

2009

Indigenous diasporic literature : representations of the Shaman in the works of Sam Watson and Alootook Ipellie

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Recommended Citation

McMahon-Coleman, Kimberley, Indigenous diasporic literature : representations of the Shaman in the works of Sam Watson and Alootook Ipellie, PhD thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, 2009. <http://uow.ro.edu.au/theses/786>

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**INDIGENOUS DIASPORIC LITERATURE:
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SHAMAN
IN THE WORKS OF
SAM WATSON
AND
ALOOTOOK IPELLIE**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

UNIVERSITY OF

WOLLONGONG

By

KIMBERLEY McMAHON-COLEMAN

B.A. (Hons.), G. Dip. Ed

FACULTY OF ARTS

2009

CERTIFICATION

I, Kimberley L. McMahon-Coleman, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Kimberley L McMahon-Coleman

April 14, 2009

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Kimberley L McMahon-Coleman

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS THESIS

"Interview with Alootook Ipellie." *Australian Canadian Studies*. Sydney: University of Sydney Publishing Service. Volume 23.2. December 2005: (77-89).

"Fatal Attraction? A Non-Indigenous Feminist's Exploration of Masculinities in Indigenous Literature." Conference Proceedings. Women in Research, University of Central Queensland, November 2005.

"Indigenous Diaspora and Literature." *Australian Canadian Studies*. Sydney: University of Sydney Publishing Service. Volume 3.2, December 2005: (91-109).

"Dreaming an Identity Between Two Cultures: The Works of Alootook Ipellie." *Kunapipi: Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. Wollongong: Kunapipi Publishing. Vol. 28.1 2006: 108-125.

"Heritage and Regional Development: An Indigenous Perspective." With Robbie Collins. Conference Proceedings. 2006 ANSRAI Conference (Australia and New Zealand Regional Science Association International), Beechworth, September 2006.

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LIST OF SPECIAL NAMES OR ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.T.N.	Aboriginal Television Network
C.B.C. North	Canadian Broadcasting North
C.H.O.G.M.	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
D.I.A.N.D.	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Inuit	lit. “the people” of the Arctic
Inuk	lit. “man” or “person.” Singular of Inuit
Inuktitut	the language spoken by the Inuit
I.B.C.	Inuit Broadcasting Corporation
I.T.K.	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (formerly the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) is the “Inuit Brotherhood” of Canada. It represents Inuit in four regions of Canada: Nunatsiavut (in Labrador), Nunavik (in Northern Quebec), Nunavut and Inuvialuit (Northwest territories).
Kadaitcha	an Australian Indigenous term meaning shaman
Maban	as above
Maban Reality	a form of Indigenous magic realism, which fuses the natural with the supernatural
Murri	term given to Aboriginal Australians from South-Eastern Queensland and North-eastern New South Wales
Shaman	an ecstatic healer
Stolen Generations	Indigenous Australians who were removed from their families and traditional lands under assimilationist Protection policies
T.F.N.	Tungavik Federation of Nunavut
Tornassuk	Inuktitut word for polar bear spirit
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to bring together postcolonial and diaspora theories to look at the work of two Indigenous writers. It explores how complexities of postcolonial representation may be analysed by viewing Indigenous populations in Canada and Australia as members of intra-national diasporas, with the mission sites being fashioned as diaspora spaces. The figures that populate these spaces are never quite at home in their host communities, and are also unable to return completely to the homelands of their imaginations.

This thesis argues that the defining features of Indigenous diasporic literature are the creation of maban realism and queer figures. Indigenous diasporic texts feature supernatural events and characters, are strongly political, and force mainstream readers into unfamiliar reading positions. The two texts examined here, Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* and Sam Watson's *The Kadaitcha Sung*, achieve this through the use of shamanic protagonists.

Each author's work conforms to a mainstream readership's expectations in terms of the type of narrative told, yet the texts queer many literary conventions. Ipellie's stories return to the stereotype of, in his words, the "quaint Eskimo," whilst Watson's is, at heart, a *Stolen Generations* narrative. Perhaps ironically, each writer has used an established narrative which is the antithesis of his own lived experience, suggesting that even as he sought to carve out a space and a means of telling Indigenous stories that may have otherwise remained untold, that space was still being delineated by colonial history.

In these works, the shaman is an Indigenous diasporic voice—a way of telling Indigenous stories in difficult political environments. The Indigenous diasporic framework provides a means of analysing such stories, which utilise imagery from two conflicting cultures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, my sincere thanks must go to Alooook Ipellie and Sam Watson. Both offered me support, candour, and hospitality which have been truly appreciated. I was always aware of my position as a white middle-class academic 'examining' their work, and so receiving emails and letters checking on how it was going made me feel that I was, in fact, on the right track. I am privileged to have had an unprecedented level of access to Alooook and his work. It is some comfort to know that at the time of his sudden death, the first half of the thesis was largely complete and that he had read, and approved of, my work. I hope that he would be proud of the end product.

Thank you to my supervisors, Associate Professor Paul Sharrad and also to Dr Debra Dudek, who came on board towards the end of the project, and reinforced my high regard for Canadians and their enthusiasm. A special thank you goes to Professor Gerry Turcotte of the University of Notre Dame (Sydney), who is one of the most rigorous editors the world has ever seen. And to Kellinde, Gerard and Sophie, for sharing him with the students of Wollongong and now Notre Dame.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Louise D'Arcens, Guy Davidson, Richard Harland, Debra Dudek, Paul Sharrad, Maureen Clark, Irene Lucchitti and Monique Rooney in the School of English Literatures, Philosophy and Languages at the University of Wollongong; Kay Kanaar and Liz Henigan from Bomaderry TAFE; the Learning Development and Batemans Bay Education Centre teaching teams, and Terry and Julie Ashby of the Kip McGrath Education Centre in Nowra, for offering me enough teaching work to keep the bills paid during my studies. To my students, past and present: it has been a privilege to study alongside you.

Enormous thanks to my colleagues at the Shoalhaven Campus—Sam Altinger, Troy Bagnall, Robbie Collins, Dan Crowley, Brad Davis, Silla Kjar, Rae Luckie, Tracey Myers, Sue Rosskelly, Jeannette Stirling and Alison Wicks—for the sanity-saving morning tea ritual. Also to my fellow PhDers, Ernie Blackmore, Jasmine Croll, Debra Evelyn, Robyn Morris, Dion Oxley, Laurie Stevenson and Roslyn Weaver, for sharing the angst along the way. To Melanie Sedge and Beth O'Reilly of Trent University in Peterborough and Kim Matthews of McMaster University in Hamilton, thank you for introducing me to Canada and Canadians, eh? And to all my ACSANZ colleagues, and the Centre for Canadian Australian Studies at the University of Wollongong, for support both academic and financial.

Thank you to Sandra Grieve from the Woodford Historical Society, for the materials on the Durundur settlement, and to Maureen Hopper, for putting me in touch with her.

To Drs Gerry Wain and Paul Hartnett, and Kim Hobbs from Westmead; Dr Ian Hoult, and nurses Tess, Bill and Kate; your care meant that my cancer diagnosis and treatment were a minor delay, rather than a major impediment to the completion of my studies.

Thanks to Alison and Barry McMahon and the extended clan for valuing education enough that I even thought about doing this in the first place. To my brother, Justin, for his ability to help me put things in perspective. And to my friends Kate Reid, Craig Olsson, Cheryl Thomson and Tim Lange; the Thorne, Abdulrahim, McGeorge, Taguchi, Kajii and Hirose families; Carmel Coad, Jo Evans, Rochelle Flaherty, Alison Llewellyn, Pippa McErvale and Phoebe Zeller; Tom Sigley; Ellyn Leighton-Hermann, Grace Bahamonde Neumann and Dany Coronel; the Colemans, Falcons and the Houlisons—you have become family. You keep me strong, and mostly sane. A special thank you to Dr Gentle Ford for offering feedback on one of the later drafts.

Finally, my very greatest thanks go to those nearest to me, who have put up with my vagueness and absences since I began this journey, and who have celebrated my successes with great enthusiasm. This thesis is dedicated to Tony, Jamie and Robert Coleman, without whose continued understanding it would never have come into being.

INTRODUCTION:
INDIGENOUS DIASPORIC LITERATURE—QUEERING
MABAN REALITY

*Give us fellowship, not favours;
Encouragement, not prohibitions,
Homes, not settlements and missions.*

Oodgeroo Noonuccal¹

This thesis focusses on the use of shamans and tricksters in the works of Alootook Ipellie and Sam Watson. Alootook Ipellie is an Inuk from Baffin Island, in what is now Nunavut, and Sam Watson is a Murri from South-Eastern Queensland. Both are Indigenous authors in majority white invader/settler nations, and although both have also written journalism and polemic, the works examined here in closest detail are their works of fiction, because it is these that have given them their most effective outreach to national and international audiences. Both texts deal with culture clashes that result from colonialist practices, and in each work the difficult task of negotiating these, at times, conflicting cultures is left to a shamanic protagonist.

These writers' works are examined as examples of an Indigenous diasporic fantastic, and the dissertation aims to contribute to studies of Indigenous—in particular, Inuit and Aboriginal—literature, as well as to theoretical knowledge in the fields of postcolonial and diaspora studies. Despite the reputation of both writers within their respective communities and some small scholarly attention, the works remain relatively unknown and so I have focussed on a descriptive textual analysis of Ipellie's and Watson's works. Both writers produce works that

¹ "Aboriginal Charter of Rights" (1964) from *My People*, reprinted in *The PEN Macquarie Anthology of Aboriginal Literature*, edited by Anita Heiss and Peter Minter, 2008, p 42.

are transgressive in multiple ways. The subjects in their works are characters who resist the probability of being marginalised by mainstream societies because of their Indigeneity; rather, they are written as being gifted border crossers. The subjects are diasporic in their transgression of accepted borders between nations, countries and societies, and are also 'queer' subjects in that they shun normative behaviours in relation to gender and sexuality. Queer theory arises out of attacks on heteronormativity, and sexual relationships between European men and Indigenous women were a feature of many colonial power struggles. The application of queer theory in this context is to critique normative sexual and race relations, and in so doing, queer the position of the reader. It is in these interstices, as subjects who are both diasporic and queer, that the shamanic characters find both their powers and their voices.

Critical attention has found these works to be "difficult" because they transgress conventions of genre, narrative, and sexual decorum. This study attempts to illuminate the nature of these transgressions by applying theories of trickster-shaman figures, of magic realism, and of queer writing as an extension of the postcolonial discourses of subversion as "border crossing." I have developed a framework of Indigenous diaspora within which these approaches are applied, and by which we can better appreciate the slippery nature of these two 'problem' writers.

The thesis aims to identify and utilise reading strategies which are useful when dealing with texts which do not fit within the common sub-genres of Indigenous literature. Stephen Muecke argued in *Textual Spaces: Aboriginality and Cultural Studies* (1992) that Aboriginal culture and literature have become sites of conflict and difficulty, as Aboriginal peoples "struggle ... against entrenched patterns of

discrimination” (Muecke 180). Sonia Kurtzer summarises Muecke’s argument as being that Aboriginal literature is a site of “multiple constraints” (Kurtzer 181). Kurtzer has further argued that these margins are placed on and around Indigenous texts by the white hegemonic readership. The use of the intersecting postcolonial, diasporic and Indigenous fantastic or “maban realist” reading strategies in this thesis is an attempt to liberate such texts, which deal with the political and the supernatural, from these controls.

The texts examined here, Ipellie’s *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* (1993) and Watson’s *The Kadaitcha Sung* (1990), do not conform to hegemonic readership expectations; instead they highlight traditional shamanic practices, and feature scatological and sexual references. Indeed, Muecke himself labelled Watson’s book “unreadable” because of Watson’s refusal to edit the book into a more conventional form.² Consequently the texts have had relatively little critical analysis and have sold fewer numbers than less confronting books such as Beatrice Culleton’s *In Search of April Raintree*³ (1983) and Sally Morgan’s *My Place*⁴ (1988). Their content is equally unpalatable, including a violent rape scene in the former and a suggestion of incest in the latter, but they use sympathetic first-person female narrators and less profane language to tell their stories.

² It is perhaps ironic that Muecke has since ‘edited’ his own comment. See Chapter Five for further details.

³ *In Search of April Raintree* had been the subject of much critical study, and in 1999 a “Critical Edition” was published, including the original text of the novel, as well as essays by Margery Fee, Janice Acoose, Agnes Grant, Michael Creal, Jeanne Perrault, Helen Hoy, Jo-Ann Thom, Peter Cumming, Heather Zwicker and Culleton herself. A Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition has been published this year, and it was the first selection on the Manitoba Reads! Project, inaugurated in 2008.

