University of Canberra

Patrick Mullins

Justifying the profane: ethics and biography

Abstract:

Since 2014, I have been researching a biography of Sir William McMahon, prime minister of Australia from 1971-72. The only prime minister to have not been the subject of a biographical study, McMahon has offered an exciting way to approach and explore the issues that confront biographers during their work. For me, the most pressing of these issues have been the ethical ones: questions of ownership, of the multiple responsibilities owed by a biographer, and the consequences of a finished work. In this paper, I examine the historical treatment and understanding of these ethical issues in order to contextualise my response to them as they've arisen in my practice. I argue that contention with these ethical issues is a necessary part of modern biographical practice and, indeed, demands both recognition of biography's 'profane' nature and a justifying answer from the biographer—a tentative one of which, for my own work, I offer here.

Biographical note:

Patrick Mullins is a lecturer in journalism at the University of Canberra, from where he obtained his PhD in 2014. He was the Donald Horne Creative and Cultural Fellow in 2015, a research fellow at the Australian Prime Ministers Centre at the Museum of Australian Democracy (2015-16) and the winner of the 2015 Scribe Non-Fiction Prize for Young Writers. His biography of Sir William McMahon will be published by Scribe in 2018.

Keywords:

Biography — ethics — ownership — Australian politics — practice

Introduction

For the past two years, I have been researching a biography of Sir William McMahon, prime minister from 1971-72 and a minister for twenty years prior to that. The only prime minister of Australia to have not been the subject of a full-length biographical study, McMahon has offered an exciting way to approach and explore the issues that confront biographers during their work. Indeed, this is among the reasons I undertook the research: I wanted to put into practice the knowledge I had gathered during my study of the form of political biography in Australia.

Of the issues that I have confronted in this work, the most pressing have been the ethical ones—questions of method, of ownership, of the multiple responsibilities owed by a biographer. In this paper, I examine how these questions have come to occupy much of biographical scholarship, how they have influenced me, and argue that contention with them is a necessary part of modern biographical practice. Indeed, I argue that this contention leads to both recognition of the form's 'profane' nature (Nicolson 1968: 64) and the necessity of a justifying answer from the biographer—a tentative one of which, for my own work, I offer here.

Awareness and understanding

Biographers have long acknowledged the ethical dimensions of their work. Initially, however, and for a long time, this dimension was perceived to exist only in the commemoration of the dead and the 'moral improvement' (Plutarch 1998: xiii) that the study of a life could offer to a reader. Absent a few outbreaks that suggested that it could exist elsewhere (such as Aubrey's *Brief Lives* ([1693]1982), this ethical dimension remained firmly situated—quarantined, even—for the subsequent two millennia. The hagiographies of the Middles Ages utilised the commemorative and instructional capabilities of biography by focusing on the lives of royalty and saints and prioritising an Aristotelian-like emphasis on plot before character (Whittemore 1988: 125) that resulted in what the academic Michael Shapiro called 'destiny narratives' (1988: 58). Flourish though biography did, it was unaccompanied by scholarship that examined or critiqued the form (Clifford 1970: 114). Moreover, though it was the form's chief purpose, there was no serious study of the ethical dimensions of biography as contemporary practitioners would understand them. There was no discussion of the biographer's role in shaping the work; no acknowledgement of the competing claims and influences of a subject, their intimates and the public; no interrogation of the methods and characteristics of the form itself (Clifford 1962: x-xvii).

This changed with Samuel Johnson. After his *Life of Savage* ([1744]2002), but before his *Lives of The English Poets* ([1779]1963a), Johnson authored two key essays in the literary magazines *Rambler* ([1750]1969) and *Idler* ([1759]1963b) that anticipate much of biographical scholarship, as Clifford notes (1962: xi-xii) and Ray Monk reaffirms (2007: 529). In these essays, Johnson raises five issues, all of which he takes care to link together and argue have bearing on a biographer's practice. First, biography is history in its concern for facts and novelistic in its concern for individuals (Johnson 1969: 318-23). Second, almost anyone is a suitable subject for a biography for there is little difference between the common man and the king. 'Men thus equal in themselves will appear equal in honest and impartial biography,' Johnson writes, 'and those whom fortune or nature place at the greatest distance

may afford instruction to each other' (1963b: 263). Third, Johnson advises what should be included in a biography: the telling detail (Catiline's gait), but not the useless (Addison's irregular pulse); the testimony of contemporaries as well as the public papers (1969: 322). Fourth, a biographer should eschew the didactic agenda that Plutarch advocated and the scandalous exposure that Aubrey expounded; instead, the biographer should:

> … pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and virtue (Johnson 1969: 321).

