CRAFTING TRUE STORIES:

an interpretation of four Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practices

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Declaration of originality

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CONTENTS

Abstract

Nonfiction books written by Australian journalists are increasingly recognised by scholars (Joseph 2016a; Keeble 2015) as authentic contributions to literary journalism. This study undertakes a case study analysis of the nonfiction writing practice of four Australian journalists: Christopher Kremmer, Annabel Crabb, Ben Stubbs and Shannon Harvey. Their explanations of key influences on their nonfiction writing such as news reporting experiences and motivations for writing nonfiction are investigated. The story-crafting techniques they each employed to write one nonfiction book, namely, *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006), *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) and *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) are a focal point of this analysis. Present scholarship indicates a gap in knowledge of Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practices that this study seeks to partly address. A case study methodology was adopted as it enables in-depth analysis (Saldaña 2015) of individual journalists' nonfiction writing styles, and "because it is one of the most immediately recognised genres of qualitative research" (Saldaña 2015, p. 3). Each case comprises a narrative analysis of two semi-structured interviews with each journalist, informed by reading and interpreting the above-mentioned books.

Sims, a pioneer literary journalism scholar, advises that studies should not "mimic that of [only] one sector of the academy" (2009, p. 8). Therefore, this study is based on related concepts from journalism studies and philosophy, and it was informed by late philosopher Sartre's view that "writing is a certain way of wanting freedom" (1947, p. 65), where the author assumes sole responsibility

for texts they create. With works of nonfiction, like those examined in this thesis, this concept of author accountability is especially important. Concepts from journalism studies are used to interpret the journalists' nonfiction writing practice: Geiber's (1964) view that creating longer news narratives is an intensely personal experience for sensitive journalists despite organisational and government restrictions imposed on them; Sims' (1984) five key characteristics of literary journalism; and Eason's explanation of literary journalists who write in a "realist" style (2008, pp. 192-193). While literary journalism scholarship has flourished in the United States of America and the United Kingdom since at least the 1960s (Sims 1984), scholarship in Australia is still developing (Ricketson & Joseph 2015). This study investigates the nonfiction writing approaches of four journalists to identify how their nonfiction books contribute to Australian literary journalism.

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Preface

> Writing is thinking; thinking is writing. (Edmundson 2016, p. xvii)

This study focuses on nonfiction writing by journalists and is inspired by my observation of the range of nonfiction books authored by Australian journalists and emerging Australian scholarship on literary journalism (*Australian Journalism Review* 2015, vol. 37, no. 2). As a journalist and writer, I have become very interested in understanding the writing techniques of journalists authoring nonfiction books, and my love of long-form journalism led me to undertake this study.

The literature review in this study indicates that there is limited scholarship on Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practices. Identifying how individual journalists write nonfiction provides a better understanding of their contribution to Australian literary journalism and the relatively new slow journalism movement (Le Masurier 2016). By examining key factors influencing journalists' nonfiction writing, such as their news reporting experiences and motivations for writing nonfiction, an in-depth understanding of their individual writing practices can be obtained. By examining journalists' nonfiction story-crafting techniques, similarities and differences in their writing styles can be identified. Cumulatively, these findings provide insights on the relevance of the participant journalists' nonfiction writing and adds to the body of knowledge on Australian long-form journalism.

Literary journalism is a "genre of accurate reporting that incorporated literary techniques to enhance the storytelling" (Wolfe cited in McDonald & Davies 2015, p. 34). It is an umbrella term that includes news feature writing, magazine

journalism and nonfiction book writing. As Ricketson and Joseph observe, when it is done well “literary journalism offers us both journalism’s revelatory bite and literature’s artful exploring of human complexity” (2015, p. 27). This “cross-pollination between literature and journalism goes back at least as far as the time of Daniel Defoe” (Richards 2005, p. 2) and literary journalism is an extension of the earliest form of journalism – print news. Journalists writing nonfiction books require creative writing ability as well as news writing ability and must incorporate literary techniques to enhance their storytelling (Hartsock cited by McDonald & Davies 2015, p. 34). I have always been keenly interested in connections between journalism and creative writing, having worked as a news feature writer and creative writer for over 15 years. This study presented an opportunity for me to further my knowledge and understanding of long-form journalism, and contribute new knowledge on specific Australian journalists’ nonfiction writing practices.

Journalists who write nonfiction books usually have an interest in narrative writing and the transformation of news information into literary work as scholarly analyses indicate (Boynton 2005a; Kerrane & Yagoda 1997). Australian journalist and nonfiction writer Paul McGeough explains his reasons for writing nonfiction as follows: “you have a huge canvas on which to write…” (cited by Joseph 2016a, p. 7). Journalists who become nonfiction writers often do so when they find that regular reporting cannot provide the space to express the full complexity of a story (Christopher Kremmer, personal communication, March 20, 2017). This is not to say that straight news reporting is ineffective. Instead long-form journalism serves different writerly goals. However, it is rare for journalists to completely transition to fulltime nonfiction book writing; most

continue to work in mainstream journalism while writing books. For such journalists, book writing is about career enhancement rather than career survival. Many are already high-profile news reporters with the status and resources to pursue nonfiction book writing. Reviewing recently published nonfiction books authored by Australian journalists revealed that political correspondent, foreign news correspondent, investigative journalist, news feature writer and travel news writer are some of the specialised journalism roles that these writers have held while authoring nonfiction books (Brissenden 2012; Bryant 2011; Stubbs 2016b; Ferguson & Drum 2016; Harvey 2016).

I chose to undertake a case study analysis of four Australian journalists writing nonfiction because it enables close investigation of their research and writing process, and asking in-depth questions regarding their transition from journalism to nonfiction writing. The participant journalists are Christopher Kremmer, Annabel Crabb, Ben Stubbs and Shannon Harvey. Insights gathered from this study furthers understanding of the ways in which Australian literary journalism is practised. There is also a gap in literature on the connections between Australian journalists' news reporting practice and their nonfiction writing practice that this study partly addresses. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss literary journalism's place within the genre of nonfiction writing, key concepts applied in this study, and related literature on literary journalism and slow journalism. This provides a broad context to the analysis of four Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practice undertaken thereafter.

Chapter 1

An explanation of literary journalism and the study's theoretical framework

1.1 Literary journalism's place in nonfiction writing

Nonfiction is a writing form with multiple genres of expression (Turco 1999). At its best, it is the narration of true stories with creative flair:

> Things that are cheap and tawdry in fiction work beautifully in non-fiction because they are true. That's why you should be careful not to abridge it, because it's the fundamental power you're dealing with. You arrange it and present it. There's lots of artistry. But you don't make it up.
> (McPhee cited in Sims 1984, p. 3)

McPhee's statement illustrates the unique artistry associated with writing true stories and thus the value of studying the craft of nonfiction writing. Contemporary nonfiction books fall into a range of recognisable genres. British book publisher Faber and Faber classifies these as: "art & design, biography & memoir, politics & world affairs, reference [specialist nonfiction], religion & philosophy, science, sport and travel nonfiction" (Faber & Faber Limited 2017). This classification fits a commercial publishing context as it covers general nonfiction categories that the public may be interested in reading. However, from a scholarly perspective, further genres such as crime and, health and lifestyle could be added to this list, based on recent nonfiction books written by Australian journalists (Harvey 2016; Voumard 2016) and examples of earlier nonfiction books by American journalists (Conover 2001; Capote 1966). Literary

journalists predominantly write in certain nonfiction genres, as key anthologies reveal (Sims 1984; Kerrane and Yagoda 1997; Sims 2007): these include biography, politics and world affairs, crime, science, sport, and travel. One reason for this may be that these genres are often an extension of news topics journalists encounter in mainstream reporting. Secondly, literary journalism lends itself best to nonfiction genres that allow for a creative writing approach, such as travel nonfiction, because, "Literary journalism draws on immersion, voice, accuracy, and symbolism as essential forces" (Sims 1984, p. 4). Most importantly, literary journalism is not confined to a single nonfiction genre: it transcends this boundary as it is a unique writing style that incorporates journalistic structures and objectives with literary intent, as Underwood explains from a fiction writing perspective:

> From the beginnings of the novel in English, writers who had experience in the world of journalism have been at the center of a movement that has repeatedly returned to journalistic methodology as the basis for developing realistic plots and journalistic research to provide the material for the construction of literature that draws upon actual events as the inspiration for dramatic narrative. (2008, p. 3)

Underwood's conceptualisation refers to the application of journalistic methods in fiction writing, but his explanation is also applicable to the writing style of literary journalism. The kind of narrative construction Underwood describes enables journalists to write different genres of nonfiction using journalistic methods to develop their stories, although such narrative writing is more appropriate for some genres than others, as reflected in several literary journalism anthologies (Kerrane & Yagoda 1997; Boynton 2005a; Joseph

2016a). Thus, it can be observed that literary journalism is a specialised type of writing that can be applied in certain types of nonfiction. The next aspect to consider is what characteristics differentiate literary journalism from other types of writing.

1.2 Key definitions of literary journalism

Definitions of literary journalism have been offered by scholars and practitioners since the 1970s, beginning with the publication of *The New Journalism* (Wolfe & Johnson 1973). This anthology drew attention to the ways journalists write true stories using fiction techniques. At the time, Wolfe's (1973, p. 9) description of this writing style as "journalism that would… read like a novel" was considered a new concept. However, later studies acknowledge that journalistic nonfiction "has been written since the time of Boswell and Johnson" (Underwood 2008, p. 3), that is, from around the 1700s. Therefore, this style of writing has been in existence without a specific name for a long time although literary journalism *studies* commenced mostly in the late twentieth century (Keeble 2015).

Currently, scholars describe such journalistic writing variously as "literary journalism" (Sims 1984, p. 4), "literary reportage" (Hartsock 2011, p. 23), "creative nonfiction" (Joseph 2016a, p. xiii), "book-length journalism" (Ricketson 2010, p. 67) and "narrative literary journalism" (Hartsock 2016, p. 3). Some academics make specific distinctions between some of these terms: Hartsock suggests "'literary reportage' of European origin is a much more 'elastic form' than American literary journalism" (cited in Bak & Reynolds 2011, p. 23), while Joseph believes that creative nonfiction sits above the term literary journalism but she acknowledges that "other theorists regard it [literary journalism] as the

all-encompassing title" (2016a, p. xvii). For this study, the term *literary journalism* was adopted after considering these interpretations and those of other key scholars (Sims 1984; Kerrane & Yagoda 1997; Kramer 1995) who refer to such writing as literary journalism. It is the most inclusive term used by scholars (Bak 2011; Ricketson & Graham 2017) and therefore allows the study of a range of types of nonfiction authored by journalists. This study investigates nonfiction writing by Australian journalists within four genres – travel, politics, health & lifestyle, and current affairs – and the term literary journalism allows for an inclusive interpretation of these journalists' writing.

There are several criteria for considering a work of nonfiction as literary journalism. Sims (1984), Kramer (1995), and Kerrane and Yagoda (1997) argue that it is the overall writing technique that determines if a nonfiction work can be classified as literary journalism. Sims was the first to identify the characteristics of literary journalism as "immersion, structure, accuracy, voice [and] responsibility" (1984, p. 8-19). The importance of authorial voice was subsequently reiterated by Kramer:

> The defining mark of literary journalism is the personality of the writer, the individual and intimate voice of a whole, candid person not representing, defending, or speaking on behalf of any institution, not a newspaper, corporation, government, ideology, field of study, chamber of commerce, or travel destination. (1995, p. 6)

Soon after, Kerrane and Yagoda used a broader five-word definition to explain literary journalism:

> …what kind of journalism is "literary"? Our five-word answer would be: thoughtfully, artfully, and valuably innovative. The "innovative" is key, for

> two reasons. First, it is our view that like much else in the twentieth century, journalism has been an object of mass production, turned out according to codified standards and in agreed-upon shapes. These standards are in many ways useful, yet they are also limiting, and for a writer to cast one or more aside can be liberating… (1997, p. 14)

From this statement, it can be observed that the authors believe journalists who wish to go beyond the conventions of mainstream news writing, such as the restrictions of the standard inverted pyramid news structure, may choose to author literary journalism. But good research and an effective narrative structure are also needed, as the above scholars note. These definitions (Sims 1984; Kramer 1995; Kerrane & Yagoda 1997) illustrate the intrinsic qualities of literary journalism, and this study draws on some of these definitions in investigating four Australian journalists' descriptions of their nonfiction writing practice. The key concepts and theories informing this study's theoretical framework are discussed next.

1.3 Adopted theoretical framework

Related concepts and theories from philosophy and journalism studies are applied in this study of the nonfiction writing practice of Australian journalists. Most scholarship on literary journalism is based on literary criticism and theory, but leading literary journalism scholars such as Sims advise that we should not look to only "one sector of the academy" (2009, p. 8) when undertaking research. Therefore, this study takes an interdisciplinary approach, adopting theories from journalism studies but also partly inspired by the views of French literary critic Jean-Paul Sartre. "A growing and increasingly important trend in the social and behavioural sciences is to think about and attempt to understand

specific research problems from an interdisciplinary perspective" (Frodeman cited by the University of Southern California 2017) and a key advantage of adopting such an approach is that it can result in "innovation in knowledge production" (Frodeman, Klein & Mitcham 2010, p. xxix). This theoretical framework is explained below:

1.3.1 Sartre on literature

Sartre's collected essays, titled *What is Literature* (1947), partly inspired this study as the work explores key reasons why we write literature. As a journalist and writer, I can relate to Sartre's idea that "writing [literature] is a certain way of wanting freedom" (Sartre 1947, p. 65), where the author assumes sole responsibility for the texts they create. My own journalism work, though rewarding, lacked the freedom for creative expression that book writing allowed. This led me to explore more creative forms of writing such as travel nonfiction and children's books. This research project reflects my deep investment in journalism and book writing, and my interest in investigating the experiences of other journalists writing nonfiction books. Sartre's (1947) notion of author accountability relates closely to this study as accountability is important in nonfiction writing to convince readers of the legitimacy and truthfulness of a story. His view that, "One is not a writer for having chosen to say certain things, but for having chosen to say them in a certain way" (Sartre 1947, p. 25) also informed this study's investigation of Australian journalists' nonfiction writing styles. Literary journalism was not identified as a writing style when Sartre wrote his essays, although his contemporaries, such as George Orwell and Joseph Mitchell, were later named as some of the earliest practitioners of the style (Sims 1984). However, Sartre's perspectives can provide insights into

present-day literary journalism practice through his essays that continue to be recognised as “a seminal text of [literary] criticism” (Flynn 2013), preceding Foucault’s (2002) influential works discussing literary and social theory. Sartre’s views on why we write literature serve as a philosophical basis for this study, which is also informed by concepts from journalism studies.

1.3.2 Geiber on news narratives

Geiber (1964) argues that to “a sensitive, thoughtful newspaperman [sic], writing the news story is a singularly personal experience” (p. 218) despite professional, ethical or bureaucratic restrictions. This highlights the often-ignored aspect that journalists’ individual experiences play a role in how they compose news stories. Geiber’s concepts are still referenced by contemporary journalism and communications scholars (Bouzis & Creech 2017; Pearson & Kosicki 2016), indicating that despite extensive changes to journalism practice in the half-century since his scholarship, his arguments remain relevant. If Geiber’s statement on the personal aspect of journalists’ news narratives is applied to literary journalism, it is even more significant, as “Literary journalists bring themselves into their stories to greater or lesser degrees and confess to human failings and emotions” (Sims 1984, p. 6). The journalists whose nonfiction writing is studied in this project are likewise bringing themselves into these stories, drawing on their personal experiences. Therefore, Geiber’s (1964) argument regarding the personal aspect of journalists’ news narratives provides a basis to explore connections between the studied journalists’ news reporting and nonfiction writing practices, and their motivations for writing nonfiction books.

1.3.3 Sims on literary journalism

Further theoretical support is needed to explore the studied journalists' nonfiction story-crafting techniques. Sims' theories on literary journalism are most appropriate for this purpose because of the extent (Sims 1984; Sims 2007; Sims 2009; Sims 2011) and influence of his scholarship on the topic on other scholars (Joseph 2016a; Kramer 1995). As noted in section 1.2 above, the five defining characteristics of literary journalism are: immersion, structure, accuracy, voice and responsibility (Sims 1984). These characteristics provide a strong basis on which to analyse journalists' nonfiction writing. Sims' inclusion of author "responsibility" (1984, p. 18) as a defining characteristic of literary journalism also reflects Sartre's (1947) description of author accountability in literature over three decades before. The repetition of this theme by these two scholars signifies that the concept of an author being responsible for texts they create is important to consider when analysing journalists' nonfiction writing. Additionally, Sims' claim that in literary journalism the "voice of the writer surfaces to show readers that an author is at work" (1984, p. 3) is useful for examining authorial voice in the studied journalists' nonfiction writing. Comparing these journalists' authorial voices helps to identify their individual writing styles. Likewise, Sim's view that "a mandate for accuracy pervades literary journalism" (1984 p. 15) can be used to interpret the journalists' nonfiction writing. Considering each journalist's attention to accuracy in their nonfiction storytelling provides insights into their writing technique. Finally, Sims' (1984) definition of voice as a key characteristic of literary journalism echoes Sartre's (1947) statement, described earlier, that it is the *way* a writer expresses themselves that creates literature. These connections between

Sartre's views on writing literature and Sims' theories on literary journalism make them a suitable pairing for this study's conceptual and theoretical framework.

1.3.4 Eason on ethnographic realism

The most interpretive theory applied in this study is Eason's conceptualisation of "ethnographic realism" (1984) as a type of literary journalism and his more recent exploration of literary journalists who are "realist" (Eason 2008) writers. Eason states that by the 1960s the doctrine of representation that separated image from reality in "linguistics, philosophy and literary criticism had crumbled" (1984, p. 51). This allowed the New Journalism movement (Wolfe & Johnson 1973) to take shape in the 1960s and literary journalism to emerge as a unique writing style. Eason explains that two styles of literary journalism emerged: "ethnographic realism and cultural phenomenology" (1984, p. 53). Journalists like Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese and Truman Capote wrote in the style of ethnographic realism while others like Joan Didion, Norman Mailer and Hunter. S. Thompson wrote in the style of cultural phenomenology (Eason 1984). "Ethnographic realism organizes experience in terms of the traditional duality between image and reality. The reporter penetrates the public facade or image in order to reveal the underlying reality" (Eason 1984, p. 53). As one of the strongest advocates for New Journalism, Tom Wolfe, says this kind of journalism strives "to show the reader real life — 'Come here! This is the way people live these days! These are the things they do!'" (cited in Eason 1984 p. 53). In contrast, literary journalism that follows the style of cultural phenomenology, "describes a world in which image and reality are ecologically intertwined" (Eason 1984, p. 53). Eason's explanation of these two distinct

styles of literary journalism is valuable for understanding how journalists write nonfiction. His perspectives are used to examine the nonfiction story-crafting techniques of the studied journalists.

The above concepts and theories provide an effective interdisciplinary framework for this research. Sartre's (1947) views on writing literature inspired the research themes, and Geiber's (1964) view on the personal aspect of news narratives helps in interpreting the connections between the journalists' news reporting and their nonfiction writing, and their motivations for writing nonfiction books. Sims' (1984) definitions of literary journalism can be used to investigate the nonfiction story- crafting techniques of each journalist and Eason's (1984) theory of ethnographic realism in literary journalism can be used to identify whether the studied journalists are writing in this style. The next chapter reviews literature on Anglo-American, European and Australian literary journalism, and the related new theme of slow journalism, to identify existing scholarship relating to this study.

Chapter 2

Perspectives on literary journalism

To examine Australian journalists' nonfiction writing, we first need to look at its roots, particularly in the United States of America (USA), as this is where literary journalism, in the form of nonfiction writing, has the longest traditions (Sims 2008). There are also parallels in the nonfiction writing styles of American and Australian journalists that can be observed in the Australian case studies presented in later chapters. Key American scholars such as Connery (1992), Kramer (1995), Kerrane and Yagoda (1997), Hartsock (2000), Underwood (2008) and Sims (2009) have set the tone for literary journalism discourse worldwide. Moreover, scholarship on literary journalism is still maturing in Australia, so it is necessary to look further afield for insights (Joseph 2016a). Reviewing literary journalism scholarship from the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe is valuable to understanding how Australian literary journalism has developed. The discussion also considers a relatively new area of scholarship – slow journalism – that is closely linked with ideas of literary journalism.

2.1 From the United States of America (USA)

The global influence of American literary journalism is noted by several international scholars including Ricketson and Joseph (2015) from Australia, and Keeble (2015) from the United Kingdom. Ricketson and Joseph note that most Australian literary journalism scholarship "has used as its reference point work from within the Anglo-American tradition" (2015, p. 29) which includes the

United Kingdom. Joseph reiterates this point in her (2016a) book on Australian nonfiction writers; she found it necessary to abandon her "search for Australian analysis and draw on the extensive writings and anthologies, published mainly in the U.S.A. and U.K." (p. ix). Likewise, Keeble explains American dominance of literary journalism scholarship as follows:

> In part, and in complex ways, the emergence of literary journalism as a discipline in the 1970s and 1980s was a manifestation of the political, cultural and ideological power of the US (as the leader of the Western, capitalist world in its confrontation with communist Soviet Union) at the time. (2015, p. 151)

In other words, America's international cultural and political dominance partly led to the emergence of literary journalism as a distinct writing genre. For these reasons, reviewing Anglo-American scholarship on literary journalism is necessary before undertaking this analysis of Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practice.

2.1.1 Key concepts

When reviewing American contributions to literary journalism, a clear starting point is Tom Wolfe's *The New Journalism* (1973), although it is important to note that American literary journalism traditions began much earlier. Sims traces this tradition back to "George Orwell, Lilian Ross and Joseph Mitchell" (1984, p. 4), and Underwood (2008, pp. 199-220) goes further, tracing what he describes as American journalistic literature back to the work of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Edgar Allen Poe and Mark Twain. However, literary journalism only began to be identified as a specific writing genre in the 1960s and 1970s (Underwood 2008, p. 9), and this literature review, while

acknowledging the beginnings of journalistic literature in the 1700s (Underwood 2008), therefore concentrates on reviewing key scholarship after the 1970s.

Wolfe opened the debate in the 1970s by claiming that New Journalists "combined in-depth reporting with literary ambition: they wanted to make the nonfiction story 'shimmer like a novel' with the pleasures of detailed realism" (cited in Kerrane & Yagoda, 1997, p. 17). Kerrane points out that Wolfe only noted as an afterthought that such journalism "had been pre-figured, in a shadowy way, by earlier novelist-reporters like Charles Dickens, George Orwell and John Hersey" (1997, p. 17). Like Sims (1984) and Underwood (2008), Kerrane and Yagoda acknowledge that literary journalism is rooted in much earlier journalistic writing traditions, whereas Wolfe prefers to describe literary journalism as a new way of writing. Kerrane and Yagoda's (1997) anthology reverses Wolfe's emphasis and gives prominence to pioneer writers of the form, "connecting their work to the journalism of the 1960s and '70s–and beyond" (p. 17). These contrasting anthologies (Wolfe & Johnson 1973; Kerrane & Yagoda 1997) reveal that there are diverse interpretations on the origins of this genre.

A decade after *The New Journalism* (Wolfe & Johnson 1973), Sims stated that "Wolfe has proven the staying power of a literary approach to journalism" (1984, p. 6) in his book *The Literary Journalists* – another seminal example of literary journalism scholarship. As noted in Chapter 1, Sims (1984) identified five key characteristics of literary journalism based on his analysis of nonfiction writing by prominent American literary journalists such as John McPhee and Joan Didion. Sims' (1984) book, like Wolfe's (1973), and Kerrane and Yagoda's (1997), concentrates on analysing the unique writing characteristics that define literary

journalism. In contrast, Eason's (1984, p. 53) categorisation of literary journalism as two types of writing – "ethnographic realism and cultural phenomenology" – delves into broader socio-cultural aspects of literary journalism. Eason (1984) also takes scholarship in a new, less explored direction by analysing literary journalism using an ethnographic and cultural lens. His later scholarship on literary journalists who write in a "realist" (Eason 2008) style is particularly useful for interpreting the nonfiction writing of Australian journalists in this study because it allows for comparison with their American counterparts.

Kramer's (1995) article on "breakable rules for literary journalists" expands on these early interpretations of literary journalism and focusses on the individuality of each writer. As discussed in Chapter 1, Kramer (1995) claims that a defining characteristic of literary journalism is the writer's personality and individual authorial voice. He is referring to American literary journalists' work, but this qualification could also be used to examine authorial voice in Australian journalists' nonfiction writing. Kramer (1995) provides valuable close analysis of literary journalism writing techniques. In contrast, anthologies such as Kerrane and Yagoda's (1997) serve as benchmark sources to understand the range of Anglo-American literary journalism through discussion of some of the best works by writers including Gay Talese, Stephen Crane, Lillian Ross, Norman Mailer, Ted Conover, Ernest Hemingway, Tom Wolfe and Joan Didion. One key conclusion that can be drawn from Kerrane and Yagoda's (1997) book is that journalism and literature have long been intertwined when journalism is practised in the long form. This also

explains why literary journalism scholarship stems from two related disciplines: English Studies and Journalism Studies (Hartsock 2000; Underwood 2008). It is important to consider scholarship from both disciplines to obtain a robust understanding of the different ways in which literary journalism has been researched so far.

2.1.2 Views from two disciplines

English Studies perspectives on literary journalism come from academics such as Chris Anderson (1987; 1989) and Barbara Lounsberry (1990), who notes that: “The artistry of nonfiction is the great unexplored territory of contemporary criticism” (p. xi). Nonfiction critique has developed considerably since Lounsberry expressed this view, however there remains room for further research on nonfiction writing. Journalism Studies perspectives come from academics such as Thomas. B. Connery and Norman Sims (Hartsock 2000, p. 6). While journalism academics refer to such nonfiction as “literary journalism” (Hartsock 2000, p. 6), those from English Studies prefer to call it “literary nonfiction” (Hartsock 2000, p. 6). Sims points out that: “Whatever we name it, the form is indeed both literary and journalistic and it is more than the sum of its parts” (1984, p. 6).

However, an awareness of the different disciplinary names for such writing is useful for distinguishing different analytical approaches. As Hartsock states (2000, p. 5), academics’ varied naming of such writing stems from heated debates in the 1960s and 1970s on the New Journalism movement and differences between novelists and news writers. Joseph’s view that “one thing we all agree upon is the ‘feeling’ of a well-written piece of nonfiction” (2016a, p. xii) emphasises the benefits of studying nonfiction writing regardless of

disciplinary differences on its naming. Other key international scholars express similar opinions:

> …we should stop fretting over the publishing industry's or academy's legitimation of literary journalism or literary journalism studies. Continued research into the history and the practice of literary journalism across the globe will serve to create that legitimation, as well as the market that literary journalism and literary journalism studies sorely needs. (Bak 2011, p. 19)

Bak's statement makes it clear that literary journalism is a rich and varied writing genre that needs ongoing scholarship from different countries and different disciplinary perspectives for continued understanding of its socio-cultural purpose.