⁴ For further information on the debate around the position of *My Place* in Australian literature, see Gillian Whitlock’s *The Intimate Empire*, Mudrooroo’s controversial comments in *Writing from the Fringe*, Adam Shoemaker’s analysis of these in *Mudrooroo: A Critical Study*, and Jackie Huggins in *Blacklines*, where she argues that the greatest weakness of *My Place* is how little translation is required by a mainstream white audience (61).

The genesis for this project was a fascination with the repeated use of shamans and magical trickster-figures in the works of non-canonical writers, particularly those of Non-English Speaking or Indigenous backgrounds. These characters appeared time and again in the works of authors of widely varying cultural and literary backgrounds, including Thomas King, Mudrooroo, Keri Hulme, Beth Yahp, Kim Scott, Larissa Lai, and Hiromi Goto. These figures, who traditionally operate within two distinct worlds and forms of power, are often used by minority writers attempting to express the tensions as well as the bridging possibilities of contrasting worlds of colonising power and colonised culture.

Contemporary Canadian literature offers an impressive range of trickster-characters who maintain elements of their culture of origin as they negotiate life in contemporary urban society. Thomas King, for example, who is a Canadian of “Cherokee and Greek descent,”⁵ uses the trickster figure of Coyote in many of his novels and short fiction. Coyote is a traditional First Nations trickster-figure who, in King’s fiction, uses his supernatural powers to alter colonial storytelling processes. In King’s acclaimed novel *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), Coyote teams up with elderly First Nations peoples named after figures from the English literary canon and English-language popular culture—Ishmael from Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* (1851), Hawkeye from James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Robinson Crusoe from Daniel Defoe’s novel of the same name (1719), and the Lone Ranger figure from Trendle’s and Striker’s early radio and television serials (1933 onwards).

Coyote also amends a John Wayne film so that Wayne’s character is killed and

⁵ As described on the back cover of his novel, *Green Grass, Running Water*.

his men massacred by the Indians, much to the consternation of a watching white TV salesman (King, *Green Grass* 321-2). This subverts the long-held predominant notion in Western society that the “cowboys” in Western films were the heroes to be championed, a point which Watson also critiques in *The Kadaitcha Sung*, and his treatment of this issue will be examined in more detail in Chapter Six.

Larissa Lai’s novels *When Fox is a Thousand* (1995) and *Salt Fish Girl* (2002) both deal with strong shape-shifting female characters of Chinese heritage living in contemporary Canada.⁶ Hiromi Goto’s *Kappa Child* (2001), which won the Tiptree Award for “gender-bending Science Fiction,” fuses the Kappa figure of Japanese mythology with images from Laura Ingalls Wilder’s classic *Little House on the Prairie* (1935) in order to highlight the alienation felt by a Japanese family living on the Canadian prairies.⁷ More recently, Joseph Boyden, a Canadian writer who identifies as being of Scottish, Irish and Métis descent,⁸ has written about the role of the shaman or medicine person at the moment of first contact with colonialists. His novel *Three Day Road*, published in 2005, tells the story of Niska, the last Oji-Cree woman to live off the land, and her last living relative, her nephew, Xavier. Xavier has been fighting in Europe during the First World War, and returns gravely wounded and addicted to morphine. It is up to Niska, a medicine woman who is skilled in the art of killing cannibalistic supernatural hybrid beings known as the Windigo, to use her inherited powers in an attempt to

⁶ See Robyn Morris in *West Coast Line* and Nicholas Birns in *China Fictions/English Language: Literary Essays in Diaspora, Memory, Story* for detailed analysis of these novels.

⁷ For further information on Goto’s writing, see Guy Beauregard and Mark Libin.

⁸ This description is used in many online Biographies, but nowhere in *Three Day Road* is Boyden’s cultural heritage articulated.

cure the illnesses Xavier has contracted in the world of the whites.⁹ The novel has received both popular and critical praise, and has won numerous prestigious awards, including the McNally Robinson Aboriginal Book of the Year, the Rogers Writer's Trust Fiction Prize, and the 2006 Canadian First Novel Award.

There are fewer examples of Australian texts that foreground magic from minority cultures, but those that do include Mudrooroo's vampire sequence—*Master of the Ghost Dreaming* (1991), *The Undying* (1998), *Underground* (1994) and *The Promised Land* (2000)—which focusses on Indigenous shaman figures who have the ability to shapeshift, and who use their supernatural gifts in order to cope with the disturbing influences of colonial powers.¹⁰ In *The Crocodile Fury* (1992), Australian writer Beth Yahp draws on her Chinese-Malaysian heritage to create the story of three generations of women haunted by extra-sensory powers, ghosts and demons.¹¹ The book won the 1993 NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission Award and the Victorian Premier's Prize for First Fiction. Nyoongar writer Kim Scott creates in his Miles Franklin Award-winning *Benang: from the Heart* (1999) a first-person narrator who levitates when under stress, and creates song-cycles as a means of healing his dysfunctional family.¹²

In all of the aforementioned novels, the shamanic or trickster figure becomes symbolic of traditional or minority powers, and fuses his or her resources with

⁹ *Three Day Road* is one the novels examined in Herb Wylie's *Speaking in the Past Tense: Canadian Novelists on Writing Historical Fiction*.

¹⁰ See Maureen Clark's review of Clare Archer-Lean's *Cross-cultural Analysis of the Writings of Thomas King and Colin Johnson (Mudrooroo)*, (2006), her article "Terror as White female in Mudrooroo's vampire trilogy" (2006), and the Annalise Oboe-edited *Mongrel Signatures* for further information on Mudrooroo, his writing, and his place in Australian literary criticism.

¹¹ For further analysis of Yahp's novel, see Miriam Wei Wei Lo's article in *Hecate* (1999). See also Olivia Khoo's *The Chinese Exotic* (2007).

¹² For further reading, see Pablo Armellino's "Australia Re-Mapped and Con-Texted in Kim Scott's *Benang*" (2004) and Tony Birch's "Miscegenation and Identity in Kim Scott's *Benang*" (2004).

those of the contemporary hegemonic society in order to create a cross-cultural mythology which is relevant to the lived experiences of contemporary minority subjects in postcolonial nations. The creative works of the authors listed above often deal with attempts at reconnecting with a cultural heritage or engaging with Indigeneity. For Ipellie and Watson, however, who are of an earlier generation, colonisation and its assimilationist practices have had a more immediate affect. As a child, Alootook Ipellie was removed and isolated from his home, land and culture on more than one occasion. Watson, who was not directly affected by the removal policies but who knew others who were, creates a protagonist who is identifiably a victim of the assimilationist relocation of part-Aboriginal children, now commonly known in Australian as the Stolen Generations. As a result, their creative works reflect the trauma of cultural loss and silencing. Both use the trope of shamanism and conventions of the fantasy genre in their work as a means of examining and confronting the complex social movements created by colonialism. The shamanic figures central to *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* and *The Kadaitcha Sung* typify the complexities faced by Indigenous peoples as European culture was introduced and offer a means by which they might cope with such experiences.

The terms “maban” and “Kadaitcha” are Australian Indigenous words meaning “shaman.” In *The Indigenous Literature of Australia: Milli Milli Wangka*, Australian critic Mudrooroo uses the term “maban reality” to describe the fantastic Indigenous works that he points out could also reasonably be classified as magic realist novels (Mudrooroo, *Indigenous* 101).¹³ Maban or magic realist texts are a specific subset of the fantasy genre. According to Rosemary Jackson in *Fantasy:*

¹³ Mudrooroo's position within the field of Indigenous literature has been problematised in recent years. Irrespective of his actual ethnic origins, Mudrooroo has written, worked and read within the Aboriginal cultural circle for many years and thus can be credited as a valid commentator on Indigenous Literature.

The Literature of Subversion, the introduction of the fantastic in a place of familiarity and comfort is a means of introducing “dark areas, of something completely other and unseen, the spaces outside the limiting frame of the ‘human’ and ‘real’ outside the control of the ‘word’ and of the ‘look’” (Jackson 179). It is my contention that the use of the uncanny in Ipellie’s and Watson’s texts functions as a means of introducing Indigenous sensibilities to the predominantly settler-founded multicultural communities of Canada and Australia. A feature common to critical writing in these fields is a focus on the uncanny, unhomely or *das Unheimlich*, as first elaborated by Freud in his 1919 essay, “The Uncanny.”¹⁴ In *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle go so far as to argue that the uncanny is “central to any description of the literary,” since uncanniness occurs whenever “real” or everyday life takes on a “disturbingly ‘literary’ or ‘fictional’ quality” (Bennett and Royle 35). As these critics point out, the uncanny as understood by Freud and others, is more than just a sense of mystery or eeriness: “[m]ore particularly, it concerns a sense of unfamiliarity which appears at the very heart of the familiar, or else a sense of familiarity which appears at the very heart of the unfamiliar” (Bennett and Royle 34). This is certainly the case in Ipellie’s and Watson’s works, where Indigenous shamanic characters participate in both traditional and in contemporary non-Indigenous societies. Moreover, since this study is enacted in a comparative framework, dealing as it does with Canadian and Australian case studies, it is itself something of an uncanny exercise, for, as Gerry Turcotte argues, any comparative literary study is “both a presentation of the familiar and of the fabulous, and its purpose is often the stress on the idea of fraught simultaneity” (Turcotte 157).

¹⁴ Reprinted in *The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture*, edited by Bruce Grenville.

Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs argue in *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation*, that notions of home and the uncanny are central to postcoloniality, stating that claims made about the Aboriginal sacred are “a sign of the predicament in modern Australia which we can characterise as postcolonial” (xiv). Their definition of uncanny experiences being those which happen when “one’s home is rendered, somehow and in some sense, unfamiliar; one has the experience, in other words, of being in place and ‘out of place’ simultaneously” (Gelder and Jacobs 23) summarises the experiences of the Indigenous diasporic characters in Ipellie’s and Watson’s books, who appear to be functioning in postcolonial society, even as they are displaced by colonising forces. The use of the fantasy genre with its limitless and escapist possibilities, is a means of expressing the anxieties of displaced Indigeneity and effectively creates unease in complacent hegemonic readers with little or no knowledge of these alternative ways of knowing and seeing the world. Magic and maban realist texts utilise this freedom from the constraints of realism in order to convey political messages.

As Linda Hutcheon notes in “Circling the Downspout of Empire,” magic realism or the mixing of the fantastic and the realistic has been a genre commonly employed in “post-colonial and culturally marginalised contexts to signal works which encode themselves within resistance” (Hutcheon 131). Stephen Slemon notes in “Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World” that the term has been used in Latin America to signify “uniqueness or difference from mainstream culture” (Slemon 407). Its repeated use in Third World literatures and more recently, its co-option by Indigenous peoples in invader/settler nations such as Canada and Australia has meant that the term is inextricably linked with resistance (Slemon 408). Australian critic Mudrooroo further distinguishes maban

realist texts as being a subgenre of magic realism, and one in which the Indigenous spiritual realities which had been marginalised as “primal, pagan and savage” by early settlers, missionaries and educators (Mudrooroo, *Indigenous* 90) feature prominently. Mudrooroo cites Watson’s *The Kadaitcha Sung* as being the novel which first broke the ground of this “new realm of reality” (Mudrooroo, *Indigenous* 46) in Australia. He defines maban reality as being “characterised by a firm grounding in the reality of the earth or country, together with an acceptance of the supernatural as part of everyday reality” (Mudrooroo, *Indigenous* 98). He also argues that it is inherently political because “it seeks to establish an Indigenous reality which is counter to the dominant natural reality of the invaders” (Mudrooroo, *Indigenous* 100).

The examination of the uncanny in “postcolonial” texts is by no means an unusual practice. Indeed, Benita Parry in her 2004 essay “The Institution of Postcolonial Studies” has noted with some asperity that “a canon of ‘Postcolonial Literature’ is being formed, in which the ‘marvellous’ or ‘magic’ realisms ... are given greater prominence than those closer to ‘realist’ modes” (73). She cites the abundance of critical material on the works of well known authors like Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Ben Okri to support her argument. Whilst I do not wish to suggest that these authors are undeserving of the attention they receive, it would seem to me that writers like Ipellie and Watson are among a number of authors from Canada and Australia who are also working in the realm of the magical, but whose work remains relatively unexamined and thus they remain outside the secondary canon of which Parry writes.