More pointedly, Johnson argues that 'if we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth' (1969: 323). Fifth, on whether it is possible to know with certainty the inner life of a subject, Johnson is unequivocal: no. 'By conjecture only can one man judge of another's motives or sentiments,' he declares (1963b: 263).

Johnson's arguments are notable for inaugurating biographical scholarship but also for the expansion and problematising of the ethical dimension of the biographical form. No longer situated merely in the biography's capacity to instruct and commemorate, this ethical dimension henceforth encompassed a biographer's method and the debatable virtues of the whole endeavour.

Prescient though they were, however, Johnson's arguments were eclipsed in biographical practice in the years that followed; first, by the sprawling and garrulous biography written by his friend, James Boswell ([1791]1953), and, second, prompted by Boswell's work, a fierce if earnest reassertion of the ideals of moral improvement Johnson had criticised. By these standards, proper regard for the memory of the dead was not evinced by forthright criticism and depiction of a subject 'warts and all', as Cromwell famously put it. Instead, this regard was to be found in the presentation of subjects bleached of the truth that Johnson recommended and the familiarity that characterises Boswell's work. Indeed, there is an apt indictment of this model foreshadowed in Johnson's own writings:

> There are many who think it an act of piety to hide the faults or failings of their friends, even when they can no longer suffer by their detection; we therefore see whole ranks of characters adorned with uniform panegyric, and not to be known from one another, but by extrinsic and casual circumstances (Johnson 1969: 323).

There was at least a vibrant critical discussion of biography and its ethical dimensions. Of the contributors to this discussion, Leslie Stephen, Edmund Gosse and Margaret Oliphant were perhaps most prolific and Oliphant the most forthright in arguing for the 'reverential mode' that Ben Pimlott argues came to characterise Victorian-era biography (1990: 217). In an essay published in *The Contemporary Review* (1883), Oliphant argued that the biographer has an obligation to the reputation of their subject that dwarfs their obligation to the public and the 'truth' that Johnson loftily invoked:

> If a man, on the eve of so important an undertaking, finds that the idea he has formed of the person whose good name is in his hands is an unfavourable one, and that all he can do by telling the story of his life is to lessen or destroy that good name … is it in such a case his duty to speak at all? … In this case his plain duty would be to refrain (Oliphant 1883: 90-91).

For Oliphant and biographers of her time, this duty was underscored by what they regarded as biography's undoubted power over readers. As Oliphant writes in the same essay, 'The biographer holds an office of high trust and responsibility. In all likelihood, if he is at all equal to his subject, permanent public opinion will be fixed, or all events largely influenced by the image he sets before it' (1883: 83). The biographer, in Oliphant's language, is 'like that judge whose summing up so often decides the verdict' (1883: 90).

Both an acerbic rejoinder and reframing of the biographer's power were offered in Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1917). The four studies that book contains unabashedly seek to 'lessen or destroy' the good names of its eponymous subjects, all in the service of exposing what Strachey saw as the hypocrisies of the Victorian era. Yet this occurs with an acknowledgement of the reduced power of a biographer in the (then early) twentieth century. The 'truth' that Johnson had invoked two centuries before is preceded, in Strachey's articulation, by the caveat that his work is only 'certain fragments of the truth which took my fancy and lay to hand' (1917: ix). This reduction of a biographer's power is further reduced in Strachey's commendation of a biographer's second duty:

> The second, no less surely, is to maintain his own freedom of spirit. It is not his business to be complimentary; it is his business to lay bare the facts of the case, as he understands them (Strachey 1917: xi).

The emphasis, here, shifts from the objective truth suggested by Johnson to a subjective understanding, one that is couched—as, indeed, Oliphant's writing is—in the language of the courts. Yet in this analogy, the biographer is *not* positioned as the judge, as he or she is in Oliphant's work; instead, the biographer is given the role of advocate who must engage, evaluate, select, and argue for the correctness of his or her interpretation.

