we could not resist we had to pick up the rocks and build an inukshuk on top of the dry stone wall. *And now the Canadians will know we were here.*

-“Linda in Burlington” A caller responding to the “No More Inukshuks Phone-In” on CBC Radio One’s *Ontario Today* (August 15, 2007) [Emphasis added]

I take the view that Canada's cottage countries and recreational wilderness spaces, such as provincial and national parks, campsites, hiking trails and beaches, are spatial expressions of antimodernism.¹³ One only has to witness the density of traffic on Highway 400 between Toronto and Barrie on the Friday of a long weekend as the droves of city dwellers make their way up to the Muskokas or Georgian Bay to see the validity in this statement. The questions emerge: why are they leaving? What are they escaping from?

I argue, using McKay's characterization that antimodernism sates a "thirst for an existence released from the iron cage of modernity," that the intended destination of these holiday travellers, which I refer to as *the recreational wild*, offers dominant culture a release, a chance to "get away from *it* all." "It," I believe refers implicitly to this iron cage, namely, the perception of hot, polluted cities; the day to day drudgery of work; and urban domestic living. The definitions put forth by Jessup and McKay of antimodernism being, in effect, a critique of the modern present, suggests the opportunity for a spatial binary: the hot, busy, dirty city *versus* the fresh, relaxing, primitive *natural* wilderness. Mackey (1999) builds upon this notion through what she refers to as "'civilization versus wilderness' opposition"(44). She contextualizes present-day ideas of the wilderness as being "distinctly and conceptually separated and distinct from urban life, rural farmland, and human 'civilization.' [I]t is now, a site marked out for leisure, a space of untouched nature in which to recuperate from one's 'real' life"(44-5).

In defining my notion of the recreational wild, it is necessary to identify the activities that are performed in these spaces. Activities such as camping, canoeing, hiking, and cottaging are mainly activities one does when away from the city. Moreover,

¹³ Indeed, Algonquin Park and Georgian Bay captivated the imagination of the Group of Seven.

these activities are suggestive of a sense of wild primitivism; of rustic or rugged living associated with a pioneer or Aboriginal past. Canadians do not, by and large, live in the bush anymore, nor do they normally get from one destination to another by way of canoe or trail. They *choose* to engage in these activities, I argue, because of their rustic appeal, because of their connection to an imagined past when life was putatively simpler. In this sense, the recreational wild conjures historical and romantic notions connected to the Aboriginal, the wilderness and the North. The romantic appeal of these myths offer an opportunity for the cottager, camper, hiker or canoeist to return to this imagined past of living and surviving in a wild “Canadian” landscape as perhaps their forebears did. At the very least, it provides an occasion to penetrate a mythic Canadian landscape constructed by such cultural producers as the of the Group of Seven.¹⁴

Given the abundance of materials (rocks), ease of production and connection to the “primitive,” it should perhaps come as no surprise that the inukshuk’s presence has come to be associated with such spaces as those I have situated within the recreational wild: provincial and national parks, cottage country, hiking trails and beaches. While I have found no evidence to suggest that the inukshuk was popular in the recreational wild before the airing of the Heritage Minute, I have located ample materials that suggest not only its presence, but ubiquity in Southern wilderness areas following the Minute’s 1994 airing.

The Gift of the Inukshuk is one such example. Written in 2004 by *Toronto Sun* sportswriter and nationalist, Mike Ulmer, whose other children’s stories include *M is for*

¹⁴ It should be noted that Bordo (1992) and Mackey (1999) argue that the Group of Seven’s work had the effect of erasing the Aboriginal from the prehistoric Canadian landscape.

Maple: A Canadian Alphabet, and *H is for Horse: An Equestrian Alphabet*,¹⁵ *The Gift* is excessively antimodern in character. The inside jacket of the book states “Seeing an Inuksuk reminds author Mike Ulmer of the way the Inuit People of the North live a simple life and consume only what they need.” Speaking to the inukshuk’s popularity in the recreational wild, Ulmer suggests in the introduction that inuksuit can be located “In gardens and campsites and trailheads across North America and even around the world” (Ulmer 2004: unpaginated).

The story itself begins “Many lives ago,” and involves a young Inuit girl who, with her family, live a romanticized life off the bounty of the land . To pass her time, the young girl, *Ukaliq*, builds stone “friends.” Some seem happy, some seem sad, some point to various directions. Soon her father and brothers are off on a hunt, and Ukaliq, longing to see them again, begins to build inuksuit to guide her father and brothers safely home. Afterwards, the stone people are named Inuksuk “in the image of man.”¹⁶ The story closes with a white family paddling by a foregrounded inukshuk located in an ambiguously located wilderness setting – Is it Baffin Island? Cape Breton Island? Vancouver Island? As the family affixes their contented gaze upon the inukshuk, we are told “To this day Inuksuit wait for paddlers and canoeists beside shallow lakes. They greet travellers along great highways...they carry the little girl’s message...you are not alone”(Ulmer 2004: unpaginated).¹⁷

¹⁵ If there was any doubt as to the inukshuk’s connection to Anglo-Canadian nationalism flavoured with a WASPY whiff of elitism, this should remove it.

¹⁶ This gendered definition of the inukshuk is incorrect. The actual definition from the Inuktitut translates to “That which acts in the capacity of a human.”

¹⁷ I sense an uncanny parallel between the little girl’s message “You are not alone” and the Inuk youth’s message of “Now the people will know we were here.”

This association between the inukshuk and the recreational wild fits well within an antimodern reading of the symbol, but it is equally telling to note how this association has been characterized in the national media. In a 2002 article titled “Invasion of the mutant inukshuks,” *The National Post*’s Douglas Hunter observed of the inuksuit he encountered on the east side of Georgian Bay,

[T]he things have become insidiously common. You can scarcely round a point in the rock-and-pine of our very near north (so near, in fact, as to be south) without encountering one. These ubiquitous piles of rock are starting to whiff of monoculturalism (A22).¹⁸

The “invasive” inukshuk reappears again in August of 2007, when, in an ad claiming that inuksuit were confusing hikers who were mistaking them as trail guides, park officials at Killarney Provincial Park (on the North shore of Georgian Bay) pleaded with campers and hikers to “stop the invasion” of inuksuit. This story generated activity in the national media with *The Globe and Mail* running a story on August 15 “Enough with the inukshuks already”(Dube: L1) and a subsequent editorial on August 18 “Of ego and inukshuk”(2007: A18). Around that time, CBC RadioOne’s *Ontario Today* ran a segment on the issue titled “Inukshuk invasion,” and invited listeners to call into the program and share their experiences with inuksuit.

While Hunter’s 2002 piece limits the inukshuk invasion to Georgian Bay, by 2007, Dube suggests that this so-called invasion had reached nation-wide proportions.¹⁹ Dube characterizes the inukshuk as virulent: “An invasive species is spreading through Canada’s parks, leaving its mark on the landscape wherever it goes. The culprit isn’t the Asian long-horned beetle or the Baltic water flea....it’s the inukshuk”(L1: 2007). Indeed,

¹⁸ This quote appears in *The National Post* again in 2005 in Joseph Brean’s “Inukshuk replacing the maple leaf: Canada’s new symbol leads us...somewhere”(A1).

¹⁹ Perhaps this is suggestive of the inukshuk’s success as a national symbol, having gone from regional nuisance to national nuisance in five years.

according to Dube, inuksuit could be seen “multiplying on hiking trails and at campsites across Canada”(ibid.); it was reported that thirty had been taken down on a single day in Killarney Provincial Park and inuksuit were being routinely removed from the beaches at the Provincial Rim National Park Reserve in British Columbia. Dube identified the culprits: Non-natives, nature-lovers, campers and hikers and suggested, somewhat sympathetically, that

Stacking rocks in a tower can be a pleasant, meditative act, and it comes naturally when you're sitting on a rocky beach or beside a campfire with little else to do but count mosquito bites or sing Kumbaya one more time. Inukshuks also allow nature-lovers to satisfy the very human desire to proclaim “I was here” in a less invasive way than carving the words on a tree (ibid.).

Both Hunter's and Dube's articles spatially connect the inukshuk with the recreational wild. However the quote above further suggests that the inukshuk was becoming a recreational activity similar to that of canoeing, hiking or the campfire; activities commonly associated with recreation in the wilderness.

This tension surrounding the inukshuk is noteworthy. On the one hand, you have a critique of the inukshuk put forth as viral, invasive and parasitic (Dube 2007: L1). On the other, you get a “friendly looking stone structure” the construction of which can be a “pleasant, meditative act,” that “comes naturally”(ibid.). This paradox illustrated in the 2007 media coverage of the inukshuk fits in with other paradoxes that seem to surround the construction of the antimodern, whereby, as in the cases of Eskimo Art, Nova Scotian Folk, and the Group of Seven , the authentic experience which is sought after by the dominant culture is not authentic at all. As I have demonstrated, in all three cases, artistic production was promoted and/or managed by individuals or agencies operating from within the dominant culture.

Moreover, the connection to the art form, at least in the case of Inuit art, is overtly colonial owing to the federal government's creation and management of the market. This leads us back, obliquely, to the question of whether "we" are part of the *we who were here*. Is this our heritage or their (Inuit) heritage? This tension around the inukshuk bespeaks an unease within the media who criticizes its perceived inauthenticity when found in the recreational wild. The inukshuk does not quite "pass." It is seen as a fraud, a mutant (Hunter 2002: A22), that, owing to its Inuit origins, conjures notions of cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation is a watchword that implicitly connects the dominant culture to repressed knowledges of Canada's colonial heritage, a heritage involving cultural genocide, residential schools, Aboriginal displacement and relocation (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Milloy 1999; Mackey 1999). Thus, the tension present in the media, that of the "inauthentic" nature of the southern inukshuk, suggests a fear that perhaps the inukshuk is *a part of our heritage*, but not a heritage "we" in dominant culture wish to remember.

I will return to this sense of unease later when I consider the inukshuk-as-fetish, however, I want to focus here on Dube's notion that constructing inuksuit identifies with a "very human desire to proclaim *I was here*"(2007: L1)[emphasis added]. This notion was picked up in an editorial that followed shortly after the Dube article. "Of egos and inukshuks" (Editorial 2007: A18) poses a question central to this chapter: "What is it about the wilderness – the top of a mountain, the bank of an unexplored lake, a remote campsite – that cries out to so many people to leave something of themselves there?"(ibid.). The response is noteworthy, if not a touch trite: "It's the call of the ego, the determination that if anyone else ever makes it to this untouched jewel of nature, by

heavens, that person will know that I have been here, because I will touch it” (ibid.).

Here we return again to Jessup’s definition of antimodernism as informed by a sense of alienation in the modern present and a longing to physically connect to an imagined past.

Certainly, this underlying notion of “I’ve been here,” similarly stating the Inuk youth’s message *we were here*, demonstrates attempts to rectify this sense of alienation.

However, as I argue below, the desire to “touch” or connect with the wilderness through the construction of an inukshuk, as the editorial implies (2007: A18), suggests not only the builder’s physical relationship with the inukshuk, but an attempt to use the monument to establish a possessive connection with the land. As I will discuss further in the third chapter, the use of stone monuments as markers of territorial possession in Western cultures has a long historic tradition (Seed 1995). In this light, I suggest that the inukshuk becomes a medium by which this communion can occur and an “authentic” ownership over the land can be asserted.

Perhaps Mike Ulmer gives us the best insight into this. To return to the jacket leaf of *The Gift*, he describes Inuksuit as “many made by ancient hands.” Later, he states “In gardens and campsites and trailheads across North America and even around the world, Inuksuit bear a message from the land and those who have come before: you are not alone.” In this context, inuksuit built in gardens and campsites in North America by “those who have come before” must be decoded as being created by other vacationers from dominant culture who ostensibly built the monument while on vacation. Combined with the message “you are not alone,” the “builder” has participated in an ancient tradition leaving a mark that will speak to the witness from an indiscernible or ambiguous past. The timelessness of the materials (rocks) that constitute the physical form of the

inukshuk, further connect both builder and witness to this *very distant past* (Burland 1973). However, while the inukshuk of the Heritage Minute can be construed as a cultural relic that has been left behind by the Inuit, the inuksuit found throughout the south are largely left behind by members of the dominant culture. As the monument cannot be readily temporalized, it becomes timeless; a relic of the dominant culture marking the landscape of the recreational wild with a sense of presence and ownership.

But this desire to connect with the land – to touch nature – suggests to a pervasive longing in the consciousness of the dominant culture that moves beyond a simple critique of the present: the yearning of the settler to be settled, to be “home”, to be native, or put more succinctly, *to be home on native land* requires a more sophisticated explanation if we are to understand the preoccupation with the inukshuk in the national imagination. I suggest that the inukshuk, as a medium that fosters the desire of the settler to be indigenized, enjoys a rich discursive tradition that I will explore in the following section.

The Impossible Dream: Going Native

Coupled with the antimodern thread I have explored, is the strategic process of what Terry Goldie characterizes as *indigenization*. Defined as “the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous”(1989, 13) whereby settler-invader culture longs to be naturalized through a perceived connection to the land – a connection commonly attributed to the indigene – this process presents an equally palpable tropic network for consideration within the current discussion. In *The House of Difference*, Mackey (2002) discusses how the “[R]epresentation of Aboriginal people [...] provides a link between settlers and the land. Their presence constructs a historical connection to the land that

helps make Canada a ‘Native land’ to settlers and immigrants”(77). In speaking to the “Grey Owl Syndrome” in *Strange Things*(1991), Margaret Atwood observes “that curious phenomenon, the desire among non-Natives to turn themselves into Natives; a desire that becomes entwined with a version of the wilderness itself”(35).

I argue that the physical act of constructing an inukshuk creates the conditions that allow for this desire to unfold. In constructing an inukshuk, the builder is performing an action that connects them to an Aboriginal tradition “many made by ancient hands”(Ulmer 2004). While Mackey argues that “the representation of Aboriginal people constructs a historical connection to the land”(1999: 77), Bordo (1992) suggests that in the case of the Group of Seven, the middlemen, Aboriginals who foster this connection to notions of the wilderness, get erased. This is not, however a question of erasure as Mackey points out; I suggest that it is, rather, an “absent presence” whereupon the inukshuk offers a necessary allusion to *Aboriginality* that connects the settler to the land while removing the specific and current agency of Aboriginal cultures (here the Inuit) from the picture. In this light, the construction of inuksuit by members of the dominant Canadian culture can be viewed as a performance of Aboriginality. In other words, they are an example of cultural mimicry whereby an Aboriginal symbol is used by the invading culture as a means of establishing a naturalized connection with the land.²⁰

In considering the myth of the inukshuk in dominant culture, I return to the thesis introduction where I stated that the “meaning” of the mythic signifier was the Inuit

²⁰ The argument arises, why aren’t settler’s carving totem poles and camping in tipis? I suggest that the inukshuk, by virtue of the relative ease of its construction; ubiquity of materials (rocks); and lack of colonial guilt around appropriation associated with such Aboriginal symbols as totem poles, makes it appear uniquely democratic and reproducible. Moreover, the inukshuk embodies a seemingly universal sign of the human form. Thus, its basic form transcends racial, gendered and specifically Aboriginal signifiers, allowing for an easier disavowal of charges relating to appropriation and integration into a liberal, tolerant and democratic framework.

inuksuk. Yes, in the North, the inuksuk belongs to Inuit culture. However, transplanted to the South, it has become the property of the culture who constructs them. *Linda from Burlington*, a caller to a CBC Radio program, whom I quote at the beginning of the previous section underscores this notion: “See I would never follow an inukshuk,” she says, adding “it’s Canadian that’s all it means to me, it doesn’t mean ‘go this way’”(from *Ontario Today* 2007). The topic of that particular segment concerned the so-called inukshuk invasion at Killarney Provincial Park that I previously discussed. Demonstrating the form and concept of the inukshuk, Linda transcends the Inuit meaning through a kind of cultural substitution; her inukshuk is “Canadian that’s all”(ibid.). Her comments suggest that the inukshuk as she knows it (the form) is the cultural property of the nation.

Moreover, Linda recounts, how, on a hiking trip in Britain, she built an inukshuk with her husband concluding the anecdote by stating: “And now the Canadians will know we were here”(ibid.). By now, the previous comment should sound eerily familiar to the reader because it is almost verbatim, the words of the Inuk youth from the 1994 Heritage Minute. The fact that, thirteen years later, Linda from Burlington would unreflexively repeat this phrase speaks perhaps to the powerfully effective mythic message resonating in the Heritage Minute. Hodgins (2003) assertion that the inukshuk Heritage Minute “construct[s] a sense of autochthony and national identity among Canadians”(244) is validated by Linda. Her comments, echoing the Minute, speak in more muted tones, to this desire located within dominant culture to be connected to the land, mediated here by the inukshuk.

In order to understand this particular desire more fully, I examine a case study that explores how the concept of indigenization has manifested itself within the dominant culture. I examine two narratives: one is a short story by Farley Mowat concerning a plane crash in the far North. The story, “Walk Well My Brother,” popularized by the 2003 motion picture *The Snow Walker*, tells the story of a pilot and his passenger, an Aboriginal woman stricken with tuberculosis, who survive the wreck only to find themselves stranded in the seemingly remote and desolate Arctic tundra. As the story progresses, the Aboriginal woman teaches the pilot to live off the land using traditional knowledge before succumbing to her disease.

The second narrative is that of internationally renowned inukshuk expert, Norman Hallendy. His work *Inuksuit: Silent Messengers of the Arctic* (2000), provides a comprehensive taxonomy of the inuksuit found throughout the Arctic and offers a detailed account of his own journey into Inuit culture and of his education in traditional Inuit epistemologies. Hallendy’s work is extremely valuable because it not only provides a very human, contemporary and realistic account of indigenization, but one that is explicitly connected to the subject of my study. I use both narratives, one fiction, the other non-fiction, to suggest a link between how this desire relating to indigenization is manifest in both literature and reality in the cultural imagination of the dominant culture, and demonstrate the uncanny parallels between the two.

Life imitating art? Two generations of indigenization

In “Viking Graves Revisited,”(2007) Brian Johnson traces the importation, development and ultimate transformation of the gothic form from the Old World to the

New World by examining Coleridge's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" and Farley Mowat's "Walk Well My Brother." The purpose of Johnson's genealogy is to trace the discursive shift from the haunted (uncanny) narratives of the Old World gothic to the creation of a "homely" gothic atmosphere in Canadian nationalist literary narratives. Building upon Cynthia Sugars's paradoxical reading of the New World gothic form "[where] the unsettling and uncanny experience of being haunted is what produces a feeling of familiarity and home" (in Johnson: 68), Johnson demonstrates how the Mariner's guilt about the "primordial crime and [the] uncanny secret of settler-invader society" (68), is "papered over" in the "ideological horizon" of Mowat's narrative (73). This is accomplished through the colonized other's (Konala's) gift of a pair of moccasins whereby the protagonist (colonist) is forgiven for the primordial crime (slaying of the albatross; colonization) and allowed to take his place in the seemingly impenetrable mytho-mystic landscape of the Canadian North (ibid.). Indeed, rather than haunted by a curse, Johnson argues that the protagonist is comforted by Konala's death-bed blessing to "walk-well" (ibid.). This bears considerable significance to the indigenizing agenda implicit in Mowat as it attempts to "paper over" the repressed guilt²¹ associated with the horrors of colonization and, returning to "Now the people will know "we" were here," clears a path towards "Mowat's vision of Canada as a fully indigenized northern nation" (80).²²

The story begins when the protagonist's plane has crashed far from its intended destination in the remote and desolate tundra. While Mowat's intended metaphor is

²¹ I employ psychoanalytic language in this chapter, because the content I consider is framed by notions of haunting, pleasure and disavowal attributed to Freud. I will explore the inukshuk from a psychoanalytic lens explicitly in the next section when I consider the fetish and its connection to the inukshuk.

²² It is interesting to note that in "The Snow Walker," the graphic employed at the beginning of each story is that of the inukshuk.

Icarus, who, in an act of hubris flew to close to the sun on wings made of wax and plummeted to the earth (Certainly, an antimodern sub-text of technological hubris runs close to Mowat's narrative surface), an alternative reading suggests that the protagonist, Lavery, has had his wings clipped and is prevented from returning "home." However, I argue that Lavery's "home" is the colonial space stolen from Aboriginal peoples by the invading culture. It is not a real home, it is an occupied space. Moreover, the technology-as-hubris metaphor is, in part, a cover story disguising the more deep-seated (repressed) metaphor of the colonial crime which Johnson suggests is "figured metonymically in the woman's tuberculosis"(Johnson, 73).

