

The Naming Compulsion in Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and Mina Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*

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One starts things moving without a thought of how to stop them. ... One starts speaking as if it were possible to stop at will.... The search for the means to put an end to things, an end to speech, is what enables the discourse to continue.

— Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*¹

THE NAMES EXPLORERS have given to features of the land in the place now called Labrador are persistent signs of imperial occupation. These names are part of an imperialist discourse that was furthered by the Hubbard/Wallace expeditions more than a hundred years ago. The Americans Leonidas Hubbard and Dillon Wallace, and two years later Hubbard's widow, Mina, along with numerous other explorers, missionaries, and philanthropists, neglected and even erased traditional knowledge of the land, creating the conditions that allowed it to be taken from those who lived there and called it home. *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* are testaments to imperial domination and are implicitly tied to the evolution of present-day industrialist discourses that continue to justify the dispossession of Innu lands. Labrador, as both a political and geographic entity, is currently involved in Innu land claim negotiations, even though dominant discourses might attempt to have these claims marginalized and silenced in the name of economic gain. Billions of dollars worth of hydroelectric energy and mineral resources in the form of iron ore are at stake, along with the question of who

owns the land and, thus, who has control over future development. Texts such as those by Wallace and Hubbard played a part in shaping the political, cultural, and industrial discourses that continue to influence the Innu. However, it is also paradoxically the case that such discourses have created a space from which Innu protests can be voiced.

The texts at the centre of my discussion, Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* (1905) and Mina Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* (1908), recount early twentieth-century expeditions to Labrador. Wallace was recruited to accompany Leonidas Hubbard, an American explorer, on a 1903 excursion. Leonidas Hubbard died of starvation on the 1903 journey and Wallace, by his own account, barely escaped with his life. On returning to the United States, Wallace published the story of the tragic adventure in *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*. However, Hubbard's widow, Mina Benson Hubbard, felt that the book cast her late husband in an unflattering light. As Bryan Greene puts it, "she became determined that its account of error and weakness should not stand as the sole record of his [Leonidas Hubbard's] life."² On hearing that Wallace was organizing a second expedition with the intent of realizing the 1903 expedition's goals, Mina Hubbard decided that she would plan her own journey. And so in the summer of 1905 two groups of explorers, one led by Dillon Wallace, the other led by Mina Hubbard, arrived in Labrador. The events of the two 1905 expeditions are recounted in Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* and Wallace's second book, *The Long Labrador Trail* (1907).

This paper focuses primarily on place-naming from the 1903 expedition, as told in Wallace's first book, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, and looks at how place names from the first excursion are contested or reinforced in later texts. The interior portions of Labrador explored during the 1903 expedition, and thus the geographic features named, were on the traditional lands of the Innu Nation. Although both 1905 expeditions reached coastal Labrador Inuit communities, the scope of this essay is limited to toponyms originating in the 1903 Hubbard journey. The concern of this essay is the impact of such place-naming on Innu culture. An analysis of place names originating in the 1905 expeditions in relation to the Inuit is a project that deserves its own space.

The discursive practice of place-naming will be elaborated in relation to post-colonial theory, with reference to, among others, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* and Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay*. Furthermore, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* will be situated within the field of early twentieth-century travel writing, and this essay builds on the work of other researchers who have similarly examined Wallace's and Hubbard's texts from post-colonial and travel writing perspectives. The analysis presented here, however, is specifically interested in how Wallace's and Hubbard's texts function in relation to the broader imperialist discourse of which they are a part. As Sara Mills suggests in *Discourses of Difference*, "it is not necessary to read

travel writing as expressing the truth of the author's life, but rather, it is the result of a configuration of discursive structures with which the author negotiates."³

A discourse, according to Mills, is "a set of sanctioned statements which have some institutionalised force, which means they have a profound influence on the way that individuals act and think."⁴ Thus, the term "imperialist discourse" signifies the discursive parameters within which early twentieth-century explorers understood Labrador as an object of imperial desire. Discourses (plural) "are those groupings of statements which have similar force ... [and] act in a similar way."⁵ This is to say that cultural and imperialist discourses, for example, are intertwined and can be seen as having similar effects in the context of Labrador. One further aspect of discourse to highlight from the outset is that it relies on exclusion. "Exclusion is," Mills says, "one of the most important ways in which discourse is produced."⁶ At the time of the Hubbard/Wallace expeditions the dominant imperialist discourse excluded and ignored opposing or incompatible discourses, such as those of Aboriginal groups. One effect of this kind of exclusion is that marginalized groups can become subordinated to dominant systems of values and find their cultural, social, and political practices suppressed or displaced. As this paper will argue, the cultural practice of naming functions in relation to a dominant imperialist discourse in that it contributes to the dispossession, and subsequently the industrialization, of Innu lands. In this way exploration literature, such as Wallace's and Hubbard's texts, continues to be significant to present-day concerns.

