

Trinity College Dublin, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Dissertation

MPhil Comparative Literature

Ciara Boulman

21330530

Hooked on a feeling

Remembering sensory experience to unveil the world in Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* (1913) and Günter Grass' *The Tin Drum* (1959)

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Arnds

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Declaration

I, Ciara Boulman, declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and that it is entirely my own work.

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Abstract

This dissertation analyses the structure of the memory narrative in *Swann's Way* by Marcel Proust and *The Tin Drum* by Günter Grass, through the lens of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology as presented in *Ideas I* and *II*. More specifically, the author argues that the use of the child narrative in these two novels exemplifies many of Husserl's concepts, starting with the individual experience of the world being founded in bodily experiences, being themselves the key to understanding it objectively. The extremely intimate perception of the child in both novels is based on sensory memory, allowing to recount more vividly complex memories such as family members and past events. Despite the obvious first-person narration at work however, both narratives are shown to be based on a plural narrative voice. The narrators distance themselves from their younger selves in order to adopt a more objective point of view of their past, and better communicate to the reader personal feelings. This search for objectivity also leads them to include a multitude of external points of view, without the initial memory being distorted as any added information is pointed out as being so. *Swann's Way* and *The Tin Drum* initiate, in that sense, a reflection on how research on human matters (historical and socio-historical) should be told. The child narrative finally enables the exploration of the different layers of reality, ultimately inviting the reader to exercise their critical mind in order to escape the natural standpoint – a position in which one is entrapped in their subjective perception of the world-about-them.

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Introduction: a changing perception of the world

The twentieth century: the collapse of the world of yesterday

The turn of the twentieth century in Europe was marked by the disruption of the supremacy of the search for objectivity. This was allowed partly thanks to new ways of life that broadened populations' horizons. New modes of transport such as the train, the car and the bicycle allowed people to travel and discover radically different worlds from their homes. With growing urbanisation came a flourish of new sensory experiences that 'suggest the multitude of metamorphosis which (...) affect[ed] [people's] sensorial economy'¹ (Granger 2014, 7).

This new form of vision was embraced by artistic and intellectual movements alike. The main, common problem was how to accurately portray human life. The twentieth century approached subjectivity with a dominating 'anxiety not to be Descartes' – whose philosophy is characterised by its abstract thinking (Rée 1995, 206). Instead of conceiving consciousness and the world as 'two separate entities', they were now seen as 'two ideal lovers, (...) [who] exist only for each other' (ibid, 207).

Artistically speaking, the change in paradigm was probably most embodied by the novel. It translated into an attempt at analysing human consciousness through subjective experience. Rée dates this shift officially to Virginia Woolf's 1919 essay "Modern Fiction", in which she underlined the necessity of using the stream of consciousness effect in the modernist novel. For once, 'subjectivity could range the world on its own account' outside of Cartesian conventions, necessitating therefore a 'reform of the novel, (...) the form of literature which specializes in subjectivity' (Rée 1995, 206). A long-lasting revolution, the centrality of the analysis of the character's consciousness has varied through the twentieth century and constitutes the common denominator of otherwise very different literary movements.

David Lodge (2002) identified two main elements that have pushed the novel to analyse human consciousness. The first one was the advent of psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth century with Freud's theory of a 'human nature in which behaviour was chiefly accounted for by motives that were hidden in the secret recesses of the individual psyche' (ibid, 58). The stream of consciousness effect came to represent the slightest movements of the mind, allowing characters to be created 'through the representation of their subjective

¹ For all translated quotes, see Appendix 1 for the original text

thoughts and feelings rather than by describing them objectively' (ibid, 57). The second factor of change was the increasing belief in scientific knowledge, at the expense of transcendentalism and the universality of human nature: 'In a world where nothing is certain (...) and even the objectivity of science is qualified by relativity and uncertainty, the single human voice, telling its own story, can seem the only authentic way of rendering consciousness' (ibid, 87). Consequently, the line between fiction and autobiography became increasingly blurred.

A point that is severely unexplored by Lodge, however, is the feeling of incomprehension that rose with this loss of belief in a universal human voice. The modernist urge to explore the human psyche was gradually combined with the search for a – maybe inexistent – answer to a world that seemed to be slipping away from the realm of comprehension.

(...) from 1890 to around 1930, both a spiritual, social and political crisis (...) [that remained unresolved] (...) on the one hand and optimistic perspectives given by scientific progress that would penetrate in all of the population's private life on the other, brought artists to rethink (...) traditional values of art and human life² (Fryčer 1974, 221)

Both World Wars constituted psychological shocks because of their violence and the inhumane cruelty which characterised them. Simultaneously, fiction became a gateway for unheard voices with the birth of new, equalitarian political movements (civil rights, feminism, decolonisation). The focus on consciousness brought them to the reader's notice and comprehension in a way that an omniscient narrative never could. Fictional autobiographies became a way of giving partial accounts of the past or contemporary matters. Reflecting on the predominant use of the first-person narrative in historical fiction, A.S Byatt writes:

(...) it is the fiction writer who believes that the idea of truth may (...) have meaning. (...) It is perhaps no coincidence that my exemplary "modern" texts are all written in the first person – a first person preoccupied with the desirability and impossibility of objectivity and truthfulness (...) (2000, 102)

Husserl, Proust, Grass: the importance of multi-perspectivity

The aim of this dissertation is to understand how the analysis of subjective experience in fiction is used as a way to force the reader to consider an outside perception of the world. More specifically, the hypotheses are 1) that the senses are prevalent in the narrative because sensory experience is both a memory pin and a way to objectively look at the past, 2) that this

is enhanced through resorting to a child's perspective, aiming at mirroring the multi-perspectivity of reality, 3) that the choice of the first-person narrative and of human consciousness analysis is a way to stimulate the reader's critical and analytical mind.

Existing research between Edmund Husserl, Marcel Proust and Günter Grass is extremely sporadic. Husserl and Proust have regularly been brought together, as they are contemporaries. However, they mostly focus on time-consciousness (Huertas-Jourda 1975, Waldenfels 2017) or on the relation between Proust and phenomenology, not solely focusing on Husserl (van Buuren 2008, Farzaneh 2016). Very little is actually explicitly done on the relation between Proustian sensory experience, Proustian narrative, and their significance in regards to Husserl's philosophy. The same goes for multi-perspectivity in *Swann's Way* (1913). No relation has been established between the importance of the subjective experience in Proust and the abundance of external voices. Attempting to draw such a link and connecting it to such a prominent figure of twentieth century philosophy, therefore, would be of double significance.