Lavery compounds this crime early in the text by remorselessly abandoning his charge, Konala, to save himself. However, Lavery is a character in transition and later in the narrative becomes filled with a sense of remorse and repentance for his act of cowardice. But it is not enough for the protagonist to repent, Johnson argues that he must be "absolved" in order to be naturalized:

the guilt of colonization is conveniently absolved by the "albatross" herself, as Konala not only rescues the protagonist at the expense of her own life, but also teaches him "that what had seemed to him a lifeless desert was in fact a land generous in its support of those who knew its nature" (Mowat 1975, 141). Her final act of fashioning a pair of caribou-skin boots which she bequeaths to the protagonist with the blessing, "Walk well in them...my brother" (Mowat 1975, 147 quoted in Johnson 2007, 73)

While this is an accurate observation, I propose that Lavery's transitioning metamorphosis from settler-invader to indigene is a double-edged process of authentication. While it is through Konala's forgiveness of Lavery's behaviour – and indeed the colonial crime – it is the anthropomorphized landscape that must ultimately accept the settler-invader as its own. It is significant to note that Mowat's landscape in the narrative, desolate and remote, develops into a hospitable land, a land "generous in its

support to those who [know] its nature.” This transition occurs in tandem with Lavery’s metamorphosis and in order to “know its nature,” Lavery must eschew the trappings of civilization. Again, in keeping with Mowat’s critique of modernity, he must throw down the settler’s metaphorical hoe, his plough, his axe and spade, they will not help him here:

He remembered his matches getting soaked when he tried to ford the first of a succession of rivers that forever deflected his course toward the West. He remembered losing the .22 cartridges when the box turned to mush after a rain. Above all, he remembered the unbearable sense of loneliness that grew until he began to panic, throwing away first the useless gun, then the sodden sleeping bag, the axe...and finally sent him in a heart-bursting spasm of desperation, toward a stony ridge that seemed to undulate serpent-like on the otherwise shapeless face of a world that had lost all form and substance. (Mowat 1975, 151-2)

Lavery cannot use his “tools,” they belong in a different world, to a different culture; he can no longer fight the extreme environment of the North and resolves to die, but is saved, curiously, by Konala who shows him how to use Aboriginal technologies and traditional knowledges to live with the land, not to fight against it.

It is the protagonist’s changing relationship with the landscape that underscores its role as the space by which indigenization may occur. The “shapeless face of a world that [has] lost all form and substance” suggests a liminal zone that situates the protagonist between the worlds of the civilized and the indigenous. Here, Mowat is constructing a space whereby the civilized and savage converge bringing the protagonist into contact with the wild and primitive landscape. Mowat’s object of civilization, the plane, is condemned; the plane has crashed and thus cannot return to the settlement. Despite having learned that “the land can be generous,” when he returns to the crash site, Lavery discovers that there have been no human visitors (rescuers from civilization), and “falls into a black depression”(155). Indeed, from his vantage point at the “site” of a destroyed civilization (the crash site, “the dead machine”), Lavery “stares through the Plexiglass windscreen at a landscape which seemed to grow increasingly bleak”(155).

Lavery is brought out of his melancholy however by the changing landscape:

From the window of the dead machine Lavery looked out upon a miracle of life. An undulating mass of antlered animals was pouring out of the north. It rolled steadily toward the pond, split, and began enveloping it [...] Although in the days when he had flown high above them Lavery had often seen skeins of migrating caribou laces across the arctic plains like a pattern of beaded threads, he could hardly credit what he now beheld...the land inundated under a veritable flood of life. His depression began to dissipate as he felt himself being drawn into and becoming almost a part of that living river (Mowat 1975, 156).

Johnson argues that the settler-invader's "absolution" comes from the blessing of the colonized victim (2007: 73). I advance this argument by suggesting that Lavery's deliverance and communion with the land, as the above quote suggests, is mediated through Konala for it is the Aboriginal who intrinsically knows the land, who has a preternatural relationship with it. In this sense, Konala, Mowat's Aboriginal subject performs a function similar to that of the inukshuk in dominant culture. As a symbol of Aboriginality, I argue, that the inukshuk mediates a connection between the dominant culture and the land.

Mowat's use of both the land as literally and metaphorically "opening up" to the settler-invader, and Konala's absolution of colonial guilt is best expressed in the final paragraph of the narrative where Lavery commences his journey northward, alone, "his feet finding their own sure way." (Mowat 1975, 160) The moccasins, symbolic of Konala's blessing/absolution are worn by the protagonist who is now "sure of foot" in the northern landscape that has opened up to him. Additionally, bespoke in Aboriginal clothing, Lavery is at the close of the narrative, affecting an indigenous appearance.

It is interesting to note that as the story closes, the protagonist is still headed *northward*. He is still travelling and has not yet found his destination. In a sense, Mowat's work still occupies a liminal space where the indigenizing project has begun the journey but is still in search; Mowat's imagination has not yet found its "home."

If, for a moment, we accept an indigenizing literary agenda present in Mowat's narrative, marked by a settler subject in the process of *becoming* the indigene, it is perhaps Norman Hallendy who is our modern-day, personified continuation of this longing, picking up where Lavery's footsteps left off. Hallendy is considered the world-wide authority on inuksuit, presenting the first scholarly paper on the topic in 1992. He is internationally recognized and is cited often in media stories relating to inuksuit.

Indeed, in his *Inuksuit: Silent Messenger's of the Arctic* (2000), Hallendy can be viewed as the protagonist in his own adventure narrative, a narrative firmly rooted in the indigenizing traditions of the colonial imagination. Hallendy, a young boy, is filled with a "sense of wonder" by a certain Captain du Marbois, a sea captain who has retired to spend his remaining years teaching at a boy's school where the young Hallendy is a pupil. Of his teacher, the author remarks:

He mesmerized us with his experiences as a twelve year old cabin boy struggling to round the Horn in sailing ships. Once in the middle of an account of a cannibal feast in Borneo, he stopped as if to snatch a floating thought from the air and asked whether we know the meaning of $E=mc^2$. Observing a room of bewildered faces, he proceeded to acquaint us with the virtues of Transcendental Meditation(8).

From this passage, it becomes clear that Hallendy's "sense of wonder" is fuelled by a nostalgic connection to the primitive and the Oriental, as instilled by his teacher. "Each moment in his class was filled with some new and often astounding adventure, tale or insight that awakened the curiosity within all of us" (9).

Hallendy's "northern adventure" begins in 1958, when, as a young man in the employ of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, he is sent to Cape Dorset – the nature of his work there is never discussed – but it is there that he comes in contact with the *Inummariit*, "the real people." Hallendy describes them as those who live on the land using traditional or ancestral knowledge. Initially he is regarded with

suspicion but slowly works to gain their confidence and friendship. At the end of his introduction, the author shares an anecdote about one of those friends who has passed away; how he makes an annual visit to her grave, concluding, “I feel her presence in everything around me.” I am reminded of Mowat’s last paragraph of *Walk Well*:

...Lavery buried her under a cairn of rocks on the high banks of the nameless river. As he made his way northward in the days that followed, his feet finding their own sure way, he no longer pondered the question which had lain in his mind through so many weeks...*for he could still hear the answer she had made and would forever hear it: Walk well....my brother...*(148) [Emphasis added].

The parallel here begins with a gravesite and continues with the ongoing spiritual presence felt by both Lavery and Hallendy for Aboriginal women who have influenced their lives. This does not presume a sense of haunting *per se* but it does suggest a metaphysical communion between the souls of the settler and the colonized Other. Especially in Hallendy’s account, this cannot be disputed or dismissed – by offering this anecdote, he is setting the stage for his own myth: he is informing his reader of a spiritual connection he claims to feel everywhere of his friend’s spirit. It seems as though he is suggesting that he is endowed with mystical gifts. Is he a shaman?

In a scene bearing a another familiar resemblance to *Walk Well*, Hallendy, relating a story about finding a legendary grouping of inuksuit, sets off in a plane with an Inuk companion and a pilot. They search unsuccessfully for some time before landing to continue on foot.

On landing, Paulassie got out to scan the horizon in all directions, looking for a sign that might tell us where we were. At this point, the most sophisticated navigational system was of no use; Paulassie had to interpret the terrain he had seen only occasionally in his lifetime (65).

As in Mowat, the plane, and by extension, Western technology is of no use in this ancient landscape. A traditional technology such as the inuksuk cannot be found with a plane, compass or map: it can only be found on foot by the seemingly preternatural ability of his

Inuk companion who has only limited experience with the specific terrain in question yet who finds the legendary inuksuit nonetheless.

However, Hallendy's indigenization is more thorough than Lavery's, and, owing to its non-fiction realism, is seemingly more credible.²³ Hallendy is given an Inuk name – Apirsuqti – Inuktitut for 'inquisitive one.' The name is given to him by Inuk elders who "were leaving their life on the land and beginning to find a different one in various communities established by the Canadian government throughout the Arctic" (22). As an agent of the federal government in the North, he must have some knowledge of his complicity with this project. Despite this, he spends little time dwelling on this displacement and relocation except through nostalgic lamentations on the disappearance of traditional or ancient knowledge systems.²⁴ Indeed, Hallendy casts himself throughout the book as the inheritor of this vanishing epistemology; he is, after all, ordained as *the inquisitive one*. But why is this epistemology vanishing? Why are the elders leaving a life on the land? Such questions evoke the sense of haunting implicit throughout his text.

As Konala adopts Lavery as a "brother" on her death bed, Hallendy situates his relations to the elders of his acquaintance in similarly familial terms: "Among the many elders I met, some became as close to me as uncles, aunts or grandparents"(23). In this sense, he is an adoptive nephew, or grandson, adding to his perceived authenticity as an authority on the matter. It is amongst these kindred that Hallendy first learns of the inukshuk: "It was from Simonie, who shared songs and stories of life when the Inuit were

²³ Or dare I say authentic?

²⁴ Hallendy appears in Payne (2006) as a staff member of the NFB's Still Photography Division in the 1960s. Payne suggests that the organizational arrangement of the archive "encoded the government's paternalistic care of its citizenry," that "Hallendy and his fellow staff members effectively internalised the values and mandate of the Division, reproducing its model of a cohesive and harmonious Canada both pictorially and archivally"(9). Payne further argues that "[T]he Division archive's organisational system reveals the way that hegemony takes shape [...] through the assumption of neutrality in its organization and interpretation by staff"(ibid.). This sense of neutrality, I argue, has carried over into Hallendy's narrative.

nunaliriniq, at one with the land, that I first learned of the ancient stone figures of the Arctic”(22). It is through this relationship with his mentor that his self proclaimed “Arctic journey with the silent messengers” begins.

Hallendy’s narrative constructs a journey based on decoding the inuksuit he encounters, but it is much more than that; this is a journey of self-discovery. His ongoing experiences with Inuit elders, his knowledge of “ancient” skills and traditions, a gift from his mentors, not unlike Konala’s moccasins, characterize his journey. Through his understanding of the land interpreted through an Inuit cosmology, the inukshuk mediates his connection to the landscape and becomes a symbol of the ancient knowledge to which he is privy. Moreover, the inukshuk acts metaphorically as a mnemonic device that is guiding his journey of *becoming* Inuk:

Eventually, I acquired a detailed image in my mind of a number of inuksuit and their locations. They became reference points from which I could depend and return with confidence. Now, I can recall where they stand as well as the conditions that prevailed when I first encountered them; who I was with and who told of their meaning. In this way, I have become attached to the very thoughts of inuksuit, to families and elders, and in some unfathomable way, to the hunters who built them (22).

Here, Hallendy identifies a spiritual existence with an imagined past – the inukshuk object – connects him, spiritually, to this imagined past. What is interesting is that his knowledge of the inukshuk allows him to convey a narrative whereby he is able to cast himself as the Aboriginal, exhibiting Atwood’s *Grey Owl Syndrome*. The inukshuk stands as the contemplative object, or icon, by which Hallendy’s indigeneity can play itself out, and indeed, resonate with a southern audience.

As though Hallendy is self-consciously unaware of his own indigenization, he chooses to end his story with a seemingly over-the-top account where he has not only succeeded in performing Aboriginality, but has in fact, *outperformed* the Aboriginal. Attending a festival held by the Kinngait community, Hallendy enters into a snow

sculpting contest. Here, Hallendy displays his knowledge and prowess. The lengthy passage I offer is too rich to paraphrase:

I decided to construct a snow replica of a traditional spiritual centre. I first prescribed a circle about 16 meters (53 feet) in diameter. Around the perimeter I constructed five sakkabluniit, stone figures believed to contain spiritual power. At one point in the circle I built a tupqujaq, a shaman's doorway to the spirit world, carved from a single huge block of snow. I managed to get two garbage collectors to help me put it in place.

Within the circle, which now represented an aglirnaqtuq (a place where strict adherence to custom must be observed), I constructed a tunillarvik, where people leave offerings when seeking favours. To complete the site, I built a facsimile of a kataujaq, the stone arch through which a shaman drew his patient in order to effect a cure. I was quite impressed by my efforts.

The next day, I spied the judges inspecting my aglirnaqtuq. They appeared puzzled as they walked about making notes and taking pictures with disposable cameras. Other Inuit visitors looked equally puzzled, I began to fear the worse: that the community was beginning to think old Apirsuqti had lost all reason. Slinking into the little office of the welfare officer who counsels people in distress and who also served as judge, I blurted out, "Do you know who won the snow sculpture contest?"

"You did," she replied impatiently. "Your prize is waiting for you back at the Co-op. Now get out of here; I'm going to a healing circle."

I dashed off to the Co-op, where I was presented with a huge yellow flashlight that required a battery as big as a brick, but I didn't care. My sacred site upon the hill had won first prize. When I awoke the next day and looked outside the window, the aglirnaqtuq had vanished; during the night, someone had destroyed it. All that now remains is a big yellow flashlight (98)

I want to begin at the end of this passage, because it returns us to the beginning of this discussion. The destruction of Hallendy's sculpture (a complex representation of inuksuit) speaks to "the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous," impossible in the sense that even when he has succeeded in the moment, his victory is short lived as his sculpture has vanished. Ironically, he is left with a symbol of southern technology – the yellow flashlight – to commemorate his triumphant performance of Aboriginality. As the inukshuk of the Heritage Minute haunts the viewer with a sense of "vanishing," in that the Inuit group is walking, towards the distant horizon leaving the inukshuk in the foreground, the flashlight stands as a perverse reminder of Hallendy's own narrative of

his vanishing sculpture and more broadly his fleeting indigeneity characterized by Goldie as “impossible” in nature.

But the way in which the author frames the passage is equally interesting. In attempting to touch the physical and spiritual experience of the Aboriginal, he is not just constructing a simple inukshuk; his is complex, spiritually endowed (he refers to the shaman twice), a demonstration of his esoteric knowledge to Inuit judges and puzzled onlookers. It is in this knowledge that confounds the “modern” Inuit (Hallendy notes their disposable cameras), that Hallendy situates himself with the ancients as the inheritor of their “lost” traditions.

In this sense, Hallendy has demonstrated the fulfilment of this desire or longing present in Mowat’s narrative. His own project of indigenization seems relatively successful, but the destruction of his sculpture speaks to the constant need to rebuild, and in muted tones bespeaks a certain hostility to the inauthentic and the ultimate failure of the object to affirm his own Aboriginality. The final section of this chapter looks at how indigenization and antimodernism inform a larger cultural phenomenon that empowers the inukshuk in the dominant culture.

“Canada’s New Symbol Leads us...Somewhere”²⁵

Our conscious reaction to Eskimo sculpture is an appreciation of the surface forms. There is an element of pleasure in handling the ivories. These carvings were meant to be handled, oiled and fondled. To touch them is to enjoy a tactile pleasure important to the understanding of their meaning (Burland 1973, 83).

²⁵ Taken from the title of a 2005 *National Post* article by Joseph Brean (2005).

I offer this quote from Cottie Burland whose work, *Eskimo Art*, I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Writing from what seems to be the very distant past of 1973, Burland's passage brings into focus a subject that I have been alluding to throughout this chapter, that of the fetish. While I have attempted to tease out how the notions of antimodernism and indigenization resonate in the inuksuit found within the dominant culture, they remain symptoms of this larger cultural phenomenon that I want to discuss in the conclusion of this chapter.

The notion of the fetish I am discussing owes its cultural origins to Sigmund Freud. While, in many respects, a dated, gendered and homophobic text, Freud's work on the fetish offers a highly valuable lens by which we can observe the inukshuk phenomenon from a cultural point of view. Freud identifies the fetish as a substitute for the mother's castrated phallus. Such an event as the mother's castration is a traumatic one for the young boy, who, fearful of his own potential castration, unconsciously disavows or represses this traumatic knowledge. However, Freud suggests that through the fetish, the subject paradoxically and repetitively seeks out objects that stand in for this perceived loss or lack, "the horror of castration has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of the substitute"(154).

Freud explains that this substituted object becomes a fetish because it is "the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one"(155). That is, it is the last image experienced before the traumatic event. Returning to the Heritage Minute, the inukshuk is the last object we see as the Inuit group are walking towards the distant horizon. Moreover, the object itself may represent an attempt by the fetishist to physically disguise the trauma. Again, the inukshuk-as-fetish-object paradoxically disguises colonial trauma

by employing an Aboriginal symbol in an attempt to paper over any unsavoury connections it might have with colonization. Freud concludes his argument by noting that affection and hostility run parallel to the acknowledgment and disavowal of the castration event. By this I mean that the fetish both repels and attracts; it evokes a sense of pleasure and a sense of horror, mediating, for example, a fleeting connection to the land, but reminding the builder and witness of, paraphrasing Goldie, the impossibility of such a connection. Similarly, it connects the national identity to that of the romanticized Aboriginal, but also reminds the nation of its colonial history. This duality can be seen in the media coverage I have cited. In Dube, for example, the inukshuk is both virulent and meditative (2007: L1). In the *Ontario Today* segment, it is invasive and *Canadian* (2007).

From a cultural point of view, then, I suggest that the inukshuk fetish deals with a perceived and ongoing sense of lack that needs to be repetitively compensated for; it provides an illusion of wholeness (the settled settler, the indigenized Canadian). The ubiquity of inuksuit throughout southern Canada suggests that the desired wholeness always falls short, owing to the persistent tensions that lead the subject back to the trauma of colonization and the impossible dream of being native, and the fetish, then, needs to be repeated over and over again, as Bhabha puts it, “again and afresh” (1994).

In the discussions relating to antimodernism and indigenization, we see how this notion of lack manifests itself in a critique of the present, the compensation of which lies in fantasies of primitive, imagined pasts that are often played out in the recreational wild. The inukshuk becomes an object of desire that facilitates this connection, not only to an imagined past, but an imagined national landscape, as in Jessup’s Group of Seven (2001),

whereby the settler fantasizes his successful indigenization. This fantasy is constantly shattered by charges of inauthenticity, and the swirling, persistent tensions especially implicit in Hallendy, Burland and the Heritage Minute that return the subject to the colonial crime and the impossibility of becoming the indigene. In this sense, the haunted words of the Inuk youth lead us back (again and afresh) to the existential and ambivalent question posed in my introduction: are “we” included in the “we” that “were here?”

Linda Schulte-Sasse (1996) observes the power of fantasy in attempting to smooth out such tensions. Quoting Žižek, Schulte-Sasse notes,

Žižek ‘conceives fantasy not as an imaginary fulfillment of desire, but as the frame in which desire becomes possible. It becomes ‘possible’ in fantasy because the latter provides a framework (often a narrative framework) that organizes and channels chaotic feelings; it thus helps ‘manage’ emotions. Fantasy is indispensable because it conceals the fact that desire is unfulfillable [...] Just as individuals need fantasy as the only possible means of experiencing harmony – however fantasmic – so groups fantasize an ‘impossible social harmony’ (In Schulte-Sasse 1996: 7-8).

Thus, the implied message in the Heritage Minute, that of the mutually assured survival of both cultures, united (by the inukshuk) under a singular heritage, *our* heritage, alludes to this “impossible social harmony,” one that exists in fantasy alone. This reading of the inukshuk as fetish allows for a greater understanding of the ways in which the inukshuk comes to be rigorously promoted by the state as a national symbol; as part of its “national brand.” In the next chapter, I will explore how the inukshuk, as a powerful cultural fetish object, has facilitated the corporatization, nationalization and internationalization of the inukshuk as a significant and meaningful Canadian symbol; and in the third chapter, how these implications connect to the ongoing question of Arctic sovereignty.

Chapter Two

Branding the inukshuk: a new symbol for a new Canada

In the preceding chapter, I discussed how the inukshuk's symbolic resonance within the dominant Canadian culture can be connected to deep-seated currents that persist in the national imagination. These currents rely upon celebrating imagined pasts where notions of the mystical and the primitive are romanticized and variously performed by members of the dominant culture in such spaces as the recreational wild. I characterize these acts of Aboriginal imposture as performances of indigeneity, and have tied them to the notion of indigenization whereby the settler acts out or performs "the Aboriginal" in an effort to establish a perceived connection with the land that pre-contact Aboriginal societies, and later "noble savages" were believed to have had (Goldie 1989; Francis 1992).

I have demonstrated that the veneration of the inukshuk in the south is always dogged by the perceived inauthenticity of the monument; that indigenizing efforts and antimodern nostalgia are haunted by a colonial past that those strategies can never completely paper-over; yet attempts are repeatedly made "again and afresh" to do so (Bhabha 1994: 77). In this light, I argue that such attempts emerge as symptoms of a cultural fetish. From this point of view, the inukshuk fetish attempts to reconcile the settler culture's sense of lack in not possessing an authentic connection to the land. It also attempts to disavow the perpetrating culture's guilt/trauma of colonization by memorializing an Aboriginal symbol in a Canadian context. However, in the first chapter I explained the popularity of the inukshuk as a largely grassroots phenomenon. In the second chapter, I intend to explore how this grassroots popularity has been manipulated

by actors and agencies within the state; how the inukshuk's powerful resonance as a fetish object has been exploited in various instances and, become nationalized through the process of iconification.

