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## Ethnonyms and Images : Genesis of the 'Inuit' and Image Manipulation

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## **Ethnonyms and Images: Genesis of the 'Inuit' and Image Manipulation**

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The image that the Western world drew for hunting and gathering societies is a double, but converging image. On one side of the coin are negative aspects such as brutality, ignorance, primitiveness, childishness, uncivilised. On the other side are affirmative aspects of purity, innocence, of 'being one with nature'. Either is set up as a foil to 'civilisation', and has been an integral part of the colonial stratagem to restrain and govern in every aspect of politics, economy, culture, and law of hunter and gathering societies. However, in recent years, hunting and gathering societies are re-forming or creating self-images suited to betterment of their socio-political situations, or more fitting to their newly acquired status within the nation-state. Such images, as well as being used in political negotiation, also are being mobilised as ethnic markers. In North America, 'oneness with Nature' or 'Mother Earth' [GILL 1994; KEHOE 1994], egalitarianism [DONALD 1994; LEE 1988] and other attributes appealing to Western society are increasingly popular as ethnic markers.

Concurrent with, or possibly preceding such self-imagery was the switch in anthropology from a socioevolutionary scheme to that of hunters-gatherers in harmony with nature, where hunters-gatherers are shown to be finely tuned to their environment [BETTINGER 1991: 5-7].

In this paper, I first discuss how hunting activities, once an important but everyday act, have been mobilised as an image and ethnic marker in the transition from 'Eskimo' to 'Inuit' in Canada. Then I take up some problems, such as the politics of imagery, the autonomic and heteronomic aspects of imagery, and the importance of imagery in the hunter-gatherer political arena today.

### **HISTORICAL IMAGES OF HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES**

Images of hunting and gathering societies, changing over time, also vary according to the situation and person who observes [DELORIA 1998; FEEST 1994: 317; KEHOE 1994]. The 'Indians' of the New World portrayed as an obstacle to development and the spread of civilisation were transposed into ecological and environmental heroes in the late twentieth century. The brutish, cruel hunters-gatherers of sixteenth and seventeenth century England became the Noble Savages of France, against which the complexity and corruption of European civilisation was contrasted, or simple idealistic models against which the

unsatisfying realities of European thinkers could be compared [BERKHOFER 1979: 72-77; 1988: 530; FEEST 1994: 314]. European nations emphasised attributes, either real or imagined of hunting and gathering societies most suited to the current of the times. Hungarian interest centred on horsemanship, German were fascinated with military skills, and the Americans replaced the stoic, militaristic Sioux chief with the egalitarian, feminist, peaceable Hopi leader in the 1960s [FEEST 1994: 317]. All these images reflected the needs or preferences of dominant societies.

Throughout the ages, civilisation has been defined as the antithesis of the barbarian, savage, and primitive as exemplified by hunter-gatherers societies. For example, Indigenous hunters-gatherers of the New World were consistently represented as a negative or reverse category against which Western civilisation was measured [BERKHOFER 1979: 40, 44-45, 52; 1988: 523-527; BRAY 1993: 310-311; JAHODA 1999: 222-223].

Imagery of hunter-gatherer societies in Europe began with depiction of Natives of the New World as not having heads, being dog-heads, as having cloven hooves, or being cannibals [BERKHOFER 1979: 8-9; DICKASON 1984: 18-20, 64; FEEST 1994: 314; FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 11; JAHODA 1999: 99-100; WILSON 1993: 42]. A seventeenth century publication of the Inuit (Eskimo) described them as half-man with only one leg and foot [DICKASON 1984: 21].

Inuit (Eskimos) fared little better in early hunter-gatherer imagery. A handbill depicting an Inuit woman and child taken to Germany for exhibition, states that the Inuit 'like no flesh better than human flesh' [STURTEVANT 1980: 48-49]. It should however be noted that the Inuit usually fared better in the Western imagination [FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 16; 1995: 54], partly because the Inuit were highly regarded for their physical stamina and ability to survive in the harshest of circumstances [e.g. BRODY 1987: 19; FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 15; SPUFFORD 1997: 199]. Scarcity of armed confrontation, and the fact that they were little hindrance to European settlement may also have been factors contributing to a favourable Inuit image.