Concerning Günter Grass, nothing has been done on his relation to phenomenology as a whole. Antoinette Delaney's book *Metaphors in Grass' Die Blechtrommel* (2004) does approach the relationship between Oskar's perception and the narrative, yet does it through the lens of cognitive theory of metaphor based off the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur and therefore remains focused on Grass' stylistics. Furthermore, Jane Missner Barstow's article "Charles Dickens, Marcel Proust and Günter Grass on Childhood" (1978) is the only comparative research that has been conducted on both Marcel Proust and Günter Grass.

Thus, conducting a triangular research on Edmund Husserl, Marcel Proust and Günter Grass is breaking new ground. All three played their own part in making the twentieth century a philosophical and literary revolution. First of all, Edmund Husserl is considered to be the theoretical basis for one of the main intellectual revolutions in Europe.

[His] "fundamental idea," as Sartre called it, was the principle of intentionality, which meant that subjectivity need not, indeed could not, be described in terms of a hidden "inner life." On the contrary: subjectivity was simply experience of the world, and the world was what subjectivity experiences: therefore the only way to portray subjectivity was by describing the world (Rée 1995, 206)

Marcel Proust and Günter Grass are of an equivalent status. Proust revolutionised the genre of the novel by stepping away from tradition and opening the way towards a focus on human consciousness, making him one of the most influential writers of the century. The main difference between the traditional and what became the modern novel holds in the use of language. The language referent in the traditional novel is 'the social and historical structures which, despite being fictional (...) are homologues of the existing ones in society'³ (Fryčer 1974, 222). The modern novel, however, 'is more of a speech than a story, (...) a voice that the narrator addresses to the reader'⁴ (ibid): 'the language referent is found instead in structures of the psyche that do not have homologues in real structures'⁵ (ibid). *Swann's Way* tells the story of a lived experience; yet, the focus is not on the story itself but on how language can be used to find the origin of the Narrator's thoughts and ideas (ibid).

Günter Grass holds a similar position. In terms of historical importance, first of all: *The Tin Drum* (1959) 'remains one of the most important prose works written after the Second World War in which a German author comments on Germany's past' (Arnds 2004, 1). Grass' novel is especially interesting as it is a symbol of his belief in the writer having to be 'in the midst of society and not above or beside it' (ibid, 2); although ironically its narrator, Oskar Matzerath, refuses to enter the adult world. Grass' use of the stream of consciousness effect and the abundance of sensory experiences have been severely disregarded despite their role in remembrance and the construction of individual history. This, moreover, strongly resembles Proustian writing and theory – *Swann's Way* being one of many examples of the invisible, yet indestructible, link that exists between the senses and memory which Marcel Proust put forward. Additionally, both narrators are equally as disinterested by social and political affairs, which justifies the strong focus on what happens directly in their field of perception. These stylistic echoes to Proust draw an ultimate link between him and Grass. Like his predecessor, Grass explores past literary trends as well as revolutionises the genre of the novel: it both echoes nineteenth-century and modernism; ultimately, 'as Oskar's great text seems to float on top of so many others, Grass is one of the first post-modernist writers' (Preece 2004, 34-35). Hence, exploring these links between Grass and Proust is more than justified.

Perceiving the world through bodily experiences – Ideas I and II, by Edmund Husserl (1913)

Husserl's initial aim was to revolutionise the way of thinking the scientific method, criticising psychologism (the belief that psychology has a central role in explaining non-psychological phenomena) and naturalism (the belief that only natural laws and forces operate in the universe). This section will focus on core Husserlian concepts required to understand the links drawn with Proust and Grass.

Although Husserl did not invent phenomenology, he was the first to conceive it as a 'science of the consciousness rather than of empirical things' (Sawicki "Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)"). Unlike induction, which consists in collecting a large amount of data to find a transcending theory, phenomenology should first describe experiences as they appear before taking it any further.

Consequently, the individual and its personal experiences are at the centre of Husserlian philosophy. The 'I' is a 'unit', an 'Ego-subject', whose consciousness relates 'to a world which, through its constant changes, remains one and ever the same' (Husserl 1931, 103). Thus, I am both aware of myself as being a member of said world, and am in interaction with a world which is 'constantly present' to me (ibid): the 'world-about-me' (ibid). Unlike Descartes' concept of duality (the separation between body and mind), Husserl's philosophy puts forward the importance of bodily experience in the consciousness of the outside world.

The bridge is mended through one of two key concepts: intentionality. Intentionality is the 'unique peculiarit[y] of experiences "to be the consciousness of something"' (Husserl 1931, 242). Perceiving is always perceiving something; judging is always judging something; wishing is always wishing for something, and so on. Intentionality encapsulates all of these experiences and is not limited to a single object. As we are turned towards an object,

we are intuitively "aware of" [various objects around it], they blend into the unity of a single intuition, that of a consciously grasped field of objects. This is a potential field of perception in the sense that a special perceiving (...) can be directed towards everything that thus appears (ibid, 243)

Intentionality does not constitute another sensory experience like seeing, in which I can only visualise another object if I focus my eyes onto it. It forms a basis to experience as when I am perceiving an object, I am aware of other possible perceptual experiences – what constitutes the perceptual horizon. It allows me to go from the object I am 'intending' (the intentional object) to another one sensed around it. Intentionality, therefore, is the condition to my

consciousness: it guarantees the 'unity of *one* consciousness' and its temporal character: the 'stream of consciousness' (ibid, 242).

The other key idea is the body as 'the organ of all perception and (...) [as] necessarily involved in all perception' (Husserl 2000, 61). The Cartesian naturalistic view implied that the body could be taken as being just another spatial object. Subsequently, any other living being could be explained with causal laws, applicable to inanimate objects. Husserl criticises this theory as it forgets to acknowledge the body as being someone's, through which experience is lived. Experience will vary depending on the movements of the organ that is used: if I look at an object, its aspect will change depending on the inclination of my head and the movement of my eyes. Hence, the body is 'the bearer of the zero point of orientation' (ibid). Everything that appears to me is always localised relatively to my body: it is away from me, above or below, etc.