What perhaps makes the inukshuk unique as an emerging national symbol is that it appears not as a deliberate monument to the pomp and majesty of the state as statues and imposing Victorian edifices might (Osborne 2001); nor does it have the overplayed, hyper-masculinized cachet of hockey (Weinstein et al 1995; Lorenz and G. Osborne 2006); the overt connections to English-Canadian hegemony as the beaver and the maple leaf (M. Francis 2004; Wright et al 2002); or, the highly politicized baggage associated with other appropriated Aboriginal cultural symbols as the totem-pole, the killer whale or the tipi (Heyd 2003). Rather, the inukshuk emerges as a more democratic, grassroots, even viral symbol that can be made out of any solid material and which requires little skill to construct. Most importantly, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the power of the cultural fetish attached to the inukshuk has been capitalized upon by various apparatuses and actors within the state to convey a myriad of messages. The inukshuk has been especially valuable to the state as it looks to update worn out or increasingly obsolete narratives to fit into a newer national paradigm based on shifting demographics and increasing post-modern pressures related to globalization, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism (van Ham 2001; Osborne 2006).

In this light, I will demonstrate how the inukshuk has been fit into such persistent national narratives as Canada's heritage of uniting the nation through transportation and communication infrastructure (e.g. CNR and CBC), Canada's narrative of its "hi-tech" prowess (Canadarm, CN Tower), and, perhaps most important, Canada's role as a site of

refuge and its putative traditions of tolerance, diversity and hospitality as institutionalized through the Official Multiculturalism Act. Owing to my notion of *iconification*, this chapter explores how the inukshuk has been meaningfully yet subtly inserted into these narratives, and why in an era where the logo and the brand enjoy pre-eminence in the promotion of both public and private interests and putative values (Nimijeane 2006), the inukshuk has emerged as one of the foremost symbols of “Brand Canada” (Ruhl 2008).

Returning to my introductory discussion on iconification, I must stress that I do not suggest that these efforts are in anyway conspiratorial or concerted; iconification as I define it, is the advancement, not necessarily intentional, of a particular symbol that connects interrelated discourses at a particular time, in a particular space. In this sense, the inukshuk has been advanced, I argue, because it has been largely emptied of its original meaning (Barthes 1981) and opened to new interpretations that may or may not connect with the original meaning. The inukshuk conveniently stands in at such a time when new symbols were being required to tell new stories, deliver new messages and convey new sets of values; the nationalized inukshuk, emerges at a time when actors and agencies within the state were looking to update the national story and develop a national brand.

The Brand State

I am struck by how other nations view Canada. We are still seen as a “nice” country, with Mounties, maple syrup²⁶ and hockey. We are not yet recognized as an economy fired by information technology, fuelled by telecommunications and fortified by the fifth-largest aerospace industry in the world.

²⁶ In an interesting intersection of such national symbols, Jakeman’s “Pure Maple Syrup” logo is adorned with a maple leaf and...an inukshuk! The company, based in Beachville Ontario, offers the following definition on the side of their bottle: “**The Inukshuk** is a stone marker or guidepost used in the high Arctic. These guide stones’s [sic] in the image of man, endures as symbols of leadership, and the importance of friendship, in both native life and travels.” [Emphasis by original author] Moreover, True North Beer formerly used the maple leaf and the inukshuk as a logo, intersecting these two symbols with another symbol close to the national imagination – beer.

This outdated view of Canada has to change [...]

Clearly, if we are to develop a solid "brand" on the world stage, we must start with a better understanding of our strengths here at home. We need to make sure that Canadians understand what we have to offer the world, that they can tell the Canadian story to anyone who will listen.

-The Hon. P. Pettigrew speaking at the Global Business Forum in Banff on the subject of enhancing Canada's international competitiveness, September 22, 2000.

In 2001, *Foreign Affairs* published a widely influential paper by Peter van Ham titled "The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation." van Ham was arguably the first scholar to identify, and indeed, name the phenomenon of the brand state. Noting the rise of the corporate brand in "giving products and services an emotional dimension in which people can identify," van Ham suggested that nations "have become 'brand states,' with geographical and political settings that seem trivial compared to their emotional resonance among an increasingly global audience of consumers"(2).

van Ham's discussion on nation branding however sought to highlight the benefits of the phenomenon in lessening the tensions caused by virulent nationalism that had traditionally haunted the European experience through appealing to "image and reputation" rather than more aggressive forms of nationalistic chauvinism (3). Indeed, "style over substance" was seen by van Ham as a panacea by which Europe would overcome the darker chapters of its history and succeed in the emerging global economy. Moreover, van Ham's paper approached the brand state as an external phenomenon; the image and reputation of a nation was intended to be promoted to a global audience to bolster tourism and competitiveness in the international marketplace. Perhaps the most noteworthy of his observations, van Ham astutely declared "the change of slogans is not merely rhetorical window-dressing. On the contrary, it implies a shift in political

paradigms, a move from the modern world of geopolitics and power to *the postmodern world of images and influence*”(4) [my emphasis]. In this sense, how has Canada attempted to fit into such a postmodern world?²⁷ While van Ham’s article deals mainly with the European experience, it is evident that Canada has not been immune from this “shift” in political paradigms.

The rising momentum of the global economy hit full stride during the administration of Jean Chrétien. Perhaps his greatest spokesperson of the new economic order was Pierre Pettigrew who held various cabinet positions throughout the Chrétien and Martin governments including Foreign Affairs and International Trade. As a fervent proponent of globalization, Pettigrew’s message remained optimistic as he promoted the possibilities for Canada in the globalized economy. For example, in his closing comments at the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs Summer Conference in 2001, the Minister stated “I believe we stand on the threshold of a new golden age.”

Indeed, as Pettigrew saw it, Canada’s “unique advantage” in this “golden age” was *our diversity*.²⁸ Speaking to the Global Business Forum in Banff in September 2000, in a section of his speech titled “Canada’s unique advantage: Our diversity”, the Minister observed:

Canada’s openness from its earliest days has led to the creation of a society that is a microcosm of the world. We have, as a result, a great wealth of experience in dealing with different cultures, approaches and business practices. It is this diversity, I think, that has been and will continue to be one of our greatest assets when it comes to competing in this era of globalization.

²⁷ As early as 1994, noted Canadian journalist Richard Gwyn (1996) referred to Canada as the first postmodern nation, because, as he saw it, Canadians were so unselfconscious of their diversity (6). I will demonstrate that this characterization was prescient as diversity would be used as a key concept in the articulation of Canada in the “postmodern world of images and influence.”

²⁸ Pettigrew’s “secret weapon,” being diversity, was hardly a new concept. Mackey (1999) argues that during the rise of global capitalism in the late 1980s multiculturalism was seen as an advantage to Canada’s competitiveness in this emerging economic model, suggesting a link “between cultural pluralism, Canadian identity, and new forms of economic competitiveness and prosperity. Canada’s ‘multicultural heritage’ is now a ‘resource’”(68)

Speaking five months later to the Vancouver Board of Trade on Canada's Competitive Role in International Trade, Canada's cultural diversity was being identified as one of "four keys" to Canada's strategy for global competitiveness; the others being strong economic fundamentals, technical infrastructure and a progressive and outward-looking trade strategy. Although the Minister did not identify Canada's new branding strategy by name, these four components appeared to be shaping the government's response to the shifting political dynamic as outlined by van Ham.

Less than a year after *Foreign Affairs* published van Ham's essay, Pettigrew delivered a series of speeches outlining an updated vision of his government's plan for promoting foreign investment. Speaking to the Conference Board of Canada in March 2002, Pettigrew suggested, in his speech titled "Our Shared Challenge: Re-branding Canada":

So what is our biggest challenge? What will largely determine whether we compete or get left behind [in the global economy]?

Believe it or not, it's our image. One of our biggest problems is that relatively few people know the truth about Canada.

Pettigrew's comments focusing on Canada's image and reputation appear to be situated in van Ham's postmodern paradigm. Moreover, the Minister's message intended to enlist corporate Canada into helping to promote this message abroad. In the following section, "Promoting the New Canada," Pettigrew suggested:

Every Canadian has a stake in this. Everyone who has any international dealings should equip themselves with the relevant data and help deliver the Canadian message to the world. Many of you in this room are well placed to engage in this [...] Everywhere I go my message is the same: I want Canadian business people to help me spread the word.

While Pettigrew's rhetoric focuses on developing a Canadian brand to increase Canada's global competitiveness abroad, the question arises: was there also an internal

strategy to brand the country to its own citizens? While many scholars and branding experts have focused on the external dimensions of the brand state (Anholt 2003; Potter 2003; Papadopolous 2005; Fan 2006; Wetzel 2006; Aronczyk 2008), there are a few who have turned their studies inward and looked at how states brand themselves to their own “consumer-citizens”(Rose 2005; Nimijean 2006). From the Canadian perspective, Nimijean has explored the complexities and dynamics of the domestic brand. Suggesting that “[b]randing also has an internal dimension, allowing national states to update images and escape thorny political problems.” Nimijean (2005) focuses on how this brand was developed during the Chrétien regime through the articulation of *the Canadian Way* (the CW). According to Nimijean, the CW was an expressive branding strategy, employed as a means by which the Chrétien government would attempt to persuade Canadians that their neoliberal policy orientation was rooted in a sense of shared Canadian values (4).

Most importantly to this discussion, Nimijean argues that there was a symbolic dimension behind Brand Canada and *the CW*: symbols, icons and logos would be utilized to visually represent the traditional values being deployed in the government’s strategies for branding Canada. These symbols would have to respond to those characteristics of the ‘Canadian experience;’ characteristics that echoed Pettigrew’s secret weapon to Canada’s global competitiveness being (according to Nimijean) “sharing, toler[ance] [...] diversity and difference”(29). Jonathan Rose (2003) echoes this idea noting “Logos thus are not only an economic vehicle but are also important in creating culture. They are an important semiological sign that link the attributes of the product to a value system, creating a shared meaning or code among those who are able to decode the sign”(7).

The rise of the inukshuk, then, occurs at a time in which Pettigrew suggests “[the] outdated view of Canada has to change”(2000). Indeed, changing this view of Canada, in Pettigrew’s eyes has to start at home; that in order to “develop a solid “brand” on the world stage,” one that pivots on Canada’s strengths as a “diverse” nation, “Canadians” need to “understand what we have to offer the world, that they can tell the Canadian story to anyone who would listen”(ibid.). If Rose and Nimijean are correct, this new brand would require a symbol, icon or logo that would best express the updated Canadian story or indeed “promote” the “New” Canada. The inukshuk appears to have been best placed emerging, as it was, as a new popular symbol, already resonating within the dominant culture. However, I argue that as an emerging symbol it was still an empty vessel, so to speak, open to interpretation and to the projection of national values.

In this respect, and almost anticipating Pettigrew’s vision of a new Canada, two events occurred in 1999 that put the inukshuk on the political map as a fledgling national symbol. The first was when the Nunavut flag was unfurled on April 1st, 1999 [figure 2.1]. Adorned with an inukshuk and the North Star, the context in which the inukshuk was being symbolized seemed appropriate given that the inuksuk is a northern and specifically Inuit symbol. However, the presence of the inuksuk on the flag, I suggest, underscored its increasing both its presence and legitimacy within the Canadian political sphere.

The potential of its growing symbolic significance in the Canadian political landscape carried over onto the international stage shortly after the inauguration of the new territory, when, in June of 1999, the Canadian government donated an inukshuk built by Inuk artist Sam Pitsootuk to the University of Vienna. The monument was intended to

commemorate the inauguration of *Canada Square*, located at the new campus of the University housing International and specifically, Canadian Studies.

Speaking at the unveiling were various dignitaries: the Director of the Centre for Canadian Studies, the University Rector the Austrian Minister for Environment, Youth and Culture and then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. The artist, while present at the unveiling, did not speak. The comments of the speakers focused favourably on the myth of Canadian diversity, and posited the inukshuk as a fitting symbol of that myth; the University Rector suggested that the inukshuk was “a monument of peace, a symbol of understanding between majorities and minorities.” Moreover, underlining the connection between “the Aboriginal” and Canadian national identity, the speakers highlighted the association between the two “founding” nations of Canada and its Aboriginal “heritage” symbolized, again, in the inukshuk.

Canada Square, according to the Director of the Centre was an appropriate spatial metaphor for Canada, for, as he suggested:

This courtyard, our “Canada Square” is a bit like Canada. You see, it is framed on the sides by the department of English and American Studies in front of you, and the department of romance languages and literatures behind you. It is rather fitting given the French and English founding nations of Canada with the inukshuk which will be unveiled today; the symbolism is enriched by providing a link between the two departments and an appropriate representation of the First Nations in Canada (In Chrétien 1999).

I observe in the director’s comments how the inukshuk is being used as a beacon, not in the original Inuit sense, but rather as a mnemonic device locating an imagined historic connection between dominant culture and Aboriginal culture in his metaphorical national landscape. Moreover, the inukshuk, as it is being represented at the University serves to situate the founding nations (France and England) within a much larger history predating the nation of Canada by, quite literally, millennia.

Chrétien himself could not pass over this opportunity to link the Aboriginal symbol to the founding (invading) nations:

Je suis très content de voir qu'ils a un symbole Canadien à cette place où, on parle de la littérature française, et la littérature et l'histoire anglaise – et avec un symbole des premiers citoyens du Canada. Et je pense que le tout dénote un très grande imagination et un hommage à mon sens très approprié et à mon pays – le Canada (1999).

{I am very happy to see that there is a Canadian symbol in this place were we speak of both French literature and English literature and history – and with a symbol of the First citizens of Canada, and I think that all of this denotes a great imagination and a tribute that I feel is very appropriate to my country – Canada.}²⁹

Great imagination indeed. Referring to the Inuit as Canada's "first-citizens" denotes perhaps an *imaginative stretch* rather than, to use the Prime Minister's term "a great imagination." Regardless, Chrétien's comments reflect ongoing and overt attempts to enlist Aboriginal heritage as part of "our heritage," much in the same way the 1994 Heritage Minute had attempted to do.³⁰

His assertion that the Inuit are "first citizens" of Canada is suggestive reverse indigenization. While I argue that the nationalized inukshuk performs the desired effect of indigenizing the nation, Chrétien's comments appear to be nationalizing the indigene highlighting the centrality of the Aboriginal in the national identity (Francis 1992). Moreover, in considering the use of the inukshuk as the symbol of Library and Archives Canada, Fletcher (2006) suggests: "In embedding the history in the timelessness of the North, and the Inuit occupation thereof, the existence of Canada is symbolically pushed back into the murky depth before confederation and colonization"(8). The consequences of

²⁹ I am indebted to colleague Péter Balogh for providing the translation of this passage.

³⁰ Moreover, nearing the end of his speech, the Prime Minister demonstrated the ways in which articulations and applications of the inukshuk-as-national-symbol were attempting to paper over the darker chapters of Canadian colonial history. In what can only be described as an appallingly insensitive and patronizing comment, Chrétien offered: "when the student will not know what to do and where to go, I will invite them to come and stand in front of the inukshuk and think that these people sometimes had to struggle very hard, but they have survived and we are very proud of them."

this, I suggest, are far reaching, when considering the role of especially, the Inuit, in providing a human presence in the North in order to strengthen Canada's claims to Arctic sovereignty. I will explore this idea more fully in the following chapter.

The Prime Minister's remarks also sought to forge a link between the stone monument and ideas of Canadian diversity:

An inukshuk was, for them [the Inuit], the way to find their way on the vast tundra. They were travelling miles and miles and miles trying, going hunting, trying to find where the caribous were to be able to feed their families. On the vast tundra, they would always rely on the inukshuk to go back home.

And this is a great illustration of what my country's all about.

Mr. Minister, you referred moments ago about diversity [...] we make sure that people with different religions could live together and my country has been a good example of building a nation in diversity (Chrétien 1999).

Chrétien's comments, echoing the remarks of the other speakers, form an embryonic connection between the inukshuk and so-called Canadian values. Specifically, the Prime Minister is associating diversity, hospitality and tolerance with the symbol. I speculate that Pierre Pettigrew was listening intently to the closing comments of the Director of the Centre for Canadian Studies when he said of the monument:

It would also remind us academics from abroad who teach and research and have for many years taken and active interest in matters Canadian, the constructive way in which Canada has met the challenges of a globalized world (In Chrétien 1999).

Indeed, the Director's comments were perhaps foretelling, for as I will demonstrate, the inukshuk would come, over the next few years, to be rhetorically groomed, both visually and textually, to meet the challenges and increasingly represent Brand Canada in the globalized world.

Flagging the Inukshuk – a case study in banal nationalism

In order to explore this rhetorical development of the inukshuk, I provide a case study examining how its concept has shifted and evolved in the national politico-symbolic realm in both rhetorical and material form. To do this, I have located references to and appearances of the inukshuk in the speeches of three successive Governor Generals from 1997 to 2005 and as it has appeared on various state-produced expressions of nationality like stamps, coins and educational materials. The evidence suggests a progressive and increasingly sophisticated articulation of the inukshuk as a “uniquely” Canadian symbol embodying putative national values (VANOC 2005).

However, what the evidence also suggests, is that rather than overt, or grand declarations by the state announcing or reinforcing the inukshuk as a national symbol, at least until the Vancouver Olympic Committee’s choice as its official logo, it has instead, entered the *quotidian landscape* (Edensor 2002). That is to say, reflective of the process of iconification, its presence has manifested itself in everyday life, consistently yet subtly reinforcing its presence as a national symbol, and that those values and resonances that underlie its particular symbolism. It’s what Michael Billig (1995) refers to as *flagging*.

The term is part of a broader concept he calls *banal nationalism*:

In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, the reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is constantly waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building (8).

In this sense, the sight of the inukshuk on the flag of Nunavut; the banners that adorn the entrances to Library and Archives Canada, which adopted the symbol as its official logo in 2004; its presence at airports in Toronto and Ottawa (Fletcher 2006); and now, its

frequent appearance on any official merchandise or promotional materials associated with the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games, underscores the powerfully evocative, yet subliminal messaging synonymous of Billig's metaphor of the unnoticed flag hanging on the public building.

Moreover, its use on currency, stamps, and state-sponsored educational material, as well as the rhetorical musings of highly placed political figures, provide a continual or repetitious use of the symbol that interpellates (Althusser 1989), or orients everyday citizens towards a specific idea of Canada that the inukshuk has been and is being groomed to convey. As such, the following examples demonstrate both the ways in which the inukshuk has been conscripted into the semiotics of nationalism, and also the means by which the messaging, or flagging of the symbol exposes the discrete workings of banal nationalism.

The inukshuk and the Governor Generals

A national symbol in its own right, the institution of Governor General operates as Canada's *de jure* head of state; and functions symbolically as an enduring representation of Canada's political sovereignty.³¹ In 1997 on National Aboriginal Day (June 21), Governor General Roméo LeBlanc unveiled an inukshuk at Rideau Hall, the official residence of Canada's Governor General. In his speech, which amongst other things

³¹ I note with some degree of cynicism that both the symbolic and political dimensions associated with the office of Governor General have perhaps been used as a means by which the government can promote diversity. As Jean and Clarkson are both women, immigrants and members of visible minorities, their symbolic appointment suggests that the government was eager to display in a highly symbolic gesture, ideals of Canadian diversity. The absence of women, and especially women of colour from the real corridors of power (e.g. the Supreme Court, Cabinet, Crown Corporations, appointments to the Senior levels of the Public Service) supports my cynical view of these appointments and leaves the question open as to whether they are merely pawns used in the service of promoting Brand Canada. These seemingly hollow gestures have historical precedence: while Diefenbaker appointed Georges Vanier to the position, no francophones held prominent positions in his cabinet.

acknowledged the contributions of Mssrs. Norman Hallendy and James Houston, LeBlanc offered some brief observations about the Inuit symbol being unveiled at the event:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I got an early look at this Inuksuk when the artist [Kananginak Pootoogook] was here three weeks ago. I told him that this figure not only looked human, it looked rather hard-headed.
 He said: "Yes, but when you talk, it won't argue back." So I'm grateful for that.
 An inuksuk is silent, but they have always carried a message. And they have done so for a very long time.
 [...]
 Today, I hope this stone figure may also become a sign of hope for the future. And I believe that one day, natives and non-natives, your children and mine, will be equally at home in the heart of our country.
 - **Governor General Romeo LeBlanc at the 1997 unveiling of an Inukshuk at Rideau Hall.**

While Leblanc's musings on the inukshuk refer to its silence, "An inuksuk is silent," I note the vocality of other nationalized Aboriginal symbols that have, in recent years *argued back*. The case of the 2006 repatriation of the G'psgolox totem pole to the Haisla nation of British Columbia is one such example (Hume 2006: A13) The subject of a 2003 NFB documentary by Gil Cardinal titled "Totem: The Return of the G'psgolox Pole," the efforts by the Haisla people to recover the stolen object received widespread media attention upon its successful repatriation in 2006.³² *The Globe and Mail's* Mark Hume covered the story noting that the repatriation, according to Gerald Amos, who chaired of the Haisla repatriation committee, "is giving hope to other aboriginal communities that want to recover artefacts from museums around the world" (in Hume 2006: A13).

