IMAGES OF THE INDIGENOUS IN MODERN MEDIA: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE CROSS-CULTURAL EXPANSION OF THE MEDIA ALTERING THE WAY ARCTIC INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES ARE PORTRAYED IN WESTERN MEDIA?

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"It is chiefly our unwillingness to change our minds which prevents the North from changing into a country to be used and lived in just like the rest of the world."

Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*, 1921: 687.

CONTENTS

PREFACE:

This thesis is about journalism and the way it explores issues relating to indigenous peoples, and specifically issues relating to Arctic indigenous peoples. My interest in the subject stems from nearly ten years working in broadcast journalism. As a participant and observer in the fast paced twenty-four hour newsroom, I have often questioned why certain stereotypes and clichés are not adequately questioned before they are reproduced and decided to pursue a more critical reflection of the medium, an opportunity which in the pressurised environment of the newsroom is a luxury rarely granted.

I would like to thank my friends and colleagues at the Scott Polar Research Institute who have provided such a stimulating environment in which to explore my thoughts and clarify my diverse ideas. In particular my supervisor, Dr. Michael Bravo, and the staff of the library who have helped me discover the wonders hidden amongst the shelves. My thanks must also go to the members of my family who have provided advice and encouragement in just the right proportions.

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing, which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

This dissertation does not exceed the word limit of 20,000 words.

INTRODUCTION:

"Inuit feel that they are still misperceived as if they were a sort of people from another age and time. Inuit are still hunters, although in a different way. They are now hunting for rights with new weapons such as news conferences, court actions and negotiations to preserve their survival."

Zebedee Nungaq, *Nunatsiaq News*, April 26, 1999.

In a recent advert for a sofa company's winter sale[1] an Inuk man, dressed in furs, stands in the icy wastes of the Arctic. His fur hood is pulled tightly around his face and as the wind blows the snow across the desolate tundra in the background, he describes life in this environment. His unusually accented Inuktituk is translated for the audience by a disembodied voice. The voice gradually becomes more exasperated and disbelieving as the Inuk promotes the merits, comfort and economy of the company's latest sofas. It doesn't, however, occur to the disembodied voice to be startled by the somewhat unusual spectacle of three penguins, occupants of the southern hemisphere, in the background listening to the Arctic sales pitch. The gentleman in question, if he is indeed Inuk, probably leads a full and varied life, based in a modern dwelling with sofas and a variety of modern media. However, as his origins seem questionable, it is more than likely that the individual is an actor of Asian origin. This albeit light-hearted example of modern Western representation of Indigenous lifestyle raises, if somewhat simplistically, some of the questions I seek to address regarding modern media representations of indigenous peoples.

These homogenous images are replicated in adverts for mortgage companies, safety matches, beers and cars[2], as well as in print media and broadcasting. Madeline Redfern, who compiled an exhibition of more than one hundred examples of "Eskimos in Advertising" (*Nunatsaiq News*, 27/02/2004), explains that the Inuit are portrayed as a generic stereotype. "The stereotypical Eskimo wears a fur parka and lives in an igloo. They spend their time hunting seals and polar bears, eating meat and rubbing noses" (Ibid.). This fur clad igloo dweller, Redfern suggests "is not of Inuit creation, but of advertisers, or of the audience they are reaching out to" (Ibid.). Harald Prins (2002) argues that these clichés are largely based "on the European

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[1] An advert for DFS sofas broadcast in December 2007 as part of the winter sale campaign.
[2] Recent examples of depictions of Inuit in advertisements carried in the British media include Cheltenham & Gloucester Mortgages, Guinness Ice and Jeep Cherokee.

primitivist stereotype of the 'noble savage' as the child of nature," a "time tested construct" that "has long allowed the instant wrapping of the indigenous 'other'" (Ibid: 58).

If contemporary mass media is "located at the intersection of the complex processes of cross-cultural consumption and those of inter-cultural communication" (Bredin 1996: 161) we must examine why the media is complicit in the creation and reproduction of romantic exoticism and demeaning generalisation and whether the cross-cultural spread of media is altering the way indigenous societies are portrayed. I will seek to address these questions by considering the complex relationship between the role the media plays in the construction of our sense of self and nationality and how this is juxtaposed with our sense of the 'other'[3]. In examining these ideas, I must consider to what extent the media acts as an 'agent' for people to acquire an awareness of environments they are not knowledgeable about, from direct experience or education, and examine how media production and consumption interact with questions of national and cultural identity. I will suggest that the media is an important 'actor' in determining modern notions of identity, as it is part of "the specific way in which a human collectivity perceives and represents its position in the universe in relation to other collectives of human beings" (Dorais 1994: 254 quoted in Oosten and Remie 1999: 2).

I will draw upon anthropology and media anthropology theory as well as political literature relating to nationalism and notions of identity. However, there have been some criticisms of modernist theory as reifying identity itself and assuming that cultures are distinct homogenous entities. In so doing, they "fail to conceptualise the fact that culture - and identities – are a process rather than naturally occurring objects" (Mandianou 2005:7). Thus I intend to follow the examples of Schlesinger (2001) and Mandianou (2005) and draw on both modernist theories and anthropological theories of ethnicity and culture as an approach that understands identities and cultures as fluid and dynamic and the audience as more than a passive recipient of media. As Bredin (1996:166) suggests "the consumption of the commodified images of introduced media is not simply a unilateral process of passive assimilation but an active transformation of novel images and ideas in relation to prior cultural norms and values." In taking this approach, I seek to avoid media-centrism and intend to examine the media as a cultural resource in which the

[3] The term 'other' appropriates Lacan's psychoanalytic use of the term as the mirror phase in human development when the child sees its own reflection as 'other.'

global and local are articulated. I consider this particularly important as the ubiquity of worldwide media has changed the cultural flow of information and reconfigured politico-cultural spaces. This "new communications geography" as Morley and Robins (1995: 1) describe it has previously inexperienced geopolitical borders (Ginsburg et al 2002).

My research will largely focus on the British media including press, television, radio, digital and global media. The British media has a long established reputation and international audience through radio and television channels such as the BBC's World Service Radio and BBC World Television. However, in modern society, contemporary media and communication flows have changed and the audience is no longer bounded by the limitations of national communities. Hence, the international reach of domestic media has expanded to the point where there are few international boundaries; television and radio programmes can now be downloaded worldwide, as can domestic newspapers. However, whereas the representation of indigenous peoples is a live political issue in the media of many nations, including Canada and Australia, the British media has not had its portrayal of aboriginal communities questioned by members of its own society, instead it has only had to address issues of multiculturalism in relation to immigration and national identity. The question which then arises is how has the 'other' been portrayed in contrast to a sense of nationalism and to what extent has the media been involved in this imagery?

I will start be examining how stereotypes of Arctic peoples have evolved and become entrenched in Western popular culture in the modern era. I will demonstrate that, western constructions of the 'other' in regard to Arctic inhabitants have largely emerged from ideas based on exploration narratives and reproduced generalisations. These stereotypes are closely related to changing European attitudes and intellectual histories, similar to those show by Edward Said in relation to the Orient (Said 2003).

In chapter two my focus centres on an examination of how indigenous peoples are portrayed in the contemporary British media. My findings show that a portrayal of the 'exotic other' is widespread and not simply restricted to the mass-market media. The British media is then complicit in and responsible for the repetition of primitivist exoticism and clichéd generalisations; unquestioningly reinforcing outdated simplified images of indigenous peoples. Focusing specifically on coverage of the Arctic, I find that greater consideration is given to the natural world and indigenous voices are

often absent from issues that are being debated even when those issues have a significant economic or cultural impact on the population.

In order to examine the impact of these portrayals on Arctic peoples, I have conducted original research by interviewing a range of representatives who have been actively involved in political and cultural representations of Arctic people to a wider audience, whether as cultural representatives or as political activists. The sample could not be comprehensive or exhaustive but sheds new light on the impact that western representations of indigenous peoples have on these populations. The responses show that there is an impact, though it has both positive and negative repercussions which, range from encouraging indigenous production and giving indigenous populations "a place in the world of TV.... legitimizing the images we want to project" to creating a sense of distance from the mainstream audience reminding "rural, aboriginal people how remote they are from all the action that is portrayed on the screen" which "can have a negative effect on young people, who want to be part of the action" (Interview with Mayor Itta conducted by author.)

Finally, I will examine how indigenous peoples are attempting to use this impact to their own ends in terms of cultural and political identity. Indigenous productions and new communications technologies have provided new mediums through which indigenous communities can engage in local and global discussions, represent themselves, largely within their own parameters, and has allowed the formation of powerful political allegiances.

In conclusion, I find that the cross-cultural expansion of the media is not altering the way indigenous societies, and more specifically Arctic indigenous societies, are portrayed in western media. Although identity is fluid and constantly redefining itself in relation to others the media has a static image of the 'other' which does not consider 'modern' indigenous societies as 'real' or ethnically valid.

My findings cause me to question the British media's reluctance to change stereotypical portrayals of indigenous populations and consider if this is directly related to the fact that are no indigenous populations in Britain. British identity, although dynamic, is only questioned in relation to national identities, immigration and diversity; it therefore does not introduce the visibility of aboriginal lives and histories within the discussion of the nation allowing it to reproduce the existing stereotypes unchallenged. However, the combination of the international political

interest in climate change and the expanding cross-cultural media network is providing a new agency through which local voices can express themselves.

CHAPTER 1: THE UNINHABITED ARCTIC AND THE ETERNAL SAVAGE.

"Today the world has become the global village of which we once spoke only in wishful metaphor. What happens in one part of the globe is immediately accessible to the entire world and affects others over great distances."

Nelson Mandela, Labour Party Conference, 28th September 2000.

In the 'global village,' which Nelson Mandela refers to, international networks of information form "a new communications geography"; one which Morley and Robins (1995:1) suggest is "defined by satellite footprints and radio signals – providing the crucial and permeable boundaries of our age." The ubiquity of the world's media has then changed the cultural flow of information and reconfigured politico-cultural spaces. Media imagery has become part of our daily routine and sustains many of our images of non-local people, places and events. Morley and Robins even suggest that, "the further the event from our own direct experience, the more we depend on media images for the totality of our knowledge" (Ibid: 133). The practices of journalism, then, supply viewers, listeners, readers and internet-users with a powerful way of experiencing and interpreting the world (Ginsburg et al 2002, Meadows 2001). Andre Singer, the chair of the Royal Anthropological Institute film committee, even proposes that, "television is by far and away the most important means of communicating ideas to a public audience in the twenty-first century." (Singer 2006: 24.) Other academics suggests that it is this medium, which has turned viewers in to amateur ethnographers: "Many of us in the West have only to sit on a couch and press a button to behold the exotic other; the global news media have made us all in to armchair anthropologists, nightly witnesses to the strange customs of others." (Morley and Robins 1995: 7) But are the images that the nightly ethnographers encounter an accurate portrayal of the 'other' or does journalism remain complicit in sustaining particular images and stereotypes? Furthermore, how do the viewers interpret these images and how do indigenous groups experience their own representations in the media? To examine these ideas we must first consider the role of the media as an 'actor' in social communications, its role in developing a sense of nationhood and the juxtaposition of the 'other' to the national stereotype and how these relate to complex new media networks.