Both the centrality of the body in lived experience and intentionality as the underlying condition for the existence of my consciousness allow to build the world-about-me. The body as centre of orientation implies two things. Firstly, bodily sensations allow to perceive the nature of objects: texture, colour, taste, are all perceived through various organs of the body. Secondly, it is the condition for the unity of perception. If I look at an object in front of me, then look at it sideways, then from above, I know that it is the same object despite its changing aspect. This is due to the body's role as centre point which implies that '*if* the eye turns in a certain way, *then* so does the image' (Husserl 2000, 62). This also participates in the unity of consciousness allowed by intentionality.

The concept of a stream of consciousness is particularly interesting when applied to Proust and Grass, as their novels analyse in detail the consciousness of their characters. The stream's unity has to be understood as a string of images that are all connected through their belonging to the same essential object, like a flipbook: each experience is a collection of more focalised experiences which 'can be considered in [their] singularity in and for [themselves]' (Husserl 1931, 116).

Although the unity of the stream of consciousness is guaranteed by the body's role as the zero point of orientation, this only holds if I am continuously perceiving something, and if the object is still while the body is the one changing its modes of perception. It is not the case if I am perfectly still but the object is moving. The question, therefore, is what happens when

'one and the same shape (given as bodily the same) appears continuously ever again "in another way", in ever-differing perspective variations of shape' (ibid, 131). The answer, according to Husserl, is an inner awareness of the moment that has just elapsed.

Any single experience we may select shapes itself within a continuous "original" time-consciousness as a unity stretched out in phenomenological time. Adopting a suitable reflective standpoint, we are able to note the mode of conscious presentation of the stretches of experience which belong to the different sections of experienced duration, and subsequently to state that the whole consciousness which constitutes this unity of duration is continuously compounded out of sections in which the sections of the duration as we experience them are constituted (Husserl 1931, 333-334)

There is a sense of succession between perceptions, but perceiving as a whole does not just depend on the 'subject's relation to the object' (Kelly, "Phenomenology and Time-Consciousness"). Perception is not temporal, but the act of perceiving an object inserts the latter into a specific time-frame: I am able to identify the just elapsed moment and its associated perception to the image that I am perceiving right now as being the same object.

Another main rupture with Cartesian philosophy concerns the perception of other egos. Descartes's thinking defended that both animate and inanimate objects could be perceived as the same. For Husserl, I recognise other egos as units themselves as being part of the world-about-me. I recognise that they are not subject to causal laws, but have a consciousness and perception of their own. However, I apprehend the world-about-them and the world-about-me objectively as one and the same world' despite the fact that 'each [individual] (...) enjoys accordingly different appearances of the things' (Husserl 1931, 105). In other words, individuals tend to believe that their perception of the world is the world itself, and is hence perceived as such by others.

Husserl claims to be reconnecting with the foundation of Descartes' method of doubt. Everything that we see cannot be taken at face value, as we are usually trapped within our own, subjective and therefore partial view of the world: the natural standpoint.

At the natural standpoint we simply carry out all the acts through which the world is there for us. We live naïvely unreflective in our perceiving and experiencing, in those thetic acts in which the unities of things appear to us, and not only appear but are given with the stamp of "presentness" and "reality" (Husserl 1931, 155)

The aim is to escape this natural standpoint. If I stay there, I am convinced that what I am perceiving is the world as a whole. Descartes' 'attempt to doubt everything' only regards '*the way it is constituted*', as I cannot both 'doubt and hold for certain' the existence of the object

(ibid, 108). Rather, Husserl goes one step further. The existence of the object itself should not be doubted, as I am experiencing it through my body. On the contrary, 'the thing that appears to sense, which has the sensory properties of shape, colour, smell, and taste, is (...) far from being a sign for something else, though to a certain extent a sign for itself' (Husserl 1931, 161). Whereas Descartes would have taken a perceived object as a possible hallucination of the senses, Husserl considers bodily experience to be the most reliable vector of perception. Consciousness, in its purity, 'cannot experience causality from anything nor exert causality upon anything', causality being 'a relation of dependence between realities' (ibid, 153). What influences – and, therefore, clouds – our perception is any motives of judgement and abstract thinking projected onto the object, which build the world-about-me.

The solution to this is intuitive: to adopt 'a certain refraining from judgment' (Husserl 1931, 109) that Husserl names the epoché. As summarised by Andrew D. Spear:

The purpose of the epoché is not to doubt or reject this thesis, but simply to set it aside or put it out of play (...) to [allow] a reorienting of the subject's intentional focus from the natural to the phenomenological attitude. A subject who has performed the epoché and adopted the phenomenological attitude is in a position to objectively describe the features of her experience as she experiences them, the phenomena ("Edmund Husserl: Intentionality and Intentional Content")

By 'bracketing' the experience (Husserl 1931, 107), I look at it with a consciousness unclouded from judgement. This then allows me to attain 'phenomenological reduction' (Husserl 1931, 154): what constitutes the experience in essence, without what is only contingent, belonging to the natural standpoint.

Thus, Husserl's core theory is the following: to 'know [the essence of the world] more comprehensively, more trustworthily, more perfectly than the naïve lore of experience is able to do' (Husserl 1931, 106), it is necessary to take a step back from all that we know and trust only our senses. That way, the essence of the world will manifest itself to the consciousness, and free us from all other 'cognitive attitudes' that may taint our perception of the objective world.

From sensorial memory to individual history: Swann's Way, by Marcel Proust (1913) and The Tin Drum, by Günter Grass (1959)

Self-published in 1913, *Swann's Way* contains some of the most influential passages of French literature. Built around the memories of the (unnamed) Narrator, *Swann's Way* is divided into

three parts. “Combray” is the childhood memories of the Narrator on holidays in the small (fictional) village of Combray in his family’s country home. The adult Narrator lies in bed in the dark, or his senses remind him of a feeling experienced as a child, and he remembers. The third part “Noms de pays: le nom” (“Place-names: the place”) follows suit. The Narrator remembers his dream to visit Italy as a boy but falls ill before the trip and has to walk the Champs-Élysées daily. Ensues the story of his intense love for the daughter of the family friend Charles Swann, Gilberte. The second part of the book, “Un amour de Swann” (“Swann in Love”), is at odds with the rest of the book. The Narrator tells the story of how Swann met his future wife, Odette de Crécy. Yet, it does not belong to the Narrator’s memories as it happened before he was born.

