

# Inukshuk Rising: Iconification, Brand Canada and Vancouver 2010

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**While many symbols have undergone this process of state sponsored icon manufacture – iconification – the rise of the inukshuk is located within the rise of Brand Canada and has been inscribed with its value-based rhetoric. It is the intention of this paper to explore the development of the inukshuk from relative obscurity to national prominence and ask why the inukshuk has come to be the signifier *ne plus ultra* of the “new” Canada. Central to this discussion is the extent to which Vancouver 2010’s choice of the stylized logo was informed by the successful development of the inukshuk brand at the state level, and how the values associated with this emblem are not necessarily emblematic of the practices of the state or host city.**

“It was time for us to go on and find a new mark,” Mr. Furlong said of the maple leaf, adding that the new inukshuk logo “will speak to the humanity of the country, the people, the culture, the values we have.”

John Furlong, CEO VANOC (quoted in Brean, 2005, A1)

When the Vancouver Olympic Committee (VANOC) introduced *Ilanaaq* (see figure “a”), a stylized reproduction of an Inuit inukshuk, as the official emblem of the Vancouver Winter games, National Post columnist James Brean noted the advent of this new Canadian symbol: “On Saturday night, when he shrugged off the absence of a maple leaf in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics logo, organizing committee CEO John Furlong heralded a new age in Canadian national symbolism: the descent of the maple leaf, and the rise of the inukshuk”(2005, A1). While this was an astute observation, the ascent of the inukshuk was hardly new: the ‘rise’ of the inukshuk had been happening for some time.

To use corporate parlance, it could be said that the unveiling of the inukshuk as the Olympic logo was a brand roll-out. Having been tested and honed during the rise of ‘Brand Canada’ in the late nineties and early 2000’s, the inukshuk was set take its place among the iconic pantheon of ‘things Canadian’ – maple leaves, tall trees, beavers, moose, mounties, hockey, totem poles, mountains and lighthouses – the inukshuk, being an Inuit symbol from the North, seemed like a logical addition to the cast of characters that came to represent ‘the True North Strong and Free.’ What was curious, however, was the speed by

which the process of what I am calling *iconification* occurred, and the growing attention that the inukshuk received on the national stage, challenging and even displacing other tried and tested symbols that had come to visually represent Canada.

When *Ilanaaq* was unveiled as the Vancouver Olympic logo, West-Coast Aboriginal leaders were dismayed and puzzled by the use of an Inuit symbol over the more locally situated and regionally relevant totem-pole (Morris, 2005, A9). Noting that the organizing committee wanted an emblem that would speak to Canadian values, VANOC CEO John Furlong responded with, “These are Canada’s games [...] not just the B.C. Games. We wanted a logo to represent that”(quoted in Armstrong, 2005, A1).

But how is it that a symbol that had resided in relative obscurity in the North until the early nineties would come to be a signifier of ‘Canadian values?’ Moreover, *what* were these national values that were so immutably connected to the inukshuk? When asked this question, *Ilanaaq* creator Elena Rivera MacGregor cited hospitality as her inspiration, because, as she thoughtfully observed, “Canadians [...] are proud of being friendly people; you know, we’re...non-threatening and we smile”(quoted in Armstrong, 2005, A1). While Macgregor’s comments alluded to the notion of Canada as a peaceful, tolerant country, the VANOC news release (2005) attempted a more concrete articulation of what those values were: “[T]he inukshuk has become a representation of hope, friendship and an external expression of the hospitality of a nation that warmly welcomes the people of the world with open arms”(p. 2). The use of the inukshuk as a vessel of Canadian values did not start, however, with the choice of *Ilanaaq* as the Olympic logo. The writing of national values onto the Inuit marker had developed in concert with the development of ‘Brand Canada.’