One reason for the lack of attention to Ipellie and Watson may be their refusal to bury their politics in the fantastical entertainment of magical realism. Watson’s

and Ipellie's works both share features of maban reality as defined by Mudrooroo, and their writings are counter-hegemonic and highly politicised. Indeed, both writers have also been vocal political activists for their communities. Both Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* and Watson's *The Kadaitcha Sung* also use violence, graphic sex scenes, and a focus on the abject to further engender discomfort in much of their readership. They reverse the historic realities of white settlers not speaking about their sexual encounters with Indigenous people,¹⁵ by creating Indigenous protagonists who are open and vocal about their activities. This idea that shamanic characters are easily distracted by earthly desires indicates their trickster status in the cosmos and each writer uses this character trait to create corporeal points of contact between the spirit and mortal worlds. It can be argued that both writers, in effect, "queer" the "approved" magic realist mode of postcolonial fiction with their "uncanny" political maban content.

In *Postcolonial Cultures*, Simon Featherstone argues that fiction "is a discourse that accepts and allows some free-play of fantasy and the irrational" (Featherstone 165). Both Ipellie and Watson, however, seem to move beyond acceptable limits of such free play. They fuse traditional Indigenous and intuitive ways of knowing—which would not be considered "logical" by many non-Indigenous readers—with easily identifiable locations, tropes and situations from the colonising cultures. Ipellie's shaman-narrator has the ability and contacts to hold audiences with God in Heaven, and to follow Superman across the Arctic. Watson's protagonist, Tommy Gubba, is of mixed-race ancestry and frequently shifts between fraternising with academics and lawyers in inner-city Brisbane, to

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of how inter-racial sexual relationships were complex and how the pretence of separation between coloniser and colonised was routinely made uncanny through these, see Hannah Robert's "Disciplining the Female Aboriginal Body: Inter-racial Sex and the Pretence of Separation."

embracing more traditional Murri life on the Fingal mission, and having audiences with his Spirit guides at Uluru.

The two texts examined in detail here may be broadly defined as belonging to the genre of 'fantasy' or as being non-naturalistic in their nature. They invoke fictional conventions of the Gothic and magic realism to incorporate alternative Indigenous knowledges. At the same time they inject political reality but do not conform to conventions of native activist writing or notions of Indigenous "authenticity." Each author, in presenting elements of traditional cultures and belief systems, suggests that the events depicted within the books are part of an alternative way of knowing or being. A mainstream reader is placed in an uncanny reading space, where supernatural events are presented as though they are commonplace.

As such, each text also raises questions about identity, and defies commonly held beliefs about time and dimensions. Rosemary Jackson argues that

the 'value' of fantasy has seemed to reside in precisely this resistance to definition, in its 'free-floating' and escapist qualities. Literary fantasies have appeared to be 'free' from many of the conventions and restraints of more realistic texts: they have refused to observe unities of time, space and character, doing away with chronology, three-dimensionality and with rigid distinctions between animate and inanimate objects, self and other, life and death. (Jackson 1-2)

Both of the writers selected for study here use these types of techniques in their work. Ipellie's shaman blurs distinctions between life, death and the after-life, and his adventures take place over a non-specific and presumably non-linear timeframe. Further, the character has the ability to change shape and morph into different incarnations of himself. Watson's Tommy Gubba is another character who has the ability to occupy a space between life and death, and the timeline of this novel is one of its most distinctive features, for although the action nominally

takes place over four days, the use of anachronistic details compresses all of Australia's colonial history into that brief timeframe. Although powerful figures who are capable of using the tools of the colonising cultures and remain in touch with their own cultural traditions, however, the shamanic protagonists of the texts share an ongoing and irreconcilable sense of alienation throughout the narratives.

This thesis arises out of work in the broad field of postcolonial studies. This field covers a wide variety of cultural politics, but here the focus is on relations within colonised Indigenous cultures as well as their relationships within the dominant white invader/settler cultures of their nation spaces. Len Findlay, in his influential essay "Always Indigenize!: The Radical Humanities in the Postcolonial Canadian University" suggests that English literatures should work "with and against" hegemonic representations of literature (Findlay 310), and seek to disprove assertions about *terra nullius* by always including Indigenous viewpoints in literary analysis in search of "innovative, non-appropriative, ethical cross-cultural research" (Findlay 313). Although Findlay's essay has subsequently also been critiqued by a number of scholars, including Paulomi Chakraborty, who argues that it "imagines a universal model" (Chakraborty 17), it seems to me that since Findlay's essay does seek anti-hegemonic strategies which "specifically speak to invader/settler colonies" (Chakraborty 17), his argument for positing Indigenous stories and perspectives in contrast to the hegemonic canon is particularly pertinent in a thesis which deals with works written by Indigenous authors in the invader/settler nation-states of Canada and Australia.

The Comparative Framework

This is, firstly and most obviously, a comparative study of two examples of Canadian and Australian Indigenous literature. This basic framework has proved useful as it is generally agreed that Canada and Australia share a similar colonial legacy: both nations are officially multicultural, yet the history of literary publication since colonisation has been predominantly one of white hegemonic narratives. As Alan Lawson has argued, invader/settler societies such as Canada and Australia, which are sometimes referred to as the Second World because of their position in resistance to Empire's traditional representations of colonies, are sites which share a "very particular dual inscription; a place that is colonized at the same time as it is colonizing" (Lawson 155).¹⁶

The adoption of official multicultural policies in the 1970s and 1980s in some ways exacerbated tensions between minority communities and the white majorities in these nations. The kind of "Othering" that occurs when visible minorities' differences are celebrated sometimes re-emphasises cultural divides and the privileging of white Anglo-centric culture. Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliot argue in *Multiculturalism in Canada: the Challenge of Diversity* that, although most people agree with multiculturalism in theory, "many in practice are insensitive to minority rights at individual or group levels, suggesting an underlying adherence to anglo-conformity as the preferred culture" (127). Luke McNamara argues that in Australia, too, three decades after the "emergence of multiculturalism as official Australian government policy in the 1970s ... the imprint of multiculturalism on Australian laws and legal institutions is decidedly faint" (McNamara 1). McNamara echoes Alastair Davidson's assertion that "the mono-cultural Anglo-Celtic past did not disappear when multiculturalism became state policy in Australia" (A. Davidson 82).

¹⁶ See also Lawson's 1991 article "A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World" and Stephen Slemon's "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World."

This dominance of Anglo-Celtic tradition and law has clearly constrained both migrant and Indigenous groups. The fusion of “national,” “ethnic” and “Indigenous” in the minds of the populace, has been, however, counterproductive. As Fleras and Elliott argue, using a Canadian example,

[m]ulticulturalism is criticized for diminishing the status of aboriginal groups to the level of a minority/ethnic group. It is also criticized for denying the unique relationship—based on the principles of aboriginal land title and self-determination—between native Indians and the federal government. Like the Quebecois, in other words, aboriginal peoples prefer to negotiate from within a bicultural framework that recognizes their special status and acknowledges their collective right to differential treatment. (120)

The novels studied here must therefore be read in the particular context of inhabiting a culturally complex nation space whilst claiming the aforementioned special status for Indigenous and Indigenous diasporic peoples.

The ongoing struggles in Australia for Aboriginal land rights, Reconciliation, compensation for the Stolen Generations and the implementation of the recommendations of the 1993 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody suggest that the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the federal government remains problematic. The rise of Pauline Hanson’s white supremacist One Nation Party in Australian politics in the 1990s and the increasingly conservative and often apparently racially-based policies of the Howard Coalition over the last fifteen years would suggest, however, that visible minority groups have increasingly been included in the category of “them” to the dominant Anglo-Celtic “us.” This obsession with identifying and categorising what it is to be “Australian” is paralleled in Canada, with W. H. New famously noting in 1975 that searching for a national identity had become a “kind of congenital art form” (New, *Among Worlds* 101), a comment echoed in recent years by Laura

Moss' suggestion that the search for a postcolonial identity "now epitomizes such an art form" (Moss vii).

In the Introduction to her edited collection *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*, Moss builds on Frank Birbalsingh's argument that countries like Australia and Canada who have not yet "evolved an organic sense of community or cultural homogeneity" use national identity as an "important literary theme" (Birbalsingh 57). Moss notes the divide between these "invader-settler nations" where "the process of colonization was predominantly one of immigration and settlement" (Moss 2) and those nations where the colonisation process was more one of "displacement, impoverishment, sublimation, and even annihilation" (2), but cautions against too sharp a division between these groups, noting that to do so may

obscure the terrible consequences of colonialism for the Indigenous peoples in the territories settled, as it might overlook the complexity of cultural and political reconstruction in territories exploited under the economic and political imperatives of empire. (2)

For many Indigenous groups within Australia and Canada, colonialism did indeed involve displacement, impoverishment, assimilation and even annihilation. Certainly Alootook Ipellie was displaced from his homeland when removed from his family, first for medical treatment, and later for educational purposes. Whilst Watson was able to remain with his biological family throughout his childhood years, the family lived not on their own 'country,' but within the suburbs of Brisbane. Relationships between community and place in postcolonial nations are clearly complex, and while Ipellie and Watson maintained some connections with their home spaces, their identities were also informed, in part, by diasporic consciousness to the extent that shamans, as shapeshifting negotiators, became appropriate vehicles to tell their stories.

As well as legislated multicultural policies, Canada and Australia share a “‘common ancestry’ of predominantly English settlement” (Brydon and Tiffin 56), “deep, significant, and unresolved relationships with their Indigenous peoples” (Shoemaker, *Paper Tracks* 246), and the legacies of British colonialism in terms of language, law and politics. As invader/settler colonies, both nations have experienced a “dual colonialism [because] settler colonials perceived their superiority over the ‘Natives’ but were seen as inferior by the imperial centre” (Alomes 104).

This dual colonial dynamic has had a profound psychological impact on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the early colonial era, and indeed Margaret Atwood has described the colonial mentality in terms of its ability to cause “psychic disturbances” (Atwood in J. Davidson 204). Perhaps in light of *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* being set in Nunavut and *The Kaddisha Sung* being set, at least in part, in rural Queensland, her comment about the impact of certain spaces on the colonial psyche is particularly pertinent:

the North is to Canada as the Outback is to Australia, and as the sea was to Melville, and as ... Africa is, shall we say, to *Heart of Darkness*. It's the place where you go to find something out. It's the place of the unconscious. It's the place of the journey or the quest. (Atwood in J. Davidson 204)

Atwood argues that the ‘North’ “is thought of as a place, but it’s a place of shifting boundaries. It’s also a state of mind. It can mean ‘wilderness’ or ‘frontier’” (Atwood in J. Davidson 10). Like the Australian ‘Outback,’ the Canadian ‘North’ is an uncanny space, since it is at once both a place and a direction. The boundaries are mutable, relational and unfixed.

The comparative Canadian-Australian framework illuminates the similarity of the colonial struggle in a variety of spaces and nation-states, yet also allows for a close examination of how individuals deal with similar subject matter in highly

individualised and culturally specific ways. Ipellie and Watson each draws on his own unique cultural heritage in order to examine the colonial processes undertaken in the modern nation-states of Canada and Australia, and its impact on Indigenous populations.

In *Black Words, White Page*, Adam Shoemaker notes that the term “Fourth World” was coined by George Manuel in 1975, specifically to describe Indigenous minorities (Shoemaker, *Paper Tracks* 1), and that Canadian and Australian Indigenous peoples, in particular, “share a strong and vibrant spiritual affinity for one another as oppressed ‘first citizens,’ for their traditions, and above all, for their land” (Shoemaker, *Black Words* 203). In the texts examined here, spiritual community leaders negotiate the uncanny experiences which result from postcolonial exile.

Peter Loveday, Bruce Hodgins and Shelagh Grant argued in 1988 that “the Indigenous peoples of both Canada and Australia ha[d] assumed greater importance in controversies arising from demands for increased self-government” (Loveday *et al* 414) in the preceding two decades, yet as recently as November 2006 these two countries voted to delay the implementation of the United Nations’ Declaration on Indigenous Rights (Green, “Indigenous Rights;” “Australia helps block UN declaration on Indigenous rights”). Canada, a country which has “long been considered a leader on human rights issues” (Green), was one of only two nations that had voted against the Declaration in June 2007, although it has been suggested that a change of government—to the Conservative Party of Canada, led by Stephen Harper—had led to this objection (Calma 2). In the Australian context, unresolved Indigenous rights issues had been a defining feature of John Howard’s Prime Ministership, and on the eve of the 2007 election

campaign, he announced that if re-elected, he would hold a referendum regarding changing the Australian Constitution to more accurately reflect Indigenous occupancy prior to European settlement. This became a key issue in the election campaign after his opposite number, and now Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, pledging that he would apologise to Indigenous Australians of the so-called “the Stolen Generations.”¹⁷ His Canadian counterpart, Stephen Harper, apologised in June 2008 to children affected by the Residential Schooling system. In both countries, it would seem, relationships between the Indigenous and subsequent citizens are still very much part of the political agenda, making a study such as this relevant and indeed, timely.

