

## Excavating Canada's Geological Nationalism

The CBC has recently produced a five-part series called *Geologic Journey*. Broadcast in high definition, the series offers the viewer “a tour of our national pride – the vast, wild beauty we call Canada.” Indeed, according to the production’s website, “Geologic Journey breathes relevance into ancient geology and traces the extraordinary history of our continent to show that the new world is in fact very, very old.” What are the consequences of such a statement to the imagining of Canada? To what extent does a constructed geologic landscape fit into existing discursive networks relating to nationalism and the nation? And, to what extent does this narrative inform the construction and articulation of national symbols, namely the inukshuk?

The intent of this paper is to unearth existing discursive evidence within literary and artistic texts of a geological nationalism and consider the consequences of such a strategy. It will be argued that the CBC series is part of a mytho-symbolic tradition that attempts to construct Canada, in part, as a sublime natural landscape with an enduring geologic heritage. It will be argued that the construction of such a landscape is connected to colonial discourses and specifically the indigenizing strategies of settler invader culture. Arising out of these discourses is the question as to whether Aboriginal presences are erased by this geologic narrative or are rendered insignificant within the context of Canada’s seemingly timeless geologic history? The paper will conclude with a discussion on how a reading of the inukshuk-as-national-symbol can be approached from the perspective of geological nationalism.

**Jeff Ruhl** is a Masters student at Carleton’s School of Canadian Studies. Interested in critical nationalism, Jeff’s current research is focused on investigating the discourses that have informed the current popularity and constructions of the inukshuk as an (inter)nationally recognized “Canadian” symbol. A Trent alumnus, Jeff still maintains a connection to Peterborough as an associate producer and writer for Lucky Canuck Productions which recently aired the documentary *The Making of ‘Lost in Canada’* on CTV.