Imagery of the Evil Savage was rooted in the belief of the 'wild man', 'a hairy man compounded of human and animal traits...found in the mountains and many parts of Europe' [PHILLIPS 1994: 48, also DICKASON 1984: 70-77; FEEST 1994: 314], imagery which may be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome [JAHODA 1999: 5-7; OKAKURA 1990: 17-20]. This imagery was not limited to Europe, but is known also from ancient China [PHILLIPS 1994: 47] and Japan [KUDO 2000: 12, 15; KOJIMA 1984: 330; TOBY 1994]. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the image of acephalous beings, and persons with cloven hooves died out, only to be replaced by the image of cruel, slovenly man-eaters. In *Leviathan* [1651], Hobbes held that those brutish, self-centred beasts must be restrained and enlightened by Civilisation. This representation of the image of the Evil Savage in need of enlightenment served to justify colonial policies of religious conversion, denial of Indigenous land title and other oppressive measures well into the twentieth century [e.g. BERKHOFER 1979: 113-175; 1988: 544-546; BRAY 1993: 311]. Although negative imagery of this sort is at times also applied to primitive farmers, it is usually hunting and gathering societies that are chosen to perpetuate the image of the beastly primitive.

As time went on, this monochromatic image took on a new hue, that of the Romanticist's primitive. During the age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the Evil

Savage pictured by Hobbes existed side-by-side with the Noble Savage, the epitome of nature untainted by civilisation [BERKHOFER 1979: 73-80; 1988: 529-534]. These two images appear contradictory at first sight, but in reality both are images of the Other, the uncivilised or the idealised antithesis of civilisation, unilaterally created by members of self-appointed 'civilised' societies. The image of the Noble Savage originated and was developed primarily in France as a contemporary embodiment of the highly regarded Ancients of the Old World, the antithesis of the corrupted, complex civilisation of eighteenth century Europe [BERKHOFER 1979: 80; 1988: 530-533; FEEST 1994]. Although the image of the 'Noble Savage' did not enjoy the popularity it did in France, it was an influence on English and American thinkers such as John Locke, James Fenimore Cooper and others [BERKHOFER 1988: 531-532].

The Noble Savage image surrounding hunter-gatherer societies persists to the present [BARNARD 2000: 22; BETTINGER 1991: 3-4]. On the other hand, the image of the backward, primitive hunters-gatherers as 'scientifically' espoused by evolutionists until the mid-twentieth century [BERKHOFER 1979: 51-55; SANDERSON 1990] endures today in the media and among the general populace. Although anthropologists have largely renounced this conception, the notion of progress from a hunting-gathering stage to agriculture to industrial society relentlessly permeates the thinking of modern society.

In contrast to those images formed and promulgated by 'civilised' societies, hunter and gatherer societies began projecting positive self-images as the Indigenous movement of the 1970s gained momentum. Such self-imagery was disseminated through the media, and has played an important part in the efforts of Indigenous hunters and gatherers to re-establish aboriginal rights and title [STEWART 1997].

Along with the advent of self-imagery by hunter-gatherer societies, there evolved a concurrent trend for the dominant society and hunter-gatherer societies to use each other's imagery to further respective goals evolved. An example of this may be found in Amazonia, where the Kayapo availed themselves to the influence on media by environmental groups to further their political goals, while environmental groups appealed to the humanitarian as well as environmental aspects of their campaign through the plight of the Kayapo [CONKLIN and GRAHAM 1995]. Similarly, the Canadian Association in support of the Native Peoples (CASNP) stressed the importance of emphasising Native ecological or environmental wholesomeness and relatedness, high moral and religious position in order to sway public opinion in their negotiations with governments [PRICE 1994: 269].

These examples point up the political implications of self- and other-imagery. Other-imagery, an artifice to justify and legitimatise colonial rule, and more recently to further national political agendas and environmental encroachment by multinational conglomerates, is countered by hunter-gatherer self-imagery against such trends, as well as to realise socio-political and economic goals. The Ainu often appeal to environmental sensitivity in their political discourse with phrases such as 'living with nature [the environment]' [KINASE 1988: 183, 187; KOJIMA 2000: 34].

In this paper, I shall briefly overview historical changes of imagery concerning the Canadian Inuit, and then discuss how the Inuit are creating and manipulating self-imagery. Following those observations is a brief discussion of the politics of imagery, the autonomic

(Self) and heteronomic (Other) aspects of imagery, and the importance of imagery in the hunter-gatherer political arena today.