Of course, the primary objective of the Hubbard/Wallace expeditions was not to map out and name Labrador as a site for future industry. Leonidas Hubbard's initial goal was that the trip "ought to make [his] reputation,"⁷ and as Margaret Atwood notes in *The Labrador Fiasco*, Hubbard hoped to find material for "a series of articles about their adventure, and thus make his name."⁸ Even Mina Hubbard, on her expedition subsequent to her husband's death, wished that her "husband's name should reap the fruits of service which had cost him so much."⁹ The impulse here was to undertake a journey such that the Hubbard name would be associated with Labrador exploration and consequently secure financial benefit and fame for an individual and his family. Other than a somewhat incomplete map from an earlier explorer, A.P. Low, the interior of Labrador was largely uncharted when Hubbard planned his 1903 expedition. Low was an agent of the Canadian Geological Survey, and while Wallace states that Low's map was the "best of Labrador extant," swaths of it had been left as *terra incognita* while other sections had been "made from hearsay."¹⁰ So the Hubbard expedition, based on an incomplete map, took up the "project of penetrating the vast solitudes of desolate Labrador, over which still brooded the fascinating twilight of the mysterious unknown,"¹¹ a land that Hubbard, as quoted by Wallace, viewed as being "as wild and primitive ... as it [had] always been."¹² The use of descriptors such as "mysterious," "wild," "primitive," and "desolate" is distinctive of imperialist discourse, which assumes a place to be backward or uncivilized and as such in need of rehabilitation. In his article "The Land

that God Gave Cain' and the Representation of Labrador," Ronald Rompkey shows how these discursive practices in relation to Labrador have evolved from early exploration and travel literature, notably in Jacques Cartier's account that typifies Labrador as "the land that God gave Cain." Rompkey says that in Cartier's time the "New World was entering the European consciousness, but the mental adjustment required to incorporate it into its field of vision was a slow process."¹³

Yet while many other parts of the New World were successfully explored and incorporated into European discursive practice, Labrador remained an enigma. As Rompkey notes, even into the 1900s "travel writers continued to represent Labrador as an impenetrable territory, one of the waste places of the earth."¹⁴ *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* is one of these representations of Labrador, and by undertaking the expedition Hubbard set out to conquer the unconquerable, to penetrate the impenetrable. And although Hubbard was well aware that Aboriginal peoples lived and worked in the "impenetrable" areas he intended to explore, it never struck him as contradictory that he should be the one to apply names. The working hypothesis, as Sherrill Grace notes, was that, "in accord with exploration convention of the day, ... these places [did] not already have indigenous names."¹⁵

As an illustration of this assumption, let us look at Wallace's naming of a range of mountains on August 14, 1903. In *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, Wallace writes:

Barren almost to their base, not a vestige of vegetation to be seen anywhere on their tops or sides, they presented a scene of desolate grandeur, standing out against the blue sky like a grim barrier placed there to guard the land beyond. As I gazed upon them, some lines from Kipling's "Explorer" that I had often heard Hubbard repeat were brought to my mind:

Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges —
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!
Let us call these ranges the Kipling Mountains.¹⁶

The romanticized language helps us forget for a moment that the mountains described are an immense land mass that stretch some 30 kilometres and surely would have been noticed by anyone who had passed through the country before. One would almost think Wallace and Hubbard were justified in naming the mountains if they were indeed convinced the land was truly wild and unknown to anyone else. Yet on the same day that he names the mountains Wallace recounts that "[w]e made a fire of old wigwam poles."¹⁷ In a series of actions that seem to encapsulate the naming compulsion, Wallace tells us how he ceremoniously named a place (even evoked it in poetry) and then in dramatic fashion erased the traces of others who had been there before. In fact, the descriptions recorded during the entire week leading up to the naming of the Kipling Mountains are littered with signs of previous use of the land. For instance, on August 10, Hubbard wrote in his diary of finding "old summer cuttings and wigwam poles."¹⁸ He tells us that he was "sure that this was

the old Montagnais route.” Wallace tells us that on Wednesday, August 12, they discovered “the remains of an old Indian camp and the ruins of two large birch-bark canoes.”¹⁹ Indeed, Hubbard’s stated plan was to follow Innu hunting trails and ultimately meet with a group of Innu, and throughout the entire narrative of *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* the Innu presence on the land is recurrent and obvious to the explorers.