The brand state, situated in an era of globalization, neoliberalism, and post-modernity, has been characterized by Peter van Ham (2001) as “a shift in political paradigms, a move from the modern world of geopolitics and power to the postmodern world of images and influence”(p. 4). Moreover, “the ‘brand state’ comprises the outside world’s ideas about a particular country”(p. 2). While this was the earliest rationale for the brand state -- maintaining competitiveness in the global economy -- there has since been limited yet cogent scholarship devoted to the internal dimension of state branding.

Operating in tandem with the external dimension of the brand state, Richard Nimijean (2005) suggests that in the case of Canada, domestic branding has become a means by which ‘Canadian values’ have come to be articulated to domestic audiences, and partisan political influence consolidated. Moreover, Nimijean suggests that these ‘values’ located within a neoliberal, globalised

political economy, seldom match the policies or actions of the state. Instead, as Jonathan Rose (2003) suggests, "It's easier to change perceptions than the material conditions of citizens"(p.8). From a semiological standpoint, Rose places a high emphasis on the role of logos within culture, and that logos come to be linked to 'value systems' which are decoded by consumers, who see in the logo a shared cultural meaning (p.7). Thus, when one considers the rise of the inukshuk from its somewhat 'remote' northerly position to a widely recognized national symbol and Olympic logo embodying Canadian 'values', its connection to 'brand' discourse becomes more tangible. It is the intention of this paper to explore the development of this logo from its relative obscurity to its prominence within the national consciousness and ask the question why has this logo come to be the signifier *ne plus ultra* of the "new" Canada?

In order to address this question, I will follow the rise of the inukshuk within the brand state with emphasis paid to the rhetorical shift in the state's official script regarding the inukshuk. To do this, I will look at the language used in the representation of the inukshuk in the speeches of three successive Governors General from 1997 to the present day. As well, I will examine how the iconified inukshuk has been branded by the various tentacles of state apparatuses – postage stamps, coins, and state-sponsored teaching aids -- what the evidence will show is how the articulation of the inukshuk as a symbol of the brand state has become more sophisticated and value-laden over a relatively short (roughly six-year) period of time.

It should also be noted that the rise in prominence of the inukshuk throughout the nation has occurred outside of the political sphere as well. It has been widely represented in corporate merchandising (e.g., Kamik Boots, True North Beer, Inukshuk Wireless), souvenir shop kitsch, and in the gardens of the nation. While this has certainly contributed to the rise of the inukshuk within the brand state, it is the intention of this paper to explore how and why so-called national values came to be inscribed onto the inukshuk within the time frame being considered.

I am calling this process of state-specific icon manufacture *iconification*. Built upon noted Queen's Geographer Brian Osborne's (2006) notion of the 'nationalizing-state,' whereby nation-state and state-nation "imply some sense of achieved cohesion, the term 'nationalizing-state' is intended to convey the sense of the state's ongoing involvement in identity-building projects"(p. 149). *Iconification* is part of this identity-building, as icons, symbols and logos come to serve the state as "mnemonic devices" acting as beacons of identity.

As well, I will suggest that the choice of an inukshuk as an Olympic emblem is mutually beneficial for the Games and for the state. In one sense, the choice of an inukshuk makes perfect sense for a host-city that does not have a 'white' winter, and is located on the southwest edge of a vast country. In another sense, VANOC is relying upon a national symbol that had been carefully and recently cultivated by the state. Moreover, the inukshuk possesses a pan-regional association with "the North" and reinforces 'the True North Strong and Free', a motto, incidentally, that the Conservative government has recently resurrected.

In the final section of this paper, I will return to the question of values and explore to what extent the real meets

the symbolic. Specifically, I will look at how the values ascribed to *Ilanaaq* -- hospitality, tolerance, friendliness and diversity -- are being practiced in the 'host' city.