Postcolonial Studies

One conceptual framework that supplies a broad basis for comparing cultural politics and textual dynamics in Australia and Canada is that of postcolonial studies. The pervasiveness of the colonial enterprise is such that Ashcroft *et al* have estimated that “[t]hree-quarters of the world’s population had their experience shaped by the process of colonialism” (Ashcroft *et al* 1). With the spread of British imperialism, English became the dominant language in many countries. The enforced replacement of Indigenous languages with English was one of many tools used by colonialists to minimise the influence of Indigenous inhabitants. Robbed of their language and culture, Indigenous populations also decreased at an alarming rate, attributable largely to disease, violence and discriminatory social policies.

¹⁷ A promise which was fulfilled as the first Order of Business during the first sitting of the new Parliament on February 13, 2008.

In their early work *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft *et al* argue that a key concern of postcolonial literature is foregrounding the tension with the imperial power and emphasising the differences from that imperial centre (Ashcroft *et al* 2). They argue that the “post-colonial world is one in which a destructive cultural encounter is changing to an acceptance of difference on equal terms” (Ashcroft *et al* 36). At this point the writing becomes truly cross-cultural, they claim, because authors are negotiating “A gap between ‘worlds,’ a gap in which simultaneous processes of abrogation and appropriation continually strive to define or determine the practice” (Ashcroft *et al* 39).

“Hybridity,” like the term “postcolonial,” has been critiqued in recent years because it privileges the European colonising perspective (Bromley in Hawley 275; King, *Godzilla* 11). It becomes critical when undertaking a study such as this to acknowledge the biased language and terminology which has commonly been used. As Simon Featherstone argues, “Few areas of study are at once so lively and so beset by doubts and dilemmas as postcolonial studies ... Few other disciplines ... so regularly worry about their own defining term” (Featherstone 1; see also Loomba *et al* 2-4). For Anne McClintock, the term is temporally loaded in that it “heralds the end of a world era [...] by invoking the very same trope of linear progress which animated that era” (McClintock 10). Nivedita Menon extends the time frame from the usual meaning of “from independence” to argue that postcoloniality “begins from the very first moment of contact” (Menon 207), but also sees it as involving a discourse of opportunity which is a result of the encounter with colonialism.

Numerous critics have also articulated a problem with the assumption that the moment of contact or invasion is an appropriate marker from which to apply the

“post”-prefix, since it suggests that the arrival of Europeans was the *raison d’être* for postcolonial literature (see King, *Godzilla* 16; Anderson 18, 22; and Kurtzer 182). Others reject the term because it seems to imply that the colonial era has now ended or been negated. This is particularly true for Indigenous critics. As Thomas King suggests, the

full complement of terms—pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial—reeks of unabashed ethnocentrism and well-meaning dismissal ... [and] organizes the literature progressively suggesting there is both progress and improvement. (King, *Godzilla* 11-12)

Yet as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat argue convincingly in “Travelling Multiculturalism: a Trinational Debate in Translation,” no single term is unproblematic:

antiracist studies seems too negative, too locked in the same paradigm as the one being combated ... Critical race theory remains too tied up with the legal discipline and excludes other axes of oppression like class and sexuality. Whiteness studies, while having the advantage of exnominating or outing whiteness, runs the risk of recentring it as well. Identity politics has come to emerge as the preferred term for the enemies of multiculturalism because it carries with it a hint of personal and cultural narcissism, of a philosophy centred on ‘my’ identity. Transnational studies, given its particular congruency with transnational corporations, is just as politically tainted as multiculturalism and risks eliding forms of oppression that are national or onfrational. In other words, each term, while problematic, also casts some light on a very complex subject. (300)

Ashcroft and his co-authors, now famous as summarising exponents of the field, have used the term not only to promote recognition “of the fact that most of the world has been affected to some degree by nineteenth century European imperialism” but also to provoke an “understanding of the continuing effects of colonial and neo-colonial power” (Ashcroft *et al*, *Key Concepts* 1).

As Timothy Brennan argues,

[c]olonisation was carried out either for purposes of settlement or for economic exploitation; it was largely conducted in terms of a confrontation between the ‘White’ and ‘Dark’ races; it often involves direct military occupation, and the setting up of alternative cultural institutions for the purpose of creating a native caste that shared the same culture as those in the home country. (136)

Postcolonial studies aim to undo this process. There are obvious similarities apparent in the histories and literatures of those nation-states now considered to be 'postcolonial.' These may result from similar experiences of colonisations or ongoing patterns of domination by extra-national powers. The colonial enterprise involved the forced subjugation of Indigenous inhabitants (Brennan 134), usually in the name of acquiring new land for settlement or expansion (Brennan 135). Other motivating factors included the opportunity to acquire cheap labour, create new markets, or find locations for the expulsion of unruly or dissident sectors of society. Still other colonies were established as a place to flee persecution (Brennan 135). Whatever the primary motivation, the methods of subjugation were strikingly similar, and involved concerted attempts to change Indigenous ideas and values in favour of European Christian ones through the establishment of education systems, the banning of Indigenous languages, customs and spirituality, all in the name of transforming the "[l]ocal population into a 'familiar' one" (Brennan 135).

Thomas King, Michael Dodson, and Ian Anderson suggest that many of the practices associated with postcolonial studies have also been suspect.¹⁸ It is now commonplace to reflect on the dangers of producing native informants in order to justify postcolonial readings.¹⁹ There is an additional irony in postcolonial studies needing to use the recorded observations of colonialists and anthropologists, complicit in the practices of subjugating Aboriginal cultures and languages and relegating them to history. It may be that any scholarly reading of the "experience" of the "aborigine" essentialises Indigeneity, but it may yet offer some

¹⁸ For more detail, see Michael Dodson's and Ian Anderson's chapters in *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*, edited by Michele Grossman; and Thomas King's 1990 article "Godzilla versus Postcolonial."

¹⁹ See Gayatri Spivak's *In Other Worlds, The Post-Colonial Critic* and *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, and the many responses to these works.

insights or value, even if it is primarily as a window into the colonial mindset. The aim, here, is not to replicate the colonialist tendency to treat Indigenous literary texts in a patronising manner or as exotic anthropological studies, but rather to use postcolonial literary frameworks to analyse the texts in light of their important position in literature and history, as pieces written by people who have been directly affected by colonialism, and who are concerned with helping the next generation explore what it means to identify as Indigenous in the late twentieth century and beyond.

Common dynamics of colonialist/imperialist control of peoples and cultures have to be set against the different situations of Second, Third and Fourth World communities. King goes so far as to suggest that the term “postcolonial” may apply to Canadian literature, but not to Native literature within it, and suggests the alternative terms “tribal,” “interfusional,” “polemical” and “associational” to describe Native writing. Tribal literature is limited to a particular tribe’s place, people and context; interfusional is the term he uses to describe the blending of oral and written literature; polemical literature is that which has been written in a language of a colonising force but which “concerns itself with the clash of Native and non-Native cultures or with the championing of Native values over non-Native values” (King, *Godzilla* 13). Associational literature, according to King’s definition,

is the body of literature which has been created, for the most part, by contemporary Native writers ... allowing the reader to associate with that world without being encouraged to feel a part of it. It does not pander to non-Native expectations concerning the glamour and/or horror of Native life. (King, *Godzilla* 14).

Certainly these terms are a useful way of differentiating literary works and of limiting essentialising practices, but the work of neither Ipellie nor Watson fits neatly into these categories. Their work is polemical, with moments that seem to

invoke oral literatures, but would largely fall under the rubric of associational literature. Ian Anderson makes the important point that,

even though some Indigenous writers have used tools made available by postcolonial literary theory, it would be a mistake to assume that Indigenous critical writing and postcolonial analysis are one and the same thing. (Anderson, *Blacklines* Intro 23)

Anderson argues that “colonial ways of knowing” continue to be reproduced in contemporary discourse, and thus reproduce dynamics of colonial power (Anderson 24). He argues that this idea had not yet “penetrated mainstream postcolonial theory” at the time of the publication of *Blacklines* (2003). Anderson and his fellow contributors to *Blacklines* further suggest that “Aboriginality” remains a “distant” concept for most Australians (Langton 91) and is a concept which cannot and should not become “fixed” (Dodson 39). Mudrooroo, in advancing his concept of “maban reality” writing, does so as an alternative to Indigenous literature being fixed into social protest realism and life writing modes. Dodson argues that the attempt to project a definition of Aboriginality onto an individual is a “violation of the right to self-determination and the right of peoples to establish their own identity” (Dodson 39). Arguably, layering the term “postcolonial” over an Indigenous author’s work could also be read in this way. It would perhaps be prudent to note here, then, that both Ipellie and Watson clearly and proudly identify their own respective Native and Aboriginal identities, and to note that the application of postcolonial reading strategies to their texts, is only one of a number of intersecting readings undertaken in this thesis. The framework as formulated in *The Empire Writes Back* is still a useful one when used in concert with diaspora and Indigenous studies to analyse the work of Alootook Ipellie, an Inuk writer whose 1993 collection *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* utilises the appropriated language of English, yet abrogates certain categories of Imperial culture, writing in such a way as to undermine the accepted meanings of words and symbols, and also that of Sam Watson, whose literary

shamans appropriate aspects of the colonising culture in an attempt to eradicate the intruders. Indeed, the greatest warrior against the white 'migloo' in Watson's 1990 novel *The Kadaitcha Sung* has gained his powers, in part, through biological and cultural links passed on through his mother's European Druidic ancestry (Watson 228).

Just as literature was central to the process of colonisation (Ashcroft *et al*, *Empire* 3), so too is postcolonial literature, at its core, political. As Brydon and Tiffin acknowledge, "reading and writing about reading are themselves engaged acts" (Brydon and Tiffin 11). Each writer, and each reader of the texts created, will bring his or her own position to the text. In using some of the features listed above, and in using the trope of the shapeshifter, writers such as Ipellie and Watson are able to make their audience question the colonising influence and raise an awareness of a plurality of cultures. A non-Indigenous reader may feel quite alienated from the events of the text in the first instance, but can become aware of powerful messages about Indigenous agency if he or she becomes engaged in the text and, by extension, the culture it represents.

One of the strengths of postcolonial studies has been its unpacking of the discursive power of colonial writing. Colonial literature did not recognise the agency of the Indigenous inhabitants, just as dictionary definitions of the term "colonial" fail to mention their very existence (see Loomba 1). Histories of resistance were not recognised. Instead, the predominant literature was a kind of pioneer or explorer mythology, centring on the feats of the white settlers in exploring new lands, exploiting what they had to offer and "helping" and/or "civilising" the native inhabitants (see Childs and Williams 26). But as Brydon and Tiffin have pointed out,

[e]xplorers never found anything Aboriginal peoples had not already known of. Indeed most expeditions depended on Aboriginal guides (voluntary or coerced) for supplies of food and water and other eco-geological knowledges without which such 'explorations' would inevitably have foundered. (46)

In short, knowledge held by Indigenous people was used in the colonisation process, but the agency of those who held the knowledge was seldom recognised.

The original inhabitants of the colonised areas were deemed by colonial powers to be "Other," an essentialising term which quickly came to be used to signify all non-European, alien, and by extension negative aspects of Indigenous culture. In colonial cultures, "Race" or "Otherness" became a useful Manichean yardstick; Western was good, Indigenous bad, in an oft-used extension of the

binary system of thought that paints the world as split between good and evil [whose] roots go back to the religion of Mani (third century, Common Era), which viewed the creators of the world, God and the Devil, still fighting it out. (Gibson 6)

In this context, the destruction of Indigenous cultures and indeed, nations, was seen by many people as a worthwhile and moral enterprise. The Indigenous nations were viewed as inferior "races," even though, as Gates points out, the term "race" is both a metaphor and a misnomer in common usage—for "race" should refer to a species, that is, the human race, rather than cultural groupings within that frame (Gates 4). According to JanMohamed, the dominant ideologies of the colonial period are reflected in the literature of the time; the colonies were on the borders of civilisation, a world "perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable, and ultimately, evil" (JanMohamed in Gates 83). He argues that it is precisely because of the arbitrary (and ultimately incorrect) use of the term that "race" becomes the ultimate trope of difference (in Gates 4-5). In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha points out that arguments about race continued beyond the initial stages of colonial power, eventually setting up binary oppositions between "good" natives, who conformed to Western cultural influences, and "bad" natives who did not (Bhabha *Location* 130-1).

