

**The Power of the Literary Image:
Mediating Memory and Managing Emotion in the Literary Memoirs
of Virginia Woolf and Helen Garner**

**Student No:
Merril Ann Howie
Master of Research Thesis
6 October, 2017**

CONTENTS

Abstract	
Statement of Candidate	
Acknowledgements	
Preface	
Introduction	
Overview	1
Cognitive Science, Cognitive Approaches to Literature and the Aims of This Thesis	7
Literary Autobiography	9
Narrative Representations of Memory, Emotion and Empathy in Autobiographical Narrative	12
Virginia Woolf	15
Helen Garner	18
Chapter One: Portraying and Engendering Memory in Autobiographical Narrative	23
Woolf's nursery: the sights, sounds, shapes and sensuality of perception	27
Garner's Grove: gateway to a 'closed-off world'	32
Engaging autobiographically with the rhythms of life and politics of family	39
Chapter Two: The Power and Potential of Emotion In Life Narratives	45
Woolf's mother: domesticity, dynamism, untimely death	48
Garner's mother: lost and found – life-long rejection, mother baby bond	52
Engaging emotionally with paternal portrayals of rage and repression	59
Chapter Three: Empathy in Life Writing – Feeling for our Former Selves	65
Woolf's 'tremulous' teenage self	69
Garner's baby bliss	73
Recollecting images, touching memories, feeling for others and for ourselves	75
Conclusion	80
Works Cited	85

ABSTRACT

Despite wide scholarly consensus regarding our long-standing penchant for autobiographical literature, further critical work is needed to more clearly apprehend and articulate the interplay between particular narrative techniques and cognitive processes that combine to invite such enthusiastic readerly engagements with life writing texts. My Master of Research project—focusing specifically on the literary memoir—aims to identify and explicate a number of potent contributing factors that drive and motivate our ongoing readerly predilection for skillfully written autobiographical narratives. This transdisciplinary cognitive literary study examines selected passages from the literary memoirs of Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) (*Moments of Being*) and Helen Garner (1942 –) (*True Stories* and *Everywhere I Look*). It focuses specifically on textual representations of memory, emotion and empathy, three components crucial not only to both effective and affective portrayals of life narratives, but also to self-understanding and the creation of personal narratives beyond writing, in lived experience. By incorporating cognitive insights into the textual investigation of their narrative constructions, this thesis aims to extend the analytical focus on Woolf's and Garner's autobiographical writings, in order to investigate the affective mechanics of these critically acclaimed life writing texts that have been widely acknowledged for their ability to emotionally engage the reader. In so doing, I investigate how specific narrative strategies—particularly the deployment of literary imagery—facilitate a potentially powerful cognitive impact and how, in turn, these memoirs invite a rich and engaging autobiographical and affective readerly experience.

I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that I have given fully documented reference to the work of others. The thesis has not previously, in part or in whole, been submitted for assessment in any formal course of study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to sincerely thank my supervisor Professor Antonina Harbus, for her highly professional management of this project, generous sharing of knowledge, and, most particularly for providing such a nurturing, encouraging and stimulating academic environment.

I would also like to thank Adrian for his unfailing support and wise counsel.

I am very appreciative of the valuable feedback and encouragement I have received from the members of my writing group—Margaret, Marian, Eva, Phillipa, and Libby.

PREFACE

The referencing of sources in this thesis follows the MLA *Guidelines*, 8th ed., apart from block quotations, which conform to the 7th ed. stipulation of single, rather than double, spacing.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This thesis is a transdisciplinary cognitive textual analysis of selected autobiographical writings by Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) and Helen Garner (1942–). These renowned feminist authors, despite emanating from dissimilar cultural and historical milieus, nevertheless share a strong affinity in their widely acclaimed authorial status, due to their much lauded ability to produce innovative, and poignant texts—both fictive and non-fictive—that are insightful and deeply engaging. This study focuses exclusively on selections from their memoirs (Woolf’s *Moments of Being*¹ and Garner’s *True Stories* (1996) and *Everywhere I Look* (2016), with the aim of better understanding the affective mechanics of these life-writing texts, which have consistently been praised for their ability to engage the reader emotionally.²

Mindful of the fact that, similarly with other art forms, literary art is largely made possible by the structure of human cognition in terms of both “social endeavor *and* social experience” (Starr, “Multisensory”, 276, my emphasis), I have elected to deploy a specifically cognitive approach in my textual investigation of three integral components of these memoirs’ affective architecture. The foundation stone of this architecture, autobiographical memory, together with the supporting structural pillars of emotion and empathy, constitute the investigatory framework of the

¹ Written between 1907 and 1940, first published 1976 and re-published with the addition of a further seventy-seven page typescript in 1985. All references in this thesis are taken from the latter publication.

² See for example, Jeanne Schulkind (11-24); J Hillis Miller (671); John Mepham (187); Evelyn Ender (63-71); James Wood (esp par. 8); Anne Manne (16); Anna Goldsworthy; and numerous reviews www.textpublishing.com.au/books/everywhere-i-look.

following discussion. By incorporating cognitive insights into the textual examination of their narrative constructions, this thesis aims to broaden the analytical focus on literary technique in Woolf's and Garner's autobiographical writings, in order to investigate how their narrative strategies facilitate a potentially powerful cognitive impact, and how, in turn, these memoirs invite a rich, deeply involving autobiographical and affectively engaging reading experience. In so doing my exploration of the three interconnected structural components of this dynamic—autobiographical memory, emotion and empathy—will focus on both the writerly production and readerly reception of autobiographical narrative, a cognitive literary investigatory framework that I envisage may have further application to both the effective and affective analyses of other literary autobiographies.

The focus on memory, emotion and empathy in this study facilitates a multi-perspectival consideration of both the textual production and readerly reception of these autobiographical writings. Literary memoirists—to a greater or lesser degree—thematize their autobiographical memories, and these personal recollections form the foundation of their life narratives. And, as all the selected examples of Woolf's and Garner's detailed recollections demonstrate, emotion underpins most vivid personal memories, a phenomenon confirmed by Daniel Schacter's observation that "memories are records of the way we have *experienced* events, not replicas of the events themselves" (*Searching*, 6, my emphasis). Together with textual portrayals of memory and emotion, empathy can also have a strong presence in autobiographical narrative, facilitated by the authorial narrator's position as both a character in, and explicator of, the representation of lived experience. This double perspective allows narrators to convey various empathetic

responses, both for their former selves and for others. The analytical focus on the readerly reception of these memoirs concerns the reciprocal triggering of autobiographical memory, emotion and empathy in the reader. Our memory systems are both primed and activated as a function of the comprehension process, and our own autobiographical memories specifically facilitate our apprehension of others' lived experience. Emotions are also central to the reading process. Not only are feelings innately bound up with readers' autobiographical memories, but the narrative activation of our own emotions is also crucial to comprehension. And the readerly experiencing of empathy, as a two-fold process, is potentially compelling. An engagement with the emotional world of narrating subjects primes readers to more readily experience an empathetic response to the contemporary portrayals and interpretations of the narrators' former selves. Further, due to our ability to empathize with another whilst simultaneously remaining cognizant of our own thoughts and feelings, we can also experience feelings of personally directed empathy as we engage, from our present perspectives, with our own past selves, courtesy of the autobiographical memories triggered during the reading process.

In exploring how these texts enable a dynamic mediation between the textual portrayal of, and readerly engagement with, memory, emotion and empathy, this thesis examines the use and impact of literary imagery, a major driver and conduit of the affective architecture and affective potential of the memoir, from a cognitive literary perspective. The term 'imagery' is used in this study in the broad sense that has been defined by M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham as denoting "all objects and qualities of sense perception" which may be described literally or via the vehicles of simile and metaphor (169). This particular focus arises from the

powerful phenomenon of mental imagery—the images of perception that we imaginatively construct when responding to, and engaging with, narrative representations of literary imagery—that “occur[s] when we have the subjective experience of sensation without corresponding sensory input” (Starr, “Multisensory”, 276).³ Multisensory imagery—which will be discussed in increasing detail in Chapters Two and Three—refers to images that may overtly or implicitly evoke two or more of our visual, aural, haptic (tactile or touch), olfactory, kinesthetic, proprioception (our awareness of our body position) and gustatory sensory modalities. Such a focus is both illuminating and productive. Particularly in light of the potential impact that inheres in some forms of imagery which “can be so strong that one confuses image with sensation” (Starr 277)—a visual image, for example, may evoke potent tactile sensations and vice versa—the ability of literary imagery to influence and shape imagination⁴ during our textual comprehension cannot be underestimated. Elaine Scarry has shown how writers’ visual images can evoke exceptionally effective mental images of extraordinary vivacity in their readers.⁵ Similarly, Gabrielle Starr’s discussion of multisensory imagery also foregrounds how “imagery can be prompted by [authorial] instruction”, as well as noting that our memories play an important role in the formation of mental images (277).

³ Metaphorically speaking, our mental images correspond “with the experience of ‘seeing with the mind’s eye’, hearing with the mind’s ears’, and the like” (Langer 178).

⁴ Ian Richardson offers a succinct definition of imagination, as constituting an “interrelated set of mental capacities and activities concerned with modeling entities and events that are not immediately present to perception and that may or may not have counterparts in the lived world” (“Imagination”, 225).

⁵ *Dreaming by the Book*.

All of these factors illustrate the potential ability of artfully constructed, imagery-laden texts—such as Woolf’s and Garner’s memoirs—to deeply engage the reader, imaginatively, autobiographically and emotionally. In light of this affective potential, my central contention is that the textual deployment of evocative multisensory imagery in the portrayal of autobiographical memory, emotion and empathy, and the corresponding inter-related cognitive and affective processes of personal memory, emotion and empathy they invite in the reader, combine to constitute a number of powerfully influential contributing factors that drive and motivate our long-standing readerly predilection for the literary memoirist’s skillful evocation of human interiority.

In seeking to identify some of the contributing factors driving our avid interest in, and affective engagement with literary autobiography, I am mindful of Nancy Easterlin’s observation that a literary artifact can only be “fully constituted via a complex cognitive process of production *and* consumption” (6, my emphasis). I thus adopt a dual analytical perspective, examining specific literary techniques and cognitive processes in relation to both the textual production and readerly consumption of these texts. My aim is to provide a robust and broad-ranging analysis of the dynamic interaction these memoirs facilitate between text and reader. My focus on the textual production of these works comprises a literary analysis of the ways in which the authors’ skillful deployment of narrative techniques— particularly the literary image—construct vivid, evocative portrayals of autobiographical memory, together with the ways in which their texts convey the potent affective processes of emotion and empathy. And my consideration of the readerly consumption of these memoirs examines how the construction and

portrayal of literary imagery and specific rhetorical strategies create the potential for a deeply involving autobiographical and affective readerly engagement, facilitated by the cognitive processing of those images.

This analytical consideration of both the literary product and the cognitive readerly responses it invites, thereby situates my thesis within the discipline of cognitive literary studies, a broad and relational field of enquiry wherein “literary studies [enters] into dialogue with the new sciences of mind and brain” (Richardson, “Cognitive”, 544). The incorporation of cognitive insights into my literary analysis of these texts is both appropriate and timely. Cognitive study is concerned with the myriad ways in which the human mind processes information (Dawson 4-5). That both writing and reading constitute highly complex acts of cognition, are observations that Mark Turner emphatically endorses when he states that language and literature represent “the most dramatic and textured expressions of the human mind” (16). The incorporation of cognitive insights that can shed light on significant aspects of the readerly interaction with these texts is therefore not merely desirable, but essential, if we are to more clearly apprehend some of the significant contributing factors that drive our long-standing readerly penchant for the literary memoir.

This cognitive literary focus on the ways in which particular textual elements “play with [our] cognitive capacities” (Rabinowitz 87), thereby facilitating an exploration of the powerful effects of narrative representations of memory and emotion, is both timely and pertinent to analyses of Woolf’s and Garner’s writing. For despite the fact that both authors share an abiding commitment to actively engage, extend and

challenge the minds of their readers,⁶ there is little cognitive literary scholarship on their works, particularly in relation to their memoirs.

Cognitive Science, Cognitive Approaches to Literature and the Aims of This Thesis

The cognitive component of this transdisciplinary study's literary analysis draws upon ideas and methods from cognitive science, a multidisciplinary inquiry into the mental processes of perceiving, reasoning, learning, remembering and linguistic understanding which emerges at the intersection of fields such as philosophy, computer science, psychology, linguistics, anthropology and neuroscience. As outlined above, the basic assumption underpinning all cognitive scientific research understands cognition as the processing of information (Dawson 4-5, 298). It would be difficult to overstate the importance afforded by our current era to the study of the diverse ways in which the mind carries out its ceaseless processing of information, a phenomenon of relevance to scholars beyond cognitive science. One of the most significant outcomes of the "growing zone of contact between literary studies and cognitive research" (Richardson, "Imagination", 225)—wherein literary analysis incorporates cognitive research concerning the mind's processing of language and literature—is the sharper focus such insights provide into the consumption of literary artifacts (Easterlin 6), specifically the comprehension of narrative and the readerly reception and experiencing of literature (Jaén and Simon 16).

⁶ Woolf's and Garner's reflections on the readerly responses they hope to engender are discussed more fully later in this Introduction.

The depth of critical analysis which has been traditionally focused on the production of a text—the examination of figurative language, lexical patterning, narrative representations of human behavior and modes of discourse—may therefore be enhanced by encompassing cognitive insights into aspects of “narrativity and the act of reading” (Hart ix; Richardson, “Cognitive”, 550). Of specific relevance to this study’s textual focus on how literary memoirs invite readerly enactments of autobiographical memory and involving, affective engagements, is cognitive imaging research. Antonio Damasio has described cognitive images as a ubiquitous and crucial cognitive phenomenon that constitutes nothing less than “the currency of our minds” (319). Scientific research into cognitive imaging has enabled a new interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of how literary imagery impacts on readerly imagination. Offering the provisional definition of this area of cognitive literary criticism as a “cognitive aesthetics of reception”, Richardson notes the lack of focus afforded by twentieth century literary critics to the effects of literary imagery, whilst also drawing attention to the importance of recent cognitive literary analyses concerning the powerful connections among, and effects of, vivid literary images and our cognitive processing of sensory and visual literary constructions (“Cognitive”, 550-1).

The main focus of my study constitutes the application of such insights concerning “literary imagery and the readerly imagination” (Richardson 550) in relation to both narrative representations of memory, emotion and empathy, and the invitations these texts extend for the corresponding readerly experiences of these cognitive and affective processes. This study thereby aims to articulate the potential Woolf’s and Garner’s memoirs offer for a dynamic and compelling textual and readerly

interaction. This dynamic interplay between text and reader underpins the specific focus of this study, in seeking to identify and examine some of the significant contributing factors that facilitate our keen engagement with the literary memoir.

I wish to stress, however, that in light of the variable nature of individual reading practices, this cognitive literary project does not seek to definitively assert a “grand unified theory of cognition and literature” (Zunshine, “Introduction”, 1) concerning our engagement with life writing texts. It aims instead to initiate, rather than resolve conversations, by further applying cognitive literary analysis—particularly in relation to the portrayal and effects of imagery—to some of the insightful scholarly criticism that has already been undertaken in relation to these authors’ autobiographical writings. In so doing, this study aims to illuminate some of the complex factors that drive our enthusiastic engagement with Woolf’s and Garner’s autobiographical texts, an investigation which will, in turn, contribute to our understanding of the interplay between literature and cognition that both facilitates and motivates our long-standing readerly predilection for the literary memoir.

Literary Autobiography

Despite the fact that literary autobiography dates from at least the early eighteenth century (with notable earlier precedents in English and other languages),⁷ coming into its own as a tradition from the latter part of that century (Folkenflik 4-7), many scholars have noted the difficulty of locating a universally agreed upon definition for

⁷ See Georg Misch (61-76).

this form of writing (DiBattista and Wittman 1; Broughton 3; McCooey, *Artful*, 5).

One of the most widely quoted definitions is that offered by Philippe Lejeune, who describes autobiography as a “retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality” (193).⁸

Difficulties in defining the term are hardly surprising, given the views of noted life writing theorists Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, who state that autobiography is in fact not a genre, but “an ‘umbrella’ term” which refers to a plethora of diverse life narratives “that engage historically situated practices of self-representation” (“The Trouble”, 357). Amidst this vast collection of life narratives—Smith and Watson identify a total of fifty-two terms—reside the related forms of life writing that this thesis examines, namely the memoir and personal essay. Although there is wide scholarly agreement that in terms of autobiographical writing, the contemporary era constitutes the age of the memoir,⁹ yet again, definitions of this form of life writing abound, depending largely upon factors such as the intended audience, authorial status, subject matter and literary style. Contrasting contemporary “pulp memoirs”—the self-indulgent, tell-all recollections of high profile celebrities, together with sensational tales, penned by virtually anyone—with the “centuries-old tradition” of the literary memoir, Jocelyn Bartkevicius notes that, like “its cousin the personal essay”, the memoir has long attempted to convey “life from the inside” by

⁸ Lejeune has subsequently noted his dissatisfaction with this definition, feeling it does not adequately distinguish “between autobiography and the adjacent genres of biography and fiction” (Anderson 2).

⁹ See, for example Nalbantian (viii *Aesthetic*); Madden (222); Bartkevicius (135); DiBattista and Wittman (1); and Hampl (19, *I Could*)

combining story-telling, figurative language, dialogue and “moments of imagination” (134; Madden 223).