This second part is illustrative of the ambiguous status of *Swann’s Way* in literary history. “Un Amour de Swann” constitutes a return to the figure of the traditional omniscient narrator. It could be argued that this section be overlooked as it is not a personal recollection of events, but a reconstitution through stories told by friends and family. However, it completes “Combray” and “Nom de pays: le nom” by enlightening some aspects of the Proustian narrative structure – especially when in relation to Husserl and multi-perspectivity – through its analysis of the late nineteenth century French bourgeois milieu.

Günter Grass’ novel similarly follows the life of Oskar Matzerath who is writing his autobiography from his room in a mental institution. Aged three, he stopped growing because of his refusal to take part in the adult world. When he finally decided to grow again, his stunted growth partially resided as he became a hunchback dwarf and is put into an institution on account of his mental disabilities because of his false conviction for murder. His individual history mirrors Danzig’s, and retraces the rise of Nazism, the Second World War and West German post-war years.

Both books explore subjective perception and the constitution of the world-about-the-characters. Indeed, ‘every [sensory] experience has its effects: every active perception’ influences future experiences (Husserl 2000, 284). *Swann’s Way* is of special interest as Proust puts special emphasis on the role of sensory experience in the building of his character’s personality. The Narrator-as-adult himself singles out the sensorial memories that have marked him as a child, and have their importance in his assessment of the world, the people around him, and in the leadup to his career as a writer (although that is only revealed in the

last book, *Time Regained* [1927]). All experiences of Proustian involuntary memory happen 'under the initial influence of a sensory impression (...) more "primitive" than vision'⁶ (van Buuren 2008, 18):

Vision (...) is, in Proust's philosophy, incapable of triggering involuntary memory. It is because the impression of the other four senses are impossible or hard to classify that they escape the attention of voluntary memory and (...) [wait for] the impulsion of an identical impression to have the vases in which they are trapped explode. But, once this vase is open, consciousness tries to go beyond this "triggering sense" and to develop the rich content into images⁷ (ibid, 19).

Vision is not to be fully disregarded, as it still has its significance in the construction of the narrative. The eye is also 'a thinking eye, establishing the tension between internal vision and external aperception'⁸ (Farzaneh 2016, 100) – between the objective world and the way consciousness intends it, interprets it.

Like Proust, the exploration of past sensorial experience and the use of language play an important part in Grass' writing. It is the story of a lived experience, but *The Tin Drum* explores how (hi)stories can be told in many different ways. The use of sensory experience initiates the construction of a multi-layered narrative. Similarly to Husserl, bodily experience constitutes the more genuine interactions with the world. They then allow to expand onto the rest of the world that the consciousness is made aware of, taking it in in a less biased way. Furthermore, the novel is reinvented as Grass builds what could be considered an anti-novel: Oskar's supposed mental illness makes him an unreliable narrator; his refusal to grow and his lack of empathy (amongst other things) make him an anti-hero. Just like Proust, this plays in favour of adopting a different perspective to the reader's. Grass subverts the traditional novel as his 'contains diverse literary voices and thus reflects a multiplicity of language systems (...) [as well as] a high degree of parody in its rejection of the seriousness of learned culture, above all the Goethean Bildungsroman' (Arnds 2004, 29). The combination of child narration and of the narrator's unreliability give a fresh perspective of the world – especially interesting as it concerns very well-known historical events. The idea is not to show an objective truth, but to show the mosaic of lives that compose it.

Therefore, Proust and Grass' exploration of language is essential to understand. Although Proust's syntax is complex, it still has a recognisable logic to it. The sensory experiences punctuate the narrative, acting like mental pins to orientate the story. Moreover, Proust's particular attention to language is explained by this attempt at unearthing hidden feelings. Writing is used 'both as a way to communicate a lived experience and to generate

meaning'⁹ (Fryček 1974, 234): the ultimate goal is to find new links between things, and the complexity of Proustian language 'hope[s] to uncover the mystery of its existence'¹⁰ (ibid). By focusing on how to communicate through words a feeling that calls for something beyond language, Proust opens up his character's perception of the world and brings the reader into it. The technicity of Proust's style is therefore justified by the attempt at communicating what is essentially non-verbal: 'devices like synaesthesia, the hypallage, or other rhetorical figures do not translate a formal expectation, but a vital need to express the mass of sensations that crosses the Narrator's body and soul'¹¹ (Farzaneh 2016, 96-97).

In *The Tin Drum*, the reader is also fully immersed in Oskar-as-character's perspective. The use of metaphors is of particular interest as it echoes the Proustian attempt at searching for the invisible links between objects and events. Objects play 'a significant role' in Grassian metaphors (Delaney 2004, 16): 'The idea of estrangement points to Oskar's need to create distance from the other figures and from the chaotic world' (ibid). Whereas the focus is put on Oskar's bodily experiences, the reader is given a different, attempted objective perspective on historical times thanks to these metaphors distancing the narrator from the story. This is all the more significant as Oskar's individual life shadows the collective history of a nation. Oskar himself can be seen as a metaphor for 'the ostracized, marginalized, and persecuted German' under Nazi rule (Schaffrath 2007, 9), 'a representative of the collective guilt burden of post Second World War Germany [and] Germany's postwar geographical and mental state' (ibid, 10), and of the dual identity of 'Danzig, (...) a product of (...) the often violent history of the Baltic sea' (ibid, 11). Through his complex and sometimes confusing narrative, Grass forces the reader to acknowledge the complexity of historiography, and to reassess their own, subjective view of the past.

The use of the child narrative is central to this attempt, especially in relations to Husserl. Traditionally, the child's view is seen as untainted, just like consciousness 'in its "purity"' (Husserl 1931, 153) cannot cloud any perception with judgement. Sensory experience takes part in the child's development as it allows them to discover the world through 'apperceptions and associations. The person is formed 'through experience' (Husserl 2000, 283). When a child looks at a bird, they see the bird as it is, and can then recognise other birds and differentiate them. There is no past experience influencing their observation, or knowledge that takes in the specificities of the appearance of the bird at this exact moment in time. Thus, 'Children

demonstrate a primitive form of synesthesia in which the senses, instead of being isolated by the intelligence, participate together in perception' (Missner Barstow 1978, 154). They rely solely on their bodily experiences as called for by Husserl, which are partially discarded as they grow up afterwards.