Some notable examples of Journalism Studies scholarship take the form of anthologies analysing works of American literary journalism (Sims 1984; Kerrane & Yagoda 1997; Boynton 2005a). Each analyses literary journalism from a different perspective and presents a largely distinct body of work. One of these anthologies – *The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft* (Boynton 2005a) – alludes to Wolfe's *New Journalism* (1973) in its title. However, Boynton states that: "not only was Wolfe's account inaccurate but it was also an impediment to appreciating both the distinctively American quality of modern literary journalism and its continuity with its 19th century predecessors" (2005b). Boynton refers to Wolfe's (1973) view that New Journalism's style of writing journalism like a novel was a technique that emerged only in the late 1960s. As discussed previously,

other American scholars (Sims 1984; Kramer 1995; Kerrane & Yagoda 1997; Underwood 2008) have also dispelled Wolfe's above claim.

From English Studies, Lounsberry's (1990) early scholarship on nonfiction writing explains contemporary enthusiasm for nonfiction writing using the following observation:

> Historical perspective in fact is what has been missing in many of the "new journalism," fact/fiction debates of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In some respects we are seeing the turn of the wheel back to the time, only 200 years ago, when serious writers chose nonfiction over fiction for expressing their views and crafting their art. (p. xiii)

Like Sims (2007) and Underwood (2008), Lounsberry is referring to the influence of 18th and 19th century writers in shaping contemporary nonfiction writing. Based on these scholars' views, this study acknowledges that the origins of literary journalism can be traced back much further than the 1960s.

On a different note, Underwood (2008) addresses the role of literary journalism in the digital information age, claiming that literary journalism has evolved largely due to career changes facing journalists in the digital age. Underwood's (2008) explanation of how the rapidly changing contemporary journalism landscape and shrinking mainstream journalism job market has inadvertently launched the book writing careers of many journalists is useful for examining the nonfiction writing careers of this study's journalists. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001/2007) also indirectly provide support for the continued relevance of literary journalism in the face of international news conglomerates and ever

faster news production cycles. They argue that contemporary journalism needs to uphold “the discipline of verification” and “its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001/2007, pp. 5-6) – aspects that have always been important in literary journalism.

The above views stem mostly from Journalism Studies, but key perspectives from English Studies have also been considered, as literature and journalism have long been linked in scholarly discourse on literary journalism (Underwood 2008). From English Studies, Barbara Lounsberry’s views are particularly valued by journalism scholars (Underwood 2008; Hartsock 2000; Kremmer 2015; Joseph 2016a). The four constitutive features of literary nonfiction Lounsberry (1990, pp. xiii-xv) outlines – “documentable subject matter, exhaustive research, scene setting and fine writing” – have been considered recently by journalism scholars when examining nonfiction writing (Kremmer 2015; Joseph 2016a), indicating that her 1990 definition remains valid.

The other English Studies perspective that links with journalism scholars’ views is that of Chris Anderson (1989), who uses the term ‘literary nonfiction’ to describe both essays and works (books) of New Journalism. His justification for this is the “hybrid nature of the texts we study” (Anderson 1989, p. x). This relates to Underwood’s call for a “hybrid form of scholarship that mirrors the hybrid nature of much journalistically influenced literature” (2008, p. 13). These shared views (Anderson 1989; Underwood 2008) illustrate connections between the study of nonfiction and literary journalism.

The contribution of English Studies is also useful in helping to reconcile issues around the naming of the genre, as Kerrane and Yagoda's *The Art of Fact* (1997) refers to 'literary journalism' despite the authors being from an English Studies background, which generally prefers the term "'literary nonfiction'" (Hartsock 2000, p. 6). Both Journalism and English Studies have produced a rich range of scholarship on nonfiction writing and literary journalism, and recent international recognition of literary journalism as an independent area of scholarship (Bak & Reynolds 2011; Keeble & Tulloch 2012) has resulted in American research inspiring further global scholarship.

2.1.3 Global scholarship inspired by American studies

American dominance of literary journalism is evident both through wide-ranging scholarship on the topic and American writers' extensive contribution to the genre. As literary journalism has become a global writing phenomenon in the 2000s (Keeble & Tulloch 2012), scholars in the United States have begun partnering with counterparts in the United Kingdom and Europe (Bak & Reynolds 2011), while the first international academic journal dedicated to this genre, *Literary Journalism Studies*, was established in 2009. This journal is a key gauge of global literary journalism scholarship and American scholars such as Norman Sims, John C. Hartsock and Thomas B. Connery are founding members and regular contributors.

One example of American scholarship in contemporary collections of global literary journalism is Hartsock's comparison of the differences between American 'literary journalism' and European 'literary reportage' in *Literary Journalism across the Globe* (Hartsock 2011). Hartsock's comparison illustrates

variations in global literary journalism style. Sims (2011) presents another American perspective on the future of literary journalism in the same collection, questioning how literary journalism can evolve in times of varying editorial interest for this genre from print and magazine journalism, as well as the challenges presented by digital journalism and less lucrative book advances from publishers for works of nonfiction (Sims 2011, p. 85-91). Sims' prognosis for literary journalism seems grim but he also provides an explanation of why literary journalism is still valuable:

> When we look back at the American journalism of the past century or more–journalism that remains informative and viable and influential on the world stage–we discover that the leading texts were literary journalism. (2011, p. 89)

This statement helps to illustrate the global influence of American literary journalism. Sims (2011) cites literary journalism penned by leading American writers such as Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, John Hersey, Joseph Mitchell, Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion and Ted Conover as supporting examples, and sums up by saying that historically "literary journalism has provided the intimacy, subtlety, and artistry we need to understand the times in which we live" (2011, p. 90). He claims that these characteristics give literary journalism a perpetuity that other kinds of journalism do not possess, indicating that it is a resilient form of journalism that is always evolving. International anthologies of literary journalism also exist (Bak & Reynolds 2011; Keeble & Tulloch 2012). Most recently, an Australian anthology that aims to provide a local perspective on such writing was published

(Joseph 2016a). This increasing global scholarship clearly indicates the growing significance and cachet of literary journalism studies.

The above discussion reveals that American literary journalism has had a strong influence on the genre globally. *New Yorker* writer Jane Kramer explains by saying: “People have tried to imitate the genre and somehow can’t. It’s really only in America – and in a different way England – that this narrative experiment has developed” (cited in Boynton 2005a, p. xxi). Her statement suggests that literary journalism may manifest differently depending on the country of origin; a concept that Sims (2009) and Bak (2011) have also emphasised. As Boynton notes, readers are currently experiencing a fascination with “true stories…that is common during times of great unrest and turmoil” (2005a, p. xxix). This fascination with true stories extends beyond the USA (Kremmer 2015) so, it is useful to also review literary journalism traditions and scholarship from the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia.

2.2 From the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe

2.2.1 UK

Literary journalism scholarship in the UK is less prolific than in the USA, but British scholars Keeble and Tulloch have edited an important anthology, *Global Literary Journalism* (2012), that includes essays from “North America, Northern Europe and some other Anglophone countries such as Australia” (Keeble & Tulloch 2012, p. 2) representing studies on the increasingly global practice of literary journalism rather than a solely British tradition. Its editors explain that literary journalism has thrived in regions which “combine the inward orientation

of American journalism research and the spurious universality of European media and cultural theory" (Curran cited in Keeble and Tulloch 2012, p. 2). This again indicates how significantly American writing traditions have influenced global literary journalism but also acknowledges how such writing is grounded in European theories. In a different article, Keeble (2015) discusses historical British writers such as Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens and Graham Greene who have influenced modern-day literary journalism but notes that leading publishers of literary journalism are mostly based in the USA such as "*Esquire, The Village Voice, Rolling Stone* and *New York Magazine*" (Keeble 2015, p. 152), with UK publication *Granta* (2017) being a notable exception. This is another reason why literary journalism has thrived in the USA, as there are more outlets for the publication of such writing.

Tulloch, on the other hand, provides analyses of journalists' long-form writing style. His research (Tulloch 2014) on the ethics of first-person narration is particularly useful for analysing individual literary journalism texts. Tulloch's view that "the construction of an authentic narrative voice, a voice we are disposed to trust" (2014, p. 630) is fundamental to long-form journalism practice is a concept that can be applied when interpreting Australian journalists' nonfiction writing in this study. His examination of the connection between British novelist and journalist Gordon Burn's journalism and book writing also provides useful parallels:

> My non-fiction is influenced by developments in the novel, and the same applies in reverse. More than most British writers, I think, I am open to the experience of art as an influence on what I do. (Burn cited in Tulloch 2012, p. 39)

The views of the Australian journalists interviewed for this study can likewise be examined to understand their perceptions of the connections between their journalism and nonfiction writing practice.

McKay's views (2011) on literary reportage–a term often used to describe literary journalism in the UK– also relate to this study. While akin to literary journalism, literary reportage is a uniquely European style of writing (see 2.2b). McKay's description of literary reportage as a "hidden genre" in Britain (2011, p. 47) assists in understanding similar challenges faced by Australian journalists writing nonfiction books. According to McKay (2011), the dominance of British tabloid press culture has meant that serious reportage has mostly been ignored in the UK, although exceptions include published anthologies such as *The Granta Book of Reportage* and *The Faber Book of Reportage*. McKay describes the characteristics of British literary reportage as follows:

> Reportage requires more skill and more effort from the writer at the research stage. It requires an awareness of literary qualities and literary strategies as well as an awareness of a story's wider significance. (McKay 2011, p. 50)

This implies that reportage requires greater consideration of narrative strategies and wider story research at pre-writing stage. McKay acknowledges that the UK is still "a long way from according serious recognition to the literary qualities of the best journalism" (2011, p. 58) but she is optimistic given the "increasing numbers of books of reportage being published in the U.K." (2011, p. 58). A parallel situation exists in Australia, where this study is based: literary journalism is an emerging

area of scholarship and there is an increasing number of nonfiction works authored by journalists (Kremmer 2015).

2.2.2 Europe

European academics such as Bak, Soares and Neveu provide further insights into literary journalism. Bak's introduction in *Literary Journalism across the Globe* (Bak & Reynolds 2011), observes that styles of literary journalism vary from country to country:

> The sixteen essays collected in this book…are by no means heterogeneous, either in their adoption of one transcendental literary journalism or in their depiction of how literary journalism arrived on their native soil. (2011, p. 17)

This statement indicates that literary journalism is influenced by specific circumstances in each country and culture of practice, justifying country-specific studies such as this one. Another unique perspective presented in this anthology is Hartsock's (2011, p. 23) explanation of what he terms the "other literary journalism": literary reportage. This is the style of long-form journalism that McKay (2011) noticed in the UK, as explained previously. Literary reportage has proletarian European roots, particularly from post-revolutionary Russia, and early 19th century Czech writer Egon Erwin Kisch and American leftist writers such as Joseph North played key roles in popularising this kind of literary journalism (Hartsock 2011, pp. 23-46). Hartsock describes this writing style as "expository and argumentative" (2011, p. 23) and cites the reportage of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya as a contemporary example. He

also notes that both *Granta* and John Carey (in the *Faber Book of Reportage*) describe 'reportage' as eye-witness accounts (2011, p.30). In comparison, the genre academics term 'literary journalism' stems from an inward-oriented American tradition that Hartsock calls "narra-descriptive journalism" (2011, p. 23) i.e. narrative and descriptive in style. For this study, it is important to appreciate these stylistic differences between literary journalism and literary reportage to effectively interpret the studied journalists' nonfiction writing. American literary journalism is described by Wolfe as journalism that would read "like a novel" (1973, p. 10) while literary reportage is "a much more 'elastic'" and "transnational form" (Hartsock 2011, p. 23) practised first in Europe. The American and European models can be used to scrutinise Australian journalists' nonfiction writing in this study. One common characteristic of literary journalism and literary reportage is "cultural revelation" (Hartsock 2011, p. 35), indicating that both types of writing closely reflect the culture being written about.

Neveu (2014) provides an argument for the contemporary value of literary journalism. He explains that journalism today is facing "a most complex combination of challenges" (2014, p. 535) and that one approach to overcoming dilemmas presented by bloggers and newsroom job cuts is to return to "a tradition of investigative and narrative journalism" (2014, p. 536). This may seem like an idealistic solution for overcoming current media industry challenges but it suggests an approach that supports literary journalism. Ongoing worldwide news industry job cuts further indicate the need for journalists to re-evaluate their role in society. As Neveu explains, narrative

journalism:

> …borrows from literature its writing techniques, from social sciences their investigative tools and interpretive methodologies when narrative in contemporary journalism has surrendered to the news-flash, and in-depth investigation to speed. (2014, p. 538)

This combination of writing skills and interpretive abilities is a hallmark of literary journalism (Sims 1984). Literary journalism is a niche area but clearly an important one for maintaining journalism's professional relevance in the face of present-day challenges.

Through her scholarship on Portuguese literary journalism, Soares (2011), like Bak and Reynolds (2011), and Keeble and Tulloch (2012), argues that literary journalism is not confined to Anglo-American countries despite most academic discourse on the genre stemming from these countries. Instead it is "a widespread journalistic form whose pioneering practitioners can also be found outside the linguistic boundaries of the English language" (Soares 2011, p. 118). While most early scholarship stemmed from the USA, UK and Europe, there is a growing body of research on global literary journalism, but more country-specific research is needed:

> Examinations of literary journalism from several countries suggest they follow their own cultural pathways and do not merely imitate the American models...We need an international scholarship that recognises there are different national manifestations. (Sims cited in Joseph 2016a, p. xi)

Sims' statement highlights the importance of studying Australian literary journalism as this project sets out to do. Related Australian scholarship is discussed next to highlight the research gap explored in this study.

2.3 From Australia

Australian scholarship on literary journalism began more recently than American scholarship. It can be traced back to approximately the early 2000s (Ricketson 2010) following publication of notable nonfiction books by Australian journalists such as David Marr's *Patrick White: A Life* (1991), Geraldine Brooks' *Nine Parts of Desire: the hidden world of Islamic women* (1995) and Margaret Simons' *Fit to Print: Inside the Canberra Press Gallery* (1999). In two decades, local scholarship has gained momentum with the publication of more nonfiction books by journalists, as well as increasing academic scrutiny of such books in journal articles and collected works (Joseph 2016a; Ricketson & Joseph 2015).

Although local scholarship is recent, literary journalism as a writing genre has been present here for longer:

> Australia does have a tradition of literary journalism I've discovered over time, and you can date it right back to *The Bulletin* at the turn of the last century when you had people like Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson writing for it. And you can see that kind of irreverent tone, that kind of larrikin voice in publications like *Oz* from the '60s when Richard Neville was at the helm. (Mordue cited by Joseph 2011, p. 39)

As in the USA and the UK – explained in section 2.1 and 2.2 above – the practice of literary journalism has been in existence in Australia for longer than its study. McDonald (2016), and McDonald and Avieson (2014) trace Australian

literary journalism back even further to colonial times, thereby illustrating the rich traditions of local literary journalism. As in the UK, publishers of literary journalism are limited when compared to the USA. Some Australian publishers who promote literary journalism are *Griffith Review* (2017), *Southerly Journal* (2017) and *The Monthly* (2017), but the texts they publish are briefer essays and articles unlike the nonfiction books referred to in this study.

The 2015 literary journalism issue of peer-reviewed journal *Australian Journalism Review* reveals that although studies on Australian literary journalism are relatively recent, they display a range of research themes. The issue (*Australian Journalism Review* vol. 37, no. 2, 2015) brings together a range of studies on literary journalism from Australia and overseas, many of which are discussed below. Recent local scholarship also includes several theses on literary journalism. The three most relevant studies located were: Roberts' (2014) PhD thesis mapping nonfiction narrative, Boven's (2013) PhD thesis comparing differences between German and Australian literary journalism and Wynter's (2004) honours thesis on literary journalism as true stories. However, none of these examine the individual nonfiction writing styles of Australian journalists using a case study approach – the research gap being explored in this study. The following section discusses local scholarship that relates to this study.

2.3.1 Creative nonfiction and book-length journalism

Joseph's research on "creative nonfiction" (2016a, p. xiii) and Ricketson's research on "book-length journalism" (2016a, p. 507) are the two most relevant research topics that relate to this study on Australian journalists' nonfiction

writing. Joseph's book *Behind The Text* (2016a), presents interviews with some of the best contemporary Australian nonfiction writers and argues that Australian creative nonfiction practice is very much alive. This book was recently reviewed in the journal of *Literary Journalism Studies* as a valuable addition to international literary journalism scholarship (Nandorfy 2017). Joseph draws on her extensive experience as a journalist, as well as that of the writers she interviews, and her book is almost a direct parallel to Boynton's (2005a) collection on American nonfiction writers. However, Joseph's analysis is the more fluid of the two as she weaves her conversations with Australian writers into her discussion, whereas Boynton separates his critique of American writers from his interviews with them.

Joseph's classification of Australian nonfiction writing as "creative nonfiction" (2016a, p. xi) suits her focus on the writing of both journalists and creative writers, and her research provides significant insights that can be applied in this study, although this study focuses only on nonfiction writing by journalists. Joseph cites the views of pioneer Australian researchers Eisenhuth and McDonald on links between nonfiction and fiction writing:

> Nonfiction stories, like fiction stories, stand or fall - as they always have – on whether or not they are a good read, whether they grip us, inspire us, surprise us, inform us, fire up our imaginations (or our hackles), or home in with so much heart on human frailties or foibles that they move us to laughter or tears. (cited in Joseph 2016a, p. xii-xiii)

This statement sums up key qualities of a well-written story and can be used to appraise any narrative nonfiction text. Joseph's book is particularly significant because it is the first scholarly anthology of Australian nonfiction. It also

encourages further discourse on Australian nonfiction writing, as she says, “I believe the writings of creative nonfiction authors in Australia are an integral part of a social history, and, as such, must be studied and collated as our own ‘cultural pathway’” (2016a, p. xviii), in reference to Sims’ view that literary journalism manifests differently in each country of practice (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). Joseph’s reference to Sims’ (2009) view highlights connections between American and Australian scholars’ work, and supports my study’s acknowledgment of the American roots of literary journalism scholarship.

Ricketson’s research on book-length journalism is the other key local scholarship that relates to this study. As he defines it: “A well-crafted true story explores events in their complexity and people in their full humanity” (cited in Joseph 2016a, p. xviii). Ricketson cites Carey’s view that the current mainstream preoccupation with inverted pyramid style, fast journalism is detrimental to understanding the full “curriculum of journalism” (cited in Ricketson 2016a, p. 507):

> Longer articles and book-length works add substantially to the store of relevant and newsworthy information. They also significantly enlarge public understanding of people, events and issues of the day by exploring them in depth, usually by taking a narrative approach in the writing. (Ricketson 2016a, p. 507)

This statement supports one line of questioning pursued in this study: how journalists’ nonfiction writing contributes to contemporary Australian journalism practice. Ricketson’s explanation of what differentiates literary journalism from news feature writing can also be used to assess the narrative quality of Australian journalists’ nonfiction books:

> Where the standard feature story uses exposition, garnished by quotes and anecdotes, literary journalism renders the material into a short story, with scenes, dialogue and characters' point of view embedded in the narrative. (2004, p. 229)

This statement indicates the complex narrative elements required in book-length journalism. Ricketson's continued research on long-form journalism signifies the importance of literary journalism and the value of research exploring new aspects of Australian literary journalism. His recent argument that "there is scope for creativity in journalism…because the forms that journalism can take extend well beyond news reporting" (Ricketson 2017, p. 3) particularly supports this study's exploration of Australian journalists' nonfiction writing, as such writing represents one example of a form journalism can take beyond news reporting. Finally, Ricketson and Joseph's observation that "a sign of emerging maturity of local scholarship is the number of articles about literary journalism that have begun appearing in international journals" (2015, p. 30) indicates that Australian scholarship on literary journalism is gaining increasing international recognition.

2.3.2 Immersion in historical Australian literary journalism

Historical examples of Australian literary journalism help us to understand the traditions from which the studied journalists' nonfiction writing has developed. McDonald and Davies' article on the historical reporting of infamous Australian gangster Ned Kelly's last stand (2015, pp. 33-49) explains that story immersion is key to authoring literary journalism:

> Immersion lies at the heart of both narrative and literary journalism because it enables the writer to include that wealth of detail that

> potentially allows scenes and characters to be brought to life in vivid and absorbing ways. (Hartsock, Sims & Wolfe cited in McDonald & Davies 2015, p. 35)

Their citing of three pioneer American scholars, Hartsock, Sims and Wolfe, in the above statement reveals that they agree with these scholars on the significance of immersion as a characteristic of literary journalism. European scholar Bak also notes that "immersion reporting" (2011, p. 7) is a key quality of literary journalism. This indicates that many scholars consider story immersion to be integral to writing literary journalism. Based on these opinions, this study explores how story immersion shapes contemporary Australian journalists' nonfiction writing. Another important aspect that can be appreciated from McDonald and Davies' (2015) article is that literary journalism has been practiced in Australia since at least the 1800s – when these narrative reports on Ned Kelly were written. Joseph's (2011) discussion of a tradition of literary journalism being present in Australia since the '60s can thereby be extended back much further using McDonald and Davies' (2015) research.

2.3.3 Crafting of literary journalism

Some Australian scholars studying literary journalism are also practitioners of the form. The USA is the other country where this occurs as Tom Wolfe (1973) was both a practitioner and scholar of literary journalism, although historically there have also been other examples of writer-scholars such as George Orwell (Underwood 2008). Christopher Kremmer is one Australian literary journalism scholar who also writes nonfiction books. His analysis of Geraldine Brooks', Helen Garner's and Anna Funder's nonfiction books concludes that:

> The challenge of narration in contemporary literary journalism is to access the affordances of powerful literary techniques such as the personal voice, symbolism and narrative storytelling, without undermining the story's all-important truth claims. (Kremmer 2015, p. 62)

Kremmer's description of how to craft such writing reflects literary journalism characteristics outlined by Sims (1984) and Kramer (1995). He considers theories from both English Studies and Journalism Studies in the USA when analysing Brooks', Garner's and Funder's writing (Kremmer 2015, p. 52), thus acknowledging the relevance of American scholarship from both disciplines. This aspect was also highlighted previously in section 2.1.2. Kremmer is one of this study's research participants as he was already a prominent journalist and nonfiction writer before becoming a scholar of literary journalism. His perspectives on literary journalism can be used to examine his own nonfiction writing in this study, making his case unique. His analyses (Kremmer 2015; 2018) focus on other Australian journalists' nonfiction story-writing techniques making his insights valuable for understanding and interpreting his own nonfiction writing techniques.

2.3.4 Travel writing as a sub-genre of literary journalism

Stubbs' explanation of why travel writing can be considered a "sub-genre of literary journalism" (2015a, p. 139) contributes to understanding of how travel writing fits into the genre of literary journalism. He is another research participant in this study, and, like Kremmer, is an example of an Australian academic who both researches on and practises literary journalism. Stubbs justifies travel writing's inclusion as a sub-genre of literary journalism using

three elements conceptualised in his 2014 PhD thesis: “a contract of truthfulness, evidence of a double story and an acceptance of rigorous subjectivism” (2015a, p. 139). As a travel writing scholar (Stubbs 2017; Stubbs 2016a) and experienced travel writer (Stubbs 2018), Stubbs is qualified to draw this conclusion. However, he makes the distinction that only travel writing that displays the above-mentioned three elements can be considered a sub-genre of literary journalism (Stubbs 2015a). UK academic Cocking’s article on “the ‘news values’ of British travel journalism” (2017, p. 1) also highlights the need to better understand the connections between journalism and travel writing, thereby supporting Stubbs’ views. Stubbs’ (2015a) exploration of travel writing’s place within journalism can be used to analyse Kremmer’s and Stubbs’ own nonfiction writing, as they have both authored travel nonfiction. Therefore, Stubbs and Kremmer play dual roles in this study: they are sources of related literary journalism scholarship and research participants. Stubbs’ and Kremmer’s contributions to literary journalism scholarship and the opinions they directly provide, as research participants, enrich the outcomes of this project.

2.3.5 The therapeutic value of literary journalism

The therapeutic value of literary journalism is discussed by Rickett (2015) in her analysis of the nonfiction book *Bad Hair Days* (2007), authored by late journalist Pamela Bone. This is the closest Australian parallel study to the analysis of Shannon Harvey’s nonfiction book, *The Whole Health Life* (2016), in this study. Both Harvey’s (2016) and Bone’s (2007) books focus on a life-threatening illness that each journalist faced. Therefore, theories Rickett (2015) uses to interpret Bone’s writing such as the view that journalists are drawn to share stories about their illnesses because “they are communicators” (Coward cited in

Rickett 2015, p. 83), are suitable for analysing Harvey's book in this study. The idea that producing such nonfiction writing can be *therapeutic* for journalists experiencing serious illness also brings up ethical dilemmas of first-person narration as Rickett notes:

> Consciously or unconsciously, the first choice facing any journalist in constructing a narrative is the mode of telling the story and its implications for the practice of truthfulness…Fundamental to this is the construction of an authentic narrative voice, a voice we are disposed to trust. (Tulloch cited in Rickett 2015, p. 84)

Rickett's citation of Tulloch's theory connects Australian and British literary journalism scholarship, and draws attention to a characteristic of literary journalism that has been highlighted by Sims (1984) and Kramer (1995): authorial voice. The fact that all these scholars discuss this characteristic indicates that is a significant factor in literary journalism. As Rickett observes, it is the "candour in writing about the disease" (2015, p. 91) that highlights authorial voice in such journalists' nonfiction books. In other words, the journalists' truthfulness when narrating the story of their illness defines their authorial voice.

2.3.6 Literary journalism as political writing

Mullins' (2015) description of Annabel Crabb as a journalist writing political history is also important to consider as Crabb is another research participant in this study. Mulins claims that Crabb "provides a new direction for contemporary political history in her book-length work" such as *The Wife Drought* (2014) and that her "familiarity with the political process" and use of "humorous and simple language" enriches her nonfiction writing (Mullins 2015, p. 102). The unique

characteristics that Mullins (2015) identifies aid in examining Crabb's nonfiction writing in this study, although his description of Crabb's writing as "simple" (Mullins 2015, p. 102) appears to miss the subtleties of reference that indicate sophistication in her writing style – an aspect analysed in Chapter 6. However, Mullins' research focusses on Crabb's broader role as a writer of political history rather than on how she describes her nonfiction writing practice. Apart from Mullins' research, no significant local scholarship on political literary journalism was identified, despite the range of nonfiction books on politics authored by Australian journalists such as *Fit to Print: Inside the Canberra Press Gallery* (Simons 1999), *American Stories* (Brissenden 2012) and *The Killing Season Uncut* (Ferguson & Drum 2016).

2.4 The related theme of slow journalism

An emerging research area that supports the value of journalists' nonfiction writing is ''slow journalism'' (Le Masurier 2016; Greenberg 2012). Slow journalism is a new trend in literary journalism scholarship (Maguire & Maguire 2017) that needs to be acknowledged in this study because it includes book-length contributions such as those under discussion here. Ricketson, a pioneer Australian literary journalism scholar, also recently acknowledged the connection between book-length journalism and slow journalism (2016a), indicating that this sub-research area of literary journalism scholarship is gaining ground.