According to Bhabha, key features of postcolonial writing include mimicry and mockery, features which are clearly present in the texts selected for this thesis. His ideas about a “splitting ... that is less than one and double” (Bhabha *Signs* 177) are exemplified by the cultural fusion evident in the Indigenous fictions studied here. Despite being “minority” writers, and thus being, in the eyes of the academy, “less than one” or of the margin, these writers are also drawing on knowledge gained from another type of society and culture, and thus “doubling” the space which their works occupy.

For postcolonial writers and readers, literature engaging with decolonisation necessarily involves the establishment of a space “between” colonial binary oppositions of black and white, civilised and savage, pure- and mixed-blood, good and bad. Bhabha has characterised this strategic reversal of discrimination “hybridity” and explains its influence as a

sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities ... Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. (Bhabha, *Signs* 173)

In recent years the problematic nature of postcolonial studies and hybridity studies has become increasingly clear. The term “hybridity” has been critiqued by a number of Indigenous critics including Michael Dodson and Ian Anderson. Both note in the 2003 collection *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians* that they find the term offensive, because it evokes a history of biological engineering and social Darwinism (Anderson 51; Dodson 28). As Mudrooroo argues in *The Indigenous Literature of Australia: Milli Milli Wangka*:

hybridity in regard to culture is a term coined by postcolonial academics to understand or rather talk about such things as contemporary Indigenous culture. It rests on the belief that there can be such a thing as pure culture uncontested by outside sources. 'Culture' in this context seems to arise spontaneously in an isolated community then exists almost as an artefact until it is contaminated by outside influences and thus becomes hybridised. This is a dubious proposition (Mudrooroo, *Indigenous* 108).

Michael Dodson deems the term to be "offensive," since it invokes a colonial "obsession with the distinctions between the offensively named 'full bloods' and 'hybrids,' or 'real' and 'inauthentic' Aborigines" (Dodson *Blacklines* 28).

It should be noted that in examining the work of Ipellie and Watson, I am not labelling the authors as 'hybrid,' but rather, that when I invoke the term "hybridity" I am referring to the bicultural influences within their work, strategically using Bhabha's definition and his suggestion that mimicry, mockery, and doubling are features common to a number of these bicultural texts. I accept that the term remains problematic, however, especially in light of Dodson's persuasive argument that most so-called "hybrid" representations could be more properly characterised as contemporary Aboriginal representations:

Alongside the colonial discourses in Australia, we have always had our own Aboriginal discourses in which we have continued to create our own representations, and to re-create identities which escaped the policing of our authorised versions. They are Aboriginalities that arise from our experiences of ourselves and our communities. They draw creatively from the past, including the experiences of colonisation and false representation. But they are embedded in our entire history, a history which goes back a long time before colonisation was even an issue. Those Aboriginalities have been, and continue to be, a private source of spiritual sustenance in the face of others' attempts to control us. (Dodson, *Black Lines* 38-9)

This assertion is particularly applicable to the texts discussed in this thesis, which depict Indigenous experiences and identities which have clearly been influenced by the colonising cultures. If we view Ipellie and Watson through a lens of the "Indigenous diasporic" we can see how they fulfil many of the ideals of both

Indigenous and postcolonial critics while also expressing the disturbing complexities of colonised experience.

Diaspora Studies

Whilst acknowledging the problematic nature of the terms “postcolonial” and “hybridity,” as well as a number of the strategies that have traditionally been used in its application, the texts studied here still benefit from analysis under the postcolonial rubric in that they deal with a clash of cultures and spiritualities after colonial contact. They demonstrate syncretism as new generations are raised with both white and Indigenous belief systems; and that they use mimicry, mockery, and magic realism in order to convey the difficulties of living “between” cultures.

It might be claimed that both Indigenous and postcolonial critics look for a utopian rootedness of belonging that is largely governed by the space of the nation. But as Ipellie and Watson demonstrate in and through the “border crossings” of their fiction, this quest operates always with unsettled movements in time and space. To better appreciate the dynamics of “Fourth World” shamanic writing, then, it would seem appropriate to combine postcolonial and Indigenous critical approaches with insights from diaspora studies.

Mary Louise Pratt, in her 1992 text *Imperial Eyes*, argued for renaming the area of colonial contact as ‘the contact zone,’ emphasising the need to treat the relationships between,

colonizers and colonized, or travellers and ‘travelees,’ not in terms of separateness and apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (Pratt 7)

Pratt defines the contact zone as social spaces where “disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (Pratt 4). Perhaps the answer to the now apparent limitations of postcolonial studies, then, lies not in an semiotic argument over terminology, but in looking at the ways in which this field overlaps with others.

Diana Brydon in her article “The Politics of Postcoloniality” argues for the need to continue to challenge our ways of thinking, and argues for “critics, from all sides of the political spectrum, [to work to] create the conditions under which genuine dialogue might begin” (12). The works of the two chosen authors, like the characters depicted within them, operate in liminal spaces. It has proven impossible to isolate one methodological framework for this study, for the texts share contact zones in fields as diverse as postcolonial studies, Indigenous literature, trauma studies, diaspora studies, queer theory and the Gothic. By creating a “dialogue” between these different methodologies one can begin to examine the complexities of works such as Ipellie’s and Watson’s, which are politically valent precisely because of the ways in which they cross generic as well as cultural borders.

Pratt’s focus on transculturation and interaction applies to Indigenous and non-Indigenous interactions in colonial and postcolonial times, and to diasporic or migrant writing. This suggests that there is a ‘social space’ wherein the Indigenous and the diasporic interact. Although at first glance diasporic identity may seem to be the antithesis of Indigeneity, which stresses “continuity of

habitation, aboriginality, and often a 'natural' connection to the land" (Clifford 252), the dispersal from tribal lands to unfamiliar places and the creation of networks of dispossessed peoples, is, by definition, diasporic (253). Perhaps the most disturbing assimilative tool used in invader/settler colonies was the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families and familial spaces. Both Canada and Australia, like many other postcolonial nations, are currently dealing with the political ramifications of these histories. This process not only removed children from their own family groupings, but also forced them into artificially essentialised "Aboriginal" communities of people of divergent Indigenous nations. In effect, colonialism produced an Indigenous diaspora. Thus applying diaspora theory to these Indigenous writers is a useful critical tactic when interpreting their work, which often deals with the clash of cultures and the difficulties of occupying spaces "between."

As Robin Cohen argues in *Global Diasporas*, the postcolonial experience in Canada and Australia emerged from the British imperial diaspora (74). Literary diaspora studies first emerged from early Commonwealth or postcolonial literatures frameworks. Postcolonial studies necessarily has contact zones with other areas of theory, including postmodernism, poststructuralism, feminism and Marxist ideological criticism (Ashcroft *et al*, *Empire* 153), and in the case of Ipellie and Watson, their shared history of transplantation, alienation and transculturation also meets the criteria for diaspora studies.

William Safran, one of the pioneers of diaspora studies, has outlined six criteria for a diasporic community: that the diasporans were displaced from their original location to two or more peripheral regions; that they retain a collective memory; that they feel partly isolated and insulated from their host community; that they

regard their ancestral home as their 'true' home or country and a place to which they, or their descendants would like to return; that they are committed to the maintenance and restoration of their homeland; and finally, that they continue to relate personally or vicariously to their homeland (Safran 83). Whilst Safran was largely concerned with delineating the field, others such as Robin Cohen have adopted a more pluralist view (Chariandy 7).

David Chariandy argues convincingly that postcolonial diasporic discourse is "something self-consciously 'figurative' or 'metaphorical'" and is thus a "special agent for social change" (Chariandy 8). As with the term "postcolonial," there are a number of questions which have been raised over the definition of "diaspora," including whether certain ethnic groups are automatically diasporic; what differences generational changes make on the imagining of diaspora; whether an extant culture must have been developed independently before dispersal or whether it can develop retrospectively; whether the dispersal has to be caused by traumatic exile, or can be voluntary; and whether the desire to return to a homeland is a mandatory feature and, if so, must this be physical, or can it be symbolic? (Chariandy 8). Chariandy notes that,

[i]n the past fifteen years, 'Diaspora' has emerged as a highly favoured term among scholars whom we might associate with contemporary postcolonial studies; and while there exists within the nebulous field of postcolonial studies no simple agreement on what Diaspora is or does, scholars such as Paul Gilroy, Floya Anthias, Stuart Hall, Carole Boyce Davies, Rey Chow, Smaro Kamboureli, Diana Brydon, and Rinaldo Walcott all seem to share these hopes: that Diaspora studies will help foreground the cultural practices of forcefully exiled and voluntarily migrant peoples; that Diaspora studies will help challenge certain calcified assumptions about ethnic, racial, and, above all, national belonging; and that Diaspora studies will help forge new links between emergent critical methodologies and contemporary social justice movements. (Chariandy 1)

Government policies of forced removal and location were applied to Indigenous peoples in both Canada and Australia. Consequently, many Indigenous groups within these countries have problematic relationships in terms of national

belonging; certainly there have been concerted social justice movements in both nations with regard to their relationships with the Indigenous populations. The impacts of these policies are explored in the dislocated characters who populate Ipellie's and Watson's works.

It is apparent that the features which Safran originally identified as being 'diasporic'—in terms of a collective memory, insulation from the broader community, a desire to return to country and a commitment to that return—also apply to Indigenous people who have been forcibly removed from their traditional lands. Fred Riggs concurs that "ethno-national" or internal migration does occur:

Ethnonational Diasporas often settle within the state where their homeland is located—Indigenous Americans in the US, Chechens in Russia, Scots in the UK, aboriginals in Australia, Maories [sic] in New Zealand, etc. Being in Diaspora, therefore, does not require crossing state boundaries for many ethnonations. (Riggs 5)

This thesis builds on Riggs' assertion, as well as on the work of Noelene Brasche, whose unpublished doctoral thesis *Leaving Country without Leaving the Country*, argues that Indigenous diasporas do exist and examines the Indigenous diaspora which was created on and around the Cherbourg mission in South Eastern Queensland—an important site in Sam Watson's novel—throughout the twentieth century. Brasche argues convincingly that William Safran's key identifying features of diaspora are evident in the policies and impacts of the forced dispersal of Indigenous peoples from their homelands as a consequence of colonialist practices. This thesis focusses on two authors whose lives and works exemplify the Indigenous diasporic experience, and who both use the figure of the shaman as a trope to examine this complex cultural phenomenon. As figures able to exist in two environments, and mediators with trickster tendencies, the shaman-characters in the texts are posited as useful symbols for

relaying the complexities of being Indigenous people within the invader/settler colonies of Canada and Australia.

In both nations, Indigenous peoples were removed from their traditional lands and housed in settlements away from the rest of the population. According to Brasche, the forced displacements of Indigenous peoples clearly

infringed traditional boundaries ... Territorial or national groups who previously had little or nothing in common now shared experiences of dispersal and loss of sovereignty, as well as physical displacement from traditional country. (Brasche 49)

Diaspora theory, however, has been applied to Indigenous writing only in the last few years. A common perception remains within mainstream Australia that “Aboriginal” people have remained on “Australian soil” and therefore have not been displaced. As Sonia Kurtzer argues, however, the very term “Aboriginal” is a product of the diasporic function of colonialism:

[t]he concept of Aboriginality did not even exist before the coming of the European. Rather, Indigenous Australians identified themselves and others according to kinship groups, skin groups, or on the basis of their relationship to totems, the Dreaming or particular tracts of land ... it has been the oppressor who has sought to define Aboriginality. (Kurtzer 182)

Even recent practices by Indigenous peoples to label themselves according to regions bear traces of colonial influence. The term “Murri,” for example, used to identify Indigenous people from Central and Southern Queensland and the north of New South Wales, has its roots in colonial policies of forced relocation and displacement. The term is said to have originated in the diaspora space of the Cherbourg (formerly Barambah) Aboriginal Reserve in South-Eastern Queensland (Brasche 8 and 37; Horton 738). From 1905,²⁰ Indigenous

²⁰The mission began at the “Blacks’ Flat” site in the Durundur/Woodford region of Queensland as “a philanthropic effort” of The Salvation Army (Brasche) but the Queensland Government took control in 1905, when the mission was moved to the present Barambah site. It was renamed Cherbourg in 1931. In March of 2005, ABC-TV’s

Australians from forty-four different language groups were incarcerated on this reserve, leading to the formation of a common, regional identity through shared circumstance. Gerard Guthrie completed fieldwork in the area in the early 1970s, and noted Cherbourg was created by “bringing together Aborigines from the remnants of a number of large tribes in Southern Queensland into a quite artificial grouping” (qtd in Brasche 197). In fact, Wiradjuri writer and academic Anita Heiss has stated that the “one thing the Murris [on Cherbourg] had in common was poverty” (Heiss 1). The Cherbourg site plays an important role in Watson’s novel *The Kadaitcha Sung*, and its history will be examined in Chapter Five.