With the analysis of the child's perspective, *Swann's Way* and *The Tin Drum* respectively inaugurate and contribute to a reflection on human consciousness, in two ways. First of all, there is a constant doubling of the narrative voice as the reader is made aware of both the children's consciousness as they are living the events (later referred to as the Narrator-as-character and Oskar-as-character), and the adults counting the events (the Narrator and Oskar-as-narrator). Through this, the latter are able to better reflect on experiences. For the Narrator, it allows him to better grasp their meaning and what constitutes the essence of these moments. The storyline is made up of images that are able 'to stop the flow of time'¹² and constitute 'a complex ensemble of sensorial impressions'¹³ (van Buuren 2008, 9;23). For Oskar, it is a way to write his own history, by giving the reader as much information as possible. For both, these shots 'reveal (...) the fundamental discontinuity of any historical process' (ibid, 10).

Consequently, the adults stick to their younger selves' consciousness. By doing so, they adopt a somewhat objective point of view as they do not veil their memories with their present consciousness and their accumulated experience. This allows the child's experience, outside of the adult world, to control the reader's perception of the story. As a result, the reader is confronted to a world-about-me that is not their own, and therefore clashes with their own subjective perception of the world. This dissertation argues that this is to entice the reader to practice their critical mind, and their epoché.

Chapter one: Proust, world experience and sensorial memory

The link between Husserl and Proust is both obvious and ambiguous. Maarten van Buuren points out that the *Search for Lost Time*, of which *Swann's Way* is the inaugural book, 'can be considered as a phenomenological project (...) [which] correspond[s] to the fundamental concepts of phenomenology'¹⁴ (2008, 8). Yet, she argues that a substantial difference exists between Husserl and Proust: whereas Husserl sees memory 'as loyal a reproduction as possible of perception'¹⁵, Proust considers memory to be 'a construction of the mind, similar to the construction of a work of art'¹⁶ (ibid, 23). However, *Swann's Way* shows that Proust recognises the basis of human consciousness to essentially be sensory experience. Hence, this chapter will mainly attempt to demonstrate that this difference is minute.

A personalistic experience

Proustian narration is worth looking into when taking Husserlian philosophy into account. The choice of the first-person narration is justified by the need for the reader to understand how the Narrator-as-child thinks. Thus, they should know about 'the surrounding world in which he grew up and how he was motivated by the things and people of his environment just as they appeared to him as he saw them' (Husserl 2000, 288). Going further, the impression of delving into his consciousness is created by the use of the child voice. Because people are 'formed through experience' (ibid, 283), choosing a child implies going back to the roots of the Narrator's conception of the world. As the inaugurating book of a fictional autobiography, *Swann's Way* therefore sets the tone of the narrative: it goes at the source of the content and the style of the narrative.

Sensory experience is shown to be primordial in grasping the constitution of the world-about-the-Narrator. As explained by Husserl, the body both obeys the laws of nature and belongs to 'the spiritual life' (Husserl 2000, 259) – the intellectual realm of our consciousness. The latter is grasped 'through the Bodily expressions' as our ideas and feelings translate into actions led through our body (ibid). In other words, bodily experience is both a sign of our belonging to the world and the foundation and expression of our intellectual world. I experience something through my body, and this allows my spiritual self to develop by learning through accumulated experiences and vice-versa. This is an essential idea to understand the constitution of consciousness:

The nexus of lived experience (...) is not merely a bundle of lived experiences or a mere "stream" of consciousness in which the lived experience flow away. (...) There is (...) an accomplishment of specific acts and, in unity with that, a constant enrichment of the stream of lived experiences (ibid, 290)

Husserl does not explicitly explain it, but it can be deduced that the nature of the body as zero point allows for the Ego to be constant through experiences. It does not 'flow away' because it remains constant through time. Consequently, the experiences the Ego is faced with participate in its development and the constitution of 'associations, perseverances, determining tendencies, etc.' (ibid, 289).

The Narrator's comments on his childhood exemplify the link between the Ego's consistency and its empirical-based development:

Probably for having united in me forever indissolubly different impressions only because they had made me feel them at the same time, the way of Méséglise and the way of Guermantes exposed me, for the future, to many deceptions and to even many errors. Because often I have wanted to see a person again without discerning that it was only because they reminded me of a hedge of hawthorn flowers, and I was led to believe, was led to have them believe in a resurgence of affection, because of a simple desire to travel. (...) by staying present in those of my current impressions to which they might be able to tie themselves to, they give them foundations, depth, a dimension more than what others have. They also add to them a charm, a significance that is made for me only¹⁷ (Proust 1988, 275)

The hedge of hawthorn flowers references an earlier passage in which he describes his childhood passion for their colour and their smell, and through which he spots Gilberte Swann. The construction of the Narrator's spiritual life has roots in this initial bodily experience, thus reaffirming the role played by van Buuren's primitive senses. The Ego's consistency through time allows for primordial experiences and feelings to 'stay present' in his 'current impressions' (ibid). The latter, however, only do so with those which 'they might be able to tie themselves to' (ibid) – to analogous situations, strongly echoing with Husserl's text: 'The similar reminds me of the similar, and by analogy with what was given with the similar on the one side, I expect something similar on the other side' (Husserl 2000, 237). In other words, there is a cause-to-effect relationship between sensory triggers and the inner self, illustrated by the primordial perception of the hawthorn flowers on the Narrator-as-child. Proust further on links this causality to involuntarily memory: a specific taste will remind me of its context despite having forgotten about it, simply because I once connected both together. The narrated subjectivity is fully reliant on this causal process to revive the most vivid representation of the primary perception. It does not matter if what the 'reality [as seen

through the Narrator-as-child's gaze] is totally distorted'¹⁸, because 'the image, in itself, exists (just like the feelings that it entices)'¹⁹ (Tadié 1971, 40).

Once again, the basis of all of this is the Narrator-as-child's bodily experiences. *Swann's Way* is written using 'the stylistic technique of the point of view' that '[explores] the relationship of the Narrator with the world'²⁰ (Tadié 1971, 34). Thus, the reader literally sees through a child who

completely turns himself into the gaze, "this gaze that is not only the speaker of the eyes; but at which's window all of the senses look out of, anxious and petrified, the gaze that would like to touch, capture, bring the body he is looking at and the soul with him"²¹ (ibid, 36)

It is worth bringing back van Buuren's distinction between vision and the other senses. Admittedly, vision is the lesser of the four other senses due to its incapacity at triggering memory. Yet, and as van Buuren also specifies, 'the Proustian vision (...) engages the eyesight, but also involves all of the other esthesias'²² (Farzaneh 2016, 97). Thus, the primordially of the gaze ensures the primordially of the other senses. What the child is seeing he is also sensing with the rest of his body.

