

Cross-text multiple matching

1 You are going to read four reviews of a book about travel. For questions 1–4 on page 69, choose from the reviews A–D. The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Crossing Paths

Four reviewers comment on writer Kerry Windham's book called *Crossing Paths*

A

As an acclaimed biographer of famous explorers, it was only a matter of time before Kerry Windham turned her attention to her own travels, and in her latest work she does not disappoint. In *Crossing Paths* we mount up behind Windham as she takes us on an exhilarating and often hazardous motorcycle ride around the vast territories of Australia. Unlike the continuous prose of her previous work, *Crossing Paths* is set out more as a series of encounters, each described succinctly, sometimes within a mere paragraph, and never requiring more than a few pages. Although Windham cannot claim this approach as hers alone, she does it justice by employing a frankness about her own occasional naivety which puts her in situations of jeopardy. Each unusual character she stumbles across is depicted with compassion; even while their quirks are noted, each malignant species of creature or plant is still admired for its tenacity and evolutionary genius.

B

When reading travel writing, one must be prepared to accept the overlap with fiction. In no other genre is there such an intertwining of fact with embellishment, of truth with the writer's own perception of it. That, indeed, is part of the allure; knowing that as travellers ourselves we have come home with a mythologized version of our own adventures, and recognizing this innate tendency in others. No doubt Kerry Windham has done the same with *Crossing Paths*, her account of her solo motorbike ride across the massive expanse of Australia. It is her eye for fine detail and her ability to describe it in ways that convince the reader that the memories are their own that make this tale the perfect armchair traveller's companion. An autobiographical journey is a departure from Windham's previous kinds of book, but this one is worthy of the same volume of praise.

C

In Kerry Windham's *Crossing Paths*, the fragments of her motorcycle journey through the Australian outback and isolated townships sparkle like individual jewels on a single thread. The idea of the set piece (rather than continuous narrative) owes much to *In Patagonia*, the seminal work of travel writer Bruce Chatwin. But unlike Chatwin's fictionalized anecdotes of real people and places, Windham gives us an undistorted account of her interactions with characters from all walks of life; a taciturn young station hand on a cattle ranch, an Aboriginal dreamtime healer, an 84-year-old surfer still paddling out to the beach break. Known for her writing on the exploits of earlier travellers and their epic voyages of discovery, Windham has taken a risk by reflecting on – in her own words – 'small, incidental moments' – but it has turned out to be a risk worth taking.

D

In her biographies, Kerry Windham has rightly been applauded for her inspirational prose; her pen becomes a paint brush that conveys the shades and hues, the light and the dark of her subjects, and the reader is fully present in the experience. The same mastery of technique can also be found in *Crossing Paths*, the story of her trip by bike around the Australian territories. Windham's apparent motive for embarking on this gruelling quest was to 'explore my own cultural backyard', and certainly there is much to discover. We are introduced to a diversity of people and plants, railroads and rock formations, abandoned settlements and thriving tourist towns. However, while none of these encounters lacks vividness or authenticity, there is a sense of inconsequentiality. In her other works Windham steps back and we see the full picture; in *Crossing Paths* we glimpse disassociated images.

Quoting practice

Which reviewer

has a different opinion from the others on the overall merits of
Kerry Windham's book?

1

takes a similar view to writer C on the format of Kerry Windham's book?
expresses a different view from the others regarding Kerry Windham's
portrayal in the book of events as they happened?

2

shares reviewer D's opinion on the effect of Kerry Windham's use of
language in the book?

3

4

Time to move on?

Four writers comment on their experience of executive burnout at work.

A I would like to write a piece about the wisdom gained following my disillusionment with my work, but that would be fictitious. When I graduated, I accepted a contract with a major insurance company. During the first seven years, I steeled myself against the relentless pressure, and my achievements were recognized in every glowing performance appraisal. But when I was eventually offered a senior management position, there was an initial sense of elation and then the anti-climax. I soldiered on until it reached the point where I quite literally collapsed from exhaustion and required a period of time off work. I expected my employers to be sympathetic but I was, in essence, given an ultimatum; get back to work or move on, and it was this attitude that has left a bitter taste. Anecdotal evidence suggests mine was hardly a unique case, which makes me wonder how corporations can ever reach their productive potential.

B From the point at which I left school until my early thirties, I worked for an international bank. As most clients were operating in different time zones, you had to be available at all hours. It was physically and emotionally draining, but that's the nature of the executive lifestyle – colleagues were suffering the same degree of exhaustion. Yet with each move up the career ladder came a substantial pay rise and my ego found this irresistible. Essentially, it was my decision to tolerate the circumstances. But the time came when I simply could not face going into work anymore. I handed in my notice and the relief was immense. This gave me the opportunity to take stock and see how I could combine my passion for music with a new career. Having said all that, in a time of recession, I was one of the fortunate few that could enjoy a lifestyle many would envy so I bear no grudge.

C That desperate phenomenon of being 'used up' by years of corporate servitude is something I knew was prevalent but never contemplated happening to me. In my case, I gave ten years of my life to a leading fashion magazine, during which time circulation figures saw a 22 per cent rise – something I feel I can take considerable credit for. I wanted our product to be the best on the market, so I often found myself unwilling to delegate tasks I knew I could do better myself. As a result, the stress was constant and burnout inevitable. In retrospect, I see how this ridiculous situation was self-inflicted – a result of my need for perfection. I took a sabbatical and finally had the mental space to reassess my priorities and myself: whereas I once regarded my obsessive qualities as a professional advantage, since then, I have made a conscious effort to suppress them. At the same time, I resent the fact that my superiors were well aware of my level of fatigue and anxiety and did nothing to alleviate it. You know then that you are a mere cog in the machine.

D For the first six years at a major PR company, I had no qualms about working extremely long hours. Then came my first child and a workload which had been feasible became overwhelming, compounded by a lack of sleep. It became apparent that I could not devote myself to the job to the degree required. Indeed, realizing my own limitations was a steep learning curve; it helped me redress the balance I needed in life and identify new priorities. I hold nothing against the company; they were entirely willing to allow me a sabbatical but I made my decision not to return within half that time. I feel that industry in general has come a long way in terms of employee welfare; there was a time when you got the sense that executives were being driven to the point of collapse, but corporate ethos appears to have changed since then.

Work to

Which writer

takes a similar view to writer C regarding their responsibility for their experiences?

1

expresses a different opinion from the others on the way their experience contributed to their personal development?

2

shares writer A's attitude towards the companies that formerly employed them?

3

has a different view from the others on the extent to which burnout is endemic within business?

4