

**The process and importance of  
writing Aboriginal fiction for young adult readers  
Exegesis accompanying the novel "Calypso Summers"**

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## **Dedication**

For the Nukunu and all Indigenous people in our quest to live, reclaim,  
document and maintain culture.

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## **Abstract**

The novel "Calypso Summers" explores issues associated with being an Aboriginal youth including complexities surrounding identity formation and the role and impact of engagement with Aboriginal culture on the well-being of contemporary Aboriginal youth. The story follows twenty-year-old "Calypso Summers" who adopts Rastafarianism to gain social status in the absence of employment and strong cultural links. Finding work in a health food store provides impetus for Calypso to discover traditional Aboriginal medicinal uses of native plants. Calypso's quest brings him into contact with his family and cultural principles of the Nukunu people, assisting him to develop meaning in his life. The novel can be read as affirmation of the strength and importance of Aboriginal cultures and promotion of engagement with culture as way to negotiate circumstances often deemed insurmountable.

The exegetical essay "The process and importance of writing Aboriginal fiction for young adult readers" is divided into three parts. Part A examines the impact of Indigenous protocols upon the process of writing that includes Aboriginal people, issues and culture. Part B explores the social realities of Aboriginal Australia and the role young adult fiction can play in addressing Indigenous illiteracy and disadvantage. Part C discusses the benefit of mentorship with renowned Jamaican writer Olive Senior when constructing the fictional work "Calypso Summers".

## **STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or tertiary institution to Jared Thomas and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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**Jared Thomas**  
**September 2010**

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