Let us focus first on the other senses. After the madeleine dipped in tea projects him back into times spent at his aunt's house, the Narrator reflects on the constitution of sensory memory.

But, when nothing remains from an ancient past, after the death of beings, after the destruction of things, smell and flavour, alone, frailer but more vivacious, more immaterial, more persistent, more loyal, stay for a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, on the ruins of everything else, carrying without flinching, on their near-intangible droplet, the immense edifice of memory²³ (Proust 1988, 104)

Proust here pinpoints the basis of his narrative: forgotten sensory memories. Apart from this key role however, the other senses have the possibility of adding texture to forgotten images. A 'wedding of the senses'²⁴ operates, which puts vision and the others at the same level (Farzaneh 2016, 97). Although images are triggered by smell and taste, they are also extremely vivacious and reveal the Narrator's 'predilection for eyesight and the magical possibility that this perception offers him'²⁵ (ibid). Nevertheless, the other senses give depth to what would otherwise be mere representations of past perceptions. This in turn nuances van Buuren's distinction. In *Ideas I*, Husserl considers that recollections have two rights. The 'original and immediate right' is that recollections are characterised by a "'weight'"

(big or small), in which 'lies a relation to the actual present' (Husserl 1931, 392) – its effect. The other right is 'relative and imperfect': the past is indeed perceived, but in a dim, vague, undetermined way' (ibid). To bring memories to 'clearness' (ibid) would involve developing the memory in the general context of other connected memories. Thus, recollection works following a process analogous to a domino effect.

With every advance from one recollection to another in the clarifying connexions of memory (...) the memory gets strengthened. The strengthening is to a certain extent reciprocal, the memory-weightings are functionally interdependent, each recollection in its context of memories has a power which increases with the extension of that context, and is greater than it would have been in a more restricted connexion or alone by itself (Husserl 1931, 392-393)

The clearness of recollection thus relies on an amalgamation of memories that give 'depth' and 'dimension' (Proust 1988, 275) to other memories, and gain in them as others come to consciousness. This connectivity between events and these senses is shown early on in the book. This is visible for example in the Narrator's recollection of one of his great childhood sorrows:

(...) I had to go up each step of the stairs, as the popular saying goes "with a heavy heart", climbing while dragging along my heart that wanted to go back to my mother because, as she had refused to kiss me good night, she had not given it the licence to follow me. That despised staircase where I would engage myself always so sadly, exhaled a smell of varnish that had in a certain way absorbed, fixed, the specific sort of grief that I would feel each night and rendered maybe even more cruel to my susceptibility because under this olfactive form my intelligence could not take its due²⁶ (Proust 1988, 79-80)

The memory of this specific cause for sorrow is inextricably linked to the smell of the varnish in the staircase that imprinted on his 'spiritual life' (Husserl 2000, 259). The strength of that sorrow is still present in the narrative because of the smell, as his 'sorrow would seep into [him] in an infinitely quicker fashion, nearly instantaneous, both insidious and brusque, through the inhaling of the varnish smell of the staircase – a lot more toxic than moral penetration'²⁷ (Proust 1988, 80). The feeling described above does not constitute a memory trigger. Rather, it acts as a memory enhancer that echoes with the principle of Husserlian connectivity between memories. At the time, the smell amplified the sorrow felt by the Narrator-as-child; writing about it as an adult, the lengthy description of the smell's nature allows the Narrator to connect with a clear impression of what was felt at the time, giving it more meaning. Proustian theory of memory is therefore set as a continuation of Husserl's: every added layer gives more texture, more vividness, to the image.

A pictorial narrative voice

Vision is interesting to set aside from the other senses as it plays multiple important roles in narrativity. Above all, the prominence of the Narrator-as-child's gaze gives continuity to the narrative, turning the novel into an 'immense intentional act'²⁹ (van Buuren 2008, 29). To Proust, the link between vision and consciousness is obvious as 'when he talks of our consciousness' "representation" he considers it automatically to be a visual phenomenon'³⁰ (ibid, 17). Thus, there is a primordially of vision over the other senses, once the latter have triggered memory and brought to consciousness lost images.

Husserl does not specifically address the importance of vision as opposed to the other senses. On the contrary, it seems that Proust's hierarchy does not exist for Husserl. The world appears to consciousness through 'sight, touch, hearing, etc., in the different ways of sensory perception' (Husserl 1931, 101). In fact, vision is even seen as somewhat of a lesser sense when it comes to the relationship between the Ego and its body: the body's is 'constituted originally' in touch and everything 'localised' in all related tactual sensations (Husserl 2000, 158).

Each thing that we see is touchable and, as such, points to an immediate relation to the Body, though it does not do so in virtue of its visibility. *A subject whose only sense was the sense of vision could not at all have an appearing Body (...)*. It cannot be said that this subject who only sees his Body, (...) even (...) with the freedom of the kinesthetic processes would not make it a Body. In that case, it would only be as if the Ego (...) could immediately and freely move the material thing, Body (ibid).

Husserl follows by underlining the importance of the cooperation of the senses. Vision is nothing by itself, as it would then merely serve a purpose of spatial 'localization' (Husserl 2000, 158). However, sensory perception turns vision into a more acute sense, as it then becomes able to localise 'sensations as sensations' (ibid), giving objects a multidimensional identity. While perceiving a cat, I do not just see a cat: I also localise the smoothness of its fur and the sharpness of its claws.

In this regard, it is not yet said that Proust explicitly considers vision to be the better sense, drastically contrasting with Husserl – but it does have a twofold importance in the construction of the narrative. First of all, it is an important component of consciousness. This is especially justified by the attempt at drawing the reader in to a consciousness that is not their own, and giving them a sense of what it is to be the Narrator-as-child. This is not necessarily a blatant contradiction between Husserl and Proust. Indeed, the Proustian

predominance of eyesight in constituting the ego could stem from a universal tendency to consider the 'central "point" from which vision proceeds' to be the 'functional center of orientation' (Behnke "Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology of Embodiment"). The other sensory experiences are made more relatable as their image anchors them into reality. When it comes to writing from a character's perspective like Proust for the Narrator, it seems therefore logical to focus on vision. Moreover, it accentuates the sense of 'subjective realism, (...) thanks to which reality is, in a sense, discovered and put into perspective by the [Narrator]'³⁰ (Raimond 1984, 260).