## FROM 'ESKIMO' TO 'INUIT'

The first depictions in the sixteenth century of the Inuit (Eskimos) as bloodthirsty beasts were later replaced by the more favourable image of hardy persons surviving the harsh climes of the Arctic [STURTEVANT 1980]. Then, as Darwinism gained popularity in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the 'Eskimo' became the epitome of the survival of the fittest (Herbert Spencer's term), 'people who were apparently so perfectly fitted to their environment, master of the natural domain' [FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 15; 1995: 54-55]. Hand-in-hand with this positive image, however, the 'Eskimo' was also negatively depicted as child-like, incapable of attaining true adult attributes [FLAHERTY 1922; BRODY 1975: 83; FIENUP-RIORDAN 1995].

This image of the Eskimo was not a simple popular stereotype, but served until recently as an administrative criterion in determining educational, medical, welfare and other policies. For example, administrators as late as the 1950s had no compunction in stating that the Eskimos 'are still in an early stage of evolution as human beings.... Moreover, the terrible uncertainty of life in this region may account to some extent for the[ir] childish superstitions.... We are dealing with a people who are to all intents and purposes childish' (quoted in Dorais [1988: 26]). This image of the 'Eskimo', coming from the journals of explorers, administrators, traders, and missionaries, as well as from the pages of ethnographies, found its way into popular literature, newspapers, movies and other media, forming a stereotypic model.

However, the Indigenous movement, budding in the 1960s and spreading in the 1970s, saw the change from Eskimo to Inuit in Canada, accompanied by redefinition of old stereotypes, as well as the promulgation and manipulation of self-images. It was in the 1970s that Eskimo was replaced by the ethnonym Inuit in Canada. More 40 years before that, Arctic explorer and researcher Vilhjalmur Stefansson asserted that Inuit was a more satisfactory term than the derogatory Eskimo, although his suggestion did not gain acceptance [SREBRNIK 1998: 60]. It was not until after the mid-1970s that the term Eskimo, burdened with the primitive connotation of 'eaters of raw meat' (see below), was wholly replaced by Inuit in Canada.

Inuit is under certain circumstances a term encompassing all Indigenous peoples of the Arctic tundra. The politically influential Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) represents not only the Inuit, but also the Yup'ik groups of south-western Alaska and Siberia, the Inupiat of north and north-western Alaska, people who never refer to themselves internally as Inuit. As Eben Hopson Sr., Mayor of the North Slope Borough in north Alaska, was a leading figure in the establishment of ICC [PETERSEN 1984: 725-726], it is interesting that Inuit should have been adopted as the collective ethnonym for ICC. I have not been able to learn why Yup'ik, Inupiat and other regional ethnonyms were subsumed under the term Inuit, but there is no doubt that the establishment of ICC in 1977 was no small factor in fixing Inuit as an ethnonym in Canada, and in many cases internationally.

It must be noted however, that in Alaska and Siberia 'Eskimo' has not been expurgated as a derogatory term. A cursory review of literature published since 1990 shows more than 50 titles, such as 'Nunivak Eskimo', 'Alaska[n] Eskimo', 'Yup'ik Eskimo', 'Inupiat Eskimo', 'Koniag Eskimo' incorporating 'Eskimo'. On the other hand, other than references to linguistic and archaeological studies, I found no such titles for Canada.

Many factors seem to have contributed to the replacement of Eskimo by Inuit in Canada. One factor was that in preparation for negotiations for self-government and control of resource exploitation in the early 1970s, in English political groups of eastern Canada began to use the term Inuit in favour of Eskimo. Presumably, in contrast to Eskimo, a foreign term under which the people were always in a subordinate position, Inuit symbolised autonomy and sovereignty. The social climate of Canada in the 1970s, recognising minority dignity and rights, probably also played a role in the exclusion of Eskimo in favour of Inuit in academia and the media. A note to Volume 1 of the *INUIT LAND USE and OCCUPANCY PROJECT* [FREEMAN 1976: 20] states that 'the Canadian Inuit increasingly, when speaking in English or French, use their own word for themselves, namely Inuit (singular, Inuk). This term has come to replace "Eskimo" or "Esquimaux", which are respectively, the English and French renditions of the Cree word "Askimawak". Thus throughout this report, the historic inhabitants of Arctic Canada are referred to as Inuit. However, because the Alaskan Eskimos (Yup'ik and Inupiat) do not refer to themselves as Inuit, and because the various prehistoric occupants of the Arctic regions are known in the literature as Eskimos, this term is used where appropriate to those particular circumstances'. This authoritative study undoubtedly was influential to the replacement of Eskimo by Inuit in the academic community.