### *Iconification, Brand Canada and the Canadian Way*

The inukshuk is perhaps the ideal logo or symbol or icon for a country like Canada. It is chthonic, faceless, genderless, secular and silent. For a vast nation with distinct regions, a diverse immigrant population, and a traditional inability to articulate a unified sense of national identity, the inukshuk 'speaks' for no one particular group or people, except of course, the Inuit. And even then, in the iconified inukshuk, the specific Inuit context becomes elided by a more general sense of Aboriginality. This is an important factor because part of the value-myth that is invested into the iconified inukshuk are the values of tolerance and diversity.

The inukshuk has come to symbolise a new Canada, ready to meet the challenges of a transnational world and an economy of globalization. According to Nimijean (2005), 'Brand Canada' arises out of those same challenges. He argues that global currents like neoliberalism and globalization, have influenced the Canadian identity debate since the late 1970's; that these issues crystallized in the 1990's when tensions around political, constitutional and economic uncertainty required a greater effort by the government to unite the nation, "to get Canadians more attached to their country"(pp. 30-32). Part of the Chrétien government's 'effort' was the development of 'Brand Canada.'

Pioneered by such branding experts as Simon Anholt (2003), the practice of nation branding is viewed as a means by which countries can maintain their competitiveness in the growing global economy. Like corporations whose branded products appeal (through marketing) to an emotional attachment between the consumer and the brand, nations become products to sell to consumers. The means of 'selling' the 'product' is through the implementation of an effective brand campaign that resonates with the 'consumer.' Scholars of the brand state have viewed this shift in geo-political discourse with mixed emotions. van Ham (2001), for example, looks to the benefits of nation branding, suggesting that 'image and reputation,' combined with 'emotional resonance' are the essential strategic components guiding the successful brand state (p. 2). Alternatively, Rose (2003) offers that the commodification of the state through marketing strategies reduces citizenship to consumerism (p.5) Finally, Anholt sees many positive benefits in the practice. Most important to this discussion is his notion that while branding may be intended for external audiences, it nonetheless has the potential to unite the domestic population behind those ideas related to the brand campaign and instill a sense of pride and purpose amongst the citizenry (Anholt, 139)

### *Branding Canada*

According to Nimijean (2005), the rise of 'Brand Canada,' was predicated upon the articulation of 'shared values' as a means of defining national identity. Nimijean argues that this was executed through the promotion of *the Canadian Way*, which set about to situate Canadians'

supposed 'shared values' within the discourses of national identity and globalization. *The Canadian Way (CW)* was an expressive branding strategy, employed as a means by which the Chrétien government would attempt to persuade Canadians that their neoliberal policy orientation was rooted in a sense of shared Canadian values. Moreover, the *CW* invoked so-called 'traditional values' as new, *Liberal* values (p. 29). In essence, Nimijean argues that the purpose of promoting *the Canadian Way* was to brand Canadian values as inextricably connected to the (then) ruling Liberal party and their policy orientation.

There was also a symbolic dimension behind Brand Canada. Symbols, icons and logos would be utilized to visually represent the traditional values being re-articulated in *the Canadian Way*. These symbols would have to respond to those characteristics of the 'Canadian experience;' of being "sharing, tolerant, respectful of diversity and difference"(p. 29).

In this environment, it can be said that the inukshuk came a long way from the year 2000 where it had been featured on the millennium issue of the 25 cent quarter (see figure "b"), and as well, on the 47 cent stamp (see figure "c"). The stamp, titled "Flag," prominently features a large Canadian flag positioned over a relatively smaller inukshuk positioned off centre in the bottom left hand corner of the image. The "Historical Notice" posted on the Canadian Postal Archives Database (2001) spends the majority of the explanation on the origins of the Canadian flag. Nearing the end of the text, the presence of the inukshuk is only briefly explained (in part) as a "marker to guide travellers." However, while the inukshuk is subordinate to the Canadian flag, there is a visual connection being made linking the symbol to the state.