Slow journalism is defined by Le Masurier as "a counter discourse and practice" (2015, p.138) that "has been emerging in recent years from journalists, editors, publishers and commentators interested in slowing journalism down" (2015, p. 138). It is a counter movement supported by journalism practitioners and

scholars who feel that contemporary journalism practice leans solely towards fast-paced delivery, to its detriment. Le Masurier is the leading Australian scholar examining this movement, and she guest edited a themed volume of *Journalism Practice* on slow journalism in 2016. This movement is currently being championed globally by journalists and academics who support its ideology (Neveu 2016; Craig 2016). Unlike literary journalism, slow journalism cannot be narrowly defined, as it is a journalistic movement as opposed to a writing genre:

> Slow Journalism is not prescriptive, but those practitioners who use the term to describe their work, and those journalists whose work embodies the spirit of the term, are all producing journalism that enacts a critique of the limitations and dangers of the speed of much of the mainstream contemporary journalistic environment. (Le Masurier 2016, p. 439)

By this definition, many journalists writing nonfiction books are practising slow journalism whether they do this intentionally or not. So, understanding this new journalism "movement" (Le Masurier 2016, p. 445) is essential to contextualise the Australian journalists' nonfiction writing in this study. Neveu (2016) describes slow journalism as narrative in style, fair to its sources and readers, participative, community oriented and prioritising untold stories. This provides useful guidelines for identifying works of slow journalism, and allows the nonfiction writing practice of the journalists in this study to be examined to determine if they display these characteristics. Neveu's (2016) article was flagged as one of the new trends in literary journalism scholarship in the journal of *Literary Journalism Studies* (Maguire & Maguire 2017, p. 123), thereby effectively linking literary journalism and slow journalism.

To summarise, *literary journalism* is a journalism genre with clearly established characteristics (Sims 1984), while *slow journalism* is a journalism movement that is far less prescriptive (Le Masurier 2016) but allows for and facilitates literary journalism to flourish. Most significantly, both literary journalism and slow journalism have currency in the international academic landscape. As Le Masurier explains, “Journalism practitioners and scholars have entered a period of high experimentation and theorisation” (2016, p. 445) indicating that this study on Australian journalists’ nonfiction writing practices is timely.

2.5 Summary

This literature review shows that Australian literary journalism stems from Anglo-American writing traditions particularly from the USA and the UK. Australian scholarship on literary journalism, though relatively recent, is rapidly gaining ground as the number of local journalists writing literary style journalism, especially in the form of nonfiction books (Ricketson 2010), increases. Recent local (Martin 2018) and international studies (Fitzgerald 2017) on literary journalism also reveal a diversity of scholarship and continued opportunities for further country-specific studies on this topic. This review indicates that there has not been a thesis-level examination of individual Australian journalists’ nonfiction writing practice, and this is the gap I am addressing. I extend current scholarship on literary journalism by analysing four Australian journalists’ descriptions of their nonfiction writing practices at research interviews, and contribute new knowledge by presenting an interpretation of these journalists’ nonfiction writing approaches. Key research identified in this chapter to support this study include:

- Wolfe's (1973), Sims' (1984), Kerrane & Yagoda's (1997) and Boynton's (2005a) anthologies of American literary journalism that reveal there can be multiple approaches to analysing such writing. These collections also highlight the value of studying individual journalists' writing styles.
- Hartsock's statement that literary journalism now has a "mainstream publishing cache" (2000, p. 7) validates further research on such writing.
- Bak's claim that global literary journalism is not "heterogeneous" (2011, p. 17) in style, supports this study's analysis of Australian journalists' nonfiction writing.
- Maguire and Maguire's (2017) identification of three emerging trends in global literary journalism scholarship: studies of individual authors' writing, regional, national and international studies, and links to slow journalism. This project fits all three research themes: it studies nonfiction writing by four individual journalists, it analyses literary journalism from Australia and it aims to illustrate connections between literary journalism and slow journalism.

The next chapter discusses the study's aims and research methodology.

Chapter 3

Research Approach

This chapter describes the qualitative research approach applied in this study of Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practice. It begins by discussing the research questions and significance of the study, and then outlines the research methodology and methods, followed by a description of the project's research participants, participant selection criteria and data collected. It concludes by discussing ethical constraints and limitations that shape the study's outcome. As Creswell (2007, p.18) explains, "the epistemological assumption [when] conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied". My epistemology draws from pre-structuralist literary theory, and post structuralist journalism theories which discuss authorial voice, news narratives and literary journalism (see Chapter 1). This theoretical foundation led to the design of the specific ontological questions this project investigates. Ontology "relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics" (Creswell 2007, p. 16), so the objective of this study is to interpret and understand the "multiple realities" (Creswell 2007, p. 16) relating to authoring nonfiction books for a select sample of Australian journalists. By addressing this aspect, I aim to contribute new knowledge on Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practices, and how such nonfiction contributes to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism, thereby providing a 'Holistic account' (Creswell & Creswell 2018, p. 182) of contemporary literary journalism practices in this country.

3.1 Research questions

This study examines four journalists' verbal accounts of their nonfiction writing practice using four research questions (RQs):

RQ 1. What are their motivations for writing nonfiction?

RQ 2. How does their journalism experience influence their nonfiction writing?

RQ 3. What nonfiction story-crafting techniques do they employ?

RQ 4. How does their nonfiction writing contribute to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism?

RQ1 explores the journalists' motivations for writing nonfiction books, providing context to RQ2's investigation of connections between their news writing and nonfiction writing. RQ2 also investigates the pluralistic styles of these journalists' nonfiction writing. As Geiber (1964) states, the creation of a news narrative is an intensely personal experience for many reporters because:

> …despite what 'professional' or 'ethical controls' he [sic] enforces upon himself [sic], or for that matter, the bureaucratic controls that are thrust upon him [sic], the news story is–or should be–a product of his [sic] disciplined perception and his [sic] evaluation of the environment, of the social arena from which the story and its characters come, and of the bureaucratic climate in which it is written. (Geiber 1964, p. 218)

Even with its gendered phrasing, this statement remains relevant to present day news practice, especially regarding long-form journalism. By extension, the narratives journalists construct in their nonfiction books are even more a product of their individual perception and evaluation of their environment than a

news article. Therefore, RQ2 investigates how the journalists' individual news reporting experience shapes their nonfiction writing to identify connections between their news writing and nonfiction writing.

RQ3 enables comparison of these journalists' nonfiction writing practices. It explores the journalists' story-crafting techniques using Sims' (1984) definition of five characteristics of literary journalism, Eason's (1984) concept of ethnographic realism in literary journalism and Neveu's (2016) explanation of the characteristics of slow journalism. RQ4 draws together insights obtained from investigating the previous questions to interpret how the journalists' nonfiction writing contributes to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism. It assesses the journalists' cross-disciplinary practice of nonfiction writing and news reporting to interpret the value of journalists writing nonfiction. Collectively, these research questions enable a robust investigation of the participants' nonfiction writing practices.

3.2 Study significance

This study's investigation of four journalists' accounts of their nonfiction writing provides an understanding of how they contribute to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism. This understanding is important as mainstream journalism becomes increasingly prescriptive due to monopolised media ownership (Janda 2018) and competition with citizen journalism and social media. Currently, Australian print media is struggling financially (Davidson 2017), resulting in continually decreasing space for long-form journalism in print news publications (Turnbull 2011). The continued value of long-form journalism such as nonfiction books needs to be identified to ensure its survival

in the digital age. This study contributes to this understanding. It is also timely given that the 2017 Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia's (JERAA) conference, titled *The Second Coming of Journalism,* focused on different ways to ensure journalism's survival amid current industry challenges. The recent global slow journalism movement (Le Masurier 2016; Neveu 2016) also highlights the value of long-form journalism such as nonfiction books. Australian scholars' growing interest in slow journalism (Le Masurier 2015; Ricketson 2016a) makes this study timely as the nonfiction books discussed are examples of slow journalism. Most significantly, Maguire and Maguire's (2017) article in *Literary Journalism Studies* pointed out that there are three emerging trends in global literary journalism scholarship (see Chapter 2): studies on individual authors' writing; regional, national and international studies; and links to slow journalism. This study fits into all three of these trends, thereby contributing new knowledge on literary journalism.

By exploring the relevance of journalists' nonfiction writing to contemporary Australian journalism, this study also assesses the cultural relevance of this writing. As Zelizer (2004, p. 146) notes: "One of the most fertile arenas of journalistic inquiry has evolved in conjunction with the cultural analysis of journalism". Ettema (2010, p. 289) reiterates this point saying that, "News is a cultural form no less than it is an organizational product, an economic commodity or a political institution". This cultural aspect also relates to journalists' nonfiction writing as both news writing and nonfiction writing reflect the culture being written about and the social environment in which the writer is working. So, this study also provides some insights into the cultural significance of journalists' nonfiction writing. The overall aim is to obtain a

detailed understanding of the nonfiction writing practices of four Australian journalists, and how their nonfiction writing contributes to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism. This knowledge is particularly relevant given recent Senate recommendations to foster public interest journalism (Parliament of Australia 2018; Carson 2017) and the establishment of the Judith Nielson Institute for Journalism and Ideas (Dye 2018) to foster quality Australian journalism. Two nonfiction books discussed in this study represent public interest book-length journalism: Annabel Crabb's *The Wife Drought* (2014) is a reflection on Australian women's work rights and culture, and Shannon Harvey's *The Whole Health Life* (2016) is an investigation on health and lifestyle. Carson (2017, para.1) notes that, "Public interest journalism could be considered the antithesis of media's darker side, which includes fake news, propaganda, censorship and voyeurism", highlighting the significance of examining the above two books. This study extends scholarship on book-length journalism by undertaking case studies of four Australian journalists who write nonfiction. The research methodology and data analysis methods employed are explained next.

3.3 A qualitative case study methodology

Saldaña's explanation of qualitative research as a heuristic form of inquiry informed the development of this study's methodology – "A heuristic is an open-ended method of discovery, a way of figuring out how to figure something out" (Saldaña 2015, p. 9). In this study, I aimed to figure out how journalists' different news reporting experiences, personal motivations for writing books and individual story-crafting approaches shape their nonfiction writing. Qualitative research is widely used across social sciences and humanities

disciplines such as education, sociology, anthropology, psychology, communication and journalism (Saldaña, Leavy & Beretvas, 2011) when data collection and analysis involve a human research component. It enables the effective study of a smaller sample and a more reflective analysis. Qualitative research also allows participants "to talk at length with the researcher rather than merely responding to a series of pre-planned questions…" (Davies & Hughes, 2014, p.168) – a key objective of the research interviews undertaken in this study. The participant journalists' nonfiction writing practice is scrutinised to identify exceptions rather than generalities in their approaches, in keeping with qualitative research practice (Davies & Hughes 2014, p.176).

Specifically, a qualitative case study methodology has been adopted for this study as it best captures "the Individual's Point of View" (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p. 9, initial capitals in original) and secures "rich descriptions of the social world" (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p. 9). As such, it is ideal for this study on how individual journalists research and write nonfiction books. Case studies are also one of "the most immediately recognised genres of qualitative research" (Saldaña 2015, p. 3), making them a tried and tested approach to adopt. Creswell (2007) describes case studies as one of five key qualitative inquiry approaches. Finally, the most pertinent justification for adopting a case study methodology is that:

> If we find a particular individual an intriguing person worth investigating and writing about in depth, then case study methodology and compatible methods are likely the most suitable for the enterprise. (Saldaña 2015, p.10)

I consider the studied journalists to be intriguing nonfiction writers and their writing worth investigating. Therefore, adopting Saldaña's recommendation to use a case study methodology and compatible methods is appropriate. Studies by Denzin and Lincoln, and Yin and Merriam are cited by Creswell in supporting case studies "as a strategy of inquiry, a methodology or a comprehensive research strategy" (2007, p. 3), though some scholars believe that "case study research is not a methodology but instead a choice of what is to be studied" (Stake cited in Creswell 2007, p. 73). The above views (Saldaña 2015; Creswell 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Yin 2003; Merriam 1998) support the adoption of case studies as a methodology and overall research strategy for this study. This project undertakes case studies of four Australian journalists who write nonfiction books, each involving a narrative analysis of interviews conducted with the participant journalist and interpretation of one nonfiction book they authored. These methods are explained in section 3.4 below.

Benedichte Meyer explains that unlike other qualitative research strategies, "there are virtually no requirements guiding case study research" (2001, p. 329), indicating its heuristic research style. The advantage of this is that "it allows tailoring the design and data collection procedures to the research questions" (Benedichte Meyer 2001, p. 329). However, other scholars define some requirements for case study research such as that the unit of analysis needs to be, "studying an event, a program, an activity or more than one individual" (Creswell 2007, p. 78). My unit of analysis is the study of the activity of nonfiction writing by the case study journalists. Creswell advises selecting cases that are "worthy of study" (2007, p. 76) to best illustrate the issue or situation being discussed. Accordingly, the case studies selected for this project

were chosen for their ability to illustrate a range of nonfiction authored by Australian journalists.

3.3.1 Reasons for undertaking four case studies

Each case studied incorporates a narrative analysis of the journalists' verbal accounts of their book-writing process and discussion of one nonfiction book, providing opportunities to examine their individual nonfiction writing styles and approaches. Creswell's definition of case study research as "the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (2007, p. 73) was applied to this project. The issue being explored is that of journalists writing nonfiction within the bounded system or context of Australian long-form journalism. To undertake effective case study research, it is also best to limit the number of cases to a maximum of four to five as each additional case beyond this "dilutes the overall analysis" (Creswell 2007, p. 76). This project focuses on four case studies. A key advantage of using case studies for postgraduate research is that:

> Case studies offer student researchers a golden opportunity to focus attention on topics relevant to their field without being tied to what they may see as too narrow an approach to methodology. (Davies & Hughes 2014, p. 212)

This study provides first-person insights into the individual nonfiction writing practices of four journalists, allowing for a unique interpretation of each case. Denzin and Lincoln explain that case studies are ideal for research that relies on "first person accounts" (2011, pg. 10). Furthermore, case studies allow the observation of "individual people in

a social context" (Davies & Hughes 2014, p. 212). In this instance, a case study approach enables observation of the journalists within the social context of research interviews where they describe their nonfiction writing practice. As interviews were conducted in various settings – at the journalists' places of work and in some cases via Skype – they also provided opportunities to observe their work environment. As Yin argues (2009, p. 4), "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events". So, by focusing on four case studies in this project, the broad research area of Australian literary journalism is narrowed down into a feasible study of real-life examples of such journalism.

Yin explains (2009, p. 2) that: "In general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed…(c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context". This study poses two 'how' questions and focuses on the contemporary phenomenon of Australian journalists writing nonfiction. It employs an analytical approach rather than the problem-oriented approach (Monash University 2007) more commonly applied in scientific studies. The strategic sample of four journalists also enables the conducting of longer semi-structured interviews to gather detailed information. Australian PhD theses that adopted similar case study approaches include "Travel Writing and the pluralising of history. A case study from New Australia, Paraguay" (Stubbs, 2014a) and "A comparison of Australian and German literary journalism" (Boven, 2013). These researchers' strategy of analysing a small number of case studies is a tested model that can

be applied here. Within the case study methodology described above, a constructivist narrative analysis method was adopted to interpret the journalists' accounts of their nonfiction writing practices, as explained next.

3.4 A narrative analysis informed by reading and interpreting the participants' nonfiction books

Narrative analysis is a qualitative method that is compatible with the qualitative case study methodology adopted (Saldaña 2015). Before undertaking interviews with the journalists, one nonfiction book written by each participant and published reviews of their nonfiction books were read, to gain an understanding of their writing. This introduced an element of mixed-methods research: the analysis of their verbal accounts of their nonfiction writing practice at interviews was supplemented by interpretation of their nonfiction books. Mixed methods cover a range of "different approaches to the research process" (Kara 2015, p. 26), enabling sound interpretation of collected data. A key advantage is that:

> Mixed-methods research involves combining different methods of data gathering and/or analysis, different types of recruitment or sampling, different theoretical and/or disciplinary perspectives... It is often considered particularly useful for investigating complex social situations. (Kara 2015, p. 7)

As outlined in Chapter 1, this study is based on perspectives from Philosophy and Journalism Studies. Mixed methods enable these perspectives to be combined. The complex social situation being investigated is that of journalists

writing nonfiction books. The two methods of narrative analysis of research interviews and interpreting the participants' nonfiction books were selected after considering how to best answer the research questions within a Master's research project timeframe. Kara advises that, "the method(s) you use must flow from your research questions, not the other way around" (2015, p.18). Therefore, selecting these methods after designing the study's research questions enabled stronger conclusions to be drawn at the project's close. Narrative analysis of interviews conducted with the participants was however the primary method used because the research interviews yielded an original and rich data set for analysis. Interpretation of the participants' nonfiction books was the secondary method used to support and enhance this narrative analysis.

3.4.1 Advantages of narrative analysis

One of the key reasons narrative analysis was chosen as the main method of inquiry was because of its "*retrospective* dimension" (Freeman 2015, p. 27, italics in original) since "narratives always and necessarily entail looking backward, from some present moment, and seeing in the movement of events *episodes* that are part of some larger whole" (Freeman 2015, p. 27, italics in original). In this study, the narratives gathered at interviews were the participants' reflections on their journalism and nonfiction writing practice. The value of these interviews, as research data, is primarily because of the story each participant tells about their journalism and nonfiction writing experiences. Narrative analysis allows for the most valid insights to be extracted from these interviews. This research method is also "closely associated with media and cultural studies" (Earthy & Cronin 2008, p. 3), indicating its suitability for this

media research project. Moreover, as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) note, “Narrative inquiry revolves around an interest in life experiences as narrated by those who live them” (p. 421). My objective is to understand the life experience of writing nonfiction books for the interviewed journalists.

This study’s narrative analysis approach is broadly based on one of four approaches to narrative inquiry outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 422), namely, “Storytelling as a Lived Experience”. This approach uses in-depth interviewing as its method of gathering data. “Narrative interviewing involves an intensive interaction with the narrator and the patience to encourage narrators to explore memories and deeper understandings of their experiences” (Polkinghorne cited in Denzin & Lincoln, p. 424). It requires maturity, sensitivity and experience on the part of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). My 15 years’ experience as a journalist helped to prepare me for this type of interviewing, and as the participants are storytellers themselves, they are well suited to provide this type of information and familiar with in-depth interviews. The above scholarly views reflect that narrative analysis, though still an evolving research method (Denzin & Lincoln 2011), can provide unique qualitative research outcomes. As McAllum & Fox explain, narrative analysis highlights participants’ uniqueness and enables interpretation of “how” (2018, p. 63) research questions – making it appropriate for this study’s investigation of journalists writing nonfiction books. Freeman (2015) and Barusch (2012) acknowledge the debt owed to French structuralist theorist Roland Barthes’ (1975) studies on narratives as the earliest forms of storytelling, indicating the long history of this method of analysis. Barthes is also acknowledged as one of the earliest theorists to apply semiotics in textual analysis (cited in Bainbridge,

Goc & Tynan 2015, p. 199), providing further support for using the combined methods of narrative inquiry and interpretation of the participants' nonfiction books.

3.4.2 A constructivist narrative analysis method

A constructivist narrative analysis method (Clandinin 2007, p.150) was used to interpret the descriptions provided by the journalists in interviews. This method acknowledges that:

> …there is much less separation between the researcher and the narrator, as the narratives are socially constructed from semi-structured interviews, reflecting the theory that the participants' intentions and interpretations are as important as the researcher's…(Clandinin 2007, p. 151)

Given that both the participants and the researcher come from a journalism background, there is naturally limited separation between the researcher and the narrator in this study. The narratives being analysed are also socially constructed from semi-structured interviews, making a constructivist narrative analysis method highly appropriate. Clandinin (2007, p. 151) outlines the methods needed to carry out constructivist narrative analysis:

- Narrators are selected who reflect the theoretical frame.
- Semi-structured interviews and conversations.
- Semi-structured observations and field notes.
- Structured and open-ended analyses; narrators give feedback

All these steps were followed. The journalists selected for this study were those whose nonfiction writing practice reflected key concepts applied in this project, namely: Sartre's (1947) view that writing is a way of seeking freedom where the author is solely responsible for the texts they create, Geiber's (1964) view that creating news reports is an intensely personal experience for many journalists, Sims' (1984) characteristics of literary journalism and Eason's (1984) concept of ethnographic realism in literary journalism. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the journalists, and observations and field notes made. Structured analysis was based on the study's above outlined key theoretical concepts. Open-ended analysis was based on feedback provided by the journalists in the second interview round. However, thesis conclusions are primarily based on my interpretation of the journalists' narratives on their nonfiction writing practice. Barusch's (2018) method of conducting narrative analysis as a four-step process provides useful guidelines on how to undertake such analysis effectively. Barusch borrows from Ezzy's (2002) guidelines on qualitative analysis, breaking down the stages of narrative inquiry as follows:

- Gather the stories.
- Analyze each story and look for insights and meanings.
- Compare and contrast different stories; look for interpretations.
- Create a new story that connects the previous ones in a novel and insightful way.

  (Barusch 2017)

The stories gathered were the journalists' narratives on their nonfiction writing practice. Each narrative was examined using the research questions (see section 3.1 above). The journalists' narratives were then compared to interpret

their individual nonfiction writing styles. Finally, a “new story” (Barusch 2017) was constructed (see Chapters 5 and 6) to interpret the journalists’ narratives. Barusch also outlines three criteria for narrative research that were applied in this study to ensure a sound analysis:

> …in-person data collection should use appropriate initiating prompts while giving the story-teller sufficient time and freedom to present a coherent narrative; second, that data analysis should address not only the content, but also the form of the narrative; and third, that interpretation of data should acknowledge the context of the story-telling, as well as its narrative intent. (Barusch 2017)

Through adopting Barusch’s four-step approach and simultaneously bearing in mind the above criteria, I slowed down the research process to achieve a more balanced and reflective interpretation. As each journalist provided highly individual accounts of their nonfiction writing process, achieving a balanced interpretation of their interviews was important to understand the relevance of their different narratives.

3.4.3 Research interview approach

The experiences of journalists who write nonfiction books were examined in this study to gauge the meaning of this activity for them, exploring “subjective patterns of personal…experience to gauge the meaning they have for the people involved” (Davies and Hughes 2014, p.176). Following approval from the University of Adelaide’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC no: H–2016–277), participants were each interviewed twice during the project. The first interviews were held between March and July 2017, and the second between March and April 2018. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at the

participants' place of work or online (via Skype) when in-person interviews were not possible. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted to allow participants "to talk at length with the researcher rather than merely responding to a series of pre-planned questions…" (Davies & Hughes, 2014, p.168). This interview style is also familiar to the participants as it reflects long-form journalism interview styles (Ricketson & Graham 2017). These interviews elicited a range of information relating to the journalists' nonfiction writing practice, such as connections between their journalism and nonfiction writing, motivations for writing nonfiction and the nonfiction story-crafting techniques they employ. The objective of conducting two interview rounds was to observe the progression of the journalists' nonfiction writing practice over one year, and to verify conclusions drawn from the first interviews. Information obtained from these interviews provided firsthand insights into each journalist's nonfiction writing practice.

The discussion of these interviews, in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, takes the form of a categorical-content narrative analysis (Lieblich et al cited in Earthy & Cronin 2008) of each interview to understand the journalists' individual career progression into writing nonfiction and their individual nonfiction writing styles. Categorical-content narrative analysis examines a narrative by themes or categories (Earthy & Cronin 2008) and is a deductive method of analysis. In keeping with the categorical-content analysis model (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber 1998), the focus of the analysis is on the content of the interviews rather than the form. The interviews covered a wide range of aspects relating to each journalist's nonfiction writing practice, including early career choices, tertiary education, personal reading interests, news reporting experience,

motivations for writing nonfiction, story research and writing style, academic interests, views on travel writing and literary journalism.

The interview transcripts will be stored electronically until five years after the completion of this project, as per ethics guidelines. All interview excerpts included in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are drawn from these transcripts. These excerpts are referenced once in Chapter 4 – which introduces the participants. Thereafter, in Chapters 5 and 6, interview excerpts are presented as direct quotations only. I have elected to refer to the participants by first name in the next three chapters because a closer relationship is inevitably established between the narrator and the researcher when a constructivist narrative analysis approach is used (Clandinin 2007, p. 150). This naming convention has been applied in previous narrative analysis studies, such as those conducted by the Berkeley Group (Clandinin 2007, pp. 146-152). It also mirrors how I addressed the journalists during interviews. I remained in regular contact with each participant for two years during this project, and thereby developed a close rapport with them. The narrative analysis of the journalists' accounts of their nonfiction writing practice also takes its cues from how each interview proceeded. The overall analysis is based on the designed research questions, but analysis of each journalist's interviews varies according to the content of their individual narratives.

3.4.4 Background reading of the journalists' nonfiction books

One nonfiction book written by each journalist was read before interviewing them to gain an understanding of their individual writing styles. These readings informed the lines of questioning undertaken at the research interviews,

providing support and context for the narrative analysis of interview data. The nonfiction books selected were those that had significant personal impact for each journalist. In the case of the two most experienced journalists, Christopher Kremmer and Annabel Crabb, the nonfiction book that each considered to define their writing (Kremmer, personal communication, March 20, 2017; Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017) was selected. For Kremmer, his book *Inhaling the Mahatma* (2006) was the most personal one he wrote as it is not only about his experiences as a foreign correspondent in India but also about how he met his Indian wife. For Crabb, *The Wife Drought* (2014) was the first book she was personally inspired to write, as opposed to her earlier commissioned nonfiction books. Crabb's (2014) book has also already been discussed in a scholarly article (Mullins 2015), highlighting its suitability for further analysis. In the case of the two younger journalists, Ben Stubbs and Shannon Harvey, the first nonfiction book written by each was selected as it represents the beginning of their nonfiction book writing careers. These books are: *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) and *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016). Stubbs' (2012) book also has a personal angle because of his ancestral connection to its historical narrative (Stubbs, personal communication, April 24, 2017). Harvey's (2016) book is the most personal as it discusses her own struggle with an ongoing health condition. While all four journalists' books are nonfiction texts, they fall into different subgenres as illustrated by book sellers' categorisations. Kremmer's and Stubbs' books are categorised as travel writing (Book Depository 2017). Harvey's book as fitness and diet, and Crabb's book (Book Depository 2017) as nonfiction relating to feminism, sociology, gender studies and workplace relationships; this wide-ranging categorisation is also

evidence of the social impact of Crabb's book. Collectively, these four books represent a sample of Australian book-length journalism from the early 2000s to the present day, making them appropriate for this study.