And it is this “highly literary” style of memoir (Madden 223) that constitutes the specific focus of this study. Consistently capturing the interest of readers keen to engage with the skillful transformation of “experience into meaning and value” (Hampl, “Memory, 208)—a significant challenge in light of the fact that “however we narrate them, selves (our own or others’) are the sites of forces not easily contained or understood” (McCooley, “Autobiography”, 339)—the literary memoir exhibits both an inventive playfulness with form, and sophisticated deployment of language and literary technique (Madden 223). The deft narrative awareness of the mediated and fallible nature of life and memory, together with an inherent understanding of “the artifice of textual transformation” constitute, in Madden’s view, the central hallmarks of the “highly literary” memoir (223). As prime exemplars of such hallmarks of literary life-writing—characterized by Madden as the “new memoir” style of the twentieth and twenty first centuries—Woolf’s and Garner’s autobiographical writings also hark back to the essay form of Michel de Montaigne, whose technique focused on conveying a sense of himself by portraying “the workings of his mind” (224). At the heart of this intimate and often emotional style, wherein the author constructs an imaginary dialogue with the reader, “a friendship . . . based on identification, understanding, testiness, and companionship”, lies the understanding that there exists “a certain unity to human experience” (Lopate xxiii), which in turn gives rise to the opportunity for empathetic engagement.

The ways in which skilled memoirists evocatively portray such human experience, together with the invitations they extend for readerly participation, are succinctly encapsulated by Phillip Lopate:

In writing memoir, the trick, it seems to me, is to establish a double perspective, which will allow the reader to participate vicariously in the experience as it was lived (the confusions and misapprehensions of the child one was, say), while conveying the sophisticated wisdom of one's current self (143).

Focusing on Woolf's and Garner's deft deployment of this split perspective, this study explores the different ways in which these authors' engaging portrayals of memory, emotion and empathy invite the reader to vicariously engage with these depictions, whilst facilitating the potential for an autobiographical and emotional engagement with their own life narratives. The potential for this kind of autobiographical readerly engagement with life writing texts has been foregrounded by Kate Douglas and Tully Barnett in their discussion of the teaching of traumatic life narratives to literature students, whereby the practice of locating "the life-writing text in the students' world" and discussing, amongst other textual components, personal memory and how it works, necessarily requires students to draw on, and engage with, their own autobiographical memories and personal knowledge (51).

Narrative Representations of Memory, Emotion and Empathy in Autobiographical Narrative

Autobiographical works "are generally narratives about the past of the writer", which also convey "a life in process" (Folkenflik 15). In order to construct such life narratives, the author must necessarily rely largely on autobiographical memory—

“the personal memory of events that are consciously and declaratively recollected”, memories that are usually anchored in specific time frames and locations, and are typically “rich in vivid detail” (Nalbantian, *The Memory*, 10). Personal memories may be therefore understood as constituting the bedrock upon which life-writing texts are built. Indeed, Bartkevicius points to the integral position of memory in the writing of memoir, observing that, as the French term for memory, “‘memoir’ is an elliptical form of ‘ecrit pour memoir’”, and thus memoir “is writing for and from memory” (136). Further, in light of James Olney’s declaration—and Augustine’s before him—that memory “constitute[s] nothing less than what we—each of us—are” (340; Blight 239), together with the potent realization that “[w]hat is remembered is what *becomes* reality” (Hampl, “Memory, 209), it is clear that memory is of profound importance, not only in relation to autobiographical literature, but to the human condition itself. Affirming these views, David Blight notes that almost “nothing renders us human as much as our unique capacity for memory”—without it, we can neither live nor function effectively (238-9).

In this critical context, my dual textual and readerly analysis of autobiographical memory in Chapter One initially focuses on how these authors’ literary techniques portray authentic, evocative recollections of their childhood perceptions and experiences in a seaside nursery room and coastal village. Together with an examination of specific rhetorical and aesthetic aspects of the language—particularly the literary image—and narrative structure, this textual investigation further incorporates cognitive insights in order to illuminate specific facets of the processes of both narrative and memory. My readerly focus in this chapter explores the ways in which readers’ memories are primed during the comprehension

process, wherein the deployment of vivid imagery can trigger both the conscious and involuntary recollection of readers' personal memories, a phenomenon that is centrally associated with the construction of cognitive "simulations" that enable narrative comprehension (Oatley and Djikic 15; Hogan 160)

Given the wide acknowledgement that memories marked by strong emotion are those most likely to be committed to long-term autobiographical memory (Schacter, *Searching*, 5-6, 201; Schacter et al., "Specificity", 98) and, in turn, reflected upon in literary autobiography, together with the fact that emotion plays a crucial role in narrative comprehension (Hogan 160-1; Miall 55-78), emotion constitutes the focus of Chapter Two. My textual focus on emotion explores how the authors' narrative techniques, especially their multisensory imagery, portray emotionally fraught depictions of situations and circumstances surrounding their relationships with their mothers, powerfully affective portrayals that in turn invite emotionally involving readerly engagements. I then investigate the literary strategies these authors deploy which specifically require the reader to experience their own emotions—albeit at a safe "aesthetic distance" (Keltner et al., 358) in order to fully comprehend specific aspects of the authors' troubled relationships with their fathers.

My examination of the emotional readerly responses that these texts invite, draws on cognitive literary scholarship to show how the emotional content of readers' autobiographical memories—which are both primed and recruited as a process of narrative comprehension—"guide our realization" and understanding of the works (Hogan 161). As Woolf herself notes, authors may evoke "much deeper emotion

than appears on the surface” and in the process of being “stimulate[d] . . . to supply what is not there” (“Jane”, 138) readers thereby draw on their own emotions and emotional memories in order to apprehend the narrating subject’s emotional world, a process that simultaneously enables readers to engage with and “explore their own emotions” (Oatley and Djikic 17-20).

Having examined how these memoirs evocatively convey and potentially invoke both autobiographical memory and emotion, the third chapter investigates selected textual representations of authorial empathy for both their former selves and others, prior to an examination of how the reader’s autobiographically and emotionally engaged reading experience may further engender a compelling multidimensional empathetic response that is both other and self-directed. Readers may thereby engage empathetically not only with the authors’ moving depictions that centre on images of a butterfly and a baby, but also with memories of their own past selves. By incorporating cognitive insights into my literary analysis of empathy in these autobiographical narratives, particularly concerning the role of multisensory imagery, I offer a broad-ranging interpretation of these texts’ compelling invitations for an engrossing, multidimensional affective reading experience.

Virginia Woolf

Given the extraordinary “creative brilliance” (Roe xiii) of Virginia Woolf, whose work has been “monumentally established in the canon of modernism and feminism” (Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 770), it is unsurprising that a veritable “academic

industry" (Mepham 206) of scholarship surrounds her prodigious literary output.¹⁰ This "ever-burgeoning scholarly industry devoted to Virginia Woolf" (Brosnan 4) presents obvious challenges for the literary scholar. As Alison Pease observes in relation to Woolf's novel *To The Lighthouse* alone "seasoned scholars can be overwhelmed by the amount of criticism one should know" (1). Having regard to the dimensions of this 'industry' of scholarship, and mindful of the length and specific focus of my study, I have elected to maintain a relatively consistent concentration on criticism dedicated to "A Sketch of the Past", Woolf's unfinished memoir which constitutes the primary focus of my discussion. This memoir, which Woolf intended to expand and publish,¹¹ represents, in the opinion of many critics, "some of her finest work" (Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 16).¹² Following the 1976 publication of "A Sketch" in *Moments of Being*, the wave of ensuing scholarly criticism focused on a number of themes, including psychoanalytic, feminist and biographical analyses of the nature of Woolf's subjectivity¹³ and perceived incidences of traumatic memory.¹⁴

¹⁰ As Andrew McNeillie notes, Woolf's essays alone total more than a million words ("Introduction", ix)

¹¹ There has been ongoing critical debate concerning the intended publication, or otherwise of this memoir. See for example Leila Brosnan (149); Jeanne Schulkind (7); and Christopher Dahl (190). Debate also exists over the correct generic term with which to classify "A Sketch". Brosnan disagrees with Hermione Lee's definition of 'autobiographical writings', noting that Woolf's "autobiographical essays are, in many senses, creatures of the in-between, twilight world, outside autobiography and outside the essay" (148). John Mepham designates "A Sketch" as an "autobiographical memoir" (180). Similarly Dahl refers to it as her "autobiography" (189), whilst Anna Snaith characterizes it as "slid[ing] between autobiography, memoir and diary" (53). Woolf herself referred to this work as both "notes" and "memoir" ("A Sketch", 75, 64-5).

¹² See also Dahl (176); Griffin (118); and Mepham (187).

¹³ See for example Emily Dalgarno, LuAnn McCracken and Daniel Albright.

¹⁴ See for example Barbara Claire Freeman and Stefanie Heine. Both Dalgarno and Freeman are representative of a concerted psychoanalytic scholarly focus by many critics of Woolf's fictional works in the latter stages of the twentieth century, who, as Linda Anderson notes, deploy a psychoanalytic framework in response to a generally agreed upon perception that her depiction of the feminine denotes a "challenge to the phallic" (102).

Scholarly analyses of “A Sketch” that relate more directly to my study include Jeanne Schulkind’s analysis of the different modal elements present in Woolf’s imagery (15-22), together with both Schulkind’s and Leila Brosnan’s examinations of Woolf’s “active interpenetration of past and present” (Schulkind 13) in her autobiographical construction of subjectivity. Psychoanalyst Murray Sherman provides a useful discussion of Woolf’s imagery, foregrounding her construction of blended modalities, the vivid “truly eidetic” quality (33-4) of her images, and the possible effects such constructions may engender in the reader in. Woolf’s imagery in “A Sketch” is also examined through a psychoanalytic lens by Virginia Hyman (25-8), and from a literary perspective in Hermione Lee’s discussion of Woolf’s essays (“Virginia”, 101-7).

Although not concentrating specifically on her autobiographical writing, Sue Roe’s analysis of the artistic influence of post-impressionism on Woolf’s graphic representations of imagery, together with a consideration of the narrative components of perspective and immediacy (171-8), also provide fruitful avenues of investigation for my analysis of “A Sketch”. Lee further discusses the contrasting narrative strategies that convey varying degrees of emotion in the first chapter of her magisterial biography of Woolf. Similarly interested in Woolf’s autobiographical strategies, Christopher Dahl’s and Gail Griffin’s textual comparisons of her modes of expression foreground the narrative techniques that intimately convey a vivid sense of herself, both past and present (Dahl 181-94; Griffin 108-13). Dahl’s analysis of the ways in which Woolf’s literary style encourages a readerly identification is also complemented by John Mepham’s analysis of the portrayal and effects of Woolf’s informal style and tone (187-90). Focusing on the interconnections in “A Sketch”

among text, memory and the nature of the reading engagement, Evelyne Ender provides an extensive trans-disciplinary perspective on the inter-subjective mnemonic process between author and reader (4-14; 46-74), and Snaith analyzes the provisional nature not only of this memoir, but also of autobiography and memory itself (54-6).

This scholarship on Woolf's autobiographical writing, which provides a number of analytical lenses that may also be applied to Garner's writing, focuses on many textual elements that illuminate the formal construction and narration of memory, subjectivity and emotion, whilst also providing a significant means of exploring the potential effects such techniques facilitate for a reciprocal, affective, autobiographically engaged reading experience.

Helen Garner

Acknowledged as "one of Australia's most gifted writers" (McDonald 269),¹⁵ Helen Garner, as a celebrated author of both fiction and non-fiction, holds a prominent status as one of our "most widely recognized 'public intellectuals'" (Rooney 143)—an influential member of the elite commentariat, whose collective views "becom[e] the oxygen of Australian cultural life" (Davis 47).¹⁶ But despite this esteemed literary and cultural standing, Garner's work "continues to polarize opinion" (Brennan 2). In a direct parallel with Woolf's exceptional "formal variety and inventiveness" (Mephram xiv), Garner refuses to be constrained by generic

¹⁵ Indeed, Owen Richardson affirms that even those "who have reservations about her work" nevertheless will admit that Garner "writes better than just about anybody else in the country" (97).

¹⁶ As Owen Richardson notes, unusually for "contemporary Australian fiction writers", Garner has also attained a strong political standing, via her public engagement with "feminism and the politics of sexuality" (96).

boundaries, seeking instead “to write across and craft her own versions of them” (Brennan 3). In the case of Garner’s literary journalism, such an experimental approach, in Willa McDonald’s view, has resulted in “writing that purports to be an analysis of the factual but [in fact] privileges the emotional” (272), a narrative stance to non-fiction that in turn has attracted heated media commentary, whilst also resulting in a paucity of academic literary analysis (260).

The fact that Garner writes “so much of herself into her non-fiction” is a technique that inspires admiration from many readers, for whom such a strategy conveys a sense of honesty, authenticity and familiarity (Brennan 2). But equally, the fact that she “never presumes objectivity”, foregrounding instead “the expression of her own reactions” in her literary journalism¹⁷—most notably in *The First Stone*, seen by many as an “ill-informed betrayal of feminism” (Brennan 2)—is a highly subjective stance that has found disfavor with academics.¹⁸ The lack of “attention from the academy” that McDonald has noted in relation to Garner’s literary journalism has also extended to her autobiographical non-fiction essays, *True Stories* (1996) and *Everywhere I Look* (2016). Since Kerry Goldsworthy’s short 1996 monograph on Garner, (containing only a brief consideration of *True Stories* in terms of gender relations), there has not been a full length study of this important writer’s work until this year, with the launch of Brennan’s *A Writing Life: Helen Garner and her Work* (2017).

¹⁷ It is interesting to compare Garner’s approach to literary journalism with Woolf’s. In relation to the latter’s critical essays, Lee has observed that despite the fact that Woolf “speaks from the ground of the literary, the historical, and the cultural, *not the personal*, still her “character, her experience and her voice come very close to us” (“Virginia”, 106-7, my emphasis).

¹⁸ See for example Ann Curthoys, Anthea Taylor and Matthew Ricketson.

Apart from Brennan's insightful examination of Garner's narrative technique and personal perspectives, my own analysis is informed by literary reviewers such as Anne Manne, who highlights Garner's (Woolfian-like) linguistic ability to convey lyrical representations of vivid imagery, whilst also encouraging a readerly engagement with her lucid narrative portrayals of meaning, emotion and empathy (16-18). Felicity Plunkett perceptively unmasks acute insights lurking behind Garner's self-deprecating expression, whilst also recognizing the liminal quality of Garner's writing, concerning both her lyricism and her positioning between the fictive and non-fictive literary spaces.¹⁹ And James Wood incisively foregrounds both the emotional and diverse narrative qualities of Garner's prose, which conveys, often simultaneously, her heroism and her vulnerability.²⁰ These collective insights are particularly helpful in terms of examining how specific literary techniques invite readers of literary memoirs to enter uniquely liminal cognitive spaces, wherein we may actively reconstruct and compare our own inner realities of lived experience with those of another living (rather than imagined) being, courtesy of the "autobiographical pact—the promise of veracity, of sharing aspects of personal life with the reader" (Douglas and Barnett 47).

My focus on two literary autobiographers rather than one, allows me to incorporate into the dual textual and readerly analytic framework a number of different, but equally effective narrative strategies and approaches to life-writing. This approach

¹⁹ "Helen Garner and our terrible projections: Helen Garner and the corridors of empathy" www-australianbookreview-com-au.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/abr-online/archive/2014/2107-helen-garner-and-our-terrible-projections.

²⁰ "Helen Garner's Savage Self-Scrutiny" www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/12/12.

is also designed to discourage an overly prolonged scrutiny and preoccupation with the techniques and idiosyncrasies of any one writer. And although Woolf and Garner are but two examples of literary memoirists, their highly acclaimed literary skills,²¹ which render vivid, moving and detailed recollections, together with thought provoking representations of self-reflexive psychological introspection, constitute well written, insightful life narratives, which in turn facilitate this study's specific examination of the dynamic interplay among text, memory and emotion. Further, there has been little cognitive literary analysis of Woolf's work,²² and none, to my knowledge, undertaken on Garner.

Despite the fact that Woolf's and Garner's literary works are products of vastly different cultural and aesthetic milieus, these writers share a prodigious talent for the construction of vivid, detailed imagery, together with their shared preoccupations with both the autobiographical²³ and radical narrative experimentation. Further, not only do they bring a maturity of personal perspective, applying the "depth and experience" of their entire writing lives (Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 22), to the articulation of their life narratives, but, as noted earlier, both authors' memoirs have also been widely acknowledged for their ability to portray and evoke emotion in these autobiographical texts.²⁴ By applying a cognitive literary analysis to the interconnections between their imagery and evocative portrayals of emotion

²¹ In their studies of the impact of various aspects of literature, cognitive psychologists have emphasized that texts must exhibit high "level[s] of artistic craftsmanship" if readers are to be emotionally and intellectually influenced or "transported" by a literary narrative (Green and Brock 317-9; Oatley and Djikic).

²² Notable exceptions include cognitive literary analyses by Lisa Zunshine (*Why We Read*), Melba Cuddy-Keane, and Susan Green.