Arguably a logical position in light of the 'vast quantity of information' that Strachey argues accumulated in the Victorian-era (1917: ix), this repositioning nonetheless heralded changes in biographical orthodoxy that resulted from the proliferation of scholarship about biography (represented in particular by the work André Maurois, Emil Ludwig and Harold Nicolson), the problems of reading and using factual material, and the turn to psychoanalysis, which raised issues of interpretation pointedly noted in Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando* ([1928]2003): 'A biography may be considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, where as a person may well have as many thousand' (2003: 153). Further spurs— including highly publicised occasions where boundaries appear to have been crossed (for example, Lord Moran's *Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival* (1966), in which the deceased prime minister's physician published information about his former patient's health), the proliferation of biographies written about contemporary figures, and increased if initially antipathetic engagement from the academy—saw the ethical issues came to occupy a central part in biographical scholarship.

The charge

Today, knowledge of these issues is widespread and the apparently shaky ethical foundations of biography are impossible to ignore. Few modern biographies do not contain some reference to, or discussion of, the ethical issues that confronted their authors (Walter 2013: 84-85). Though frequently confined to paratextual author's notes or supplementary exegeses,

these discussions are often very similar, a point that Australian academic James Walter argues is the result of the way in which most biographers engage with their practice: 'None of us was trained to be a biographer. In the course of writing a biography you become aware of the issues and, often at the end of the process, you then write a sort of anguished methodological essay about the problems' (2006: 30).

Few, however, are willing to admit the charge made by Janet Malcolm in *The Silent Woman* ([1994]2005), a provocative study of the wrangling between the estate cum family of the deceased poet Sylvia Plath and the attentions of biographers. According to Malcolm, the biographical rituals—of 'the pose of fair-mindedness, the charade of evenhandedness, the striking of an attitude of detachment [which] can never be more than rhetorical ruses' (2005: 176)—belie the essentially 'flawed' nature of the form (2005: 10). Really, Malcolm argues, biographers are:

> … like the professional burglar, breaking into a house, rifling through certain drawers that he has good reason to think contain the jewelry and money, and triumphantly bearing his loot away (Malcolm 2005: 9).

Malcolm's indictment of practitioners is allusion to the voyeuristic excesses that characterise biography—'Biographers do these weird things,' Edmund Morris wrote, after standing on a box to look through a window into a house that his subject once lived in (2012: 451)—but also a strike at the knotty issue of ownership.

'The question "Who owns *the life?"* seems self-evident initially,' writes Walter (2006: 29). However self-evident it is, the question is posed repeatedly throughout a biographical endeavour, drawing in the competing responsibilities and claims of a subject, their family and friends, the public and (despite its problems) the truth.

> The difficulty with any biography … is the need to reconcile the subject's own investment in their 'life myth' … These 'life myth' concerns are also linked to the concerns of their family because you will find if your subject is within living memory or recently dead that the family, too, has an investment and there are certain things that the family do no want to tell. But then there are other stakeholders … Each of these have a particular version of *the life* that they would want to see supported (Walter 2006: 29).

What makes ownership especially fraught, particularly for the subject of a biography, is the absence of any choice in the matter. Responding to the forlorn hope expressed by Plath's widow, Ted Hughes, that 'each of us owns the facts of her or his own life', Malcolm argues that:

> … We do not "own" the facts of our lives at all. This ownership passes out of our hands at birth, at the moment we are first observed. The organs of publicity that have proliferated in our time are only an extension and a magnification of society's fundamental and incorrigible nosiness. Our business is everybody's business, should anybody wish to make it so (Malcolm 2005: 8).

Though some protection from these facts and observations may be found in the prospect of libel or defamation suits, this protection expires once a subject is deceased. And although this ostensibly leaves the subject hostage to whosoever picks up the pen, as Oliphant suggests—

> The dead have no such safeguard; they have no longer any privacy; their very hearts, like

> their desks and private drawers and cabinets, can be ransacked for evidence to their disadvantage (Oliphant 1883: 91).