For example, a search for 'Eskimo' and 'Inuit' until 1975 in my personal data base of about six thousand titles for Arctic peoples, other than a few exceptions, resulted in all 'Eskimo'. However, by the same search for the period of 1975 to the present, several hundred titles with 'Inuit' can be found. For this period, with only one exception, the term 'Eskimo' occurred only in archaeological and historical titles (i.e. Palaeoeskimo), linguistics titles (i.e. Eskimo language), and research in Alaska, Greenland and Siberia. This cursory exercise demonstrates a clear-cut and almost total change from Eskimo to Inuit in Canada after 1975.

It must be noted here that Eskimo is not necessarily a derogatory term. The term Eskimo was introduced into English and other European languages on two separate occasions. The first, in the sixteenth century, was a Montanais (Innu) term referring to netting a snowshoe [DAMAS 1984: 6; FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 5; MAILHOT et al. 1980: 61; MARTIJN 1980a: 79-80; 1980b; MARY-ROUSSELIERE 1987; OSWALT 1979: 5-6; ROGERS and LEACOCK 1981: 187; TAYLOR 1978: 100; 1979a: 50; 1979b: 268-272; 1980: 188-189, 271; 1980: 188; WEYER 1969: 2]. The second introduction was an Ojibwa word similar in pronunciation, but with the derogatory meaning of 'eaters of raw meat', as recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary [cf. MAILHOT 1978]. It was this derogatory meaning that gained general acceptance in Canada, but was rejected in favour of Inuit in the 1970s [STEWART 1993a].

However, there is the problem whether Inuit was actually a traditional ethnonym,

or self-designation. When discussing ethnic self-designations, both 'ethnic' and 'self-designation' need to be scrutinised. Leaving 'ethnic' to another time, it is important to note that self-designations are context-bound, and may change according to the situation [OTSUKA 1998]. Inuit is no exception.

It appears that in traditional times, the most extensive identity group was the socio-territorial '*miut*' [BIRKET-SMITH 1924: 37-38; 1936: 147] (in northern Alaska see Burch [1998: 8-12]). '*Miut*' designations, usually based upon toponyms of places inhabited, particularly in the winter, by a certain group (i.e. *Iglulingmiut*, etc.), indicated the greatest extent of socio-territorial identity. Inuit was probably not an all-encompassing term for all inhabitants of the tundra. In other words, other '*miut*' groups were not sections of a generic 'Inuit', but rather constituted an 'Other group' [BURCH 1978; KLEIVAN 1984: 524; STEWART 1989; cf. FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 153]. Birket-Smith describes groups in Greenland as those that because of consanguinity or isolation are looked upon as something apart, but are not politico-tribal divisions. Group names appear to be applied from without, and members of a group speak of themselves as *inuit* 'men'. In his book '*THE ESKIMOS*', first published in Danish in 1927, Birket-Smith states that the Eskimos from the Atlantic Ocean to the Bering Strait everywhere call themselves *inuit* [1936: 8]. However, this self-appellation was most probably in contradistinction to 'non-Eskimos', and not an indication of belonging to pan-Arctic group [BIRKET-SMITH 1936: 147]. This is in contradiction to the ethnonym Inuit in its present day connotation.

According to linguistic research by Keiichi Omura (personal communication), in Inuktitut, the root *inu* of *inuit* (singular form *inuk*, dual form *inuuk*, plural form *inuit*) does not refer only to humanity, but refers to 'existence' or 'an autonomous agent', either animate or inanimate. *Inuit* may have included, but was not limited to humanity. Although there are generic terms for caribou (*tuktu*) or polar bears (*nanuq*), there may not have been a collective term for persons (humanity). Although not yet conclusive, it may be that in traditional Inuktitut there was only the ego, founded upon personal names, maturity stages, social relations, growth stage (infancy, adulthood, etc.), and social relations [KISHIGAMI 1996; FIENUP-RIORDAN 1986: 262-263; STEWART field notes]. Unfortunately, we have little data concerning the basic meaning of *inu*, but it appears that *inu*, and its derivative *inuit*, is not a classificatory noun, and most certainly not a collective designation for all original inhabitants of the tundra Arctic. In substantiation of this postulate, the following observation by Birket-Smith [1929: 53] is germane. 'The Caribou Eskimos, like almost all Eskimos, call themselves [inuit], the plural of [inuk], which means, partly, a person and, in its narrower sense, an Eskimo, and partly in the possessive form [inua] a personification of all, live and lifeless objects. The fundamental meaning is without doubt more "inhabitant", "possessor", and the root seems to be related to [ine], place of residence. Just that feeling of something living, which we connect with the word inhabitant, is strongly expressed in the anthropomorphic thought of the Eskimos....'

Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis: before the advent of Europeans, humans may also have been included under the designation *inuit*, but it foremost referred to 'existence', or 'an autonomous agent'. However, one must note that Otto FABRICUS in *Fauna Groenlandica* [1780] (quoted from Holtved [1962: 14]) wrote that in Greenland,

*innuit* was a term meaning 'person', but my personal observations convince me that his translation was contingent upon anthropological thinking, and not a reflection of pan-ethnic identity.

In Greenland, Birket-Smith [1924: 37] states that '[in the Egedesminde District] the Eskimos simply use the word *innuit*, "men", when speaking of themselves, this being the appellation used by the majority of the Eskimos.' According to Steensby [1916: 421], 'Another name for the Eskimo is *innuit* (plural of *inuk*, human being), which originates from the Eskimo themselves'.

A rather unreasonable hypothesis was put forward by Thalbitzer [1941: 586] when he writes that 'If *inuk* (plur. *innuit*) is conceived to be derived from Japanese *inu* "a dog", more especially "a bitch", the name ainu might be formed after Japanese *oinu* "a he-dog".... The Eskimos, if we consider that they are born with the "Mongolian spot" (or pigment) like the Japanese, might be supposed to have obtained the name from the language of the Japanese which denoted their original position within (or without?) the Japanese realm. Inuit, "the bitches"? Aside from this his fanciful theory, in the same publication, Thalbitzer repeatedly uses the term "Inuit" interchangeably with "Eskimo"'.

In Alaska, Weyer [1969: 153] notes that 'The Norton Sound Eskimos call themselves, on the other hand, Yup'ik, meaning "fine" or "complete" people. The usual word, however, which Eskimos use in referring to their own people is Inuit, which is simply the plural if *inuk*, meaning "person" or "man"'.

More to the point, Murdoch [1892: 42-43] says that 'They [Point Barrow Eskimos] call themselves as a race "*In'nuin*", a term corresponding to the "Inuit" of other dialects, and meaning "people", or "human beings". Under this name they include white men and Indians as well as Eskimo, as in the case in Greenland and the Mackenzie River District, and probably also everywhere else, *though many writers have supposed it to be applied by them only to their own race*' (emphasis added). This observation probably most correctly describes the use of *innuit* before the twentieth century.

Whatever the historical vicissitudes of the term, from the twentieth century on, Inuit came to be used as an ethnonym [BIRKET-SMITH 1924: 37; 1936: 8; STEENSBY 1916: 42; THALBITZER 1941: 585-586, 596; WEYER 1969: 153]. It appears that it was anthropologists that began to use 'Inuit' as an ethnonym referring to the original inhabitants of the Canadian Arctic, often also to the original Greenlanders and sometimes north-western Alaska. This supposition is supported by Murdoch's observation, as well as by the fact that in Alaska Yup'ik dislike being referred to as Inuit [i.e. FIENUP-RIORDAN 1990: 5].

Here, I wish to make it clear that I have not the least intention to infer that Inuit is not a legitimate ethnonym. That the Inuit should call themselves Inuit is a matter for themselves to choose, and not something that an outsider such as myself to criticise. My point is that anthropologists should realise that *innuit* was not originally an ethnonym, but a term probably referring to humanity in general. It is most probable that anthropologists, and subsequently dominant society, were the instrument by which the term came to be used as an ethnonym. However, it must be emphasised that the term has been accepted by the people, and has become an integral part of their life and relations with the dominant society. Inuit is in deed, as well as in name, an ethnonym for the original occupants of the Canadian Far North, and at



times for all those from the Chukotka Peninsula to Greenland by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