²³ See Lee (4, *Virginia Woolf*); and Brennan (3)

²⁴ The vital, emotional dimension Woolf creates in "A Sketch" is largely absent in the somewhat "ponderous and stuffy" Victorian formality that characterizes her 1908 "Reminiscences" (Griffin 113).

in the following chapters (particularly Two and Three) I endeavor to illuminate a number of factors that contribute to their ability to both effectively portray emotion and invite affective, engaged reading responses. In so doing, I highlight some of the ways in which these authors construct highly effective textual invitations for deep readerly involvements, a participatory outcome that both writers, in all their literary works, consistently strive to achieve.²⁵

²⁵ Lee stresses that Woolf nurtured a “passionate desire for a shared common ground of communication between readers and writers” (96 “Virginia”); and Garner’s comments, which appear in “The Fate of the First Stone” (*True Stories*) are indicative of the way she endeavours to reach out to her readers: “I hoped I was writing in such a way as to invite people to lay down their guns for a moment and think again—and not only think, but *feel* again” (194). Emphasizing her wish that readers actively think and engage with her writing, Garner chastises those who refuse to respond to “the little emotional and psychological by-roads”, declaring that it is “a poor sort of reading that refuses the invitation to *stop* reading and lay down the page and turn the attention inwards” (195).

CHAPTER ONE

Portraying and Engendering Memory in Autobiographical Narrative

We are driven back to the past, we are driven to remember, because it is essential for us, as human beings, to make sense of our lives by connecting to the thread of impressions, feelings, emotions that we have experienced . . . To study remembrance among writers is to discover beautifully crafted narratives that make us see and understand what it feels like to be alive.

Evelyne Ender¹

As the bedrock upon which memoir is constructed, episodic, or autobiographical memory—the recollection of “context-embedded events of one’s own past” (Markowitsch 466)—constitutes the foundation stone of this study’s cognitive literary investigation into the affective architecture of Woolf’s and Garner’s memoirs. Defining “collective memory” as one of the key differences between the memory systems of humans and “non-human animals”, neuroscientist Steven Rose warns that the long reach of “artificial memory”—the dissemination of memories onto “papyrus, wax tablets, paper or electronic screens”—threatens to limit the scope of one’s personal recollections, potentially creating “a mass consensus about what is to be remembered and how it is to be remembered” (326-7). The following discussion counters this bleak spectre of a collective memory that dominates individual recollection by demonstrating how skillful literary depictions of autobiographical memories—as exemplary exhibitions of our “extraordinary” capacity for “imaginative freedom”—can engender a correspondingly imaginative and autobiographically engaged readerly response (Edelman 52-3). This textual invitation for an autobiographical readerly engagement in turn facilitates our ability

¹ *Architexts of Memory* (20).

to reconstruct and reappraise our own lived experiences and life narratives,² notwithstanding the ubiquitous presence of collective cultural memories that link us all to family, society and the past.

Explicitly acknowledging the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in the ongoing quest to apprehend the astonishing phenomenon of human memory, Rose draws attention to the singular ability of literary writers, such as Brian Friel, to illuminate our understanding of autobiographical memory:

But there is one memory of that Lughnasa time that visits me most often . . . In that memory atmosphere is more real than incident and everything is simultaneously actual and illusory. In that memory, too, the air is nostalgic with the music of the thirties. It drifts in from somewhere far away—a mirage of sound—a dream music that is both heard and imagined; that seems to be both itself and its own echo ...” (Rose 328).

Rose’s referencing of this passage highlights the growing scientific recognition of the importance of literature to the study of the complex phenomenon of human memory. Friel’s evocation of autobiographical memory, wherein the multisensory images of a mirage, a dream and an echo imaginatively and movingly convey the intangible, elusive nature of both the conceptualization and subjective experiencing of memory, eloquently demonstrates the power of skillfully crafted representations of autobiographical memory to offer insights into the multifaceted qualities and essence of human recollection.

² Our life stories are not a jumble of unconnected events—“on the contrary, we usually organize our remembered experiences into a *narrative*”—wherein we assign meaning to temporal events by conceptualizing them as components of a plot, a “process that is constantly at work as we recall our own experiences” (Neisser and Libby 318, emphasis in original).

The following discussion focuses specifically on this kind of highly literary portrayal of personal memory, exploring not only how Woolf's and Garner's narrative strategies evocatively convey their autobiographical memories—inviting a compelling vicarious engagement with their lived experience—but also, how their techniques can facilitate a more personally targeted autobiographical reading experience. The structure of this chapter's dual analytical focus on the authors' constructions of their recollections, together with the ways in which such strategies invite an involving readerly engagement with autobiographical memory, will be similarly replicated for my discussions in the following chapters, regarding the portrayals of emotion and empathy that inhere in their memories, together with the ways in which these texts further draw the reader in with their invitations for an affective readerly experience.

In examining the interplay between literature and cognition—the ways in which specific narrative strategies facilitate involving cognitive readerly engagements with representations of autobiographical memory, emotion and empathy—the purpose of this study is to explicate and better understand a number of dynamic interactions between text and reader that combine to produce an engaging autobiographical and affective reading experience. The ultimate aim of this cognitive literary exploration is to provide some suggestions as to both how and why so many of us are drawn to the literary memoir, despite the fact that, far from presenting irrefutable fact, they constitute a selective artistic endeavor, creating not “the whole truth and nothing but the truth of our experience”, but “a version of its swirling, changing wholeness” (Hampl, “Memory”, 209-11).

The attraction of the literary memoir, I contend, springs in part from certain distinctive characteristics, wherein the “centuries-old tradition” of this carefully crafted literary sub-genre has long portrayed thoughtful meditations of the narrating subject’s human interiority (Bartkevicius 134-5). Eschewing the narcissistic superficiality of self-justifications and “unseemly disclosure” (Eakin 143), literary memoirists reflect upon and interpret particular interior moments that render the difficulties, complexities and realities of their inner experiences and negotiations with the exterior world. This interpretive self-examination, rather than documenting “the story of ‘what happened’ based on historical facts”, instead “relies almost solely on memory” (Silverman 151). The long viability of this genre suggests that readers have consistently been drawn to the memoirist’s “memory-bound sense” (Bartkevicius 134) of self-revelation and interpretation. This durable readerly engagement in turn demonstrates our desire to embrace memory’s inherent talent for “rendering detail, for paying homage to the senses” and for conveying “the richness” of our lived experience (Hampl, “Memory”, 209).

But how, precisely, do authors convey such ‘richness’ of human experience? And why are we drawn to read about the life stories of strangers whom we are never likely to meet? These questions underpin the following discussion. I initially provide a textual analysis of Woolf’s and Garner’s childhood memories of place—a seaside nursery room and run-down coastal village—examining how specific narrative techniques, particularly their deployment of literary imagery, both convey and invite a vicarious engagement with the sensory-laden and richly diverse portrayals of lived experience to which Hampl refers. The second part of my discussion explores the literary strategies that facilitate a further vicarious readerly

engagement with Woolf's random 'moments of being' and 'non-being' and the factional politics that emerge between Garner and her siblings, whilst simultaneously providing the opportunity for a deeply involving readerly engagement with one's own personal recollections.

Capturing the immersive experiential quality of engaging with the autobiographical genre, Janet Malcolm writes of "the rapture of first-hand encounters with another's lived experience" (87). Such sentiments foreground the vicarious readerly enjoyment to be had from engaging with another's life experience, an aspect that is further explicated by Lopate, who notes that it is the memoirist's ability to convey two perspectives—the "experience as it was lived" and the "retrospective employment of a more mature intelligence to interpret the past"—that facilitates the reader's vicarious participation in the author's life story (143).

Woolf's nursery: the sights, sounds, shapes and sensuality of perception

Commenting on the innovative, experimental nature of Woolf's entire oeuvre, Sue Roe has noted how the author "learned, in her writing, to train the reader's eye as she described inner and outer forms, radically questioning relationships between surface and depth and finding new frameworks and forms for narrative" (xiv). Woolf's innovative experimentation with form as well as her commitment to the depiction of both interior and exterior realities are evident from the outset of "A Sketch of the Past":

"Two days ago . . . Nessa said that if I did not start writing my memoirs I should soon be too old [. . .] So without stopping to choose my way . . . I begin".

Following the depiction of her “first memory” Woolf then portrays “the most important of all [her] memories:

If life has a base that it stands upon, if it is a bowl that one fills and fills and fills—then my bowl without a doubt stands upon this memory. It is of lying half asleep, half awake, in bed in the nursery at St Ives. It is of hearing the waves breaking, one, two, one, two, and sending a splash of water over the beach; and then breaking, one, two, one, two, behind a yellow blind. It is of hearing the blind draw its little acorn across the floor as the wind blew the blind out. It is of lying and hearing this splash and seeing this light, and feeling, it is almost impossible that I should be here; of feeling the purest ecstasy I can conceive” (64-5).

These quotations, similarly to the other passages discussed below, exemplify both the rich sensory modalities of Woolf’s imagery, together with her double perspective, techniques that, as I will demonstrate, retrospectively convey her memories and effectively invite a vicarious readerly engagement with her lived experience. Woolf chooses here to reject the traditional Victorian mode of autobiography, evident in the “formal tone and complex syntax” (Dahl 190) of her much earlier “Reminiscences”.³ Whereas the traditional formal register distances the narrating voice, Woolf instead closes this interpersonal space—demonstrating her pioneering concern with the creation of a “two-way dialogue between readers and writers” (Lee, “Essays”, 91)—constructing a light-hearted, yet intimate conversational tone, whilst adroitly incorporating vivid images and sensory detail into a multilayered portrayal of her earliest memories. Woolf’s abiding narrative preoccupations concerning the multidimensional properties—inner and outer, surface and depth—of lived experience are clearly apparent in the manner in which she interweaves her vivid pictorial representations of childhood memories with an

³ “Reminiscences” (1908), the first autobiographical work that appears in *Moments of Being*, is a memoir ostensibly concerning Woolf’s sister Vanessa, written in the form of a letter addressed to Vanessa’s eldest son, Julian. The structure of this text emulates a Victorian patriarchal mode of life writing whereby the older generation write a letter to their offspring (Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 18).

equally vivid evocation of interior aural and tactile sensory perceptions, as she hovers between wakefulness and sleep, in her earliest remembered “moments of being” (73).⁴

The repetitive, rhythmical “one, two, one, two” invites us to slow down and dwell momentarily in this transient, seductively dreamy liminal zone, whilst simultaneously foregrounding—through their grammatical thematization at the head of successive sentences—the sensory modalities of “hearing”, “seeing” and “feeling”. By combining these sensory images with clearly detailed visual imagery—the rhythmical movement of the waves, the yellow blind, the acorn handle—Woolf invites a multidimensional readerly engagement, conveying the visual pictures of these autobiographical memories whilst simultaneously granting a deeper experiential access to her interior perceptions of these recollections.

Woolf’s clear, coherent articulation of both the visual content of these memories and her attendant perceptions—particularly her attribution of ecstatic feeling—is facilitated by the “double perspective” she provides, wherein her portrayal of this memory conveys the “experience as it was lived” whilst simultaneously encompassing a “retrospective . . . more mature intelligence” (Lopate 143) which interprets this experience. Keenly aware of the importance of this autobiographical double perspective, Woolf reveals her desire to “include the present” in these memoirs: “[i]t would be interesting to make the two people, I now, I then, come out

⁴ Many scholars have remarked on Woolf’s exceptional ability to blend different sensory modalities in her imagery. Benjamin Hagen, for example, refers to the “audiovisual display” (13) she constructs in this passage; and Murray Sherman has discussed the “semi-hallucinatory quality” (34) of the imagery in this text.

in contrast” (75). And her deployment of this technique—framing her first memory with the retrospective interpretation of its significance—enhances the reader’s vicarious engagement in two specific ways. Firstly, by drawing attention to this memory’s foundational stature, we appreciate its importance because of our shared cultural understanding of the significance of our earliest memories.⁵ Secondly, given the direct influence the structure of a narrative has on the “potency of the imagery used” (Green and Brock, “In the Mind’s”, 319), Woolf’s explicit foregrounding of this memory’s prime importance, positioning it prominently at the beginning of her memoirs, lends rhetorical power to her images.

The nature of the vicarious experiencing of Woolf’s retrospective wisdom which frames this memory is thus heightened for the reader, due to the power afforded to these visual images in their portrayal of life as proceeding from a “base” or constituting an eternally replenishable “bowl”. Not only do such images construct materialized representations of the abstract notion of a human “life”, but they also transform this abstraction into images that are, respectively, accessible and aesthetically alluring. Such images are also simultaneously deployed as scaffolding for both the construction of the narrative and the conceptualization of *all* lived experience as emanating from a firmly anchored starting point, a notion which in turn draws the reader in with its intersubjective implication of the shared unity of human experience (Lopate xxiii).

⁵ Indeed, Evelyne Ender, commenting specifically on this passage, suggests that although we “dream” rather than “remember” our very early childhoods, these “fictions of the past” become the very “foundations of our life stories”, noting further the profound investment—exemplified in Woolf’s nursery recollection—we all have “in tracing our personal past back to a compelling origin” (73).

Shortly afterwards, Woolf provides a “painterly” refiguring of this memory (Dahl 191):

If I were a painter I should paint these first impressions in pale yellow, silver, and green. There was the pale yellow blind; the green sea; and the silver of the passion flowers. I should make a picture that was globular; semi-transparent [. . .] I should make curved shapes, showing the light through, but not giving a clear outline [. . .] When I think of the early morning in bed I also hear the caw of rooks falling from a great height. The sound seems to fall through an elastic gummy air; which holds it up; which prevents it from being sharp and distinct. The quality of the air above Talland House seemed to suspend sound, to let it sink down slowly, as if it were caught in a blue gummy veil” (66).

In contrast with Woolf’s initial depiction of this memory, wherein she provides a clearer delineation between “I now” and “I then” (75), the ‘painterly’ mature Woolf in this reconfiguration permeates the entire memory as she extends her mnemonic “range of experience” (Dahl 192) with this impressionistic scene. The hazy, dreamlike sensibility that we immediately recognize as an authentic representation of far-off childhood memories, is amplified in this latter portrayal, evident in images such as “globular”, “semi-transparent”, “elastic gummy air” and “veil”. But far from evoking a correspondingly hazy impression of this memory for the reader, these literary images in fact facilitate the reader’s ability to apprehend a surprisingly vivid mnemonic scene.⁶

Studying how skillful writers encourage vivid readerly image-making, Elaine Scarry draws attention to the thin, transparent quality of images the mind imagines when daydreaming, as opposed to the “vivid image-making” which can occur “under

⁶ Although not every reader “encounter[s] literature vividly” (Starr, “Theorizing”, 246), “all readers experience mental images some of the time, and some readers experience them all the time” (Kuzmičová 275). Damasio points out that although we are not always conscious of images, the “business of making images never stops while we are awake and it even continues during part of our sleep, when we dream. One might argue that images are the currency of our minds” (319). Further, as I discuss in Chapter Two, for most people, visual images are stronger than any other kind of sensory image (Starr, “Multisensory”, 277).

authorial direction" (22-31). In so doing, Scarry highlights our real-world perception of the physical regarding things that are virtually transparent and lacking in density, such as misty rain, fog and gauze (22). The hazy, indeterminate nature of these objects in "the physical universe [thus] approaches the condition of the imagination" (23). Woolf's impressionistic representation of her first memory—the foregrounding of non-delineated features that are "semi-transparent" and unclear in outline, and the veiled quality of the air—thus paradoxically render a vivid, powerfully authentic memory, by deploying images that "duplicate the phenomenology of perception", thereby encouraging us to engage in what our imaginations do best: the conjuring of objects that lack both density and three dimensional detail (22-3).

Garner's Grove: gateway to a 'closed-off world'

Just as Woolf's oeuvre demonstrates her lifelong commitment to literary innovation, so too does Garner seek to free herself from "the constraints of literary genre" choosing instead to "craft her own versions of them" (Brennan 3). Explicitly linking Woolf's and Garner's literary approaches, Anne Manne's opening remarks in her review of *True Stories* characterizes Garner's style as emblematic of the freedom Woolf had championed in her own writing:

Virginia Woolf wondered in *A Room of One's Own* how women might write if they could, like men, live lives that gave them full liberty to stretch themselves in whatever way they liked. One answer to her question might come, seventy-five years later on reading *True Stories*, a fine collection of Helen Garner's short pieces of non-fiction (16).

A consistent component of Garner's literary innovation, however, is the insertion "of a 'me' character in all her work" wherein her crossing of generic boundaries means that the "I" of her nonfiction is "a functionary connected [only] tenuously to the

actual writer" (Brennan 3). But notwithstanding both her somewhat slippery identity or the fact that reviewers tend to refer interchangeably to the terms "memoir" and "personal essay" in relation to *True Stories* and *Everywhere I Look*⁷, these autobiographical writings exhibit a consistent adherence to the central tenets of the literary memoir: the reliance on memory to portray "one's subjective perceptions of the past", wherein specific, often problematic aspects of the narrator's lived experience are examined, interpreted and mined for meaning (Silverman 151).

In "Sad Grove by the Ocean"⁸ Garner thematizes the capricious nature of memory—both its unreliability and its rich capacity for detail—as she ruthlessly probes her parochial childhood subjectivity, portraying the poignant tussle that emerges between her nostalgic recollections and confronting contemporary realities. Garner's intimate, engaging narrative voice, which closes the interpersonal gap even further than Woolf's conversational informality, portrays small, precise snapshots of memory (Manne 16). In their intimate first-person modes of address and detailed, imagery-rich depictions of memory, both authors convey highly authentic recollections (Rubin and Greenberg 57). The style of Garner's narrative voice contributes to both the authentic and intimate quality of her recollections, particularly concerning factors such as the modulation of register and idiolect in dialogue: "[s]o people just picked 'em up and carted 'em over the river"; rhetorical

⁷ For example, Wood uses the term 'memoir' in his discussion of "Dreams of Her Real Self"; Kerryn Goldsworthy refers to Part One of *True Stories* as "directly autobiographical pieces" (93), and Brennan characterizes the content of *Everywhere I Look* as "one possible biography of the writing persona that is Helen Garner" (282).