However, owing to its relative newness, the inukshuk does not carry the same overt connections to colonial appropriation as the totem pole. I speculate that while Inuit groups have been vociferous and active agents in their dealings with the federal

³² The story was covered in April of 2006 by the CBC, CTV, the Associated Press, The Globe and Mail and The Vancouver Sun.

government, their struggles and contestations have often been absent or overlooked in the national media. In contrast to the widely covered and occasionally violent Aboriginal protest movements in the south, it could be suggested that by comparison, the Inuit have a more peaceful or “quiet” relationship with the state. I further speculate that beyond LeBlanc’s light-hearted joke at the beginning of his speech, there appears to be a powerful subtext underlying his anecdote as to the “silent” character of the inukshuk.

But while LeBlanc notes the silence of the inukshuk, he is quick to counter that it has always carried a message. LeBlanc never elaborates what that message is, however, in commenting upon the message-carrying capabilities of the monument, he rather unwittingly stumbles upon the powerfully symbolic potential of the inukshuk to convey a host of meanings. Moreover, in not defining the inukshuk’s message, he is leaving it open as to what that message might be, or *may become*. He even attempts in his speech to infuse the inukshuk with his own message: that of hope for the future and the peaceful and respectful coexistence between Aboriginal and dominant cultures. His message foreshadows the notions of tolerance and diversity that will later be inscribed on the symbol.

Six years later, at a 2003 ceremony honouring recipients of the Order of Canada, Adrienne Clarkson attempted to assign a more nuanced meaning to this, as Hallendy (2000) puts it, *silent messenger*:

Sometimes there's been a guide in your mental map-making, a person or several people who have helped you to become what you were meant to be. They are like the *Inukshuks* [sic] that point the direction through the white desert which is our north. They have helped to give shape and direction to where you were going, or where you thought you were going. Those people are here with you today – because you include them in your mental dream map. They are coordinates on your spiritual geography. They have helped you follow a dream trail.

And through this dream trail you have brought experience, intuition and talent together into noteworthy achievement. Having travelled those dream trails, you can help others by translating them into images for them to follow. This is how individual achievement can be taken to the higher realm of the public good. That is the special responsibility of which I spoke. You now have become *Inukshuks* [*sic.*] to point the way for others, to guide, to encourage, to stand as symbols of what we can do in our society – if we know the way in our minds, if we can find our dream-trails.

-Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, Speech on the Occasion of the Order of Canada Investiture. Ottawa, Friday, February 21, 2003

Clarkson's official speeches often emphasized Canada's symbolic connection to the North and was a subtle if consistent advocate of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. What is interesting in her remarks, imbued as they were with a heavy dose of pseudo-Aboriginal mysticism (read: dream trails), is that she is linking her idea of the inukshuk to notions of civic leadership.

In an earlier 2002 speech honouring Queen Elizabeth II, Clarkson suggested: "There have to be beacons, those who give us our bearings, who point the way like the Inukshuk of the Canadian Arctic; our magnetic is north." Clarkson's 2003 comments demonstrate that such beacons have been found in those honourees who demonstrate leadership and achievement and the people who assisted in their efforts. Moreover, her remarks offer a sense of collective and individual destiny wrapped up in her symbolic reading of the inukshuk; that the inukshuk had been nationalized in the sense of mooring the Inuit symbol to the idea of *national* citizenship and the values that underlie the making of a "good" citizen. Indeed, the inukshuk had moved beyond being a "silent" message carrier in LeBlanc's account, to that of a "beacon," situated within a national landscape, highlighting the "higher realm of public service." While the inukshuk may have stood proxy for the uber-citizen in Clarkson's utopian message, it nonetheless stood symbolically as a sentinel for her ideal state. It had been invested with a powerful

spatialised rhetoric (read: spiritual geography) and acknowledged as a beacon of values, whatever those might be...

When Governor General Michaëlle Jean commemorated an inukshuk at Juno Beach, France, in 2005 to honour the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion and Canadian veterans who had fallen during the invasion, the idea of what those specific national values were became a lot clearer:

The Inuksuk, in Inuit Culture, is a guide. This stone figure bears a lasting witness that humans have passed through a place. It is a signpost in space, sometimes marking a spot that summons us to reverence and contemplation.

[...]

May the spirit of the Inuksuk go with you throughout this journey that you are making to the battlefields of France and Belgium. And may it guide us toward a world in which the *values of openness, tolerance, respect and fellowship triumph.*

- Governor General Michaëlle Jean at a 2005 unveiling of an inukshuk at Juno Beach, France [my emphasis]

Indeed, from LeBlanc's vague remarks in 1997 to Clarkson's still ambiguous yet increasingly sophisticated comments in 2002-3, Jean's rhetoric finally reflect named values, specifically "openness, tolerance, respect and fellowship." As this is a "Canadian" monument in France, we can deduce that such values are "Canadian" in character. Moreover, the fact that the inukshuk was being used overseas, similarly to the monument in *Canada Square*, to commemorate Canada's contribution to the D-Day invasion, speaks highly of the symbol's growing cachet in the corridors of power. It speaks further to Canada's attempt to redefine, or rebrand itself on the international stage using non-traditional symbols.³³

³³ However, as early as 2002 an inukshuk was constructed by Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan to commemorate Canadian forces that had fallen during "Operation Enduring Freedom/Apollo" (Fletcher, 2005; Waymarking.com 2008) UPDATE: As I write this, the Afghanistan inukshuk has been moved and rededicated by Canadian Forces to all NATO soldiers who have fallen in the ongoing conflict. Of note and particular relevance to my first chapter are the comments of British RAF Officer, Bob Judson who stated: "It [...] represents a way of telling those who come after us that we were here now." (CBC 2008)

Cumulatively, what this rhetorical evidence suggests is that in a seemingly short period of time (eight years), the inukshuk's semiological currency rose drastically. The evidence supports my notion that the inukshuk was still, in LeBlanc's tenure, a fledgling member of the national symbolic pantheon. By 2005, however, the inukshuk was being used in a very nuanced, meaningful way to tell a very specific, Canadian story. The inukshuk was becoming firmly entrenched as a Canadian national symbol.

Stamping, minting and educating: Banal expressions of statehood

Following Pettigrew's message, the inukshuk was increasingly deployed in material form to promote *our unique advantage*, diversity. In 2002, the same year as Clarkson's speech highlighting the need for national beacons, Citizenship and Immigration Canada introduced a new educational program designed to educate students about the connections between values and citizenship. *The Spirit of Home 2002* was intended to help students to become good citizens by, quoting then-Minister Denis Coderre, "holding dear our values of freedom, respect and peace"(2002).³⁴

The activities and themes of *Spirit of Home* were organized into various modules and a colourful poster was provided for display in classrooms and youth centres [figure 2.2]. The poster, bordered with maple leaves, is of a house filled with happy children of different racial backgrounds (one of them is holding the Canadian flag) peering out of the windows; the top of the house has an Aboriginal symbol of possibly Pacific North-Western provenance; various birds commonly associated with Canada (a loon, an eagle, a Canada goose and a blue jay) fly around the house's exterior; a multitude of flora

³⁴ The Minister's remarks to not name tolerance, diversity and hospitality directly, however, we can deduce from his words that in referring to respect and peace, he is alluding to respect for other cultures (diversity) and peace through tolerance.

including tulips and pinecones are similarly positioned; and, curiously, a St. Bernard dog, traditionally seen as a symbol of refuge and hospitality, stands guard at the doorway where large snowflakes are falling. Across the middle is a banner emblazoned with the slogan: *Canada: We All Belong!* What perhaps, is most curious is that outside the door, in the bottom right-hand corner, and beside the vigilant St. Bernard, stands an inukshuk. Additionally, the inukshuk is much larger than the Canadian flag.

The fourth module of *Spirit of Home* was titled *My time for Peace*. One of the activities in this module focused directly on the inukshuk and supposedly Canadian notions of hospitality:

Show your youth the Inukshuk on the Canada: We All Belong! Poster and provide pictures of Inukshuk statues from the North. Explain the origins of the Inukshuk and its significance within Inuit culture. Discuss the Inukshuk's role as a guide for travellers, and use this powerful metaphor to explore the role each of us can play in guiding people who travel to Canada to make this country their new home [...] Encourage your youth to follow the example of Inukshuk and to guide the many travellers who come to Canada each year in search of shelter and a welcoming home (2002).

While hospitality is not directly synonymous with diversity, it is wrapped up into the language of diversity in the sense that “Canadian” notions of hospitality and tolerance to immigrants has historically engendered a diverse and peaceful population [figure 2.3]. Moreover, to return to the poster once again, the children of different racial backgrounds are meant to signify the myth of Canada's “cultural mosaic.” In fact, one could argue that watchwords like hospitality, tolerance, and multiculturalism are part of a language that is used to demarcate a geography of diversity in Canada, and again, the inukshuk is being used as a beacon to locate students within that geography.

Pettigrew's earlier comments suggesting the “need to make sure that Canadians understand what we have to offer the world, that they can tell the Canadian story to anyone who will listen,” resonate loudly in the message of *Spirit of Home* module four

and are particularly relevant in that this activity is attempting to condition Canadian youth to tell this story of Canada's "unique advantage."³⁵ The presence of the inukshuk in a poster promoting Canada's diversity and contextualized in the activity synopsis as "a powerful metaphor" for such Canadian values is equally telling.³⁶

Another way in which the inukshuk was being "minted" for national service was through its repeated presence on stamps and currency. The inukshuk had already been featured on the Canadian quarter as early as 1992 (the earliest use of the symbol in a national context that I could locate) when the Canadian Mint produced a series to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Confederation [figure 2.4]. The series produced twelve quarters, one for each province and territory; the inukshuk represented the Northwest Territories which, at the time, encompassed what would become the territory of Nunavut. On a promotional souvenir that commemorated the series, the symbol was explained as "erected by the Inuit in the treeless lands of the North. These cairns were most commonly used as landmarks for boat and sled navigation, and they also played an important part in hunting caribou by directing the movement of herds"(Royal Canadian Mint 1992). It should be noted, however, that while used on national currency, the inukshuk was only being used to signify a limited, regional context.

Eight years later, in 2000, a 47¢ stamp titled *Flag* featured a large Canadian flag positioned, I suggest hierarchically, over a considerably smaller inukshuk on the lower

³⁵ Relevant to my consideration of *Spirit of Home*, Mackey (1999) discusses *Spirit of a Nation*, a play combining "a celebration of cultural diversity, a glorification of Canadian achievement and shaping of the environment, and a message of harmony with the land"(74). Coinciding with the Canada 125 celebrations, produced by the Canadian Heritage Arts Society, sponsored by the Federal Government and featuring a multicultural cast of youth from "diverse cultural backgrounds, *Spirit of a Nation* was "explicitly designed," Mackey argues "as a pedagogical endeavour"(ibid.).

³⁶ An article in *The Windsor Star*, May 30th 2008, titled "Kids meet downtown to celebrate their diversity," reports that "[S]tudents adorned a banner hanging from a tree with symbols of their diversity – including a dove, a cross and an inukshuk. The banner will be displayed at city hall."(Windsor Star 2008)

left side of the image [figure 2.5]. The inukshuk had been removed from the regional locality of the 1992 coin and framed within a national context by virtue of the flag and the text which reads CANADA. The inukshuk is perched on a rocky shore of what is ostensibly the Arctic coastline overlooking a vast expanse of water and sky, although, this vantage point could be just as easily mistaken for the shores of, say, Georgian Bay.

The *Historical Notice* published by Canada Post Archives Database (2001) concentrated most of its description of the stamp on the origins and composition of the Canadian flag. Of note is that the rhetoric of diversity, here, is being attached to the maple leaf: “it’s [the maple leaf] the centrepiece of a flag that represents all citizens of Canada regardless of race, language, belief or opinion.” The closing remarks of the Notice mentions in brief, the presence of the inukshuk “to balance out the stamp’s visual elements.” In terms of defining the inukshuk, the Notice states: “An inukshuk is a figure of a human made of stones, originally used to scare caribou into an ambush. Today it’s used as a marker to guide travellers”(2001)

A short five years later, in 2005, the inukshuk had undergone a remarkable transformation. No longer used “to balance out the stamp’s visual elements,” the inukshuk was the focal point of the 50¢ stamp commemorating Canada’s participation at the 2005 World Exposition in Japan [figure 2.6]. The stamp, aptly titled *Wisdom in Diversity* (issued the same year as Jean’s speech in France), features a foregrounded inukshuk that takes up most of the surface of the stamp. Behind the inukshuk is a pixellated image of the northern lights; in the bottom left corner a coniferous tree line, denoting Canadian wilderness; and, fibre optic cables interlaced throughout the image. Noticeably absent is the Canadian flag or the maple leaf. While the maple leaf was

connected to ideas of Canadian diversity in the 2000 stamp, the press release issued by Canada Post suggested a symbolic shift in its rhetoric by:

[...] seizing the opportunity to export this country's image world-wide by putting on view its diversity, creativity and innovation. When Canada chose as its theme "Wisdom of Diversity," Canada Post decided it wanted a stamp to convey how the country's diversity is found everywhere – in its people, fauna, flora, geology, and climate.

This rhetoric sounds uncannily familiar to Pettigrew's message on a few levels. Like *Spirit of Home*, the language of diversity is being inscribed on the inukshuk. Moreover, the international connotations attached to a stamp commemorating Canada's participation at an international event (the World Expo) and the release's message of "export[ing] this country's image worldwide by putting on view its diversity," resonates with the Pettigrew's desire to tell a new Canadian story abroad. However, there is a more nuanced parallel to Pettigrew's message. Pettigrew's idea of the Canadian brand was one built on notions of diversity with the purpose of promoting an "economy fired by information technology, fuelled by telecommunications." Judging by its visual rhetoric that combines the antimodern with the hyper-modern through representations of the wilderness and fibre-optic cables, I argue that *Wisdom of Diversity* successfully articulates Pettigrew's desired message. Moreover, to relate this to my notion of iconification, the inukshuk stands centrally figured as the nexus mediating the relationship between the anti and the hyper modern.

Ilanaaq - it's everywhere you want to be!

We just tend to listen to everybody, everybody has a voice, and that's why we're so passionate about who we are. We include everybody.

This logo had to fit as much in a Visa Card as it did in a stadium or in the middle of an ice rink.

– 'Ilanaaq' Creator Elena Rivera-MacGregor (in Freeze 2005 and Kennedy and Kerr 2005)

2005 was indeed a watershed year for the inukshuk: *Wisdom of Diversity* and the Juno Beach monument demonstrated that the inukshuk had come of age on the national political stage. However, the Vancouver Olympic Committee's (VANOC) choice to use an image of a stylized inukshuk as its official logo, perhaps best demonstrates the overwhelming success of the inukshuk as an emerging and popular national symbol [figure 2.7]. The April 25th 2005 VANOC press release rolling out the Olympic logo, *Ilanaaq*, Inuktitut for "friend", provided a highly polished rhetoric reflecting the earlier articulations of the inukshuk as seen in *Spirit of Home* and *Wisdom of Diversity*.

The opening sentence of the press release stated: "A *uniquely Canadian symbol* of friendship, hospitality, strength, teamwork and the vast Canadian landscape has been selected as the emblem for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games" [my emphasis]. True to the *signification* (Barthes 1981) of the inukshuk, the release continues by contextualizing the symbol in both Inuit and national culture:

The Vancouver 2010 emblem is a contemporary interpretation of the traditional inukshuk, a stone sculpture used by Canada's Inuit people as directional land marks across the northern Canadian lands of snow and ice. *Over time*, the inukshuk has become a representation of hope, friendship and an external expression of the hospitality of a nation that warmly welcomes the people of the world with open arms. The distinctive formations are found across the country – from coastlines to mountaintops. from small towns to large cities in a variety of styles. [my emphasis]

The phrase *over time* is perhaps a little inflated or purposefully ambiguous considering the evidence I have considered in this chapter, that the inukshuk has only really been present on the national stage from 1992 and largely in the national imagination since the 1994 Heritage Minute. However, despite this somewhat hyperbolic phrasing, I suggest that like the inuksuit found in the recreational wild, or the monument in *Canada Square*, the language used in VANOC's press release attempts to naturalize the inukshuk in the historical-geographic landscape of "Canada." The release continues in this vein by

offering some observations by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) panel that judged the submissions for the Olympic logo. René Fasel, chairman for the IOC Coordination Commission for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games commented that “Ilanaaq is rooted in Canada’s history. It reflects the spirit, diversity and values of Canada.”³⁷

Moreover, the content of the release shadowed Pettigrew’s strategies for promoting a “new” Canada to the world. The potential for the Olympics to benefit the updated Canadian image had been previously touted by Pettigrew during a speech at the Conference Board of Canada in 2002 when he remarked that the strong showing by Canadian athletes drew positive international media attention towards Canada. Suggesting that few people outside the country knew the “truth” about Canada, the 2002 Winter Olympics had been a good vehicle for spreading his new message:

One of our biggest problems is that relatively few people know the truth about Canada.

A good example of this is the international media attention Canada received during and right after the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. The remarkable performances of our athletes not only drew international media coverage, but incited some to them to research and discover more about Canada.

What they found is that Canada is more than immense grasslands, cold winters and beautiful wilderness. They discovered that Canada is also about successful businesses whose products [...] are now known throughout the world.

With the world’s eyes fixed on Vancouver, the 2010 Games will be the ultimate platform for promoting, or to use Billig’s term, *flagging* brand Canada at home and abroad.

Ilanaaq will be symbolically poised as the logo behind the brand; this fact did not escape VANOC who stated in their release that:

³⁷ It was widely reported that Jacques Rogge, President of the IOC, was delighted in the logo as it reminded him of a hockey goalie, intersecting the inukshuk with yet another aspect of the Canadian identity.

The Vancouver 2010 emblem forms the cornerstone of the entire look of the Games program. Over the next five years, the emblem and associated designs and colours will be featured in thousands of applications such as licensed products, street banners, publications and rink boards at sport venues. **These applications will make the Vancouver 2010 emblem one of the most recognized marks in the world** (2005) [my emphasis].

This process of branding *Ilanaaq* has begun in earnest and the stylized logo has already become ubiquitous across the country. Through licensing rights conferred to corporate sponsors, *Ilanaaq* can be seen on a host of products and promotional merchandise; at every corner, the Olympic logo can be spotted at shopping malls, at gas stations, in supermarkets, in airports, at festivals, anywhere corporations may find an audience. This repeated use of the Olympic logo serves not only to keep the image of the inukshuk constant and fresh in the day-to-day life of the citizen, but, in the national and corporate context to which it can be found, further reifies the symbol as Canadian, as belonging to the nation. The corporate sphere, then, lends another layer of authenticity to the inukshuk, legitimizing through its association with the companies it represents, Canadian companies like *Bell Canada*, *Petro Canada*, the Royal Bank of *Canada* to name a few examples.

However, I argue that in positing the inukshuk within the Canadian national landscape and framing it as a *unique* symbol that had evolved *over time*, VANOC was attempting to fend off potential charges of cultural appropriation and criticisms levelled at the logo's authenticity. Despite these efforts, criticism came swiftly from all corners: West Coast Aboriginal leaders condemned the use of an Aboriginal symbol that did not come from British Columbia. The President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Chief Stewart Philip, commented that it looked like a Pac-Man and offered that "The first nations community at large is disappointed with the selection. The decision makers have

decided not to reflect the first nations and the Pacific region in the design of the logo” (in Morris 2005: A-9).

In “The Friend Nobody Likes,” Jane Armstrong of *The Globe and Mail* reported that “One writer to a Vancouver paper said using the Inuit icon as an Olympic logo gives the impression that Canada is a barren, northern tundra. A caller to a radio show said Ilanaaq resembled the toy figurine Gumby, only with a rocket launcher”(2005: A1). According to her article, Chief Edward John of British Columbia’s First Nations Summit suggested “Does *inukshuk* represent Canada? I hardly think so. It represents the North. Put it this way: if there were games in Yellowknife and the logo was West Coast totem poles, do you think they’d be happy up there?” (in Armstrong 2005: A1) VANOC CEO John Furlong responded in the article to the expected criticism stating: “These are Canada’s Games. Not just the B.C. Games. We wanted a logo to represent that”(ibid.). The implicit argument that Furlong is employing, relevant to the overall iconification of the inukshuk, is that the nation has at its disposal the power to mobilize symbols from any region in the country for use in the service of signifying national identity. Moreover, the inukshuk was not regional at all, it was Canadian.

If the backlash towards *Ilanaaq* was fierce, it failed to take into consideration the overall strategies implicit in positioning the inukshuk in the national-symbolic landscape.

In “Inukshuk replacing the maple leaf: Canada’s new symbol leads us...somewhere,”

The National Post’s James Brean attempted to address this idea:

On Saturday night, when he shrugged off the absence of a maple leaf in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics logo, organizing committee CEO John Furlong heralded a new age in Canadian national symbolism: the descent of the maple leaf, and the rise of the inukshuk. “It was time for us to go on and find a new mark,” Mr. Furlong said of the maple leaf, adding that the new inukshuk logo “will speak to the humanity of the country, the people, the culture, the values we have.”

He might have added: “Whatever those are.” Because if anything is clear from the inukshuk’s recent rise in the public mind – on beer labels and in bank ads, as a monument

of joy or grief, in the name of an Internet company and a polar bear at the Toronto Zoo – it is that no one really knows what an inukshuk is, except that it is Canadian (A4).

Brean's title confirms what I have been arguing throughout this chapter: that the primacy of the maple leaf was being contested by the ongoing iconification of the inukshuk.³⁸ But what is more revealing is that despite Brean's ambivalence as to its meaning, the inukshuk, for whatever the reason, had penetrated the national imagination. Echoing McLuhan's oft-cited maxim *the medium is the message*, and foreshadowing Linda from Burlington's "the inukshuk is Canadian, that's all," (from *Ontario Today* 2007), Brean's comments demonstrate that above-all, the inukshuk itself is the prime message.