## GENESIS OF THE 'INUIT', ETHNIC IDENTITY AND IMAGERY

By the historical process sketched above, it may be seen how in Canada (and in some instances, Greenland also), the usage of Inuit changed from the abstract 'existence', or 'an autonomous agent', to an official ethnonym. In this process, there developed a sort of image crisis in the switch from the individual identities of the various '*miut*' groups to a comprehensive, circumpolar 'Inuit' image. This was presumably the case in projecting an ethnic image to the dominant society. That is because of the rapid, almost violent process of modernisation in the 1970s and 80s, in which the well-known ethnic markers, such as fur clothing, dog sleds, snow houses, etc., faded from the scene. With the loss, or decline of these familiar markers, it became necessary to find new representational images to project to the Outside, as well as to bolster self-identity.

One such image often alluded to is living on the tundra and resistance to cold. The Canadian Inuit are fully aware of how dominant society (the South) visualises the 'brutal, bitterly cold' Arctic, considering it to be the harshest conditions under which humans survive. Awareness of this image by the Inuit is often indicated in conversations with Outsiders. In camp, though many Inuit today are as sensitive to the cold as any 'Southerner' (or Japanese researcher), one is still told, particularly by males, how resistant are the Inuit to the cold.

Modern Inuit often also cite genealogical links, kinship, language, love of the land, food and eating habits, as the hallmark of genuine Inuitness, as well as 'going on the land' (*maqainniq*) as opposed to wage work. Without at least some knowledge of the Inuit language (Inuktitut) and culture, some groups do not consider a person to be a genuine Inuit [DORAIS 1988; 1996: 31-32]. However, my observations of young children at Pelly Bay, Nunavut, Canada, unable or unwilling to speak Inuktitut (Inuit language), particularly children under ten years of age, indicates that Inuktitut is becoming less important as an ethnic marker.

My field observations at Pelly Bay lead me to believe that 'going on the land' is paramount in the formation of contemporary Inuit identity. Fully aware of the dangers of oversimplifying, my observations lead me to hypothesise that subsistence activities, above all hunting, are assuming an evermore-important role in ethnic imagery. In particular, sea-ice seal hunting, necessitating special familiarity with game habits, capture techniques, knowledge of vagaries of the weather, stamina and endurance, has become a, or the hallmark of Inuit imagery [STEWART 1995; 1996; 1998]. Hunting on the land where game may be observed, thus requiring little special skill or knowledge, does not enjoy the prestige and pride of hunting on the ice, the chase of an unseen seal that is free to move unobserved to any of its many breathing holes, only to disappear again under the ice after a few seconds of breathing. Only a skilled hunter with years of experience is likely to successfully harpoon such elusive game.

Fishing on lake or river ice is a similarly esteemed pursuit. As one Pelly Bay elder told

me, one must be thoroughly knowledgeable in the habits of fish swimming beneath the ice. The habits of different species of fish differ according to the season. Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), whitefish (*Coregonus* spp., *Prosopium* spp.) and lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) all have different habits, each species requiring different fishing methods according to the season [STEWART 1993b: 36].

Such subsistence activities were once essential to survival in the Arctic. However, recent changes in the socio-political situation have brought about a shift in the significance of hunting. As Wenzel [1991] emphasises, hunting still holds significance as an indicator of cultural continuity, and has not entirely lost its economic importance. However, hunting has assumed other significance, such as leisure, and most importantly, as a representation of ethnicity [STEWART 1996]. Put in another way, hunting is now a credential of Inuitness at Pelly Bay.

As I have argued elsewhere [STEWART 1996], young Inuit males are more taken up with, albeit not always consciously, with the imagery, rather than the subsistence aspects of hunting. Some young men continue to hunt seal from the sea ice and fish on lake or river ice, but many are more attracted to hunting wolves on skidoos with high-powered rifles [STEWART 1996: 132]. The appeal of the high prices of wolf skins and the recreational aspects of the 'high-speed hunt' [CONDON et al. 1995: 36] have served to change Inuit attitudes to traditional subsistence activities. Thus, 'doing hunting' proves to the Inuit that he is an Inuit, and projects an image readily understandable to the dominant society.