⁸ *True Stories*, (47-53).

questions: “[d]idn’t anyone explain anything to us?”; and direct second person address: “[s]o you’ll just have to believe me” (48-52).

But whereas the multisensory imagery Woolf deploys in her nursery recollection invites a mnemonic engagement via the artistic visualization of scene (Griffin 113), Garner’s harnessing of imagery here illuminates her perspectives and interpretations on the nature of memory itself. As Peter Steele puts it, these memoirs are “as much probes toward comprehension as they are reports on experience” (32). Garner’s uncomfortable memories of cultural misunderstandings and social exclusion are conveyed in brief but vivid outline, via specific visual and sensory images which precisely pinpoint perceived differences between herself and her migrant classmates: “slices of bread an inch thick”, “slabs of high-smelling sausage”, and the student wearing “pyjamas under her clothes” (59).

Garner’s main focus, however, is to foreground the discomfort she feels not only with the profound ignorance of her familial and social post-war milieus, but also her suspicion that these disturbing memories may represent only the tip of the iceberg. Accordingly, she reserves her most graphic and disquieting imagery for her candid observation that if she “poked even one rational hole in the thick skin of that closed-off world, who knows what would come squirting out” (49).⁹ Embedded in this image of a firm but permeable membrane, tightly encasing a body of fluid, is the unpleasant allusion to the lancing of an infected boil. Such an image highlights the

⁹ Cognitive psychologists Melanie Green and Timothy Brock note that the ability to produce this kind of graphic imagery, (a skill that characterizes the work of both Garner and Woolf), is highly effective in drawing the reader into the text, as even readers who have a “generally low imagery propensity may experience images in response to an especially vivid description” (“In the Mind’s”, 327).

fact that some memories may be too painful to explore, whilst the combination of her irritable tone and repellent imagery also suggests that despite her surface attitude of sullen defiance, she is in fact uncomfortable with her decision to leave her deeper memories unexamined.

Further exploring traits of autobiographical memory, Garner effectively foregrounds its fluid, subjective nature with her images of Ocean Grove's "hideous shopfronts" and ill-built extensions that "stagger away" (49-50). She then proceeds to undercut these decisively unattractive visions by suggesting that it may be she who has "brought the ugliness with [her]" (49), before again insisting that her old home now appears "hovel-like", with its "mean louvred windows" and "feebly" drooping antenna (49-52). These kinds of vivid, precisely detailed images permeate the narrative, constructing a complex portrayal of Garner's split perspective by highlighting the ongoing dissonance between her memories of the past and the realities of the present. Garner's portrayals of memory thereby at times complicate Lopate's articulation of the reader's ability to "participate vicariously" in "experience as it was lived", whilst apprehending the author's "sophisticated wisdom" of the present (143), with her foregrounding of the fallibility of memory, together with her reluctance to consistently encapsulate her precisely detailed recollections in a confidently assured present 'wisdom'.

But notwithstanding the complexity of her split perspective, Garner's imagery not only contributes to her ability to portray "[s]mall perfect portraits which compress things in quite unexpected ways, reveal[ing] meaning with great brevity" (Manne 16), but also—as the following examples demonstrate—provides clear

opportunities for an involving vicarious engagement with her memories. The first example concerns her discovery of the gate to her childhood home: “[t]he gate is still there. It is the same gate. It is so real, so much the same, I’m afraid that if I touch it I will get an electric shock” (51). The vicarious experiencing facilitated by the textual construction of this multisensory imagery, wherein the reader is invited to both see the gate whilst simultaneously evoking the jolting tactile sensation of electrified metal, relates not so much to a clear childhood memory which is interpreted through a wise commentary in the present, as to the conflation of past and present, wherein the tactile imagery of an “electric shock” signifies the momentous and seemingly real possibility of actually touching the past.

But the opportunity for an even deeper level of vicarious engagement is also invited by this arresting multisensory image. In her study of embodied cognition¹⁰ concerning the enactment of images triggered during the reading process, Anežka Kuzmičová suggests that readers may “form a referential image” of a literary character that is conjured either “from without” or “from within” (281). The latter “stance” signifies how readers, during the act of engaging with the literary character’s behavior, may feel themselves to be personally there, “in the shoes” of the character, thus “vicarious[ly] experiencing . . . the referential contents of a given passage” (Kuzmičová 282).

¹⁰ Broadly speaking, the underlying premise of embodied cognition is “that the body thinks . . . bodies do not merely express, communicate, or influence thought; bodily experience is the shape of thought itself” (Cuddy-Keane 58). Our embodied responses thereby play an important role in our ability to understand others’ behavioural patterns and emotions (Keltner et al., 134-5).

This “aesthetically rewarding” experience means that “the reader-imager comes as close as one possibly can to forgetting that the experience was in fact mediated by a string of words on a page” (282-3). The nature of Garner’s multisensory imagery in this passage facilitates the opportunity for the reader to vicariously apprehend *and* fleetingly experience her jarring confrontation with past and present. This invitation for a deeply engaging vicarious readerly involvement is further facilitated by the “precision of [Garner’s] imagery” (Manne 16), together with her concise narrative representation of the gate and the feelings it evokes. These strategies of precision and succinct expression are important because, as Kuzmičová notes, imagery triggered readerly enactment—facilitating the opportunity for an intense vicarious involvement—is less likely to occur in long, complex “thickly descriptive” narration, wherein readers instead become “aware of the cognitive labor invested in the imaging process” (283-4).

A further example graphically demonstrating how Garner invites a deep readerly involvement concerns her inclusion of an excerpt of poetry by Thomas Tranströmer:

Time is not a straight line, it’s more of a labyrinth,
and if you press close to the wall at the right
place you can hear the hurrying steps and voices, you
can hear yourself walking past there on the other side . . . (52).

This tantalizing spectre of a “labyrinth” facilitating the literal re-experiencing of the past—a cognitive re-living of one’s memories that Garner evocatively illustrates and reinforces with the multisensory images of the “rollerskates” she *hears*, the “four knobby-legged girls” she *sees* and the “jarring . . . fall on concrete” that she *feels*—once again invites an engagement not only with Garner’s memories, but with the nature of memory itself. Tranströmer’s vision of a ‘labyrinth’ that can bend time and

Garner's sensory images which portray not only her remembering, but literally re-living—hearing, seeing and feeling—the experiences of her childhood, create multidimensional narrative representations of an archived, fully constructed, re-livable past. Such representations also share an uncanny resemblance to Woolf's envisioning of the past, as:

an avenue lying behind; a long ribbon of scenes, emotions. There at the end of the avenue still, are the garden and the nursery. Instead of remembering here a scene and there a sound, I shall fit a plug into the wall; and listen in to the past. I shall turn up August 1890 (67).

Both authors' image-laden representations of the processes of autobiographical memory create vivid, multimodal sensory images which invite us to actively engage not only with their reflections on the memory process, but also encourage us to reflect on the nature and function of the memory process itself. And as I will now demonstrate, such portrayals explicitly invite us to draw on our own autobiographical memories.

In identifying and explicating textual processes of production, and cognitive processes of reception that combine to facilitate an engaging readerly involvement with these literary memoirs, I have been focusing on how different narrative strategies and multisensory imagery portray authentic, vivid representations of the narrators' memories, depictions which in turn invite a vicarious readerly engagement. The following discussion explores how these narrative representations of memory invite a corresponding autobiographical engagement on the part of the reader, a mode of reading that demands varying degrees of personal introspection, thus creating an increased sense of readerly involvement with, and investment in, the text.

***Engaging autobiographically with the rhythms of life
and politics of family***

The fact that literary comprehension both primes and triggers general “associations and memories”—including autobiographical recollections—which form the substance of the mental “simulation[s]” that help to bring the text alive in the reader’s mind”, has been well documented (Oatley and Djikic 15; Hogan 155-65). But in the case of autobiographical literature—such as the memoir—the specific focus or “heart of the matter” concerns both the nature and function of memory together with “those passages where the writer analyzes the meaning of his or her experience” (Lopate 143), experience that is accessed via autobiographical memory. This specific concentration on the nature and interpretation of autobiographical memory clearly encourages readers to explicitly draw on their own autobiographical memories in order to recall their “experience and intuition about human action and interaction” (Oatley and Djikic 24).¹¹

In relation to the role of autobiographical memory in the reader’s comprehension process, however, it should be noted that, contrary to the tantalizing evocation of Tranströmer’s ‘labyrinth’ and Woolf’s ‘plug’ in the wall, human memory is in fact “fragmentary and discontinuous” (Hogan 161). Far from constituting “a documentary in the archive of the mind” (Hampl, “Memory”, 209), the business of “retrieving” a memory is a highly elaborate and constructive process” (Hogan 161), whereby the human “neural network combines information in the present environment with patterns that have been stored in the past, and the resulting mixture of the two is what the network remembers” (Schacter, *Searching*, 71). And

¹¹ The important links between autobiographical memories (primed during the reading process), the emotion that inheres in those recollections and the role of such emotion in our understandings of the text will be discussed in Chapter Two.

central to this constructive retrieval process of autobiographical memory is visual imagery (Rubin and Greenberg 56).

Our internal mental images “in all modalities” store and “depict” a wealth of both concrete and abstract information, including that related to autobiographical memory (Damasio 318; Schacter et al., “Specificity”, 99). As Patricia Hampl puts it, “[w]hat memory “sees”, it must regard through the image-making faculty of mind” (*I Could Tell*, 223). These images are not fixed, “static” pictures, however, but highly susceptible to manipulation (Rubin and Greenberg 58). This “fluid mental-model” of visual imagery, together with its role as a “powerful memory aid” (Rubin and Greenberg 56-8) are conceptualizations that have important implications for our interaction with autobiographical literature. Not only can vivid literary images clearly work as a ‘memory aid’, encouraging readerly engagements with the fragmentary images of their own autobiographical memories during textual comprehension, but the authorial reflections and interpretations of autobiographical meaning also have the potential to influence the reader’s autobiographical constructions: firstly, because our internal visual images can be easily manipulated (Rubin and Greenberg 58; Starr, “Multisensory”, 277); and secondly, because “the seemingly simple act of calling to mind a memory” is in fact a process which is “constructed from influences operating in the present” (Schacter, *Searching*, 8), to the extent that, at times, “present conditions virtually create the memory” (Hogan 161). That such ‘present conditions’—which in terms of the memoirist, amounts to her articulation of the meaning and interpretation of autobiographical experience—carry the potential to influence the reader’s reconstruction of memory and self perceptions is a process endorsed by Jerome Bruner’s observations concerning both

the susceptibility of our “life stories . . . to cultural, interpersonal and linguistic influences” and the general instability of our “autobiographical accounts (even the ones we tell ourselves)” (694).

The authors’ intimate, interpersonal tone and linguistic construction of images in the following examples, wherein they reflect on the meaning of their lived experience, exemplify how readers can experience a multidimensional textual involvement, vicariously engaging with the narrators’ pasts whilst also facilitating the opportunity to engage with, and better understand, their own. Woolf in fact alludes to exactly this latter possibility during a much discussed passage described by Andrew McNeillie as her “mystical” “version of transcendental reality” (“*Bloomsbury*”, 17). Prior to explaining her understanding of moments of “being” and “non-being”, Woolf prefaces her interpretation with the hope that it “may explain a little of my psychology; even of other people’s” (70). The extended reflections that follow, wherein Woolf conducts an “ongoing dialectic between [her] prior and present intelligences” (Lopate 144) concerning her past and present apprehension of both “nondescript” and “exceptional moments” (70-1), contains carefully calibrated images, encapsulating details that are particularized enough to convey her own distant and more recent memories, but also generic enough to facilitate the reader’s application of Woolf’s “sophisticated wisdom” (Lopate 143) to his or her own recollected experience.

For example, Woolf vividly describes her recent memory of “the willows . . . all plummy and soft green and purple against the blue” of the river on the day before, and the apple tree she remembers as a child with “grey-green creases of the bark” (70-

1), but provides descriptions devoid of detail to portray the kinds of “nondescript” activities—“walk[ing], eat[ing] . . . washing; cooking dinner” (70)—which constitute the “cotton wool” moments of “non-being” (70). The generic nature of this imagery thus affords readers the freedom to insert their own recollections for these activities, whilst simultaneously being invited to recast and/or reappraise those images to accommodate Woolf’s insights, such as her belief that a “great part of every day is not lived consciously” (70), or that there is a “hidden pattern” wherein all human beings “are connected” (72).

Garner thematizes a similar sense of human connection, ostensibly concerning her siblings, but with clear implications for universal familial and social interactions in “A Scrapbook, an Album”.¹² Describing the intersubjective “theatre” of the sisters’ relationships, Garner’s judicious deployment of imagery similarly invites the reader to engage vicariously with particular aspects of her recollected collective experience—the “shrines” of the self the siblings erect which house the “little ego-lamp”, fed by the “oil” of each sister’s slights—before shifting to less specific, generalized descriptions of the “silly accents” and “coded phrases” the siblings enact as they transform their inner grievances into the “multi-track story” of each other’s lives (79).

Garner distances us here from the specifics of her own relationships. The sisters are referred to numerically rather than by name, and Garner interprets their interactions from an external, rather than internal familial position, a less intimate perspective that allows her to reflect on the performative aspect of these

¹² *True Stories* (59-89)

interrelationships, which in turn prevents readers from dwelling on the particularities of Garner's own recollections. In facilitating this subtle shift away from a specific vicarious engagement with her own memories, Garner instead implicitly invites us to engage with our own autobiographical experiences of the universally recognized "secret language" and "coded phrases" of factional family politics. Further, in drawing attention to the interpreted nature of recollection by pointedly referring to the various "stories" that are "constructed" by the siblings with a particular "aim" in mind, Garner also encourages us, even as we engage with and resavour our own recollections, to reflect on the reconstructive process of memory and the inherent "instability" of our own "life stories" (Bruner 694).

This discussion has foregrounded the interrelationships between particular narrative strategies and cognitive processes that facilitate the potential for a deeply engaging readerly involvement with these memoirs. I initially considered how specific literary techniques, especially multisensory imagery and double perspectives, both convey, and invite vicarious engagements with the authors' evocative memories of childhood and the complexities of human recollection. I then demonstrated how their memories of daily life and sibling relationships in turn invite a readerly involvement with autobiographical memory, both as a process of comprehension and as a result of engaging with specific textual constructions of human experience. The following chapter focuses on the first supporting pillar of this study's affective architectural framework—emotion—in order to explore how specific literary techniques and cognitive processes interact to potentially extend and deepen this autobiographical involvement. I initially consider how emotion is

effectively portrayed, before examining how such depictions encourage a deeply affective personal engagement.

CHAPTER TWO

The Power and Potential of Emotion in Life Narratives

Although one can sometimes read, in the pages of psychology, implications that negative emotions are to be avoided, and that positive emotions are to be thought of as pleasures that one might acquire in a consumer society . . . this must be a misapprehension. If emotions are the joints and sinews of our relationships, if they are the deepest clues to our identity and if they are the signals of how things are going between one person and another, they are not to be treated as pieces of bitter gall or delicious chocolates. They are the means by which we articulate our lives with each other.

Keith Oatley et al.¹

The strange thing about life is that though the nature of it must have been apparent to everyone for hundreds of years, no one has left any adequate account of it. The streets of London have their map; but our passions are uncharted.

Virginia Woolf²

In Chapter One, I examined how narrative strategies, particularly multisensory images, facilitate evocative and engaging representations of autobiographical memory, together with an exploration of the cognitive and literary processes that facilitate a reciprocal autobiographically engaged readerly involvement. Building on this foundational analysis of memory, this chapter now focuses on emotion—the first of two supporting pillars of this study’s affective architectural framework. The following cognitive literary analysis demonstrates how specific examples of Woolf’s and Garner’s moving portrayals of the powerful emotions underpinning recollections of their parents effectively draw the reader in, a participatory engagement that encourages an emotionally involving readerly experience.

Emotions are central to understandings of ourselves, to human relationships, and indeed, to the functioning of the mind itself (Keltner et al., xxvii). In their integral

¹ *Understanding Emotions* (410) 2nd ed. (2006). All other quotations from this title (Keltner et al.) are from the 3rd ed. (2014).

² *Jacob’s Room* (78).

role of “mediating everyday social interaction”, emotions are not only of crucial importance to our general psychological well-being, but are also profoundly practical, helping us to negotiate the hierarchies of our interpersonal social frameworks (Keltner et al., xxix, 27). Drawing on the diverse insights afforded by his dual roles as both a cognitive scientist and acclaimed novelist, Keith Oatley has initiated “foundational work on emotion and cognition” (Hogan 141) and urges cognitive scientists to better appreciate and apprehend the strong interrelationship between emotion and art (Hogan 141), particularly in light of the fact that “[m]any of the greatest insights into emotions come from novelists and poets” (Keltner et al., 15). Literature communicates such insights via the highly effective medium of narrative—our “preferred mental structure for storing and retrieving information” (Green and Brock, “Persuasiveness”, 121). And, throughout the ages, a principal area of narrative focus has centred on “emotions and their effects” (Keltner et al., 359).

Reflecting specifically on literary representations of memory and emotion, cognitive psychologist Daniel Schacter highlights the importance of apprehending “the subjective experience of remembering” (*Searching*, 4). And just as neuroscientist Steven Rose acknowledges the unique ability of literary artists to illuminate, in highly nuanced and insightful ways, the diverse experiential realities of autobiographical memory (328), so too does Schacter foreground the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to memory research, particularly stressing how the skillful artistic rendering of memory inevitably reveals that, far from constituting “judgment-free snapshots”, the nature of our subjective recollections are profoundly

concerned with the “meaning, sense and *emotions*” that inevitably inheres in personal remembering (*Searching*, 4-5, my emphasis).