It may strike the contemporary reader that the kind of thinking demonstrated in this example is inherently contradictory. How could one be so naive to think that a populated place with clear signs of use would be unnamed? The next obvious question is what this says about attitudes towards the inhabitants of the land. It is important to remember that this kind of thinking — this kind of imagining of a place and a people as ahistorical, apolitical, and without culture — is precisely the crux of imperialist discourse. In line with this, Edward Said has written that people shape history and culture to suit present-day purposes. The imagining of history and culture often serves the purposes of an imperialist discourse by elaborating basic geopolitical, social, or cultural distinctions into the will or intention to control and dominate other people and lands. This is done by establishing a system of tastes and values that dismisses and devalues anything that seems to be uncivilized or “Other,” creating a dichotomy between “us” and “them.” “At some very basic level,” Said says, “imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others.”²⁰

The first imperial force to culturally occupy Labrador and impose alien customs was Great Britain, perhaps best shown by the activities of Sir Wilfred Grenfell and the International Grenfell Association. Grenfell, a British doctor, is credited with setting up numerous medical facilities on the Labrador coast, the aim of which was to provide health care to settlers and the many fishermen who arrived each summer from Newfoundland and the British Isles. However, besides a concern with medical well-being, Grenfell brought a particular brand of evangelical Christianity to Labrador. As Rompkey notes, “while Grenfell lived, the image of a vigorous Christian knight ... clung to him.”²¹ Grenfell’s humanitarian mission, while seemingly benevolent on the surface, also involved the superimposition of an outside culture and ideology of social organization on the people who lived in Labrador. Further to this, John Kennedy suggests that the Grenfell Mission “changed the region’s settlement pattern and economy by creating centralized communities,” a move that “inadvertently paved the way for the economic dependency still characteristic of the region.”²²

Differing from the example of Great Britain, American imperialist interest in Labrador can be understood in terms of American exceptionalism. At the time of the Hubbard/Wallace expeditions, American exceptionalism centred on the belief that American identity was founded on the frontier spirit, and that Americans were morally and spiritually obliged to tame the wild or unknown regions of the globe. Tiffany Johnstone discusses this in relation to the Hubbard expedition:

Wallace uses the language of faith to express a sense of cultural purpose rooted in ideals of masculinity, militarism, and social order. Such collective ideological authority takes on imperial connotations through the imposition of Wallace's and Hubbard's belief systems onto [George] Elson [a James Bay Cree-Métis guide on both expeditions] and the Labrador surroundings. Wallace's overt use of religious and biblical allusions further mythologizes himself and Hubbard as cultural heroes.²³

As cultural heroes, Hubbard and Wallace envisioned their role as one of exploring, and thus civilizing, Labrador. And although the United States never physically possessed Labrador, the Hubbard/Wallace expeditions functioned as a means of incorporating an unknown region into the American national consciousness.

Canadian and Newfoundland imperialist desires in Labrador (which will be discussed in greater detail below) differ from both the British and American examples. Originally seen as little more than a summer base for fishing operations, Labrador has more recently been viewed as a rich site of natural resources, such as minerals and hydroelectric energy, and is also host to a sizable Canadian military installation at Goose Bay. Economic motives, rather than philanthropic or spiritual ideals, are the primary objectives of recent imperialist appropriations. Yet although the rationales for British, American, and Canadian imperialism in Labrador were different, the discourse has been similar regardless of the intended outcome, whether philanthropic, exploratory, or economic: Labrador is imagined as empty, unknown, uncivilized, and wild, as a space there for the taking and in need of outsiders to civilize it. Furthermore, with regard to each of these three examples of imperialist desire, it has been the Aboriginal peoples of Labrador who have been dispossessed and marginalized.

What should be noted at this point is the relationship between imperialism and culture. Said tells us that the struggle over geography "is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about image and imaginings."²⁴ In other words, aside from militarily taking land, an imperialist force relies on cultural occupation as a means of dominating geographic space and the people who live there. Indeed, naming is no small part of this cultural occupation, and the naming practice as it relates to imperialism has been discussed by numerous post-colonial theorists. In *The Road to Botany Bay*, Paul Carter says that:

the name is also the result of erasure: it symbolizes the imperial project of permanent possession through dispossession.... It also indicates, concisely and poetically, the *cultural* place where spatial history begins: not in a particular year, nor in a particular place, but *in the act of naming*. For by the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into place, that is, a space with a history.²⁵

Seen in this light, the symbolic transformation of space through naming is a way to quantify a place so its topography can be mapped and its distances can be

transformed into viable resources for consumption. Land, thus quantified, can be settled and exploited, and this process involves erasing the history, culture, and names that had already been given to the space to be dominated. This is to say that a place (as opposed to a space) is not fixed in position. Previous names are displaced by dominant discourses, and in this way names are not static. As Ashcroft et al. point out, “the dynamic of ‘naming’ becomes a primary colonising process because it appropriates, defines, captures the place in language.”²⁶ The use of the term “dynamic” in the discussion of place-naming highlights something further about naming as a discursive practice. Seen through this lens, “place *is* language, something in constant flux, a discourse in process.”²⁷ Names change over time, and these changes are due in no small part to the tendencies of discourse. In this way the naming of space might be metaphorically conceived of as a layering, with each subsequent name covering over the one that preceded it. Geography accumulates cultural thickness, acting as a palimpsest by retaining the imprint of what was erased. There are residues or traces left over from previous names, and space, seen this way, is no more than loaned a name, anticipating a future (or reversion to a previous) naming.