As Ginsburg et al (2002: 1) elucidate, "media reception occurs 'beyond the living room' and media production 'beyond the studio'" not only because of the diverse

locations in which they occur, but also because they occur as part of "a set of daily practices and discourses." These daily practices are then pivotal in both people's perceptions of themselves and their sense of collective identities. As Oosten and Remie (1999) discuss, identity is a dynamic, social construct defined in terms of sameness as well as in terms of difference or contrast. "A person's identity may be derived from factors such as his nationality, his ethnic background, his profession, his soul or his spirit. Each identity is relevant in a different context." (Ibid: 1). Cultural identity is also a socially constructed, dynamic entity, which is undergoing constant adaptation. "Cultural identity based on a re-telling of the past; where cultural events are mediated by various actors, who in view of their political or social interests, reconstruct past symbols and memories." (Legare 2001: 146). To what extent then can the media be seen to be an actor in the construction of cultural identity?

The media has traditionally been assumed to have a pivotal role in the creation of national cultural identity. Examining the role of the media in the formations of *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner (1983) suggested that the style and language of communication were more important than the content, but this communication direct to the nation was central in the formation of nationalism. He suggests that, "The media do not transmit an idea which has been fed into them: it is the media themselves, the pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralized, standardized, one to many communication, which itself automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism, quite irrespective of what particular message is being put in to the specific messages transmitted. The most important and persistent message is generated by the medium itself, by the role that such media have acquired in modern life... What is actually said matters little." (Gellner 1983: 127.) However, as Schlesinger (2000: 104) discusses this approach fails to address the importance of any external influences and "ignores any otherness."

Another formidable work in the discussion of the role of the media in the creation of a sense of nationalism is Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities* (1991). Ginsburg et al (2002: 5) suggest that Anderson's thesis has been "central to those concerned with studying and theorizing the cultural effects of flows of people, ideas and objects, flows crucially mediated by communications technologies." Anderson argues that mass communication and the print media were pivotal in the emergence of nationalism, allowing new technologies to determine an "imagined political community" (Anderson 1991: 6). He explains, "it is imagined because even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even

hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (Ibid: 6.) This sense of social and national community, a shared sense of being, Anderson contends was originally obtained through reading the same novels and newspapers. Expanding Anderson's notion, as he himself did in later works (2001), we can also consider that broadcasting technology, and later online technology, enable a sense of communal imagination and encourage a sense of belonging to communities or populations -- a long distance nationalism.

The idea of a shared national identity was envisaged in the early conception of national broadcasting networks. The British Broadcasting Corporation's first director-general, John Reith, was determined, "to educate, to inform and to entertain" (*Making News*, BBC World Service Radio) the audience but also intended that the network would help construct a sense of national unity "forging a link between dispersed and disparate listeners and the symbolic heartland of national life." (Quoted in Scannell and Cardiff 1991:159). Broadcasts covering events from Wimbledon to the Grand National became a collective experience and a shared memory. As Scannell explains, "All these existed before broadcasting but previously they existed only for their particular sporting publics. They became, through radio and television something more. Millions now heard them or saw them who had no direct interest in the sports themselves. The events became, and have remained, punctual moments in a shared national life" (Scannell 1989: 141 quoted in Madianou 2005:17). Historically then the media was considered to assume a duel role "serving as the political sphere of the nation state, and the focus for national cultural identification" (Morley and Robins, 1995: 10).

However, there have been some criticisms of modernist theory for assuming that cultures are distinct homogenous entities and ignoring "the otherness that may well substantially condition any given national identity" (Schlesinger 2000: 104). Culture and identity, Schlesinger argues, are constituted as much though distinctions from and opposition to other groups. "Identity is as much about exclusion as it is about inclusion, and the critical factor for defining the ethnic group therefore becomes the social boundary which defines the group with respect to other groups.... Not the cultural reality within those borders." (Schlesinger 1987: 235.) Mandianou (2005) is also critical because these approaches "fail to conceptualise the fact that culture - and identities – are a process rather than naturally occurring objects."

The question which then arises is how has the 'other' been portrayed as a contrast or a juxtaposition to the national identity? To consider this further I will provide a general survey, of how the indigenous peoples of the Arctic have historically been portrayed and the nature of these accounts and their audience.

In his seminal work *The People's Land* (1975: 17), Hugh Brody suggests that, "Northern History can be – and has been – written as the saga of a few heroic individuals." The widespread Western image of the aboriginal peoples of the Circumpolar North began in the sixteenth century when Arctic pioneers, including members of Frobisher's expeditions, returned to Europe with accounts of fur-clad savages, which they tended to portray as animal-like in their behaviour. "Their winter dwellings ... are made two fadome under grounde ... having holes like a foxe or Conny berry .... They defile these dennes most filthily with their beastly feeding, and dwell so long in a place ... until their sluttishness lothing them, they are forced to seeke ayre, and a new seate." (Hakluyt 1589: 300-1, quoted in Fienup Riordan 1995:10.) These people from the 'edge of the world', did not conform to Elizabethan perceptions and beliefs, and could not easily be understood in terms of the dominant Christian Doctrine, which considered there were only three descendants of Noah. (Oswald 1979.)

As European powers endeavoured to continue with Imperial expansionism, representations of native Arctic peoples continued almost as a by-product of Naval exploration and the search for the Northwest Passage. These new lands were "portrayed as tests for daring individuals who were willing to risk their lives to make gains for science, flag or mankind " (Riffenburgh 1993: 56) and Inuit presence as part of any expedition was largely ignored because "it would complicate the vision of exploring bravery predicated on the idea of an empty Arctic" (Spufford 1996: 189).

By the seventeenth century however, European society had begun to interpret aboriginal peoples as less advanced members of their own species. (Fienup-Riordan 1995.) Hobbes postulated that the brutish, 'natural man' required the restraining arm of society to control his animal natured. By the following century, during the age of enlightenment, a new explanation for the social behaviour of 'natural man' was introduced. In *The Social Contract*, Jean Jacques Rousseau describes how pure people in a state of nature are corrupted by civilization; the paragons of simplicity and virtue were almost an original image of ourselves. Hence, the image of the noble savage was derived: an admirable but inferior being.

It was the image of the noble savage that proliferated in the journals of the nineteenth century explorers. The British Naval officer, George Lyon, who spent considerable time in Inuit settlements describes how the remote societies they encountered were viewed as culturally primitive. "It is a generally allowed opinion that the further north a man is settled, the more dwindled in his form, his intellect and his passions." (Lyon 1824: 355, quoted in Brody 1975: 83.) The officers also found themselves to be morally superior to those they encountered. Ross wrote that, "the conduct of the present people, as of all of the rest of this race, is not more pure than that of the brute beasts: it is far less so than that of the pairing animals" (Ross 1835: 8 quoted in Remie and Oosten 1999: 10). These expedition accounts and tales of adventure where an important aspect of British newspapers. Advances in printing technology during the industrial revolution had a significant impact on the development of the press. Since the early 1800s steam-driven presses and steam railways meant daily deliveries could be made outside London (Riffenburgh 1993) turning the newspaper into a widely circulated means of communication. However, it was not until the 1850s that newspapers, which had previously been a luxury of the upper classes started to reach the general public in Britain (Ibid).[4] Prior to this date there had been "taxes on knowledge" which subjected every periodical containing news published more than every twenty-six days to a 4*d* tax (Ibid: 23).

As Darwinism gained popularity the perception of the Inuit changed and remote civilizations that thrived in harsh environments were portrayed as the embodiment of nature and the epitome of the survival of the fittest. (Stewart 2002: 88.) Friedtjof Nansen, for example, suggested that "The Eskimo forms the extreme outpost towards the infinite stillness of the regions of the ice...The tracts which all others despise he has made his own." (Nansen 1893: 4, quoted in Brody 1975: 83.) Also during the late nineteenth century, whalers and traders also began to have regular contact with Inuit societies. Remie and Oosten (1999: 9) suggest that a new approach to the Inuit was adopted "when the Hudson Bay Company became aware of the fact that that the 'savages' were useful to enterprise." The whalers, missionaries and traders were romanticised because of the isolated and basic lifestyles they led in the harsh Arctic environment, living amongst a people who, according to western stereotype, were at the edge of human life. However, Brody

[4] The birth of the modern American press was earlier and is widely considered to be 3 September 1833, when Benjamin H. Day first published his four-page New York newspaper, *The Sun.* (Riffenburgh 1993: 19).

(1975) speculates that these stereotypes were reinforced because the majority of the individuals lived on the peripheries of Inuit societies and were motivated by either commercial or moral ideology. "Many features of Eskimo culture and personality were inevitably the objects of criticism and distaste, although of course they varied individually in the intensity of their hostile reaction. To the extent that they were committed to effecting transformations, they were also committed to the abolition or modification of very many well-established local customs. Missionaries, policemen and traders all expressed strongly negative attitudes towards Eskimos in general and discovered in individuals or families manifestations of deviance from or ignorance of the principles they had come to teach." (Brody 1975: 16.) Their accounts then portrayed to wider society a colonialist representation in which members of a technologically advanced societies introduced civilization and culture.

By the turn of the twentieth century, explorers were highly paid public speakers whose adventures and heroic deeds were regularly featured in the popular press. "Not only did members of the press sponsor numerous expeditions they also encouraged exploration by paying large sums of money for exclusive accounts from the explorers" (Riffenburgh 1993: 3). The claims by the rivals Cook and Peary to have conquered the North Pole was played out in the media and brought the Arctic once again to the publics' attention. Robert E. Peary described the Inuit he encountered on his expedition as a "fearless, hardy, cheerful little tribe of human children" for whom he had the greatest regard but who knew nothing "of arts, sciences, culture, manufacture and other adjuncts of civilization." (Peary 1898: 479, quoted in Fienup-Riordan 1990.) Encouraged by the anthropologist Franz Boas, Robert Peary brought six Inuit back from one of his voyages to became living ethnographic specimens for the American Museum of Natural History. (Harper 2001.) The Inuit of New York became the subject of much interest and debate. *The New York Times* reported that access to scrutinize the individuals was limited and caused much disappointment. "The unusual crowd that thronged the museum was disappointed to be told the Eskimos were not an exhibition ..... they had to content themselves with a glimpse through a grating above the basement, and many lay prone, peering through the spaces hoping to catch a glimpse of the Eskimo." (Harper 2001: 27.) Whilst Peary's living specimens were creating great interest on the east coast of America, an exhibit of Siberian Yup'ik were exciting public attention in Seattle. Over one hundred individuals were housed in a papier-mâché igloo and promoted as a "strange people" who exist "only on the products of the icy north, half civilized in their nature, knowing no god, having no laws, no government, unable to

read and write, with no history of their antecedents." (*Alaskan Journal* 1984: 14 quoted in Fienup-Riordan 1995: 17.)