Returning to Barthes, the signification (the mythic sign) requires a concept. I argue that while the notions of diversity, Aboriginality and nordicity are bundled into the concept of the symbol, the over-arching concept associated with the nationalized inukshuk is that it is Canadian – *that's all*. Brean's comments, while seemingly critical, do not suggest failure from my perspective. Quite the reverse, they represent success, in that the inukshuk, whatever it is, whatever it means, is essentially Canadian; the inukshuk by 2005 had been emptied of specificity and successfully *nationalized*.

In this light, the endorsement by VANOC of this new symbol, could only be seen as a huge boost in support the state's earlier efforts to iconify the inukshuk; one that they would seek to capitalize upon. I suggest that the iconification of a symbol is advanced through opportunity as opposed to conspiratorial pre-meditation. In this light the government prepared to align its brand with that of VANOC's. In a 2006 article in *The Globe and Mail*, sports writer Colin Freeze, in "Get ready to embrace this logo" reported

³⁸ The sponsorship scandal in Quebec had dealt the maple leaf a considerable blow.

on the government's plans to absorb *Ilanaaq* into its own specific "Government of Canada" brand:

If the government of Canada succeeds, the mascot for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver will soon be spotted everywhere.

"Engagement of Canadians of all regions, cultural backgrounds, including aboriginal [sic] peoples, linguistic minority communities, youth... will be vital in creating a pan-Canadian sense of ownership and collective [Olympic] legacy," says a new contract tendered this week by Heritage Canada.

The department is asking for help to figure out a "corporate look" that would mix Olympic logos with the Canadian government's brand, adding in some generous dollops of national-unity messaged and multicultural values.

According to the request for proposals [...] the contractor will figure out how to blitz the country with Ottawa's version of the 2010 logo, featuring *Ilanaaq*, in conjunction with the standard Government of Canada logo (S4).

The underlying notion of such an advertising blitz is that Canadians need to be familiarized with the idea that the inukshuk is a Canadian symbol before it is rolled out internationally; again echoing Pettigrew's comments that Canadian's need first to understand their story before they tell it to the world.

Another important detail in Freeze's article is the role of corporate sponsors in promoting *Ilanaaq*:

Various levels of government, particularly Ottawa, have committed hundreds of millions of dollars to the Olympics, while the big corporate sponsors – such as Bell, GM and Royal Bank – are combining to donate nearly as much.

Only big-time sponsors get to associate their brands with *Ilanaaq*, whose companionship doesn't come cheap (2006: S4).

The Olympic Games, then, offer a unique intersection between public and private interests. However, such interconnectedness in the Canadian context is hardly a new phenomenon: throughout its history and pre-history Canada has had a long-standing connection with its corporations: The Hudson's Bay Company, Bell Canada and Canadian banking institutions are notable examples. As Peter Hodgins (2003) suggests, this public-corporate relationship has had strong connections to the construction of

national identity and nation building. Writing on this interconnectedness as it pertained to the *Historica* Heritage Minutes, Hodgins observes:

[C]orporate Canada's attempt to reconfigure Canadian subjectivities [is] in a manner that suits its own "innovation agenda." In other words, corporate Canada seems to be using the Heritage Minutes and the attending discourse of nation-building that accompanies them as a blind for its own political and cultural project of transforming future Canadian "citizens" into "consumers" and "knowledgeable workers" (12).

This resonates again, with Pettigrew's message that Canadian business had a role to play in promoting Canada's message domestically and abroad.³⁹ The question becomes (although, I won't attempt to answer it here), are these corporations promoting the Government's message or is the Government promoting the corporate message *or* are these messages one in the same? Certainly, the concept of Brand Canada was one of promoting Canadian competitiveness and business in the global economy, but does the internal dimension of the brand, and the nationalization of the inukshuk possess a deeper message beyond merely educating Canadians about their putative values? Does the language of diversity and hospitality as encoded in the nationalized inukshuk suggest a pedagogy of neo-liberal nationalism: that is, a deeper, didactic strategy of re-aligning Canadian notions of government and citizenship to be more in-line with the ongoing corporatization of the state and the creation of a class of consumer-citizens who populate this brave "New" Canada?

³⁹ Independent, although perhaps interdependent of the state's and VANOC's efforts to iconify the inukshuk, some Canadian corporations have embraced this symbol as a trade mark for their own products. Kamik Boots uses the inukshuk in its logo [figure 2.8]; and, as I mentioned in a previous footnote, True North Beer used the inukshuk on its beer labels (although it no longer does). Most notable is Inukshuk Wireless, a joint venture between Bell Canada and Rogers Communication started in 2005 to develop an nationwide wireless broadband (Wi-Max) network [figure 2.9]. While the Kamik and True North applications of the inukshuk resonate more with romantic notions of the wilderness, the Aboriginal and the North, Inukshuk Wireless seems to be capitalizing on the symbol as an ancient example the Canadian telecommunication legacy, and, again, like *Wisdom of Diversity* intersecting the antimodern with the hypermodern. Moreover, the explanatory message of the logo on the company's website reflects the rhetoric of hospitality: "Inukshuk is a beacon. For travellers in Canada's North, an Inukshuk is a welcome sight. It says, 'I've been here before; you're on the right path'. In the same way, Inukshuk will be a welcome guide to travellers on the internet." (Inukshuk Wireless 2008).

Conclusion: The head of the sovereign, competing symbols of sovereignty?

The nationalized inukshuk, I argue, came of age in 2005. Indicative of the process of iconification, this maturation, I suggest, stemmed from the earlier efforts of individual actors and agencies operating within the state who had been independently exploiting the inukshuk to suit their own localised interests. Increasingly, as the inukshuk became more visible and widely used, its symbolic currency rose, and it began to take a more meaningful, nuanced and national dimension. Reflecting both a sense of nordicity and Aboriginality, a rhetoric of national values, namely diversity, hospitality and tolerance, has further been inscribed on the inukshuk to underscore its essential Canadian-ness and marketed from various corners to the nation at large. These earlier efforts came to a head, when in 2005, VANOC announced that *Ilanaaq*, a stylized inukshuk would be its official logo.

As I have suggested, through its ubiquitous government/corporate branding, *Ilanaaq* can now be seen everywhere in Canada – from automated Bank machines, to licence plates, wine bottles, new GM cars, corporate promotional stationary, TV commercials, billboards, work uniforms – *Ilanaaq* has entered the quotidian landscape repeatedly projecting, or flagging, powerful yet subtle messages at every turn in the day-to-day world of the consumer. In their homes, at their places of work, penetrating almost every space both public and private an individual might access, images of the nationalized inukshuk, especially figured in *Ilanaaq*, constantly reaffirm and reify the

inukshuk's presence in the national imagination. At this point the inukshuk's status as an enduring national symbol seems assured.

On a final note, highlighting yet another example of the ongoing iconification of the inukshuk, Petro-Canada and the Royal Bank, in participation with the Royal Canadian Mint will be issuing from 2007-2009, a series of quarters commemorating the Winter Games. The back of the coins, where we saw the inukshuk featured in 1992, feature images of various Olympic events. Of note, is that *Ilanaaq* is featured on the *front* of the coin, sharing "head-space" with the Queen.⁴⁰ It is extremely rare, that the reigning monarch, as Canada's ultimate symbol of political sovereignty, ever shares this space at all [figure 2.9].

As I have demonstrated throughout this chapter, the inukshuk is an extremely versatile sign; VANOC's choice of a northern symbol as its logo is both convenient and meaningfully coincidental, one that promises to keep the presence of Canada's North at the fore both nationally and internationally prior to and during the 2010 games. As the contest for Arctic sovereignty heats up, how does the inukshuk come to represent Canada's ongoing claim to contested Arctic spaces such as the Northwest Passage, Hans Island and the vast oil reserves reputed to exist beneath the Arctic sea-bed?⁴¹ Moreover, to what extent does the inukshuk intersect with past and present strategies to highlight these claims? In the following chapter, I will argue that in the continuing process of iconification, the inukshuk is being deployed as a symbolic response to the timely question of Arctic sovereignty; another discourse that is meaningfully connected to the advancement of the symbol on the national stage.

⁴⁰ For coins featuring Paralympic events, the Paralympic logo is featured on the front of the coin.

⁴¹ I note that Petro-Canada is a co-sponsor of this coin series.

Chapter Three

Of Paper Tigers, Frozen Beavers and Stone Sentinels: The inukshuk and the question of Arctic Sovereignty

The definition of sovereignty is somewhat elusive, with varying emphasis given to the elements of control, authority, and *perception* (Carnaghan and Goody 2006, 2) [emphasis added]

In the previous two chapters, I have explored how the inukshuk has resonated within the dominant culture; and, how the power of the inukshuk fetish has been capitalized upon by the state seeking to update its image in an increasingly competitive global economy. This branding initiative rested upon diversity as a cornerstone of the Canadian identity via the articulation of associated Canadian values (Nimijean 2005). The inukshuk emerges in the early part of the decade – faceless, genderless, secular and silent – as an ideal and highly accessible monument; open to varying, yet increasingly uniform messaging that repeatedly articulates the multicultural, tolerant and diverse image of nation that Canada desires to have both domestically and abroad.

However, beyond notions of Aboriginality, diversity, tolerance and multiculturalism, there is one lingering subtext attached to this symbol that I alluded to at the end of the last chapter, and which will explore here. It is, perhaps, the most important subtext in terms of Canada's agenda on the current geo-political stage: the notion of sovereignty, specifically Arctic sovereignty. With the debate currently heating up concerning territorial claims to Arctic spaces, the obvious question that emerges is: how can Canada, a nation of relatively modest military strength contest and indeed assert sovereignty in a multi-power colonial scramble that involves both the United States and Russia?

The inukshuk in this light might appear merely as a footnote to this question. However, the inukshuk has appeared in support of a strategy that, I will argue, has in the absence of strong military force, attempted to symbolically extend and maintain Canada's hegemony within the Arctic. I reverse American President Theodore Roosevelt's famous maxim and suggest that Canada must speak loudly *because* it carries a small stick. As a relatively militaristically benign middle power,⁴² Canada has historically been forced to find innovative, demonstrative or indeed symbolic means to assert its sovereignty in the North (Jones-Imhotep 2004; Fremeth 2003; Humphreys 2005).

In this chapter, I engage evidence in a more speculative dialogue than in previous chapters. This is because the nationalized inukshuk's connotative message of sovereignty is, I suggest, largely implicit rather than explicit, hidden under all those other layers of meaning that have come to be associated with the symbol. However, in terms of how Canada has administered the North and asserted its sovereignty, the inukshuk can be seen to embody, intersect or resonate with many of those practices further validating its enduring symbolic currency on the national stage.

As I excavate the evidence relating to this particular topic, this theme of what I call *soft-sovereignty* continues to reappear in Canada's territorial posturing towards the Arctic.⁴³ I use the term soft-sovereignty to describe mainly non-militaristic methods that the state uses to assert its presence in and control over the North.⁴⁴ In discussing this notion of soft-sovereignty, I will be situating the inukshuk's development and ubiquity

⁴² Although the people of Afghanistan and Somalia might disagree.

⁴³ *Soft sovereignty* is suggestive of Nye's (2004) notion of *soft power* whereby states are increasingly using public diplomacy, or non-militaristic strategies to influence power on the global stage.

⁴⁴ While the state does engage in periodic military exercises in the region, and continues to fund a (mostly) Inuit militia called *The Arctic Rangers*, such efforts remain *soft* in that they are at best symbolic or spectacular in nature and intent.

within a larger historical and colonial context of Western territorial possession to demonstrate how it has become a present day expression of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. The inukshuk's sovereignty story starts here.

The True North Strong and Free in *the Cold Rush*

The cover of the October 1st, 2007 edition of *Time* magazine posed the increasingly topical and thorny question "Who owns the Arctic?" The cover graphic displayed a small patch of ice floating in a vast expanse of open, ostensibly Arctic water [figure 3.1]. The ice patch had five flags staked on top of it, those of Russia, the United States, Norway, Denmark and Canada; countries that are currently contesting territoriality over Arctic spaces. Combined with the text, the flags suggested an impending territorial scramble between the nations concerned.

But what is more interesting from my perspective, are the discourses that can be linked to those flags, staked as they were, atop the ice patch. I note that the graphic implies a colonial subtext suggestive of "flag planting," a ceremony commonly associated, especially in early colonial history, with demonstrating ownership over newly "discovered" territories.⁴⁵ The colonial dimension in *Time* was even more overt given the article's allusions to "a *new* Great Game." The old "Great Game," refers to the nineteenth Century colonial contest between the British and Russian Empires for Asian territories; this allusion was apparently not lost on *Time* contributor James Graff.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ This tradition that has continued into the modern era, witnessed in the iconic photographs taken at the American capture of Iwo Jima in WWII and on the lunar surface in 1969; and of the planting of the Russian tricolour at the North Pole in August of 2007.

⁴⁶ It was also not lost on Lieutenant-Commander Guy Killaby, a military legal expert who wrote, two years prior to the TIME feature, " 'Great Game in a Cold Climate'; Canada's Arctic Sovereignty in Question," an

Indeed, returning to the cover graphic, the lone patch of ice floating on an otherwise open sea suggests that a *neo-colonial* scramble, the “*cold rush*” if you will, is looming paradoxically because the effects of global warming offer the lucrative possibilities of opening up new silk roads or rather, trade routes to the east, like the fabled Northwest Passage, and easier extraction of resources like oil, diamonds and gold. The Arctic is believed to possess a minimum of 20% of the world’s remaining oil reserves and thus, the nation or nations who control these reserves stand to enjoy immense prosperity and geo-political power.

It should not be overlooked that, the iconification of the inukshuk was and is occurring at a time when increasing international attention is becoming focused on the question of Arctic ownership. I attribute this sense of complementarity, once again, to the meaningful coincidences that are exploited through the process of iconification. Moreover, returning to the mythic sign, the meaning of the inukshuk, that “instantaneous reserve of history,” as Barthes puts it (1981: 118), is once again being drawn upon. This symbol of Inuit culture, found originally in the Arctic, is applied through the form of the nationalized inukshuk (the stone man), to the overarching concept of its essential Canadian-ness, and therefore, by extension, to the essential Canadian-ness of the Arctic.

I want to turn the discussion over to a brief contextualization of Western notions of sovereignty in the New World, and examine the extent to which European discourses of sovereignty and possession have informed Canada’s past and current efforts to express its sovereignty in the North. This will not be a thorough discussion on all matters relating to sovereignty and possession, rather, it is intended to locate some of the practices and

article in the Winter 2005-2006 edition of *The Canadian Military Journal*. Indeed, in the article, Killaby cited an even earlier reference to the Great Game in a 2005 piece in *The New York Times*.

symbolic gestures that were used to justify the acquisition (theft) of “New World” territories by European powers. I will then connect Canada’s efforts to these earlier colonial practices throughout the chapter. On a final note, following my concept of iconification, I will address the ways in which these particular discourses have can be located within the nationalized inukshuk; how it appears as a logical embodiment of Canada’s Arctic sovereignty through a localised, Canadian vernacular.

Sovereignty and Possession in brief context

While Canada traces its origins to two “founding” empires, namely those of the British and the French, I argue that Canada’s strategies, past and present, have been constructed out of a considerably larger datum of colonial experience drawn from the overall phenomenon of Western colonization. That is to say, Canada’s efforts broadly reflect a pastiche of colonial approaches to territorial possession as opposed to merely relying upon those measures employed by the founding empires.

While Canada has a host of historic practices relating to the possession of remote territories at its disposal, European colonial powers, at the time New World “discovery” did not. They possessed only local methods to establish “legitimate” title over a territory (Seed 1995; MacMillan 2006). MacMillan argues that “Because of the inability to draw on a “universal” legal code to regulate territorial acquisition of *terra incognita* (unknown land) each colonial power developed its own self-serving code, usually based on its indigenous, domestic laws”(11). As the Spanish, and later, the Portuguese were the first to lay claim to the New World, these “self-serving codes” were exercised, the author suggests, through doctrines of discovery, papal edict and treaty (ibid.).

As a relative late-comer to the territorial scramble occurring in the New World, MacMillan suggests that England was forced to find alternative legal justifications for acquiring new territories. Drawing upon legal principals of land title found in English Common Law, the English sought to justify their acquisition of territory through the occupation and cultivation of the territory in question (2006: 12). The author succinctly provides the contrast between the different powers and their alternative guiding principals, being preemption and domination:

Whereas the Iberian powers legitimized their [control over New World territories] to other Europeans based on discovery, papal donation, and temporal treaty, or *preemption*, the northern powers legitimized their claims through actual, physical occupation of the territory, or *domination* (2006: 11).

Seed (1995) offers this discussion a more nuanced account of the symbolism behind territorial acquisition and the localised discourses motivating what she terms “ceremonies of possession.” Seed notes the complex variety to which these ceremonies of possession were performed by various European powers: Columbus planted royal banners and made “solemn declarations” of Spanish control over their new territories; the French in South America, under de la Ravadière, marched in a procession and had the Aboriginal peoples in their presence plant the Royal banner denoting the King’s possession of the land; the acquisition of Newfoundland involved Englishman Sir Humphrey Gilbert being presented with a stick and a sampling of dirt; the Portuguese took Brazil by trading with the indigenous peoples and mapping the stars in relation to the newly acquired territory; the Dutch, building on the Portuguese method, asserted their sovereignty in New Amsterdam through highly detailed maps (1). In other words, quoting Seed, “Colonial rule over the New World was initiated through largely ceremonial practices – planting crosses, standards, banners, and coats of arms – marching

in processions, measuring the stars, drawing maps, speaking certain words, or remaining silent”(2). It is symbolic gestures such as these that are of specific interest to this chapter.

Seed accounts for these varying symbolic expressions by suggesting that these practices arose out of local histories and systems of meaning (1995: 6). That remote control over these territories was justified through “historical cultural assumptions stemm[ing] from three fundamental sources: “everyday life,” a common colloquial language, and a shared legal code”(ibid.). To this point, Seed argues, “Symbolically enacting colonial authority meant that ceremonies, actions, speeches, and records primarily target their fellow Europeans. It was above all their own countrymen and political leaders that colonists had to convince of the legitimacy of their actions[.]”(11).

Drawing these conclusions into the present, the above quotes suggest two points that are crucial to my understanding of Canada’s claims to Arctic territories: the first is that ceremonial or symbolic expressions of sovereignty are mainly performed for internal audiences. Recalling Pettigrew’s message that the citizenry need to first know its own story, I take from Seed the suggestion that expressions of sovereignty must first find favour in a domestic audience before sovereign claims can be promoted abroad. This has the effect of mobilizing the nation behind a common goal where sovereign claims can be advanced through popular consent.

The second point of significance is that such efforts are performed because of their ability to resonate with “everyday life” and a “common colloquial language”(1995:

6). With respect to colloquial language Seed offers:

These languages were used to describe everyday objects and actions, as well as to create understandings of how those objects should be used and what actions meant. Creating such meanings day after day, year after year, made the language as well as the objects and actions it interpreted appear natural or obvious (6).

I link Seed's observations to my own concerning the inukshuk. I have demonstrated throughout this thesis that the inukshuk has become part of "everyday life," and how the testimony of ordinary citizens, like Linda from Burlington, attests to the fact that it has entered into the Canadian colloquial language. In considering how the inukshuk has become naturalized within the national imagination, I offer that it is both an open and readily accessible symbol of Canada's Arctic sovereignty; that the Canadian-ness of the inukshuk implies that Arctic spaces are, by extension, Canadian.

Moreover, I argue that the everyday presence of the Inukshuk in the south, found in ubiquity in gardens, supermarkets, cottage country, or government buildings has a more desirable effect than planting Canadian flags in the Arctic. The inuksuit found in the south are visible and daily reminders of Canada's ownership of the North; they are localised expressions of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Adding yet another layer of meaning to the Inuk youth's message, "Now the people will know we were here," I note that his message in this light, takes on a possessive connotation. "The people" in the youth's message could be construed as foreign nations; the "we" are Canadians who were here *first*, suggesting a reliance on Iberian notions of discovery whereby, MacMillan notes "As first discoverers of the territory under question, it was immediately and permanently under their possession"(2006: 11). As the Inuit, are according to Chrétien, Canada's first citizens, it stands to reason that Canadian title to Arctic spaces extends into historic Inuit occupation of the land spanning millennia.

As I begin to explore the notion of soft-sovereignty in this chapter, the unique methods of sovereignty expression employed various powers, as outlined in Seed and MacMillan become increasingly relevant to the discussion. Flag planting, mapping, data

collection, declarations, physical possession of the land, Aboriginal consent, even ceremony itself are all processes by which Canada has advanced its control and ownership of the North. I further connect these various discourses to the inukshuk through my process of iconification. That is the inukshuk, while it has not been explicitly associated with these discourses, can nonetheless be meaningfully and conveniently connected to many of them. As a mapping device; as a declaration of a human, Canadian presence; as a symbol of Aboriginal consent; and as a monument to historic and current Inuit land-use. As a symbol of Canadian Arctic sovereignty, it is a powerful and logical one considering its ability to resonate with so many of these processes. I continue this discussion by providing an account of a “uniquely” Canadian ceremony of possession.