Here, the nuances of the narrative's speech modes are essential to understand. *Swann's Way* does not exactly rely on the stream of consciousness effect. The novel is dominated by an 'iterative narrative'³¹, which allows the Narrator to resort to his personal classification of the events and escape 'the pure expression of time-consciousness'³² that is characteristic of stream of consciousness (Raimond 1984, 259-260). Yet, 'there is space, occasionally, for exception'³³, with the passage to singulative (ibid, 258). Although the reader is immersed in the Narrator-as-child's head from beginning to end, these exceptions allow Proust to detail the inner workings of the Narrator's consciousness, thus enhancing the the narration's immersive qualities. This is also where consciousness both as a 'unity' and a 'stream' (Husserl 1931, 242) manifests itself the most. The Narrator's perception of events is structured in such a way that each segment of the sentence refers to each precise image which constitute the stream of consciousness.

The hedge allowed to see (1) an alleyway in the park (2) bordered with jasmine, forget-me-nots and verbenas in between which (3) wallflowers opened up their pockets fresh with the fragrant and faded pink of an ancient Cordoba leather, (4) while on the pebbles a long spraying hose painted green, (5) uncoiling its circuits, (6) sent up, wherever it was punctured, (7) above the flowers whose smells it was soaking, (8) the vertical and prismatic fan of its rainbow droplets³⁴ (Proust 1988, 218)

The reader can clearly perceive the progressive composition of the Narrator-as-child's consciousness in eight distinctive images. The gaze perceives the alleyway through the hedge (1), before focusing with various intensity on the different flowers bordering it (2 and 3). He then moves onto the green hose on the pebbles (4) and concentrates on its different aspects (5 and 6), before admiring the rainbow fan of drops that it is projecting into the air (8). This is preceded by an instance of localisation: it is above the fragrant flowers (7). The reader is given the precise and analytical description of the scene as perceived by the amazed child, following the exact movement of his eyes.

The second aspect of vision's importance is more essentially stylistic. The Narrator's metaphors allow to better acknowledge the link made between images and style. 'For Proust, style was the true medium of an artist's vision, and metaphor was the essence of style' (Crosman 1978, 13). It should be noted that Proust's metaphors englobe all kinds of comparative imagery (ibid; Mattuissi 2008, 8). The importance of vision is especially interesting as Proustian metaphors often rely on synaesthesia – the act of relating one type of sense to another through metaphor –, painting vivid pictures analogous to the narrated perceptions. More specifically, the syntactic complexity of the imagery is one of the ways in which 'the novelist hoped to translate his complex vision of the world'³⁵ (Fryčer 1974, 224). The Narrator's use of metaphors denotes an attempt at materialising extremely personal, and often non-verbal, feelings and impressions, both to relive them and communicate them to the reader.

Putting Husserl and Proust side by side, it could be argued that the Proustian metaphor aims at intersubjectivity. Husserl distinguishes between 'the *surrounding world*' and 'the *merely subjective sphere of the solitary subject*' (Husserl 2000, 208). Whereas the latter is a world that is given to a subject in particular and 'can be *given originally to any other subject*' (ibid), the former is a space of spiritual communication:

This is the world of intersubjectively constituted objectivities, (...) objectivities each subject belonging to the community can bring to givenness in his own way and from his own standpoint. And each subject can at the same time recognize, in virtue of mutual understanding, that what is given to him and what is given to his companions is one and the same (ibid)

Reading on, intersubjectivity could be interpreted as being the result of a process of recognition. In other words, the objects as given are not necessarily immediately recognised as being 'one and the same'. Indeed, 'each subject encounters, as his own, endless manifolds of appearances and thus (...) endless objectivities belonging exclusively to him alone' (ibid, 220). The question is how to bring these exclusive appearances to the spiritual world so as others recognise them as being different appearances of what they perceive.

Proust's metaphors, therefore, can be seen as a means of connecting these two worlds together by tapping into a collective register of experiences. Inspiration for metaphors mainly stems from the medical world, art, zoology, botanics and religious architecture (Ullman, 1963). Through these prolific images, Proustian writing allows for its readers to visualise or

understand on a personal level what is first and foremost a vision of the most subjective and personal order – and achieving the intersubjective realm. Hence, they play an important role in character, place and memory descriptions, either too subjective or too abstract for the reader to grasp without any sensorial analogy.

The Narrator-as-child's synaesthesia when hearing town names is among the most appropriate illustrations.

Bayeux so elevated in her noble reddish lace and whose crest was illuminated by the ancient gold of her last syllable; Vitré whose acute accent lozenged the ancient glass with black wood; the soft Lamballe who, in his white, goes from eggshell yellow to pearl grey; Coutances, Normandy cathedral, whose final, yellowing and unctuous diphthong crowns like a butter tower; (...) Benodet, barely docked name that the river seems to want to carry into its algae, Pont-Aven, pink and white flight of a light headpiece's wing that, trembling, is reflected in greened canal water; Quimperlé, himself, better anchored and ever since the Middle Ages, between streams about which he chirps and embellishes himself with pearls of water into a greyness similar to one drawn, through the spiderwebs of a skylight, by the sunrays changed into dull points of burnished silver (...) ³⁶ (Proust 1988, 526)

What is interesting here is that the child's imagination is feeding off one specific sense (hearing), but opens up into a flourish of light, colours (vision) and texture (touch), ultimately making his inner feelings comprehensible to the reader. The key here is his imagination, which ultimately participates in the constitution of the world-about-him: imagination is a 'true *interface* (...) [through which we] filter [and] mold' (van Buuren 2008, 62) according to our inner feelings perceptual ways the world appears to us (van Buuren 2008, 62). His fantasies about town names are influenced by his desire to see 'what had not been artificially designed for [his] pleasure [Paris and the Champs-Élysées] but [was] essential, unchangeable – the beauties of landscapes or of great art (...), what [he] thought to be more real than himself' ³⁸ (Proust 1988, 520), and what his readings have made him picture the countryside to be. Thus, he pictures countryside towns as belonging to a glorified rural France: the repetitive use of 'ancient' and the scheme of colours used both hint at a region with a rich history and local culture (gold, red lace, burnished silver, pearl grey, the tower of butter, etc).