An analysis of Woolf’s and Garner’s potent textual representations of emotion underpinning specific maternal recollections constitutes the initial focus of this discussion. The second part of the chapter explores how their depictions of emotion associated with their paternal memories create further opportunities for a personally directed affective readerly involvement, wherein specific narrative structures encourage readers to recall and engage with their own emotional experiential knowledge, inhering in memories that are primed and triggered during textual comprehension. The deeply thoughtful and involving engagement that such reading invites reflects the literary aspirations of both writers—evident in Woolf’s stated desire to invite us “to think of [a] book not as a fixed object, but as a process” (Lee, “Virginia”, 98), and in Garner’s observation that she “would like the text to be such that the reader has room to come in” (Kerryn Goldsworthy v).

Noting that one of Woolf’s primary preoccupations concerned literature’s power to “wor[k] on the reader’s feelings” (“Virginia”, 100),³ Lee further foregrounds Woolf’s conceptualization of reading as constituting a “mixture of association, memory, dreaming and responsiveness” (99), together with her belief that the primary significance of literature inheres not in its form, but in its ability to both convey and engender readerly emotion (“Virginia”, 100). These observations not only underline Woolf’s conviction that memory and emotion constitute significant factors

³ As neurologist Antonio Damasio explains, emotions engender feelings: “[i]t is through feelings, which are inwardly directed and private, that emotions . . . begin their impact on the mind” (36).

contributing to the development of a dynamic textual and readerly engagement, but also align with the chief contention of this thesis.

Woolf's mother: domesticity, dynamism, untimely death

In “A Sketch of the Past”, Woolf demonstrates her ability to effectively ‘work on the reader’s feelings’ when reflecting on her mother, Julia’s, pivotal position and the devastating aftermath of her untimely death. Woolf effectively conveys here—via both content and formal textual aspects—the emotion that permeates her memories. And, as the following example demonstrates, the emotional impact of the content is largely facilitated by her skillful deployment of multisensory imagery, which not only evokes visual, but also auditory and tactile sensory perceptions. Prior to deploying such imagery, Woolf’s portrayal of her mother is somewhat neutral, factual rather than emotional, as she stresses her centrality and pervasive presence: “[s]he was the whole thing; Talland House was full of her, Hyde Park Gate was full of her” (83). Kept at arm’s length, the reader gains only a distant impression of a competent matriarchal figure, who—as the linchpin of her extended family—kept “the panoply of life . . . in being” (83).

As the passage continues, however, Woolf dramatically transforms this dry outline of Julia’s “general presence” (83) into a series of animated maternal portraits, resulting in an intensely moving explication of the desolation that followed Julia’s sudden death. And this transformation, wherein the reader is invited to vicariously engage with the complex feelings that underpin Woolf’s detailed visual representations of her childhood memories, is largely facilitated by her extensive

deployment of multisensory imagery.⁴ By combining her external visions with aural, tactile and motor sensory perceptions, Woolf communicates important details of her interiority, thereby investing her recollections with a deeper emotional dimension:

I see her at the head of the table . . . I say something funny; she laughs; I am pleased; I blush furiously; she observes; someone laughs at Nessa for saying that Ida Milman is her B.F.; Mother says soothingly, tenderly, "Best friend, that means." I see her going to the town with her basket . . . I see her knitting on the hall step while we play cricket . . . I see her writing at her table in London . . . I wait in agony peeping surreptitiously behind the blind for her to come down the street, when she has been out late . . . and I am sure that she has been run over [...] What a jumble of things I can remember . . . about my mother . . . of her as the creator of that crowded merry world which spun so gaily in the centre of my childhood (84).

The predominance here of present, rather than past tense, effectively expands the textual space, inviting the reader to actively share in—rather than passively receive—these recollections. The grammatical strategy of using present tense also infuses Woolf's memories with a strong sense of immediacy that, together with their clarity and vivid detail, contributes to our acceptance of their authenticity.⁵ A further sense of closeness and familiarity with the narrator is gained, as Griffin observes, not by looking at her, but "by looking at the world through the subject's eyes" (112). This subjective focalization encourages both a textual intimacy and close participatory reading engagement, and, together with the intensity of feeling conveyed by Woolf's multisensory images, increases the ability of these narrative representations to convey the emotional impact of Julia's death.

⁴ In his neurocognitive focus on the component of affect in literary aesthetics, Federico Langer posits that visual mental imagery "plays a crucial role in literary aesthetics by enhancing the emotional response to semantic (conceptual) processes" (169-70).

⁵ As cognitive psychologists David Rubin and Daniel Greenberg explain, "[i]magery is . . . important in autobiographical memory because of its role in increasing the specific, relived, personally experienced aspect of autobiographical memory". They further note that "[c]oncrete, easy-to-image details make stories seem more accurate, thoughtful, and believable. Although vivid images do not guarantee accuracy . . . people act as if memory for details implies that the central points are remembered correctly". Therefore, "evidence that the rememberer has an image is routinely taken as evidence for a relived, personally experienced, accurate autobiographical memory" (57).

For example, together with the visual images of her mother engaged in various domestic activities, we are invited to develop a more dynamic and vital sensory portrait of Julia as we ‘hear’ her laugh of approval or the “soothing”, nurturing tone of voice with which she addresses her young children, whilst also being granted access to the emotions underpinning these memories for her daughter. Conveying the intensity of feeling associated with early adolescence, Woolf depicts her acute self-consciousness, apparent in her disquieting “blush”, and her need for parental approval, evident in the pleasure she feels in making her mother laugh. Woolf also confesses to the fretful, agonized vigil she conducts as she awaits her mother’s return (84). In John Mepham’s view, such deeply personal, emotive revelations characterize Woolf’s unpublished writings, wherein the privacy of “writing that would not be seen” facilitated her ability for personal disclosure (188-9).⁶

The emotional landscape that emerges from the depiction of these multisensory images reveals a somewhat nervous and vulnerable young girl, whose psychological security and sense of well-being, in common with most adolescents, is still largely dependent upon her family circle, particularly the central figure of her mother, notwithstanding Woolf’s admission of the “adventures” she embarked upon “outside that world” (84). And thus, the understated acknowledgement that her mother, as “creator” of the “merry” centre of her childhood “was proved on May 5th 1895. For after that day nothing was left of it” constitutes an observation that

⁶ Although acknowledging the existence of a number of personal revelations present in “A Sketch”, Griffin takes a different view, reading the memoir as predominantly characterized by the Victorian understanding of autobiography as “essentially social”. For Griffin, this memoir is characterized by Woolf’s tendency to disappear, “floating somewhere behind accounts of her impressions and of the people who figured largely in her life” (109-10).

wields considerable emotional force. These succinct statements unequivocally confirm the decimation of Woolf's childhood world. But also, in light of the access readers gain, via her imagery, to Woolf's emotional interiority—which, through the process of embodied cognition, invites us to feel her emotions in our own bodies (Keltner et al., 134-5)—our apprehension of the experiential nature and scale of Woolf's loss of the protective care that her mother's "crowded merry world" (84) provided, is thereby amplified.

The emotional content of this portrayal may further be discerned through Woolf's linguistic and structural configuration of the prose. In Griffin's view, this memoir is permeated by a sense of both immediacy and vitality (113), and the emotional dimension of the vitality that Woolf clearly associates with her childhood memories of Julia is forcefully conveyed by the energetic, almost feverish quality of her narration. Woolf's recollections of her mother—consisting predominantly of numerous successive clauses strung together between semi-colons—constitute multiple uninterrupted vignettes that continue for well over a page, a textual construction that creates a sense of momentum and verve. Such vitality is further affirmed by Woolf's description of these memories as constituting the "crowded merry world which spun so gaily in the centre of [her] childhood" (84), thereby suggesting an analogous transfiguring of these recollections into a myriad of vivid, swirling freeze frames.⁷

⁷ Elaine Scarry's cognitive literary analysis of the readerly reception of textual imagery helps to explain the effective evocation here of a sense of movement and vivacity, noting that one of the significant properties of "mental images is that they tend to float around . . . [s]o given to floating are mental images that it requires some effort to hold them steady on the mental retina" (92).

But this textual emulation of the energized life force of Julia as the “creator” and central pivot around which Woolf’s childhood world revolved, is jarringly interrupted by Woolf’s bald confirmation of its sudden demise. Both the form and content of her observations—two short, sharp declaratives which convey her sobering assessment of the effects of Julia’s death—dramatically reverse the frenetic pace of the passage. In bringing to a crashing halt the animation Woolf associates with these familial recollections, this sudden interruption to the narrative momentum poignantly conveys the fraught emotional quality of her memories, with the abrupt textual mirroring of the immediate, irreversible destruction of the vigorous “merry” life force that kept Woolf’s childhood world spinning “gaily” and securely on its axis.

***Garner’s mother: lost and found –
life-long rejection, mother baby bond***

Whereas a “flowing, ruminative, expansiv[e]” writing style (Schulkind 16)—particularly evident in this depiction of the emotional dimensions and implications concerning Julia and her untimely death—characterizes Woolf’s memoir, Garner’s “unillusioned eye” (Wood, par. 6) in “Dreams of Her Real Self”⁸ succinctly conveys the unsettling emotional undercurrents that surge relentlessly through her maternal recollections. Garner’s portrayal of emotion in this memoir concerns the retrospective apportionment of self-blame, and the shame she feels for her previous attitude towards, and treatment of her mother. Indeed, as Brennan notes, “shame”, together with “honesty and defiance” are the dominant traits that shape all the memoirs in this collection (284). Similarly to Manne’s overt linking of Woolf and

⁸ *Everywhere I Look* (90-105).

Garner, Brennan also highlights the manifestation of Woolf's literary reflections in Garner's work, by introducing the chapter concerning these memoirs with an excerpt from Woolf's *Orlando*. This quotation specifically refers to the inability of the biographical genre to adequately represent our many competing identities, a theme that is prevalent throughout Garner's memoirs, as evidenced in the stark contrast between 'shame' and 'defiance'.

In her analysis of "Dreams of Her Real Self", Brennan observes that Garner "longs to atone for the cruelty she dealt her [mother]" (285). The pervasive confessional tone, and harsh self-judgment apparent in this memoir may well be understood as an act of atonement, a necessary precursor to self-forgiveness, which, in Janet Malcolm's opinion, constitutes the basis of autobiography (298).⁹ Yet it is precisely the unstinting withholding of self-love on Garner's part, wherein she "confesses to the barriers she erected between herself and her mother, and lacerates herself for them" (Brennan 285), that facilitates her ability to imbue her memoir with such strong emotional force—a narrative trait that permeates Garner's entire oeuvre (Dalziell 140). Commenting on Garner's prose style, Plunkett observes that, in contrast with Malcolm's "relative reserve", Garner's writing exhibits a disclosure that is altogether "deeper and more confronting" (par. 12). The emotive, confronting nature of Garner's self disclosure in this "brooding, aching ode to her mother" which tugs at our "heart strings" (Vuk 3), thus appears to be less an exercise in self-forgiveness than an austere exposé, marked by a "relentless candor" (Wood par. 6) of the complex feelings of reproachful regret, belated understanding and affection Garner

⁹ In her essay entitled "The Rapture of Firsthand Encounters" in *Everywhere I Look*, Garner observes that Malcolm "is the writer who has influenced and taught me more than any other" (181).

now feels towards her late mother. And once again, Garner's deployment of figurative language, particularly her imagery, enhances her ability to movingly portray the emotions associated with her recollections.

For example, Garner's unflinching portrayal of the emotions of guilt, grief and regret associated with her memories of habitually refusing her mother's eye contact: "[s]he longed for it. I withheld it" (94), are powerfully fortified by her deployment of both analogy and imagery concerning the parallels she draws between her treatment of the family dog and her mother. Mindful of Gabrielle Starr's observation that, for most people, visual imagery constitutes the strongest of our sensory perceptions, as well as the highest level of vivacity ("Multisensory", 277), the visual picture Garner sketches of the "anxious . . . timid and appeasing" poodle who would lie at her feet, "tilting her head" (94) as she strove for eye contact, provides the reader with a clear image of both the dog and its supplicating behavior. But a further emotional function of this visual imagery inheres in its graphic portrayal of the grief that Garner associates with this recollection and the harsh self-judgment it provokes. By choosing to overtly parallel her treatment of the dog with that of her mother, Garner forcefully conveys the brazen self-contempt and shame she feels for her past behaviour. And by constructing a textual picture of this animal, Garner evokes a graphic, easily accessible visual image that convincingly communicates her feelings. Her foregrounding of the "connection" she cannot "expunge between lost mother and lost dog" (94) therefore highlights not only the fact that she has failed them both, but more importantly, that her callous emotional manipulation failed to discriminate between the treatment of a hapless domestic pet and the appropriate behavior of a daughter to her mother.

Whereas Garner's memories of "lost mother and lost dog" (94) introduce her series of recollections in "Dreams of Her Real Self" in a chronology that is subsequent to her mother's death, her final memory marks a return to her infancy, wherein she describes a photograph of herself in her mother's arms. Having recently felt a "bolt of ecstasy" (104) upon seeing a stranger wearing a particular blouse, Garner enquires if her mother had ever owned such a garment. Although unable to consciously remember this clothing, Garner's experiencing, many decades later, of the intense "ecstasy" and "atavistic bliss" that accompanied her sighting of it, clearly demonstrates our propensity to "hold on to the . . . emotions" associated with "our past experiences" (Schacter, *Searching*, 5). But notwithstanding the embodied emotional impact Garner experiences at the sight of this clothing, the emotional force of this passage for the reader inheres both in its narrative placement, as the memoir's final vignette, together with the multisensory imagery depicting the photo of her mother wearing a similar blouse, whilst holding Garner as a six-month-old infant.

Brennan has stressed that the order in which Garner narrates her recollections is carefully planned and constructed (282). The emotional impact resulting from Garner's strategic placement of this particular memory is facilitated by our foreknowledge of both the life-long difficulties between mother and daughter, and the mother's ultimate descent into a virulent form of dementia that rendered her "savage" and "bestial" (91). Armed with this information, there is an undeniable pathos associated with the image Garner now presents of the mother's young "strong" body supporting her trusting infant, as yet unaware of the troubled familial

relationships and physical indignities that lay ahead. Further, the ability of Garner's visual imagery—facilitating the depiction of herself as the trusting baby resting her “right cheek and left hand” on her mother's “breast” (105)—to convey a strong emotional impact, is largely dependent on the tactile imagery that this visual image evokes.

Tactile images are “often multisensory”, a phenomenon Starr has drawn attention to in her discussion of the cognitive “architecture of the imagery of the senses” (“Multisensory”, 287-91). The human brain appears to prioritize particular forms of tactile imagery, with a proportionally greater cortical area assigned to the face, mouth, lips and hands (Starr 286). As a result, these body parts facilitate our experiencing of more detailed sensations: “[h]aptic activity is almost essential to human survival: the networks enabling it are complex, recruiting sensations of touch, motor processes, and visual systems to enable robust and detailed imagery” (286-7). In view of this cognitive functioning, a clearer understanding emerges of the inherent power of imagery relating to the hands and face to evoke “extremely detailed sensations” (Starr 286-7). And our interpretation and understanding of such sensations is intimately connected with emotion, specifically its behavioural facet, because emotion often inheres in facial and vocal expressions, as well as in posture, gesture, touch and other actions” (Keltner et al., 27). Narrative representations of the caressing gesture of hand to face, may therefore not only convey “semantic weight” relating to aspects such as nurture, tenderness or love, but such tactile imagery also carries with it potentially high levels of “sensory richness” (Starr 286-7).

So although Garner's depiction of this photograph foregrounds the visual image of her position viz-à-viz her mother's body, our cognitive architecture simultaneously enables the engagement of our tactile sensory perceptions, such as the feel of one's cheek on the shiny smoothness of a "rayon blouse" for example, or the feel of the malleable, unsupported weight and warmth of a baby's body and/or the attendant contrasting sensations of her velvety skin and clothing material. The emotional impact of Garner's predominantly visual portrayal thereby emanates from the facility of this image to evoke more than just our visual perception, whereby the combined effects of both visual and tactile sensations increase not only the vivacity of this image, but also our ability to experience the different facets of these sensory components, which in turn amplifies the "semantic weight" (Starr 287) inhering in the feelings of trust, vulnerability and tenderness embedded in Garner's image of mother and baby.

Similarly, the "sensory richness" (Starr 287) of Woolf's imagery depicting the "shock" (92) of her final contact with her mother, fortifies the emotion underpinning this portrayal:

Stella took me into the bedroom to kiss mother for the last time. She had been lying on her side before. Now she was lying straight in the middle of her pillows. Her face looked immeasurably distant, hollow and stern. When I kissed her, it was like kissing cold iron. Whenever I touch cold iron the feeling comes back to me—the feeling of my mother's face, iron cold, and granulated. I started back" (92).