This popular stereotypical image of Inuit lifestyle was reinforced to the Euro-American audience in 1922, following the release of Robert Flaherty's film *Nanook of the North;* a documentary depiction of family life in the Arctic. Flaherty was not concerned with ethnographic accuracy in his depiction. "As an artist, he wanted to make a dramatic statement about man in confrontation with the most extreme conditions on earth. He used the strategy of intensification, that is, selecting an aspect of well observed behaviour and amplifying it to a dramatic pitch" (Balikci 1989: 7). The film was extremely successful at the box office and caused 'Nanookmania' in many countries, including Britain. Although popular with its audience, the film was criticised by the Arctic explorer and ethnographer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson. In his scathing analysis he suggests that the film reinforces already preconceived stereotypes. "It confirms most of the ordinary misconceptions; and it adds new misconceptions more numerous than those that it removes." (Stefansson 1922: 3-4.) More films depicting Arctic life followed including *Eskimo*, which was based on the novel by Peter Freuchen, and *The Wedding of Palo* in 1937.

The idea that the Inuit were primitive was still proliferated in the media in the 1950s. An international edition of *Life* featured a cover story on the "Stone Age Survivors" of the Keewatin District of the Canadian Arctic. The Ahiarmuit family pictured on the cover were thought to typify "modern Mesolithic man – the harvester of wild bounty, and consumer of temporary abundance" who "lacking a concept of time, he is unwilling or unable to take present action for future needs." (*Life*, 2 April 1956 quoted in Marcus 1998: 190.) The stereotype that the Inuit were "still in an early stage of evolution as human beings.... A people who were to all intents and purposes childish" was even believed amongst administrators (Stewart 2002: 88) although it was sometimes co-joined with equally pervasive western notions of Inuit culture on the brink of collapse (Wachowich 2007).

In the early 1970s the question of the perceived stereotype surrounding the Inuit was again examined in the United States. Asen Balikci (1989) was involved in the production of a series of ethnographic films, which were distributed to schools to be viewed by nine and ten year old children. The public criticism was vociferous and members of Congress even suggested that the film attacked family values. A Republican representative from Arizona even insisted that, "Embedded in the

material is an 'anything goes' philosophy which subtly unteaches morality, patriotism, American values, Judeo-Christian ethics and beliefs." (Quoted in Balikci 1989: 6). The hostile reaction of a large cross section of the American public to the film led to an investigation of the stereotypes held by American school children regarding the Netsilik[5]. The perception was of a courageous, hard working, ingenious and virtuous community. "American children and most probably their parents as well, apparently considered the Eskimos as primitive Protestants, disciplined and virtuous people from the top of the world, to be contrasted with the bloodthirsty and warlike Indians." (Balikci 1989: 7). Questioning how these stereotypes emerged; Balikci makes the assumption that ethnographic films were responsible for intensifying pre-existing stereotypes. "Several attributes of Eskimo stereotype, already present in Victorian literature, were dramatically intensified in *Nanook*. More than ever, the Eskimos emerged as happy, lovable, clean, courageous, family people endowed with great ingenuity" (Ibid: 7).

Historically, then, we can see that western constructions of the 'other' in regard to Inuit inhabitants of the Arctic largely emerged from ideas based on exploration narratives and reproduced generalisations. As Remie and Oosten (1999: 20) suggest the image is of the persistent or eternal savage. "From the outset till recently (and perhaps even till the present day), Inuit have been viewed by qallunaat[6] as 'savages.' And although the image of 'the brutal' savage' of the early days of the explorers may have made way for an image of a 'usable savage' and that of a 'savage with a human face in need of civilized care,' the persistent element in the definition is 'savage' as opposed to 'civilised'" (Remie and Oosten 1999: 20).

These historical examples enforce Edward Said's (2003 [1978]) notion that western constructions of 'other' peoples are more often closely related to changing European attitudes and intellectual histories. In his examination of western constructions of the Orient, Said suggests that "the imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desired, repressions, investments and projections" (Ibid: 8).

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[5] The Netsilik are a Canadian Inuit community resident on the west of Hudson Bay.
[6] Hugh Brody defines the term *qallunaat* as Inuttitut for 'southerners' or 'whites' (Brody 175: 163).

However, in modern society, contemporary media and communication flows have changed and the audience is no longer bounded by the limitations of national communities (Morley and Robins 1995.). As the former head of Time Warner, Steve Ross, explained that "the new reality of international media is driven more by market opportunity than national identity..... With new technologies we can bring services and ideas that will help draw even the remotest of areas of the world into the national media community." (Quoted in Morley and Robins 1995: 11.)

Examining the media networks of the European Union, "a particularly apt laboratory test for those interested in the communicative relations between nation statehood and supranationalism" (Schlesinger 2000:107-8), Schlesinger considers how communicative boundaries alter and co-exist within a larger, expanding network. He concludes that, "in board explanatory terms, social communications theory is capable of discarding its national shell and, indeed its tight functionalism" and "it can produce an account of distinct and intersecting levels of communicative space above, at and below the level of the nation-state." (Ibid: 111.) However, he suggests that the model of a network "does not resolve the knotty question of how contradiction of interest, identity and loyalty, or structured inequalities of power are handled within the complex account of communicative space that latterly has been elaborated." (Ibid.) If then a notion of national identity can, when necessary, be shed to fit within a framework of international media networks does this alter how the 'other' is personified in the global village in which there is a contradiction of interest and identity?

In this electronic age, Said suggests that, the world "has become more immediately accessible to the western citizen" so that "the Orient is drawn nearer to him." (Said 2003: 26.) He advocates that in this smaller, electronic post-modern world, stereotypes of the Orient are reinforced. "Television, films and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized moulds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth century academic imaginative demonology of 'the mysterious Orient.'" (Ibid.)

In the following chapters I intend to examine how the 'other' is characterised in the British media. After a more general examination of these issues, I will focus specifically on one example, the issue of how the indigenous peoples of the Arctic

are portrayed in the British media, and how this type of portrayal influences notions of self and identity. I intend to follow the examples of Schlesinger (2001) and Mandianou (2005) drawing on both modernist theories and on anthropological theories of ethnicity and culture as an approach that understands identities and cultures as fluid and dynamic and the audience as more than a passive recipient of media. Hence by examining identity and media simultaneously, I hope to avoid a more typical media-centrism.

CHAPTER 2: PORTRAYING THE OTHER: A SEARCH FOR THE EXOTIC?

In the media there has often been "conflict over the presentation or interpretation of material that an anthropologist would regard as prurient, unnecessary or sensational, whilst the broadcaster sees the same as attention grabbing and thus good for ratings" (Singer interviewed by Thakur 2006: 10). Examining seventy years of media coverage of Native Americans, Mary Ann Weston (1996) advocates that the media is implicitly responsible for erroneous imagery of indigenous peoples. She suggests, "Journalism has reflected the images and stereotypes prevalent in popular culture. But also it has done more. The very conventions and practices of journalism have worked to reinforce that popular – and often inaccurate imagery" (Ibid: 163). Michael Meadows is also adamant that Australian journalism is complicit in creating and sustaining simplified images of indigenous people. In his book, *Images of Aboriginal People in the Australian Media* (2001), Meadows suggests it is "quite apparent that journalism, as a set of cultural practices, tends to fulfil a role in providing simplistic, commonsense explanations for questions or events, where more often than not, complex and contextual answers are needed" (Ibid: ix). He further advocates that the media is more responsible for the creation of these assumptions than any other institutions including churches, universities, schools and societies. Is journalism then, as Alia suggests, responsible for "reportage with a level of ethnocentrism considered unacceptable in other fields" (1996: 98) and to what extent is the British media complicit in the repetition of outdated stereotypes of indigenous peoples? To consider these issues further, I will examine a number of examples of the British media's portrayal of indigenous populations from around the world and then focus specifically on the British media's portrayal of Arctic peoples.

The British media still has a tendency to label indigenous populations as "stone age', 'primitive' and 'Neolithic', sometimes still romanticising or idealising remote tribes or cultures an in a way that is reminiscent of Rousseau's 'noble savage.' The most recent example appeared in a variety of newspapers after aerial photographs were taken of a tribe that lives in the Envira region of Brazil. The photographs were seen to reveal "the lost world" of "the jungle tribe that time forgot" (*The Daily Mail*, 30/05/2008). The tribesmen and women were considered to be taking a defiant stance, "skin painted bright red, heads shaven, arrows drawn in their longbows and aimed at the aircraft buzzing overhead" (Ibid.) *The Daily Mail's* science editor further suggested that the apparent aggression shown by these individuals was understandable because "they are members of one of earth's last uncontacted

tribes...who live a life probably unchanged for more than 10,000 years." *The Sun* (30/05/2008) described how the "primitive tribe came face-to-face with the "modern world for the first time" staring "in amazement at the great metal bird" that flies overhead (Ibid.). Examining "the things they have missed" the article suggests that the "good news for them is [that] the dinosaurs have all gone – so they can come out of the forest now." The story was featured in newspapers and on websites worldwide in a largely simplistic and ethnocentric manner. However, there was some coverage that also examined in more depth the political and commercial issues influencing the survival of indigenous tribes.[7]

One might anticipate that the production of certain stereotypes was predominantly found in tabloid newspapers. However, many of the broadsheets are also complicit in the production of images of 'stone age' tribes. In a *Sunday Telegraph* feature in March (23/03/2008), the Zo'e, residents of the Amazon of northern Brazil, were also depicted as "a remote tribe" who live "a stone age existence." Their lifestyle is described as one in which "they have no need for clothes and no concept of ownership." The captions, which illustrate the largely photographic feature, explain that, "As they have done for millennia, the Zo'e live in straw huts" and "parents do not necessarily share a hut with their children, for the only concept of family is that of the greater clan." The article also draws attention to other examples of the Zo'e lifestyle, which it considers idiosyncratic. "The tribe has no notion of monogamy, nor any phrase for 'thank you', as everything is shared. Any quarrel is resolved by the disputants being pinned down and tickled until they start laughing." The concluding suggestion is that the Zo'e could "offer us the ultimate message about how to save the planet – through the two golden principles of moderation and sharing."

In another article a correspondent describes the adventures that bring him "face to face with stone age man" in Tanzania (*The Daily Mail*, 21/07/2007). After a four-day quest by light aircraft, four-wheel drive and on foot the journalists has "the chance to reach back in time to meet our living human ancestors from countless millennia ago." He describes the members of the Hadzabe tribe he encounters. "Draped in animal skins and carrying arrows tipped with poison, two slim, wiry characters walked slowly towards us in the clearing. ... Two of the estimated four hundred remaining survivors of the Hadzabe tribe whose way of life has scarcely changed since human evolution began" (Ibid.) The nervous reporter and his translator then attempt to communicate

[7] For example, BBC Online coverage was much less sensationalist. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7426794.stm Last accessed 05/06/2008.

with the members of the tribe. "The men shouted greetings to us in clicks and whistles – their sole form of language, which although it sounds basic, is capable of expressing complete thoughts and concepts" (Ibid.).

In one series of articles, a "stone age tribe" pleads to be allowed, "to join the modern world" (*The Daily Star*, 14/05/2006). The Nakak-Maku people, who are considered to have lived "a stone-age existence in the Amazon rainforest for centuries" are viewed as "a lost tribe who think planes run on invisible sky roads" and have no understandings of the trappings of modern life, such as money, property and transport." *The Express on Sunday* (14/05/2006), explains that, "A group of about 80 wandered out of the wilderness in Southern Colombia, half naked, with a gaggle of children and a pet monkey in tow, and declared themselves ready to join civilisation." An aid worker suggests, "They say they want to live near us, but they don't want anything else. If they catch a monkey, they're happy."