I read and interpreted these books using Sims' (1984) five characteristics of literary journalism: immersion, structure, voice, accuracy and responsibility and Eason's (1984) explanation of ethnographic realism in literary journalism, part of this study's theoretical framework. This was to identify if the journalists' accounts of their story-crafting techniques, provided in the research interviews, related to the writing style of their nonfiction books. As McKee (2003) notes and Bainbridge reiterates, textual analysis is a "sense-making" (Bainbridge, Goc & Tynan 2015, p. 197), practice by which we can extract meanings from texts. Reading the journalists' nonfiction books provided key insights into each participant's book writing style. Textual analysis is also a "toolkit" (Bainbridge, Goc & Tynan 2015, p. 265) for examining narratives and a way to "make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (McKee, 2003, p.1). This interpretation of the nonfiction texts was used to support conclusions reached in the narrative analysis to RQ3 (see section 3.1 above) which investigates the journalists' story-crafting techniques. Bainbridge describes a complete textual analysis as a "combination of three approaches" (2015, p.198):

> …breaking down the text into its various components; framing a text (becoming aware of how the text is presented to us and where we find the text); looking at the relationship between texts. (2015, p.198)

Two of these approaches were applied to the books. Each text was broken down and compared against Sims' (1984) characteristics of literary journalism. The relationship between the examined texts was also considered, as they fit into different nonfiction subgenres. Therefore, comparing them was useful for identifying the different nonfiction writing styles of the journalists. The third approach of becoming aware of how the text is presented to us (Bainbridge 2015) was excluded because this study's textual analysis only aims to provide insights into the journalists' writing styles to support the main narrative analysis.

3.4.5 Final interpretation

Cumulatively, the narrative analysis of research interviews and the supporting interpretation of the journalists' nonfiction texts forms a strong case study of each journalist's nonfiction writing practice. The adoption of these two methods reflects Carvalho's advice (cited in Fürsich 2009) to combine textual analysis with other contextual methods to help strengthen the overall analysis as opposed to adopting a purely textual research approach. Narrative analysis of the journalists' interviews allows for verification of interpretations made from reading the journalists' nonfiction books, thereby providing more informed answers to the research questions (see section 3.1 above).

The final research stage interpreted all data gathered over the duration of the project. As the overall methodological approach is a case study one, data triangulation was used to compare findings from the narrative and textual analyses. Yin's (2009, p. 2) argument that "an essential tactic [in case study research] is to use multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge

in a triangulating fashion" was taken into consideration in this final analysis stage. The evidence used in this study was:

- interpretation of the participants' nonfiction texts
- interpretation of the connections between the journalists' news reporting and their nonfiction writing (narrative analysis)
- interpretation of the journalists' motivations for writing nonfiction (narrative analysis)
- interpretation of their story-crafting techniques (narrative analysis)

Collectively these findings provide a robust case study of each journalist's nonfiction writing practice. This kind of comparative approach "is credited with clarifying interpretations, and highlighting how much certain developments belong to very specific contexts" (Boven 2013, p. 50) – making it ideal for this study. The overall aim was to understand the different ways in which Australian journalists craft nonfiction books and how their writing contributes to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism. Combining interpretations derived from the two data sets (nonfiction texts and interviews) required an imaginative research approach, as this "enables a researcher to examine the world in different ways and from different perspectives" (Lapum et al cited in Kara 2015, p. 66) and allows research questions to be addressed from a variety of angles. This echoes the ''bricolage'' method (Markham 2013) of "using a combination of data-gathering methods and analytic techniques" (Kincheloe cited in Kara 2015, p. 27) to arrive at sound research conclusions.

3.5 Research participant selection criteria

A selective sample was created for this study to meet the research aims outlined in section 3.1. The key selection criterion was that participants must be widely published Australian journalists with news reporting experience with major Australian news organisations and who also author nonfiction books. Initially, Annabel Crabb, Christopher Kremmer and two other journalists were identified as potential participants. The latter two journalists declined to participate, so alternatives were sought. Ben Stubbs and Shannon Harvey were included as the two alternative research participants as they fit the above selection criteria. A distinct advantage of Stubbs' and Harvey's inclusion is that their nonfiction writing has not been previously examined by scholars. Therefore, original insights can be drawn to extend current discourse on Australian journalists' nonfiction writing. All participants were recruited via email invitation or written correspondence and all were provided with a detailed participant information sheet (see thesis Appendix, p.177).

3.6 Interview locations and data collected

Research interviews were conducted face-to-face in Sydney and Adelaide, and via Skype. Data collected for this study were:

1. Two semi-structured interviews (of approximately 60 to 80 minutes' duration each) with each participant.
2. One nonfiction book written by each participant and published reviews of participants' nonfiction writing.

3.7 Ethics and limits of study

One key ethical challenge with this study was that research participants must be named in the thesis for the analysis to have context and value. However, as all participants are well-known journalists with medium to high public profiles they were comfortable with being identified. Prior to the first interview, all participants signed a consent form acknowledging that they would be named in this study. They were also informed that they could withdraw at any time up to thesis submission. Creswell (2007, p. 44) outlines valid guidelines on how to ethically conduct primary research: exercising reciprocity by "giving back to participants for their time and efforts in our projects", "the need to honor who owns the account" and the need to respect participants individually and to avoid stereotyping participants. Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 88) also point out the need to "protect research participants" and "promote the integrity of research". These guidelines have been followed by acknowledging all instances where the participants' opinions are cited in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, remaining in regular contact with the participants and highlighting the individuality of each participant in the analysis. As with any research project, my own biases as a researcher and journalist may affect the analysis of data gathered. I aim for a "controlled bias" (Davies & Hughes 2014, p.173) to obtain valid answers to the research questions. It is important to acknowledge that as researchers, we strive for objective analysis but, "We (re)present our data, partly based on participants' perspectives and partly based on our own interpretation, never clearly escaping our own personal stamp on a study" (Creswell 2007, p. 43). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) outline specific ethical issues with the method of narrative inquiry: as "narrative researchers often publish…longer stories from individuals'

narratives…the risk that narrators will feel vulnerable or exposed by narrative work" (p. 424) is higher. This issue affects this project but Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 424) cite Lieblich's advice on how to resolve this problem: researchers should "return to narrators to inform them…when they *do* know how they plan to present, publish or perform the work". I have communicated with my participants whenever I publish or present data collected from their interviews, in keeping with this guideline for good ethical practice.

The limitation of undertaking four case studies is that it is not representative of a large cross-section of local journalists writing nonfiction. However, as Australian book-length journalism is a niche sector, the four-person case study approach is valid as a "core sample" (Davies & Hughes 2014, p. 171) of such writing. As explained in section 3.3.1, Creswell (2007) advises that a researcher should choose "no more than four or five cases" (p. 76). Therefore, this study interprets four Australian journalists' nonfiction writing practices to understand how they contribute to Australian literary journalism and slow journalism.

Chapter 4

Introducing the participant journalists: key writing influences and their motivations for authoring nonfiction

Prominent American literary journalists argue that writing true stories is a craft learned over years (Kramer 1995) – as opposed to a skill that can only be learned through formal study – and that, "there is no one way to do this work" (Conover 2007, p. xv). Australian journalist and nonfiction writer Anna Krien reiterated this point at a nonfiction writing workshop in Alice Springs: "This is a craft. It's not like learning A, B, C" (Anna Krien, personal communication, 24 February 2018). These views inform this study's investigation of the ways Australian journalists who write nonfiction describe how they craft their books. This chapter introduces the four journalists. Brief descriptions of each journalist's professional experience and the settings of the research interviews are provided to give context to the analysis of their interviews in Chapters 5 and 6. A description of key writers who have influenced the journalists' nonfiction writing is also included. Thereafter, the journalists' motivations for writing nonfiction are discussed to address the study's first research question (see Chapter 3, section 3.1). This background informs the interpretation of the journalists' nonfiction writing practice in the next two chapters and is in keeping with Earthy and Cronin's advice that in narrative analysis, "the social construction of the story" (2008, p. 4), should also be considered when analysing interview contents.

Figure 1: The participant journalists

1.1 Christopher Kremmer

1.2 Ben Stubbs

(Picture 1.1 sourced from: http://verveonline.evasproductions.com/52/life/speakingfull.shtml)

(Picture 1.2 sourced from: https://twitter.com/stubbs_ben)

1.3 Annabel Crabb

1.4 Shannon Harvey

(Picture 1.3 sourced from: https://www.facebook.com/AnnabelCrabbJourno/)

(Picture 1.4 sourced from: https://www.wellbeing.com.au/community/thinkers-doers/speak-shannon-harvey-director-feature-documentary-connection.html)

4.1 Christopher Kremmer

(Direct quotes included in this section and section 4.5.1 are sourced from research interviews conducted with Christopher Kremmer on March 20, 2017 and April 6, 2018).

Christopher Kremmer is well-established within Australian journalism, academic and literary circles. He worked as South Asia correspondent for the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* from 1990 to 2000. Based on these reporting experiences, he has authored three acclaimed nonfiction books: *The Carpet Wars* (Kremmer 2002) set in Afghanistan, *Bamboo Palace* (Kremmer 2003) set in Laos and *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006) set in India. The last was shortlisted for the Australian Book Industry Awards' best nonfiction book in 2007. He speaks regularly at local and international literary events such as the Sydney Writers' Festival, the Byron Bay Writers' Festival and the Jaipur Literary Festival. He has also authored a fiction book – *The Chase* (2011) – as a creative work for his doctoral thesis and now works as a senior lecturer in Literary and Narrative Journalism Practice at the University of New South Wales.

I first met Christopher in his office, nestled in a row of glass cubicles and located in a modern wing of the University of New South Wales in Sydney. The room was lined with bookshelves crammed with academic and literary books, and his own works of travel nonfiction, indicating his fascination with travel and creative writing. Posters of the covers of his published books decorated the walls. He offered me a packet of Indian spun sugar candy gifted to him by another student, perhaps to set me at ease before the interview.

4.1.1 Writers who have influenced Christopher

Christopher describes the authors who have influenced him as, “a bit old and classic”. As a teenager and young adult, he was fascinated by European novelists, short story writers, playwrights and poets such as Leo Tolstoy, Nikolai Gogol, Anton Chekhov, Ivan Turgenev, Bertolt Brecht and Vladimir Mayakovsky. “It’s all dark and gloomy stuff, good preparation for journalism, particularly journalism with a Hemingway sort of style”. He also mentions George Orwell as a major influence during this time. Christopher clearly prefers reading literary heavyweights and these readings have influenced the literary style nonfiction that he authors. However, it was Indian novelist Vikram Seth’s (1984) book *From Heaven Lake* that directly influenced him, inspiring him to write his first nonfiction book. “It’s a pip of a book; it’s that thin. It’s just about a trip to Tibet that he did…I read that and I thought, you can do that and probably you can do that better”. According to Christopher, it is important for a writer to be able to read other writers’ books and deconstruct the narrative: “how can I take this thing apart, dissect it, see what the ingredients are…”.

As Christopher’s nonfiction books fit into the genres of travel nonfiction and literary journalism (Stubbs 2015a), it is also useful to note when he first read books of literary journalism written in the New Journalism style of the 1960s and 1970s, discussed in Chapter 2. “I read all the New Journalists. I read [Truman] Capote, [Hunter S] Thompson, [Tom] Wolfe, Gay Talese… I read all those in my first year of university”. These texts were literally new journalism at the time Christopher attended university. So, he read these as the revolutionary works they were, and they set a standard by which he eventually crafted his nonfiction books. Christopher particularly admires the writing of New Journalist Hunter. S.

Thompson, who is also widely regarded as the father of gonzo journalism and recently authored a book chapter (Kremmer 2018a) for a global anthology reflecting on the legacy of Thompson's gonzo journalism. Asian writers who have inspired Christopher include Salman Rushdie and Indian author R. K. Narayan, especially during his time as a foreign correspondent in India. Of Australian authors, he mentions Patrick White as a favourite: "A real masochist. I love how difficult he is to read". This fascination with difficult prose that forces the reader to actively engage with the text also explains Christopher's enthusiasm for Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy's works: "He [Tolstoy] didn't give a fuck what the reader thought…You've got to treat it with a bit of arrogance…you're sort of demonstrating who's in the driver's seat here…". Christopher admits that he too enjoys keeping the reader second guessing. From the above account, it is evident that several prominent historical and contemporary fiction and nonfiction authors have provided inspiration for Christopher's own writing.

4.2 Annabel Crabb

(Direct quotes included in this section and section 4.5.2 are sourced from research interviews conducted with Annabel Crabb on June 20, 2017 and March 21, 2018).

Annabel Crabb is one of Australia's most widely recognised journalists. She began her career in 1997 at *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, and then moved on to cover politics for *The Age*, Melbourne, and later for *The Sydney Morning Herald,* where she remains a weekend columnist. She is the author of three nonfiction books–*Losing It: The Inside Story of the Labor Party in*

Opposition (Crabb 2005), *Rise of the Ruddbot: Observations from the Gallery* (Crabb 2010) and *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014). She has also co-authored a cookbook (Crabb 2015) with her childhood friend Wendy Sharpe and is presently co-authoring a second cookbook with Sharpe. Annabel's Quarterly Essay, *Stop at Nothing: The Life and Adventures of Malcolm Turnbull,* won a Walkley Award for journalism in 2009. She created and hosts the popular Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television programme *The Kitchen Cabinet* and is about to launch a new documentary series on Parliament House. She also publishes a podcast, Chat10Looks3, discussing books, TV shows and other lifestyle matters together with another prominent Australian journalist – Leigh Sales. Annabel is currently the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's chief online political reporter.

The setting for my first interview with Annabel could not have been more different from the university ambience of my first interview with Christopher Kremmer. I was ushered into the trendy modern offices of Cutting Edge editing studio in Sydney's upmarket suburb of Chippendale by a sharply dressed receptionist. Annabel arrived punctually. We sat first at her editing work space and then moved to a quieter area at the back of this busy office. Several staff members walked by throwing curious glances our way as the interview progressed. Annabel was serious, forthcoming and very efficient at managing her time. At one point, she told me we needed to wrap it up as she had to begin work but then softened her tone saying, "You asked good questions. Sometimes people don't".

4.2.1 Writers who have influenced Annabel

Annabel began her explanation of key authors who have influenced her writing with a description of her passion for reading since childhood. She grew up on a farm in the Lower Light region of the Adelaide Plains. “We were country South Australians, my parents voted Liberal and that was it really…my household wasn’t particularly obsessed with politics”. She read a lot as a child: “I think I always took a great delight in language and that probably has helped me throughout my career but I wasn’t particularly interested in politics as a kid”. Her interest in reading came naturally to Annabel as her mother and grandmother were also avid readers. “We had lots of books lying around…so I read some books that were probably a bit older than my reading age”. The significance of Annabel’s childhood reading for her future journalism and book writing career is effectively explained by American literacy expert, Mary Leonhardt:

> The sophisticated skills demanded by high-level academic or professional work–the ability to understand multiple plots or complex issues, a sensitivity to tone, the expertise to know immediately what is crucial to a text and what can be skimmed–can be acquired only through years of avid reading. (cited in Krashen 2004, p. 1)

The reading skills Annabel acquired in childhood shape how she now interprets and comments on complex Australian political and social issues through her books and news writing.

One writer who strongly influenced Annabel’s opinion news writing style was British journalist and political sketch writer Matthew Parris. She first

encountered his writing when taking a gap year in Glasgow, Scotland, in her early twenties.

> I kept buying it [*The Times* newspaper] for these articles by this guy called Matthew Parris who was very funny and he wrote about politics in a way that made me really interested in it…When I eventually became a journalist and I started writing politics, I think I always thought one day I'd like to do something like that. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

Annabel admits that her first attempts to mimic Parris' political sketches were terrible: "I think that you have to learn to structure a news story and how to do all the basics before you can go off and be Matthew Parris". Since then, she has mastered her writing voice and come into her own as one of Australia's best political sketch writers (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2018). It is this satirical writing style that Annabel transfers into her nonfiction.

Other journalists whose writing Annabel admires include British journalists Marina Hyde and Caitlin Moran because "they are so brilliant when they get worked up". She also admires the writing of Australian political journalist Laura Tingle: "I think she's at the height of her powers at the moment. She's able to do that thing where you take a very complicated policy issue and make sense of it over 1,200 words". Annabel also mentions the writing of Australian journalist and commentator, David Marr. "He has this capacity to use language in a very modulated way because he can be violent sometimes and it's very effective but he's also funny and expansive, a very beautiful writer". Quality long-form journalism is clearly part of Annabel's preferred reading but she also admires literary writers. British feminist writer Virginia Woolf is the author

Annabel reads whenever she finds herself experiencing writer's block. "Woolf is a great hero of mine because of her capacity to minutely examine things and make the writing seem huge and textured and detailed". Russian novelist Nikolay Novikov is another historical writer Annabel admires. Of contemporary literary writers, Annabel mentions Anne Enright: "She is intellectually and observationally one of the greatest writers I've ever read I think". Annabel clearly admires writers with strong authorial voices, who can mould language to suit their specific writing agenda, whether it is journalism or nonfiction writing. However, by her own admission, the strongest influence on her political reporting is the political sketch writing of Parris.

4.3 Ben Stubbs

(Direct quotes included in this section and section 4.5.3 are sourced from research interviews conducted with Ben Stubbs on April 24, 2017 and March 5, 2018).

Ben Stubbs is an academic, freelance journalist and nonfiction writer. He began his career as a television script writer in Sydney in 2002 and then worked as a feature and travel writer for *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and magazine and travel publications such as *Australian Geographic* and *Rough Guides*. His first nonfiction book, *Ticket To Paradise*, was published locally by Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Books in 2012 and his second book, *After Dark,* was published internationally by Signal Books, United Kingdom, in 2016. His third nonfiction book, titled *Invisible Lines*, will be published in 2019. Ben works as a journalism and writing lecturer at the University of South Australia, and continues to freelance as a feature news

writer for the local editions of international news publications like *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*.

I knew Ben professionally before this study as I tutored for him at the University of South Australia from 2015 to 2016. His university office displays a poster of his first book, *Ticket To Paradise* (2012), mementos from his travels to far-flung destinations and bookshelves lined with the prose of travel writing heavyweights such as Ryszard Kapuściński, Pico Iyer and Ted Conover, indicating a deep interest in travel writing. However, my interviews with Ben are via Skype to his home office in Adelaide. During our most recent 2018 interview, he was spending the day writing another chapter of his latest book on South Australia. From my limited Skype camera view, I noticed that his desk was piled high with books and field notes that he was referring to as he wrote. Ben showed me the background literature he was using to write his current book. These included a historical book on South Australia, a contemporary nonfiction account of South Australia, which he described as extensive but lacking in pace, and notebooks filled with handwritten notes taken during trips to various landmarks and towns while researching this book.

4.3.1 Writers who have influenced Ben

Ben's descriptions of the Paraguayan town of New London in his first book, *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) echo American literary journalist Ted Conover's gritty scene-setting style in *Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing* (Conover 2001). He is "inspired by Conover's prose" and lent me a copy of Conover's (2001) book when I first mentioned that I was interested in undertaking research on journalists' nonfiction writing. Similarly, Ben's descriptions of torture

in *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), are reminiscent of South American writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez's writing on torture in Colombia. He read Marquez's writing on Colombia and magical realism at the time of writing his 2014 book. Ben explains that English novelist Graham Greene was also a big influence on his time in Paraguay writing *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), enabling him to conceptualise the book in a "literary sense". Marquez's and Greene's prose inspired the more literary aspects of Ben's nonfiction whereas Conover's writing inspired Ben in a more "contemporary sense". Australian nonfiction authors he admires include Christopher Kremmer and Nicholas Rothwell. The fact that Ben used Kremmer's nonfiction as a case study in his (2014) PhD thesis and other scholarly articles (Stubbs 2015) further indicates his interest in Kremmer's writing.

The above-mentioned authors are ones who directly influenced Ben's nonfiction writing, but several other authors had a more indirect influence. Before Ben wrote his first nonfiction book, he had read travel writers such as Paul Theroux, Bruce Chaplin, Pico Iyer, John Gimlette and William Dalrymple. In his youth, Ben also followed the work of American magazine writers such as Tim Cahill and Colin Thubron. When asked about Bill Bryson, an often-cited example of successful travel writing, Ben says that his appreciation of Bryson's writing is only recent: "I read his books in the past but I didn't get his humour…until more recently…[The] book of his that I like the most is *A Walk in the Woods*" because of its well-structured narrative. This reflects Ben's leanings towards more panoramic literary kinds of travel writing such as that of William Dalrymple and Christopher Kremmer. It also explains why Ben was more drawn to *A Walk in the Woods* (Bryson 1998) than Bryson's earlier books – because it is so

focussed. “It’s just two men and one trail and one place and the simplicity of it was really nice”. Ben’s structuring of his second nonfiction book, *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016b), has a similar simplicity and clarity of purpose. The book describes Madrid streets at night time and each chapter is one night walk. Ben explains that Charles Dickens’ *Night Walks* (2010), first published in 1869, was a key influence on *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016). He was inspired by Dickens’ (2010) classic account of his nocturnal ramblings on London streets and this gave him the idea to write a book on nocturnal Madrid streets. From the above discussion, it is evident that Ben’s nonfiction writing is inspired by the works of literary writers, travel writers and literary journalists.

4.4 Shannon Harvey

(Direct quotes included in this section and section 4.5.4 are sourced from research interviews conducted with Shannon Harvey on June 19, 2017 and May 30, 2018).

Shannon Harvey is a Sydney-based investigative health journalist, documentary filmmaker and nonfiction book writer. She began her journalism career as a freelancer and then worked with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Fairfax Media as an online, television and radio reporter. These roles gave her the opportunity to be posted in diverse locations such as Samoa, Tonga and Tasmania. In 2008, she left Fairfax to start her own company, Elemental Media, with her filmmaker husband, to pursue her investigative journalism without the confining corporate pressures of working for a large media company. Shannon’s company has produced numerous online documentaries for Australian media companies. The success of her

investigative health documentary, *The Connection* (Harvey 2015a), inspired her to write her first nonfiction book *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016). To understand Shannon's nonfiction writing, it is first necessary to understand her health circumstances. She was motivated to become an investigative health journalist after she was diagnosed with "systemic lupus erythematosus (known as SLE or lupus), an autoimmune disease where her immune system attacks normal healthy tissue and causes crippling pain, arthritis and exhaustion".

When I first met Shannon for our 2017 interview, I expected to meet a frail young woman, given her ongoing illness. I was ushered into her office, on the upper floor of a bustling city street in Manly on Sydney's northern beaches, by two members of her team who seemed bemused as to what I was doing there. In walked a beaming energetic woman who turned out to be Shannon. As I became more acquainted with her over the course of this study, I have come to realise that her nonfiction writing is deeply inspired by her personal experience of living with an ongoing illness.

4.4.1 Writers who have influenced Shannon

Shannon prefers reading science and health nonfiction, and science fiction books. "For fun, I tend to read sci-fi and fantasy novels. I also read at least one nonfiction book a week". At the time of the second interview, she was reading two contemporary health nonfiction books, *The Human Instinct* (Miller 2018) and *Your Brain Is A Time Machine* (Buonomano 2018), although she concedes that so far, this book "is not that good". Key recent nonfiction books that inspired Shannon's own writing include *Lost Connections* (Hari, 2018), *How To Be Human* (Wax 2018) and *Why Buddhism Is True* (Wright 2018). Her reading

preferences indicate that Shannon is deeply interested in finding the most current nonfiction writing on human health and wellbeing. She avidly follows the writing of medical experts who author health nonfiction books, such as Robert Wright and Johann Hari. Shannon is also inspired by the nonfiction writing of British/American comedy writer, actress and author Ruby Wax. Wax's nonfiction books discuss her personal battles with mental health which in turn inspires Shannon's nonfiction writing on her struggle with lupus. The writers who have inspired Shannon the most relate closely to her own health and book writing interests. "Writers I consider influential on me are: Tim Parks…Michael Pollan, especially for his seminal *Unhappy Meals* piece [article] and A.J. Jacobs—his *My Outsourced Life* piece [article] is one of my favourite". The kind of soul searching and life changing nonfiction writing that Tim Parks authors (Crown 2012), is clearly an inspiration for Shannon's own attempts at authoring thought-provoking health nonfiction. The reason why Shannon considers American author and journalist A. J. Jacobs' satirical article on outsourcing his life to an executive assistant in India (Jacobs 2018) a favourite is less obvious. However, Jacobs' online biography helps to explain: "He [Jacobs] has written four *New York Times* bestsellers that combine memoir, science, humor and a dash of self-help" (Jacobs 2018). Shannon's own nonfiction writing is peppered with similar anecdotal information on science and health and, at times, wry references to her ongoing health struggles. The above science, health and lifestyle writers have made a significant impression on Shannon, and most importantly, her interest in reading such books enables her to author her health nonfiction books from a widely-informed position. The next section discusses the journalists' motivations for authoring nonfiction.

4.5 Motivations for writing nonfiction

Each journalist interviewed expressed specific reasons for writing nonfiction books. Scrutinising and comparing their motivations enables a better understanding of their individual nonfiction writing practice and the different nonfiction genres they author, thereby addressing RQ1.

4.5.1 Christopher Kremmer

Christopher's motivation to write nonfiction was mainly due to an increasing awareness of tensions between his creative writing interests and his journalism writing. He enjoyed newswriting because it allowed him to express his deeply political side: "I come from a Catholic Labour Party kind of family in inner Western Sydney, so politics was always an interest". However, hard newswriting's objectivity and word limitations stifled his ability to express the full range of experiences he gained while working as a foreign correspondent. Ironically, it is this journalism experience that provided the material and ideas for his nonfiction books. Christopher's aspirations to write creatively existed prior to working as a journalist, although he only became a nonfiction writer later in life. The tension between his news writing and creative writing existed from his university years: "We're talking about when I'm 18, for the rest of my life that tension doesn't go away…It's always there and you're dealing with it at some level. You might be doing one job, one journalistic job and in the background working on a more creative project". As discussed further in Chapter 5, section 5.1, he maintained a mental firewall between his day-to-day journalism work and his book writing. This indicates that, for him, there is a distinct separation between his creative nonfiction writing and his objective hard news writing.

Christopher explains why only some journalists choose to become nonfiction writers: “It’s about your personality as well…certain personalities have been really good journalistic gophers…they love all that [referring to the competitive daily deadline driven news writing environment] … there’s another set of people that are a little bit more sensitive…they are probably the ones who got more aspiration to do other things”. From this, it can be gathered that journalists who write nonfiction often have a reflective nature, and want to communicate with readers in a more creative and expansive manner. Sim’s (1984) explanation of immersion as a key quality of literary journalism is reflected in Christopher’s statement – journalists like Christopher, who author nonfiction, want to immerse themselves in a topic in a long-term manner that other journalists do not or may not have the capacity to.

How Christopher’s journalism experiences inversely motivated him to write nonfiction is illustrated by this next statement:

> I always had this feeling…even when I was correspondent for the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] and particularly The Herald [*The Sydney Morning Herald*] … when I got to sit down to write *Carpet Wars* (2002) in particular…I’d been covering Afghanistan for 10 years almost at that point and I realised that it was just this classic journalistic grim sort of portrait of the place…there was nothing that really mattered. (Kremmer, personal communication, March 20, 2017)

This statement illustrates Geiber’s (1964) view that creating a news narrative is an intensely personal experience for a sensitive journalist, despite organisational or governance circumstances. Christopher’s straight news articles were restricted by the news format of the organisations he was

employed by and focussed on objective reporting of the Afghan war. However, he could include personal perspectives on the conflict in his longer news narratives and nonfiction. He intentionally wrote his nonfiction book on Afghanistan, *The Carpet Wars* (2002), from the perspective of a simple carpet dealer "who's neither a victim or a big powerful person". By adopting this close personal angle, he felt the "fetters come off" and the distance between him and his sources recede, allowing him to express details of the Afghan conflict that he could not in newswriting. His writing process illustrates Eason's (1984) concept of ethnographic realism in literary journalism as, by writing in this manner, Christopher penetrates existing truth facades on the Afghan war to reveal underlying realities. It also reflects Neveu's definition of one of the characteristics of slow journalism as "prioritising untold stories" (2016, p. 448) as Christopher tells the story of the Afghan conflict from an ordinary man's perspective. His nonfiction writing can therefore be classified as literary journalism and it also contributes to slow journalism.