Stuart Hall has noted that diaspora identities “are those who are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (S. Hall 120). The transformative nature of the Australian Indigenous diaspora has also been explored by Indigenous elder Michael Dodson, who notes that “Aboriginalities of today are regenerations and transformations of the spirit of the past ... we include our precolonial practices, our oppression and our political struggles” (Dodson 40). Alterations of Indigenous cultural practices should not be viewed as measures of ‘authenticity’ or otherwise, but as a function of contemporary Indigenous diaspora.

Diaspora is fundamentally concerned with complex notions of home, belonging and exile. Victor Ramraj has also argued that diasporans are “caught psychologically between two worlds” (216), a description which undoubtedly applies to the bicultural spirituality evident in the characters created by Ipellie and Watson. Although neither author has migrated in the traditional sense, the forced removal

Message Stick chronicled the centenary of Cherbourg, suggesting that its inhabitants continue to mark the mission’s start date as 1905.

of their peoples at the hands of colonial regimes can be understood in the context of diaspora theory. Within the Indigenous context, when people were forcibly removed from their familial locations they crossed traditional borders, even whilst remaining within the confines of the modern nation-state. Colonialism, in effect, created an Indigenous diaspora. It seems particularly, fitting, then, to focus on works which use shapeshifters to negotiate borders in works which themselves do not fit neatly into compartmentalised theories, since shapeshifters are known for their border-crossing abilities.

Kim Matthews suggests that all identities are negotiated and deterritorialised; for any individual, “home” may be the place of origin, the place of residence, or the place where one has lived the longest period of time (Matthews 68-9). She further argues that identity construction

is derived from the actions of social agents as they negotiate the cultures of the past with those of the present and indeed of an imagined community. Identity formation is fraught with barriers, as any given identity is constantly acting upon culture and vice versa. (71-2)

Issues surrounding home and identity are as pertinent to Indigenous people removed from their families and familial settings as they are to people who have crossed national borders. It is apparent that two conflicting cultures influence the daily lives of these people, causing issues of identity and belonging to remain contentious.

Avtar Brah investigates the interrelationship of Indigeneity and diaspora in her notion of diaspora space, which she defines as the

intersectionality of Diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes. It addresses the global condition of culture, economics and politics as a site of ‘migrancy’ and ‘travel’ which seriously problematizes the subject position of the ‘native’ ... Diaspora space as a conceptual category is ‘inhabited’ not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as Indigenous. In other words, the concept of Diaspora space (as

opposed to that of Diaspora) includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put.' (Brah 181)

Brah's concept of a 'diaspora space' can usefully be applied to understanding the ways in which Ipellie and Watson interrogate notions of home and homelessness, as well as the aforementioned political, cultural and psychic processes. I will be examining the intersection of diaspora space and Indigenous studies, and the close analysis of the texts in later chapters will explore how the selected texts demonstrate the concerns and features of Indigenous diasporic literature.

Those who have "stayed put," to use Brah's phrase, (181) have experienced a sense of homelessness under colonial regimes, which parallels the dislocation of those who have migrated. As Ceridwen Spark has noted, recent Indigenous publications in Australia have

employed the concept of home to great effect. Juxtaposed with displacement and loss, it stands as a site of longing, as evidenced in the Government-commissioned report on the stolen generations, *Bringing Them Home*. (Spark S14)

The writers whose work is examined in this thesis are concerned with these themes of displacement and loss, and their personal histories and art reflect their peoples' shared history of entanglement and dispossession through colonialism. Both writers explore these notions through shamans, powerful figures who have traditionally inhabited a space "in-between."

Clearly, the colonialist practices of separation and interference had far-reaching effects on both the Inuit and Indigenous Australians. For Andrew and Nigel Dawson, however, who argue in *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*, that "[h]ome is the place where one knows oneself best" (9) there is an unexpected positive outcome of such practices. Through these

transcultural experiences, individuals come to achieve a stronger sense of belonging, such as that reflected in Ipellie's statement that

my mind, my psyche, is at home up in the Arctic, and it will always be that way. And I'm thinking now that I know one day I'll go back to my real home, sometime in the future. (McMahon-Coleman, *Interview* 79)

Rapport and Dawson argue that exile can be a resource as it provides a vantage point from which to learn about oneself (9). For individuals such as Ipellie and Watson whose home, culture and very identity have been under threat from an outside force, these can no longer be taken for granted. The Inuit, who have experienced unprecedented cultural upheaval as a result of their rapid and recent colonisation, have such a strong sense of cultural identity that community leaders—many of whom, including Ipellie, had been removed from their communities as children—lobbied for the formal establishment of a homeland within the borders of Canada. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or national Inuit organisation, was largely responsible for this political movement. Similar lobbying has also seen the establishment of Inuktitut educational materials and television broadcasts. These are used to ensure the survival of Inuktitut in the face of the all-pervasive languages of the colonisers. In these instances, Inuit who had never left the Arctic have worked together with the Indigenous diasporans in order to create a better outcome for all members of the community.

In an Australian context, disparate Indigenous groups have become involved in pan-Aboriginal political movements in order to lobby for land and civil rights. Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs argue that ethnicity can be seen as such a positive force that white Australians resent their own lack of ethnic identity, and in particular that

Aboriginal people put their ethnicity to use as a primary social category ... Aboriginal people are a group of people who certainly have much less than others (less opportunities, worse health etc.) but who also have what those others do not: their 'Aboriginality.' (Gelder and Jacobs 98)

This sense of “Aboriginality as home” supports the argument of Rapport and Dawson that the diasporic experience can create a stronger sense of belonging or identity. The everyday practice of Indigenous Australians using familial greetings and honorifics, regardless of their original familial location, supports this idea that dislocation and dispossession has created a commonality of experience.²¹

As Noelene Brasche explains, the forging of a pan-Aboriginal identity was necessitated by colonial practices:

[I]ike the Inuit, Aboriginal Australians were displaced from their traditional lands, often onto missions, reserves or peripheral camps. These dispersals frequently forced them onto land with which they did not culturally identify and into the country of Indigenous host nations with whom negotiation of language use, custom, and authority, became essential for any form of co-existence or survival. (23)

She further suggests that the existence of such “an adaptive form of social organisation” is one of the criteria in Robin Cohen’s definition of a diaspora (Brasche 23; see Cohen xii). Nonetheless, the adaptation to new areas or “country” has been a key difficulty for displaced Indigenous Australians and a significant issue in Aboriginal literature. Alexis Wright’s description of an Aboriginal character, Maudie, in her 1997 novel *Plains of Promise*, articulates the new kinds of kinship which have been established through forced displacement, and the fraught process of identity reconstruction of which Matthews writes:

Maudie never made law status ... because of her preferred affiliation with her own country, to which she had been brought as a child, not to this topsy-turvy world where, to establish harmony, everyone had adopted local kinship status ... People believed that even though she lived in exile, she had never left her own country in her mind. (Wright 40)

In a similar vein, Sam Watson noted in a 1995 interview that:

²¹ Brasche and Wright both allude to this idea in the quotations which follow, and I have also witnessed this in practice, during my work in the Aboriginal Education and Training Unit, Illawarra Institute of TAFE (Bomaderry Campus).

[y]ou can take aboriginal people out of the land but you can't take the land out of aboriginal people. So regardless of where we live and what we do, we always have that relation to our spiritual side. (in Dean 8)

Both of these examples suggest that a sense of 'place' is internalised as a significant part of Indigenous identity.

Notions of place and country are particularly strong in Aboriginal communities, but Indigenous nations remain largely unrecognised by mainstream Australian society. This forges an affinity between different cultural groupings, yet, as Gelder and Jacobs argue, "ethnicity may not be quite so coherent as the modern category 'Aboriginal people' would suggest" (Gelder and Jacobs 101). As Brasche points out, the history of Indigenous Australians in the era after white colonisation is one of "multiple intra-national Diasporas which conforms to traditional paradigms while retaining its own uniqueness" (Brasche ix). This sense of a distinct cultural identity and shared understanding, regardless of location, are the key features which signify an Indigenous diaspora.

The key features of Indigenous diasporic Literature, then, are that they are created by and deal with Indigenous people who have been removed from their traditional lands by the forces of colonialism. Like Brah's concept of diaspora space, Indigenous diaspora deals with areas of intersection, rather than replicating binary oppositions, and thus goes some way towards answering Houston A. Baker Jr's question, "how does one escape, or explode ... [the] simplistic duality?" (Baker in Gates 389) of writings which deal with the concept of "race."

Indigenous diasporic literature typically centres around an exploration of borders and boundaries, areas which are both fundamental to diaspora studies and prevalent in the works of postcolonial scholars. In particular, the works examined

here deal with the traversing of the borders between dreams and reality, the natural and the supernatural, through shamanic trickster figures. Shamans are singularly uninhibited by borders, with an ability to cross corporeal boundaries by shapeshifting, to subvert the boundaries of science in their abilities to manipulate their physical bodies, and in their ability to co-exist in both the realms of the gods and of humans. Their fluidity and ability to slide between worlds sets up an opposition to the Manichean aesthetics of colonial literature, and insists on the creation of something new and more powerful, rather than attempting to recreate pre-colonial culture or to completely accept the imported one. It confronts colonial amnesia regarding the existence of Indigenous inhabitants or of the history of cultural interference in subsequent years.

By claiming this ability to harness supernatural powers as a means of negotiating the spaces between worlds, the texts examined here deal with notions of the “uncanny,” and the use of irony and humour as means of literary subversion. Indeed, Linda Hutcheon has identified the use of irony as being one of the defining features of postcolonial studies, since the use of a double or split discourse offers a unique opportunity to “subvert from within” (Hutcheon 133), as exemplified by the actions and speech of the shamanic features examined here. As Hutcheon suggests, irony becomes “a popular rhetorical strategy for working within existing discourses and contesting them at the same time” (Hutcheon 133). The very concept of Indigenous diaspora is imbued with irony, since nationwide anti-colonial movements are based on the national borders which colonialism created (Gibson 177-8). Rupture and dislocation are also significant textual strategies in these authors’ works. Certain places—in these texts, Uluru and the Arctic—are imbued with spiritual significance drawn from traditional Indigenous belief systems in what may, at first, be read by some as “nativism.” The powers

drawn from these spaces, however, are harnessed by contemporary bicultural shamanic characters with similar access to powers and belief systems from the colonising cultures.

Shamanism

The Inuit shaman figure was sometimes examined by European anthropologists seeking information about “native” cultures. Interest in shamanism was also a focus of the 1970s “New Age” counterculture, and this kind of appropriation of Indigenous belief systems has been widely denounced by numerous Indigenous critics.²² From the early 1990s, there has been a renewed interest in Indigenous cultures, as exemplified by the United Nations’ designation of 1993 as the International Year of Indigenous Peoples.

In recent times, however, the figure of the shaman has been reclaimed by Indigenous peoples as a symbol of cultural strength. Celebrations of Indigenous knowledge are once again of interest to non-Indigenous audiences as evidenced by the wide-spread popularity of Zacharias Kunuk’s award-winning film, *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* in Canada in 2001, and Rolf de Heer’s and Peter Djiggirr’s *Ten Canoes* in Australia in 2006. Both films were critically acclaimed at an international level and experienced unprecedented popularity despite being filmed in Indigenous languages, with English-speaking audiences only accommodated through the use of subtitles.

Atanarjuat was the first feature film ever released in Inuktitut and is a reworking of a traditional Inuit tale wherein Kunuk has invested his characters with modern

²² See, for example, Leslie Marmon Silko (1978), Geary Hobson (1978), Wendy Rose (1992).

psychological motivations. *Atanarjuat* (Natar Ungalaaq) breaks a taboo when he marries Atuat (Sylvia Ivalu), who was betrothed to Oki (Peter Henry Arnatsiaq). Oki seeks revenge and *Atanarjuat* flees across the ice. He is naked when surprised by an enraged Oki, and the inclusion of nudity, scatology and frank sexuality in the film is again indicative of the features of traditional Inuit storytelling, with no concessions allowed for the broader, non-Inuk audience. *Atanarjuat* is finally saved by the intervention of a shaman to whom he is related, and Oki and his family are banished. The film proved to have an unexpectedly broad audience, and won the 2001 Palme D'Or at Cannes.