Let us return for a moment to the example of the naming of the Kipling Mountains to illustrate the dynamic nature of place names and naming as a discursive practice. By naming a range of mountains Wallace placed a cultural marker, inscribing the space with a history. As already noted, in doing so he has also erased whatever history this space had before (in dramatic fashion, by burning historical markers in the form of wigwam poles). But for the name “Kipling Mountains” to have currency it must be incorporated into a broader discursive practice. In short, it must be taken as common usage and accepted ahead of other names for the same place. When Wallace returned from the expedition he publicized his account of the 1903 expedition to some fanfare. Yet Hubbard’s widow, Mina Benson Hubbard, was evidently displeased with Wallace’s telling of the story and undertook an expedition of her own to complete her husband’s unfinished work. In his article, “Toponymy from the Mina Benson Hubbard Expedition to Labrador,” Bryan Greene lists the geographic names applied to the land by Mina Hubbard, noting that “Mrs. Hubbard, following the accepted exploration practice at that time, named prominent geographic features to honour friends and family.”²⁸ Greene, the former director of the Geological Survey Section of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources, has found some 50 new names given to interior Labrador by Mina Hubbard. Wendy Roy has also studied the naming practice in Mina Hubbard’s narrative, noting that “[t]he toponyms on Hubbard’s map contribute to her personalization and domestication of the landscape as they evoke her husband and other relatives and friends.”²⁹ Yet the most interesting name for our present purpose is a mountain range she called the Lion Heart Mountains: “George pointed out the ridge of mountains away to the south-west which he had crossed with Mr. Hubbard ... I named them Lion Heart Mountains.”³⁰ This name memorializes her husband (L.H.; Leonidas Hubbard; Lion Heart). It will probably come as

little surprise to the reader that, given the animosity between Mina Hubbard and Dillon Wallace, this range is the same one that Wallace named the Kipling Mountains.

What is shown by elaborating the example of the Kipling/Lion Heart Mountains is the way that place and history can be contested through naming. In naming and renaming features of the land, Wallace and Hubbard initiated a discourse, one that is in many ways antagonistic and continues to impact present-day Labrador. In the biography file on Wallace housed in Memorial University's Centre for Newfoundland Studies is a printed copy of an e-mail exchange between Rudy Mauro and the Labrador Heritage Society. Mauro undertook a journey in 1973 with Wallace's son (Dillon Wallace III) that retraced the original expedition and located a memorial marker that Wallace inscribed on a stone at Hubbard's last campsite. Mauro says on a website he hosts that the motivation for the trip was "to do something that might help offset the growing tendency of historians to lionize Mina Hubbard at the expense of Wallace."³¹ Evidently, Mauro is not a fan of Mina Hubbard and tried, as he put it, to keep Wallace's "good name alive."³² Having completed his mission of locating the campsite and the memorial stone with the use of a helicopter, Mauro and Dillon Wallace III placed a metal tablet as a permanent marker. Mauro tells us that "the tablet was firmly cemented in place over the weathered inscription."³³ Interestingly, this shows a physical representation of the layering of history over geographic space and how, in "cementing" the tablet in place, Mauro attempted to permanently stamp the space with significance. On returning from this trip Mauro then petitioned the Geographical Names Board of Canada to adopt a certain number of names applied to the land in Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*. These petitions are one of the subjects of the e-mail held in the Wallace biography file in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies. Of interest in continuing our example was Mauro's recommendation for "attaching ... Rudyard Kipling's name to *one* of the mountainous areas traversed by Hubbard and his companions."³⁴ The website of the Geographical Names Board of Canada confirms that the name "Mount Kipling" was adopted on October 5, 1981, as per Mauro's request and because of evidence provided by him of the location ascertained during his 1973 trip.³⁵

Let us retrace the evolution and layering of names on the place now called Mount Kipling. Wallace gave the name Kipling to a vast range of mountains encountered on the 1903 expedition. Mina Hubbard then renamed this same range the Lion Heart Mountains on her 1905 expedition. Neither of these names was in common usage for this range, because it already had a name familiar to people who lived and worked in the area — this range is still officially known as the Red Wine Mountains — and so the Geographic Names Board adopted neither Wallace's nor Hubbard's name for this range. Rudy Mauro then petitioned that a single mountain of this range be tagged with the name Kipling in recognition of the original Hubbard/Wallace expedition in order to claw back some of the acclaim he felt had

wrongly gone to Mina Hubbard at the expense of Dillon Wallace. The Geographic Names Board agreed and the name Mount Kipling became official for one peak on the south extremity of the Red Wine Mountains. Aside from the fact that Mount Kipling is a single mountain and not the entire range named by Wallace, aside from the range already having been named the Red Wine Mountains by earlier white European settlers, and also leaving aside any concern for whose renaming is the more legitimate — Mina Hubbard's or that of Wallace and Mauro/Wallace III — something essential seems to be missing from the entire debate.