Exercise Frozen Beaver

As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, 2005 was an important year for the nationalized inukshuk. It was featured on the *Wisdom of Diversity* stamp; chosen as the logo for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games; and, unveiled as a monument to Canada’s participation in the D-Day invasion at Juno Beach in France. However the inukshuk was also used later in July to convey a message that went beyond mere expressions of diversity, tolerance and hospitality. Indeed, this “unique symbol”(VANOC 2005) and “silent messenger”(Hallendy 2000) would be used as an overt signifier of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, and add another discrete dimension to the Canadian brand.

Located between Greenland (A Danish territory) and Canada’s Ellesmere Island, Hans Island, an uninhabited and barren island approximately 1.3 square kilometres in

area, has been the centre of a long-standing territorial dispute between both nations (Carnaghan and Goody 2006). Despite the relative economic insignificance of the island, a 2006 parliamentary report on Arctic Sovereignty, suggested that “[...] Canada’s ability to project control over Hans Island represents a significant indicator of Canada’s ability to exercise sovereignty over its Arctic territory, and sends an important message to other nations”(5). To this end, the report stated that in July 2005, then-Minister of National Defence Bill Graham and Canadian military personnel visited the island and raised a Canadian flag on the contested territory (5).

What the report failed to mention, is that this particular event was part of a then top-secret mission carried out by Canadian Forces under the titillating codename “Exercise Frozen Beaver.” *The National Post’s* Adrian Humphreys broke the story in October, 2005 in an article titled “Standing on guard, with a pile of rocks”(A1) The mission was carried out on two occasions: July 13th where Danish flags had been removed and the Canadian flag had been unfurled, and July 20th when the Minister visited the island for the purpose of a photo-op. However, beyond planting the flag and the Minister’s visit, Humphrey’s reported that Canadian Forces had built an inukshuk; the construction of which was somewhat of a “curiosity” to the reporter. Humphreys was sceptical of the Canadian Forces (CF) explanation for constructing the monument: “The military claims there was nothing special about placing an Inukshuk on the island [.]” Moreover, the CF claim that the construction of inuksuit was “normally done on these types of Ranger patrols,” was called into question by the reporter who countered, “Inukshuks [sic] have not been part of previous sovereignty patrols and there appear to be no records of other Inukshuks being constructed on earlier missions”(2005).

Indeed, it was curious that the military had shipped the 300 lbs. of rocks from another location and affixed a plaque on the monument that read: “O Canada, We Stand On Guard For Thee.” However, the use of stones in marking boundaries has historical precedent in Western culture. Seed (1995) notes that in England, “small agricultural plots in open fields used such stones, placed upon a ditch or a furrow to indicate a plot’s edge. The stone which was sometimes engraved with the initial of the plot’s owner signified that the ditch or furrow on either side of the stone constituted his property’s limit” (146-7).

This act of territorial demarcation also finds historical precedent in Canada’s other colonizing power’s history. Ramsay Cook’s introduction to *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier* (1993), observes that “Cartier presided over the raising of a thirty-foot wooden cross to which was fixed a coat-of-arms bearing the fleurs-de-lys and a board on which was emblazoned the words: ‘VIVE LE ROI DE FRANCE’” (xxiii). At a quick glance, the inukshuk is similar in form and meaning: it has a cruciform shape, and in some of its applications in Inuit culture, it is invested with spiritual significance. Beyond these somewhat superficial similarities, there are other deeper similarities between the Cartier cross and the Hans Island inukshuk:

Neither the action of the French, in raising the cross, nor the reaction of the native people is totally unambiguous. Cross-raising, beginning with Columbus, had already become something of a tradition in the Americas. It contained both religious and political symbolism. Cartier had previously raised at least one cross – an undecorated one at St. Servan’s Harbour in June – and he would raise others later. Some of these crosses were raised unceremoniously and doubtless were intended to function as [quoting Cartier] ‘a landmark and guidepost into the harbour’ Though Cartier explained the Gaspé cross that way, its bold symbols of church and state, and the accompanying ceremony, surely represented something more. If it was not an explicit legal claim, recognizable in international law, to French possession of this territory, it was surely at least what Trudel calls ‘une affirmation solennelle des droits de la France sur cette terre.’ This was not an anonymous directional sign; it distinctly affirmed the French presence [...] If then, the crosses were merely traffic signals, they should at least be described as *French* traffic signals (Cook, xxiv-v).

I cite this rather lengthy passage because Cook's observations are both relevant and, I suggest, at the very heart of the Hans Island exercise. The Hans Island inukshuk, symbolically and politically proclaiming the message "O Canada, We Stand on Guard for Thee," emerges, I argue, from a similar colonial tradition that adorned Cartier's Gaspe cross with the fleurs-de-lys and the dedication to the King of France.⁴⁷ The difference here, is that while the inukshuk distinctly affirms the Canadian presence, it is an Aboriginal symbol that is being used to affirm a colonial nation's territory.

According to Cook (1993), even those crosses that did not bear the coat of arms or the dedication to the King served a metonymic function in that they reinforced the presence of the French in the New World. Thus the language on the plaque, suggesting that "we" stand on guard for thee, discreetly enlists those other inuksuit found throughout the Arctic: they implicitly become an army of silent sentinels, that, despite the fact that this was not their original intended purpose, reinforce Canada's presence throughout the region,. In this light, Cook's logic stands to reason that if inuksuit are merely traffic signals, they should at least be described as *Canadian* traffic signals.

Returning to my discussion on *Banal Nationalism* from the previous chapter (Billig 1995), the ubiquitous appearance of the inukshuk, be it in provincial parks, urban landscapes, suburban gardens, cottage shorelines, airports, government offices; on stamps, coins, wine bottles, clothing, Olympic Logos, corporate logos, flags (Nunavut); or, the rhetorical musings of politicians, bloggers or nationalists, creates an atmosphere where this once Inuit, *northern* symbol is subtly promoted through a myriad of imaging and media that subliminally or implicitly posits the inukshuk within the national landscape as a *uniquely Canadian symbol*. Whether the intended connotative message of

⁴⁷ Moreover, it is analogous to the English plot-owner's initial on the boundary stone.

the symbol is diversity, tolerance or Aboriginality, the symbol *also* evokes the nation's northern mythology and its historic and continuing ownership of those spaces where they (Inuksuit) are traditionally found.⁴⁸ Again, the Inuk youth's message from the Heritage Minute, *Now the people will know we were here* takes on an even deeper relevance in light of Canada's efforts to employ the inukshuk for purposes of making sovereign territory.

It should be noted that the repeated flagging (Billig 1995) of the inukshuk, again like Cartier's crosses, has no legal significance concerning the actual case for Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. Paraphrasing Trudel (in Cook 1993: xxiv), while the Hans Island Inukshuk does provide a solemn affirmation to Canadian rights in that territory, Canada's case will ultimately be decided by an international body responsible for arbitrating maritime territorial disputes: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Carnaghan and Goody 2006: 6). This body of arbitration will rule on the extent to which the continental shelf extends from the Canadian coast. As the Convention stands, littoral, or coastal nations, are guaranteed 200 nautical miles of maritime sovereignty from their coasts unless the continental shelf extends beyond that limit. In such a case, a nation's maritime sovereignty extends to the edge of the continental shelf (ibid.). In order to establish its case, Canada must by 2013 (10 years following its ratification of UNCLOS III) provide compelling evidence that its continental shelf extends beyond the preset limit. At stake is the vast Arctic ocean with its wealthy promise of shipping, oil and fisheries (ibid). This claim will require extensive

⁴⁸ I draw the reader's attention to [Figure 3.2] the example of a postcard displaying an "authentic" inuksuk in a typically Arctic setting bearing the text "Canada" demonstrates that even those monuments built and belonging to Inuit culture have not escaped the nationalizing forces that are presently engaged in the iconification of the inukshuk.

mapping of the Arctic sea-floor to determine the extent of the Canada's continental shelf and to this end, the government has funded \$60 million to aid such scientific missions (Carnaghan and Goody 2006: 6; Canadian Press 2008).

This extensive mapping involved in Canada's claims through UNCLOS, I argue, is part of a triple-pronged strategy that the state has historically used to demonstrate its sovereignty over the area which I frame through the term *soft-sovereignty*. This notion, as I described in this chapter's introduction, refers to (mainly) non-militaristic methods that the state uses to assert its presence in and control over the North.⁴⁹ I further argue that state's exercise of soft-sovereignty relies upon three main strategies. I call them *the three-R's of soft-sovereignty: Rhetoric* (political and symbolic), *Research* (mainly scientific), and *Relationships* (with Arctic Aboriginal inhabitants, namely the Inuit). There is a fourth-R as well, haunting *Relationships: Relocation* which is central to understanding the role that the state saw the Inuit playing in the North. I also note that these strategies, the Three-R's, emanate from historical practices relating to European notions of sovereignty and possession that I discussed earlier. I will tease out these connections in the following discussion.

The Three-R's

Rhetoric

Given the prominence of the Northern mythology in the national imagination, Arctic sovereignty features heavily in the rhetorical posturing of Canada's statespeople.

⁴⁹ While the state does engage in periodic military exercises in the region, and continues to fund a (mostly) Inuit militia called *The Arctic Rangers*, such efforts remain *soft* in that they are at best symbolic or spectacular in nature and intent.

This can be seen, when, in 1958, at Winnipeg's Civic Auditorium, John Diefenbaker delivered a speech that would become the cornerstone of his so-called "Northern Vision" campaign. In that speech, the Prime Minister suggested that while John A. Macdonald had envisioned a "Canada from East to West," Diefenbaker saw "[A] new Canada – a Canada of the North." The familiar rhetoric of a "new" Canada may remind the reader of Pettigrew's articulations of a "new" Canada in the last chapter. However, while Pettigrew's "new" Canada hinged upon exploiting diversity as a means of competing on a global stage, Diefenbaker's was of a frontier imagination that had shifted its focus from the now-settled West to newer, northern horizons⁵⁰:

There is a new imagination now. The Arctic. We intend to carry out the legislative programme of Arctic research, to develop Arctic routes, *to develop those vast hidden resources the last few years have revealed* (1958).

Diefenbaker's 1958 vision relied upon notions of Arctic routes and resource exploitation. While those ideas would never be realized during his tenure, Arctic research, I argue, has been the one facet of his vision that has been successfully executed.

Perceived and real threats to Canada's Arctic sovereignty by its southern neighbours, the US, has also provoked impassioned oratory from Canada's statespeople. Speaking in 2000 aboard the *St. Roch II*, named after the first ship (An RCMP vessel) to traverse the Northwest Passage in 1940-42 and again in 1944, Governor General Adrienne Clarkson remarked that those "voyages reinforced Canada's sovereignty in the north, an area which is so important to us as Canadians." She also noted that her

⁵⁰ I note that as the rhetoric surrounding Arctic sovereignty develops and intersects with the rhetoric of global warming, an uncanny resemblance to another episode in Western colonization – the Frontier myth – is emerging. Whereas receding wilderness, extinct buffalo, the gold rush, the vanishing Indian and the intercontinental railroad came to embody the myth of the North American Western frontier, it appears that images of receding glaciers, endangered polar bears, the vanishing Inuit way of life, the promise of resource exploitation and the transcontinental North West passage are being mobilized to define a new, northern frontier.

predecessor, Vincent Massey, the first Canadian Governor General, “flew over the Arctic and dropped down a can in which there was a message which simply said: ‘This belongs to us.’ You have helped us, with the voyage of the St. Roch, reaffirm that” (Clarkson 2000). Clarkson was eager to emulate such a symbolic act as that of her predecessor. In fact, just prior to her remarks, the Governor General had participated in the construction of an inukshuk at the Nunavik 2000 youth camp in Leaf Bay (George 2000).

The rhetorical dimension of Canada’s Arctic sovereignty has manifested itself in every federal administration since WWII, but perhaps it has received its most vociferous champion in the current Prime Minister. The Government of Canada’s website now features (In English) the motto “The True North Strong and Free.” Indeed, Stephen Harper’s first press conference as Prime Minister-elect was to defend Canada’s sovereignty with regards to the Northwest Passage. “The United States defends its sovereignty and the Canadian government will defend our sovereignty. It is the Canadian people we get our mandate from, not the ambassador of the United States” (in Byers 2006).

While *Exercise Frozen Beaver* and the ratification of UNCLOS III occurred during the Martin and Chrétien administrations respectively, Harper has taken the Arctic assignment with a particular fervour.⁵¹ In a 2005 speech titled “Securing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic,” Harper spoke of the various challenges facing Canada’s claims to Arctic Sovereignty – a weak military infrastructure caused by empty promises

⁵¹ Perhaps in an effort to create his own symbol of Arctic sovereignty, the Prime Minister in February of 2007 told an audience at the Canadian Club that Trudeau’s view of Canadian/US relations (being akin to an elephant and a mouse) “sold Canada a little short”(in Boswell, 2007) Instead, Harper offered that the relationship was more like a wolverine and a grizzly bear: “We may be smaller but we’re no less fierce about protecting our territory.” It remains to be seen if the wolverine (or skunk-bear as it is otherwise known) will be iconified with the same intensity as the inukshuk - if at all.

made by past (ostensibly Liberal) governments, the failure by Canada to enforce its sovereignty in light of repeated incursions by foreign powers, especially the US, in domestic waters, and the need for better surveillance of Canadian Arctic spaces. Harper's comments in Iqaluit at the launch of *Operation Lancaster*, a high-Arctic military training exercise, possessed a particularly bellicose rhetoric, consistently reinforcing the need for an expanded military infrastructure and presence in the North. Moreover, he uttered the now famous remark in describing the voyages of Henry Larsen on the St. Roch: "Larsen's many voyages upheld the first principle of Arctic sovereignty: Use it or lose it." This must have been a curious statement to the citizens of Nunavut (Inuktitut for "Our Land") whose culture has been "using" the land since their arrival. However, like the Hans Island Inukshuk, Harper was quick to absorb (appropriate) Inuit culture into the government's language relating to sovereignty:

This is Nunavut – "Our Land" – just as Yukon and the Northwest Territories and the entire Arctic Archipelago are "Our Land."

And, on this you have my word, we will back our sovereignty over "our land" with all the tools at our disposal, including the men and women of our Armed Forces who are launching Operation Lancaster from Iqaluit today.

Harper concluded the speech by offering "God Bless the True North, Strong and Free!"

While Harper's bellicose remarks belie the notion of *soft-sovereignty*, I argue that the context of the speech – the launch of a military exercise – demanded strong language. Moreover, the rhetoric remains just that, as the Harper government has yet to realize its commitments.

This militaristic language softened considerably when Governor General Michaëlle Jean read the 2007 Speech From The Throne. Arctic sovereignty would become one of the cornerstones of the government's agenda, taking first place in its list

of priorities. The Speech itself hearkened to earlier visions of the North as articulated by Diefenbaker, appealing to the ongoing myth of the North in the Canadian imagination:

The Arctic is an essential part of Canada's history. One of our Fathers of Confederation, D'Arcy McGee spoke of Canada as a northern nation, bounded by the blue rim of the ocean. Canadians see in our North an expression of our deepest aspirations: our sense of exploration, the beauty and the bounty of our land, and our limitless potential.

But the North needs new attention. New opportunities are emerging across the Arctic, and new challenges from other shores. Our Government will bring forward an integrated northern strategy focused on strengthening Canada's sovereignty, protecting our environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development and improving and devolving governance, so that northerners have greater control over their destinies.

[...]

Our Government will build a world-class research station that will be on the cutting edge of arctic issues, including environmental science and resource development. This station will be built by Canadians, in Canada's Arctic, and it will be there to serve the world.

As part of asserting sovereignty in the Arctic, our Government will complete comprehensive mapping of Canada's Arctic seabed. Never before has this part of Canada's ocean floor been fully mapped.

Defending our sovereignty in the North also demands that we maintain the capacity to act. New arctic patrol ships and expanded aerial surveillance will guard Canada's Far North and the NorthWest Passage. As well, the size and capabilities of the Arctic Rangers will be expanded to better patrol our east Arctic territory (from the 2007 Speech From the Throne).

As Diefenbaker's "Northern Vision" speech highlighted the need for scientific research to be conducted in Arctic, the 2007 Speech From The Throne reinforces the importance of such research, especially mapping as the prime factors in strengthening Canada's claim to the disputed Arctic territories.

Research

In terms of sovereignty, mapping and knowledge of a territory is an important historical tradition in the Western world underlying the control and possession of remote territories (Clayton 2000). As I mentioned earlier, knowledge and cartography have a long historical precedence in terms of the colonial practices of the West (Seed 1995).

"The Ledger, the Map, and British Imperial Vision," from Daniel W. Clayton's *Islands*

of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island, builds on this notion by employing a theoretical framework including Foucault, Brewer and Latour, to argue:

The NorthWest Coast was brought to order through the political rationalization of cartographic and commercial information [...] For the ledger and the map were also tools of power. The British used them to *assert* themselves in the world (to establish the Pacific as a field of possession and intervention) and to *insert* the NorthWest Coast into a European rationalist discourse (a view of the world as Sudipta Kiviraj has pointed out, that “is clear, precise, instrumentalist, technical, scientific, effective, true and above all [deemed] beneficial to all who came in contact with it, both the rulers and the subjects”) (182).

As Clayton suggests, territorial possession, as it was interpreted by an eighteenth century Imperial power, was secured through the power’s knowledge of a territory. However, according to Clayton the terms of territorial knowledge are based on a very narrow construction of *what it is to know*. In the case of British control over Vancouver Island, it was cartographic and commercial knowledge that allowed the metropole to rationally situate the remote space of Vancouver within their local concept of empire. Moreover, these knowledges were produced from Kiviraj’s notion of “European rationalist discourse,” whereby data, precise measurement, Western technologies and science were the ways in which space could be quantified, managed and understood in the Western colonial imagination (in Clayton: 182).

Diefenbaker’s *Vision*, the UNCLOS requirements for arbitration and the 2007 Speech from the Throne, demonstrate the ways in which Kiviraj’s notion of European rationalist discourse (in Clayton 2000) are still very much part of the colonial present in this paradoxically “post” colonial era.⁵² Beyond a constant barrage of rhetoric, Canada

⁵² While colonial powers have shifted in the modern era and into the present day, the phenomenon itself has remained constant. Since Confederation, Canada has itself become a colonial power in its ongoing administration of the affairs and regulation of Aboriginal culture, residential schools providing a tragic yet immediate example (Milloy 1999). However, Canada’s colonial presence can especially be seen in relation to its administration of the North (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Grant 2002; Payne 2006). Indeed, I argue that rhetoric, research and relationships have all been coloured by the colonial relationship which sees a central power (Ottawa) administrate over a remote territory (the Canadian Arctic).

has consistently relied on scientific research as a means of establishing its control over the far North.⁵³ In “Nature, Technology, and Nation,” Edward Jones-Imhotep (2004) offers an example of such Arctic research. His study details how, in an effort to solve persistent problems plaguing WWII shortwave radio communications in the North Atlantic theatre, problems linked to geophysical, magnetic and auroral anomalies, the Navy’s Operational Intelligence Centre, Section 6 (OIC/6),

began tackling problems of communications, detection, and direction-finding in the North Atlantic by mounting the first systematic Canadian studies of the ionosphere – the ionized regions of the upper atmosphere that reflect high-frequency radio waves, making shortwave telecommunications possible (8).

This research carried over into the post-war/early Cold War era through the establishment of the Radio Physics Laboratory (RPL) which stemmed from OIC/6. However, Jones-Imhotep observes that the RPL’s implicit mandate involved more than purely scientific research.

At the close of WWII, Canada’s North was still populated with American forces who had built communication, transportation and military infrastructure throughout the conflict. This presence remained intact following the end of the war and threatened to remain as the Cold War began to heat up. This ongoing military presence in the North caused the Canadian political establishment to fear that Canada’s northern sovereignty was under attack (13). Thus, Jones-Imhotep argues that the research of the RPL attempted to combat these perceived threats of Canada’s control over its northern territories by:

⁵³ In fact, as I prepare this thesis for formal submission, the Prime Minister is currently in the North touting his government’s agenda for securing Arctic sovereignty. An August 26, 2008 release from the Prime Minister’s office states: “The Canadian Government will use the full tools of modern geological science to encourage economic development and defend Canadian sovereignty throughout the North”(PMO 2008). The release continues, quoting the Prime Minister. “As I’ve said before, ‘use it or lose it’ is the first principal of sovereignty in the Arctic’ [...] ‘To develop the North we must *know* the North. To protect the North, we must control the North. And to accomplish all our goals for the North, we must be in the North”’(ibid.)[emphasis added].

[Engaging] two crucial sets of anxieties about the Canadian North in the mid-1940's. The first were a set of long-standing concerns over territorial control in the North and the place of science and technology in asserting that control. The technological focus of [the RPL] – its emphasis on the improvement of radio in northern latitudes – and its scattered field stations make its research useful in establishing territorial sovereignty over the North. Its scientific focus – its emphasis on investigating the natural order of the northern regions – placed it at the centre of broader programs to control the North in cognitive as well as territorial terms. In doing so, its work became central to the efforts to use northern knowledge to refashion the post-war nation (13)

It is this notion of *cognitive sovereignty* that I find kindred to my notion of *soft-sovereignty*. Obviously outflanked by the military might of the two superpowers, one that existed to the south, and the other on the other side of the Pole, the implicit argument here is that Canada required an innovative response to these two superpowers that would establish its presence and legitimacy over its Northern territories. Cognitive sovereignty is a powerful term because it evokes (like Clayton's ledger and map), Western epistemologies that include notions around mapping which are so near and dear to (colonial) discourses associated with "naming and claiming" (Patrick et. al. 2008).