—there is nonetheless some protection to be found. As though in response to Dr. Arbuthnot's famous crack that biography had added a new terror to death came the regular formation of estates to manage and protect images of the deceased. Most conspicuous since the formalisation of copyright law in the early twentieth century, these so-called 'keepers of the flame' can frustrate and inhibit the work of prospective biographers. While some can demand acquiescence to the kind of 'hard terms' that Bernard Crick put to Sonia Orwell (Crick 1987: 293), or find ways around such restrictions, as Peter Ackroyd did with his *T.S. Eliot* (1994), the powers offered under copyright to unwilling families and estates is immense. Unprecedented though it may have seemed, Ian Hamilton's tortured experience (1988) dealing with a subject, in J.D. Salinger, willing to test the limits of the protections offered by copyright was neither new nor extraordinary. Henry James' novella *The Aspern Papers* ([1888]1976) had suggested how a sense of ownership could inhibit or facilitate the putative biographer; Hamilton's subsequent study of literary estates ([1992]2011) simply confirmed the long history of precedents for actions and obstacles of this kind.

Though mitigated by the various gaps for 'fair use' and the inability to copyright 'facts' on their own—proof, perhaps, of Helen Garner's argument (2012) that writers of non-fiction shape messes of fragments and inchoate matter into the stories we read—the result is an ongoing tension between the responsibilities of a biographer and the stakes inherent in their work; stakes that exist whether a subject, their family, friends and followers co-operates with the biography or not.

An answer

For me, the above issues have weighed heavily throughout the past two years. The ethical questions have confronted me in a way that was never as acute or urgent during my study of biography as a form.

These confrontations began almost as soon as I realised the considerable scars carried by the family of my subject. The criticism that McMahon has attracted, both during his life and since his death, has resulted in an understandably acute sensitivity. The prospect of hurt resulting from the confrontation that David Day suggests is unavoidable in biography—that is, a family confronting the judgment rendered by a biographer (2006: 53)—is high. As McMahon's widow said after the publication of a book which discussed her marriage and her husband's private life, 'It hurts when someone attacks and ridicules the man you love, questions his achievements, and wonders if his life may have been largely a lie' (Writer 2007).

That so much of the biographical endeavour centres on engaging with a subject's life-myth—parsing, checking, and correcting or verifying the stories that he told to both himself and the public—means the prospect of hurt is inherent. Is this ethical, then? Would it really assuage that hurt to see an appropriate number of footnotes? Would knowledge of a biographer's sensitivity and honesty in handling material lessen that hurt?

'Biography is essentially a profane brand of literature,' wrote Harold Nicolson (1968: 64). It is difficult to disagree. To discuss modern biography is to acknowledge that one of its leading

examples, in Strachey's *Eminent Victorians,* is a celebrated hatchet job that foreshadows the egregious work of biographers like Kitty Kelley. With such precedents, it's understandable that the McMahon family reacted warily to my proposal of a biography. Similarly understandable, if frustrating, was the family's decision to decline co-operation in spite of my attempts to establish a relationship of trust and transparency by agreeing to undertakings and measures that included:

- obtaining ethics clearance from my university;
- giving them opportunity to revise answers from interviews;
- warning them of criticisms and providing opportunity to engage with those criticisms before any kind of publication;
- providing a draft chapter prior to any kind of agreement or meeting for their scrutiny, as well as work of my own that discussed, explicitly, the dangers and opportunities of a biographer's work for a subject and their family.

It took little time to realise that I was alive to their sensitivity but not to their vulnerability. For to my offer to disclose criticisms and allow them opportunity to convince me otherwise, I was told that they were not experts. How could they possibly refute my arguments? To my offer to allow them to review transcripts of interviews, they pointed out that they had no say in how I used them, if I did at all. The vulnerability went further and to the heart of the whole endeavour: for if my view of McMahon turned out to be negative then they had few ways to escape the hurt inflicted. The ethics clearance I was seeking from the university sought only to protect participants from *harm that resulted from their co-operation.* There was no protection from the hurt that might result from the project's simple existence.

But I must argue that this prospect of hurt to the McMahon family exists within a broader context of multiple responsibilities owed by me (as a biographer) to them, to McMahon's colleagues, to the public, and to the cause of knowledge. In this context, the prospect of a point of view that engages with McMahon, with sensitivity and care and with the objective of greater knowledge, *is* also valid—if not more so.