Further news item described how two fisherman living in the Andaman Islands were "killed by one of the world's last stone age tribes after drifting on to their desert island." (*The Daily Mail*, 09/02/2006.) The article suggests that, "the scene would not have been very different from the time, ten thousands of years ago, when groups of primitive people made their way out of Africa by land and basic sea craft towards South East Asia, battling enemy tribes on the way." The same story also featured in *The Observer* (12/02/2006) describing how "Survival comes first for the last Stone Age Tribe." The Sentinelese tribe are described as "loin-clothed warriors" and an "aggressive 'stone-age' tribe who hunt wild pigs and fish with arrows, believe that birds talk to spirits, and lack both the skills to make fire and a word to describe a number greater than two." One of the witnesses to the incident, who viewed the bodies in a shallow grave in photographs, is quoted telling the police that he was surprised to see the bodies. "I thought they roasted and ate their victims, he said." In *The Daily Telegraph* (08/02/2006), the Sentinelese are described as "the last pre-Neolithic tribe in the world to remain isolated." Discussing the same incident in *The Times* (09/02/2006), the hostility of the "lost tribe of stone age aborigines" is seen as having a historic precedent. The article describes how "Marco Polo, coming across the natives of the Andaman Islands in 1296, wrote that 'they kill and eat every foreigner whom they can lay their hands upon. Members of the tribe wear the jawbones of the dead relatives around their necks.'"

One contemporary portrayal of indigenous populations in the British media has caused much discussion amongst anthropologists. The BBC documentary series *Tribe*[8] features an adventurous ex-marine living with a series of "the world's most remote tribes"[9] for a short time, participating in local customs and trying "to understand in a small way what their lives are like."[10] Some anthropologists were appalled the "the Boys' Own idiocy" of Bruce Parry's adventures into remote communities (Caplan 2005:4). Others, were more scathing still and interpreted the programmes as "a Victorian romp where men boldly go out of history to the realm of the savage at the very heart of darkness and return to tell their tales, converting suffering to celebrity" (Hughes-Freeland 2006: 23). Even those who defended the sentiment of the endeavour worried about how some traditional stereotypes and generalisations were perpetuated and suggested that there is "a hint of the 'noble savage' conceit in the series but continue to defend the "genuine affection, respect (both ways) and empathy with the subjects chosen" (Thakur 2006: 24). In conclusion Andre Singer suggests that the mass audience appeal of such a series ultimately provides a valuable opportunity in which indigenous populations are humanised. "They don't learn enough about the people they watch and no, we don't hear the voices of any experts. But the audience does come away with one valuable truth – these people on their screens may well invert their penises, take drugs and eat grubs and insects, but so too do they laugh, joke, make fun of Bruce and each other and share values we can all recognise" (Ibid: 24).

To examine in more detail how indigenous communities are portrayed, and to obtain a direct contrast with how they have historically been portrayed, I will now examine how the indigenous populations of the Arctic are depicted in the British media. Coverage of the Arctic in the British media primarily falls into four disciplines, environmental, tourism, adventure and economic or resource related. As part of its green week coverage; a week designed to highlight "the plight of our planet" *The Sun* (14/01/2008) featured an article, which proclaimed that "Global warming is real ... Eskimos need air con." The article by the British polar explorer, David Hempleman-Adams described how he and his dog team had come "face to face with global warming" in the high Arctic. Hempleman-Adams eloquently describes their experiences travelling across "the land that never melts"; a land that was now "a

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[8] Three series of the BBC documentary series have been broadcast between February 2005 and August 2008.
[9] http://www.bbc.co.uk/tribe/ Last accessed 05/06/2008.
[10] Ibid.

combination of sludge and open water." Although he does quote one local resident, David Hempleman-Adams is the dominant voice of the article. *The Express on Sunday* (09/12/2007), questions whether "Man's greed is destroying the North Pole." It depicts the Arctic as a rapidly developing "playground for the rich and a battleground for the superpowers" whose beauty is being brought "to our big screens while the white wastes have been given extra lustre with diamond deposits being tapped by Canadian companies." The article, which warns against the spread of tourism, quotes explorers who caution against turning the North Pole in to a Disneyland and suggests that the "lure of tourism may be too much for impoverished Arctic communities to resist."

The Financial Times (01/12/2007) is more concerned with the economic effects on the Arctic towns and villages of the expanding resource industry as "interest in the Arctic heats up" amid a "thawing market." The article examines the increasing global and political attention on the region and suggests that the recent "Arctic fever" is in part because "these locations are starting to defy stereotypes about the cold barren north." It describes the effects on a variety of communities from Murmansk and Grise Fiord to Barrow to Haparanda of the expanding economies. It concludes that, "although many settlements in the Arctic are stagnating, with economies as cold as the climate ... the region is no longer a polar desert but a new frontier, attracting a raft of business, workers and residents as its temperatures rise and its resources are slowly revealed." *Vanity Fair* (May 2008) also suggests that there is a reinvigorated, renewed "interest in the Arctic – the last non-jurisdictional real estate on the planet", an area it suggests "went off the screen when the Cold War ended" but is returning "now there's a new Great Game on – the Cold Rush."

Another examination of Arctic sovereignty and resource potential, "A Very Cold War Indeed" was also explored in *The Guardian* (05/04/2008). The narrative describes the empty environment and its resilient inhabitants on the peripheries of the globe. As the author explains, "it isn't hard, visiting the Canadian Arctic, to feel as though you have reached the back of beyond: a place at the edge of the map, empty except for the caribou and a few improbably hardy humans, who journey for miles to shop at Inuvik's solitary supermarket, which sells overpriced groceries shipped from down south." The author feels inclined to believe that this was previously "the kind of place the rest of the world had forgotten about" until issues of sovereignty arose in relation to resource ownership and sea routes. In all these articles the local and indigenous are ostensibly ignored or fleetingly referred to.

Another issue, which has been covered with a less impartial imagery, is that of the annual Canadian commercial seal cull. *The Guardian* (31/03/2008) for example used its eyewitness feature, a daily double page photographic spread, to illustrate the story. Three hunters are pictured hopping across the jagged ice flows dragging the bodies of harp seals behind them on the end of a pole, their carcasses leaving a trail of blood on the ice. The annual commodity hunt, which takes place between March and April in the waters to the north and east of Newfoundland, is a yearly feature in the British media and is often not distinguished from Inuit subsistence hunting. As *The Daily Telegraph's* environment editor, Charles Clover, explains Inuit perspectives are given little attention. Describing the visit of delegation from Canada including Paul Okalik, the premier of Nunavut, the self-governing Inuit territory, Clover explains Okalik "got short shrift" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 04/04/2008).

The cull received considerable coverage in 2006. Sir Paul McCartney and his then wife took a public stance against the cull and were pictured on the ice with a young, white-coated, harp seal pup, which they claimed would be clubbed to death.[11] (*The Daily Mail*, 03/03/2006.) The couple's celebrity status ensured that their vocal pleas to stop the "brutal" (*The Daily Express*, 03/03/2006) and "heartbreaking" hunt featured in most of the British papers. The reporting was reminiscent of the late 1960s and early 1970s British newspaper coverage of the anti-sealing protests in which politicians and film stars, most memorably Brigitte Bardot, were invited on to the ice by the architects of the protests. The Sunday Mirror even went so far as to explain that their coverage was thirty-eight years to the day after the "*Daily Mirror's* iconic front page revealed the horror of the cull to the nation." (*The Daily Mirror*, 26/03/1968.)

Many of the papers presented the McCartneys' point of view unquestioningly. (For example, *The Daily Express, The Sun, The Mirror, The Sunday Mirror and The People* all published on 03/03/2006.) They reported the impassioned pleas of the couple and failed to provide any wider context to the issue. This was perhaps because consumer affairs, arts, media, business and domestic home news correspondents rather than science or foreign affairs specialists wrote the copy. However, this unquestioning response to the story was not uniform. Some of the Sunday papers and broadsheets did go in to a little more depth but often gave little if

[11] The hunting of harp seal pups (whitecoats) has been prohibited since 1987.

any space to opposing views and these articles were often juxtaposed with anti-sealing leader pages and feature pages calling for boycotts of Canadian goods. (For example, as was seen in *The Guardian*.) The reporting failed to examine seal hunting sufficiently and largely adopted an unquestioning, culturally specific, perspective encouraged by the agenda of the animal rights groups who originated the story. Hunting was presented as a homogeneous activity that conflates two different types of Arctic hunts: the annual commodity cull and Inuit subsistence harvesting. The confused image in the media is reinforced by the unquestioning acceptance of the notion that seals are only killed for their fur and the position adopted on the use of seals for consumption is largely based on a western philosophical and ethical interpretation of activities. This is further reinforced by the fact that throughout the month of coverage in the British media there were few opposing views expressed and there was little consideration given to the economic or cultural implications of the cull itself.

The fate of the polar bear, "the very symbol of the Arctic's looming environmental disaster" (*The Independent on Sunday*, 09/09/2007), attracts more media coverage than is afforded to indigenous peoples. Articles have examined the plight of the marine mammal and "its fight for survival" as campaigners called for the species to be protected. The former US presidential candidate, Senator John Kerry, a leading advocate for the cessation of sports hunting, insisted it was "time to take responsibility for their survival. Not only must these bears contend with their home melting away, but they are also being hunted in the limited habitat they have left" (Ibid.). The eventual decision by the United States government to place the polar bear on the list of mammals threatened under the Endangered Species Act did provided some opportunities for members of the Inupiat community to express their concerns. A subsistence hunter and ice scientist who works for the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation voiced his fears that the ruling would disproportionately affect the local community. "It'll turn our coastal villages into critical habitat, which means we're going to need a biologists opinion when we want to build a playground, gravel pit, airstrip, landfill, campsite or expand any of our villages and try to improve the quality of life of our people" (Ibid.). The acting mayor was also given the opportunity to express his concern at the ruling. He explained, "we've always depended on the land for our lifestyle. Polar Bears were one of the dependable sources of food in Barrow. Things are changing, there's nothing we can do about that, it's just when people tell us what we can and can't do that's when we say something" (Ibid.).

Coverage of other Arctic peoples is often limited to the pages of the travel supplements. For example, encounters with Sami are largely only depicted in relation to "reindeer tourism" (*The Observer*, 09/03/2008) and any wider political issues are not considered. In one feature in *The Observer* (Ibid.) the author experiences "a sedate reindeer-sleigh ride to a remote cabin to feast on succulent Arctic salmon, slow cooked beside a log fire" before returning by snowmobile to experience the landscape. A more indepth insight into Sami lifestyle was featured in the 'Natural World' series (*Reindeer Girls*, BBC 2, 09/04/2008). The documentary followed the annual migration of the reindeer herd with one Norwegian Sami family. One television critic (*The Independent*, 10/04/2008) found the program surprising refreshing. "I usually get a bit twitchy when confronted by elegiac accounts of immemorial traditions of ancient people, but the Sami appear unfussy about mixing ancient and modern, rounding up their reindeer with quad bikes and cataloguing their unique owners' earmarks in the Internet." She continues, "I'd prefer the silence to the quad bike, but then I don't have to climb a mountain to check the balance on my current account." Others, however, questioned the authenticity of the families' Sami identity, suggesting that perhaps they were not "real Sami" if their herding practices included quad bikes (*Midweek*, BBC Radio 4, 09/04/2008).