One can get lost in minutiae or drawn into the discussion and forget that the geographic features being named and argued about, the places being contested, have been located for countless generations within the traditional homeland of the Innu people, a people who have their own culture and history and, of course, their own naming practices. Indeed, this example of naming the Kipling Mountains, Lion Heart Mountains, and finally Mount Kipling — plus, of course, the Red Wine Mountains — illustrates how Innu naming practices have been marginalized. Their name for this mountain range, a name that likely dates to long before Europeans arrived in North America, is *Penipuapishk*¹. In Innu-aimun it means “rocks coming off.” And while one might forgive Wallace and Hubbard as simply creatures of their time, when the commonly held belief was that the land was unnamed because there was no name on a map, it seems difficult to understand the Geographic Names Board's decision to use the name “Kipling” — a name synonymous with empire and colonialism for so many. One would expect that by 1981 a regulatory body of the Canadian government would have some sort of cultural sensitivity towards Innu heritage or a degree of political savvy. While incidents of naming such as this are not necessarily wilful attempts to oppress or silence the Innu, this is exactly the effect. The conclusion drawn from this analysis of naming as a discursive practice is that the early twentieth-century imagining of Labrador as “wild,” “primitive,” and “unknown” has not drastically changed, but has, in fact, been augmented through institutional force.

Innu culture and history have been eviscerated by various imperialist discourses, by colonial occupation, and by industrial developments. Taken together, this erasure of Innu culture and the superimposition of a foreign system of tastes and values are a form of cultural hegemony. In *Hunters in the Barrens*, Georg Henriksen, writing nearly 40 years ago, proclaimed that the Innu “by now have lost the greater part of their cultural heritage.... The opinion of most politicians and the general public is that these peoples must be assimilated as soon as possible so that their standard of living can improve in proportion to the economic growth of Canada.”³⁶ This kind of egalitarian humanism falls squarely within an imperialist discourse, justifying the Euro-Canadian settling and takeover of Innu lands by suggesting that the intent is to both civilize and improve the lives of those colonized. Although it is easier to associate British and American imperialism with the experience of the Innu people in Labrador, the argument can be made that Canada

continues to exert imperial domination over the Innu, even if this might be considered an inheritance of Canada's own colonial past. Canada as a geopolitical entity can be viewed as an imperial state in that it exists only because it appropriated and continues to possess lands taken from Aboriginal nations. Imperialist discourses reinforce a Canadian national identity, pointing out what Canada is *not* by othering Aboriginal peoples and presenting them as backward and uncivilized.

It is also important to mention that, in line with the Canadian Constitution, which establishes the separation of powers in the Canadian federal system, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador makes many of the decisions regarding land use in Labrador. The provincial government, not Ottawa, undertook the development of the Churchill Falls hydroelectric dam and various mining initiatives. Also significant is the fact that traditional Innu lands are not isolated to Labrador but include parts of present-day Quebec. The Quebec/Labrador border effectively splits Innu lands between the two provinces, and the government of Quebec is a party involved in Innu land claims negotiations. So when speaking of Canadian imperialism let us keep in mind that the provincial governments of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador also participate in the domination and oppression of the Innu Nation. And naming, as a discursive practice necessary for settling and industrializing occupied territories, remains one of the cornerstones of the imperialist project.

Stuckey and Murphy discuss naming as a colonial mechanism:

Once invented ... nations require certain elements for their sustenance and growth, and a certain sort of language with which to maintain and perpetuate themselves. In the colonial context of North America, this language reflected, reinforced, and received support from the very fact of colonization. The ways in which the colonists understood, spoke, and wrote about the land and its inhabitants justified the colonial project, which in turn set in motion processes that reinforced the colonists' understanding of themselves and the world. In so doing, naming naturalized the process of colonization, reflecting and reinforcing colonial power.³⁷

From this point of view, any debate about the "correct" place names as applied to Labrador by either Wallace or Hubbard is somewhat redundant. As Susan Drummond notes, "the very arguments about the legitimacy of place naming could only make sense within a customary practice of acquiring territory beyond one's realm and determining acquisition by the conventions of discovery and possession."³⁸ Rather than being concerned with who is correct, it would be more relevant to emphasize how any further debate about the veracity of Wallace's or Hubbard's claims helps to perpetuate an imperialist discourse at the cost of marginalizing and silencing Innu voices. Similarly, critics engaging with these texts should take into account that the narratives are representative of an imperialist discourse that allows for the continuing dispossession of Innu lands. In repeating topographical names

from Wallace's and Hubbard's texts, one is participating in this discourse, even implicitly supporting it, regardless of whatever critical stance one might take.