From the above explanation, we can surmise that Christopher was motivated to write nonfiction because his news reporting could not present full insights into the human-interest aspects of issues he covered. He considers his nonfiction a "reinterpretation of what's ok in journalism" and "almost anti-journalism". The information he gathered while working as a foreign correspondent was re-interpreted using his personal perspectives on news issues and expanded into creative nonfiction narratives that moved away from the objective confines of journalism.

4.5.2 Annabel Crabb

The first two nonfiction books Annabel wrote, *Losing It: The Inside Story of the Labor Party in Opposition* (2005) and *Rise of the Ruddbot: Observations from the Gallery* (2010), were commissioned by publishers. As a result, she found it challenging to write them: “it was somebody else’s idea really and I was foolishly and probably vainly drawn to the idea of writing a book”. Annabel was based in London as Fairfax correspondent at the time of writing her first book. She worked at her regular job all day and phoned Australian Labor politicians at night to write the book. What can be observed from this is that her drive to write this first nonfiction book was strong despite the practical difficulties.

Annabel’s third nonfiction book, *The Wife Drought* (2014) is a significant departure from her first two books because she came up with the idea herself based on her own experiences as a female journalist and parallels with the working conditions of female federal politicians. “I wrote it because I’d been thinking and writing about, and living a lot of the issues in the book”. Her statement illustrates Geiber’s (1964) view that creating a news narrative can be a very personal experience for a journalist. Her motivations for writing this book (Crabb 2014) were far more personal than her motivations for writing her first two commissioned books. *The Wife Drought* (2014) is the focus of this discussion of her motivations for writing nonfiction as it was her first uncommissioned book. The initial idea came from her regular Sunday column for the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Crabb 2013). This column allowed her to move away from the solely political reporting she was doing for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and

comment on “broader social issues”, and she found that she greatly enjoyed writing it. The column edition that specifically inspired Annabel to author *The Wife Drought* (2014) was one she wrote suggesting an airdrop of wives over Parliament House to increase women’s rate of participation in federal politics (discussed further in Chapter 5, section 5.2) that generated an unprecedented number of comments from readers. Annabel’s immersion (Sims 1984) in political reporting and related social commentary inspired and enabled her to author the book.

Annabel’s motivations for writing *The Wife Drought* (2014) were quite personal. However, the impact of the book lies in the fact that she chose a subject with deep social value to the Australian public. She addressed a topic of high public interest but also humanised the issue with her own and other women’s personal insights:

> I noticed that a lot of the guys that I’d come up with through political journalism were all being made editors and they were also having kids but having kids didn’t have the same effect on their careers as it had on the women around me…all of that stuff swirled around and obviously, I was looking at women that I knew in politics and the differing experiences of women who are parents in politics from the experience of men who are parents. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

Annabel’s observations on disparities in work conditions for Australian men and women compelled her to write *The Wife Drought* (2014) – a book that “penetrates the public facade” (Eason 1984, p. 53) to reveal confronting realities of local women’s working lives. Her views on feminism

and gender equality were also represented in this book: “I think, as a deeply personal value, I’m a feminist. I am very committed and enthusiastic, in a positive way, about the idea of gender equality, not only as an equity issue but also as an unfolding [one]”. However, Annabel doesn’t endorse gender debate as a war between the sexes. Instead, with *The Wife Drought* (2014) she also wanted to “look at how the existing set of assumptions disadvantages men…in very sad ways”. She brings up the valid point that, “the idea that you would spend all this time and money educating women through the tertiary sector and then ending up with some weird equation where 98 per cent of ASX 200 CEOs are men…just doesn’t add up to me”. From the above, it is evident that Annabel’s motivations for writing *The Wife Drought* (2014) were highly personal, fuelled by her own experiences and those of other working women, and her views on feminism and gender equality. This reflects Geiber’s (1964) concept of the personal aspect of news narratives journalists create – Annabel’s accumulated news reporting experiences have had a strong impact on the kind of nonfiction books she authors.

During research interviews a circumstance specific to female writers also came up. This is the emotional toll that writing books takes on a woman who is also a wife and mother. “It’s an expensive process in several ways, timewise–the effort and the time lost with family…so I think it’s a very emotionally draining process”. While this is a deterrent rather than a motivation to write books, it highlights the stoic drive to write that many female authors possess. For *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), Annabel took 12 weeks off work and her writing routine was “all day, every day and

most of the night" indicating her deep motivation to author this book and the sacrifices made to do so.

4.5.3 Ben Stubbs

Ben began to write nonfiction when he got bored writing standard news and travel features: "you're always constrained by a word count or the theme or the mode of a particular publication". He is drawn to nonfiction because he considers "true stories and real people's lives so much more fascinating than fiction", and finds writing nonfiction more reassuring than writing fiction because fiction's lack of boundaries seems intimidating. Ben's strong interest in historical events and "how much it shapes the stories people tell" also motivates his writing. He finds nonfiction exciting because the more he digs into a story, the more material he comes up with to "weave into a narrative", reflecting Sims' (1984) perspectives on story immersion and story accuracy as key characteristics of literary journalism.

Ben's first nonfiction book *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) is a good example of the circumstances that motivated him to go beyond writing news. He initially went to Paraguay to write a story on the New Australia colony there for *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "For them [the news organisation] that's it, nice story, good job move onto the next one but there was so much more within that". Ben felt a need to persist and return to Paraguay to investigate further, demonstrating how creating a news narrative (Geiber 1964) can be a very personal experience for a sensitive journalist. Ben's experience of writing this story for *The Sydney Morning Herald* led him to eventually write *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) with the aim of revealing underlying realities (Eason

1984). “The stories I want to tell take longer than a week, take longer than 1200 words,” he said. Ben describes it as a kind of evolution where he started off being comfortable with writing 500 word stories, then for a long time wrote features of up to 2000 words and then progressed to writing travel essays of up to 5000 words for literary publications such as *Meanjin* and the *Griffith Review*. The move to nonfiction book writing came almost naturally: “I can never go back but I think that that’s kind of a natural progression. I wouldn’t be surprised if a lot of people had the same understanding”. Another reason that Ben was drawn to nonfiction writing is because he began writing news features during the rise of social media, resulting in his stories being distributed online as well – “You…believed all the hype for a little while, wow I got this many shares and this many people are commenting on my articles”. However, in his view, both online and print news lack the permanency of book writing: “You’re writing something that has a little bit more legacy…even though books of my ilk aren’t going to sell 150,000 copies, it still lasts, it’s still something that sits on people’s shelves that I can talk to you about”. In sum, Ben’s motivations for writing nonfiction stem firstly from wishing to escape the limitations of news feature writing and secondly from a desire to leave a more lasting written legacy.

4.5.4 Shannon Harvey

Shannon’s motivations for writing her first nonfiction book, *The Whole Health Life* (2016), are the most personal. After being diagnosed with lupus at the age of 24, she tried various forms of conventional and alternative medicine for six years but failed to recover. This prompted her to travel the world interviewing leading medical researchers and individuals who had recovered from life-threatening illnesses, and sort “the quacks from the qualified”. From this

investigative journey, she discovered there was far more to maintaining good health and mental wellbeing than conventional Western medicine could offer. Shannon began writing health news features based on her findings. Thereafter she was inspired to create a health documentary, *The Connection* (Harvey 2015a), based on her findings, and a year later she wrote and published *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016), her first nonfiction book. Her progression from writing health news articles to authoring *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) reflects Geiber's (1964) views on the personal experience of creating a news narrative for sensitive journalists and the effect it has on them. Shannon's own health issues and experiences of writing health articles eventually inspired her to write her first nonfiction book (Harvey 2016).

> I always want to provide trustworthy information to the best of my ability and I'm really proud of the book because I think it's very trustworthy. I also want to share people's wisdom. (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017)

Her attention to the trustworthiness of information she presents in her nonfiction writing is indicative of the key literary journalism characteristics of accuracy and author responsibility (Sims 1984). Shannon's primary motivation for writing *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) was to share with others knowledge she gained on how to live with an incurable disease. Joseph describes this type of nonfiction writing as "auto-ethnographic writing" (cited in Rickett 2015, p. 83) and notes that there has been a resurgence of such writing since the late twentieth century, particularly by writers who have experienced severe illness. Shannon's nonfiction fits into this auto-ethnographic nonfiction category as her own life experiences form a significant portion of the narrative.

Shannon is presently gathering research to write another investigative book critiquing the global "wellness industry". She admits that this book may be controversial given that most of her readers are keen on alternative therapies but defends her stance saying, "I've just had enough of quackery and people being exploited". Shannon's investigation of truths about human health and wellbeing, through nonfiction writing, supports Eason's (1984) view that some journalists seek to penetrate public facades through their literary journalism. Her new book is still partly motivated by her ongoing health issues, but she now has added motivation: she is the mother of two young boys and she said that, "in this world it's really hard to raise healthy kids". Her latest book also seeks to inform readers about the dangers of blindly following the guidelines of wellness gurus. From the above statements, it is evident that Shannon's nonfiction writing is motivated by her personal interests in human health and wellbeing, and strongly influenced by her own experiences of living with an ongoing illness.

When discussing motivations for writing nonfiction, the fact that *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) is self-published cannot be overlooked. Self-publishing is often described as vanity publishing by critics (Mitchell 2014). However, in recent years even traditional publishers have acknowledged that it is a growing sector and that if done well by an experienced writer, self-publishing can be a highly effective form of book publishing (Mitchell 2014). Shannon met with several interested Australian publishers before deciding to self-publish *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016).

> We did the maths on it and we realised that not only would I never be financially remunerated for the time that I put into the book, but that the

> book would have the possibility of being buried never to be seen by an audience. So, we made the decision to do it all independently. (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017)

Self-publishing her book was a sound marketing and economic decision given that she had already accumulated considerable writing experience in journalism. In terms of writer motivation, it is also proof of Shannon's entrepreneurial spirit and determination to tell her story. The success of other contemporary self-published health nonfiction writers, such as Johann Hari (2018), also demonstrates the viability of this publication model if undertaken with experience and care.

4.5.5 Comparison of participants' motivations

The need to go beyond the narrative capacity of news writing to fully articulate complex ideas and observations is mentioned by all four journalists. A lack of space and time in news writing to effectively explore significant story themes is a common factor that motivates these journalists to author nonfiction books. However, the news stories they write often inspire their nonfiction books, as can be seen from the above accounts. These connections between their news writing and nonfiction writing reflect Geiber's (1964) concept that writing a news narrative can be a very personal experience for some journalists.

Thereafter, their motivations for authoring nonfiction differ based on their specific journalism experience and writing interests. Christopher's experience as a foreign correspondent directly influenced the three nonfiction books he authored (Kremmer 2002; 2003; 2006). His interest in the politics and culture of the countries he reported from motivated him to write travel and current affairs

nonfiction books with strong human interest angles. Annabel was motivated to author *The Wife Drought* (2014) due to her personal experience of working as a female journalist and observing the experiences of other Australian working women. While Christopher's nonfiction was generally inspired by his experiences as a foreign correspondent, Annabel's (2014) book was directly inspired by a political news column that she wrote (Crabb 2013). Ben's motivations for writing nonfiction are that he loves immersing himself in a story and weaving it into a narrative, and the more lasting written legacy that book writing leaves as opposed to news writing. His first book (Stubbs 2012), like Annabel's third (Crabb 2014), was inspired by a specific news feature article that he wrote. He authors travel nonfiction that is informed by his extensive experience as a travel feature writer. Shannon's motivations for writing nonfiction are highly personal as her book (Harvey 2016) was inspired by her ongoing struggle with lupus. She authors health nonfiction that is informed by her experience in writing health news articles. Sims' (1984) stipulation that immersion is a key quality of literary journalism applies to all four journalists' nonfiction writing practice, as they have all immersed themselves in topics, issues and places of interest to author nonfiction books. In Christopher's case, in South East Asian culture and politics, in Annabel's case Australian politics and social issues, in Ben's case travel writing and history and Shannon's case human health and wellbeing issues. This immersion allows them to penetrate the public facade of knowledge on these topics through their nonfiction stories and reveal underlying realities in keeping with Eason's (1984) concept of ethnographic realism in literary journalism. In doing so these journalists are also narrating previously untold stories through nonfiction writing which is a key

characteristic of slow journalism practice (Neveu 2016). This suggests there are close links between the practices of literary journalism and slow journalism as other recent scholarship (Neveu 2016; Ricketson 2016a; Maguire & Maguire 2017) also identifies.

From the above, it is evident that each journalist's news reporting specialisations and individual motivations for writing nonfiction have played a significant role in the genre of nonfiction books they author. With this understanding, the journalists' verbal accounts of the influence of their news reporting experiences on their nonfiction writing practices are examined next.

Chapter 5

How their journalism influences the participants' nonfiction writing

This chapter undertakes a narrative analysis of the participants' descriptions of how their journalism experience influences their nonfiction writing. As all four participants work or have previously worked as journalists, it is important to identify the connections they perceive between their news reporting practice and nonfiction writing practice.

5.1 Christopher Kremmer

Christopher's interest in journalism began at childhood when he travelled with his family to Canberra and watched the Australian Parliament sitting. He recalls being "fixated on the press gallery" and watching journalism heavyweights Richard Carleton and Laurie Oakes working. He describes this experience as an inspirational moment in his life when he felt that journalism might be something he would like to do one day. Thereafter, he published an article in his school newspaper at the age of 15. This was also when he began travelling independently with friends and started to keep a travel journal. He then enrolled in a Professional Writing and Journalism course at the Canberra College of Adult Education (CAE) and progressed to a Professional Writing degree at the University of Canberra. The first subject in the CAE course was on short story writing and he distinctly recalls key writers included in the subject's set text, such as Ernest Hemingway, Graham Greene and D H Lawrence. "From that point on…I was really interested in writing literary short stories and maybe a novel at some point or a play. And in the course of the next 10 to 15 years, I

wrote all of those things," Christopher says. He won the Patricia Rappolt Prize for young writers in the *Canberra Times* National Short Story Competition in 1981, and his stories were published in *Australian Short Stories* in 1986 and 1984. This indicates that Christopher had an interest in writing literature before becoming a journalist, providing clues on why he later ventured into nonfiction writing. He was also appointed editor of the university newspaper in his second year of study at the age of 18. So, in his opinion, "the journalism thing as well as the literary thing was there right from the beginning and after that…for the rest of my life". These childhood experiences and early writing outputs demonstrate that Christopher's interest in newswriting and literary writing began before he ventured into professional work. Both writing genres intrigued him from an early age and the literary authors he read at university inspired the kind of nonfiction he would later write.

Christopher began his career in journalism in the 1980s at a print news publication. His was the "transition generation where we started with typewriters and linotype". The subsequent introduction of the internet and digital news delivery over the next 20 or so years resulted in a sharp upheaval in his work environment: "the word loses its power, the image is more important and the speed of things…it's all about just riding the tiger of the now". These changes to his work conditions affected Christopher's perception of the journalism industry and perhaps played a factor in his decision to begin writing nonfiction. However, the career move that seems to have most influenced his nonfiction writing was his appointment as South Asia correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, he reported for the ABC, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* from Laos, Afghanistan, India and

Vietnam. These news reporting experiences provided inspiration and some of the information for his nonfiction books focusing on society and politics in Laos, Afghanistan and India. The opportunities that journalism provided, such as the mobility to travel throughout South Asia, the chance to meet both high-profile and ordinary individuals, and the ability to experience world events firsthand have all influenced the three nonfiction books Christopher has authored. He describes these opportunities anecdotally, saying, “You get to see all levels of society…like that French photographer Cartier-Bresson…he’d be sitting in [Mahatma] Gandhi’s lap virtually at one moment and in some slum in Mumbai in the other”. Christopher also explains that observational journalism is a key skill that proved to be very useful for his nonfiction writing: “the source might be talking to me…but while engaging them…I’m taking massive notes on every tiny detail of my environment”. He explains this as a “fetish for detail that goes beyond the journalistic, but is very much cultivated by journalism”. Christopher also mentions the “polyphonic skills” that journalism cultivates as an advantage to crafting nonfiction. This is the ability to gather the views of several individuals and present differing viewpoints effectively. This technique of presenting different views can also be applied when structuring nonfiction narratives.

Another quality that successful journalists possess that transfers well into book writing is their stamina, as Christopher himself mentions. He uses his recollections of another foreign correspondent, working in India, to explain this quality: “One of the most formidable people you can ever come across is a journalist on their first posting overseas. They have superhuman qualities of energy. They will work 20 hours a day constantly for three years. It’s just unstoppable”. This kind of stamina is what enables journalists like Christopher

to complete book-length works given that book writing is often an isolating and long-drawn-out activity (Conover 2007). Cumulatively, journalism provided the opportunity to source unique ideas for Christopher's nonfiction books, and key performance, observational and writing skills to craft such books. This confirms Geiber's view that creating a news narrative is a "singularly personal experience" (1964, p. 218) for sensitive journalists despite professional and ethical restrictions imposed by media organisations or governments. Christopher's news reporting experiences in South East Asia inspired him to write three nonfiction books, with each shaped by his perception of South East Asian politics and society, extending Geiber's (1964) concept of the personal aspect of news narratives journalists create into Christopher's nonfiction writing. In other words, the nonfiction books that journalists author are shaped even more by their own perceptions than are their news reports.

Although Christopher's nonfiction books were informed by his journalism, he claims that he always "maintained a kind of firewall" between his literary instincts and his journalistic work. He visualises this divide as the difference between art and politics. Journalism work satisfied his political side that likes accountability and truth finding, and book writing satisfied his literary and creative writing instincts: "So they kind of co-existed but…the tension was always there". This indicates that while the practical affordances of being a senior journalist provided the potential to write nonfiction books, authoring such books required breaking away from news writing style and venturing into literary writing style. This supports Sartre's (1947, p. 65) idea that "writing is a certain way of wanting freedom". The metaphorical firewall that Christopher describes between his news writing and nonfiction writing represents his departure from

the narrative limitations of journalism to venture into the narrative opportunities of nonfiction writing. It also points to connections between slow journalism and literary journalism, as slow journalism is “narrative in style” (Neveu 2016). It is worth noting that journalism writing provided a starting point for some of the best historical nonfiction writers as well, as Christopher himself mentions, such as Ernest Hemingway and Mark Twain. However, it is in breaking away from the inverted pyramid (most important information first) style of newswriting that a nonfiction writer emerges, as literary journalists and scholars observe (Wolfe 1973; Sims 1984; Conover 2007). This indicates that journalism writing can be a formative base from which individuals like Christopher can go on to write more creatively.

5.2 Annabel Crabb

Unlike Christopher, Annabel did not study journalism. Instead she undertook a law degree at the University of Adelaide and upon its completion was unsure of what career path to take. On the recommendation of a journalist friend, she sat for the cadetship exam at Adelaide’s *The Advertiser* newspaper and thereby landed her first journalism role. “It was probably what was driving me away from law more than what drew me towards journalism…at the end of my law degree I thought, ‘I really don’t want to be a lawyer,’” Annabel says. However, she “loved the part of the lectures where you’d go through the cases and hear what happened…in hindsight I can see that the story was what I enjoyed”. This explains why Annabel eventually became such a successful political journalist; her law education coupled with her appetite for a good story enables her to understand and convey complex political issues with finesse.

In terms of how her journalism has influenced her book writing, Annabel feels that it is mostly in the way she researches information for her books and her method of inquiry into any topic. “I research like a journalist researches, which means at top speed. I skim things first to kind of triage and I’m looking for a hook or something that’s interesting.” She further explains that this kind of research is unlike the rigorous approach that an academic would take: “I’m looking for a spark, which is classic journalistic training…you look through a 200-page dense report and you’re looking for something to give your reader a way into that density of information”. Her method of including sparks of interesting information to captivate readers can be observed in *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), where she uses anecdotes about Australian working women to illustrate the legal constraints affecting women who work in this country. However, there is a danger in undertaking such speedy research, as Annabel acknowledges, and it is again a classic journalism issue: the danger of getting the facts wrong. To write *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), she had to read academic journals on Australian work and marriage law but admits that she is not very good at understanding statistics. She addressed this issue by double checking her interpretation of reported statistics with a friend who is a “stats whizz”. This commitment to accuracy comes from Annabel’s journalism training, as she explains, and is also a key characteristic of literary journalism (Sims 1984). It also reflects the literary journalism characteristic of responsibility (Sims 1984).

Finally, Annabel notes that it is the very fact that her level of inquiry into a topic is at “punter level” that makes her nonfiction writing valuable. She admits she is always paranoid that she is not qualified enough to write on the complex topics

discussed in her books, such as feminism, gender issues and Australian women's work conditions in *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014). However, she justifies her approach by saying, "the imperfection of my understanding is an advantage because I'm approaching it just like any other person that's picking up the book". Annabel scrutinises complex topics such as Australian politics and Australian views on feminism with an open-minded inquiring mindset. She is thereby able to write unique perspectives on such issues in her nonfiction.

> I think sometimes if you've been in that field for a long time you're encrusted by your own history so you don't necessarily recognise the sparkling thing that is of interest to the novice [herself] in this field. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

Once again, this is characteristic of journalistic inquiry where the expectation is to be proficient enough to interpret and comment on complex issues without being an expert in them (Ricketson & Graham 2017). Journalists who do this well are those who approach stories with an active and intelligent sense of curiosity, and ample background research to understand and interpret issues (Ricketson & Graham 2017). From Annabel's above account, it is evident that the research skills she acquired in journalism have significantly enhanced her nonfiction book research ability.

Annabel is a multimedia journalist who works in print, online and television news media so, it is important to consider whether these different journalism roles influence her nonfiction writing. She explains that at production stage, television journalism has little similarity to nonfiction writing. The former is very much a collaborative team effort between herself, her editorial team and the film crew support team, whereas book writing is mostly an isolated individual effort:

“like most print journalists, I’m a one-woman machine when it comes to that part of my work”. However, the research methods Annabel adopts for her television documentaries, political news reporting and nonfiction book writing are similar. “The priority is finding things, finding stories that they [politicians] may be able to tell well,” she says. So, while there are story research style crossovers between Annabel’s different forms of news reporting and her nonfiction writing, writing books obviously requires dedicated individual effort. Even though she used a research assistant to help her source facts for *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), Annabel was the one who directed the lines of inquiry. Being a multimedia journalist also means she envisions stories visually and verbally, and this contributes to how she dramatises and structures her nonfiction narratives. *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) has a well-paced flow and crisp tone that echoes the style of Annabel’s broadcast news deliveries. Annabel’s nonfiction story ideas flow from her news reporting and this is also a time-saving mechanism as she can generate dual outputs from a single idea: news articles and book-length works of nonfiction.

Annabel’s nonfiction writing voice takes its cues from her journalism writing voice. The satirical writing style that she developed in her news opinion columns is further elaborated in her nonfiction books: “Well, as a writer, I think that the book [*The Wife Drought*] is very much typical of me. I think I look for humour and I like synchronicity and surprising things…”. This aspect is discussed further in Chapter 6 which focuses on the journalists’ nonfiction story-crafting techniques. Annabel’s news reporting also enables her to generate ideas for her books: “*The Wife Drought* really started from a column that I wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald*”. The column was about ways to increase female

participation in federal politics, as mentioned in Chapter 4, and she "was really enjoying writing about some of these broader social issues". In this column (Crabb 2013), Annabel half-jokingly suggested that an airdrop of wives should be staged over Parliament House. "I got so much correspondence [from readers] from that…that's what actually tipped me into thinking I should write a book about this." This inspired her to write *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), reflecting that her journalism and nonfiction writing are closely connected. The shorter narrative that she wrote in her news opinion column was fleshed out and used as the base for her book (Crabb 2014). Annabel's experience of writing this column and her response to ensuing reader comments to her article supports Geiber's (1964) view that creating a news narrative can be a highly personal experience for journalists. In Annabel's case, it inspired her to author *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014).

5.3 Ben Stubbs

Like Annabel, Ben did not study journalism. Instead, he undertook a Communications Media degree at the University of Canberra, majoring in creative writing, with a minor in Spanish. The idea of being a writer didn't take form until around the second year of university when he realised that he liked writing and "the earliest manifestation of that was to want to be a screenwriter". After graduation in 2002, he pursued this aim by working as a screenwriter for a Sydney television station. He was mentored by his former university screen writing lecturer, Felicity Packard, who he says was "the brains behind Underbelly, Anzac Girls" and other popular Australian television programmes. These early forays into screen writing and being mentored by a well-known screenwriter have influenced Ben's nonfiction writing in terms of how he tightly

structures and visualises his narratives in almost cinematic detail such as in his second book: *Madrid After Dark* (Stubbs 2016). The chapters of this book (Stubbs 2016) are each structured as one hour of a full night's walk through Madrid's streets. Similarly, the current nonfiction book he is writing on South Australia is structured according to the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. Ben's writing style is discussed further in Chapter 6. His first experience of journalism and newswriting came indirectly while working as a television screen writer. But he found this work "a little depressing" and wanted to do something more fulfilling. At the time, he had never been overseas but a cousin who was a surfer would describe how he travelled the globe with his surfboard "renting a little hut on the beach for a month…selling his Oakleys for a can of Coke". This inspired Ben to sell his belongings, quit his job and book a round-the-world ticket in 2004. "It was just go and explore and see the world." "I had no intention of writing…just seeing," he says. Like Christopher Kremmer, he kept a travel journal and when he returned to Australia, he approached the editor of *The Canberra Times* with a story idea from his travels in post-tsunami Sri Lanka and India. The story was published in the newspaper's culture section: "They paid me $50…I got my name up there and that was the first time I thought wow I can combine my love of writing; this travel thing is new…and it just kind of snowballed from there". Once again, this phenomenon reflects Geiber's (1964) view that news narratives sensitive journalists write are shaped by their personal experiences – Ben's travels inspired and shaped his news feature articles. Over the next few years he would go on to travel widely, writing regular news features for *The Sydney Morning Herald*'s Traveller section and leading Australian travel magazines. Ben's professional metamorphosis from

screenwriting to travel news writing reflects Sartre's (1947) idea of writing being a way of seeking freedom. He found television screenwriting too restrictive and structured so he looked for writing outlets that offered greater freedom of expression. Penning travel news features allowed him to write more creatively. Thereafter, he began writing long-form essays for publications such as *Meanjin* (Stubbs 2014b) and *Griffith Review* (Stubbs 2015b) because the sorts of stories he wanted to write "take longer than a week, take longer than 1,200 words and it's a kind of evolution". His writing progression indicates that Ben prefers to write expansively in the immersive style of literary journalism and explains why he now writes nonfiction books. His preference for delving deep into a story reflects Sims' (1984) view that story immersion is a key to authoring literary journalism.