In communicating the emotional — "sledge-hammer force of the blow" (72)—caused by her complete unpreparedness for the "iron cold, and granulated" (92) feel and texture of her mother's face, Woolf's imagery prioritizes the tactile over the visual. Although she does refer to the visual images of Julia's "distant hollow and stern"

face, and bodily positioning, it is the imagery of touch—"kissing her", "kissing cold iron", "touch[ing] cold iron", "the feeling of [her] mother's face" that more forcefully conveys the cause of her shock (92). Because we are invited to apprehend the emotional content of this portrayal primarily through these facial tactile sensations, our understanding of the emotional horror of this recollection is enhanced by the ability of this imagery to evoke rich and "detailed sensations" of tactile perception (Starr 286-7).¹⁰ In his psychoanalytic focus on the capacity of blended sensory modalities to evoke vivid readerly perceptions, Sherman notes Woolf's ability to convey extremely detailed "eidetic" imagery, affirming that for him, her "visual and auditory perceptions" engender a "sensation of touching the very objects" (34).

This discussion has considered the different ways in which these writers' narrative techniques, particularly their deployment of literary images, effectively convey—in both overt and implicit ways—the strong emotions that underpin particular memories of their mothers. In focusing predominantly on the role of multisensory imagery in these literary evocations of emotion, my primary aims have been, firstly, to demonstrate the crucial role such narrative and discursive techniques play in constructing the feelings at the heart of their recollections. And secondly, to explicate how these imagery-laden portrayals effectively evoke emotion by encouraging a reciprocal sensory engagement on the part of the reader, facilitating our ability "to feel in order to understand" (Smuts 149) these representations of emotion.

¹⁰ Starr has observed that some "imagery can be so strong that one confuses image with sensation" ("Multisensory", 277), and in this example, the sensation of touching her mother's dead body appears to outweigh its visual impact, apparent in Woolf's observation that whenever she touches "cold iron" she does not 'see' her mother's face, but *feels* it: "the feeling comes back . . . the feeling of my mother's face" (92).

In light of this study's aim to explore the narrative construction of memory, emotion and empathy, and the ways in which these textual portrayals invite an autobiographical and affective reading involvement, in order to ultimately identify some of the contributing factors driving our keen engagement with literary autobiography, I now focus more specifically on the readerly dynamic, examining how these texts encourage an involving and affective engagement. In so doing, my focus on the maternal shifts to selected paternal portrayals which facilitate an investigation of how specific representations of emotion necessitate the readerly provision of personal emotional experience and knowledge in order to comprehend the text, a process that in turn enables the reader to actively re-examine and engage with the emotions embedded in their own autobiographical recollections.

Engaging emotionally with paternal portrayals of rage and repression

Discussing how skilled literary writers engage readers' memories and emotions, Oatley and Djikic highlight Woolf's critical reflections on representations of emotion, concerning Jane Austen's ability to evoke "much deeper emotion than appears on the surface" thereby stimulating us "to supply what is not there . . . something that expands in the reader's mind" (Woolf, "Jane", 138; Oatley and Djikic 20).¹¹ In "A Sketch", Woolf's own evocation of emotion requiring the reader to 'supply what is not there' is evident in her displeasing paternal recollection:

¹¹ It is no coincidence that cognitive analysts such as Keith Oatley, Maja Djikic and David Miall expressly engage with Woolf's writing in order to discuss and demonstrate their concepts. The sophistication and "subtlety of [her] prose" (Miall 59), makes it particularly suitable for cognitive literary study, traits that, as this thesis shows, are equally apparent in Garner's work.

I would find my lips moving; I would be arguing with him; raging against him; saying to myself all that I never said to him. How deep they drove themselves into me, the things it was impossible to say aloud" (108).

In her lengthy observations immediately following this passage, Woolf declines to explain precisely what caused her to argue with her father. Therefore, in order to comprehend the nature and force of Woolf's rage, readers must consequently 'supply what is not there'. In so doing, readers rely on their own understanding of the complex emotions commonly inhering in generational relationships of unequal power, which can create such feelings of injustice and suppressed anger. And in order to access this knowledge, readers draw on autobiographical memories relating to the power hierarchies embedded in their own familial or social relationships, or knowledge acquired from other sources, such as literary narratives (Miall 62). An engagement with such personal knowledge is crucial in order to gain a clear understanding of the nature of Woolf's emotional experience. For although we are subsequently apprised of certain details concerning the nature of their relationship, no amount of narrative detail could ever capture or adequately convey *all* that was "never said" or *all* that "was impossible to say aloud" (108).

Our ability to understand the force of emotion that motivates Woolf's expression and enactment of such behavioural patterns therefore relies on our engagement with the "representational content" of our own personal memories (Hogan 160; Oatley and Djikic 10-11). As cognitive literary scholar Patrick Colm Hogan has noted, these recollections, primed during the comprehension process "are the source of the reader's emotive reaction to the work" (160). Further, our personal memories not only guide our understanding of a narrative, but in fact constitute the basis of "our emotional response to a work" (Hogan 161). In order, therefore, to "fill

in indeterminate aspect[s]” of Woolf recollection—such as the “hidden causes” of her rage—we scan our “memory systems for relevant material” (Hogan 161), thereby recalling and engaging with our own emotionally fraught memories, which not only allow us to understand Woolf’s feelings, but also facilitates the potential for a deep personal investment in the text, as we remember and engage with those turbulent recollections.

In “Three Acres, More or Less”¹² Garner similarly depicts the difficult relationship and imbalance of power between herself and her father, but here, in contrast with Woolf’s open admission of emotion, the reader must ‘supply what is not there’ in order to comprehend the implicit, unstated nature of her underlying emotions:

[M]y father, arrive[s] without warning from Geelong at 8.00am [. . .]
 ‘What is a runoff?’ I ask humbly, standing behind him with clasped hands.
 He points. ‘How the hell did you think the water got into the dam?’
 ‘Oh’, I say, with the foolish giggle I despise in others, ‘I thought it got filled
 from the—from the raining sky.’
 He plunges away to the house, where I make a cup of tea . . . (98-9).

Garner makes explicit the domineering and dismissive behavior of her father in the form of his uninvited presence, offhand language and belligerent pose. She also highlights her own subservient demeanor and responses—“humbly” positioning herself behind him, enacting the role of an uninformed simpleton and, despite her father’s rudeness, dutifully preparing his tea. But in so doing, she carefully avoids making any overt reference to the precise nature of her emotions. In contrast with Woolf’s more straightforward characterization of her feelings, Garner only hints at the complexity of feeling connected with her adoption, in the face of her father’s

¹² *True Stories* (96-114).

scorn, of an ignorant, submissive persona, wherein she is reduced to displaying the “foolish” behavior she “despise[s] in others” (98).

In terms of the reader’s personal emotional engagement, however, such indeterminacy offers the potential for a deep level of personal involvement due to the complexity, in this case, of ‘supplying what is not there’. This involving engagement results from the need to recall and experience cognitive simulations of the emotional content of a range of different scenarios relating to the complex politics and dynamics of familial relationships, either from personal memory or from narratively stored emotional states, concerning parents and their adult children, in the effort to comprehend and account for the feelings that might motivate Garner’s seemingly inexplicable behaviour.¹³

In considering the nature and impact of these portrayals’ invitations for an affective reading engagement, it is important to note literature’s capacity to provide a safe “aesthetic distance” (Keltner et al., 358), whereby the nature of our vicarious engagement—wherein we translate “words into mental models” or simulations within which we “can think” (Oatley and Djikic 15)—regulates the intensity of our emotions, ensuring that they are neither entirely absent nor overwhelming (Keltner et al., 358). Crucially however, Keltner et al. also stress that during our literary engagements within these imaginative mental simulations, it is not the emotions of characters that we experience, “*but our own*” (358, my emphasis), whilst also

¹³ In a related reference to our imaginative—rather than specific emotional engagement—Owen Richardson has commented on Garner’s “trademark” tactic of “economy”, wherein she affords, her literary figures a certain privacy, which, in Richardson’s view, has the effect of drawing “the reader closer in”, allowing an imaginative engagement with the text (98).

acknowledging the potential ability of this emotional literary experience to influence and even change our self-perceptions (360).¹⁴

Further, in their study of narrative persuasion (in both fiction and non-fiction), psychologists Melanie Green and Timothy Brock have observed that well crafted literary narratives “in which images are evoked” (“Persuasiveness”, 125), cannot only facilitate the reader’s transportation “into a narrative world”, but also within this context “the story can affect their real-world beliefs. *Transportation into a narrative world* has been conceptualized as a distinct mental process—an integrative melding of attention, imagery and feelings” (123, emphasis in original). Further, during narrative transportation, readers may “recall or focus on specific story-related instances from their own lives” and such recollections “can continue to exert influence beyond the story context” (124).

In their targeted engagement with the meaning and interpretation of lived experience, such observations carry clear implications for the power of carefully crafted, imagery rich, literary memoirs,¹⁵ such as Woolf’s and Garner’s, to encourage the reader to actively recruit their autobiographical memories and emotional experiences. In so doing, these texts facilitate the provision of safe and, more importantly, creative liminal spaces “between the text and the reader” (Oatley and Djikic 15), wherein we can re-examine, re-live and reconstruct our emotional

¹⁴ Although Keltner et al. specifically refer here to “literary fiction” (360), the authors they draw on, namely Keith Oatley and Maja Djikic, expressly include carefully crafted literary “memoirs and essays” (16) in their study of readers’ emotional and empathetic engagements with literature.

¹⁵ Similarly to Green and Brock, Oatley and Djikic have stressed the importance of literary imagery, noting that in order to successfully prompt readers’ mental simulations, literary writers “must invoke imagistic and emotional processes” (24).

experiential memories. Mindful of the fact that memories are “living processes, which become transformed, imbued with new meanings, each time we recall them” (Rose 2), our autobiographical and emotional engagement with this kind of literature provides the potent potential for us to re-appraise and even change our perceptions, attitudes and understandings of our ongoing and “notably unstable” life narratives (Bruner 694).

This chapter has demonstrated how the deployment of various literary techniques—most notably that of multisensory imagery—facilitate Woolf’s and Garner’s compelling and vivid portrayals of the complex feelings and sensibilities associated with memories of their parents, together with a consideration of how these emotions’ narrative constructions encourage an emotionally involved reading engagement. This affective involvement, wherein we understand and engage with narrative representations of “the emotional reaction of others” (Johansen 189), further facilitates the potential for an empathetic response, whereby we are invited to take up another’s “psychological perspective and imaginatively experience, to some degree or other, what he or she experiences” (Coplan, “Empathetic”, 143). This potential of the literary memoir to further draw the reader in by both inviting and invoking such empathy—not only in response to the narrators, but also as a self-directed sense of empathy for our own former selves—is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Empathy in Life Writing—Feeling for our Former Selves

Empathy is not a luxury in human affairs. We need it in order to negotiate our way around one another, with our diverse motives and characters. It is intrinsic to our efforts to get real explanations of why people do what they do.

Adam Morton¹

“[T]he mind is its own place and in his inner life each of us lives the life of a ghostly Robinson Crusoe.” I submit that, by providing us with an experiential understanding of other people, however imperfect, empathy promises to rescue us from the island of such a ghostly existence.

Amy Coplan²

Extending my previous consideration of affect regarding both the textual construction of moving portrayals and the invitations for emotionally engaged reading experiences, I now focus on the capacity of these texts to invite empathy in the reader. Building on the analyses of the ways in which readers are invited to engage both autobiographically and emotionally with these texts, the following discussion concentrates on the second supporting pillar of this study’s affective architectural framework, that of empathy. And as with autobiographical memory and emotion, multisensory imagery again emerges as one of the prime enabling literary mechanisms facilitating effective and affective portrayals of empathy, and compelling textual invitations for a reciprocal readerly empathetic involvement. The following examination of these processes initially focuses on selected portrayals of empathy wherein the authors’ poignant empathetic depictions of a butterfly and a baby construct a further affective dimension to their recollections. I then broaden the discussion to demonstrate how such strategies potentially deepen the reader’s

¹ “Empathy for the Devil”, *Empathy* (318-9).

² “Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects”, *Empathy* (18).

ongoing emotional and empathetic investment in both the authors' and their own life narratives.

The study of empathy has long occupied scholarly minds from diverse academic disciplines, resulting in many “competing conceptualizations” of this widely debated and important phenomenon (Coplan, “Understanding”, 3-4). There is a general consensus amongst psychologists that empathy involves three different components: “feeling what another person is feeling, knowing what another person is feeling, and having the intention to respond compassionately to another person’s distress” (Decety and Jackson 73). Favouring the “multidimensional” approach of psychologist William Ickes, neuroscientists Jean Decety and Philip Jackson extend these understandings, defining empathy as “a complex form of psychological inference in which observation, memory, knowledge and reasoning are combined to yield insights into the thoughts and feelings of others” (73). Focusing more specifically on the nature of empathetic reading engagements with narrative fiction, philosopher Amy Coplan observes that when empathizing with another, we “imaginatively experience his or her emotional states, while simultaneously imaginatively experiencing his or her cognitive states” (“Empathetic”, 144).³

Initially, it may appear that the process of empathy, whereby we experience *another person’s* cognitive and emotional states, precludes the ability for an empathic engagement with oneself—for example, a writer portraying empathy for her past

³ Coplan also notes that empathy needs to be distinguished from the related processes of emotional contagion and sympathy. The former occurs when “emotions get transferred from one individual to another”, an experience that “is typically automatic, uncontrollable, and unintentional”, whereas sympathy may be characterized as “feeling *for* another”, rather than “sharing the other’s experience” (“Empathetic”, 145).

mindsets or experiences. But, as psychologists Michael Ross and Anne Wilson confirm, we commonly conceptualize our identities in terms of our “former and current selves”, which, together with our propensity to engage in the constant evaluation of ourselves retrospectively through time, clearly facilitates the opportunity for us to feel “empathy for [our] earlier selves” (241).

Highlighting the ability of the empathetic process to extend beyond everyday interactions into our artistic engagements, Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie note that literary characters “have a life of their own, so to speak, which is in many respects just like ours, and which is there to be understood, and perhaps, empathized with” (xxxvii). Traditionally however, the scholarly consideration of affective and empathetic engagements with literature has tended to focus largely on fictional characters.⁴ Indeed Suzanne Keen, in her study of the interrelationships among empathy, altruism and fiction, contends that it is precisely “the perception of fictionality” that permits readers to engage empathetically with literature, because the fictive genre removes the “suspicion of others’ motives that often acts as a barrier to empathy” (168).

Countering this viewpoint, Leah Anderst endorses the ability of literary memoirists to portray highly effective empathetic engagements, both between the narrator’s past and present selves, and the narrator and other figures depicted within the narrative, depictions that provide “just as much potential for creating empathetic responses and for arousing strong emotions in readers as do novels and short stories” (273). Supporting this perspective, Hampl believes that far from displaying

⁴ See for example Blakey Vermeule (21-48), and Noël Carroll (162-184).

any inherent cynicism or suspicion of the non-fictional sub-genres of memoirs and personal essays, the ever-increasing popularity of these texts is due to the “irresistible” pull of the autobiographer’s “first-person voice” bringing “news of the self perceiving and experiencing the world” (“Book Review”, 22). But, in order for autobiographers to create an empathetic portrayal—moving or otherwise—a clearly delineated past and present self must be constructed. In her focus on autobiographical technique, Brosnan highlights Woolf’s stated intention in “A Sketch”, “to make the two people, I now, I then, come out in contrast” (Woolf 75), noting that “the configuration of the ‘I’s written in, and the ‘I’s writing the essay are exceedingly complex. A self writes in the present . . . and the past self that is written about is a combination of past and present” (158). Similarly, Snaith observes that the “notion of flux” pertains not only to Woolf’s understanding of memory, but also to “the writing self” and thus “A Sketch” is “as much about Woolf in 1939-40 as it is a memoir of her past” (55), whereas Hyman focuses on matters of accuracy, suggesting that autobiographical narrative more accurately reflects the writer’s present state of mind than the self that is recollected (25).

These observations not only underline our understanding of human subjectivity in terms of “former and current selves” but also highlight the fact that “[a]utobiographical memory is a constructive process”⁵ (Ross and Wilson 241, 232), whereby our recollections become “infused with what we now know, and with how we now feel about what happened” (Goldie, *The Mess*, 54). These

⁵ Although primarily focused on highlighting resonances amongst “A Sketch”, Wordsworth’s conceptualization of nature and Foucault’s thoughts on the ethical writing of the self, literary scholar Benjamin Hagen alludes to the reconstructive process of memory in Woolf’s memoir when he comments on her “reinvention of *theres* and *thens*” in the “*here* and *now*”, together with his characterization of the memoir as “a creative work” (13).

characteristics and processes of identity and memory are evident in the depiction of empathy that the mature Woolf feels for her former, psychologically destitute fifteen-year-old self, following the death of her half sister, Stella, who had become a surrogate mother to the Stephen siblings following the death of their mother.

Woolf's 'tremulous' teenage self

Remarking on the “latent sorrow” associated with her mother’s death, Woolf then discusses the different “substance” of her “mind stuff” and “being stuff” following Stella’s death (124). Woolf’s retrospective empathy for her teenage self is evident in the way she characterizes her mental state in terms of both affective and cognitive insights, wherein she felt “extraordinarily unprotected, unformed, unshielded, apprehensive, receptive [and] anticipatory” (124). Increasing the intensity of this empathetic portrayal, Woolf then momentarily *becomes* “the voice of the experiencing – I” (Anderst 280)—her former teenage self—via the textual illusion created by a short section of direct dialogue: “I remember saying to myself after she died: ‘But this is impossible; things aren’t, can’t be, like this’” (124). This narrative representation of direct speech, which “invite[s] the reader into the autobiographer’s past mental experience” (Anderst 280) succinctly encompasses her agitated thoughts and feelings, conveying her self-directed empathetic engagement with strong affective force by presenting her experience “as if she is reliving” (Anderst 281) that moment, thus dramatically closing the distance between her past and present selves and inviting the reader to apprehend and engage empathetically with the confusion and disbelief of her teenage mind. Whilst it is clear that this intimate and insightful portrayal of empathy, wherein Woolf’s “narrating – I” comments on and interprets her “experiencing – I”, facilitates, as

Anderst notes, narrative “channels or tracks across which affective responses and empathetic engagement may travel” (280, 273), the following analysis, building on these insights, more precisely explicates how the affective force of Woolf’s textual portrayal of self-directed empathy—an analogous image of a butterfly’s emergence from its chrysalis—is both primarily enabled and powerfully communicated by her deployment of multisensory literary imagery.

