

CROSSING BORDERS

by

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**A thesis submitted in accordance with the degree requirements
of the
University of the Sunshine Coast**

for the award of Master of Creative Arts (Creative Writing)

and comprising:

- 1. a novel entitled : *Crossing Borders***
- 2. an exegesis explaining the writing of that novel**

Declaration of original authorship

This is to certify that this submission is all my own work, completed under the supervision of the University of the Sunshine Coast.

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DATE: 7th August 2007

Abstract

This submission for consideration is comprised of an original Young Adult novel entitled *Crossing Borders*. The project encompassed research into both Balinese culture and the depiction of attitudes of young adult males in contemporary Young Adult fiction.

The male protagonist in my novel is not a “splendid, clear-thinking young” (man.) (Salinger 1958. p. 2) He is a ‘lost’ and depressed Western adolescent ‘in crisis’ and ‘at risk’ of self-harm.

The writer utilised alchemical philosophy to create a completed novel based on lived experience. *Crossing Borders* employs Magical Realism to draw the reader from the reality of the visible external world into the dream-like psyche of Marcas Oswald, a young man with schizophrenia. *Crossing Borders* blends Balinese and Australian cultures to create a new ‘seeing place’ for Marcas and the reader.

The plot-line crosses backwards and forwards between Marcas’s childhood memories and his current life on the Island of the Gods providing contrasts between climate, landscape and the customs of modern day people in popular culture, with the gods, goddesses, demons and witches of ancient mythological worlds.

Bali, the Island of the Gods, was chosen because the Balinese believe life is a continuous cycle of birth, death and re-birth. Marcas Oswald, therefore, crosses geographical and psychological borders until he is ready to be re-born into a ‘positive state of completeness’ and ‘cosmic consciousness’.

Crossing Borders was created to provide a voice for young adult males 'in crisis' and 'at risk' of self-harm. It supports a strong belief in the re-creative force of art because art is the "greatest defence and protection against solitude, loneliness and isolation from our fellows." (Aldama 2003. p. 109) The theme of *Crossing Borders* is that an appreciation of the arts for youth is vital because the writer believes the making of art is healing and a life-enhancing form of occupational therapy.

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“The writer and reader of adolescent fiction may interact as spiritual teacher and student.” (Shaw 2007, p. 1)