It is interesting to note that in five short years, the inukshuk's currency would quite literally rise. No longer relegated to a corner position below the flag, the inukshuk was now the focal point of the *50-cent* stamp commemorating Canada's participation at Expo 2005. Titled *Wisdom of Diversity* (see figure "d"), the Canadian flag was, in fact, notably absent. Not just a "marker to guide travellers," the language used to describe the stone monument was much more precise:

When Canada chose as its theme "Wisdom of Diversity," Canada Post decided it wanted a stamp to convey how the country's diversity is found everywhere [...] The stamp features an Inukshuk created from five stones, each different in size shape and colour, that symbolizes man's non-destructive imprint on nature. These well-known traditional stone markings were used by Canada's Inuit for orientation and for marking bountiful hunting and fishing areas. (Canada Post, 2006, p. 1-2)

Indeed, the text had changed considerably, even the original use of the inukshuk had shifted: it was now also a marker for bounty. Moreover, the inukshuk had come to symbolize the alleged Canadian values of 'diversity,' and 'natural harmony,' or, 'man's non-destructive imprint on nature.' The text continues taking on an even greater connection to Brand Canada:

The stones are set in a pixilated image of the northern lights, a uniquely Canadian symbol that has a magical quality of its own. The contrasting images symbolize the potential for the positive influence of technology on nature,

with the digitized images of the northern lights ready to be transferred across the World Wide Web – and shared with the world. (Canada Post, 2006, p. 2)

Here the inukshuk has come to be linked with the high-tech dimension of Brand Canada. Nimijean notes how "Industry Canada promote[d] 'Brand Canada' as a wired, connected and friendly country, highly desirable to potential foreign investors"(2005, p. 35). The use of the inukshuk on the stamp shows both the domestic and international dimensions of the logo: the inukshuk had come to represent values to Canadians, and also, Canada's desire to be seen as a competitive high-tech leader in the globalized world (Nimijean, 2005, p. 30). What was perhaps of greater importance was that the inukshuk had replaced the primacy of the maple leaf, and was now a national symbol in its own right. Moreover, having been featured on a stamp commemorating Canada's participation at the 2005 World Expo in Japan, it was a symbol connected to Canada's image abroad.

Another example of the way in which the inukshuk was being invested with Canadian values can be found on the 2002 Citizenship and Immigration Canada website. *The Spirit of Home 2002* was 'an activity guide for teachers and youth leaders' to help teach their students the connection between values and citizenship. In the "Minister's Message" at the beginning of the guide, then-Minister Denis Coderre explains that the intent of the guide is to help students to become good citizens by "holding dear *our values of freedom, respect and peace* [italics added]." (Coderre, 2002)

It is interesting, then, to find under theme 4: *My time for peace*, the following activity:

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

The inukshuk was now being used to teach children about Canadian values. Values, Coderre suggested, such as freedom, respect, peace and belonging. Moreover, the activity suggests that students should strive to embrace Canada's values of hospitality and tolerance in welcoming immigrants as embodied in the inukshuk. The fact that the state was using the inukshuk as a teaching aid shows not only a desire to instil the notion of national values into the Canadian child, but also, new icons were coming to act as visual referents to those values.

The final instance of *iconification* I want to look at is within the rhetorical sphere of the Governor General. The following quotations that I provide demonstrate the

iconic development of the inukshuk from a relatively 'natural' and ambiguous understanding of the Inuit Inukshuk to a 'value-laden' icon imbued with an apparent and innate embodiment of Canadian values. It should be noted that these excerpts span the years of 1997 to 2005.

At the 1997 unveiling of an inukshuk at Rideau Hall, Governor General Romeo Leblanc commented that:

An inuksuk is silent, but they have always carried a message. And they have done so for a very long time (par. 8-10).

Leblanc never explains what that message might be. He has nonetheless identified the inukshuk as a message carrier.

The "message" of the inukshuk becomes a little clearer in a 2002 speech by Governor General Adrienne Clarkson who suggested:

There have to be beacons, those who give us our bearings, who point the way like the Inukshuk of the Canadian Arctic (par. 5).