One example of this includes McMahon's reputation. For many years, he has been damned as Australia's worst prime minister. The derision of his colleagues has long been on the record: according to Robert Menzies, McMahon was a 'contemptible little squirt … the most characterless man who was ever prime minister' (cited in Henderson 1994: 184). John McEwen, an implacable foe throughout the 1960s, said publicly that he didn't trust McMahon and John Gorton, McMahon's predecessor as prime minister, called him 'a leech' and 'congenital liar' (Henderson 1994: 207). Doug Anthony, deputy prime minister to McMahon, reckoned that he was 'just not big enough for the job' (Bramston 2004: 33), and Neil Brown, a deputy leader of the Liberal Party, wrote that that McMahon 'was devoid of the most elementary qualities that the job [of being prime minister] requires' (1993: 56). Most famous of all, perhaps, was the assessment of Paul Hasluck, a colleague and Governor-General:

> The longer one is associated with him the deeper the contempt for him grows, and I find it hard to allow him any merit. Disloyal, devious, dishonest, untrustworthy, petty, cowardly—all these adjectives have been weighed by me and I could not in truth modify or reduce any one of them in its application to McMahon. I find him a contemptible creature (Hasluck 1997:

185).

The popular regard for McMahon is no less derisory, and while the sentiments of Left-leaning historians such as Don Watson—'His name is a byword for decay, folly and defeat,' wrote Watson (2012: 132)—are perhaps predictable, the contempt of McMahon's own party remains considerable. When Tony Abbott wished to insult Julia Gillard, he cited with no apparent irony Robert Manne's assessment that she was the worst prime minister since McMahon (Schubert 2012).

McMahon 'was one of Australia's worst prime ministers,' wrote Ian Hancock (2007: 7) in his history of the NSW Liberal Party. Impossible to ignore, however, are the questions that must be raised once these comments are read. If McMahon was so devoid of the qualities that the job required, then how did he get there? How did he continue to rise through the Liberal Party ranks in spite of the attitudes of so many of his colleagues? Is there any prospect that he was a more substantial figure than these comments would suggest?

By my reckoning, informed by the two years I have spent working on McMahon's biography, the answer is yes. My desire to explain my answer, then, is ethically justifiable on grounds of offering another perspective to the dominant representation and memory of McMahon. By exploring the life of a subject who *has not* been the subject of a full-length biography, there is the potential capacity to find some salve to the family's hurt.

In another vein, beyond McMahon and what Walter terms 'the romance of the individual journey' (2014: 124), is the capacity of answers to the above questions (and others) to speak to a broader knowledge about politics, institutions and policy. By discussing McMahon within context, biography offers the opportunity to study the circumstances that exerted themselves on him, including (for example) the influence of legal scholarship in the early twentieth century, and economic scholarship in Australia in the post-war years. Discussion of McMahon can, similarly, illuminate the intersection between politicians and the media in the mid-twentieth century; the waning of protectionism as a source of economic policy and the rise of economic rationalism to the point of neoliberalism; and the parochial shifts of power in a Liberal Party once dominated by Victoria—home of Menzies, Harold Holt and John Gorton—but now dominated, since McMahon, by New South Wales and the leaders it has produced in John Howard, John Hewson, Brendan Nelson, Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull. In addition to the individual life, the 'tasks' that Alan Davies commends to biography—which explore questions of culture, outlook, styles of work and experience, which overall seek to bring biography closer to meeting the demands of the social sciences (1972: 110-113)—offer the opportunity to focus on questions and insights, analysis and understanding.

For me, the prospect of exploring, and arguing for the possibility of a different McMahon to the one widely known, and the wider applicable knowledge gleaned from study of his life, justifies my work. For as Johnson suggests, what regard we show for the memory of the dead is still dwarfed by the respect owed to knowledge, virtue and truth—even if it is the biographer's version of it.