Ben's news feature writing experience also shaped his later nonfiction writing style in terms of how he researches his books and structures his nonfiction narratives. With no formal training in journalism, he describes how he became a successful news feature writer as "something I learnt on the road, in the field" which, in his opinion, is much more valuable because you must be very alert and constantly think on your feet. He never wrote straight news stories as he was always freelance and never worked in a newsroom. Ben says that one of the brushes travel writers are tarred with is that they are not considered "real journalists" by in-house reporters. Yet, he says news feature writers require an innate curiosity about the world around them: "if you're not curious about the world and the way that it works and your place within it, then your reader and as an extension of that, the editor…won't be interested either". This indicates that despite being a freelance journalist, Ben's understanding of the intrinsic skills

that feature news writers require is strong. Along with curiosity, he notes, practical skills needed include knowing how to translate a story idea into something concrete and workable that fits specific news audiences, “combining on-the-ground time, research, interviews and how you can package it into…something that lends itself towards a certain theme or issue or topic going on at the moment”. While these personal traits and skills are needed in journalism (Ricketson & Graham 2017), it still leaves the question of the importance of writing ability itself. Ben believes that writing ability is something that can be developed over time: “You need to know how to string a sentence together but a lot of that comes from experience and from reading a lot”. In his opinion, the more important characteristics of persistence and drive need to be there first if someone wants to pursue long-form news writing. These characteristics and writing skills are carried over into Ben’s nonfiction writing. As a freelance journalist, Ben had to be extremely persistent in presenting story ideas to news editors and this ability has stood him well in approaching publishers regarding his nonfiction books. The personal traits that Ben has carried through into his nonfiction writing are the tenacity and drive to follow through a story from initial idea to publishable end and a strong curiosity about the world around him. His career progression clearly positions writing as a way of seeking freedom (Sartre 1947): in Ben’s career, from the limitations of news feature writing to the more expressive and nuanced writing of nonfiction. Both screen writing and news feature writing also provided practical writing skills that Ben has adapted into his nonfiction writing.

5.4 Shannon Harvey

Shannon studied journalism up to postgraduate level at the University of Technology, Sydney in the late 1990s to early 2000s. However, journalistic inquiry also comes naturally to Shannon as she loves finding things out.

> If I was put on this earth to ask one question it would be why, why is it so…I guess I'm about finding wisdom and applying that to my own life and journalism is a great excuse to approach people and ask them to share their wisdom with me. (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017)

This curiosity explains why she chose to eventually become an investigative journalist. Like Annabel, Shannon is a multimedia journalist who thinks of news stories visually and verbally, given her video journalism training at university and in industry as a television and online journalist. "When I did journalism [at university] …multimedia was a weird word. Nobody really knew what that meant then. You were encouraged to specialise and to decide do you want to be a radio journalist or a television journalist or a print journalist, let alone a filmmaker, God!" she exclaims. Her news writing ability is complemented by her multimedia skills. However, while Annabel's broadcast skills are mainly front-of-camera skills as a programme host, Shannon has extensive behind camera experience as a video journalist. She is passionate about video journalism and wrote her masters' thesis on it: "I interviewed all the executives, you know, Channel Nine and ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] and asked them all, 'What is the future of video journalism in Australia?'". After graduating from university, Shannon produced online documentaries for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Fairfax Media and now manages her own video

production company. Her range of journalism skills and experience shapes the way she writes nonfiction books. She created her health documentary, *The Connection* (Harvey 2015a), before she authored her first nonfiction book *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016). Based on her video journalism experience, Shannon's long-form journalism practice appears to be to first create a news documentary and then to write a book from it. She is currently working simultaneously on a second health documentary, *My Year of Living Mindfully* (working title), due for release in 2019 and a nonfiction book on the same topic. Shannon's account of her long-form journalism practice supports Geiber's (1964) concept that news narratives journalists create are shaped by their personal experiences as her experiences of alternative medical health practices, inspire her documentaries and nonfiction books.

Shannon has covered major hard news stories for Australian media such as the 2009 Samoan tsunami but significant journalism experiences for her were not big ones like these: "Interestingly, reporting for five days in a country that has just been devastated by a tsunami is not a defining moment for me". Instead, covering smaller stories affected her the most, such as when she was forced to intrude on a small close knit community's privacy at a time of extreme grief. "I was responsible for reporting in the northwest of Tasmania…and there was a really horrible car accident. Five young women were killed, they were on their way to a netball game," she reveals. Reporting this incident forced Shannon to confront her own views on how to ethically practise journalism. She was not comfortable with the level of personal intrusion required to cover this story. Like Christopher Kremmer, Shannon expresses a disillusionment with mainstream journalism that led her to start her own media company and eventually write her

first nonfiction book, a view reflective of Sartre's (1947) notion of writing as a way of seeking freedom. Shannon evaluated her journalism practice and took a conscious decision to go freelance to pursue her style of investigative journalism.

> When I look back on my career as a journalist there are moments that leap out that have monumentally shaped my values about the way that I want to work and about the work that I want to present to the world. (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017)

Reporting on the above-mentioned car accident story was such a defining moment. It made Shannon realise that she wanted to report facts more empathetically, supporting Geiber's (1964) view that news reporting can be a deeply personal experience for sensitive journalists, shaped by their individual values and socio-cultural perspectives. Her progression to nonfiction writing stems partly from ethical dilemmas she faced working as a mainstream journalist. Nonfiction writing gave her the freedom to investigate and write on topics of interest in far greater detail than she could have done in day-to-day journalism. Shannon's journalism experiences, both positive and negative, have clearly influenced her nonfiction writing practice. The benefit is the journalistic research and writing skillset she – like the other three journalists – brings to her nonfiction writing.

Shannon describes herself as a journalist seeking the truth on health and wellbeing (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017), and *The Whole Health Life* (2016) is an investigation of this topic. At a 2015 presentation at Google headquarters, she cited German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer's views to support her avant-garde approach to health:

> Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized. In the first it is ridiculed, in the second it is opposed, in the third it is regarded as self-evident. (Schopenhauer cited by Harvey 2015b)

Shannon used this quotation to illustrate the fact that her health documentary (Harvey 2015a) challenges currently acknowledged truths about the global health and wellness industry. *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) extends this investigation into health and wellbeing even further. Her aim of contesting publicly perceived truths, through nonfiction writing, reflects Eason's (1984) concept of ethnographic realism in literary journalism where a journalist penetrates public facades to reveal underlying realities. Shannon's passion for revealing the truth also confirms that she is first and foremost an investigative journalist: "I will always be a journalist no matter what I do and I will always bring what I call the journalistic integrity to whatever it is that I do". She sees herself as a journalist who writes nonfiction books and not vice versa – a perception similar to Annabel Crabb's. Shannon's journalism often informs her book writing. For example, the weekly health blog she writes provides ideas for her books: "My notes are all segmented but the journalism just feeds into the right sections". Her immersion (Sims 1984) in the topic of health and wellbeing, via her blog and documentaries, enhances her nonfiction writing on health issues.

The best aspect of being a journalist for Shannon is sharing knowledge with others. "There are so many wise people in the world and often we don't get to hear about that…that's the great thing about being a journalist…that you can share that and hopefully inspire people," she explains. This is also why she writes nonfiction books: to share pertinent insights regarding health with others,

reflecting ideas of writing as a way of seeking freedom (Sartre 1947). In Shannon's case, the freedom to express her views on health through nonfiction writing without the objective restrictions imposed in journalism. However, journalism experience has been an invaluable tool as she used her attention to accuracy to author her book (Harvey 2016), referencing over 700 scientific papers, highlighting author responsibility and accuracy (Sims 1984) as key characteristics of literary journalism.

Shannon's journalistic skills are evident in her book writing, which demonstrates her research, interviewing and communication skills, and writing ability in a narrative format. Her day-to-day journalism also inspires her book writing and vice versa. As in Annabel's case, this cross-pollination is a time-saving tool as it enables Shannon to speedily generate story ideas for her blog, news articles and books. Finally, her immersion in health journalism through her news blog and documentary (Harvey 2015a) inspired her to write *The Whole Health Life* (2016). Her nonfiction writing is therefore heavily influenced by her journalism work experience. The next section compares the participants' journalism experiences.

5.5 Comparison of how journalism experience influences the participants' nonfiction writing

Annabel Crabb and Ben Stubbs did not study journalism at university so this is clearly not a pre-requisite for becoming a journalist. However, they both studied arts degrees that complement journalism practice. The tertiary education undertaken by all four participants has served as a skills and knowledge base for their journalism and nonfiction writing. As with most writers (Sims & Kramer

1995), some of the participants' interest in literature began early in life. In Christopher's case, his interest in journalism and literary writing began at childhood and strengthened in his teens. Similarly, Ben developed an interest in literary writing at university. This provides clues as to why they both authored literary style travel nonfiction later. Christopher and Ben also have predominantly print news writing experience: Christopher has extensive hard news and feature news writing experience, and Ben has extensive feature news writing experience. Print newswriting is an ideal starting point for venturing into long-form writing. Christopher's most awarded nonfiction book (Kremmer 2018b), *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006), was inspired by his experiences of working as foreign correspondent in India and Ben's first nonfiction book, *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), by a news feature he wrote on the New Australia colony in Paraguay. So, their journalism is closely connected to their nonfiction writing. Annabel and Shannon, on the other hand, are multimedia journalists working across a range of news media. Their repertoire of journalism skills enables them to generate story ideas quickly and they both try to maximise the number of stories they produce from a single idea to save time (Crabb, personal communication, March 21, 2018; Harvey, personal communication June 19, 2017). Both expanded news articles they wrote into nonfiction books, namely *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) and *The Whole Health Life* (2016), indicating the close links between their journalism and nonfiction writing.

The type of news reporting each journalist specialised in directly relates to the genre of nonfiction books they author. Christopher's work as a foreign correspondent enabled him to write current affairs and travel nonfiction. Ben's

work as a travel news feature writer inspires his travel nonfiction. Annabel's work as a political reporter inspires her politically-themed nonfiction. Shannon's investigative health journalism inspires her health nonfiction. So, in all four cases, the genre of nonfiction books they author is linked to their specific journalism experience, supporting Geiber's (1964) view that creating news narratives is an intensely personal experience for many journalists. While their news specialisations may not have been wholly intentional, there appears to be an underlying pre-existing interest in each of their specialisations. They are immersed in the news topics they cover and this in turn lifts the quality of their nonfiction writing as story immersion represents one key attribute of literary journalism (Sims 1984). Another commonality is that all participants have used journalism skills in their nonfiction writing, namely, story research skills, interviewing skills, writing skills and observational skills. Additionally, a characteristic that they all stressed as invaluable to both journalism and nonfiction writing is a strong curiosity about the world around them, although they each used different analogies to express this view. All participants also emphasised the need for accuracy in both journalism and nonfiction writing. While the nonfiction book genres in which each of them writes varies according to their specific interests, the journalistic skills they draw on for writing nonfiction are similar. In all four cases, journalism experience has been invaluable for writing their nonfiction books.

A significant theme to emerge from this chapter's discussion was that all participants said that writing nonfiction books gave them the opportunity to express their views (on topics of interest) in a narrative style that was not possible in news reporting; indicating that they turned to nonfiction writing when

news reporting became an insufficient outlet for their prose, reflecting ideas (Sartre 1947) of writing as a way of seeking freedom where authors want to be exclusively responsible for texts they create. While it is difficult for an author to be held completely responsible for the texts they write, unless they self-publish as in Shannon's case, writing nonfiction does facilitate greater authorial responsibility than writing journalism. The studied journalists are breaking away from the inverted pyramid structure and objective style of news reporting, and using nonfiction writing to delve into complex topics that cannot be fully addressed even in a news feature article. By doing so, they are also taking responsibility (Sartre 1947; Sims 1984) for the texts they create and putting their writing reputation on the line as they are no longer protected by a media masthead, although Shannon and Ben were already working independently as freelance journalists. They are also trying to penetrate public facades to reveal underlying realities (Eason 1984) through their nonfiction, turning from news writing to nonfiction to achieve this goal. In each journalist's case, they are narrating previously untold stories through their nonfiction, reflecting a key characteristic of slow journalism as well (Neveu 2016). This is indicative of the parallels between slow journalism and literary journalism, an aspect that is investigated further in Chapters 6 and 7.

This comparison shows that there are identifiable connections between the journalism content each participant produces and nonfiction topics they write on. It is also evident that they harness many of their journalism skills into their nonfiction writing. The genres of nonfiction books each journalist writes relates to the types of news stories they write as well. Most significantly however, their nonfiction writing represents a departure from the word limitations and objective

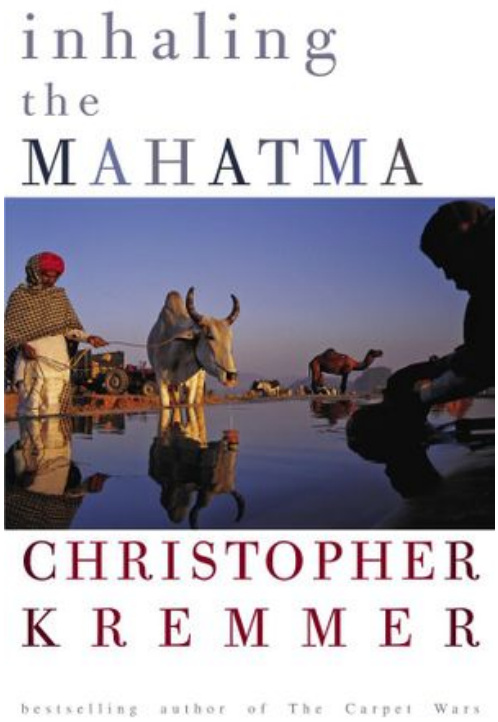
restrictions of news writing, confirming Sims' view that most literary journalists "share a belief that objectivity is not the heartbeat of nonfiction" (2008, p. xiv). The next chapter addresses RQ3 by discussing the participants' nonfiction story-crafting techniques in relation to the theoretical concepts outlined in Chapter 1.

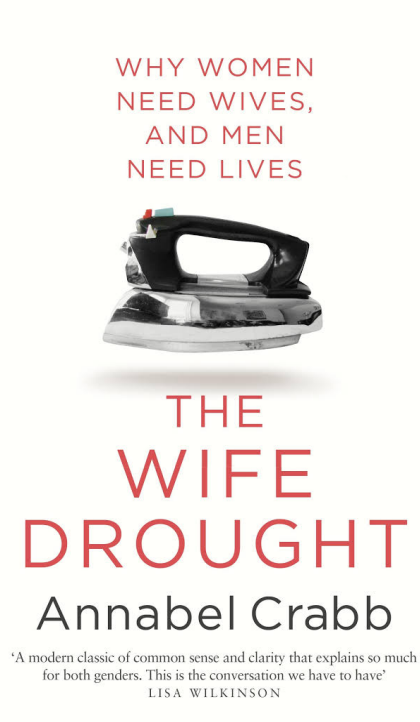
Chapter 6

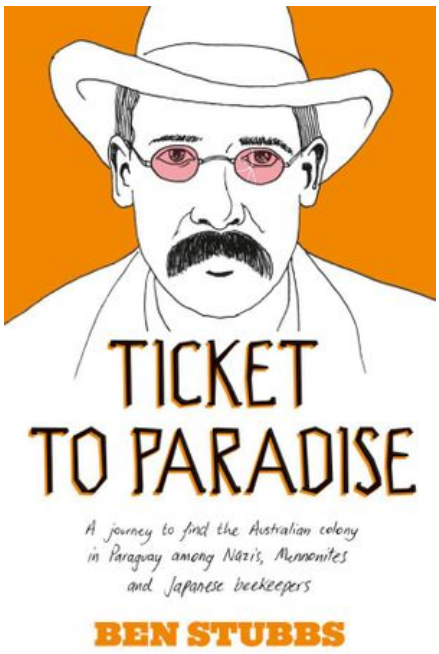
Nonfiction story-crafting techniques

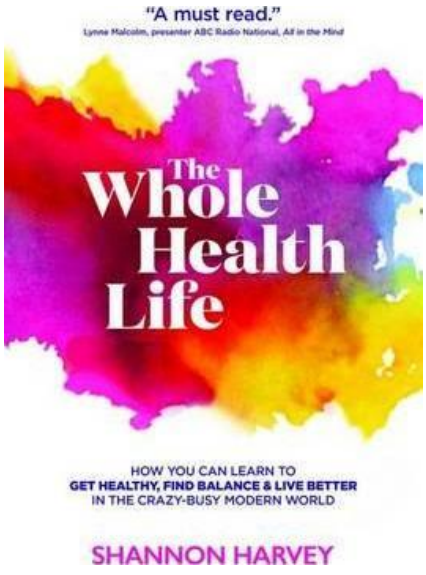
As with most forms of book writing, writing nonfiction requires a key skill: the ability to craft a story into an engaging narrative. This chapter examines the participants' descriptions of their nonfiction story-crafting techniques to explore how they craft narratives and to identify similarities and differences in their individual story-crafting approaches. As explained in Chapter 3, narrative analysis undertaken in this chapter was informed by reading and interpreting select nonfiction books written by the participants and published reviews of their nonfiction books. The intention with this approach was to obtain an understanding of their writing styles before discussing their story-crafting techniques in the research interviews. The participants' explanations of these techniques are first interpreted using Sims' (1984) five characteristics of literary journalism: immersion, structure, voice, accuracy and responsibility, to determine if their nonfiction writing can be classified as literary journalism. Thereafter, Eason's (1984; 2008) concepts on realism in literary journalism are used to interpret their nonfiction texts, and the participants' explanations of their nonfiction writing approaches are used to interpret if they are practising slow journalism using Neveu's (2016) definition of the characteristics of slow journalism. Finally, the participants' nonfiction story-crafting techniques are compared to identify how pluralistic their approaches are.

Figure 2: The nonfiction books read to interpret the journalists' story-crafting techniques









(Photos taken by V. Ruwanpura)

6.1 Christopher Kremmer

6.1.1 Christopher's techniques interpreted using Sims' (1984) definitions of literary journalism

Christopher considers his nonfiction books as works of art: "The way I've written them particularly, it's a literary work. It's a work of art. It happens to be a work of art done in a nonfictional kind of framework". His perception of his books as art is important for understanding his story-crafting style. Christopher explains that the story-research technique of American author and journalist Steve Coll, who writes investigative journalism books, is like his own technique: "His [Coll's] technique, it's basically all avenues of research simultaneously." "It's a sort of blitzkrieg, a sort of Teutonic approach," Christopher says. Undertaking extensive background research for his nonfiction is clearly important to Christopher, reflecting Sim's (1984) stipulation that story immersion through extensive research, interviews and observation is fundamental to writing literary journalism. Another American nonfiction author whose methods Christopher admires is Sebastian Junger, who wrote the acclaimed true story *The Perfect Storm* (1997): "He says it's not about you. Your life is not really that interesting compared to the beauty and the clamour of the world. I'm very much in that school of thought". Like Junger, Christopher is an outward looking nonfiction writer who prefers writing about true events that interest him rather than about himself. This suggests that Christopher's journalism experience has played a significant role in forming his nonfiction writing style, as journalism is about observing, interpreting and commenting on external circumstances. However, book writing requires a level of imagination and creativity not called for in standard news reports because in books "you don't normally tell people exactly

what happened right in the first paragraph," Christopher explains. For this reason, he considers book writing to be the "antithesis" of journalistic writing in terms of how it is structured, and he devotes far more time to crafting his nonfiction narratives than his journalism work.

Story immersion is the first characteristic of literary journalism (Sims 1984). To write *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006), Christopher would "constantly revisit places" to capture an accurate picture of India in his book. For example, he visits the village of a man who hijacked a plane that he [Christopher] was on and recounts both the hijacking incident and the experience of meeting the hijacker in his village in the book (Kremmer 2006).

> I'm going to find that guy who hijacked the plane that I was on…If you're going to find a more literary technique in nonfiction, it's the revisitation. It's the…aspect of not just sitting in the office and reflecting. (Kremmer, personal communication, March 20, 2017)

Christopher's immersion in the narrative he is creating is evident by the effort he took to track down this hijacker in his home environment. Such immersion enables the authenticity of description needed in nonfiction writing (Sims 1984). Christopher explains another reason why story immersion is key to nonfiction writing:

> If you're writing nonfiction about, say, international affairs…then you got to be mindful that it's no point giving people the same thing that just got on the news…the immersion is one very important tactic, technique for going beyond the normal superficial news reporting. (Kremmer, personal communication, March 20, 2017)

Digging so deeply into the details of a story allows Christopher to unearth anecdotes and facts that are not covered in mainstream news and thereby allows him to write insightful nonfiction.

Structure is the second characteristic of literary journalism (Sims 1984). Christopher has a crafter's mindset, considering his nonfiction books as works of literary art, as mentioned above. "I have a lump of clay. [A] big ugly fat lump of brown clay and I am just going to take my time sculpting that," he says. A large part of this metaphorical lump of clay he sculpts is the book's structure "because structures are like nightmares in these books". "How do you tie it together in a narrative when it's so disparate?" he questions. Christopher's deep consideration of how to structure his books reflects Sims' (1984) view that effective story structuring is key to authoring literary journalism. His nonfiction books on Laos, Afghanistan and India were all written retrospectively, looking back over the ten-year period he spent as a foreign correspondent in South Asia. Given the expanse of information that he was dealing with, creating a cohesive structure for each book was challenging. He found it helpful to structure each as a series of discrete chapters that read like "short stories". This enabled him to tie together the disparate information gathered over several years into cohesive narratives. Christopher also spliced together conversations he had at different times with various sources into a single conversation in *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006). To prevent this from being misleading, he acknowledges this technique in the book's afterword. Sims (1984) mentions American writer John McPhee's similar struggles with perfecting his nonfiction narratives' structures. McPhee used various methods for structuring his nonfiction, including drawing his plots out in intricate geometric patterns before

finalising book structures. Sims describes this as the, “kind of architectonic structures that you have to build, that nobody ever teaches or talks about” (1984, p. 15) but are crucial to writing literary journalism. Christopher’s similarly minute attention to structuring his nonfiction emphasises the significant role of story structuring in authoring literary journalism.

Authorial voice is the third characteristic of literary journalism (Sims 1984). One unique aspect of authorial voice is that it often emerges when authors include relevant personal angles in their nonfiction narratives (Kramer 1995). This is true of Christopher’s writing as well. *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006) is a personal story about how he met his Indian wife as well as a narrative on grander societal, political and cultural themes on India. “So why is the family in the book?” he ponders. “It’s because I’m trying to get away from journalism…I’m trying to…have a different way of understanding the subject [India].” The challenge was to include only personal details that added value to the overall narrative. For example, Christopher uses his description of his late father-in-law to illustrate why Indians are divided regarding the political parties they vote for. Another example is the way in which he uses his wife’s family history records in the book’s chapter on the siege of Delhi. “There were documents around to tell about their forebears’ role during the mutiny.” “So, I feel like this is not gratuitous,” he says. Christopher notes that there are limits to including personal details in a nonfiction narrative that is categorised as literary journalism; there should be a balance between personalising the story and maintaining a wider journalistic perspective. “So, for me the narrative voice and perspective and position in the narrative was always very important and always something that you were wrestling with the whole time,” he says. His statement

echoes American literary journalist Mark Kramer's explanation that when he finds the "right voice for a piece, it admits play, and that's a relief, an antidote to being pushed around by your own words" (cited in Sims 1984, p. 17). Following is an example of Christopher's authorial voice in *Inhaling the Mahatma* (2006):

> The sky would darken, illuminated by fluorescent flashes that silhouetted the trees. The wind would start to buffet the bamboo *chik* screens that hung across the verandas. Birds would fall silent, the temperature would drop, and it would begin to rain, large, fat drops at first, and then a torrent…All through to September the monsoon cast its blessings and plagues on northern India… (Kremmer, 2006, p. 200)

From this excerpt, it can be observed that Christopher's authorial voice is rhythmic, well-paced and literary in style. Like Kramer mentioned above, Christopher uses his writing voice to control his narratives and create a recognisable authorial footprint throughout a book.

Accuracy is the fourth characteristic of literary journalism (Sims 1984). Before Christopher begins to write, he is in research mode. This is when he undertakes the 'Coll-like' frenzy of information discovery needed to write his nonfiction. "I'm a robot. I'm an archive rat." "I will spend a lot of time and I enjoy that," he says. For example, when Christopher was researching for *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006) he was "thinking about questions like…where does India start and end?" "How far do you go West? How far do you go East?". At face value, these seem like basic questions but in fact they reveal the extensive contextual and cultural investigation of India that Christopher undertook before writing this book.

Closely related to the characteristic of accuracy is the final characteristic of responsibility in literary journalism (Sims 1984). Christopher views author responsibility as the main ethical challenge in writing nonfiction. “It is essentially about how can you consciously meld narrative techniques, literary techniques with truth when you know that the narrative elements are going to kind of dominate the readers’ reception of the text,” he explains. Christopher refers to this as the “emotional effect” of a nonfiction text and discusses the challenge of balancing such narrative techniques with the matter-of-fact truth telling required in nonfiction. If we consider this challenge using Sims’ (1984) explanation of author responsibility as a key element of literary journalism, it is evident that being factual is non-negotiable when writing nonfiction. A nonfiction writer’s responsibility is to write the truth (Rickett 2015; Tulloch 2014) no matter how much they may enhance it using literary techniques. To merge truth-telling and literary writing effectively in a single narrative, the narrator’s voice must be skilled; “A writer’s voice grows from experience” as Sims 1984, p.18) notes. Christopher’s years of journalism and creative writing experience, discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, have honed his nonfiction writing voice. He writes nonfiction using literary techniques but takes his responsibility to convey facts accurately very seriously.

The above discussion makes it clear that Christopher’s story-crafting approach displays Sims’ (1984) five characteristics of literary journalism. He explains that his writing technique was identical for all three nonfiction books because he wrote these books in close succession immediately after his years working as a foreign correspondent. Writing nonfiction comes easily to Christopher so he ventured into fiction writing next with *The Chase* (2011) to push his craft further.

“The key agenda there was do something different…don’t just write nonfiction set in India, write fiction set in Australia, raise the bar of difficulty,” he reveals. Yet, he admits that *The Chase* (Kremmer 2011) is broadly based on interviews with his father who was a jockey and several of the book’s characters are loosely based on real-life individuals. This indicates that Christopher’s story-crafting style leans towards nonfiction even when he moves away from this genre into fiction.

6.1.2 Christopher’s techniques in relation to Eason’s (1984) ethnographic realism in literary journalism

It has now been established that Christopher’s nonfiction can be categorised as literary journalism, making it possible to analyse his nonfiction further to assess if Eason’s (1984) concept of ethnographic realism in literary journalism, where some journalists penetrate truth facades to reveal the underlying reality of events and issues, applies to *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006). Textual interpretation of this book helps in this examination. Three examples from the book where Christopher penetrates existing truth facades are used to understand how he writes in this style.