One article also examined the effects of climate change on traditional Sami lifestyle (*The Independent*, 10/05/2008). Olav Mathias-Eira, explained how climate change is threatening the economy of the reindeer herders and the effect on the Sami culture. "This is part of our traditional way of life, if the economy goes, probably the entire Sami culture would go with it" (Ibid). He further laments the fact that indigenous opinion and observation is not sufficiently valued. "The action needs to be fast. World participation is most important now, but our voices are not heard, and that's a pity." (Ibid.) The portrayal of climate change as a human rights issue has, then, started to provide "an avenue through which indigenous peoples can speak for themselves" (Long Martello, 2004: 112.) This was recently endorsed when in its first consideration of the issue the United Nations Human Rights Council endorsed a resolution stressing that global warming is threatening the livelihoods and welfare of many of the world's most vulnerable people and endorsed a detailed and analytical study of the relationship between human rights and climate change.[12] As the Maldives' ambassador to the United Nations, Abdul Ghafour Mohamed explained, "until now the global discourse on climate change has tended to focus on the physical or

[12] Resolution endorsed on 28/03/2008.

natural impacts of climate change. The immediate and far reaching impact of the phenomenon on human beings around the world has been largely neglected." (*Reuters*, 28/03/2008.)

The media coverage examining the impact of climate change on human lifestyle has taken several, often varied, avenues. One interest has been regarding the legal challenges, which indigenous inhabitants are pursuing against multinational corporations that they consider responsible for direct contributions to climate change and the subsequent effect on their communities. *The Daily Telegraph* (28/02/2008) reported on one case in which an Inupiat community launched a legal challenge against more than twenty oil and power companies for the damage caused to their local environment. "The three hundred and ninety-one inhabitants of Kivalina, a traditional Inupiat Eskimo village built on an eight-mile barrier reef between the Chukchi sea and Kivalina river, say sea ice that has always protected them is eroding because of higher temperatures and that energy companies should pay more to move them to safer ground." The media also provided considerable coverage in December 2005 when an Inuit petition was submitted to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The petition claimed that the anthropogenically-induced warming that is being observed worldwide is a violation of indigenous peoples' rights. "The subsistence culture central to Inuit cultural identity has been damaged by climate change, and may cease to exist if action is not taken by the United States in concert with the community of nations."[13]

Such proactive events by indigenous populations precipitated great interest in proactive individuals who have been campaigning to bring the effects of climate change to a wider audience. In a feature in *The Guardian* (23/08/2007), the Inuk activist and former chairperson of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Sheila Watt-Cloutier describes how the unpredictable and variable weather systems are affecting traditional lifestyles. "I speak to the Inuit elders," she explains "and they are constantly telling me how unpredictable it is." As a result, traditional knowledge is being challenged." She further elaborates on how these changes could influence

[13] Petition to the Inter American Commission on Human Rights seeking Relief from Violations Resulting from Global Warming Caused by Acts and Omissions of the United States.' Submitted by Shelia Watt-Cloutier, with the Support of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference on behalf of all Inuit of the Arctic Regions of the United States and Canada. Submitted on December 7, 2005. The full petition can be seen at: http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/files/uploads/icc-files/FINALpetitionICC.pdf, Last accessed 05/06/2008.

cultural identity during the life span of her grandchildren. "Lee is learning to hunt with his father, but he may be the generation that will lose this in his life lifetime.... The wisdom of our hunting culture is not just about killing. It is a powerful training ground for young people. It builds character skills of judgement, courage, patience, strength under pressure, and withstanding stress, which is together the wisdom that will help our young people change, to chose life over self-destruction" (Ibid).

However, the coverage of the testimony of Aqqaluk Lynge, the ICC Greenland President, to the Stansted Airport Public Inquiry received a more varied reception. Headlines described his "dramatic intervention" to stop the airport expansion on environmental grounds as an "Eskimo" begging to "put (*the*) Stansted expansion on ice" (*The Daily Mail*, 31/05/2007) or urging for an "airport freeze." (*The Sunday Times*, 27/05/2007.) Many of the articles used clichéd generalisations about Mr Lynge. The "exotic outsider" was questioned about the stereotypes of nose rubbing and igloos (*The Guardian*, 28/07/2007) whilst other papers inferred that the "sealskin-wearing environmentalist" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 24/08/2007) "had been wheeled out to object to the expansion of the airport" (*The Daily Mail*, 01/06/2007). The ICC Greenland President was also accused of participating in "an apocalyptic campaign of green spin" (*The Mail on Sunday*, 22/07/2007) and of being hypocritical because of his own use of air travel. The coverage was not, however, universally critical. *The Independent* (30/05/2007) made a more extensive examination of the issues, and provided Mr Lynge with an opportunity to express his own opinions. This in itself raises questions about the differential coverage of the story, the extent of its circulation and the nature of how the public consume media. Average net circulations in October for *The Daily Mail* were nearly ten times that of *The Independent*.[14] Thus the image of the "Eskimo" is portrayed to a far wider audience.

My findings show, then, that a portrayal of the 'exotic other' is widespread and not simply restricted to the mass-market media. The British media is still largely complicit in and responsible for the repetition of primitivist exoticism and clichéd generalisations; unquestioningly reinforcing outdated simplified images of indigenous peoples. Focusing specifically on coverage of the Arctic, I find that greater consideration is given to the natural world and climate change and indigenous voices are often absent from the issues that are being debated, even when those issues

[14] Audit Bureau of Circulation figures for the Average Net Circulation from 01-October-2007 to 28-October 2007. http://www.abc.org.uk. *The Daily Mail*: 2,353,807. *The Independent* : 240,134. Last accessed November 26 2007

have a significant economic or cultural impact on the population. I will now consider to what extent these representations have an impact on the peoples themselves.

CHAPTER 3: FLUID MEDIA, FROZEN ATTITUDES?

"A modern Inuk who works on a computer or teaches in a classroom is as much Inuk – if he or she perceive himself or herself as such – as is a traditional Inuk who spends his or her days hunting seals or sewing skin clothes."

Louis-Jacques Dorais, *Quaqtaq,* 1997: 5.

In chapter two I have set out how indigenous peoples are represented in western and especially British media. In this chapter, I seek to investigate how these images, which are appropriated into cultural references, influence peoples' perceptions of themselves and their notions of identity. According to the stereotypes, that I have shown to be inaccurate, one might expect that this portrayal would have a negligible effect on the peoples themselves. On the contrary, however, I will show that these portrayals do have a considerable impact though my findings suggest that there are both positive and negative effects.

In his discussion of modernity and identity in an Inuit community, Louis-Jacques Dorais (1997: 102) describes how residents of Quaqtaq[15] strive to reconcile the 'traditional' and 'modern' aspects of their existence so that they can preserve "their original values and social attitudes" whilst incorporating economic, technical and social change. 'Traditional' values and ways of doing things are incorporated in to 'modern' life, as Inuit identity is versatile. As Arlene Stairs (1992: 116) explains, "Inuit identity is not individualistic in the western sense, nor can it be divorced from the full, ecological, social and cognitive process of 'living in the north.'" It is dynamic and progressive. "One does not assume the fixed qualities of a bounded person, and others do not ascribe an absent individual in terms of past behaviours. This acceptance of a progressive identity is demonstrated by Inuit as they absorb such external features as syllabic writing, fox trapping and media technology and large-scale carving into the same body of knowledge as oral literature, sea-mammal hunting, land lore and kinship structure."

One of the 'modern' technologies which the Quaqtaq community have integrated in to their contemporary lifestyle is that of media. The omnipresence of the media in Arctic communities is something, which also struck Cornelius Remis (1999) when he

[15] Quaqtaq is located on the eastern shore of Tuvaaluk (Diana Bay) in Nunavik, Northern Quebec. http://www.nvquaqtaq.com Last accessed 05/06/2008.

returned to the hamlet of Pelly Bay[16] in 1995 to conduct fieldwork, twenty-five years after his first visit. In addition to the differences in the physical appearance of the settlement, the population of which had increased by nearly sixty percent, Remie observed that television was now available in every household and that through the media, especially television, the population of Pelly Bay came in to contact with "new systems of meaning which had been generated elsewhere" (Ibid: 51).

Remie further suggests that these meanings were being integrated into the existing system and influencing the younger generations in such a way that they were changing "their outlook on life considerably" and producing "a lifestyle which differs substantially from that of their own parents" (Ibid). Bredin (1996: 164) agrees that, "the presence of the modern media such as television and radio in Inuit and Indian communities has undoubtedly occasioned changes in the traditional lifestyles in these communities." She illustrates her point with reference to one example of some family hunting trips being scheduled to fit in with viewing schedules for popular programmes. However, she warns against the premise that imported media contributes to the cultural assimilation of minorities and the promotion of cultural homogeneity. "Clearly the consumption of the commoditised images of introduced media is not simply a unilateral process of passive assimilation but an active transformation of novel images and ideas in relation to prior cultural values and norms" (Ibid: 166). For example Valaskskis (cited in Bredin 1996) observed that the character 'The Fonz' from the sitcom *Happy Days,* was appropriated into cultural models alongside the symbol of the 'real Inuk'. Millar (1992) similarly provides evidence of a dialectic relationship between local culture and global media in his study of the local appropriation of an American soap opera in Trinidad. Trinidadians interpreted the programme, *The Young and the Restless*, in relation to the term 'bacchanal', which denotes scandal, confusion and truth.

In order to examine the impact of modern western media portrayals on Arctic peoples, I have conducted original research by interviewing a range of representatives who have been actively involved in political and cultural representations of Arctic people to a wider audience, whether as cultural representatives or as political activists. The group of respondents was in a sense self-selecting as only a quarter of the respondents who replied or were prepared to

[16] Pelly Bay has since been renamed Kugaaruk.

participate[17] and of those all were indigenous peoples of Canada, America and Greenland. Thus the survey is not comprehensive or exhaustive, however, it does provide an interesting cross-section of views and the sample could shed new light on the impact that western representations of indigenous peoples have on these populations. My questions addressed how the respondents perceived western representations of indigenous peoples and I will further examine how the issues I observed in chapter two are reflected in their perceptions.

Addressing this idea nearly ten years ago, Zebedee Nungaq explained that, "Inuit feel that they are still misperceived as if they were sort of a people from another age and time" who are "now hunting for rights with new weapons such as news conferences, court actions" (*Nunatsiq News*, 26/04/1999). Michele Therrien (1999: 28) also suggested that most of the time, "Inuit face situations where qalluanaat misperceive and therefore misunderstand, essential aspects of their traditional and contemporary culture" and that "in the opinion of many Inuit, qallunaat[18] have preconceived ideas that they want to see confirmed when they travel to the Arctic" (Ibid: 34). How then, if at all, has this altered with the expansion of communications and Internet technologies?

The Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Patricia Cochran, suggested that the situation had changed little and that there was still not enough known internationally about the issues that are facing the Inuit and other indigenous peoples worldwide. She further suggested that the problem was actually more extensive than just how the media portray the Inuit because "not many people even know that we exist" (Interview with author conducted 22 May 2008).

Dorothy Gibbons from Arviat who works for Nunavut Housing, and had previously been involved in the Expo in Seville, reinforced this idea (Interview with author conducted by email. Responses to questions received on 29 April 2008). She described how very few of the visitors she encountered, had been aware of the term Inuit. She explained, "A lot of Europeans, Americans and even some Canadians did not know what Inuit are or had even heard of them. So I would have to try and ask if they had heard of 'Eskimos' and even then, when they didn't know what Eskimos

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[17] More than thirty representatives were contacted and eight agreed to participate. A complete list of respondents is included in the primary sources references.
[18] It is also interesting to note that the term qallunaat is in many ways an expression of the other and helps to define Inuit concept of their identity.

were, I would have to refer to 'Indians' and then they would at least have a small idea of what people I was talking about. Most of the time they didn't even have any knowledge of 'aboriginals', because they would think of Australian aborigines." The questions that she and her colleagues encountered from the public also gave her an indication of the lack of knowledge and generalisations she felt were present regarding the inhabitants of the Circumpolar North. "A lot of the questions asked related to if we still lived in igloos and I thought this came from cartoons. Another common question was whether Inuit really do eat raw food. I though it was totally related to history. One other question that I received a lot of the time was about the weather and trying to explain to somebody who has never been in -35°C weather without wind-chill, is a bit hard to explain." The idea that recurrent stereotypes are acquired through cartoons and comics is something that the Greenland Inuit circumpolar conference President has also expressed. Questioned about whether igloo dwelling and nose rubbing are still a part of Inuit lifestyle during the coverage of his Stansted Inquiry testimony, Aqqaluk Lynge thought that, "some people still have a kind of cartoon in their minds" (*The Guardian*, 28/07/2007).

The Mayor of North Slope Borough, Edward Itta, believes that there isn't sufficient international coverage of indigenous people and that coverage by American media is mixed (Interview with author conducted by email. Responses to questions received on 1 June 2008). "Some portrayals of our lifestyle and the socio-cultural dilemmas we face are generally accurate and perceptive. However, when it comes to coverage of our politics, many reporters oversimplify the issues, from either an ethnocentric lack of imagination, investigative laziness, or an apparent political agenda." Mayor Itta further explains, "Ours is a difficult perspective to convey, because we live in two worlds and have interests in both. This is most obvious in relation to land use issues. While we live in a cash economy and generally support onshore oil and gas development, we also place the highest priority on the perpetuation of our traditional subsistence hunting activities, and because of our whaling culture, we oppose offshore development. This is a more nuanced position than most news reporters want to bother with. They just want us to be pro- or anti-development." Examining the media coverage of Alaska's North Slope Inupiat, Mayor Itta suggests that most of the coverage is based on political issues, not cultural considerations. "The press realizes we have a different culture but they want to know how we see the many national and international issues swirling around us. In that sense, their coverage of us is not that different from their coverage of other "stakeholders," except they see us as a bit mysterious because we bring a unique perspective to the table through our

cultural concerns."

Jackie Price, who works as an instructor for the Nunavut Sivuniksavut college programme in Ottawa suggests that media portrayal of indigenous peoples can sit anywhere on a continuum. "With one end being really, really positive, and the other being really, really negative. When I say positive, I mean, providing Indigenous communities the opportunity to share their own experience, respecting the range of experience in any given community. The negative refers to situations where Indigenous peoples are referred to as victims, trouble makers, as being owned or as being unable to think on their own, and in their own way." She further suggests that there is discrepancy between how indigenous peoples from the same nation state are portrayed. "In Canada, for example, Inuit are talked about much more differently than First Nations, or Metis - why - because the colonial relationship Canada has with Inuit is shorter and less ugly than with First Nations, and Inuit are much more 'definable' than Metis." Jackie suggests that the same phenomenon occurs at an international level. "When talking about climate change, Inuit may be portrayed more positively (but still behind Polar Bears) than on any discussion on Canadian Seal pelts." She also suggests that the "international media is often more interested in the plight of indigenous peoples far away instead of peoples either effected directly by them, or right next door to them."

Many of the respondents, however, felt that the national and international media did not portray a robust or accurate picture of indigenous populations. A Yu'pik student of film and television studies who also works as a guide during the tourist season described how she "often encountered naive and simplistic questions regarding life in the community", and hoped that her own studies would provide her with "the chance to dispel some of the myths that are so often reinforced by the media." (Interview with student from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks conducted in person on 9 May 2008. Student wished to remain anonymous.) Another Alaskan respondent explained that, "very rarely do I feel that indigenous populations are accurately portrayed in the media. The majority of the media portrays the indigenous peoples in Alaska with disproportionate negativity" (Email response to questions by an employee of Inuit Circumpolar Council, Alaska received on 5 May 2008. Respondent wished to remain anonymous.) She illustrated her point with reference to one story, which had recently appeared on the front page of the *Anchorage Daily News* (10/09/2007) and which she said had "enraged the Native community, because again it portrayed Native people in a negative way, this time as alcoholics." The front-page article described

how the community of Nome regularly became an "Oasis of alcohol" to which "villagers from far-flung Eskimo communities where alcohol is banned regularly pour in to...not just to drink, but to get plastered" (*Anchorage Daily News* 10/09/2007). The article links "alcohol abuse among Natives to poverty, hopelessness, loss of culture and perhaps habits learned generations ago from hard-drinking settlers, trappers, traders and miners" (Ibid.). Responding to the article online one resident of Nome illustrated what he considered to be the deficiencies of the article and reflected some of the Native communities criticisms. "Yes, I do see many Natives drunk, passed out and wandering the streets of Nome. But also, you see many other people of different ethnicities flocking to the doors of the bars any given night of the week. This author doesn't give in to the fact that alcoholism is everyone's problem."[19]

Dorothy Gibbons felt that the "Inuit are not accurately portrayed in the majority of national and international media as the only time that Inuit are on the news is when tragedy strikes – whether it is a whole community buried in an avalanche or illness, disease, sickness, suicide or murder."

A respondent from Rankin Inlet who runs a variety of cultural and education programmes felt that the portrayal of the seal industry, and in particular the annual coverage relating to the commercial seal cull, was a prime example of how the Inuit did not receive accurate coverage by journalists. Bernadette Dean explains "Inuit are put in the same category as non-Inuit seal hunters that hunt just for fur. As opposed to hunting seal for meals, clothing and the well being of a community which is our culture and living for the few remaining 'real' hunters in the north. This means that the Inuit hunt for the survival of their family, to put meals on the table, to be able to buy more gas for their machines and boats, to buy clothing for their immediate family and a lot of times for other family as well" (Interview with Bernadette Dean conducted by telephone on 20 May 2008). The respondent also felt that the symbolic dimensions of the hunt were ignored. As Michele Therrien (1999: 30) has described before "Hunting may be said to create relations that contribute to the constitution of the self. Ignoring the main role these cultural features and practices play in everyday life, leads to the conclusion that modern Inuit living in wooden houses, speaking a second language and wearing qallunaat clothes, have lost their traditional culture." Discussing this issue in his book *Arctic Wars* (1992), Finn Lynge sees this particular

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[19] Online response to *Anchorage Daily News* story. http://dwb.adn.com/news/alaska/rural/strory/9291992p-9206481c.html Last accessed 06/06/2008.

issue as an "immense gulf of cultural alienation, misinformation and plain ignorance" and questions how aboriginal hunters and trappers will "ever hope to have their voices heard and their viewpoint understood" (Ibid: 2-3).

Another example that was used by Bernadette Dean, to illustrate how the mainstream news media often misunderstand, misrepresent or inaccurately portray the indigenous populations was the recent coverage of the United States' decision to place the polar bear on the list of endangered species. She felt that the coverage had been "dominated by Californian academics that had never been to the Arctic and had never spoken to the Inuit" (Interview with Bernadette Dean conducted by telephone on 20 May 2008). Thus she felt that the issues facing both the indigenous inhabitants and the marine mammals were not clearly communicated and in particular was concerned that Inuit perceptions of how wildlife and animals are viewed were not articulated in the coverage of this story, and others such as the seal hunt. She felt these views were very different from those of the mainstream Euro-American media and needed to be represented. She reinforced this idea by expressing the view that the media did not talk to the indigenous populations enough, although was aware that this also could be problematic because the indigenous populations also felt considerable distrust of the media itself.

One of the only respondents, an employee of Inuit Circumpolar Council, Alaska, felt that some aspects of Native coverage were starting to be more positively portrayed and cited an article in the *Anchorage Daily News* (28/04/2008) as an example. The feature promotes the health benefits of country food to people suffering from forms of cancer. Discussing the topic, Dr Nagaruk, a family physician who herself suffered from acute leukaemia explains the benefits to both the patients and the wider society. "The more knowledge health care providers have about the nutritional and cultural value of Native foods, the more likely it will be encouraged and promoted, which in turn makes a patient who eats these foods feel culturally respected and may give the patients more trust in their healthcare provider" (Ibid.).

There was however, a disparity of feeling over how the coverage of stories relating to indigenous populations effect or influence people's perceptions of themselves. Some individuals could see both positive and negative influences of media coverage, depending on the stories and their reach; others felt that the type of media was influential in the effect of the media itself. Mayor Itta is of the belief that media images can have a significant effect on self-concept. "This is true for images that are

portrayed, as well as images that are absent from the media experience." He explained, "In the early days of television in our region, all the programming was imported from far off places. We were able to learn a lot about mainstream culture from these images, but we also realized that we were more or less invisible to the rest of the world, because we didn't see ourselves in any of the programs. Then we began to produce our own programs and put them on a local channel. This local programming gave us a place in the world of TV and it legitimized the images we wanted to project. It was a kind of affirmation for us." However, he suggests that television can still have a negative effect in the younger members of the population. "TV programming is almost entirely imported by satellite, and its most important effect may be that it reminds rural, aboriginal people how remote they are from all the action that is portrayed on the screen. This can have a negative effect on young people, who want to be part of the action." However, he suggests that radio has been more widely appropriated by the local community. "Radio has always been a local medium here, with a large component of local programming. The result is that people have quickly adopted this medium and have a sense of ownership and identification with it. Some programming is in our native language, so the radio can help to preserve our culture. Television only glorifies mainstream culture."

Jackie Price also recognized the influence that media was having among Inuit communities and illustrates her considerations with reference to climate change. "For example, the way climate change is being talked about internationally represents how many Inuit communities are talking about it. International, and national, media is interested in talking about proof of climate change - in showing physical evidence that it is happening. A lot of call in shows in Nunavut, and many conferences in Nunavut, often include Inuit talking in this manner too. Inuit talk about how the sun has grown hotter, the ice is thinner, and how erratic the weather is, how the animals are changing, etc. And while these are important points to talk about, the discussion often ends at these statements and very little talk focuses on how Inuit will respond to this - what strategies for adapting is necessary, or what new advice should be followed and what new rules must be respected. Overall, the climate change discussion has showed me that very little of the talk focuses on how Inuit must be confident in living life the right way - as Inuit think it is. Climate change discussion have the potential of including how to learn from these changes, how to make right the mistakes made by others, and what opportunities people must take. Also, discussion is not focused on the need for Inuit to defend their way of life through practice - for example - the best way to address climate change is to consistently,

and smartly, interacting with the land, and sharing experiences with community members through dialogue, which result in a willingness to trust and respect the experience of people in the community, and not to speak beyond one's experience - which means and allows different communities to speak of their own experience."