One objection that could be made to the above call for critical vigilance would be to point out the presence of George Elson in *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*. Elson, a James Bay Cree-Métis, was a guide for both expeditions. Elson is a central and even heroic figure in both texts, yet he is often presented by Wallace and by Mina Hubbard in contradictory ways. In Wallace's *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, Elson is portrayed as honourable and steadfast in his commitment to the explorers, and ultimately he saves Wallace's life. By the close of the narrative, Wallace recognizes Elson's dedication and heroism. Yet in his later book, *The Long Labrador Trail*, Wallace interjects snide remarks about Native people. For example:

It is safe to say that there is not a truthful Indian in Labrador. In fact it is considered an accomplishment to lie cheerfully and well. They are like the Crees of James Bay and the westward in this respect, and will lie most plausibly when it will serve their purpose better than truth, and I verily believe these Indians sometimes lie for the mere pleasure of it when it might be to their advantage to tell the truth.³⁹

Roberta Buchanan suggests that Wallace's remark in this instance might be "a dig at Elson,"⁴⁰ a conjecture that is difficult to deny. An overtly racist comment such as this is entirely out of place in regard to the person who saved Wallace's life. But although it is the case that such statements betray Wallace's stereotypical attitudes, it is also important to note that George Elson was not an Innu and that his people, the James Bay Cree, do not call Labrador home. It is the Innu people who are in this instance primarily affected by imperialist discourse and by the names given to their land on the Hubbard/Wallace expeditions. It is the Innu whose culture and history are devalued by these texts. Critics should recognize this and be wary of assuming some sort of social or cultural parity between distinct groups of people. Aboriginal peoples are not monolithic or homogeneous, but are extremely diverse and heterogeneous. While George Elson is a central figure in *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, no Innu people are encountered in the narrative. There are only the remnants of their campsites, which, of course, are chopped up and burned as firewood by the explorers.

Critics of Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* have noted similarly contradictory attitudes towards Aboriginal people. Hubbard often displays humanity and compassion towards Aboriginal people alongside potentially imperialist assumptions. For example, Buchanan suggests that, on one hand, "Mina Hubbard was refreshingly free from the worst aspects of the racial prejudice of her day."⁴¹ Buchanan notes that Hubbard tried to learn some Cree from George Elson, and was also interested in Innu artifacts, clothing, and dwellings.⁴² Hubbard was aware that the Innu had their own culture and showed respect for their culture, yet

she was also susceptible to certain stereotypical beliefs. For example, Buchanan points out, citing Hubbard's diary, that on hearing Elson and Gilbert Blake (a second guide on the excursion, of mixed Inuit-white settler background) express their fears of being killed by the Innu, "[s]he oiled her pistol, making ready for a possible hostile encounter," and that she felt there was a "threat of rape and violence." An interesting point that Buchanan makes is that in this instance it is "the mixed-race Elson and Blake [who] invoke the stereotype of the savage.... By doing so, they perhaps distance themselves from their indigenous inheritance and align themselves with the 'civilized' white."⁴³

A further example of Mina Hubbard's often contradictory attitudes towards Aboriginal people is discussed by Wendy Roy, who suggests that Mina Hubbard displayed the "egalitarian nature of her personal politics" towards Native people by naming a lake after George Elson,⁴⁴ while also pointing out that Hubbard's photographs show her to be an elitist with a condescending attitude towards the Innu. One photo Roy examines, captioned "With the Nascaupee Women," is of Mina Hubbard meeting a group of Innu women. In this photograph Hubbard is standing on a stone in front of the Innu and Roy points out that she is "dominant in terms of her physical position. She stands above them; her raised hand and pointed fingers indicate that she is saying something of import."⁴⁵ By contriving the photograph this way Hubbard is displaying an attitude of superiority over the Innu. Roy's article nicely demonstrates the contradictions inherent in Mina Hubbard's contact with Innu people at Indian House Lake, showing how Hubbard was compassionate and respectful, yet was also quick to assume the Innu were uncultured and in need of rehabilitating. This is a good example of the ambiguity of an imperialist discourse. It often has humanitarian aspirations and values at its core, but it remains based on assumptions of superiority.

To be sure, the Innu have a rich cultural heritage, albeit one that is different from the Euro-Canadian culture that has been imposed upon them. In response to the dominant imperialist discourse, the Innu people in recent years have begun to assert their culture and attempt to revitalize it. It might be claimed that because of British, American, and Canadian imperialism the Innu Nation has found a position from which to speak back to the empires. The imperialist discourses that have marginalized the Innu are being opposed and resisted, and, in line with Said's analysis, "the slow and often bitterly disputed recovery of geographical territory which is at the heart of decolonization is preceded — as empire had been — by the charting of cultural territory."⁴⁶ The Innu have always had names for features of the land named in Wallace's and Hubbard's texts. In *It's Like the Legend*, a collection of narratives gathered from Innu women, Mani-Aten speaks about Labrador place names:

There are thousands of Innu names for the lakes, rivers, mountains, peninsulas and other geographic features of our land. These names have been here and are still used by us, the Innu, after thousands of years. Today, the maps drawn by the Europeans

carry the names of these geographical features in English, for example: Churchill Falls for Mista-paustuk, Churchill River for Mista-shipu and Mealy Mountains for Akami-uapishk^u. These are only a few, and the names I give you in Innu are the proper ones.⁴⁷

In the current land claim negotiations between the Innu and the federal and provincial governments, place names are a vital part of the Innu claim. The introductory page of the Pepamuteiati Nitassinat website tells us that the Innu began collecting place names in the 1970s with the aim of “documenting Innu land use and occupancy for the purpose of land claims negotiations.”⁴⁸ These names were collected from the people through interviews, from traditional knowledge and stories of Innu history, and even by creating huge maps that were laid out on gymnasium floors so people could “walk about [and] point out the locations of place names.” The Innu name for the place now called Labrador is Nitassinan. In the Innu language it means “Our Land.”