Describing the alternating “despair” and “ecstasy” of the “two lives” Woolf lived at Hyde Park Gate (123-4), and drawing a parallel between these competing modes of existence and the “muffled intensity” of a moth or butterfly emerging from the confines of its cocoon, Woolf describes the brief moment of highly charged anticipation, when the insect “emerges and sits quivering beside the broken case for a moment; its wings still creased; its eyes dazzled, incapable of flight” (124). At the end of the subsequent paragraph, however, having depicted both the complexity of her emotional milieu, together with the crucial stability and hope that Stella represented, Woolf describes the effect of Stella’s sudden death: “the blow, the second blow of death, struck on me; tremulous, filmy eyed as I was, with my wings still creased, sitting there on the edge of my broken chrysalis” (124). These passages, culminating in a ‘moment of being’ of “astonishing intensity”, are prime exemplars of both “the surface and spreading depths”—the daily interactions and deeper emotional dimensions—which Woolf aspired to depict in both her memoirs and her fiction (Schulkind 19).

Both the contrasting contexts and subtle figurative differences between Woolf’s representations of the insect’s emergence and her teenage plight are the primary

narrative strategies that facilitate this moving portrayal of Woolf's empathetic engagement with her teenage self. Woolf's initial depiction of the "quivering" insect sitting "for a moment" with its "eyes dazzled" by the light, captures both the inherent excitement of the instant immediately preceding the butterfly's liberation, and the radiant brilliance of the world it is about to enter (124). But, having been "brutally" and "violently cheated" of the promise of happiness as a result of Stella's death, Woolf's subsequent portrayal of subjectivity— analogous to that of the butterfly— depicts her young self as neither "dazzled" by the light, nor "quivering" with anticipation, but "filmy eyed" with grief-stricken tears, a passive disconsolate figure "sitting there" on her "broken chrysalis" (124). These small but significant discursive dissimilarities, coupled with the contextual knowledge of Woolf's prolonged exposure to the familial turmoil following Julia's death, invite us to empathize with her teenage self via the sensory components of her literary imagery, rendering the butterfly a potent discursive symbol of her physical and psychological entrapment.

As noted above, visual images are, for most people, "more strong and controllable than any other kind" (Starr, "Multisensory", 277). Not only will many readers thereby instantiate a clear internal image of a moth or butterfly, but because of these insects' ubiquitous presence in the natural world, we are also aware that the ability to move as they navigate their habitat is integral to their very existence. As Starr notes, imagery is "multisensory and multimodal. Rarely will we encounter descriptions that speak to only a single sense" ("Theorizing", 248). Importantly for our understanding of Woolf's example, Starr also confirms that everyday sensory experience "is in fact biased toward motion"—for example, we constantly monitor

the movement of people, animals, objects and light sources in our visual fields, and sound informs us of our own movements and those of other beings (248).

These observations have significant implications for our understanding of the efficacy of this passage, wherein Woolf's foregrounding of the transitory "dazzl[ing]" of the eyes and "quivering" of the butterfly which heralds the insect's impending departure into the natural world, encourage us to primarily focus not on the butterfly's visual appearance, but on its *movement*. We are then invited to contrast this energized, anticipatory moment of the butterfly's imminent liberation with the stasis and inwardness that characterizes her later imagery. Here, following the "blow of death", Woolf is immobilized with grief, passively "sitting there" on the "broken chrysalis", wherein her vision, far from being dazzled by the radiance of her surroundings, is clouded and dulled by tears (124). Woolf's imagery effectively conveys her self-directed empathy via the graphic foregrounding of these powerful multimodal images. Through her perceptions of vision and motion, Woolf invites a strong empathetic readerly engagement with her plight, wherein this potent multisensory imagery facilitates a keen understanding of her crushing curtailment of freedom, whereby her ability to move, both physically, and metaphorically—as a growing teenager's rite of passage into the young adult world—is "brutally" blocked as a result of yet another untimely death of an integral family member (124).

Laying to one side specific textual considerations of Woolf's narrative representations of empathy, the manner in which she openly draws attention to her self-directed empathy—similarly to the overt foregrounding of her emotions discussed above—is quite clear and unambiguous. And whilst it is true that one of

the primary functions and designs of literature, as Jørgen Dines Johansen notes, is “to call forth feelings” (195), there are myriad ways in which authors may both portray and endeavor to elicit such emotional responses. As with their portrayals and evocations of emotion discussed above, Woolf’s and Garner’s textual constructions of empathy are also markedly different. Unlike the mature Woolf’s overt embracing of empathy for her teenage self, the following example highlights the embedded, implicit nature of Garner’s portrayals of empathy, both for her mother and, more particularly, for herself.

I have so far chosen different textual examples from each author in order to facilitate clear explications of both the construction and evocation of textual and readerly processes of memory and emotion. But the contribution these integral components make to the dynamic textual and readerly processes I have examined throughout this study are, of course, thoroughly inter-related. In order to demonstrate this inter-relationship, my discussion of Garner’s empathetic depictions will reconsider the passage analyzed in the previous chapter, concerning the emotion embedded in her portrayal of her mother and infant self.

Garner’s baby bliss

Together with the facilitation of an empathetic textual “channel” created by the autobiographical “narrating – I” and “the experiencing – I”, Anderst further identifies the “empathetic response” the autobiographer can portray to the “retrospective image” of other characters, such as siblings or parents (280-4). At the conclusion of “Dreams of Her Real Self”, Garner constructs the retrospective empathetic portrayal of her mother via a brief shift from the intimacy of the first person, internally

focalized voice in which this memoir has been consistently narrated, to a more impersonal, externally focalized, third-person narrative voice:

A week later came a curly edged black-and-white photo . . . A woman in her early twenties stands in a bare backyard [. . .] On her flexed left arm sits a wide-browed, unsmiling baby. The child's right cheek and left hand lean against the stripes of the woman's rayon blouse.

The war is not yet over. Her brother is alive. (105).

This depiction demonstrates an empathetic attempt to imagine her mother—in a time that pre-dates Garner's conscious memories—in a youthful and comparatively carefree state, prior to the emotional devastation caused by her brother's death, a loss which she mourned throughout her life (98). This portrayal, although brief and unembellished, nevertheless invites a multidimensional empathetic engagement, with both Garner's mother, and with Garner herself. The depth of the empathetic engagement we are invited to feel for Garner here is informed by our ongoing exposure to the "irradiating disclosure" (Plunkett par. 6) of Garner's life-long irritations with her mother, criticisms which—in the ruthless chronicling of her dismissive and careless mishandling of her mother's feelings and sensibilities—have, throughout, been made abundantly clear to the reader. The insights such emotional and cognitive perspectives permit, thereby facilitate the reader's apprehension of both the guilt-fuelled regret and worldly maturity and compassion that inhere in Garner's effort to make the imaginative empathetic leap into the psychological perspective of her mother.⁶

⁶ Although not referring specifically to Garner's memoirs, William Wilde et al. have remarked on the "imperatives" that characterize Garner's works, as constituting "compassion, understanding and tenderness" (308), components that are all salient to the retrospective empathy she demonstrates here for her late mother.

In the passage that immediately follows, however, Garner abruptly shifts back to a first person, internally focalized perspective:

I am six months old. I am still an only child. She is carrying me in her arms. She is strong enough to bear my weight with ease. I trust her. She is my mother and I am content to rest my head upon her breast (105).

This disruptive, mid-paragraph transition draws the reader's attention to Garner's textual reconfiguration—specifically her jarring shift in focalization—facilitating her imposition of this retrospective interpretation which evokes the universally agreed upon, cultural notion of the 'natural' reciprocation of trust and harmony between a mother and her baby. Garner further alludes to her imagined infant response to the embrace and to the context more broadly as its subject, together with her adult mind-reading of the baby's posture and expression as an object, a blurring of perspectives that creates narrative depth and emotional complexity. Both the form and content of this passage thereby implicitly invite us to empathize with the deep regrets and belated effort Garner is making "to atone for the cruelty she dealt her" [mother] (Brennan 285). These empathetic invitations are evident in Garner's depiction of the potent image of the trusting mother and infant bond, together with her concluding remarks which assert the blissful fidelity of their original relationship, a loving connection that Garner implicitly 'proves' by describing her "atavistic bliss" at the sight of the "stripey blouse", resembling that of her mother's in this photograph (104-5).

***Recollecting images, touching memories, feeling for others
and for ourselves***

These examples have sought to demonstrate how the authors' narrative techniques—especially their literary imagery—construct portrayals of empathy,

both for themselves and others, evocative representations that draw us into their life narratives and invite empathetic readerly responses. Referring specifically to the nature of our empathetic engagements with narrative, Coplan has emphasized the empathizer's ability to simulate "the target's experiences without losing the ability to simultaneously experience his or her own separate thoughts, emotions and desires" (144). This complex cognitive process—which may be conceptualized as the mind's ability for "offline as well as online social processing" (Vermeule 47)—illustrates the extensive "psychological movement" available to readers during narrative comprehension (Coplan, "Empathetic", 149,) thereby facilitating the potential for a compelling and deeply involving narrative engagement. For example, we may experience an 'offline' vicarious empathetic and emotional involvement with Woolf's and Garner's affective representations of empathy. In representing the feelings of characters, Johansen notes that "authors are very often successful in eliciting an emotional response in the readers" (189). Taking this observation a step further, the cognitive mechanisms that enable such an 'emotional response' are themselves reliant on the reader drawing on, and engaging with, "autobiographical rememberings" and "intuitive mental models of the physical and social world", wherein we create an "imaginative construction or simulation" (Oatley and Djikic 10-11) in order to comprehend the text. And because of our ability to experience our "own separate thoughts, emotions and desires" (Coplan, "Empathetic", 144) we can further engage with an 'online' sense of personally directed empathetic feelings for our own former selves, as we recall and engage with our personal memories during textual comprehension.

For example, the ability to specifically comprehend and engage with Garner's portrayal of empathy for her mother and herself relies on the reader's ability to simulate mental models of internal images—triggered as we engage with her vividly evocative literary imagery—which are drawn from the “representational content” of our own personal memories (and/or general cultural and social knowledge) concerning parent and child relationships (Rubin and Greenberg 56; Hogan 160; Oatley and Djikic 10-11).⁷ But in the case of each and every reader's infant self—because of our inability to recall the experiential reality of ourselves as babies—these internal mental images will themselves reflect visual photographic depictions of ourselves, depictions which will almost certainly include loved ones—parents, grandparents and/or siblings. And the emotion inevitably embedded in such images not only facilitates the potential for a deeply affective personal engagement, but also provides us with affective insights that increase our ability to empathize with Garner's retrospective interpretation, as we recognize the potent complexity of emotions that inhere in depictions of our infant selves with our parents.

Our cognitive ability to empathize with Garner's retrospective re-interpretation, whilst also reconstructing and re-engaging empathetically—in light of Garner's insights—with memories of our own infant children, or images of our former selves as infants with family members, provides the clear potential for a deeply involving autobiographical and affective reading engagement.⁸ Further, the affective nature of

⁷ Decety and Jackson stress that “memory” and “knowledge” are both crucial components of the empathetic process (73).

⁸ This complex cognitive engagement may not necessarily occur only during the act of reading. Media and cultural studies research on reading practices has found that participants report feelings of empathy and ongoing self reflection up to a week after their engagement with the literary text (Koopman and Hakemulder 105).

this empathetic engagement may be intensified as a result of the specific literary images Garner constructs in this scene.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the *tactile* images that Garner's *visual* depiction evokes creates the potential for us to experience a richly detailed and vital multisensory and emotional engagement with our own personal "associations and memories" (Oatley and Djikic 15; Miall 62).⁹ And, in the case of parent and child relationships, such recollections will inevitably carry strong affective connotations—such as love, joy, grief or guilt—universally experienced emotions associated with these crucial familial bonds that are triggered, and with which we may then engage both emotionally and empathetically as a result of our cognitive and affective experiencing of Garner's evocative, multisensory depiction of this iconic, culturally significant and inherently emotive image of mother and baby.¹⁰

This examination of literary technique, together with specific cognitive insights concerning the powerful affective force of visual images that further evoke sensory perceptions of movement and touch, has demonstrated not only the textual effectiveness of these narrative strategies, but also the dynamic potential they offer for a deeply involving autobiographical and affective readerly engagement—both with the authorial depictions of empathy and for readers' personally directed empathetic engagement with their former selves and others. These cognitive

⁹ Schacter et al. note that highly specific details characteristically inhere in emotionally significant memories ("Specificity", 98-9), a feature of memory that may potentially be intensified by the ability of multisensory imagery in narrative to engender "robust and detailed" internal images (Starr, "Multisensory", 287).

¹⁰ As Johansen notes, one of the great strengths of literature inheres in its expression of "everyday experience" wherein it often concentrates on "peak moments or crises and rites of passage" (193).

insights, which help to illuminate such literary portrayals of, and invitations for empathetic readerly involvements, in turn highlight the ways in which literature can offer a unique contribution to personal human development, by facilitating what third-person scientific knowledge cannot: the “understanding of another person from the inside” (Coplan, “Understanding”, 18).

CONCLUSION

This cognitive literary examination of selected passages of Woolf's and Garner's literary memoirs has specifically focused on autobiographical memory, emotion and empathy, three integral components of the affective architecture of life narratives. The incorporation of cognitive insights into the literary exploration of these components has permitted a wide-ranging analytical focus on the interplay between language and cognition, encompassing both a textual examination of the construction and effectiveness of specific narrative techniques, and an investigation into how portrayals of memory and emotion provide opportunities for a reciprocal engendering of these cognitive and affective processes in the reader. And, as every example discussed above demonstrates, imagery—in its dynamic mediating role between text and reader—emerges as a crucial literary and cognitive mechanism, facilitating both *effective* and *affective* textual portrayals of these integral components, together with corresponding invitations for involving autobiographical and emotional readerly engagements.

It is my central contention that these authors' deployment of literary imagery not only effectively engages us in their life narratives by vividly portraying autobiographical memory, emotion and empathy, but that such imagery further invites an involving affective engagement by triggering mental images that invoke these cognitive and affective processes in the reader. I further contend that this complex literary, cognitive and affective interchange constitutes a number of significant driving factors that contribute to our long-standing, enthusiastic engagement with the skillfully crafted, self-reflexive literary memoir.

Each of the three chapters deploys a dual textual and readerly analytic framework in the cognitive literary examination of the three integral components of memory, emotion and empathy. Beginning with a textual focus on the foundational underpinning structure of these texts' affective architecture—autobiographical memory—I demonstrate how various rhetorical strategies, together with carefully crafted multisensory imagery, facilitate evocative, engaging and authentic portrayals of Woolf's recollections of her seaside nursery and Garner's memories of her coastal village upbringing. These multisensory, vividly detailed, split-perspective depictions not only facilitate a vicarious readerly engagement with the authors' lived experiences, but further encourage an introspective autobiographical engagement by overtly reflecting on the complexities and vagaries of the memory process itself.

In then focusing more specifically on the readerly process, I apply cognitive insights concerning the role of imagery (and its susceptibility to manipulation), in the triggering of autobiographical memory, together with the essentially reconstructive nature of human recollection, to show how the nature of our engagement with more generalized portrayals of memory—Woolf's daily moments of 'non-being' and Garner's familial factional politics—provides alternative opportunities for a reciprocal autobiographical readerly engagement. Further demonstrating how these texts effectively draw the reader in, I outline how authorial interpretations of lived experience can potentially impact and influence our own life narratives as we recall, reconstruct and resavour our autobiographical memories during the comprehension process.

In Chapter Two, my initial textual examination of the affective structural pillar of emotion highlights examples of visual, aural and tactile imagery, which, together with particular discursive strategies, facilitate the authors' constructions of highly emotive recollections of their mothers. My further incorporation of cognitive literary insights demonstrates how particular multisensory images can increase the emotional potency of these portrayals, together with the subtle ways in which predominantly visual images can, for example, effectively invoke rich tactile sensory detail and vividly felt experience, factors which can amplify our affective engagement with the text.

My concentration on the readerly process then builds on the cognitive and literary insights outlined previously concerning autobiographical memory's role in narrative comprehension. Here, I demonstrate how the authors' emotional memories of their fathers require us to engage with, and re-experience (to a degree) our own emotions, embedded in similarly fraught autobiographical or generalized narrative memories, an affective engagement which in turn creates the potential for a deep personal investment in these life narratives. Developing the previous chapter's discussion of the potential authorial influence on our own autobiographical memories, I also foreground cognitive insights affirming the capacity of highly crafted, imagery-laden texts to trigger and engage our own emotions, thereby not only drawing the reader in via narrative transportation, but also potentially influencing our self perceptions and life narratives, as—in light of the authors' interpretive insights—we reconstruct and re-engage with our own emotional memories within the process of textual comprehension.