Firstly, Christopher’s deep understanding of India and the country’s founder – Mahatma Gandhi’s – values are revealed in the way he penetrates India’s socio-political façade:

> Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu and a nationalist, but he was not a Hindu nationalist. His assassin, Nathuram Godse, was. While Gandhi used the Hindu ideal of Ramrajya – God-given government on earth – to convey his ideas of self-reliance and non-violence, he nonetheless believed that

> all citizens and religions of India should be equal in a secular state. (Kremmer, 2006, p. 103)

This statement reveals the extent of Christopher's knowledge of India: with these few words, he explains the subtle differences between blind Hindu nationalism and Gandhi's tolerant Hindu ideals. Secondly, his description of the realities of life for an ordinary Indian man, Hari, who for more than a decade, had been his "sporadic but indefatigable [Hindi] tutor (Kremmer, 2006, p. 5) also illustrates how Christopher writes in a realist style (Eason 2008):

> Hari Lal was a saver, a keeper of people and things, whose frugal nature was forged during the holocaust the Indians called Partition, when his family had lost everything. They were Hindus in what became Muslim Pakistan, with sizeable tracts of land around Hazro, near the Indus River midway between Peshawar and Rawalpindi… (Kremmer, 2006, p. 10)

With this anecdote, Christopher is communicating the harsh reality of Partition, when India and Pakistan were created amid brutal civil unrest, for ordinary Indians and how their lives were permanently affected by it. Finally, his description of how meeting his future Indian wife changed his own expectations, reflects Eason's 2008 view that "the reporter's own experiences…are either deleted or used as 'cutaways' to unify the narrative" (p. 199).

> At thirty-four, I had just about everything I wanted: a career based on travel and writing; even the odd, quite glamorous Indian girlfriend, which had earned me the undying envy of some of my peers. Things were so good…But things changed anyway and I became a frequent visitor to a

> whitewashed bungalow [his wife's family home] on a quiet lane near the Old City. (Kremmer, 2006, p. 128)

In this case, Christopher has used his own experiences as a cutaway (Eason 2008) to connect the book's narrative. The above explanation and literary critics' opinions (Bilson 2006; Kurosawa cited in Kremmer 2006, p. i) demonstrate that Christopher's nonfiction goes beyond superficial details to convey underlying realities about the Indian way of life, indicating that he is a literary journalist who writes in Eason's (2008) realist style.

6.1.3 How Christopher's nonfiction relates to slow journalism

The final aspect being considered is how Christopher's literary journalism links to the practice of slow journalism. As explained in Chapter Two, section 2.4, slow journalism is narrative in style, tells untold stories, is fair to sources and readers, and is participative and community oriented (Neveu 2016). Christopher's nonfiction has already been shown to be narrative in style. It is also evident that he is telling a previously untold story on India (Kremmer 2006) through his unique insights. He is fair to sources because he takes the time to get to know them and portray them authentically. Whether he is fair to readers is harder to judge, but it is possible to say that he portrays the tale of India effectively to readers through his insightful descriptions of this country. Christopher's nonfiction is participative as he plays an active role in the narrative by incorporating his own reporting and life experiences in India. It is also community oriented because he zooms in on the life of average Indians to bring the larger story of Indian culture and politics to life. His nonfiction writing style therefore displays the characteristics of slow journalism, supporting

Maguire and Maguire's (2017) viewpoint that literary journalism and slow journalism are closely connected.

6.2 Annabel Crabb

6.2.1 Annabel's techniques interpreted using Sims' (1984) definitions of literary journalism

Annabel explains that she has learned a lot about writing books since authoring her first nonfiction book in 2005, but that it is still a "traumatic" experience.

> I find it really full-on writing a book. It's very different from writing day-to-day journalism because there is a different psychology. It feels more permanent…it sits heavily on you, more heavily than writing a thousand words for a daily column. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

She also finds it emotionally exhausting because once she's finished writing a book she always hates what she has written for a while. This is indicative of Annabel's perfectionist nature rather than a reflection on her writing. For example, when she sent the completed manuscript for *The Wife Drought* (2014) to her publishers, she also sent a letter apologising for how terrible the book was.

> But I can actually read it now and I really like it…I think a lot of writers go through that phase of just despising everything they've written and then maybe with a bit of distance they look back and are proud of it. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

Her humility and degree of self-doubt are perhaps partly why Annabel's writing appeals to readers, because her writing is unpretentious.

This discussion interprets Annabel's account of her story-crafting techniques for her third nonfiction book *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), as it was the first uncommissioned nonfiction book she wrote. The book was written in 12 weeks (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017), a very short timeline compared to the book writing timelines of the other participants and only possible because she had an assistant based at the University of Sydney library during this time, sourcing most background information. "The writing routine was pretty much all day, every day and most of the night," Annabel explains. Her first nonfiction book, *Losing It* (Crabb 2005), was also similarly written under pressure, mostly after hours while working as a journalist in London. This reflects that Annabel often writes books to tight publication deadlines. This fast-paced routine is like her deadline-driven journalism work routine so there are practice crossovers between these two writing forms for Annabel. She admits that this quick writing pace can be challenging at times, as discussed above. When she completed writing *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014), she wasn't entirely satisfied with it, indicating that she holds herself to a high writing standard. It was only much later that she could read it and feel confident that it was a good book.

When writing nonfiction books, Annabel immerses herself in the theme that she is researching, whether it is Australian politics in the case of her first two books or workplace legislation and Australian women's work culture in the case of *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014). Sims' (1984) view

that immersion is a characteristic of literary journalism is reflected in her book writing approach. One advantage Annabel had was that she was already familiar with the topics she was writing on as she is a national political correspondent. For her, story immersion required looking at the topic of Australian women's work culture from a new perspective rather than immersing herself in an unknown topic. *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) was researched primarily by an assistant because Annabel juggles several senior media roles while writing books. However, the fact that she used an assistant does not detract from the quality of research; it was Annabel who steered the research. "I've heard some amazing stories from guys who have been the primary caregiver in their family…I tracked down a whole bunch of them using social media and talked to them while I was writing the book," she said. She specifically included male caregivers' views in *The Wife Drought* (2014) because stories of female caregivers are already well documented:

> We all know what it was like for women walking into workplaces and boardrooms in the '60s onwards but I think the experience of a man being the only guy at the mothers' group is very akin to that experience. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

By including these less discussed aspects, Annabel provided new insights into Australian work culture. Her immersion in the book's topic indicates that she is authoring literary journalism (Sims' 1984).

Annabel also understands the importance of story structure in nonfiction writing: "there is an obligation for the whole thing to make sense from every angle, it has to hang together, it has to have a more complicated

structure so I do find writing books absorbing". Her attention to this aspect of crafting a story reflects Sims' (1984) view that structure is a key characteristic of literary journalism. Structuring her first two nonfiction books was difficult because they were commissioned works and not her own ideas. With *Losing It* (Crabb 2005), Annabel didn't know "how to stop writing it because it became a sort of history of the Labor Party in opposition" which seemed to continue indefinitely at the time. On the other hand, Annabel envisioned *The Wife Drought's* (Crabb 2014) structure more easily because she had been gathering knowledge on women's workplace issues for so long beforehand and the book was her idea.

> When I had the idea of writing it I sat down with, seriously, a napkin in a café and I sketched out the chapter structure and it was pretty much as it ended up, so it was a great blessing to have a structure already in mind. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

This description recalls Sims' (1984) descriptions of American literary journalist John McPhee's sketches of his nonfiction book structures: "McPhee rummaged around for a moment…and came up with a diagram of the structure in *Travels in Georgia.* It looked like a lower case 'e'" (Sims 1984, p. 13). However, when she struggles with the structure, as she did with her first book *Losing It* (Crabb 2005), she uses a different approach: "Another way I work is to collect and write all the anecdotal information first and address the hard parts later". Annabel's varied approaches to story structuring indicate that nonfiction writing is an intuitive, craft-like process, showing that, "there is no one way to do this work–on the contrary, a distinctive approach is often an advantage" (Sims 2007, p. xv).

Annabel uses two approaches to structure her books: one is quite streamlined (when she is sure of what she wants to write about) and one is more experimental, collecting anecdotal information and then building a structure around this information.

Annabel's authorial voice, like in her journalism writing, is satirical and witty, incorporating "humour and wordplay" (Mullins 2015). An extract from *The Wife Drought* illustrates this: "Bouts of wife envy strike me periodically. Sometimes it happens in airports when I see squads of booming businessmen flocking together into the Qantas club…" (Crabb 2014, p. 17). This is Annabel's trademark writing style, both perceptive and humourous. Her authorial voice is also unpretentious, displaying an almost larrikin humour at times. She is adept at weaving anecdotal information into narratives that discuss serious social issues. For example, she uses a historical anecdote about an Australian woman working in government in the 1950s who had to keep her marriage secret to illustrate the gender-biased marriage laws that existed in Australia at the time: "So Merle became one of many white-veil criminals; she got married in secret" (Crabb 2014, p. 73). Annabel uses such story snippets to drive home the serious workplace issues she discusses in the book. "Yeah, people do learn through stories and you can't hit them over the head with some very interesting but complicated study without creating an entry point," she says. Her distinctive writing style illustrates the characteristic of authorial voice required in literary journalism (Sims 1984). However, she says that she does not make a mental switch from a news writing voice to a nonfiction writing voice as Christopher Kremmer does when writing books.

This is because much of her newswriting is also written quite subjectively as a political commentator: “Most of it is in my own voice, even my news writing”. So, for Annabel, the shift from news writing to book writing is less jarring than for Christopher and Shannon, who both practised predominantly hard news reporting.

Accuracy and author responsibility are the two final characteristics of literary journalism Sims (1984) outlined. Annabel pays great attention to accuracy in *The Wife Drought* (2014) as in all her nonfiction writing.

> It is a really hard thing to do, to spend so much time immersing yourself in a field of knowledge to achieve a great depth where really you have only a few peers who have the same understanding as you of that material. (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

Accuracy comes naturally to Annabel due to years of experience as a senior political correspondent. However, as *The Wife Drought* (2014) is a book-length narrative, it required gathering a range of facts on Australian women’s work culture and, workplace and marriage legislation that Annabel’s regular journalism did not. She had more support when compared with the other participants as she had a dedicated research assistant, nevertheless, her perseverance in unearthing detailed facts for this book (Crabb 2014) is evidence of the significance of accuracy as an integral characteristic of literary journalism (Sims 1984). On the other hand, author responsibility (Sims 1984) is the writer’s ethical and moral obligation to the human sources from whom they obtain information to write books. Each nonfiction writer approaches this aspect differently. Sources who initially agree to speak to a writer may take offence when

they finally see what has been written about them, although this did not occur in Annabel's case. Sims (1984, p. 20) notes that, "This conflict seems inherent in a form of writing where practitioners form friendships with their subjects". Annabel discusses the experiences of other female journalists and female politicians in *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) to illustrate the complex gender-based issues facing Australian working women. So, she too had to build a rapport with her sources to include their personal experiences in this book and weigh up her sense of author responsibility when narrating their stories. From the above discussion, it is evident that Annabel's story-crafting technique for *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) displays Sims' (1984) five characteristics of literary journalism.

6.2.2 Annabel's techniques in relation to Eason's (1984) ethnographic realism in literary journalism

A further interpretation of the kind of literary journalism her book (Crabb 2014) represents can be made using Eason's (1984) definition of ethnographic realism in literary journalism. Annabel penetrates the public facade of Australian workplace culture for working women in this book using a mix of historical and contemporary facts, and anecdotal information, suggesting that she writes in Eason's (2008) realist style: "I think that it is such an important thing for a writer to be a door-opener." "If you can find as many doors as you can and the things that capture people's attention," it keeps readers engaged. Annabel considers her writing to be an avenue for readers to understand the nuances and complexities of Australian politics and workplace culture.

> If you can find…things that they might identify with or things that they can readily find amusing…or even find out something surprising about somebody that they thought they couldn't be surprised by, that's the idea… (Crabb, personal communication, June 20, 2017)

She enjoys the challenge of drawing in readers who would usually not be interested in socio-political issues by including unique anecdotes, and this is a key characteristic of her nonfiction writing. The following example from the book illustrates Annabel's realist (Eason 2008) style.

> I first started thinking seriously about the significance of wives back in 2013, when Tony Abbott named a federal Cabinet with only one woman in it and the nation went into one of its periodic fits of self-examination as to why there aren't more women in federal politics. (Crabb 2014, p. 20)

With this description, she effectively reveals that Australia still falls short of having gender-balanced representation in Parliament. Her description also reflects Eason's (2008, p.199) view that, "In realist reports, the dominant function of the narrative is to reveal an interpretation" – the narrative must show how the author interprets events, issues or persons they discuss. From the above, it can be surmised that Annabel too writes literary journalism in a realist style (Eason 2008).

6.2.3 How Annabel's nonfiction relates to slow journalism

It is now clear that Annabel's nonfiction is narrative in style, reflecting the first characteristic of slow journalism (Neveu 2016). She is also telling an untold story because she addresses the topic of Australian women's work issues using previously undisclosed historical and contemporary facts, anecdotes, and the

individual experiences of working women and men. Annabel is fair to sources to the extent that she acknowledges each source's unique situation in the book but her narration is strongly shaped by her own opinion as the following extract indicates: "Now, I like this bloke. I really do…But why did I suddenly want to push his smiling face into the Potatoes Dauphinoise?" (Crabb 2014, p. 15). Her fairness to readers is more obvious as her book paints a sharply accurate picture of Australian women's working lives. Annabel participates in the narrative through the inclusion of snippets of her own experiences as a female reporter. The book is oriented to the Australian community as a revelatory narrative on what is it like to be a woman working in this country. The above points illustrate that Annabel is practising slow journalism (Neveu 2016) through her nonfiction writing.

6.3 Ben Stubbs

6.3.1 Ben's techniques interpreted using Sims' (1984) definitions of literary journalism

Ben wrote his first nonfiction book, *Ticket To Paradise* (2012), six years after he began writing travel articles. "I think that my writing style has changed a lot from those early travel stories to *Ticket To Paradise* and then *After Dark"* (Stubbs, personal communication, April 24, 2017). He particularly feels that there has been a boost in his confidence and focus as a nonfiction writer between writing his first and second books.

> I've always looked for those grand narratives but now that my writing has changed as well, Ticket To Paradise was my first try…I'm becoming

> more focused and I have more of an idea of what I want and how I write. (Stubbs, personal communication, April 24, 2017)

This growing awareness of the kind of nonfiction he wants to write could perhaps be attributed to the fact that he is an emerging nonfiction writer compared to Annabel Crabb and Christopher Kremmer, and is still experimenting with his writing methods.

Ben's account of his story-crafting techniques is interpreted with reference to how he crafted *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016b) and his ongoing work on his third nonfiction book, although only the first was analysed prior to our interviews. This is because he discussed his story-crafting process for all three books in the research interviews. Ben says that his research methods have changed with experience and a better understanding of the stories he wants to tell. "One thing I've learnt is that the more you can refine and do your research, and focus the [book] idea in the planning stages, the easier it becomes," he explains. When Ben was writing his first book, he had no clear parameters in mind: "It was kind of shapeless when I was there [in Paraguay]". This made it challenging to undertake research as he was unsure of how much information to note down. Learning from this experience, with *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016b) he set clear parameters from the beginning. "I wanted to write about something which pushed the travel writing genre, which wasn't just sitting comfortably, so that's why I wrote about the nocturnal perspective," Ben says referring to writing about nocturnal Madrid streets in *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016b). He clearly refines his research methods with each new book he writes. Unlike Christopher Kremmer, he never revisits a place that he is writing about. "I purposely don't do that…If I go back, it kind of spoils it,"

Ben says. Instead, he prefers to capture an of-the-moment, atmospheric image of places rather than a heavily reflective one.

For Ben, immersion in the subject that he is writing on is crucial: “I think that you can’t get a sense of place and you can’t be authentic to yourself and the reader without immersion”. He also says that immersion is one of the most enjoyable aspects of nonfiction writing. When writing *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), Ben spent several months living in the New Australia colony in Paraguay, getting to know the locals and participating in their daily life. “If you don’t have that immersion then you’re just re-treading what you’ve read, you’re not giving the place your unique sense of what it felt like,” he explains. Likewise, for *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016b), Ben spent weeks in Spain walking nocturnal Madrid streets and interacting closely with locals to gain their perspectives. For his current nonfiction book on South Australia, he visited numerous towns and historical sites. Ben’s diligence in seeking authentic experiences of the places he writes about reflects Sims’ view that “literary journalists gamble with their time” (1984, p. 10), immersing themselves in a story and often devoting extensive periods to understanding a subject

The way Ben structures his nonfiction books has changed considerably since he authored his first book. In reference to how he structured *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), he says: “That was the most challenging thing…I think it works well, how I’ve spliced my experience with the historical experience”. The dilemma he faced was crafting an engaging narrative while conveying key historical facts about this Australian colony, “balancing the in-between of something that is readable…and something that’s a tome”. In contrast, Ben set out to write *After Dark* (Stubbs 2016b) with a clear structure in mind, “I wanted

every hour to be a chapter, so there are thirteen chapters in the book and it starts at 7pm and ends at 7am". This tight structuring made writing the book much more streamlined and focused. With his third book on South Australia, he has refined the structure even more. "With the SA book, each chapter is going to be…a different experience in a different place but then, I'm breaking it up even further by having different sections on the seasons," Ben explains. He decided to structure the book this way because South Australia is well defined by seasons. "That's why I went to Coober Pedy when it was 45 degrees because it dictates and clarifies things even more," he says. The attention Ben pays to structuring his nonfiction and the changes in his story structures over the course of writing these three books reflects Sims' (1984) view that attention to story structure is an integral characteristic of literary journalism.

Ben's authorial voice has also developed considerably since his first book, reflecting that authorial voice is key to writing literary journalism (Sims 1984). "I think my writing has changed a lot from those early travel stories [written for news media] to *Ticket To Paradise* and then *After Dark,*" he explains. Like Christopher Kremmer's, Ben's authorial voice is literary in style because his nonfiction narratives focus on the broad and complex themes of travel, history and place. He often weaves historical facts seamlessly into his narratives, as this example from *Ticket To Paradise* illustrates*:*

> I feel I don't belong amongst these men as they jig and swig the night away in remembrance of the old country they've got no real affection for. The Australian in me feels like a convict in the room. This isn't the diaspora I came to Paraguay in search of and I escape before the sword dancing begins. (Stubbs, 2012, p. 125)

Ben uses this technique to present history to his readers in an engaging manner to retain their interest in the story. Over the course of writing his next two books, his authorial voice, like his story structuring, has matured. He now has less of a need to be visible in a story. He explains his changed writing style using his second book as an example: “I’m the guide that’s taking the reader through Madrid but the book’s not about me”. “It’s about Madrid, it’s about after dark, it’s about all those stories within.” Ben evidently refines his authorial voice with each new book he writes, also supporting Sims’ (1984) view that developing a distinctive authorial voice is crucial for writing literary journalism.

For Ben, accuracy is integral to his nonfiction writing as he always includes historical facts in his stories. When researching for *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), he spent days at the University of Sydney library’s special collections section and Canberra’s national archives tracing the history of the New Australia colony in Paraguay. He sifted through “12 boxes of handwritten letters and papers…piecing together the narrative chronology was really difficult”. His attention to checking story facts highlights the importance of accuracy to literary journalism (Sims 1984). Ben notes that, “accuracy is that thing on your shoulder…if you’re doing it with integrity, it’s always there behind you”. He explains that he is uncomfortable with travel and nonfiction writing that embellishes facts to engage readers. “If you wanted to yes, you could make things more dangerous and sexier…but because it’s nonfiction, I think the better stories are those that are a little messier, that have warts and all,” he reflects. This integrity in gathering facts relates to the final characteristic of literary journalism – author responsibility (Sims 1984). Nonfiction writers have a responsibility to narrate a story accurately but they also have an ethical

responsibility towards the primary sources they use in their stories. Ben spent months with the exiled Australians he wrote about in *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) and became close to them. This made it doubly important to tell their stories accurately. “Showing them the book…having a little bit of dialogue is important because otherwise you’re being one of those FIFO [fly in, fly out] journalists,” he explains. The dilemma nonfiction writers face is that their responsibility to sources should not dictate the final narrative they create (Sims 1984). Some degree of separation between the writer and their sources is therefore needed at the writing stage. Ben addressed this issue by showing his sources the book (Stubbs 2012) only after it was published. He also mentions that he now only occasionally corresponds with these sources. In a sense, this kind of closure, after a book is published, is needed for the writer as much as for a book’s sources. Author responsibility (Sims 1984) in literary journalism is significant because it does not diminish after a book’s publication, making it even more important to responsibly cite sources at the writing stage. From the above account, it can be observed that Ben’s nonfiction displays Sims’ (1984) defining characteristics of literary journalism.

6.3.2 Ben’s techniques in relation to Eason’s (1984) ethnographic realism in literary journalism

Ben’s at times confronting descriptions of the New Australia colony in Paraguay in *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) indicate that he too is a literary journalist who writes in the style of Eason’s (1984) ethnographic realism. In the book, he reveals less savoury aspects of this colony which was to be set up as a utopian haven but was soon troubled by dissent due to the harsh conditions of Paraguayan life and the rigid rules of the colony’s founder.

> Paradise was wetter than they expected. When the troop of socialists finally arrived at the land outside of Ajos there weren't fields of daisies or paddocks of soft, rich earth waiting for them to hoe into…there was just a lot of mud. (Stubbs 2012, p. 71)

With this statement, Ben shows the bitter reality that confronted the colonists who had high expectations of leaving Australia for a better land. Another example of Ben's realist (Eason 2008) writing style of dispelling perceived views to reveal buried realities is the following extract describing an indigenous street musician:

> He plugs in his electric flute and begins playing the theme to *The Mission*, as the horns honk and the exhaust fumes accompany him and his beautiful and absurd solo. It's a strange juxtaposition; the Guarani of Paraguay are still persecuted, though rather than the Portuguese slavers and Jesuit priests who the flutist evokes…they now contend with modern poverty. (Stubbs 2012, p. 117)

A less informed observer would only see the flautist in their present-day context – another impoverished musician making a living on a busy street. However, Ben uses his deep historical knowledge of South America to enrich the narrative and describe the musician's situation in much stronger context. From the above interpretations, it can be gathered that Ben writes literary journalism in Eason's (2008, p. 199) realist style where the "function is to reveal a story that exists 'out there' in real life". He tells the underlying life story of this flautist through his description.

6.3.3 How Ben's nonfiction relates to slow journalism

Ben's nonfiction has already been shown to be narrative in style. He also tells the untold story of the reality of life in the New Australia colony in Paraguay in *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012). He is fair to sources through his prolonged engagement with most of them, living for several months in the colony while researching the story. He is fair to readers, particularly Australian readers, in the way that he reveals the story of the New Australia colony and recounts the colony's history in relation to Australia. He participates in the narrative through his months of living in the colony and includes details of this experience in the book. The book is specifically oriented to the Australian community, providing insights into their history that they may have previously been unaware of. Through these aspects, it is evident that Ben is writing nonfiction in the style of slow journalism (Neveu 2016).

6.4 Shannon Harvey

6.4.1 Shannon's techniques interpreted using Sims' (1984) definitions of literary journalism

Health nonfiction is rarely discussed as a genre of literary journalism although there are some exceptional examples of book-length literary journalism (Kramer 1983; Bone 2007) on health topics. Given the auto-ethnographic and conversational style of Shannon's nonfiction, incorporating her own experiences into the narrative, it is easy to assume that her writing may not fit the requirements of literary journalism. This section aims to examine this assumption. It investigates if Shannon's nonfiction can be considered literary

journalism based on Sims' (1984) defining characteristics of this writing style, and also explores the versatility of literary journalism.

Shannon's descriptions of her story-crafting techniques are discussed with reference to her published nonfiction book *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) and current work on her second nonfiction book. American medical professor George Jelinek describes Shannon as "a journalist who thinks like a scientist" (cited in Harvey 2016, p. 2). She took approximately one and a half years to research and write the book (Harvey 2016) while working on other media projects, and referenced over 770 scientific research papers. "I read all the scientific papers, particularly the ones that I'm especially referencing…I read them from beginning to end, even all the really difficult parts and I make sure that I understand them fully," she says. Shannon also interviewed many world-renowned scientists and medical experts for her documentary, *The Connection* (Harvey 2015a), and cites many of them in her book (Harvey 2016) – "I made myself widely available for whenever they [the scientists] could". This approach shows that Shannon is a highly analytical writer. Shannon enjoys learning how scientists come up with world-changing discoveries: "I love hearing that backstory and if it's a good one then I love putting that into the information because I find that really interesting personally". She immersed herself in health research to write the book (Harvey 2016), and read a wide range of published health nonfiction and health news articles to get a sense of what was already available. "I read everything, everything." "You name it in the health space, I've read it," she says. Her extensive appraisal of the topic of human health through reading scientific papers and news articles, speaking to a range of experts and the narration of her own health story in the book (Harvey

2016) confirms that her writing displays the characteristic of immersion Sims' (1984) outlines as key to literary journalism.

Health nonfiction is a genre of writing that is less widely studied as a form of literary journalism. Therefore, two other studies of health nonfiction as literary journalism by Sims (1984) examining the writing of Mark Kramer on invasive surgeries and Rickett (2015) examining the auto-ethnographic writing of the late Pamela Bone are used to compare Shannon's story structuring of *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016). Kramer's writing follows the climactic narrative structuring of the New Journalists of the 1960s and 1970s such as Tom Wolfe and Truman Capote (Sims 1984). Shannon's structuring of her health nonfiction is different to this approach. She constructs her narratives using thematic chapters on each health issue that she discusses and a summary of key points at the end of each chapter. This is because her book (Harvey 2016) discusses the significant topic of commonly held misconceptions on human health and therefore the structure needs to be straightforward and easy to understand for readers, unlike the more fluid story structuring possible in other nonfiction books. As her first nonfiction book, it is also her debut attempt at this form of writing. She aims to experiment further with structure in the second health nonfiction book that she is authoring.

> With a book, it's good to have a narrative story all the way through it but you can sort of dip in and out, you can take it in the directions that you want it to go. You've got to have a cohesive structure but it doesn't necessarily need to come to a climactic conclusion. (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017)

Shannon uses this explanation to describe structural differences between her health documentary (Harvey 2015a) and her book (Harvey 2016). Unlike the documentary, the book did not require a climactic ending. Instead, she structured the book like a health news feature article with summaries at the end of each chapter and larger pop-out text boxes describing key health advice. Shannon's aim was to inspire and inform readers but to conclude the book in an open-ended manner allowing readers to form their own opinions. Her nonfiction writing style is a variation of the "auto-ethnographic" approach (Joseph cited in Rickett 2015, p. 83) late Australian journalist Pamela Bone used to write her book (Bone 2007) about her terminal illness because she describes her own illness auto-ethnographically throughout the narrative but also includes facts and anecdotal information from a range of medical experts and individuals experiencing serious illnesses.

> So, it's really a blend of academic research, interviews with scientists and interviews with real people and there's probably a fourth element in there, in my story-telling technique, which is the kind of story behind the science. (Harvey, personal communication, March 19, 2018)

She uses creative writing techniques (Hodgins 2001) such as point of view, dialogue, anecdotes and imaginative description to contextualise complex scientific information. Shannon clearly pays close attention to how she structures her nonfiction writing, which displays the characteristic of story structure that Sims' (1984) prescribes as key to authoring literary journalism. At our second interview, Shannon provided further insights about her book's (Harvey 2016) structuring.