Indeed, in Kiveraj's definition of European rationalist discourse as, "clear, precise, instrumentalist, technical, scientific, effective [and] true"(in Clayton 2000: 182) the Canadian government's efforts to map the ionosphere, and in a larger sense, to assert cognitive sovereignty were founded in the European rationalist discourse that was as applicable in the mid-twentieth century as it was in the late-eighteenth century.⁵⁴

At this point in the discussion, the reader may be wondering what connection the inukshuk might have (if any) to Western epistemologies that involve knowledge collection and mapping. The question, as I wish to frame it at this point, is how might this army of silent sentinels be drawn into such Western discourses, and as explicitly

⁵⁴ Indeed, a July 14, 2008 CBC News article titled "NorthWest Passage surveillance tested by Canadian scientists," underscores the proximity science shares with questions of Arctic sovereignty.

demonstrated in the Hans Island inukshuk, have they come to symbolize Canadian sovereignty in the North?

I want to address this question first by returning to the broader discussion in “Nature, Technology, and Nation” considering the relationship between nature and technology as it relates to Canadian nationalism:

For decades, scholars have treated the relations between nature and technology in Canada as oppositional. Nature (they have argued) – whether instantiated in muskeg or granite, in hostile climate or impossible terrain – has always opposed technology; and technology, for its part – whether realized in railways or telegraphs, shortwave radios or communications satellites – has enabled the tentative conquests of a harsh, unforgiving, and expansive northern nature. In doing so, technology has provided the conditions for the possibility of the nation (Jones-Imhotep 2004: 6).

While Jones-Imhotep argues the existence of such binaries that pit nature and technology in oppositional corners, he suggests “RPL had to assert an additional sovereignty – a reform of the practices of geophysical research that would allow nature and technology to be linked. Far from opposing one another, nature and technology were mutually constitutive in the work of RPL”(7).

However mutually constitutive the work of RPL might have been in drawing nature and technology together, it remained an obscure project, and was never drawn into a larger national narrative. In this light, the inukshuk, itself a mapping and communicative technology, has been inserted into the national mythology, offering, I suggest, the opportunity of reconciling such a binary. While the inukshuk *appears* to be natural, that is, it is created from rocks that are found in the landscape, and made by Aboriginal peoples who themselves have consistently been mythologized in Western discourses as having an essential connection with nature, it nonetheless plays a double

role as an Aboriginal technology that can be associated with Canada's ongoing technologization of the North.⁵⁵

Drawn from European rationalist discourse (Kiviraj in Clayton 2000), the establishment of technology infrastructure in the Arctic, I argue, provides another layer by which Canada maintains its sovereign presence and control over the North. I have already discussed the role that the RPS played in affirming Canadian sovereignty (Jones-Imphotep 2004), however, the creation of Telesat, Canada's commercial satellite communications corporation, provides additional evidence of this practice. Fremeth (2003) argues that the incursion of the SS Manhattan, the American oil tanker that traversed the Northwest Passage in 1969, provided a perceived threat to sovereignty that expedited the policy implementation of the federally mandated satellite corporation (6-7). Fremeth suggests the connection between the formation of Telesat and Arctic sovereignty was explicit. He demonstrates that the 1968 White Paper on "A Domestic Satellite Communication System for Canada" sought to link Canada's myth of national development through communication infrastructure with that of Arctic sovereignty. "[T]he system would not only strengthen the links of a population stretched 'across the width,' but also far into the North. In particular, television would provide entertainment to people in the north and," quoting the White Paper, "also serve the function of maintaining a well-informed public"(89).

What is remarkable, or predictable, depending on your perspective, is the fact that the link between the myth of communications development in the construction of the

⁵⁵ This binary is highlighted in an August 2008 report from Northern News Services Online about a youth science camp held over the summer in Kitannalik Park in Nunavut. In the article, "Science Camp on the Land," youth participate in an activity where they are taught how to navigate the land by GPS or Global Positioning Systems, "and were then given a lesson in traditional navigation using inuksuit"(Sloan 2008).

nation and the question of sovereignty was, in part, mediated through a connection to the Aboriginal. According to Fremeth, the first satellite launched by Telesat was called Anik I, Inuktitut for *brother*. The name was not conferred to the corporation by the Inuit community, rather, it was chosen by way of contest. The successful entry, Fremeth reports, was provided by a Montreal book-keeper. Famed Canadian poet Leonard Cohen suggested that it “reflected a desire felt by many Canadians to pay homage one of Canada’s native peoples”(in Fremeth 2003: 103) Fremeth further suggests that the choice of Anik I as the name of the first satellite of Telesat “served the purpose of drawing attention of both the Inuit and Canadians to the impression that Telesat’s goal was to magnanimously serve the North and benefit the Inuit” (ibid.).

While the formation of Telesat provides further evidence as to the link between the technologization of the North and Arctic sovereignty, a current scientific research project being undertaken in the North by the Astronomical Technology Research Group-Victoria (ATRG-V) has particular relevance to this discussion. The project involving the National Research Council, the University of Toronto, Environment Canada and Defence Research and Development Canada has positioned three weather stations on northern Ellesmere Island for astronomical research [figure 3.3]. According to the project overview:

In 2006, with logistical support from Natural Resources Canada Polar Continental Shelf Project, we installed a compact site-testing station on two of these sites, each at an elevation of about 1000 meters. These robotic stations look something like a person, so we call them “Inuksuit” stations, like the stone way markers of the North. The record basic weather data using a standard meteorological instrument suite and have an optical/infrared camera for sensing cloud cover (ATRG-V website accessed 2008).

I return to my first chapter where I argued that the inukshuk found a resonance in dominant culture because it provided a link between culture and nature. The specific technological and cultural uses were elided in favour of its perceived embodiment of a

primitive past, and its utility in connecting the builder to the wilderness. Here, as in the *Wisdom in Diversity* stamp from the second chapter, antimodern technology intersects with the hyper-modern in the inukshuk's perceived physical similarity to the weather stations and is implicitly being inserted into, what I frame as a national technological teleology. Further, the project itself is directly involved with Arctic sovereignty as the ATRG-V website reports that it is connected to the *Canada Polar Continental Shelf Project* that is central to Canada's claim with UNCLOS.

In this vein, the ATRG-V inukshuk embodies a unique intersection between nature and technology, one that naturalizes the governments efforts both technologically and territorially by placing their own technology in a much broader narrative, a much longer autochthonous history of technological conquest in the Arctic. The effect, as I have argued elsewhere, is that of indigenizing the nation; of extending its 141 year history into millennia further lending credibility to claims of sovereignty that rely on notions discovery and human settlement of a territory (Seed 1995; Fletcher 2006; MacMillan 2006).

Relationships

While present in Prime Minister Harper's speech at the outset of Operation Lancaster, and implicitly connected to Telesat through Anik I the ATRG-V's meteorological project, the absorption of Inuit culture into the government's effort to control the North is not isolated to research and rhetoric alone. Indeed, the government's relationship with the Inuit has been central to its claims of ownership over the North – in the sense that the *de facto* presence of the Inuit underscore the state's *de jure* title to the

territory. Far too often, however, this relationship, the last, yet most crucial aspect of *soft-sovereignty* has had problematic and tragic consequences.

Shelagh D. Grant's *Arctic Justice: On Trial For Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923* (2002), tells the story of the murder of a fur trader from Newfoundland by his Inuit companions. The murder, more specifically – execution – had been carried out because the trapper had become an abusive menace to the Inuit group he was travelling with. The group decided (following their own legal-cultural codes), that in the best interests of the collective, the threat had to be eliminated. When news of the perceived crime reached the RCMP, an investigation, trial and incarceration followed. However, Grant (an expert in Arctic history) argues that this was not necessarily about serving justice, “Although implied but not explicitly stated, it was apparent that a court trial in the far North would enhance Arctic sovereignty”(43).

Thus, the state's ability to legally administer the area (and its inhabitants) would speak to its ownership over the territory. In this sense, the state saw the Inuit as proxies serving its agenda of territorial assertion, conveniently providing a human presence in remote areas coming under increasing control, protection and policing by the central government in order to strengthen its *de jure* title in the North. Perhaps the most tragic case emerging from this strategy occurred in the 1950s when the Federal Government relocated Inuit families to the Far North.

In *Tammarniit (Mistakes)* (1994), Tester and Kulchyski contend that while there were a myriad of reasons that contributed to High Arctic relocation of Inuit families by the federal government, concerns about sovereignty emerged as a central concern:

What started out as a concern for the deteriorating welfare conditions of Inuit in Arctic Quebec was to become [sic] entangled in the minds of some officials within the Department of Resources and Development and the RCMP with concerns about

sovereignty and the enforcement of Canadian law in the Arctic Archipelago, both of which were fuelled by cold war fears, Soviet atomic capability and military paranoia (119).

This quote brings the arguments of both Jones-Imhotep and Grant back into the discussion and demonstrates the various strategies in which the federal government at the time was attempting to assert its authority in the North – through law, research and relocation.

Tester and Kulchyski document the later attempts in the 1980s-1990s by Inuit groups to seek an apology and compensation for the relocation. The House standing committee on Aboriginal affairs had directed Tom Siddon, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to apologize for the 1953 relocation and acknowledge the contribution that the residents of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay had made with respect to Canadian sovereignty (1994: 102). Before the committee, the lawyers representing the Inuit of Inukjuak of Arctic Quebec argued that “Inuit were ‘used’ in the early 1950s by the federal government to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago”(102). In an article published by *The Canadian Arctic Resources Committee*, Shelagh Grant wrote “concern for sovereignty was the primary motive in determining when and where resettlement should occur”(Quoted in Tester and Kulchyski 103).

The government contracted a private firm – the Hickling Corporation – to investigate the claims made to the standing committee. Ultimately, the firm absolved the government stating that the government had acted under humanitarian motives and with voluntary Inuit compliance (102). At the behest of the Inuit groups involved, the case then went to the Canadian Human Rights Commission who reported that while there was evidence that sovereignty was a concern at the time, it was not a priority. The author of

the report, Daniel Soberman of the Faculty of Law at Queen's University did however note that the government was aware that the high Arctic relocation would have a positive impact on sovereignty (in Tester and Kulchyski 1994: 103). Ultimately, the government did not apologize nor would it compensate the victims, except to pay for their re-relocation and housing in their original communities (103-4).

Notwithstanding the government's response, the high Arctic relocation efforts in the 1950s has generated considerable interest causing the authors to note:

[T]he idea that Inuit were moved north to act as human 'flagpoles' and to strengthen Canada's claim to the Arctic islands during the cold war has attracted considerable attention and generated a passionate response from the Canadian public, from researchers, and from the legal community since Inuit claims were advanced in the 1980s (Tester and Kulchyski 1994: 114).

I take from this passage, perhaps the kernel of the discussion here in this chapter, the notion of 'human flagpoles.' This term was recently reprised in June 12, 2008 *Globe and Mail* editorial by noted UBC Arctic sovereignty specialist Michael Byers. While a 1996 compensation package had been reached, Byers urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper to formally apologize to the Inuit families who were "arbitrarily relocated half a century ago."

The decision to relocate 17 families to the Queen Elizabeth Islands in 1953 and 1955 was motivated by concerns about possible Danish or American claims. The Inuit, identified by government officials by numbers rather than their names, were essentially treated as flagpoles (Byers 2008: A17)

However, times have indeed changed, and while there has yet to be closure to This dark chapter in Canadian history by way of apology and reconciliation, the government has shifted the ways by which it relates to and approaches its relationship with the Inuit.

To return to Stephen Harper's remarks at the commencement of *Operation Lancaster*, the Prime Minister, speaking to largely Inuit audience that included Nunavut

Premier Paul Okalik, began and concluded his speech with salutations in Inuktitut. In the body of his remarks, the Prime Minister observed:

It is no exaggeration to say that the need to assert our sovereignty and take action to protect our territorial integrity in the Arctic has never been more urgent.

The North is poised to take a much bigger role in Canada's economic and social development.

[...]

Therefore, the Government of Canada has an enormous responsibility to ensure that development occurs on our terms.

In particular, we must ensure the unique ecosystem of the North, and the unique cultural traditions of the First Peoples of the North, are respected and protected.

It is important to note that Harper's remarks reflect a continuing paternal relationship with the Inuit. However, the Prime Minister was quick to stress that the "unique" Inuit culture was to be "respected and protected." Harper's remarks bespeak a perceived benefit in promoting the appearance of a tolerant, respectful and seemingly reciprocal relationship with the Arctic's inhabitants. Such an appearance adds credibility to the Canadian myths of diversity and tolerance as embodied in the nationalized inukshuk.

In his report on the "Nunavut Project," noted Canadian jurist Thomas R. Berger commented:

Effective occupation is one of the keys to sovereignty under international law. The immemorial presence of the Inuit in Canada's Arctic, as much as British and Canadian voyages throughout the Arctic Islands, is fundamental to Canada's claim. For centuries, the Inuit were the sole occupants of the Arctic Islands and most of Canada's Arctic coastline. They lived on the land and on the ice; they harvested the resources of the land and the sea. We used to think of the early explorers of the Arctic and sub-Arctic as if they were tracing their way across some far-off planet. We thought of them as the first cartographers. In Canada we now know, through Aboriginal mapping projects conducted in recent years, that before Europeans came the Arctic was already mapped by the Inuit – traced all over by their hunting patterns (2006, 64).

Berger's argument underscores the notion that the Inuit presence aides Canada's legal claim over the territory. However, this is not a new concept. What is notable however is that he is citing Aboriginal land-use, and particularly, Inuit mapping practices within his conclusions. Again, the inukshuk obliquely weighs into Berger's arguments for, as I

have discussed, the inukshuk was a technology that was used for both mapping and hunting purposes. Berger's conclusions speak not only the Inuit presence in the North, but that their ability to use and map the land aids in Canada's sovereignty efforts. His conclusions recalibrate the relationship Canada can have with its Northern inhabitants because they are now drawn into European rationalist discourse. No longer mere proxies, the Inuit are now seen as "partners" in this relationship.

There are other examples of this changing relationship. CBC News reported in April 2008 that the Senate was preparing to vote on "whether to introduce Inuktitut in some of its proceedings, debates and meetings"(CBC Online 2008) In June of 2008, *The Canadian Press* reported that the Senate again was urging the government to build more ice-breakers and recruit Inuit to the Coast Guard (CP 2008). There are also the Arctic Rangers, an Inuit militia who conducted the Hans Island exercise (Humphreys 2005: A1). They are charged with being Canada's first line of defence for Arctic sovereignty. I speculate that perhaps the most important of these developments was the 1999 foundation of the territory of Nunavut, now mainly administered and represented by Inuit.

To take a more critical approach to this changing relationship, I return to Jean Chrétien's 1999 remarks in Vienna where he described the Inuit as "our first-citizens." I noted in the previous chapter that the unveiling of an inukshuk reflected not only a deep-seated desire to indigenize the nation, but in fact, the Prime-Minister's remarks attempted to nationalize the indigene. The effects of absorbing Aboriginal groups into the national history, creates an ur-national history – a Canada *before* Canada. As "first-citizens," the Inuit create a claim or title to the land that extends far past 1867, and has the added effect of naturalizing the nation (Fletcher 2006), much like Jessup (2001) contends the Group of

Seven attempted to do. The inukshuk underscores this ur-history, again acting as a proxy for the first-citizens. They do so now, in an age where the state can no longer appropriate Indigenous bodies to tell national narratives of conquest and indigeneity, as we have seen historically and repetitiously constructed through romantic representations of the “Noble Savage”(Francis 1992).

Faceless, genderless and silent, inuksuit provide a compelling yet subtle reminder of Canada’s “first-citizens” that inhabit the North. To put a sharper edge on this point, the Hans Island inukshuk, and all the other inuksuit that comprise the “we” that stand on guard for Canada have become the embodiment of these human flagpoles – they are proxies of proxies, the ultimate simulacrum. Seen in this light, the inuksuit now standing on guard throughout the North are not a banal celebration of Canada’s Aboriginal heritage, they are grotesque monuments to the bodies of the relocated, turned to stone by the Medusa’s gaze of colonization. In this sense, the fetish is alive and well in the Hans Island Inukshuk as Freud’s observations from my first chapter continue to haunt the story of this chapter: “[the trauma of relocation] has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of the substitute”(Freud 1959, 154).

Conclusion – Operation Sovereign Inukshuk

Through the iconification of the nationalized inukshuk, the “stone man” has become a *de facto* national symbol alluding to, amongst *many* other things, Arctic sovereignty. A June 25, 2008 Government of Canada press release announcing “Canada Pavilion Coming to the Victoria Tall Ships” perhaps drives this point home:

The Government of Canada is pleased to present the Canada Pavilion for the second time at the Victoria Tall Ships

[...]

Various programs and activities will be featured at the Canada Pavilion, including activities surrounding this year's theme, the Great Canadian North. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn more about this territory, which covers a large area of Canada, through educational displays such as an iceberg, a giant circumpolar map *and the creation of an inukshuk*. [emphasis added]

In this chapter I have not so much argued that the inukshuk has been specifically used by the government as *the* symbol of its sovereignty over the Arctic. Instead, I have demonstrated its powerful strengths as *a* symbol and have conscripted it into a deconstruction that surveys some of the state's historic and ongoing efforts to articulate its control over the North, and to demonstrate how these efforts are part of a larger tradition of sovereignty and possession employed by Western colonial powers.

At the heart of the iconification process lies the intersection of those discourses that are present at the time of the inukshuk's rise on the national stage. Mapping, territorial marking and human occupation are all contributing factors to the government's case for sovereignty, and in this sense, the inukshuk can be meaningfully if conveniently linked to all three. But what makes this symbol so powerful – so relevant – is that it is able to resonate with so many other narratives present in the national imagination. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the subtext of Arctic sovereignty adds yet another dimension to the nationalized inukshuk and to the Canadian brand that it has been groomed to represent. The prominence of the North in the national mythology, and Canada's sovereignty over this territory is such that the inukshuk finds itself at the very heart of what Sherrill Grace (2003) calls (echoing Glenn Gould) “Canada and the Idea of North.”

It is fitting that I close this chapter with a coda to the story of the Hans Island inukshuk. The centrality of the inukshuk to Canadian sovereignty was underscored by

Adrian Humphries (the journalist who originally broke the story in October 2005), when he ran two follow up stories in November of the same year. In them, he reported that Exercise Frozen Beaver had later been renamed to “Operation Sovereign Inukshuk”(Humphreys 2008: A1). And the Canadian flag, made of sheet metal, indestructible and always unfurled, purposefully emulating the US flag on the lunar surface was, according to Danish reports, “toppled over by high winds”(ibid.). The Hans Island inukshuk, then, stands alone on the barren island as the enduring symbol of Canadian sovereignty; a silent sentry, a human flagpole, standing on guard on home and native land.

Conclusion

Putting the pieces together

Sitting in my garage, where I have written the bulk of this thesis, and where, if I strain my neck far enough, I can catch a glimpse of the inukshuk that stands in my front garden, I find myself reflecting on two jigsaw puzzles. Both puzzles are illustrated geographical maps of Canada, intended for school children. They are around thirty years apart, one is from the late 70s, the other from the early 2000s and they share much of the same imagery. Like the cardinal points on a compass the images they feature have totem-poles on the west-coast, lighthouses on the east coast and the CN Tower in the south. They stand as dutiful sentinels watching over Canada's geographic and cultural boundaries; they guard the national identity. However, there is one notable difference between the puzzles. The northern sentinel in the earlier map is that of a typically southern representation of the racialized caricature of an "Eskimo." In the later map, the "Eskimo" has been petrified; what stands in his place now is a stone man.

This thesis is kind of a third puzzle, a puzzle that has attempted to understand how this stone man has taken its place amongst those other national symbols: the lighthouse, the totem pole, the CN Tower; serving as a cardinal point, a mnemonic device locating the dominant culture within the national landscape. In this puzzle, the pieces I have found come from many corners, medias, localities; assembled, they offer a view of the Canadian symbolic landscape and the inukshuk's place within it.

My research and conclusions have located the inukshuk within deep, sometimes unconscious longings that exist within the dominant culture. Such longings are manifest in the culture's historic use of Aboriginal symbols as a means of negotiating a sense of

national identity (Francis 1992); desires represented through notions of antimodernism (McKay 1994; Jessup 2001) where the dominant culture, feeling a sense of lack or alienation in the present, draws upon perceived and romantic representations of primitive pasts to negotiate its own cultural identity. It is in this desire to connect to an imagined past that I locate a curious phenomenon whereby the dominant culture attempts to perform actions and use symbols attributable to the indigene. Goldie (1989) characterizes this phenomenon as the process of indigenization; in the Canadian context, Atwood (1994) calls it *the Grey Owl Syndrome*.

The lack that I spoke of earlier is understood in this thesis as the dominant culture's unease which overshadows their connection with the land; a sense of alienation stemming from historic episodes of colonial theft and, a brief, by comparison to Aboriginal habitation, five-hundred year history of continental occupation by European cultures. In an attempt to resolve this sense of lack, dominant culture enshrines Aboriginal symbols and performs indigenous activities within its own cultural landscape. The inukshuk, in this context, appears as a current manifestation of this cultural process, mediating a connection to the land through the repetitious construction of an Aboriginal symbol.