Notably, these Innu place names have not been officially adopted by the Geographic Names Board of Canada. The naming of place is explicitly tied to ongoing Innu land claims and self-governance negotiations. This process is complicated, however, by the fact that prior to colonization the Innu culture and its transmission were entirely oral, material, and observational, not written. Only since 1997, with the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Delgamuukw*, has oral evidence been treated as equal to written, documentary evidence in court cases and land claim negotiations, rather than being readily dismissed as hearsay. In recent decades, narratives collected by ethnographers showing how the Innu people have traditionally named and used the land have been central to the Innu land claim and their argument for self-governance. Peter Armitage, a consultant on aboriginal issues, was commissioned by the Innu Nation to conduct a study for just this purpose. Armitage’s 1990 report relies on both topographic and ethnographic information to validate the legality of Innu claims. In his report, Armitage sets the contemporary scene in stark terms:

The script that was written for the Innu was largely not of their choosing, but was imposed on them by an alien people with alien values and language, alien forms of government, land tenure and economic systems. The final act has yet to be performed, but it could well be a tragic one for the Innu unless there are changes in Canadian, Quebec and Newfoundland policies towards them and their country.⁴⁹

Some of the alien people and customs Armitage discusses throughout the report are the Catholic Church, the International Grenfell Association, early settlers and non-Aboriginal frontiersmen, the United States and other NATO nations, as well as the Canadian and Newfoundland governments. Armitage argues that attempts to settle Labrador and integrate the Innu people into Euro-Canadian culture have utterly failed, the results of which are substance abuse, family violence, and other so-

cial pathologies. Further, Armitage notes that “[t]he process by which many Innu people have come to lose their self-esteem is found among other colonized peoples throughout the world.”⁵⁰ It is difficult for the Canadian consciousness to forget the media images from 1993 of Innu youth from Davis Inlet sniffing gasoline. Yet even more difficult for Canadians to own up to is the fact that, as was reported by the Aboriginal advocacy group Survival International in 1999, the suicide rate among the Innu at that time was the highest in the world.⁵¹

Part of the imperialist discourse that allowed this state of affairs to arise involved place-naming, and as has been shown above the ongoing concern with names is influential in the debate over Innu lands. When explorers such as the Hubbards and Wallace named Innu lands they effectively took them; they ripped a place from its fundamental ground. Once taken, place could then be conceived as an object and was, in some way, available — it could be encroached upon, swallowed up, owned. Thus, to name the land was to discursively invent it, to inscribe it with meaning and situate it within a field of other named objects, there for the taking. But this act of naming by explorers, this pinning a place down in language, was a form of cultural hegemony. As Heidegger writes, “when man, investigating, observing, pursues nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research.”⁵² Yet this is functional in that the object, once named, is now placed in reserve for use. The compulsion to name and to objectify nature as a series of distinct objects to be quantified and known empirically can be seen as doing violence to the land, rationalizing it as a site for industrialization and commercial exploitation. Inscribing the land with names allows for what Heidegger calls a “setting-upon”: “This setting-upon that challenges the energies of nature is an expediting, and in two ways. It expedites in that it unlocks and exposes. Yet that expediting is always itself directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense.”⁵³

The technological expedition is secondary to the one that names, for a resource must be known before it can be set-upon — a land must be explored before it can be parcelled out and taken. And while it is the case that the Innu also name features of the land and use natural resources, it is the scale of modern industrialization that disrupts the ecological balance of the region. It would be difficult to characterize Innu use of the land as exploitation because their use does not extend beyond their needs. They are not, in Heidegger’s words, attempting to extract the “maximum yield at the minimum expense.” Many Innu feel outraged by what they perceive as the mass industrialization of their traditional lands. In her narrative from *It’s Like the Legend*, Elizabeth Penashue (who was awarded an honorary doctorate by Memorial University in 2005) speaks to this point, contrasting Innu land use with what would best be characterized as industrial pillaging:

The Innu detest what the governments have done to our land. There has been heavy destruction of our homeland. We have been gentle and loving to our land, and we use it wisely. With the Churchill Falls development, all the animals were wasted away in the flooding.... The governments didn't look at the Innu way of life. They never even consulted us. All that mattered to them were dollar signs.... In 1984, there were 10,000 caribou drowned in Kaniapishkau.... [Our grandfathers] killed only enough for food.⁵⁴