The inukshuk has gone from a simple message carrier to somewhat of a moral compass, giving "us" our bearings; showing Canadians the way. It is interesting to note that this speech was given in the same year as *The Spirit of Home* and the idea that the inukshuk might give "us" our bearings is similar to the way in which the inukshuk is being used in the theme 4 activity – as a signpost for Canadian values.

While Clarkson's comments bespeak a projection of vague values onto the inukshuk, Governor General Michaëlle Jean's observations at the unveiling of an inukshuk at Juno Beach in France leave no doubt as to its message or the essentially Canadian values embedded within the icon:

May the spirit of the Inuksuk go with you throughout this journey that you are making to the battlefields of France and Belgium. And may it guide us toward a world in which the values of openness, tolerance, respect and fellowship triumph (par. 1, 5).

Thus, the inukshuk goes from being a silent message carrier, to a rather mystical compass giving Canadians their bearings, to having a 'spirit' that guides the way to 'values of openness, tolerance, respect and fellowship.' It is a rather remarkable rhetorical development given the short time-span in which these events occurred. Combined with the efforts by Canada Post, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canadian Mint, the brand state's overall efforts to iconify the inukshuk as a new and improved national symbol/icon/logo can be seen more clearly.

In the next section, I will look at the VANOC's selection of *Ilanaaq* as the Olympic logo and assess the extent to which the state's iconification of the inukshuk played a role in that choice; how *Ilanaaq* attempts to reconcile some of the paradoxes surrounding the Olympic site; and, how the branding of *Ilanaaq* is a mutually

beneficial prospect for the federal government and VANOC.

### *Inukshuk Über Alles - Ilanaaq, VANOC & Brand Canada*

When VANOC introduced *Ilanaaq* (Inuktitut for "friend") as the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Logo on April 23, 2005, reviews were mixed: West Coast Aboriginal groups were upset at the use of the Inuit marker, leading one Aboriginal leader, Chief Stewart Philip, to comment that it looked like a Pac-Man (as cited in Armstrong, 2005, A1). In her article 'The Friend Nobody Likes,' *Globe and Mail* columnist Jane Armstrong noted the dissatisfaction: "One writer to a Vancouver paper said using the Inuit icon as an Olympic logo gives the impression that Canada is a barren, northern tundra. A caller to a radio show said *Ilanaaq* resembled the toy figurine Gumby, only with a rocket launcher"(A1). An editorial from Victoria's *Times-Colonist* (2005) was equally upset with the choice. Referring to *Ilanaaq* as "Our Olympic rockpile," the editorial suggested that while the logo had a "primitive charm," it had "nothing to do with the Games, or sports, or Canada for that matter"(A10). It went on to comment that Jim Furlong's estimation that *Ilanaaq* "[would] speak to the humanity of the country, the people, the culture, the values we have," was "a pretty big assignment for a pile of rocks"(A10).

To be sure, this was a "pretty big assignment" but what the *Times-Colonist* had not considered was that *Ilanaaq* was up to the challenge. Over the past five years, the inukshuk had undergone a cultivation from being a monument of the North to a national symbol that as Jim Furlong suggested, referred to "the values we have." But what were those values? The VANOC news release (2005) stated that *Ilanaaq* was a "uniquely Canadian symbol" that came to represent friendship, hospitality, strength, teamwork and the vast Canadian landscape (p. 1). Combined with the associated values that had been previously written onto the inukshuk (diversity, tolerance, freedom, respect, natural harmony), *Ilanaaq* would be the culmination of the past years' work in creating a new symbol for a new Canada. As I will show, it was a reciprocal relationship whereby VANOC chose a new national symbol that would be recognized as 'Canadian,' and the state, in turn, would use the Olympic logo to benefit its own domestic and external brand.