The Alaskan student suggested, "In some ways, there is a positive effect of media on people's image of themselves. We have had a lot of media coverage with the erosion and relocation issue[20]. I think some people are proud to be on television... to be able to tell their story. Despite that, sometimes the media distorts the story and focuses on the negative story that they want to be told." Others felt that media coverage of certain issues precipitated wider discussions on subjects that had previously been ignored and caused them to re-examine their own standpoint. "I feel that what is being seen and heard on the media does effect people and not only Inuit. For example, when there was a lot of coverage of abuse in the residential school system, former students did start talking about what they went through. What I heard about the residential school system was all bad, but when I personally look at it, there was a lot of good that came out of it. Looking at the present leaders of various organisations, they went to residential schools and now have a way to support their family by holding good jobs. They also now have the ability to speak, read and write in English, along with their mother tongue." (Email response to questions by an employee of Inuit Circumpolar Council, Alaska received on 5 May 2008. Respondent wished to remain anonymous.)

In her capacity as the chairperson of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Patricia Cochran has found that the recent media interest in the circumpolar north has provided an opportunity for wider coverage of the issues that relate to the Arctic's indigenous communities. She suggested that issues such as climate change, that have a global effect, provide an opportunity for the Inuit and other indigenous communities, the communities who are the most marginalised and most impacted by events, to impart information about the affects they are seeing and the best ways to adapt. She is also endeavouring to coordinate a global summit of indigenous communities to look for solutions to some of the international problems and to develop a dialogue with the industries that are having an indirect impact on the communities.[21]

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[20] Referring to the coverage in *Time Magazine* and on CNN of one the Inupiat village, Shishmaref, which has lost 100ft to 300ft of coastline over the past 30 years. Half of which has eroded since 1997.

[21] The Global summit will take place in Anchorage, Alaska in April 2009.

However, others felt that a lot of the coverage relating to indigenous populations resulted in, or reinforced, a negative self-image, one that could have a lasting effect. One Alaskan respondent, referring to the story in the *Anchorage Daily News* (10/09/2007), about alcoholism explained; "I'm sure that a lot of Native people didn't feel good about themselves after reading the story on Natives and alcoholism, even if you drink alcohol or not, it does not make you very proud to be Native. So yes, I think it does have an effect on how Natives view themselves. I grew up not being proud of being Native. Not only does society still make you feel this way but the media generally does not encourage otherwise." (Email response to questions by an employee of Inuit Circumpolar Council, Alaska received on 5 May 2008. Respondent wished to remain anonymous.)

The media's coverage of the Arctic is an issue that the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami[22], has also recently expressed concerns about. In an online article for the *Globe and Mail* (28/03/2008), Mary Simon suggests that, "The media around the world are awash with unprecedented coverage about the circumpolar world" and that the coverage is diverse. "News stories range from the shrinkage of multiyear sea ice to speculation about new routes from East Asia to Europe, to a just out European Union report suggesting global warming in the Arctic may precipitate security issues for Europe involving energy wars, mass migration, failed states and political radicalization." Simon fears however, that the picture that the reports paint harks back to a Diefenbaker-era "roads to resources tone" in which the "aboriginal realities of the Arctic, our demographic majority, our aboriginal and treaty rights, our distinct languages and cultures are effectively airbrushed out." Furthermore, she suggests that aboriginal peoples are merely a postscript in the political and media agendas. "Public pronouncements on northern policy rarely mention Inuit and other aboriginal peoples, and when they do, the references are footnotes and after thoughts. The views and suggestions of representative aboriginal organisations are sidelined,"

This raises an interesting point for further discussion relating to how the media is being appropriated by indigenous communities as part of their political identity. As Jackie Price suggests "a lot of Indigenous communities are in an interesting places in their history. I do believe many communities are in the process of rebuilding

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[22] The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is Canada's National Inuit Organisation, which represents the four Inuit regions of Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit settlement region of the Northwest Territories. http://www.itk.ca Last accessed 05/06/2008.

themselves and reshaping themselves - beyond the colonial history that has changed their way of life. This de-colonizing process must happen at the community level for positive things to grow. Where the challenge is, is that decolonizing is not always pretty, happy, straight forward, and is often rift with contradictions - because its hard work to move beyond the current realities in indigenous communities. This gets more complicated with the media involved, because of the fluidity that is necessary in change" (Email response to questions by Jackie Price. Responses received on 1 June 2008).

CHAPTER 4: HUNTING FOR RIGHTS WITH NEW WEAPONS.

"Aboriginal communities are ensuring the continuity of their languages and cultures and representation of their views. By making their own films and videos, they speak for themselves, no longer aliens in an industry which for a century has used them for its own ends."

Michael Leigh, Quoted in Ginsburgh 1995: 256.

Indigenous peoples, "like other people all over the world, are engaged in a complex process of invention, innovation and encounter." (Fienup-Riordan 1989: 231). I will now seek to examine how the use of the media has become an important tool in controlling the imposition of meaning on a global scale.

In her examination of how American the Inupiat are Vernita Cassidy (1988: 74) suggests that one of the Inupiat dilemmas of the modern era is "the challenge of maintaining their historical identity in the face of a swiftly and abruptly changing reality." Cassidy suggests that for the Inupiat people to realise their own identity, it is necessary "to sit back regularly and recognise how others see us" (Ibid: 78). She further suggests, "We Inupiat are discovering that who we are and how we live can be affected by events, activities and people located thousands of miles away. We can no longer afford the luxury of pondering our identity in private" (Ibid: 80). Fienup-Riordan has also observed how western beliefs can have far greater consequences than we realise amongst the Yu'pik. She suggests, "it is especially important to reconsider our ideas about Eskimos because of the immense impact these ideas have on the indigenous people of Alaska today. Our ideas about Eskimos help create the framework they are forced to reside in" (Fienup-Riordan 1990: 124).

Similarly, George Wenzel describes how, "public opinion over an issue that seems far removed from the Inuit can have far reaching mutual causal impact on matters of intense concern to Inuit" (Wenzel 2001: 48). Wenzel elaborates on one example of how western public opinion influenced Inuit life. During the 1970s and 1980s, a vociferous public relations campaign was waged in the media against seal hunting by animal rights movements. The campaign, originated by the Swiss banker Franz Weber, photographed celebrities, famously including Brigitte Bardot, amongst the 'seal babies' (Lynge 1992). Sealing and its proponents were portrayed as cruel, ecologically imprudent and immoral. The implicit charge being that killing seal pups was equivalent to murdering children. The successful lobbying of the animal welfare

organisations resulted in a European Economic Community (EEC) directive[23] that banned the import of sealskins. The direct effect on the Inuit, who had been selling the by-products of the sustainable hunt to the international market, was economic. The Inuit "very quickly lost control over their village economies" (Wenzel 1991: 123). Finn Lynge (1992: 1) who contends that western perceptions of hunters as inhumane and cruel have developed because "the urban person has become alienated from nature and like everyone else fears the unknown", worries that, not just for the Inuit but for wider indigenous populations this western assessment is difficult to confront. "For the ever-decreasing number of aboriginal hunters and trappers around the globe, the urban world appears a formidable adversary representing an overwhelming superpower of money, media mastery and above all sheer number" (Ibid: 2).

The modern media does then both directly and indirectly influence indigenous societies in the way that they are portrayed and they way they are forced to react to the media representations. However, my examination of the media portrayal of Arctic societies and the impact of these portrayals demonstrates that modern media technologies can have both positive and negative effects -- acting as mediums of objectification as well as mediums of reflection. "They can be seductive conduits for imposing the values of language of the dominant culture on minoritized people, what some indigenous activists have called a potential cultural 'neutron bomb', the kind that kills people and leaves inanimate structures intact" (Ginsburg 2002: 51). Whilst at the same time "these technologies – unlike most others – also offer the possibilities for 'talking back' to and through the categories that have been created to contain indigenous people" (Ibid). The media cannot then simply be seen as a device that inflicts 'cultural bankruptcy' (Fienup-Riordan 1989). Assuming a model of 'electronic colonialism' risks "a 'media-centred' distortion of complex historical and political process and neglects to adequately situate media use within local discourses and practices" (Bredin 1996: 164). As Dybbroe (1996: 48) suggests, "Opposing traditional to modern is tautological: any so-called traditional ways still in existence is found in present-day context and must be understood in that context. On the other hand, so-called, modern ways may represent cultural traditions in dynamic interaction with a global process of social change." The media should not then be seen as an 'actor' which enforces cultural homogenisation so that societies 'lose' their traditional culture. Media consumption should instead be considered as "as

[23] EEC directive 83/129/EEC.

active transformation of novel images and ideas in relation to prior cultural norms and values" (Bredin 1996: 164). Traditions and forms of representation are then reinvented and reproduced as part of a dialogue in which the media is one form of encounter.

In the rest of this chapter, I will examine how indigenous peoples are attempting to use this impact to their own ends in terms of cultural and political identity. Indigenous productions and new communications technologies have provided new mediums through which indigenous communities can engage in local and global discussions, represent themselves, largely within their own parameters, and form powerful political allegiances.

The unforeseen consequences of aboriginal communities exposure to foreign media include the increase in indigenous productions (Bredin 1996) and greater discussion pertaining to aboriginal identity (Prins 2002). As Bredin suggests "Imported television may have the effect of heightening awareness of cultural differences and inspiring collective movement to appropriate communications technology as a means of aboriginal languages and culture" (Bredin 1996: 166). For example, by making a documentary about their community, the Mi'kmaqs hoped to dispel the romantic exoticism of Hollywood stereotypes and present what they perceived to be a more accurate portrayal of the community. The tribal leader, Donald Sanipass explained to Harald Prins (2002) that the elders and the community hoped the film would present a different perspective to the community. "We wanted a film in which our voices can be heard and in which we show how we live, how we work and where we have chosen to continue the life of our forefathers and mothers." (Prins 2002: 65)

However, indigenous media has primarily been consumed by aboriginal audiences (Ginsburg et al) and there is often the perception that indigenous productions are not of interest to mainstream audiences. This is a recurrent obstacle that the indigenous producer Rachel Perkins encounters. "There's a huge perception that Aboriginal stuff is only interesting to aboriginal people, and that it's boring...Until *Once Were Warriors*[24] all I heard was that indigenous films will never get an audience, people aren't interested in indigenous characters, that audiences are racist." (Quoted in Ginsburg 2002: 49). As we see from this quote however, some indigenous media has now started to reach a mainstream audience. *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, is the

[24] The 1994 feature film made by Maori director Lee Tamahori.

first Inuit film to have received theatrical release[25]. The film, which is a recreation of the Inuit legend of Atanarjuat, won critical acclaim and an array of awards including the Camera D'or in Cannes for the Best First Feature (2001). Wachowich (2006) suggests that part of the attraction to the producers is that the medium of film offers a network of national, international and cosmopolitan audiences for whom an image of Inuit presence can be projected. "The fusion of Western and Inuit visual media practices provides Isuma videographers to present exclusive renderings of Inuit history and identity that are otherwise difficult to articulate within western frameworks of understanding" (Wachowich 2006: 134). Furthermore, the director Zacharias Kunuk explains that the production allows Inuit to assert control over their own self-representation. "*Atanarjuat* shows a national TV audience our culture from an Inuit point of view, not as victims but with the skills and strength to survive 4000 years with our identity in tact. Inuit culture is alive; that is our statement, not yours" (Cousineau 1998 quoted in Wachowich 2006: 135). In addition, the process of indigenous media production helps to revive skills that had previously been abandoned by the younger generations and to revive relations between the generations as these skills are re-established and taught (Ginsburg 2002).