Penashue also talks about the Labrador logging industry, again contrasting this destructive use of the land with traditional Innu usage. "By the side of the road," she says, "I see piles and piles of wood waiting to be picked up by those trucks. It hurts me so much. Innu people never killed so many trees. We only chop down trees to use to set up our tents ... and to keep us warm."⁵⁵ Along with other women from the Innu Nation, Penashue protested against the NATO presence in Labrador. NATO, with the permission of the Canadian government, has used Labrador as a site for military exercises involving low-level flying as well as a testing site for munitions and weapons systems. She describes the scene of the bombing range, saying, "we saw craters.... Trees were destroyed and bombs were also dropped in the lake. Some of the bombs were huge. The military has only a 40 year history on our land. How can they tell us they own the land? We have thousands of years of history on this land."⁵⁶ As part of organized protests, Penashue and other Innu occupied positions on the runways and bombing ranges. In her narrative she tells us that the protests were non-violent and no damage was done to military property or vehicles. She compares the Innu protest against the base with "the struggle in South Africa ... before the fall of apartheid."⁵⁷ For her trouble, Penashue and her fellow protestors were imprisoned. She was released after a hearing and on returning home decided to organize another protest, the result being that she was once again jailed. "I did this three times," she tells us. Her feeling, and the feeling of many Innu, is that "if further militarisation continues ... there will be no future for the Innu. This land was meant to be used for hunting. This is not a land of war."⁵⁸

Recalling the descriptor applied to Labrador ("the land that God gave Cain") one might wonder, given Penashue's characterization of industrial and military developments, if this was a prognostication rather than an estimation of worth on the part of Cartier. For it seems that with the flooding, deforestation, and supersonic jets, Labrador has *become* something of a wasteland, a hunting ground for imperialism and the military-industrial complex. This discussion originated in the seemingly insignificant act of naming places on the misguided adventures of Leonidas Hubbard. Although it should again be stressed that expeditions to Labrador did not set out to name the land for the purpose of industrialization, a post-colonial analysis of Dillon Wallace's and Mina Hubbard's texts shows how the cultural practice of naming functions in relation to an imperialist discourse that continues to impact the Innu. One of the most striking examples of the industrial setting-upon of the land is

the manipulation and flooding of rivers for hydroelectric development, an issue that is a current topic of contention for the Innu people of Labrador.

In June 2011, the Innu Nation ratified through plebiscite an agreement with the government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Tshash Petapen Agreement (the New Dawn Agreement), which takes into account land claims and the Lower Churchill Falls hydroelectric development. Although this agreement seems to be a progressive step in recognizing the economic, political, and cultural rights of the Innu, not all members of the Innu Nation support it. In an interview with Jenny McCarthy of the *Labradorian*, Elizabeth Penashue says she is troubled by the prospect of further environmental damage to the land, and is also concerned by the way land claims have been bundled with deals regarding the Lower Churchill.⁵⁹ Penashue's son, Peter Penashue, who was recently elected as the first Innu federal Member of Parliament for Labrador and appointed to a cabinet post as Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, supports the New Dawn Agreement and the development of the Lower Churchill.⁶⁰ His electoral victory and subsequent appointment to cabinet cannot but further these aims. In a May 2011 interview with Tara McLean of CBC's *Labrador Morning Show*, Elizabeth Penashue expressed great pride in her son's election to office, but again reiterated her opposition to development of the Lower Churchill.⁶¹ This tension between mother and son highlights the divide in the Innu community, but also adheres to the pattern of resistance to imperialism as discussed by Said, who notes, "the partial tragedy of resistance [is that] it must to a certain degree work to recover forms already established or at least influenced or infiltrated by the culture of empire."⁶² In this case, the already established forms are Canadian economic, political, and industrialist discourses.

Elizabeth Penashue's concerns with regard to the proposed Lower Churchill development are not unfounded. In creating the Upper Churchill Falls hydroelectric dam, a 6,500 km² area was turned into a standing reserve of water energy — what is now called the Smallwood Reservoir. This reservoir encompasses Lake Michikamau, one of the unrealized goals of the 1903 Hubbard/Wallace expedition, as well as a number of smaller lakes and tributaries. The Innu Nation website tells us that this industrial setting-upon "flooded thousands of kilometres of land in Labrador, including valuable caribou habitat and Innu burial grounds. Although the Innu people used and depended on much of this area for centuries, the provincial government did not consult them before damming the Churchill River."⁶³

Leonidas Hubbard glimpsed Lake Michikamau and the site of the future Smallwood Reservoir in 1903 from the top of a mountain before deciding to give up his expedition and turn back. Wallace describes the naming of this mountain by saying, "to the northwest rose in solemn majesty a great, grey mountain, holding its head high above all the surrounding world. It shall be known as Mount Hubbard."⁶⁴ For whatever reason, the Geographical Names Board has never officially adopted this name. In what might be seen as a twist of fate, Leonidas Hubbard has been spared the dubious honour of having his name placed on a mountain overlooking

the present site of an industrial landscape, something that has further covered over and erased Innu culture.

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Notes

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