

THE WRITER AS MAP MAKER

VOLUME ONE:

THE JOURNEYMAN YEARS

BEN CRISP

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Writing
Discipline of English and Creative Writing
School of the Humanities
The University of Adelaide

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Abstract

The Journeyman Years is a postmodern historical conspiracy fiction novel chronicling the life and travels of John Riven, a sixteenth-century apprentice alchemist and mapmaker, on a quest to find a mysterious religious relic which he believes holds the secret to the meaning of life.

The exegesis situates my writing within the context of postmodern literature and demonstrates how the postmodern author might narrate the journey of self-discovery through an interweaving of three recurring motifs of both historical conspiracy fiction and the critical field of semiotics: codes, maps and symbols. Through an analysis of the critical and creative works of semiotician and postmodern fiction author Umberto Eco – in particular his novel *Foucault's Pendulum* – the thesis explores how the interplay of these three motifs serves an examination of question of the limit of interpretation, and how they might combine to offer a framework for responding to this question within a postmodern work of historical conspiracy fiction.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution 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. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Acknowledgements

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This work would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of three people who provided the inspiration to my imagination, and my curiosity to discover the unknown: thank you Kate, and Genevieve and Geoffrey Crisp.

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VOLUME TWO:

MAPPING A POSTMODERN WORLD

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