List of works cited

Ackroyd, P 1984 *TS Eliot*, London: Simon & Schuster

Aubrey, J 1982 *Brief Lives* O Dick (ed.), London: Penguin

Boswell, J 1953 *Life of Johnson*, London: Oxford University Press

Bramston, T 2004 'Wherefore Art Thou, Billy? Revisiting the McMahon Government', *Eureka Street* 13:4, 33-35

Brown, N 1993 *On the Other Hand… Some Sketches and Reflections from Political Life*, Australia: Poplar Press

Clifford, J (ed.) 1962 *Biography as an Art: Selected Criticism 1560-1960*, New York: Oxford University Press

Clifford, J 1970 *From Puzzles to Portraits: Problems of a Literary Biographer*, USA: University of North Carolina Press

Crick, B 1987 'Orwell and Biography', *Biography* 10:4, 283-300

Crouch, W 1974 'Former PM is celebrating 25 years in Parliament: 'I think I'm in better shape than ever', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 December, 6

Davies, A 1972 *Essays in Political Sociology*, Melbourne: Cheshire Press

Day, D 2006 'John Curtin: Taking his Childhood Seriously', in T Arklay, J Nethercote & J Wanna *Australian Political Lives: Chronicling Political Careers and Administrative Histories*, Canberra: ANU E-Press, 51-53

Garner, H 2012 'An Evening with Helen Garner', published on YouTube by the Wheeler Centre, 28 January 2013, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rfsXsBg3IU (accessed 28 July 2016) Drawn from 'Helen Garner: Ethics, Erotics and Hauling Seaweed', 27 November 2012, NonFictioNow Conference, Melbourne

Hamilton, I 1988 *In Search of JD Salinger*, London: William Heineman

Hamilton, I 2011 *Keepers of the Flame: Literary Estates and the Rise of Biography*, London: Faber and Faber, Kindle Edition

Hancock, I 2007 *The Liberals: The NSW Division 1945-2000*, Australia: Federation Press

Hasluck, P 1997 *The Chance of Politics* N Hasluck (ed.), Melbourne: Text

Henderson, G 1994 *Menzies' Child: The Liberal Party of Australia, 1944-1994*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin

Jackson, RV 1982 *John McEwen: His Story*, privately published

James, H 1976 *The Aspern Papers and Other Stories*, London: Penguin

Johnson, S 1963a *Lives of the English Poets,* London: Collins

Johnson, S 1963b *The Idler and The Adventurer: The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Volume II*, New Haven: Yale University Press

Johnson, S 1969 *The Rambler: The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Volume III*, New Haven: Yale University Press

Johnson, S 2002 *Johnson on Savage: An Account of the Life of Mr Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers*, London: Harper Perennial

Malcolm, J 2005 *The Silent Woman: Sylvia Plath & Ted Hughes*, London: Granta

Monk, R 2007 'Life Without Theory: Biography as an Exemplar of Philosophical understanding', *Poetics*

Today 28:3, 527-70

Moran, C 1966 *Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival*, London: Houghton Mifflin

Nicolson, H 1968 *The Development of English Biography*, London: Hogarth Press

Oliphaunt, O 1883 'The Ethics of Biography', *Contemporary Review*, 76-93, at http://archive.org/stream/a634729700londuoft#page/n5/mode/2up (accessed 27 July 2016)

Pimlott, B 1990 'The Future of Political Biography', *Political Quarterly* 61:2, 214-224

Plutarch, 1998 *Greek Lives* R Waterfield (trans.) P Stadter (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press

Schubert, M 2012 'Gillard is the Worst PM since McMahon: Discuss', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 February, at http://www.smh.com.au/national/gillard-is-the-worst-pm-since-mcmahon-discuss-20120204-1qypm.html (accessed 27 July 2016)

Shapiro, M 1988 *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography*, *Photography, and Policy Analysis*, USA: University of Wisconsin Press

Strachey, L 1917 *Eminent Victorians*, London: Cassell

Walter, J 2006 'The 'Life Myth', 'Short Lives' and Dealing with Live Subjects in Political Biography', in T Arklay, J Nethercote & J Wanna (eds) *Australian Political Lives: Chronicling Political Careers and Administrative Histories*, Canberra: ANU E-Press, 29-34

Walter, J 2013 'The Solace of Doubt? Biographical Methodology after the Short Twentieth Century', in H Renders & B de Haan (eds) *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory and Life Writing,* New York: Edwin Mellen Press

Walter, J 2014 'It Is Not Biography…It Is Executive Practice', in RAW Rhodes & G Davis *The Craft of Governing*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 123-143

Watson, D 2012 *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart: A Portrait of Paul Keating*, Sydney: Viking

Writer, L 1007 'Sonia McMahon: The Truth about my Marriage', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 1 November, Factiva, (accessed 31 March 2015)