In the final chapter, my textual focus considers how the second structural pillar of these texts' affective architecture—that of empathy—is movingly portrayed, courtesy of the multisensory evocations of movement and touch inhering in the visual imagery with which the authors depict their former selves—the fifteen-year-old Woolf as an analogous butterfly, and Garner as a babe-in-arms. In concluding this chapter with a cognitive literary analysis of the potential these multisensory depictions provides for an empathetic readerly engagement that is both other and self-directed, I further explicate the capacity of Garner's portrayal of her infant self to engage the reader autobiographically and emotionally. In so doing, I illustrate the interrelationship of the affective architectural structures of memory, emotion and empathy, demonstrating how these integral, interconnected components work in concert to invite a deeply engaging autobiographical and affective readerly involvement.

The incorporation of cognitive insights into close readings of selected narrative representations of memory, emotion and empathy in these memoirs has provided an analytical framework that has allowed me to investigate our affective interactions with language in terms of the authors' effective and affective portrayals of these components, as well as the potential such depictions provide for engendering corresponding processes in the reader. In light of the consistent praise that Woolf's and Garner's memoirs attract for their ability to emotionally engage the reader, it is my hope that this study will not only contribute to a deeper understanding of how these texts both communicate and engender such emotion, but will also contribute insights to memoir studies more generally, in terms of the explanatory potential that this cognitive literary framework offers for the analysis of life writing—specifically,

the explication and illumination of imagery's dynamic role in the affective interaction between the literary portrayal and cognitive reception of memory, emotion and empathy.

This cognitive literary analytical structure has the potential to be applied more broadly within the affective investigation—particularly concerning the role of imagery—of other literary memoirists. Such an enterprise might draw out the dynamic and vital interchange between text and reader that this sub-genre of highly crafted literary autobiography facilitates so distinctly and powerfully, wherein the author's eloquent "transformation of experience into art" (Griffin 118) may conversely engender an affective autobiographical readerly engagement which transforms art into experience.

WORKS CITED

- Abrams, M.H. and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Wadsworth, 2012.
- Albright, Daniel. "Virginia Woolf as Autobiographer". *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1984, pp. 1-17
- Anderson, Linda. *Autobiography*. Routledge, 2011.
- Anderst, Leah. "Feeling With Real Others: Narrative Empathy in the Autobiographies of Doris Lessing and Alison Bechdel". *Narrative*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2015, pp. 271-290.
- Bartkevicius, Jocelyn. "'The Person to Whom Things Happened': Meditations on the Tradition of Memoir". *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1999, pp. 133-140.
- Blight, David. "The Memory Boom: Why and Why Now?". *Memory in Mind and Culture*, edited by Pascal Boyer and James Wertsch, Cambridge UP, 2009, pp. 238-251.
- Brennan, Bernadette. *A Writing Life: Helen Garner and Her Work*. Text Publishing Company, 2017.
- Brosnan, Leila. *Reading Virginia Woolf's Essays and Journalism: Breaking the Surface of Silence*. Edinburgh UP, 1997.
- Broughton, Trev Lyn. *Autobiography: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge, 2007.
- Bruner, Jerome. "Life as Narrative". *Social Research*, vol. 71, no. 3, 2004, pp. 691-710.
- Carroll, Noël. "On Some Affective Relations between Audiences and the Characters in Popular Fictions". *Empathy*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie. Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 162-184.
- Coplan, Amy. "Empathic Engagement with Narrative Fictions". *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 62, no. 2, 2004, pp. 141-152.
- . "Introduction" *Empathy*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie. Oxford UP, 2011, pp. ix-XLVII.
- . "Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects". *Empathy*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie. Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 3-18.
- Cuddy-Keane, Melba. "Movement, Space, and Embodied Cognition in *To The Lighthouse*". *The Cambridge Companion to To The Lighthouse*, edited

- by Allison Pease, Cambridge UP, 2014, pp. 58-68.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781107280342>
- Curthoys, Ann. "Helen Garner's *The First Stone*". *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 10, no. 21, 1995, pp. 203-211.
- Dahl, Christopher. "Virginia Woolf's Moments of Being and Autobiographical Tradition in the Stephen Family". *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1983, pp. 175-196.
- Dalgarno, Emily. "Ideology into Fiction: Virginia Woolf's 'A Sketch of the Past'". *Novel*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1994, pp. 175-195.
- Dalziell, Tanya. "Australian Women's Writing from 1970 – 2005". *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*, edited by Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer, Boydell & Brewer, 2007, pp. 139-153.
- Damasio, Antonio. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*. Vintage, 2000.
- Davis, Mark. "Myths of the Generations: Baby Boomers, X and Y". *Overland*, vol. 187, 2007, pp. 4-14.
- Dawson, Michael. *Understanding Cognitive Science*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998.
- Decety, Jean and Philip Jackson. "The Functional Architecture of Human Empathy". *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2004, pp. 71-100.
- DiBattista, Maria and Emily O Wittman, editors. Introduction. *The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography*. Cambridge UP, 2014, pp. 1-20.
- Douglas, Kate and Tully Barnett. "Teaching Traumatic Life Narratives: Affect, Witnessing, and Ethics". *Antipodes*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2014, pp. 46-62.
- Eakin, Paul John. *How Our Lives Become Stories*. Cornell UP, 1999.
- Easterlin, Nancy. *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*. The John Hopkins UP, 2012.
- Edelman, Gerald. "from Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind". *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology*, edited by James McConkey, Oxford UP, 1996, pp. 47-54.
- Ender, Evelyne. *Architexts of Memory: Literature, Science, and Autobiography*. The University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Folkenflik, Robert. *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation*. Stanford UP, 1993.

- Freeman, Barbara Claire. "Moments of Beating. Addiction and Inscription in Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past". *Diacritics*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1997, pp. 65-76.
- Friel, Brian. *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Faber and Faber, 1990.
- Garner, Helen. *Everywhere I Look*. The Text Publishing Company Pty Ltd, 2016.
- . *True Stories*. The Text Publishing Company Pty Ltd, 1996.
- Goldsworthy, Anna. "Felled by grace. Helen Garner's work collected in 'Everywhere I Look'", in *The Monthly*, April 2016.
www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2016/april/1459429200/anna-goldsworthy/felled-grace. Accessed 26 September, 2017.
- Goldsworthy, Kerryn. *Helen Garner*. Oxford UP, 1996.
- Goldie, Peter. *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion, and the Mind*. Oxford UP, 2012.
- . Introduction. *Empathy*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie. Oxford UP, 2011, pp. ix-XLVII.
- Green, Melanie and Timothy Brock. "In the Mind's Eye: Transportation-Imagery Model Of Narrative Persuasion". *Narrative Impact Social and Cognitive Foundations*, edited by Melanie Green et al., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2002, pp. 315-341.
- . "Persuasiveness of Narratives". *Persuasion, Psychological Insights and Perspectives*, edited by Timothy Brock and Melanie Green. Sage Publications, Inc, 2005, pp. 117-142.
- Green, Susan. "Representations of Consciousness in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Ian McEwan". Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Macquarie University, 2011.
- Griffin, Gail. "Braving the Mirror: Virginia Woolf as Autobiographer". *Biography*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1981, pp. 108-118.
- Hagen, Benjamin. "'It is Almost Impossible That I Should be Here': Wordsworthian Nature and an Ethics of Self-Writing in Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past". *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, vol. 78, Fall-Winter, 2010, pp. 13-15.
- Hampl, Patricia. "Memory and Imagination". *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology*, edited by James McConkey, Oxford UP, 1996.
- . *I Could Tell You Stories*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- . "Book Review". *Commonweal*, vol. 139, no. 21, Dec 7, 2012, pp. 22-23.

- Harbus, Antonina. *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry*. D.S. Brewer, 2012.
- Hart, Elizabeth. Foreword. *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions*, edited by Isabel Jaén and Jacques Simon University of Texas Press, 2012, pp. vii-xiii.
- Heine, Stefanie. "The Force of the Blow – Traumatic Memory in Virginia Woolf's Writing". *Anglia*, vol. 132, no. 1, 2014, pp. 40-57.
- Hillis Miller, J. "The Waves as Exploration of (An)aesthetic of Absence". *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 83, no. 3, 2014, pp. 659-677.
- Hogan, Patrick Colm. *Cognitive Science, Literature and the Arts: a guide for Humanists*. Routledge, 2003.
- Hyman, Virginia. "The Autobiographical Present in "A Sketch of the Past". *Psychoanalytic Review*, vol. 70, no. 1, 1983, pp. 24-32.
- Jaén, Isabel and Julien Jacques Simon. Introduction. *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions*, edited by Isabel Jaén and Julien Jacques Simon, University of Texas Press, 2012, pp. 1-9.
- Johansen, Jørgen Dines. "Feelings in Literature". *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science*, vol. 44, 2010, pp. 185-196.
- Keen, Suzanne. *Empathy and the Novel*. Oxford UP, 2010.
- Keltner, Dacher et al., *Understanding Emotions*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2014.
- Koopman, Eva Maria and Frank Hakemulder. "Effects of Literature on Empathy and Self-Reflection: A theoretical-Empirical Framework". *JLT*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 79-111.
- Kuzmičová, Anežka. "Literary Narrative and Mental Imagery: A View from Embodied Cognition". *Style* Vol 48, No. 3, 2014, pp. 275-293.
- Langer, Federico. "Mental Imagery, Emotion, and 'Literary Task Sets'". *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 19, no. 7-8, 2012, pp. 168-215.
- Lee, Hermione. "Virginia Woolf's essays". *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, edited by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, Cambridge UP, 2000, pp. 91-109.
- . *Virginia Woolf*. Chatto & Windus Ltd, 1996.
- Lejeune, Philippe. "The Autobiographical Contract". *French Literary Theory Today*, edited by Tzvetan Todorov, Cambridge UP, 1982, pp. 192-222.
- Lopate, Phillip. *The Art of the Personal Essay*. Anchor Books, 1995.

- Malcolm, Janet. *Forty-one False Starts: Essays on Artists and Writers*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.
- Madden, Patrick. "The 'New Memoir'". *The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography*, edited by Maria DiBattista and Emily Wittman, Cambridge UP, 2014, pp. 222-236.
- Manne, Anne. "Reading Fairy Blackstick". *Quadrant*, vol. 40, no. 5, 1996, pp. 16-18.
- Markowitsch, Hans. "Neuroanatomy of Memory". *The Oxford Handbook of Memory*. Edited by Endel Tulving and Fergus Craik, Oxford UP, 2000, pp. 465-484.
- McCooley, David. *Artful Histories*. Cambridge UP, 1996.
- . "Autobiography". *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature*, edited by Peter Pierce, Cambridge UP, 2009, pp. 323-343.
- McCracken, LuAnn. "'The Synthesis of My Being': Autobiography and the Reproduction of Identity in Virginia Woolf". *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1990, pp. 58-78.
- McDonald, Willa. "Creditable or Reprehensible? The Literary Journalism of Helen Garner". *Literary Journalism Across the Globe*, edited by John Bak and Bill Reynolds, University of Massachusetts Press, 2011, pp. 260-275. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.49-2487>
- McNeillie, Andrew. Introduction. *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, Vol I, 1904-1912, edited by Andrew McNeillie. The Hogarth Press, 1986, pp. ix-xviii.
- . "Bloomsbury". *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, edited by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, Cambridge UP, 2000, pp. 1-28.
- Mepham, John. *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life*. Macmillan Press Ltd, 1991.
- Miall, David. "Beyond the schema given: Affective comprehension of literary narratives". *Cognition and Emotion*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1989, pp. 55-78.
- Misch, Georg. "Conception and Origin of Autobiography". *Autobiography*, edited by Trev Lynn Broughton, (Vol 1), Routledge, 2007, pp. 61-76.
- Morton, Adam. "Empathy for the Devil". *Empathy*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie, Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 318-330.
- Nalbantian, Suzanne. *Aesthetic Autobiography*. Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997.
- . *The Memory Process: Neuroscientific and Humanistic Perspectives*, edited by Suzanne Nalbantian, Paul Matthews, and James McClelland, Massachusetts

- Institute of Technology, 2011.
- Neisser, Ulric and Lisa Libby. "Remembering Life Experiences". *The Oxford Handbook of Memory*, edited by Endel Tulving and Fergus Craik, Oxford UP, 2000, pp. 315-332.
- Oatley, Keith, Dacher Keltner and Jennifer M. Jenkins. *Understanding Emotions*. Blackwell, 2006.
- Oatley, Keith and Maja Djikic. "Writing as Thinking". *Review of General Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2008, pp. 9-27.
- Olney, James. *Memory & Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*. The University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Pease, Allison. Introduction. *The Cambridge Companion to To The Lighthouse*, edited by Allison Pease. Cambridge UP, 2014, pp. 1-5. DOI: 10.1017/CCO9781107280342
- Plunkett, Felicity. "Helen Garner and our terrible projections: Helen Garner and the corridors of empathy". *Australian Book Review*, no. 364, Sept 2014. www-australianbookreview-com-au.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/abr-online/archive/2014/2107-helen-garner-and-our-terrible-projections. Accessed 7 March 2017.
- Rabinowitz, Peter. "Toward a Narratology of Cognitive Flavor". *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*, edited by Lisa Zunshine, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 85-103. Oxford Handbooks Online 2014 Literature.
- Richardson, Alan. "Cognitive Literary Criticism". *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Patricia Waugh, Oxford UP, 2006, pp. 544-556.
- . "Imagination Literary and Cognitive Intersections" in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*, edited by Lisa Zunshine. Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 225-245. Oxford Handbooks Online 2014 Literature.
- Richardson, Owen. "A Kind of Tact". *Meanjin*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 96-103.
- Ricketson, Matthew. "Helen Garner's The First Stone: Hitchhiking on the Credibility of Other Writers" in *bodyjamming: Sexual Harassment, Feminism and Public Life*, edited by Jenna Mead, Random House, 1997, pp. 79-100.
- Roe, Sue. "Preface" and "The impact of post-impressionism". *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, edited by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers. Cambridge UP, 2000, pp. xiii-xvii; 164-190.
- Rooney, Brigid. *Literary Activists: Australian writer-intellectuals and public life*. University of Queensland Press, 2009.
- Rose, Steven. *The Making of Memory*. Transworld Publishers Ltd, 1992.

- Ross, Michael and Anne Wilson. "Constructing and Appraising Past Selves". *Memory, Brain, and Belief*, edited by Daniel Schacter and Elaine Scarry. Harvard UP, 2000, pp. 231-258.
- Rubin, David and Daniel Greenberg. "The Role of Narrative in Recollection. A View from Cognitive Psychology and Neuropsychology". *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology, and the Brain*, edited by Gary Fireman, Ted McVay and Owen Flanagan, Oxford UP, 2003, pp. 53-85.
- Scarry, Elaine. *Dreaming by the Book*. Princeton UP, 1999.
- Schacter, Daniel. *Searching for Memory: The brain, the mind and the past*. BasicBooks, 1996.
- . "Specificity of Memory: Implications for Individual and Collective Remembering". *Memory in Mind and Culture*, edited by Pascal Boyer and James Wertsch, Cambridge UP, 2009, pp. 83-111.
- Schulkind, Jeanne. Introduction. *Moments of Being*, by Virginia Woolf, Unpublished Autobiographical Writings, edited by Jeanne Schulkind, Second Edition, Harcourt Publishing, 1985, pp. 11-24.
- Sherman, Murray. "Psychosensory Images from Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past". *Psychoanalytic Review*, vol. 70, no. 1, 1983, pp. 33-39.
- Silverman, Sue William. *Fearless Confessions: A Writer's Guide to Memoir*. The University of Georgia Press, 2009.
- Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- . "The Trouble with Autobiography: Cautionary Notes for Narrative Theorists", in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, edited by James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz, Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp. 356-371.
- Smuts, Aaron. "Rubber Ring: Why Do We Listen to Sad Songs?" *Narrative, Emotion, and Insight*, edited by Noël Carroll and John Gibson, The Pennsylvania State UP, 2011, pp. 131-153.
- Snaith, Anna. *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations*. Palgrave, 2000.
- Starr, Gabrielle. "Multisensory Imagery". *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, edited by Lisa Zunshine, The John Hopkins UP, 2010, pp. 275-291.
- . "Theorizing Imagery, Aesthetics, and Doubly Directed States". *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*, edited by Lisa Zunshine, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 246-268.

Steele, Peter. "Having a Go". *Eureka Street*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1996, pp. 32-33.

Taylor, Anthea. "Feminists 'Misreading'/'Misreading' Feminists: Helen Garner, Literary Celebrity and Epitextuality". *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 22, no. 52, 2007, pp.73-88.

Turner, Mark. *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science*. Princeton UP, 1991.

Vermeule, Blakey. *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* John Hopkins UP, 2009.

Vuk, Jen and Barry Gittins. "Helen Garner's 'Best Essays' Triumph". *Eureka Street.com.au*, vol 25, no. 2, 2015, pp. 3-4.

Wilde, William et al. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*. Oxford UP, 1994, pp. 308-9.

Wood, James. "Helen Garner's Savage Self-Scrutiny". *The New Yorker*, 12 December, 2016, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/12/12. Accessed 19 January 2017.

Woolf, Virginia. *Moments of Being: A Collection of Autobiographical Writings*, edited by Jeanne Schulkind, Harcourt, Inc, 1985.

---. "Jane Austen", in *The Common Reader*, First Series, edited by Andrew McNeillie, Harcourt, Inc, 1984, pp. 134-145.

---. *Jacob's Room*, edited by Edward Bishop, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Zunshine, Lisa. "Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies". *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*, edited by Lisa Zunshine, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 1-9. Oxford Handbooks Online 2014 Literature.

---. *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. The Ohio State UP, 2006.