> You know it's funny but a lot of the feedback that I've had with The Whole Health Life was that there was too much science in it…it's just that they [readers] just want surface level information but the thing is for me, it's the science that gives it credibility. (Harvey, personal communication, March 19, 2018)

This would indicate that the average reader is conditioned to expect even health nonfiction books to take a strongly human interest angle given the style of popular nonfiction available commercially. "This next book [referring to the one she is working on now], I need to make it significantly shorter." "So that's going to be a challenge because my last book was 70,000 words or something," she explains. Shannon is experimenting with different writing styles for her second nonfiction book which is about her personal experience of mindfulness and meditation techniques: "it's essentially looking at the science of…meditation but how, obviously, our mind and body are interconnected". The types of nonfiction books that Shannon chooses to write reflect that she is immersed in the topic of human health and wellbeing and that this is her nonfiction niche, highlighting the place of immersion (Sims 1984) in literary journalism. At our second interview, Shannon also acknowledged that it was much easier to research medical and scientific information for her second book due to the investigative skills she had acquired while writing the first book. "I now have much better research skills in terms of trawling through health evidence data bases so it's much faster," she says. This is like Christopher Kremmer's comment, discussed in section 6.1.1, that he mastered a technique for researching and writing his nonfiction books that he repeated with each new book he wrote. Shannon's and Christopher's explanation of how they have

honed their book-research technique over time indicates a maturing of their story-crafting techniques with each new book authored in keeping with Sims' (1984; 2007; 2008) theories on crafting literary journalism.

Shannon's authorial voice in *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) is gentle but convincing, like her writing voice in her regular health and lifestyle news articles (Harvey 2017). The following excerpt from the book, where she describes her struggle with the medical condition lupus, illustrates this:

> But the Samoa story changed things…And I paid a costly price. While the story sat on the cutting room floor, my immune system went into overdrive and my disease flared up. I felt as if I'd been hit by a truck. Everything hurt. Every nerve. Every muscle. Every joint. (Harvey 2016, p. 27)

The excruciating pain of Shannon's illness is evident in her writing voice in this excerpt but at the same time she comments on her illness in an almost removed manner. This is characteristic of how she expresses herself throughout the book. In another section of the book, she writes: "The scary thing about my illness is that I'm no unique snowflake. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there's a two in three chance you'll end up dying from a chronic disease" (Harvey 2016, p. 15). Shannon describes her illness in a confronting and honest manner. Her authorial voice is defined by how she describes her illness and relates her health experiences to the rest of the book's narrative. Shannon's unique writing voice reflects Sim's (1984) view that voice is another key attribute of literary journalism. Like Annabel Crabb's opinion news writing, Shannon includes her opinion in health news articles she writes. Both Shannon and Annabel wrote opinion articles before they started

writing nonfiction, so they both developed their writing voices in opinion news writing before they began to experiment with authorial voice in nonfiction.

Accuracy and author responsibility are the two final characteristics of literary journalism (Sims 1984). As an investigative journalist, Shannon's attention to accuracy is stringent but her inquiring nature was cultivated much earlier in life.

> I was raised in a family that values robust discussion and arguing. Forming an argument is sort of everyday dinner conversation…whether it is politics or social sciences or science…people all express their opinions freely and adamantly in my family. (Harvey, personal communication, March 19, 2018)

This ability to construct a foolproof argument has stood Shannon well when writing her book (Harvey 2016) and partly explains her drive for finding out the truth about human health. "I value truth." "Although what I'm finding increasingly…is that the more I look for truth the vaguer it becomes but I enjoy having an open mind and I enjoy looking for answers," she says. Identifying the truth is especially important for the genre of nonfiction that Shannon writes, as public knowledge on health varies. "I've just had enough of quackery and people being exploited," Shannon says referring to the range of misleading health information publicly available. To ensure that the book (Harvey 2016) was highly accurate, Shannon employed a US-based specialist researcher and medical editor who was familiar with reading academic papers before publication. "I sent every chapter to a wonderful researcher who fact-checked everything and who really challenged me on pretty much everything which was such a good process," she explains, indicating that the characteristic of accuracy (Sims 1984) is clearly present in her nonfiction. Finally, Shannon is

keenly aware of her responsibility (Sims 1984) as an author of health nonfiction books. Any misrepresentation could affect the health of readers if they follow her advice.

> I would sell more books if I was to gloss over stuff…if I was to just pick the last interview that I heard from somebody…and churn it out there really quickly but I can't do that to my readers. (Harvey, personal communication, June 19, 2017)

This statement illustrates that Shannon is a thorough journalistic investigator who carefully researches her books in anticipation of the repercussions for readers if she misrepresents health facts. The last characteristic of author responsibility (Sims 1984) is also therefore present in Shannon's nonfiction. From the above discussion, it can be observed that her writing displays all the characteristics of literary journalism although health nonfiction is a less conventional form of literary journalism. Shannon has crafted an engaging health narrative (Harvey 2016) incorporating literary journalism techniques, demonstrating the versatility of this writing style.

6.4.2 Shannon's techniques in relation to Eason's (1984) ethnographic realism in literary journalism

As Shannon is dispelling commonly held assumptions about human health through her writing, her nonfiction also follows the style of ethnographic realism in literary journalism (Eason 1984) where the writer penetrates public facades to reveal underlying realities. She penetrates the facade of available health information to reveal confronting truths through her nonfiction. An anecdote she included in *The Whole Health Life* (2016) about World War II anaesthetist

Henry Beecher is one example of how she does this. Beecher is widely considered the “gold standard of scientific research,” according to Shannon, for replacing active drugs with placebos and measuring the effect on patients. However, what she discovered was that Beecher replaced morphine with a sedative for his patients and not a placebo drug. Shannon’s attention to story accuracy is also reflected here.

Another example of how she reveals hidden truths is this excerpt from the book:

> …one study showed it takes an average of 17 years for new discoveries to become part of medical practices. That’s a long time to wait when you’re living with a chronic illness. I wasn’t prepared to wait around…I decided to use the skills I had developed as a journalist to make my own map. (Harvey 2016, pp. 16-17)

Shannon researched the average time taken for medical discoveries to be put into practice, demonstrating a commitment to “unify[ing] the narrative” (Eason 2008, p. 199). A third example of the way she uses anecdotes to engage readers and reveal hidden truths is this excerpt:

> In the late 1960s, a young cardiologist named Herbert Benson sneaked transcendental meditators through the side door of his lab at Harvard Medical School to study what happened to their bodies when they meditated…In what is now known as “white coat hypertension,” he suspected that when his patients saw his white coat and measuring instruments they became worried and their heart rates rose in response. (Harvey 2016, p. 36)

Through this anecdote, Shannon is revealing the story behind the now commonly used phrase – ‘white coat hypertension’, again indicating her

realist style of revealing information (Eason 2008). From the above discussion, it can be observed that Shannon too is writing literary journalism in Eason's realist style (1984; 2008).

6.4.3 How Shannon's nonfiction relates to slow journalism

Shannon's book (Harvey 2016) is narrative in style, reflecting literary journalism and slow journalism. She reveals untold stories about medicine and human health, and is fair to her sources, who are mostly scientists and medical practitioners, because she accurately cites their research and opinions, and to her readers, because she makes a concerted effort to narrate an accurate and enlightening health story. Shannon's nonfiction is also participative as she includes her own experiences in the narrative. The book is oriented to a global community of readers who are interested in improving their health. From these points, it can be ascertained that Shannon is writing nonfiction that possesses the characteristics of slow journalism (Neveu 2016). The fact that Neveu's definition of slow journalism was published in the same year as Shannon's book (Harvey 2016), indicates that this is a highly contemporary movement that is gaining growing scholarly recognition. The final section of this chapter compares the nonfiction story-crafting techniques of all four participants to consider how pluralistic their approaches are.

6.5 Comparison of participants' techniques

The above discussion illustrates that the participants' nonfiction writing can be classified as literary journalism according to Sims' (1984) defining characteristics of this writing style. It also shows that they are writing a specific type of literary journalism: realist style literary journalism (Eason

2008). These Australian journalists are thereby practising the "realist" model that stems from the American literary journalism tradition of writers such as "Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese and Truman Capote" (Eason 2008, p. 192). The examination of the participants' nonfiction writing practice also highlights connections between literary journalism and slow journalism, as already noted by some journalism academics (Maguire & Maguire 2017; Ricketson 2016a). However, not all slow journalism can be classified as literary journalism, as slow journalism includes all forms of journalism that avoid the speed of mainstream journalism (Le Masurier 2015). The relevance for this study is that literary journalism fits into slow journalism practice as it is an extended journalistic writing form. The participants' nonfiction writing approaches are compared below to identify differences and similarities in their techniques.

Immersion

Story immersion for Annabel and Shannon required delving further into topics already familiar through regular news reporting, whereas for Christopher and Ben, the topics were mostly unfamiliar and on foreign countries, although Christopher's (2006) book partly drew on his news reporting experiences. This suggests that the effort needed by the latter two to familiarise themselves with the cultures and stories they were writing on may have been greater, and may explain why their books took longer to research and write; nearly two years in Ben's case for *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) and three in Christopher's for *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006). One commonality in all participants' cases is that they initially became immersed in their book topics via their journalism

work, indicating the strength of the ties between their journalism practice and nonfiction writing practice.

The story research style adopted by all four journalists is relatively similar. However, Annabel's and Christopher's approach seems the most closely related as they both described using high-speed research methods adapted from news reporting. All four journalists also explained that they hone their research techniques with each new book they write.

Structure

There are discernible differences in how each journalist structures their nonfiction books. Annabel and Christopher described sketching and metaphorically sculpting their book structures respectively, indicating that they think of story structure in a visual manner. Christopher also structured *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006) as a series of short story-like chapters reflecting his creative writing interests. Shannon likewise arranged her book (Harvey 2016) as a series of discrete chapters addressing specific health issues. However, Christopher's book reaches a climatic ending whereas Shannon's does not. This is because Shannon's is a health nonfiction book and her aim was not to end with a definitive conclusion but an open-ended one. Ben appears to tackle story structure like a puzzle that needs to be pieced together, especially as his books include considerable historical information so sequencing the narrative becomes a challenge. He also adopts experimental new story structures for each book he writes.

Voice

From sections 6.1 to 6.4, it evident that all participants have distinctive authorial voices. Annabel's, Shannon's and Ben's initial experimentation with authorial voice was in their opinion news articles and feature news articles. As a news reporter, Christopher had less opportunity to experiment with authorial voice in news writing. However, short stories he wrote prior to writing nonfiction books helped develop his voice. Christopher and Ben are primarily outward-looking nonfiction writers who are comfortable with reflecting on external circumstances and experiences in their books. They include personal experiences where relevant, but this is done sparingly. Annabel and Shannon write in a more inward-looking manner, sharing confronting personal experiences throughout their books and connecting these to the overall narratives. Christopher's and Ben's authorial voices are highly literary in keeping with the travel nonfiction genre they write. Annabel's authorial voice is literary but also satirical, as with her news opinion writing. Shannon has a gentle and analytical authorial voice that suits health nonfiction writing. These differences distinguish the participants' writing styles.

Accuracy

All participants pay close attention to story accuracy when writing nonfiction, indicating that nonfiction writing is almost a natural progression for journalists who wish to write longer true stories. The difference is in how the aspect of accuracy validates each participants' nonfiction book. For Christopher, accuracy validated the narrative he created on India in *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006). For Annabel, it validated the narrative she created on

Australian women's work conditions in *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014). For Ben, accuracy validated the narrative he created on the New Australia colony in Paraguay in *Ticket to Paradise* (Stubbs 2012), and for Shannon, the narrative she created on human health in *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016). It is interesting to note that while in Shannon's book creative writing techniques take less precedence, accuracy is most important for her book as it focuses on the important topic of human health. What can be observed from all four participants' attention to accuracy, is that story accuracy is a foundation from which creative writing or literary writing techniques can be applied to enhance nonfiction works.

Author responsibility

Author responsibility varies for each participant's book based on who they used as primary information sources. Christopher's responsibility is to sources of information in India and his own family. Annabel's is to journalists, politicians and lay people who are her sources. Ben's is to his sources in Paraguay, while Shannon's is not only to her sources, namely, scientists, academics and people suffering illnesses, but also to her readers, because they may rely on her book's insights in maintaining their own health. Author responsibility and the degree of it depends on the genre of nonfiction book being written and the book's subject matter.

Summary

There is discernible progression in story-crafting techniques and a maturing of authorial voice as each participant writes more nonfiction books. However, they are at different stages in their nonfiction writing careers. Christopher's and

Annabel's nonfiction writing appears the most sophisticated given their years of writing experience and critics' reviews (Tuffield 2006; Mullins 2015). Ben is at an early career stage but has made steady progress, publishing two nonfiction books since 2012 and working on a third. Shannon is an emerging nonfiction writer with one published book and another in progress. Regardless of the stage in their nonfiction writing careers, all are authoring literary journalism. The key difference is that Christopher, Annabel and Ben author nonfiction in genres that require a high degree of creative writing while Shannon authors health nonfiction which firstly requires strong attention to factuality and story coherence. This chapter illustrates that nonfiction books of different genres can be classified as works of literary journalism if they display Sims' (1984) five characteristics of literary journalism. Nonfiction writing is therefore a pluralistic writing practice and the techniques of literary journalism can be applied to multiple writing forms, nonfiction being one of them. Each participant's nonfiction writing practice is also pluralistic in their varying approaches to story structuring, degree of immersion in their topics, and degree of responsibility towards sources and readers, indicating that nonfiction is a highly versatile writing form that allows literary journalism to flourish. The final chapter draws together arguments presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to interpret how the participants' nonfiction writing contributes to Australian literary journalism and the global slow journalism movement.

Chapter 7

Conclusions: The diversity of Australian literary journalism and its connections to the slow journalism movement

This chapter addresses two themes: how the participants' nonfiction writing reflects the diversity of Australian literary journalism and, more briefly, how their nonfiction writing can be considered slow journalism (Le Masurier 2016) in practice. Identifying these contributions enables understanding of the significance of the participants' nonfiction writing within a national and global context.

7.1 The participants' nonfiction writing illustrates the diversity of contemporary Australian literary journalism

It is evident from the analysis of the participants' descriptions of their nonfiction writing practice and their nonfiction books in preceding chapters that literary journalism is a versatile writing style, the defining parameters of which allow for considerable experimentation with story content and crafting. For all four participants, their news reporting specialisation has influenced the nonfiction genre they author, and their nonfiction is an extension of their journalism interests, such as travel writing, political writing and health writing. In Annabel's and Ben's cases, this can be directly observed as both were inspired to write nonfiction books by news articles they previously wrote. In Christopher's and Shannon's cases, their books were inspired not by a specific news article but by working as a foreign correspondent in India and writing a series of health news

articles respectively. These connections between the participants' news writing and nonfiction writing, in terms of story themes and content, demonstrate that their nonfiction stems from their journalism in the "working tradition" (Sims 2008) of literary journalists.

The participants expressed a common motivation for writing nonfiction: the desire to write true stories that superseded the narrative limitations imposed in regular journalism. This reflects Boylan's statement that literary journalism is "writing that seeks to encompass aspects of life and culture that may lie beyond the grasp of other forms of journalism" (cited in Sims 2008, p. xvii). However, the nonfiction genre each participant writes in is based on their personal news reporting experiences as Geiber's (1964) concept of the personal nature of news narratives journalists create suggests. Christopher wrote *Inhaling the Mahatma* (Kremmer 2006) – a travel and current affairs nonfiction book – based on his experiences as a foreign correspondent in India and Annabel wrote *The Wife Drought* (Crabb 2014) – a politics and current affairs nonfiction book – after her experiences as a female political journalist in Australia. Likewise, Ben wrote *Ticket To Paradise* (Stubbs 2012) – a travel nonfiction book – after his experience of writing a feature news article on the Australian colony in Paraguay, and Shannon wrote *The Whole Health Life* (Harvey 2016) – a health nonfiction book – based on her experience with a personal illness and writing related news articles. The different nonfiction genres they author indicate the versatility of literary journalism as a writing style; a view supported by key international anthologies of literary journalism (Keeble &Tulloch 2012; Sims 2008) which also cite nonfiction works in multiple genres.

Chapter 6 demonstrated that all the participants' nonfiction writing displayed Sims' (1984) five key characteristics of literary journalism: immersion, structure, voice, accuracy and author responsibility. However, the degree of creativity in their writing varies depending on the maturity of their nonfiction writing practice and the nonfiction genre they write in. While creative writing ability considerably enhances nonfiction writing as Lounsberry (1990), Kramer (1995) and Sims (2008) note, Necka's theory (cited in Kara 2015, p. 12) on the four levels of human creativity indicates the value of all the participants' nonfiction. All the participants work at what he describes as a "mature" level of creativity as they are "creating new texts…using intelligence, knowledge and skill" (Necka cited in Kara 2015, p.12) and thereby making valuable and unique contributions to Australian literary journalism. Chapter 6 also demonstrated that the participants write Eason's (1984; 2008) realist style literary journalism in the tradition of pioneer American literary journalists such as Tom Wolfe and Gay Talese (Eason 2008). This study's identification of four Australian literary journalists who are realist writers highlights connections between Australian and American literary journalism traditions outlined in Chapter 2. Given the common Anglo-American roots from which both countries' literary journalism stems (Ricketson & Joseph 2015), this is a natural connection.

The key significance of the study participants' nonfiction writing lies in the differences in their writing styles, story content and structuring. From a common base of literary journalism and realist style writing (Eason 2008), they have crafted unique true stories that strongly reflect their personal writing interests and showcase their individual writing styles. Christopher's and Ben's nonfiction is literary in style in keeping with the rich travel narratives, steeped in historical

and contemporary facts and anecdotes, that they write. Christopher's nonfiction books are panoramic narratives on Burma, Laos and India developed from his experiences in South East Asia. Ben's nonfiction describes smaller regions or cities namely, the Australian colony in Paraguay, the city of Madrid and the state of South Australia – he undertakes a close examination of each of these places. Annabel's nonfiction provides detailed perspectives on the Australian political and social landscape in her characteristic satirical writing style. Shannon's health nonfiction is perhaps the most distinct out of the four cases studied, as it is auto-ethnographic style writing (Joseph cited in Rickett 2015) as well as realist style literary journalism – a hybrid form of writing that warrants further scholarly examination. These distinct differences in the subject matter and writing styles of the participants' nonfiction reflect the diversity of their contributions to Australian literary journalism. They also reflect the versatility and robustness of literary journalism as a writing style that enables nonfiction stories of multiple genres to be crafted. This study's interpretation of the participants' accounts of their nonfiction writing practice and their nonfiction texts shows that for journalists with literary writing interests, nonfiction writing is a highly rewarding means of expression.

As Ricketson and Joseph (2015) note, Australian literary journalism, due to its relatively short history of practice, needs further development to achieve the rich output and maturity of American literary journalism. However, nonfiction books like those written by this study's participants add to the repertoire of global literary journalism, enriching its overall practice (Keeble and Tulloch 2012). In Australia, literary journalism in the form of nonfiction books plays an important role in fostering long-form journalism as mainstream news media

increasingly focuses on faster-paced news delivery (Le Masurier 2016). This is a key reason why nonfiction writing by journalists such as Christopher Kremmer, Annabel Crabb, Ben Stubbs and Shannon Harvey is significant. Furthermore, Annabel's and Ben's nonfiction books (Stubbs 2012; Crabb 2014) discuss uniquely Australian themes, representing literary journalism that explores valuable country-specific themes and strongly reflecting the culture about which they are writing. Shannon's and Annabel's nonfiction also represents long-form public interest journalism as the topics they are narrating on are of significant public interest. All four participants' books (Kremmer 2006; Stubbs 2012; Crabb 2014, Harvey 2016) are examples of contemporary Australian literary journalism that follow literary journalism writing traditions originating from the USA. The different genres of these nonfiction books echo the different nonfiction genres of American literary journalism output presented in anthologies compiled by Sims (1984; 2007; 2008), Sims and Kramer (1995) and Boynton (2005a), indicating that nonfiction is a pluralistic writing form shaped by an author's own experiences, personal writing interests and individual writing style. This diversity of content and expression is what makes the participants' nonfiction writing interesting and unique, indicating that this form of literary journalism is a valuable means of narrating on various topics of interest. By adding to the body of Australian literary journalism through their diverse nonfiction writing, the participants are also contributing to the global tapestry of literary journalism.

7.2 The participants' nonfiction writing highlights connections between literary journalism and slow journalism

Chapter 2 identified that there is another related area of journalism (Ricketson 2015; Maguire & Maguire 2017) to which the participants' nonfiction writing contributes: the growing global movement of slow journalism (Le Masurier 2016) that is a reaction to the fast-paced journalism practised by most mainstream media. By definition, any type of long-form journalism can be classified as slow journalism (Le Masurier 2015), however, Chapter 6's discussion illustrated that the participants' nonfiction writing qualifies as slow journalism according to Neveu's (2016) defining characteristics of this movement, thereby highlighting the connections between literary journalism and slow journalism. Literary journalism is a writing style while slow journalism is a movement, but their methods of practice are connected as both require applying extended effort to creating a piece of work. Another reason that literary journalism relates closely to slow journalism is because they both provide alternatives to mainstream high-speed journalism outputs and a way for audiences to make sense of complex topics at their own pace. Chapter 6 demonstrated that Christopher, Annabel, Ben and Shannon have all extended discourse on news topics that matter to them to a longer narrative format through nonfiction writing and are thereby practising slow journalism. The key significance for this study is the identification of the slow journalism movement as a means of support for the continued practice and relevance of literary journalism in the digital media age. Chapter 6's examination of the participants' nonfiction writing practices showed that literary journalism is intrinsically linked to slow journalism as it is a way of practising journalism slowly.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the participants make a twofold contribution to Australian journalism – their nonfiction books extend the range of Australian literary journalism and their nonfiction writing practice contributes to the Australian slow journalism movement. This dual contribution highlights the importance of journalists continuing to author nonfiction to sustain long-form journalism practice in Australia, despite ongoing changes in mainstream journalism (Davidson 2017). These case studies also demonstrate that literary journalism continues to be relevant due to its timeless narrative structures (Sims 2007) that remain effective despite contemporary changes to journalism practice. The analysis of the research interviews in Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated that the participants' nonfiction writing nurtures literary journalism on key news topics. The firsthand insights obtained into their nonfiction writing practices through interviews particularly enabled these conclusions to be reached. As Ricketson & Joseph note, it is "important for scholars to build literacy about the writers they analyse" as so little is known about them in comparison to "canonical figures…such as Wolfe, John Hersey, Hunter S. Thompson and Joan Didion et al" (2015, p. 31). This study builds literacy on four Australian journalists and suggests the potential for further scholarship on other Australian literary journalists following in American (Sims 2008) and European (Keeble & Tulloch 2012) anthological traditions.

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Appendix

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Crafting true stories: how contemporary nonfiction books by Australian journalists are shaped by their news reporting and personal values

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2016-277
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Kathryn Bowd
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Varunika Ruwanpura
STUDENT'S DEGREE: Master of Philosophy

Dear Ms Harvey,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?
This project investigates how nonfiction books written by Australian journalists are influenced by their news reporting and personal values.

It aims to understand how Australian journalists who begin their careers as news reporters progress to become non-fiction book writers and why they do so. The also aims to understand writing genre and journalism practice links between feature writing, news documentaries and non-fiction book writing.

Four Australian journalists were chosen as case studies for this project. Participants will be interviewed and a comparative analysis of one non-fiction book written by each journalist will also be undertaken (in your case: *The Whole Health Life*). The overall aim is to draw connections between news reporting and nonfiction book writing and understand the shaping of Australian book-length journalism.

Who is undertaking the project?
This project is being conducted by the student researcher, Varunika Ruwanpura, for a Master of Philosophy under the supervision of Dr Kathryn Bowd, Dr Kim Barbour and Dr Jillian Schedneck. It is funded by an Australian Research Training Scheme grant.

Why am I being invited to participate?
Your participation is sought as you are an established Australian journalist who has produced news articles, documentaries and a non-fiction book.

What will I be asked to do?

- Agree to two interviews via video conferencing methods such as Skype or a face-to-face interview if funding permits. The first interview will be about 1 hour in duration with a follow up interview (also of around 1 hour) after 6-8 months. The second

interview is to be able to speak to each journalist over a set period to assess how their writing has progressed.

- Interviews will be recorded with your permission. These recordings will be accessed only by the student researcher and supervision team for data analysis. You are welcome to look at the interview transcripts if you wish to.
- Any further background information on your writing that you are willing to share with the researcher will also be valuable to this research. All information shared will be treated with strict confidentiality and used only for research purposes.

How much time will the project take?
You would need to allocate a maximum of three hours for this project:

- 2 hours for interviews over approximately a 6-8 month period.
- 1 hour for sourcing any background information on writing approach, diaries, journalism writing examples or other information you would like to share with the researcher.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?
There are few foreseeable risks in your participation in this project. However, there may be minor emotional risks caused by agreeing to an in-depth interview such as the ones proposed. For example, the risk of bringing up unpleasant memories associated with talking about previous work. If an adverse event occurs, the interview will be stopped immediately and remedial action taken by the researcher in consultation with supervisors and the university's research advisors. There may also be a slight reputational risk depending on the findings of the thesis. However, this risk is minimal as you can review the interview transcripts prior to thesis publication.

What are the benefits of the research project?
Potential benefits may be a wider knowledge of peers writing nonfiction books and current trends in Australian book-length journalism. Your writing experience may also serve as an inspiration for future students of journalism and new media graduates.

Can I withdraw from the project?
Participation in this project is voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time. Please inform the research student, Varunika Ruwanpura, in writing if you wish to withdraw.

What will happen to my information?
Digital data will be password protected and stored on the University's secure network. Any hardcopy documents will be stored securely in the primary supervisor's, Dr Kathryn Bowd's, office. Information collected will be used to write the student researcher's Master's thesis. It may also be included in presentations, conference papers, academic publications and journal articles.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?
The research team can be contacted by email or phone. The primary researcher, Dr Kathryn Bowd, is the recommended contact. In her absence, you can contact the student researcher, Varunika Ruwanpura at any time during the project.

1. Primary researcher Dr Kathryn Bowd Senior Lecturer, Media Ph: +61 8 8313 5617	**2. Student researcher** Varunika Ruwanpura Ph: + Mobile: +

Email:kathryn.bowd@adelaide.edu.au	Email:varunika.ruwanpura@adelaide.edu.au
3. Dr Kim Barbour Lecturer in Media Ph: +61 8 8313 3405	4. Dr Jillian Schedneck Coordinator of the Writer's Centre Ph: +61 8 8313 3640

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2016-277). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding a concern or complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 6028

Email: hrec@adelaide.edu.au

Post: Level 4, Rundle Mall Plaza, 50 Rundle Mall, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

Thank you for reading and considering this information sheet. If you agree to be a project participant, please sign and return the attached participant consent form via email to Varunika Ruwanpura (varunika.ruwanpura@adelaide.edu.au). Once signed consent is received, an appointment will be made for the first interview to take place.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Varunika Ruwanpura