## IMAGERY AND POLITICS

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the strategy of imagery pursued by hunting and gathering societies today, and those conjured up by the dominant society, are extremely political in nature. For example, Inuit leaders, at the negotiation table or in Parliament, often allude to ethnic imagery. For example, 'The land, the waters, the wildlife and we, the people, are one and the same. We are not separate from our environment. We are part of it and it is part of us' (statement by Jack Anawak at the vote in Parliament on Nunavut, House of Commons Debates, Volume 132, Number 262, 3rd Session, 34th Parliament, p.20358). Another MP, Peter Ittinuar, states that 'Inuit culture is inseparably part of the land'.

Although 'being one with nature' is not part of young male's activities or their ethos [STEWART 1996: 141-144], the image projected by leaders, however far removed from reality, carries important political significance. Hunting is an especially political aspect of Inuit imagery. One need only to recall the 'seal fur war' that broke out in the 1970s. In opposition to commercial harp seal hunting, viewed as cruel and inhumane, seal fur products were boycotted in Europe and the United States. This boycott developed into a campaign against subsistence hunting by the Inuit. Inuit leaders emphasised the difference between hunting harp seals for furs and subsistence hunting by the Inuit, but in spite of their efforts, subsistence hunting came under increasing fire, and restrictions on import and marketing of seal products are still in force [WENZEL 1991: 41-55]. This episode is an example of imagery failure.

On the other hand, Nunavut is an example of how imagery was an important means of

achieving political objectives. By convincing the dominant society of the importance of Inuit ties to the land, a long history of living in harmony with nature, and the existence of traditional wisdom making possible continued sustainable game harvest, a portion of the Arctic amounting to one fifth of Canada is to be established as an Inuit homeland. The effectiveness of imagery, coupled with recognition by the dominant society that indigenous autonomy was an important human right, resulted in the creation of Nunavut.

The above two episodes bespeak the politics of imagery, as well as show how when image projection does not succeed, political and economic goals may not be realised, whereas when images are successfully projected, political aspirations are more likely to become reality. The episodes also indicate that for imagery to be successful, the images projected must relate to the expectations, or fancies of the dominant society.

## SUMMARY

In this paper, I showed how the Eskimo, dispersed into innumerable local 'miut' groups and assigned a negative image, transformed themselves into a monolithic ethnos (or 'people') during the international Indigenous movement of the 1970s and 80s. Although in Canada 'Inuit' is generally interpreted as being, and always as having been an ethnonym, it became such only during the past century or so. Moreover, it is only during the past few decades that it has come to embrace all the tundra inhabitants of Canada, and in the case of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, those from Chukotka to Greenland. In this paper, I did not discuss regional ethnonyms of the Inuit, such as Inummaariit, Inuvialuit, nor the Suxpiat, Yuget and Yupiget usually subsumed under the term of Yup'ik.

Many socio-political factors in the 1970s contributed to the change from Eskimo to Inuit. Factors including 'ethnic awakening', the Indigenous movement, land claims negotiations, and education were important, while on the dominant side, factors such as increased concern to human rights and Indigenous peoples' welfare may be noted. Not a single factor, but rather an interaction of all of the above, and other factors, were instrumental in the genesis of [the] Inuit.

Following the genesis of this pan-Arctic 'Inuit' phenomenon, I argue that subsistence activities, above all hunting, has become the image representing the Canadian Inuit to the Outside, as well as bolstering ethnic identity within the community itself. Hunting scenes dominate media representations of the Inuit, both of Outside media and ethnic media. The Inuit are seemingly aware of this situation, and tend emphasise the importance of hunting in modern life, as well as in image projection. Although increased employment opportunities and other factors work to make hunting less important in daily life, hunting continues to be the focal image of the Inuit today. Thus arises the discrepancy between reality and imagery. Also, one sees an emphasis on traditionalism in imagery counterposed to the ongoing process of modernisation in everyday life.

Here arises a conundrum, to wit, how autonomous is the Inuit image, and how greatly is it heteronomic, that is regulated by the expectations of the dominant society. In either case, I argue that for autonomous ethnic imagery to be successful, to a certain extent, it must conform to dominant society's expectations. In any event, imagery, be it autonomic or

heteronomic, exerts an ever increasing influence on the social, cultural, and political situation of hunter and gathering societies within the nation-state.

In closing, I recognise that have unwittingly stressed images as projected by adult males. In the future, it will be necessary to investigate what images are projected by females, as will as Inuit living in suburban areas.

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