Perhaps more important than the film's critical acclaim, however, was its role in restoring traditional skills to the Inuit. The film was the result of a long collaborative process from the members of Isuma Productions, an all-Inuit media company. In *Atanarjuat*, the shaman became a figure of cultural renewal both on and off the screen. Set at the dawn of the first millennium, forgotten skills were rehabilitated in order to create authentic clothing, tools and so on. Since the inception of Isuma in 1990, this sense of recovering and protecting Inuit culture has been a key feature of the company's *modus operandi*. To this end, Inuit are involved at all levels of production of Isuma's films. The skills and knowledge gained are then passed on to the younger generation. As with Ipellie's work, the film was of critical importance in bringing knowledge of the Inuit culture, and specifically the shaman's role within that culture, to a broader audience.

Similarly, *Ten Canoes* also gave a local community an opportunity to regain lost skills, including that of canoe building. It was the first Australian feature film to be recorded solely in an Aboriginal language, and, as with *Atanarjuat*, it does contain frank sexual and scatological references. In *Ten Canoes*, the shaman or

sorcerer is represented as being extraordinarily powerful, a healer and the person most likely to rid the area of strangers and resolve conflict. This makes him a powerful metaphorical figure in terms of the broader historical backdrop of colonisation in Australia.

Shamanic powers are key to the development of the film's plot, and in this film, as in *Atanarjuat*, much of the drama comes from the lust of the central character, Dayindi (played by Jamie Gulpilil) for his brother's beautiful young and third wife. Dayindi's brother tells him the story of their ancestor, Yeeralparil—also played by Jamie Gulpilil—and the dire consequences of his carnal desire for a sister-in-law. Both stories are played out on screen, with the more recent tale being shot in black and white, reflecting the photographs by anthropologist Donald Thompson, whose work was an inspiration for the film, and the ancestral tale which it frames being shot in colour. This is an ironic reversal of the more common cinematic technique of showing flashbacks in black and white and contemporary events in colour. The double narrative again suggests the uncanny as viewers are moved between two culturally unfamiliar tales in noticeably different times. *Ten Canoes* won the 2006 Jury prize at Cannes.

In each of these films, the shaman weaves magic through a masterful command of language and traditional practices; he or she is able to use songs, poetry and bragging to teach and to express him or herself effectively. Shamans are also usually mediators, and in the postcolonial context, is a figure who is able to mediate two conflicting cultures. Ipellie defines Inuit shamans more simply as members of "certain families all over the Arctic that keep the power of their forebears" (Kennedy, *Voice* 162), and notes that he was in line to be one, until the family converted to Christianity (McMahon-Coleman, *ACS* 86. See Appendix A 289).

Bragging and competitiveness are considered part of normal interaction in Inuit society, and would be best exemplified by shamans because of the unique nature of their experiences and powers. The shaman's voice was one which, traditionally, could not be silenced. Ipellie's fictional narrator is no exception, boasting on numerous occasions of his fame and prowess as a noted shaman, and outlining his special relationships with figures of Euro-Canadian iconography. This is in stark contrast to Ipellie, who as a youth suffered from chronic shyness, and perhaps provides further insight into Ipellie's decision to use the figure of the shaman in order to represent the conflicting emotions of exile and belonging that have been typical of postcolonial Inuit experiences.

Tricksters have supernatural powers but suffer from human failings. The shaman in Inuit culture fulfils this role. Owing to the frequency of song competitions between shamans, they are fiercely competitive, and ego is often the source of their downfall. The role of the polar bear spirit, or *tornassuk*, is also significant. The powers attributed to the polar bear are such, in fact, that they have long baffled Christian missionaries. Daniel Merkur records in *Powers Which We Do Not Know: The Gods and Spirits of the Inuit*, that Greenlandic Inuit told missionaries in 1721 that Tornassuk was the deity they felt most closely resembled the Christian God. He goes on to suggest that they are drawing a comparison between the death and resurrection of Christ, and the shaman's experiences of death and revival under Tornassuk (Merkur 227). Danish missionaries equated Tornassuk with the devil, since he obviously had great powers, yet was not the God of Christianity (Merkur 227). The Kadaitcha men in Watson's novel are similarly ambiguous in their ability to use their powers for

good or evil. Tommy, in particular, is a flawed individual who is often sidetracked by mortal feelings of anger and desire, at the expense of supernatural quest.

Shamanism provides a means of reworking the binaries of good and evil created through the evangelical Christian colonisation process. Although in some instances the Christian religion was positively embraced by Indigenous peoples, generally, the Christian religion does not allow for co-existence of another belief system. Consequently the Manichean aesthetic of Christian as “good” and pagan or polytheistic as “bad” was accepted as an article of faith by both the colonisers and by many of the Inuit who converted to Christianity. Some younger Inuit have reversed the process, recognising that conversion was one of the key tools of the colonists. Sandra Pikujak Katsak expresses her disillusionment with Christianity in *Saqiyuq: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women*, noting that the more she learned about the process of colonisation,

the more I felt that I had to resist that Christianity. I wondered how my grandparents could believe so strongly when it is so different from the old Inuit spirits. I asked them about those old spirits, about shamans and stuff, but they wouldn't talk about those things ... I didn't want to be Christian, because I wanted to get back at the Qallunaat for saying those bad things about Inuit back then (Wachowich *et al* 243).

Yet as Alvin Austin and Jamie Scott argue in their 2005 publication, *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad*, the transition to Christianity was not absolute in many cases:

[i]n embracing Christianity, Aboriginal people did not entirely forsake connections to their heritage, land, or Indigenous cultural expressions ... This self identification is a shifting one, and not the sole reference point for the individual (Austin and Scott 101).

Jim Miller notes in *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens—A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, that this was a common experience among Indigenous peoples, claiming that “[m]any so-called Indian converts simply incorporated the

Christian god into their religion alongside many other spirits” (Miller 58). The idea of shifting boundaries and belief systems is critical to Indigenous diasporic literature and is clearly evident in the works of Ipellie and Watson.

Joseph Campbell in his early work on religion and mythologies from around the world argues that the “shamanistic crisis, when properly fostered, yields an adult not only of superior intelligence and refinement, but also of greater physical stamina and vitality of spirit than is normal to the members of his group” (Campbell 253). This would seem to present an insight into the choice of the shaman metaphor in the works of writers such as Ipellie and Watson. The dispossessed need powerful representatives to restore pride and a sense of agency in their own communities, and to attain visibility in the dominant culture. The “crisis” of colonisation has created a strength and resilience in those who have survived the process. The impact of this period of cultural upheaval on the young Alootook Ipellie will be more closely examined in the Chapter Two, and a similar biography of Sam Watson will be outlined in Chapter Five.

It is this notion of power through crisis which is interesting in the context of the political nature of Indigenous writing. Kali Tal explores the notion of ‘trauma,’ and how traumatic cultural events are reported in written texts. Although she examines this through case studies of African American race relations, the wider Black Diaspora, the experiences of Holocaust survivors and Vietnam Veterans, the key features of trauma literature are equally applicable in the context of postcolonial diaspora. Alootook Ipellie and Sam Watson are both arguably writing from the perspective of trauma survivors, as a consequence of their childhood experiences and their belonging to cultural groups who have been subjected to genocidal practices. Perhaps more obviously, the narrators of their stories—

Ipellie's unnamed shaman and Watson's hybrid Kadaitcha character, Tommy—are survivors of periods of extreme cultural upheaval and even genocide.

Tal asserts that the key goal of trauma literature is change, and that the act of writing as a means of “bearing witness” is an aggressive one, representing a “refusal to bow to outside pressure to revise or to repress experience, a decision to embrace conflict rather than conformity”(4). Certainly both authors' works demonstrate a refusal to conform or promote accepted views of history, and instead, bear witness for those whose voices were silenced in colonial history and literature.

Tal's argument that the “battle over the meaning of a traumatic experience is fought in the arena of popular discourse, popular culture, and scholarly debate” (4) perhaps offers an insight into the choices made by the authors to include readily recognisable contemporary figures in their works, including the Christian God, Superman and Brigitte Bardot in Ipellie's stories, and thinly-disguised caricatures of prominent 1970s Queensland politicians in Watson's *The Kadaitcha Sung*. Tal asserts the importance of this kind of interaction in terms of a broader sociological perspective, arguing that the “outcome of this battle shapes the rhetoric of the dominant culture and influences further political action” (4). It may also serve to explain why Ipellie creates a narrator-character who has remained in the Arctic and been allowed to practise his religion without interference, and why Watson's tale is essentially a Stolen Generations' narrative. Each author is attempting to find an acceptable—or at least, accessible—discourse in which to tell their otherwise unconventional stories.

Traditionally, the colonised voice has been characterised as stripped of power, minimalised or silenced altogether, as argued by Gayatri Spivak in her influential

essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In these texts, the warriors battling for political action and social justice in the era of post-colonisation are shamans who have the power to negotiate the space between cultures. In the creation of his shaman-narrator, Ipellie presents an Indigenous voice who has not only retained the power of his native culture, but has also held onto the iconography of the colonising Christian Europeans. Furthermore, he has access to the supernatural powers of the spirit world. Watson’s Tommy also has unmitigated access to the realm of the spiritual, and is guided by dingo and kookaburra spirits, among others. A shaman has, by definition, the ability to negotiate a path between worlds—traditionally, the world of humans and the world of nature. Within the postcolonial context, this ability to live between two worlds is applied to the experiences of Indigenous peoples living in postcolonial nations.

Shamanic characters are inherently destabilising influences. Tim Fulford notes that the figure of the tribal “ ‘conjurer’ was astonishing because it defied the limits of the physical,” and suggests that Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” was influenced by a knowledge of shamanism learned from friends who had sailed in the West Indies and the Arctic (Fulford 159-63; Johnson 84).

Stephen O. Glosecki argues in *Shamanism and Old English Poetry* that the shaman is a figure with a long history in Anglophone literature, and hence in utilising these figures in their works, Ipellie and Watson are engaging in the uncanny process of utilising traditional figures who are still somehow eerily familiar to many readers. There is a long-held European fascination with shamanistic beliefs, and key texts from the twentieth century dealt with shamanism from an anthropological perspective, including the works of John Lee

Maddox, Mircea Eliade and Ioan Lewis. Writing in 1923, Maddox defined the shaman as a “mediator between gods and humans” (Maddox 25). Despite the patronising and essentialist tone one might expect from a text of this era, Maddox does at least recognise the psychological impetus behind a belief in shamanism, noting that

[i]f it is within the range of possibility for the soul not only to absent itself from the body but also to re-enter it, as, for example, in dreams, likewise it must be possible for another spirit to enter the body, make it sick, and do it even to death. (Maddox 9)

Glosecki suggests that the boar on Beowulf’s helmet in the early epic poem is symbolic of an ancient interest in animism, which underlies all shamanism (Glosecki 53-6). He articulates the key defining features of shamanism as animism, ecstasy, therapy, initiation and assistance from spirit guides (Glosecki 11).

Eliade argues that the pre-eminent shamanic technique is an ability to create a passage “from one cosmic region to another—from earth to sky or from earth to underworld” (259). These kinds of cosmic journeys are evident in the works of Ipellie and Watson, and are clearly a useful literary tool for interrogating ways of crossing imposed social boundaries in Indigenous diaspora. These critics seem to be in agreement that shamans practise ecstatic trances in order to heal their community (Eliade 289; Glosecki 11, 15; Kottler and Carson xiii; Lewis, *Arguments* 92; Lewis, *Ecstatic* 49-53), and Lewis goes so far as to state that “[n]o clan is secure without its shaman” (Lewis, *Ecstatic* 53).

In a paper presented at the Fourth Conference of the International Society for Shamanic Research, Ioan Lewis defines a shaman as an ecstatic healer and ritual expert (Lewis, *Ecstatic* 106). He cites Shirokogoroff’s presentation of the

shaman as a “master of spirits” and his assertion that a key characteristic of a shaman is a demonstrable ability to experience ecstasy “and a half-delirious hysterical condition ‘abnormal’ in European terms” (Lewis, *Ecstatic* 107-8). This ‘abnormality’ and ability to operate in a fluid and unfixed environment can not only be read as “queer,” but also may suggest a reason for the fascination of minority writers with the trope of shamanism. Shamans are able to confidently traverse the spaces between their inherited traditions and a culture which is significantly different from their own.