It should be stated that the choice of *Ilanaaq* was also a shrewd one in the sense that it reconciled many of the paradoxes facing the Vancouver Games. It is possible that visitors to the Olympic games (at least in those portions of the games situated in Vancouver as opposed to Whistler) may be disappointed to find noticeably absent the natural wintry landscape associated with winter Olympics. The inukshuk, symbolic of the northern Canadian Arctic landscape, helps then to 'whiten' Vancouver.

Moreover, the choice of *Ilanaaq* has the added dimension of smoothing over such unfortunate episodes in the history of British Columbia as the internment of Japanese-Canadians in WWII and the racist policies directed towards Aboriginal groups throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It does this by offering an Aboriginal symbol that in its silence, 'speaks' of diversity,



tolerance, acceptance and hospitality. In offering a symbol like *Ilanaaq*, VANOC attempts to put aside the past and offer a new logo that supports new values.

Perhaps the greatest symbolic benefit of *Ilanaaq* is that it comes to symbolize a pan-regional nation of the North. It is devoid of latent or overt national/political symbolism associated with other national symbols like the maple leaf, and therefore becomes an ideal logo to promote 'Canada' and 'Canada's' Olympic Games. Writing in January 2006, *Globe* columnist Colin Freeze reported on the federal government's intent to co-brand with the Olympic logo. The Department of Canadian Heritage had put out a call for tenders to:

"figure out a "corporate look" that would mix Olympic logos with the Canadian government's brand, adding that some generous dollops of national-unity messages and multicultural values [...] According to the request for proposals [...] the contractor will figure out how to blitz the country with Ottawa's version of the 2010 logo, featuring *Ilanaaq*, in conjunction with the standard Government of Canada logo. (S4)

Here we see the reified inukshuk come full circle with *Ilanaaq*. Whereby VANOC has appropriated from the state this new, iconic national symbol, the state will reabsorb the stylized Olympic logo within its own brand.

The article continues by mentioning other big name sponsors who have purchased the rights to use the logo such as Bell Canada, General Motors and the Royal Bank of Canada. The corporate interest in the logo demonstrates its economic viability. This also has an added benefit to the brand nation. As Anholt suggests, "[w]e know that it's valuable for branded products to talk about their national identity to consumers and increasingly, brands are actually the means by which those consumers form their views about national identity in the first place"(2003, 138). So, as a means by which the state can articulate a sense of national identity through its co-branding of *Ilanaaq*, it stands to doubly win when it comes to be associated with the increased exposure of corporate marketing campaigns. The question then becomes: do multinational corporations represent the values that have come to be associated with the logo? Moreover, does the state, VANOC or the host-city represent or act upon the values that they are promoting in *Ilanaaq*?

### **Conclusion - *Ilanaaq*, it's everywhere you want to be!**

"This logo had to fit as much in a Visa Card as it did in a stadium or in the middle of an ice rink." *Ilanaaq* Creator Elena Rivera MacGregor (quoted in Kennedy and Kerr, 2005, A8).

While much ado has been made by the state and VANOC of the values associated with the inukshuk, some are puzzled by the attempt to infer such values from the stone monument. When Jim Furlong optimistically observed that *Ilanaaq* will speak to the humanity of the country, the people, the culture and the values we have," *National Post* columnist Joseph Breen remarked:

He might have added: "Whatever those are." Because if anything is clear from the inukshuk's recent rise in the public mind – on beer labels and in bank ads, as a monument of joy or grief, in the name of an Internet company and a polar bear at the Toronto Zoo – it is that no one really knows what an inukshuk is, except that it is Canadian. (2005, A1)

In a sense, the fact that Canadians may now know that the inukshuk is 'Canadian' speaks, perhaps, to the state's successful efforts to iconify the monument. While the inukshuk has become relatively ubiquitous in southern Canada over the past fifteen years or so, the association of national values with the inukshuk has been a state-sponsored endeavour. The roll-out of *Ilanaaq* now offers the state a large market with corporate co-sponsors in which the values-rhetoric can be easily reproduced, replicated and marketed to a nation of consumers.