Combined with the effect of the "new communications geography" (Morley and Robins 1995:1) indigenous productions have a wide reaching audience. Previously the means of distributing indigenous productions was largely controlled by individuals outside the community. The emergence of the Internet, however, has provided a means to distribute films and information to a wider audience effectively. "The immense medium that is the worldwide web is a multifunctional communication venue that facilitates engagement in local and global information exchange, social networking, economic marketing, political advocacy and even cultural preservation. It enables tribal communities and individuals to represent themselves and to do so largely on their own terms and according to their own aesthetic preferences." (Prins 2002: 70).

The evolution of media and communication technology has then fed into the political movement for self-determination amongst Arctic peoples and the cultural and political process of defining a modern, authentic, cultural identity. Dybbroe (1996: 48) suggests that the question of meaning and "who controls imposition of meaning on a

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[25] *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* was released in December 2001. The film was produced by the Inuit film company Igloolik Isuma Productions Inc. http://www.atanarjuat.com/ Last accessed 05/06/2008.

global scale, is central to matters of cultural survival on local scale." Explaining this concept with reference to hunting, Dybbroe explains "To call seal hunting from a kayak with the use of harpoon and bladder traditional and hunting with a rifle and motorboat modern is of course true in a historical perspective. However, in the context of 'cultural identity' (as seen from the outside), it implies a devaluation of the latter form of hunting, a judgement considering it as somehow inauthentic" (Ibid: 50). We must then question why the western media are largely failing to subsume the images of indigenous peoples that are being locally produced and why barriers of knowledge are effectively being put up. We could question if this is part of the political idiom of power and if it relates to the global politics of the Arctic, which until the collapse of the Soviet Union focused on the Arctic as a region for the deployment of strategic weapons. Is the way the Arctic inhabitants are portrayed in the media then linked to the way that the region has been viewed in the West?

Since the late 1980s there had been a paradigm shift in the Arctic from a national security related discourse to a more co-operative Arctic politics (Nuttall 1996, Chaturvedi, 2000) in which indigenous communities are significant political actors. Many people considered the defining moment in a movement towards co-operation to have been a speech by Mikhail Gorbachev in October 1987. (Archer and Scrivener, 2000, Young, 1996, Young and Osherenko, 1993.) Addressing an audience in Murmansk, Gorachev proposed new forms of international co-operation in the Arctic and envisaged a zone of peaceful collaboration, scientific study and environmental protection so that' "all northern countries should never again become an area of war." (Armstrong, 1987: 68-9.) Gorbachev's speech paved the way for the foundation of a trans-national forum, The Arctic Council, that is intended "to provide a means of promoting co-operation, co-ordination and interaction among the Arctic States."[26]

Adopting an international perspective on issues that transcended national boundaries introduced the idea of the Arctic as a holistic entity and crucially provided indigenous communities with an opportunity to become significant political actors in the formation of Arctic policy as Permanent Participants of the new regional board. Many of the indigenous organisations, such as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) and the Saami Council, had been established for many decades by the time the Arctic

[26] Statement of intent from The Arctic Council website. http://arctic-council.org/article/about Last accessed 05/06/2008.

Council was created[27] and as Shadian (2006: 257) notes had already "composed a solid discourse concerning how best to manage development and the environment in the Arctic."

However, the indigenous peoples are just one of the players in post-Cold War Arctic striving to set the agenda of Arctic geopolitics. Among the other principle players in a resource rich region are the industries involved in the recovery of ores and hydrocarbons, which are vital to an increasingly urbanised world, and the environmental movement. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Al Gore, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change marks a fundamental change in the nature of the global warming discourse. It acknowledges the move of the discipline from an environmental issue to a political issue, "one of international security" (*The Financial Times*, 13/10/2007) and "a major challenge to the survival of human civilisation." (*The Guardian*, 12/10/2007.) Are the transformation of environmental issues in to global phenomenon and the expansion of cross-cultural media providing a new agency for indigenous peoples and a new power to assert their own identity?

Marybeth Long Martello however (2004: 112) suggests that the discourse on climate change is starting to provide an "avenue through which indigenous peoples can speak for themselves" instead of science speaking on behalf of indigenous Arctic peoples. She suggests that global change science is underwriting a new Arctic identity, "centred on the notion that its people comprise an at-risk community." Secondly she suggests that the "emergent framings of regional environmental phenomena construct humans, not simply as passive recipients of global change, but as citizens with resources and strategies for responding to such change, and with a unique perspective on what counts as risk or opportunity." Finally, she advocates that climate change science is providing an opportunity for local voices to explain observations and interpret environmental phenomena. "For centuries, science has spoken on behalf of Indigenous Arctic peoples. Now climate change assessments may provide avenues through which indigenous peoples can speak for themselves. The voice they wield, however, will depend, in part, on what science deems relevant to knowledge" (Ibid: 112).

I would suggest then that the media has become an important tool in controlling the imposition of meaning on a global scale for indigenous communities but that it is

[27] For example, The Saami Council was founded in 1956 and The Inuit Circumpolar Council was founded in 1976.

inherently linked with the politics of the region and that the regional politics of the Arctic could continue to influence the extent to which the voices of the indigenous populations of the Arctic are being heard in the national and international media. The danger is that as discourse regarding the Arctic returns to discussions of resources that the voices of the indigenous populations will once again be less influential in the eyes of the media. To some extent this has already been seen in coverage relating to Russian claims of sovereignty of the Lomonosov Ridge. Last year, the Russian Arctic explorer, Artur Chilingarov, led a team, which planted a titanium capsule bearing the country's flag on the ocean bed, four kilometres below the Arctic ice cap. President Putin deemed the provocative claim by Russia to the underwater mountain range that extends perpendicularly from the Russian continental shelf towards Greenland, as a "very interesting, responsible and important exercise." (*Financial Times.* 20/08/2007)

In response to Russia's manifestation of their Arctic presence, the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, announced that an army training base would be established in Nunavut and that the Nanisivik mine on the northern tip of Baffin Island, would be refurbished as a deep-water docking facility. Mr Harper explained that the developments would "tell the world that Canada has a real and growing presence in the Arctic" and that "Canada's new government understands that the first principle of Arctic sovereignty is use it or lose it."[28] This idea was reiterated in his governments' speech from the throne. The speech proposed a new integrated northern strategy, which would be reinforced by the development of a world-class Arctic research station, comprehensive mapping of the Canadian Arctic seabed and new Arctic patrol ships to guard the North.[29] The Throne Speech's 'use it or lose it' mentality angered some of the Inuit community who considered it insulting that their "use" of the Canadian Arctic received no mention. Nancy-Karetak-Lindell, Nunavut's Liberal Member of Parliament said, "This gives me the impression that Northerners that currently live there do not count as users and only if the rest of Canada is there, as in the Military, that Canada is finally using the North." (*Nunatsiq News* 26/08/2007).

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[28] Prime Minister Harper Prime Minister announces expansion of Canadian Forces facilities and operations in the Arctic, 10 August 2007, Resolute Bay, Nunavut. http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1784 Last accessed 06/06/2008.

[29] Speech from the Throne October 16, 2007. http://www.sft-ddt.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1364 Last accessed 06/06/2008.

CONCLUSION: REIMAGINING THE OTHER?

In this thesis I have sought to examine whether the British media is complicit in the creation and reproduction of romantic exoticism and demeaning generalisation and whether the cross-cultural spread of media is altering the way indigenous societies are portrayed. I chose to examine these questions by considering the complex relationship between the role the media plays in the construction of our sense of self and nationality and how this is juxtaposed with our sense of the 'other'.

Examining the historical literature, I established that Western constructions of the 'other' in regard to Arctic inhabitants have largely emerged from ideas based on exploration narratives and media imagery, particularly populist films such as *Nanook of the North*. I have shown that these stereotypes have evolved from the early sixteenth century and are closely related to changing European attitudes and intellectual histories, a notion which Edward Said previously expressed in relation to western constructions of the Orient (Said 2003).

A further examination of the contemporary British media shows that the portrayal of the 'exotic other' is widespread and can be found in both the broadsheet and tabloid media as well as in some television images. I suggest that the British media is complicit in and responsible for the repetition of primitivist exoticism and clichéd generalisations. Focusing specifically on coverage of the Arctic, I find that greater consideration is given to the natural world and that indigenous voices are often absent from issues that are being debated even when those issues have a significant economic or cultural impact on the population.

To examine the impact of these portrayals on Arctic peoples, I interviewed a small sample of representatives who have been actively involved in political and cultural representation of Arctic peoples to a wider audience. The responses I received support Bredin's (1996) notion that the consumption of the commodified images of foreign media is an active process through which the images are transformation in relation to cultural norms and values. However, I have also shown that this transformation of images can have both a positive and negative effects.

On the one hand, modern media provides a new means for indigenous populations to develop powerful global coalitions and represent themselves, largely within their

own parameters. On the other hand, it can also act as a medium through which younger members of the community become disenfranchised with community life.

I have also shown that the evolution of media and communication technology has afed into the political movement for self-determination amongst Arctic peoples and the political process of defining a modern, authentic, cultural identity. Despite this fluid cultural identity which is constantly redefining itself in relation to others the media has a static image of the 'other' which does not consider 'modern' indigenous societies as 'real' or ethnically valid. We must then question why the western media are largely failing to subsume these self-produced images of indigenous peoples and why barriers of knowledge are effectively being put up.

I suggest that the way the Arctic inhabitants are portrayed in the media is partly linked to the political perspective of the West. For example, the combination of the international political interest in climate change and the expanding cross-cultural media network is providing a new agency through which local voices can express themselves instead of science speaking on behalf of indigenous Arctic peoples. (Long Martello 2004) but the danger is that if discourse regarding the Arctic returns to discussions of resources that the voices of the indigenous populations will once again be less influential in the eyes of the media

I would also suggest that the British media's reluctance to change stereotypical portrayals of indigenous populations is directly related to the fact that are no indigenous populations in Britain. British identity, although dynamic, is only questioned in relation to national identities, immigration and diversity; it therefore does not introduce the visibility of aboriginal lives and histories within the discussion of the nation allowing it to reproduce the existing stereotypes unchallenged.

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