However, both antimodernism and indigenization appear as symptoms of a more comprehensive cultural phenomenon by which the popularity of the inukshuk in dominant culture can be understood. The fetish (Freud 1959) attempts, simultaneously to resolve this sense of lack in the dominant culture's consciousness, and to disavow the repressed knowledge of the colonial legacy and the traumas it engendered. In this sense, "the horror of [colonization] has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of the

substitute”(154). By Freud’s account, the inukshuk fetish evokes both a sense of pleasure in the builder’s construction, and witness’s acknowledgement of, indigeneity, but always leads the builder/witness back, through charges of cultural appropriation, to the inauthenticity of their actions. Thus, the ubiquitous presence of the inukshuk in the south underscores the need for the fetish to be actualized, according to Bhabha (1994) “again and afresh;” the pleasure in its construction always needing to find new expressions and localities.

The nationalization of the inukshuk, that is, the inukshuk’s reification as a national symbol within the Canadian political economy, occurred because elements operating within state institutions, I argue, understood its increasing popularity amongst the dominant culture and the value of its symbolic newness. This newness allowed for national narratives and national values to be inscribed on the symbol with ease at a time when the state was looking to present an updated image of itself at home and abroad. In a short, roughly ten year period of time, the inukshuk went from relative obscurity to national prominence articulating a highly specific, nuanced rhetoric of national values and essential *Canadian-ness*. This process culminated in 2005 when the inukshuk was used as the logo for the Vancouver Olympic games. The ongoing branding or *flagging* (Billig 1995) of the inukshuk underscores its Canadian-ness by providing repetitious and subtle reminders of the symbol as it can now be encountered at almost any turn in the ordinary citizen’s day to day life.

The efforts of the state, however, should not be seen as uniform and pre-meditated. Explained through my concept of iconification, earlier efforts using the inukshuk were local and self-serving to the actors or agencies in which the inukshuk was

being employed. Cumulatively, these efforts demonstrate that the nationalized inukshuk was advanced because it was able to, through a series of meaningful coincidences brought about by its repetitive appearances on the national stage, demonstrate its ability to connect interrelated discourse at a particular time when new symbols were being sought. More than anything, iconification relies upon convenience, coincidence, and a symbol's relative emptiness which can then absorb and be used to articulate discourses significant to the political-economy of a nation. In this sense, while the inukshuk emerged as a symbol of a *new* Canada competing in the globalized economy, emphasizing so-called Canadian values of diversity, tolerance and hospitality, it was also conveniently connected to other dominant discourses important to the nation, namely, the growing concern over Arctic sovereignty.

Thus, the inukshuk emerges, as both a response to the conditions of globalization in a "the postmodern world of images and influence"(van Ham 2001: 4), and, renewed threats to Arctic sovereignty brought about by the conditions of global warming (Graff 2007). Climate change is offering new opportunities for resource exploitation which will no doubt, have an effect on future geo-political power dynamics. However, owing to the prominence of the Northern mythology in Canadian consciousness (Grace 2001), Canada's sometimes tenuous hold over its Arctic territories represent a persistent dominant discourse in the political economy, climate change is only a new threat to an older problem. I have demonstrated that Canada has in its past and current efforts, exercised its control over the region through what I call *soft-sovereignty* which relies on mainly non-militaristic methods to establish its presence and control over the North.

Soft-sovereignty has been exercised primarily through political rhetoric, scientific research, data collection and the development of technological infrastructure; and through its relationships with Aboriginal peoples in the North. I characterized these methods as the *Three-R's* of soft sovereignty. Especially in the cases of research and relationships, there are historical precedents that suggest how the government's past and current efforts have been informed by earlier episodes of New World colonization and European declarations of sovereignty and possession (Seed 1995; MacMillan 2006).

Such "ceremonies of possession" as Seed (1995) puts it, are particularly evident in the case of the Hans Island inukshuk whereby the Arctic Rangers, a mainly Inuit militia of the Canadian Forces, planted a flag and constructed an inukshuk as an expression of sovereignty on the barren island whose ownership is contested by Denmark (Humphreys 2008: A1). While the inukshuk, framed by the plaque "O Canada We Stand On Guard For Thee," is a symbolic gesture alluding to Canadian ownership of its North, it is, I argue, at the very core of many of the themes that are relevant to this thesis.

Specifically, the Hans Island inukshuk attempts to indigenize the nation by removing the idea of Canada from its recent 141 year history and place it into a much larger, autochthonous history. This has the opposite, yet complimentary effect of nationalizing the indigene. In this sense, the Hans Island inukshuk, and all the other inuksuit found throughout the North, for which it metonymically figures, draws from earlier, colonizing efforts as seen in the High Arctic relocation, to use human subjects as "human flagpoles" (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Byers 2008). Despite the efforts to use the symbol in service to the state, the Hans Island inukshuk, is symptomatic of the cultural fetish and dutifully returns its Canadian witness back to the haunting spectre of

colonization; it's authenticity always in question by virtue of the processes that lead to its construction. More than anything, the Hans Island inukshuk highlights a core theme of the thesis: the enduring legacy of Canada's colonial past and present, a present I argue, that is reinforced through the iconification of the inukshuk – *a part of our heritage*.

This thesis has demonstrated that the inukshuk has entered the national iconic pantheon; that it has come to occupy a space on the shelves of souvenir shops of the nation and has entered the national imagination at large. The following quote, I believe further justifies my claim. *Quilts of Valour-Canada*, an organization of volunteers who create and provide quilts to wounded soldiers, offers tips to volunteers as to what themes might be featured on a quilt. According to the organization's website: "If you or your guild wishes to quilts [sic] for wounded soldiers [...] think Canadian patriotic – think Canadianna – moose / mountains / maple leaves / inukshuk / prairies / fishing / forests..."(*QOV-C* 2008).

However, beyond establishing its presence in the national imagination, I hope to have effectively demonstrated how it got there, and more importantly, why. It will be interesting to see if the inukshuk's popularity continues, and I am sure that its ongoing presence on the national stage will be cause for further academic scrutiny. I am also curious as to the role that the Vancouver Olympics will play, closer to 2010 in the popularity of the symbol; if it will succumb to symbolic fatigue, or if it is indeed, as enduring as I speculate. Finally, I await with anticipation, other national symbols that will undoubtedly come to be iconified, and the conditions present in the national landscape that will engender their iconification.

Figures



Figure 0.1: From the 1994 *Historica* Heritage Minute “Inukshuk.” The Inuit group and the Mountie depart, backs turned from the audience. They have left a monument. But a monument to what?

Image from: <http://www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/medias.php?id=30423&gId=gal_film&picId=9>

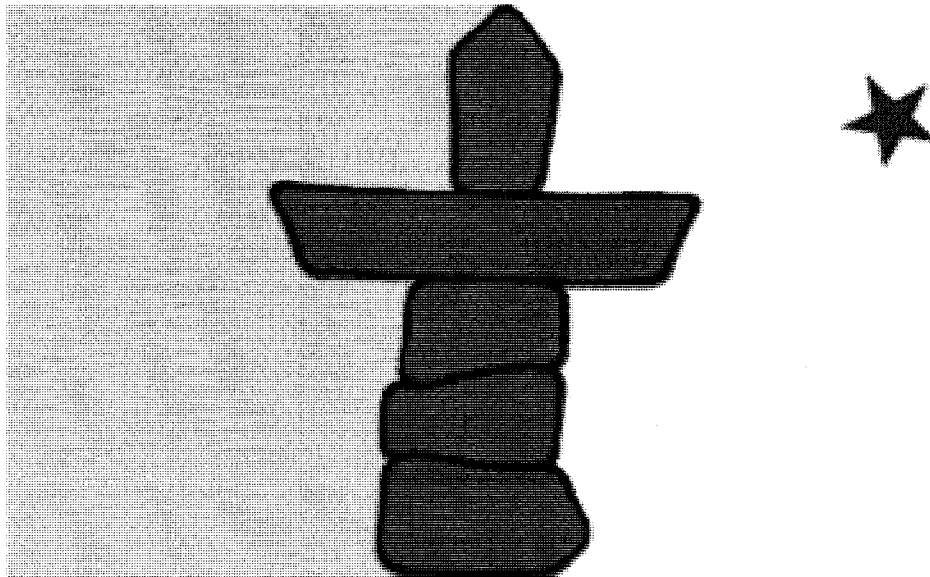


Figure 2.1: The flag of the Territory of Nunavut, established April 1st 1999.

Image from: <<http://www.2112.net/powerwindows/inspirations/NunavutFlag.gif>>

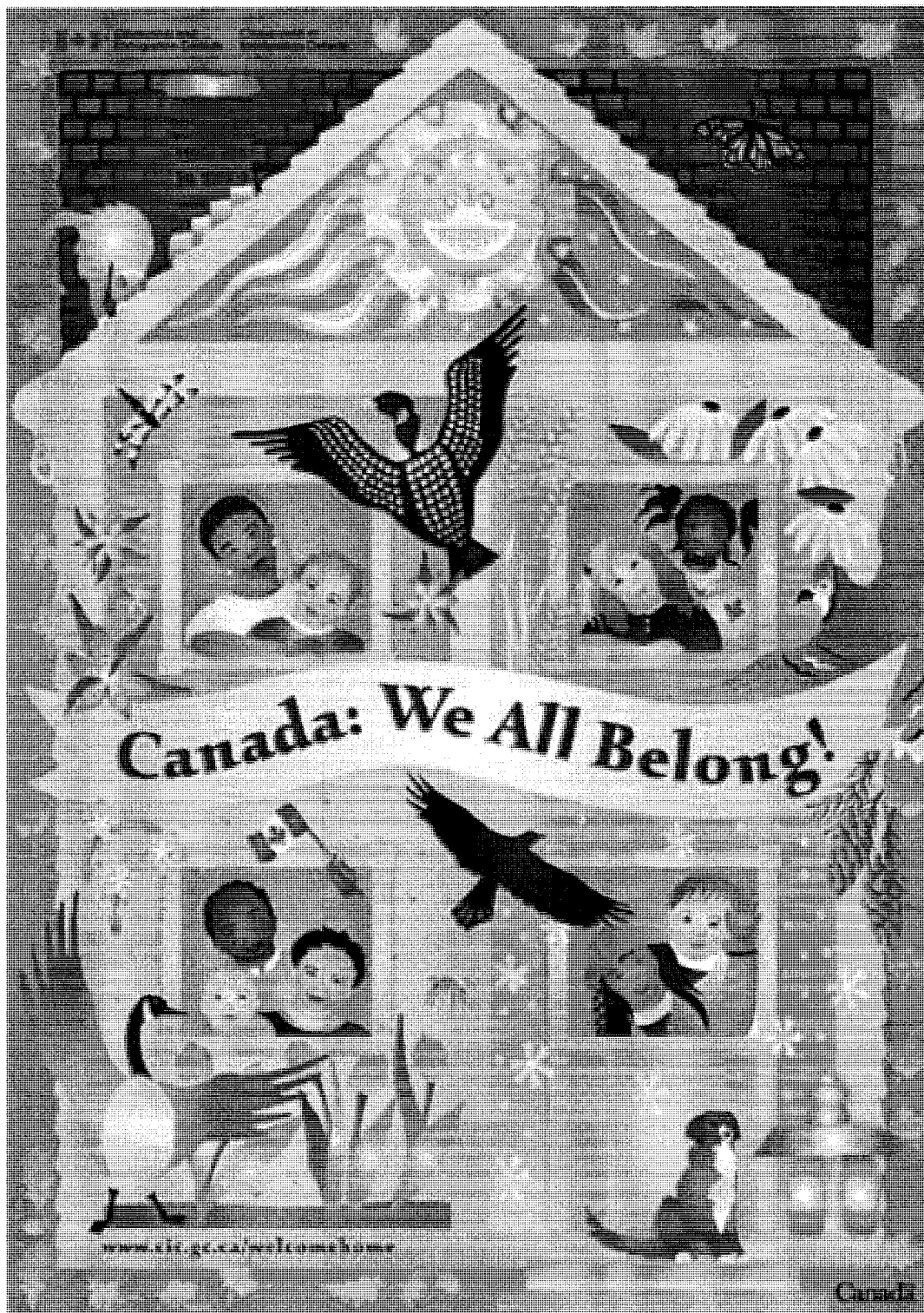


Figure 2.2: “Canada We All Belong!” Educational poster from *Spirit of Home 2002*, sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Note the inukshuk in bottom, right-hand corner.

Image from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/citizen/guide_2002_e/images/guide_2002_e_belong.jpg>

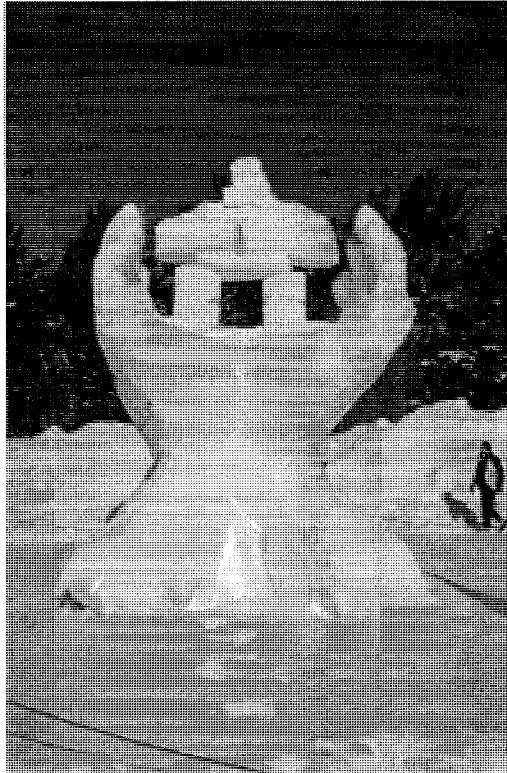


Figure 2.3: This photo, taken at Ottawa's 2008 "Winterlude" demonstrates the way in which these notions of hospitality, tolerance and diversity have become absorbed into the dominant culture and reflected through popular expressions of the inukshuk.
Image courtesy of J.C. Walsh



Figure 2.4: Canada 125 Commemorative Quarter (1992). This quarter was one of eleven issued in the 1992 series; one for each province and territory.
Image from: <<http://www.freepiritgallery.ca/Images/inuitcoin3.jpg>>



Figure 2.5: “Flag” issued by Canada Post (2000). I draw the reader’s attention to the hierarchical positioning of the flag over the inukshuk.

Image from: <<http://www.adminware.ca/canada/2000-47flag.jpg>>



Figure 2.6: “Wisdom of Diversity” issued by Canada Post (2005). Note how the inukshuk mediates and intersection between the antimodern and the hypermodern.

Image from: <http://www.bvdp.de/files/bvdp/images/Canada_Post_Stamp_2005_Japan_Expo.jpg>



Figure 2.7: “A unique Canadian symbol...” *Ilanaaq*, the official logo of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games.

Image from: <<http://www.freespiritgallery.ca/Images/inukshukolympic.jpg>>



Figure 2.8: Canadian company Kamik Boots uses the inukshuk as their corporate logo.

Image from: <<http://www.canadiandesignresource.ca/officialgallery/wp-content/uploads/2006/07/Kamik%20Boots.jpg>>



Figure 2.9: Inukshuk Wireless. The use of this logo by the telecommunication company again suggests that the inukshuk has been employed to mediate a relationship between antimodern hypermodern discourses prevalent in the national imagination. Image from: <<http://montrealtechwatch.com/images/INUKSHUK.jpg>>



Figure 2.10: Competing symbols of sovereignty? *Ilanaaq* is featured on the “head” of the quarter. The Queen is looking away. Image by the author.

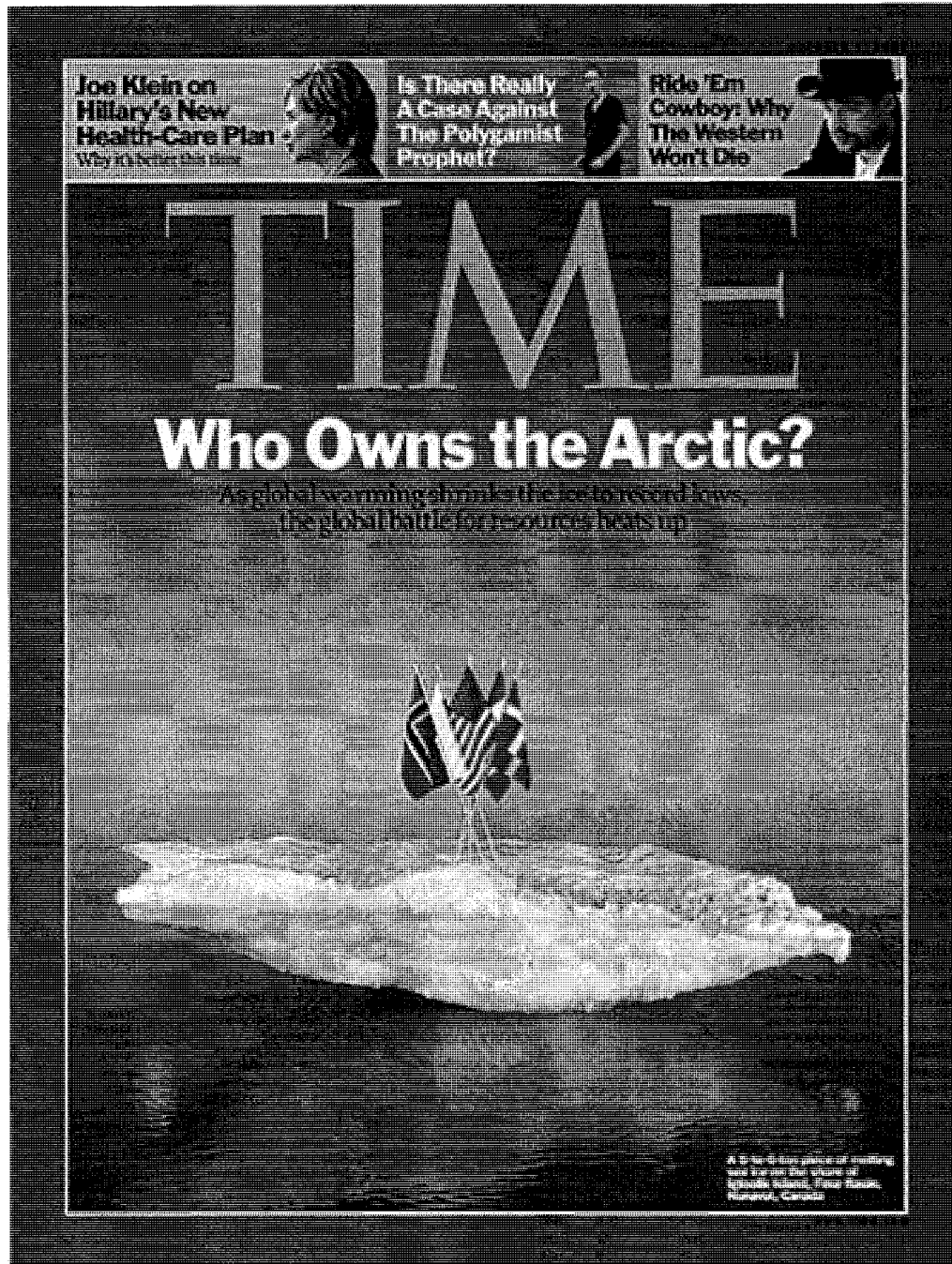


Figure 3.1: “Who Owns the Arctic?” The provocative cover of the October 1st, 2007 edition of TIME Magazine.

Image from: <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601071001,00.html>>



Figure 3.2: Pressed into service? A silent sentinel stands on guard for the “Canadian” Arctic. Postcard (undated).

Image from: <<http://www.2112.net/powerwindows/inspirations/InukshukPostcard.jpg>>

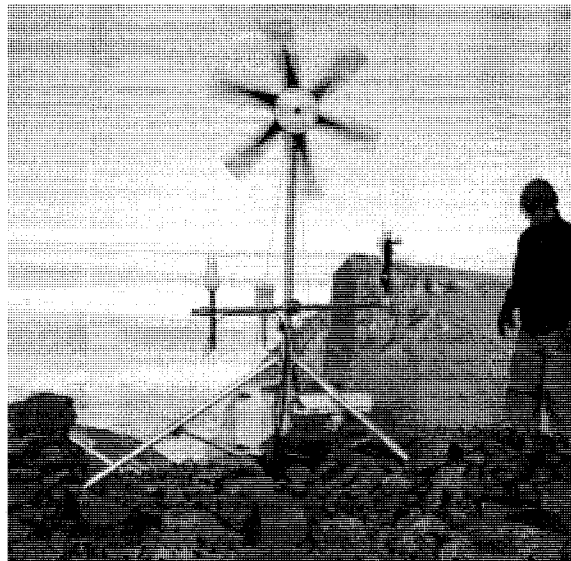


Figure 3.3: An *Inukshuk*? A weather station in the high Arctic (2006) used by Astronomical Technology Research Group-Victoria (ATRG-V), further solidifying the link between nature and technology; the antimodern and the hypermodern.

Image from: <http://www.casca.ca/ecass/issues/2006-ae/features/artic/station2_running_cut.jpg>

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