What perhaps becomes the larger question is do the values invested in the inukshuk reflect the actions of the host-nation and the host-city? It is obvious that companies like GM or Bell do not value, say, diversity, tolerance or hospitality above their bottom line. Thus the rhetoric of values at the corporate level remains at best in the sphere of the superficial. Companies market products through brands which, as van Ham suggests, "giv[es] products and services an emotional dimension with which people can identify (2001, p.2). This is why corporations pay substantial costs in licensing fees, so they can have an emotional association with brands like *Ilanaaq* and market the Olympic or Canadian Spirit rather than a phone or a car.

It would seem a rather cynical stance to view the brand state as similar to the corporate brand, associating products with values to appeal to the emotional instincts of consumers. But what has become evident in 'brand' discourse is that by looking at the branded-values that the state promotes versus its day-to-day actions, there is an alarming disparity. Rose suggests, "Governments persist in knowing that if they are successful in changing public opinion based on a revamped logo, they need not change their behaviour"(2003, p.8). Indeed, as Nimijean argues, *the Canadian Way* was a means by which the Liberal government could re-articulate those Canadian values that had come to be represented through progressive public policies and a strong social contract developed earlier in the century. The paradox was that despite the trumpeting of shared values vis à vis *the Canadian Way*, the Liberals, through a regime of deficit cutting and minimized spending had, in fact, hollowed out many of the public policy programs that those values had been predicated upon (2005). All of this, however, was kept decidedly out of the limelight.

Who or what is being kept out of the limelight in Vancouver? While *Ilanaaq* purportedly stands for hospitality, friendliness, diversity and sustainability, there seems to be a growing disparity between the rhetoric and the reality. Echoing Nimijean's observation that despite the optimism of *the Canadian Way*, economic priorities preceded social priorities (2005, 40), David Whitson suggests that while Olympic games are perceived as being "good for the 'community' as a whole," city and regional elites are often 'best positioned to benefit from whatever economic growth materialises"(2004, p. 1218).

It is safe to assume that in the interests of city and regional elites, the values of hospitality, tolerance and diversity will obviously be afforded to the many travelers who will be flocking to Vancouver with *Ilanaaq* silently waiting, ready to welcome their tourist dollars with outstretched arms. But for the panhandlers and homeless living on Vancouver's streets, friendly *Ilanaaq* will appear more like "Gumby with a rocket-launcher."

In a 2006 report for *globeandmail.com*, Mark Hume suggests a growing concern that Vancouver's "blight of homelessness will be on display for the world to see" (p. 4). In response to this growing fear, Hume notes that Vancouver's Mayor Sam Sullivan plans to "crack down" on the city's pan handlers and reduce the city's homeless population by half before the games (p. 5). Moreover it is widely rumoured that the federal government plans to cut their funding commitment and legal exemption for Vancouver's Safe Injection Sites, and as a result, the sites will be shut down.

Graphic designer Elena Rivera Macgregor noted that from her perspective, *Ilanaaq* represented hospitality and friendliness. Noting the challenges she faced when creating *Ilanaaq*, Macgregor remarked, "[The] logo had to fit as much in a Visa Card as it did in a stadium or in the middle of an ice rink" (quoted in Kennedy and Kerr, 2005, A8). The question becomes will the logo 'fit' in the streets of Vancouver's downtown east-side? When the values that come to define a nation are not afforded to all its citizens, do they lose their value? In the case of Canada and the 2010 Olympic Games, the creation of logos and their exhortations of Canadian values like tolerance, diversity, hospitality, friendliness, harmony take on a tinny resonance when compared to the actions of their so-called champions. In the end, values become a thin veneer that disguises the ugly realities of the neo-liberal, global economy.

And so *Ilanaaq* the inukshuk - symbol of Canada's Olympics and Canada's values...

...as long as it fits on a Visa card.

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