Mabans or shamans are thus naturally “queer” or unstable figures who undermine norms. Theorists such as Alexander Doty and David Buchbinder argue that whilst the term ‘queer’ has often been used as a signifier of “non-heterosexual, non-traditionally gendered individuals and groups” (Buchbinder 149), ‘queerness’ as a theoretical concept is rather more elusive (Buchbinder 149). Doty argues that

[h]omosexuals as well as heterosexuals can operate or mediate from within straight cultural spaces and positions—after all, most of us grew up learning the rules of straight culture—[but] we have paid less attention to the proposition that basically heterocentrist texts can contain queer elements, and basically heterosexual, straight-identifying people can experience queer moments. And these people should be encouraged to examine and express these moments as queer ... the cultural ‘queer space’ recognizes the possibility that various and fluctuating queer positions might be occupied whenever *anyone* produces or responds to culture. (Doty 3)

In other words, as Buchbinder asserts, readers experience queer moments when “reading texts or understanding situations from a reading position which one would not normally occupy” (Buchbinder 166). Buchbinder asserts that ‘queerness’ “seeks to defy and thence to destabilise” (152), and that queer readings undermine ideological boundaries and blur the boundaries between them; they also advocate a spectrum of subject positions in relation to performances of sex, gender and sexuality. Each of these texts introduces a

protagonist who is culturally “Othered” through his Indigeneity; who is able to seek the familiar in unfamiliar environments, and who has atypical relationships with the people around him. These characters continually undermine often-accepted binaries about black and white, straight and queer, thereby forcing non-marginalised members of the reading audience into a more marginalised reading position.

In his study *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, Michael Taussig suggests that part of the ‘hysteria’ of the shaman is the experience of moving into the dangerous territory of the dead (Taussig 7). This sense of reincarnation into a more powerful, more spiritual being, confused early missionaries in the Arctic, who struggled in vain to translate traditional Inuit beliefs into Christian terminology. The conferring of supernatural powers through an experience with death is indicated in anthropological studies of the Inuit (Merkur 240), and is directly reflected in the writings of Ipellie (17-25) and Watson (*The Kadaitcha Sung*, 17-22; 162-7; 311-2). Death, like postcolonial loss or social exile, produces possibilities for resistance and access to powers not previously available. One of the consolations of the victims of history is the belief that the dead have not departed in vain. In many cases this gives rise to testimony and recovery of silenced histories as a basis for protest and claims for reparation. In some instances, as with shamanism, it rests on a conviction that the dead are not gone altogether, but can return or be contacted in uncanny encounters that destabilise the uniform ‘reality’ of dominant history and present regimes of power.

The choice of shamanism and shape shifting, then, as tropes for Indigenous writers, seems obvious; the special powers and attributes of their characters are a metaphor for both the cultures that have resisted an attempted cultural

genocide, and the authors whose voices have not been silenced by the colonial process. The shaman functions both literally and as a metaphor in the text, albeit one with different meanings in each author's interpretation. For Ipellie, the traumas of his childhood experiences with his stepfather's alcoholism, medical treatment and schooling in the South, and his lack of a stable childhood home, manifested in a form of selective mutism which he could only really counteract through his artworks, cartoons and writing. Watson, on the other hand, uses his youthful shamanic protagonist as a voice for young Indigenous Australians, and Tommy's bicultural identity and urban lifestyle counteract widely-accepted stereotypes within Australia about what a 'real' Aboriginal person is or should be.

The shaman, then, becomes a metaphor for strength and community, reflecting Watson's political beliefs which remain largely unaltered since the days when he helped establish the Australian arm of the Black Panthers in the 1970s. Ipellie and Watson, like the characters to whom they give voice, are wordsmiths. They have harnessed the discursive power of the hybrid, using the English-language literary industry to produce figures who are able to split and syncretise power from two sources: animal and human, natural and supernatural. Symbolically, they are rewriting the colonial practice of viewing the Indigene as sub-human or as doomed to death.

Taussig further argues that the presence of powerful, non-Christian religious leaders in the form of shamans provided colonisers the world over with an "Other" against which to set up their binary codes—wildness versus order, and shamanism versus Christianity. He writes,

[i]n place of order in God and steadfastness in his signifiers' signatures where the divine and the natural fuse, the domain of chance foregrounds the epistemic murk of sorcery where contradiction and ambiguity in social relations undermine his steadfastness in a weltering of signs cracking the divine and the natural apart

from one another and into images from which what Barthes called the third or obtuse meaning erupts into play. (Taussig 465-6)

The third meaning to which he refers is an “obtuse meaning [that] appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information ...” (Barthes 54-5). Here it must be noted that the obtuse meaning refers to culture, knowledge and information outside the dominant culture. For those writers outside this culture, then, harnessing the powers of the shaman and the third meaning is a political choice as well as a literary one, since it is drawing attention to a culture which colonial history has marginalised and attempted to erase.

Ipellie and Watson also seek to blur ideological boundaries and to allow multiple ways of identifying as Inuit or Aboriginal, rather than these terms being constructed as binary opposites to Euro-Canadian or Anglo-Australian settlers. Moreover, the characters they have created in the texts studied here demonstrate at times quite radical performances of masculinity. In each case, the main protagonist is a hyper-masculine figure, not bound by hegemonic Christian mores of monogamy. In Watson’s *The Kadaitcha Sung*, he has also constructed a character whose sexuality is never clearly defined; although Tommy’s cousin Boonger has a steady girlfriend to whom he is committed, and he speaks in disparaging terms about men who identify as homosexual, he seeks homosexual sex both inside and outside of prison. “Queer theory” has been defined by Wendy Pearson as the

various attempts to interrogate and bring into visibility an understanding of the world ... that takes on as its basis the assumption that queer subjects can be represented in culture and, further, that it is possible to recuperate a history of representation of sexual dissidence in culture that has been rendered invisible ... by societal insistence on the primacy of heteronormativity. (Pearson 80)

In both texts, the dominant beliefs of the colonising societies in terms of sexuality and race are often marginalised, placing readers from the mainstream into an

unfamiliar or 'queer' reading space where heteronormativity is questioned through the presentation of alternative expressions of human sexuality.

The shamanic figures in these texts share some qualities with the archetype of the trickster, another 'queer' figure of unfixed identity. Penny Petrone defines the trickster as being anti-social, a hero and a fool; at once an everyman and no-one (Petrone, *Native* 16). In some ways he²³ is the antithesis of the shaman, in that he mocks the gods. Although superior to humans by virtue of the ability to shape-shift, the trickster figure is a flawed character in that he is self-centred, impulsive, and able to be outsmarted by humans (A. Grant 25). Despite his prankster status, however, the majority of his actions are not malevolent, but rather, often prove to be beneficial to humanity.

The similarities between tricksters and shamans, then, lie in the super-human qualities available to them, namely knowledge, power and the ability to change form. It is for these reasons that they are powerful figures for marginalised writers, including those examined here.

Negotiating Borders

The texts focussed on in this project deal largely with issues of border crossing and liminality. The protagonist in each work is able to move between different worlds, just as their creators—Indigenous men in colonised nations—function within and identify with two quite different cultural paradigms. The authors and their characters share a diasporic sensibility, in that they are not quite "at home" in either of their two cultures.

²³ It should be noted that the trickster is traditionally without gender, but the usual English translation uses the pronoun "he." See Highway, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, 12.

Ideas about border slippage function at all levels of this thesis. On a structural level, the project is necessarily interdisciplinary in nature. Literature does not exist in isolation, and the creative output of these two writers, forged in the crucible of colonialism, is heavily influenced by the history and politics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The textual analysis draws on a number of intersecting methodologies including postcolonial studies, Indigenous studies, diaspora studies, shamanism, and queer theory. Indeed, both authors cross genre borders within their works and also their boundaries between artist and political activist.

Finally, on a philosophical level, there is an intellectual border transgression of sorts, in that a non-Indigenous person is applying these kinds of critical theories to the works of Indigenous authors, and that I seek to gain academic standing from doing so. I am the first to admit that this is a problematic subject position. I also believe, however, that non-Indigenous critics opting not to analyse works by Indigenous authors replicates colonialist silencing practices. In an attempt to at least partially mitigate the politics of this situation, I have interviewed and maintained correspondence with both authors, in an attempt to ensure that their messages are not overwhelmed by the voice of the academy, and that their views are not culturally misread. I am placing a certain amount of faith in Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak's assertion that those who "criticise, having earned the right to do so ... are indeed taking a risk and ... will probably be made welcome, and can hope to be judged with respect" (Spivak in Harasym 63).

In this thesis I have endeavoured to follow the advice of those scholars before me who exhorted that one must always "historicise" and "indigenise." Prem Poddar

and David Johnson argue in their preface to the 2005 volume *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Thought in English* that Fredric Jameson's injunction "‘always historicise’ reverberates like a mantra in postcolonial literary criticism" (Poddar and Johnson vi). Thus the two core texts in this thesis are prefaced by chapters which deal, in detail, with the colonial histories, biographies and works of the two authors chosen for study. The perspectives of the writers and extra-textual political issues at the time of their writing have shaped the production of their fiction.

I will initially focus on the Canadian work, with the first part of the thesis offering an analysis of Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* and some of his poetry, art, cartoons and short prose, preceded with contextual information about the colonisation of the Canadian Arctic and its people, the Inuit in Chapter One. It follows the impact of early visits by whalers, traders and European 'explorers' on the lives of the locals, but more particularly looks at the influence of Christian missionaries and the accretion of Christian symbolism into Inuit belief systems; the impact on traditional life that resulted from mainstream schooling and the removal of children from the Arctic for purposes of the same; and medical interventions which also necessitated mass and often repeated removals of Inuit to the South.

All of these processes effectively created an Inuit diaspora within Canada's national borders, and Chapter Two highlights how these colonialist practices impacted on Alootook Ipellie personally. Chapter Three contains detailed analysis of Ipellie's writings and other art, examining how the shamanic figure he favoured in his creative works negotiated this diasporic condition between two cultures, and how his own lived experiences informed his work. Throughout his career he

continued to challenge notions of containment in his life, artwork, and writing and used the diaspora space to contest accepted images of what he often termed the “humble Eskimo.” Accompanied by pen-and-ink drawings that fused images from Euro-Canadian ‘pop’ culture, traditional Inuit folklore, and Ipellie’s own dreams in a thought-provoking way, a deeper appreciation of the stories is available to those readers with knowledge of Inuit traditions. Thus the non-Inuit reader, supplied only with information from the texts of the dominant print-literary culture, is ‘marginalised’ through the interaction with the text, thus creating a reversal of the culturally-alien (and largely Christian religious), texts first proffered to Inuit by the colonisers and missionaries who introduced their literacy to the Arctic.

The second half of the thesis follows a similar process with the second author, Murri writer and activist Sam Watson, from South-Eastern Queensland in Australia. Chapter Four outlines colonialist practices within Australia, touching on universalised processes, especially in the original colony of Port Jackson (Sydney) and in Tasmania, where a great deal of historical evidence of genocidal colonialist practices has been uncovered, but focussing more specifically on the Durundur and Cherbourg reserves of South-Eastern Queensland, from whence the identifying term “Murri” originated, and where *The Kadaitcha Sung* is partially set.

In many ways, Queensland provides an ideal setting for a novel about frontier conflict in Australia, for it has been described as “Australia’s Deep North” by Eva Rask Knudsen (283). The state was also unusual in that in the Southern regions, frontier brutality continued late into the nineteenth century, even as those in the far north were able to continue living according to traditional practices for “the tropics were too discouraging for pastoralists or agriculturalists” (Beward 167).

The Kadaitcha Sung focusses on shamanism and traditional magic, allowing for an exploration of spirituality and power from two cultural sources—that of the colonised and of the coloniser. The hybridised character of Tommy Gubba grapples with complex issues of identity and cultural belonging. Set in and around contemporary Brisbane, the novel is simultaneously located within the realms of traditional Murri culture and spirituality. Like his Kadaitcha enemies, Tommy appropriates aspects of the colonising culture in an attempt to eradicate the intruders. This appropriation is portrayed as a survival strategy in a violent world where Indigenous peoples are either ignored or are targets of racially-motivated violence. As with Ipellie, Watson utilises focalising techniques such as free indirect discourse and extensive use of dialogue so that the reader can empathise with the Indigenous characters' viewpoints.

Again, the influences of church and educational institutions on relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples are examined. Chapter Five outlines Sam Watson's personal history and his political activities as an Aboriginal rights activist in Queensland, and how his familial relationships have impacted on his subsequent writing. Chapter Six is a detailed analysis of his writings, primarily his novel *The Kadaitcha Sung*, but also noting the thematic similarities which permeate his other works and his plans for the novels which will complete the *Kadaitcha* trilogy. Throughout his creative works, Watson utilises shamanic figures who negotiate the interstices between Indigenous and mainstream Australia, and also examines the responses of different generations to contemporary race relations.

My aim in this thesis is to introduce into the postcolonial arena two writers who have been overlooked or been considered problematic, and to suggest the idea of Indigenous diaspora as an appropriate tool for understanding their texts, mediated by the figure of the shaman. This is done with an attention to specificity, and by acknowledging that neither represents “the” postcolonial voice, but that each is an example of myriad possible postcolonialities.