The important synaesthesia in this passage hints at Husserl once more. The Narrator explains that these images were born from 'what [his] imagination aspired to and what [his] senses would only perceive partially and with no pleasure in the present' ³⁹ (Proust 1988, 526). His senses are thus redirected towards what he perceives in these place-names, which is just 'a *new dimension of relativities*' (Husserl 2000, 92) of the perceived object (the place-name). The reader is communicated a subjective perception that may not be their own. Through the

vivid images meant to translate his feelings, the Narrator attempts to turn his childhood sensory perception into a physicalistic object, defined as being '*intersubjectively* common in that it has validity for all individuals who stand in possible communion with us' (ibid). Resorting to the primary senses increases the chances of it happening, as sensory perception is the main way of perceiving the world that is common to all subjects.

The world's multi-perspectivity

Proust reveals the multiple constitutions of reality thanks to a paradoxically polyphonic first-person narrative voice, in two ways. First of all, the narrative voice is constantly doubled. The reader is made constantly aware of the presence of a superseding voice: the adult Narrator's. Despite the narrative content being the Narrative-as-child's perceptions, the latter is not the voice orchestrating the novel: 'a retrospective gaze embraces all of [it], and endeavours to give (...) at least subjective meaning (...) to what has been seen and lived'⁴⁰ (Tadié 1971, 31). As Tadié further develops, there are three levels of truth the novel aims to achieve. On the level of the Narrator-as-child, the latter 'only partially know what is making him act'⁴¹ (ibid), which corresponds to Husserl's subjective world of the ego. On the level of the Narrator, he has finally 'grasped a "subjective truth"'⁴² (ibid) through his retrospection, and enabling it to access the intersubjective world – in which individuals understand what others are perceiving as being both different and the same. The third level is the one of 'objective truth, that may escape the narration, even if precise. (...) the I thus goes back to "more distant significations"'⁴³ thanks to the way they manifested themselves to him – although reality can 'remain obscure'⁴⁴ (ibid). It strongly resembles the Husserlian Objective world, in which objects are perceived in their essence. The Objective world is not in anyone's space 'as *phenomenon* (...), but exists in *objective space*, which is a formal *unity* of identification in the midst of the changing qualities' (Husserl 200, 92). Consequently, although the objective does not have 'sensuous qualities' (ibid), it does appear in spaces with them, through appearances. The intersubjective can therefore lead to the objective, but does not necessarily equate it.

The duality of the I is especially visible in the structure of the narrative. The previously mentioned use of the iterative mode is a first example of that. By denoting an action which was repeated through time, it hints at the amalgamation of multiple events now being presented as one, typical day. The Narrator hence structures the episodes of his life according to which precise moments he will be talking about. This goes hand in hand with explicit

interventions of the Narrator, taking over the Narrator-as-child's voice and commenting on the world or in the influence of past experiences in his present life. A very good example of this is the Narrator's first glimpse at Gilberte, and the lasting impression her eyes made on him.

Her black eyes shone and as I did not know at the time, nor have I learned since, to reduce a strong impression to its objective elements, as I had not, as one says, enough of a "sense of observation" to distinguish the concept from their colour, for a long time, every time I thought of her, the memory of their sparkle immediately presented itself to me as one of bright azure, because she was blonde: so that, maybe if she had not had such black eyes – which was what struck you so much the first time you saw her – I would not have been, as I had been at the time, any more particularly in love, of all that is her, of her blue eyes⁴⁵ (Proust 1988, 220)

This passage is one where the duality of the Narrator is the most explicit. The two voices, past and present, intertwine. The former describes the shine of Gilberte's black eyes, while the latter looks back on them with a critical eye. The Narrator is capable of bringing to the surface the more distant significations of that moment, and to understand why he thought of Gilberte's eyes as being blue for so long. The pause in the narrative description happens as the Narrator's voice emerges. The black eyes are therefore an 'experience as lived' as he explains their short and long-term effects on his world view; but the Narrator 'makes no use of [them]' (Husserl 1931, 108). The image is put "'out of action", (...) bracke[ed]' (ibid) as he reflects on its effects rather than merely contemplate. By taking over the Narrator-as-child's voice, the Narrator amplifies the distance between the moment of writing and the remembered experience. He thus establishes himself as an objective observer, facilitating the unbiased analysis of his lived experience. Proust and Husserl further mirror each other as they are both aware of the possibility to distinguish the appearance of the phenomenon from its essence. The Narrator is aware that there is a way of distinguishing the 'objective elements' (the essence of the object) of a blinding 'strong impression' (the phenomenon) without being able to.

The plurality of the narrative does not stem only from this duality. Indeed, the multi-perspectivity of the world is given through the incorporation of multiple points of view into the mainly subjective narrative. Jean-Yves Tadié explains that

(...) dispersed in space, spread out across time a series of secondary centres of observation shape, for them, and so for us, the narrative. These centres, even when [they] oppose one

another, are subject to a central gaze, that retrieves all of the visions, all of the images, does not let anything to be lost⁴⁶ (1971, 55)

Thus, the Narrator does more than taking a step back: he offers the reader a multi-faceted picture of a world presented as being the world-about-him, as if to better understand its texture. The Narrator points out when he has been told something since a particular event: 'the knowledge of the Narrator who rewrites the story of his past life fills in the holes of the event and shines on it the light of a new day'⁴⁷ (ibid, 56), without influencing the Narrator-as-character's perceptions.

The paradigmatic example of the plurality of perspective is the section "Swann in love". To justify the Narrator's extended knowledge of the situation – despite it having happened before his birth –, he writes

(...) I had learned about a love affair that Swann had had before I was born, with this precision in detail that is easier to obtain sometimes about the life of the deceased centuries ago than for that of our best friends, and that seems impossible (...) – as we ignore so much of the bias with which this impossibility has been spun⁴⁸ (Proust 1988, 276)

"Swann in love" exemplifies how the Narrator incorporates the various points of view into his story. The opening pages focus on the Verdurin's social circle, a bourgeois couple where Swann goes to charm his future wife, Odette de Cr cy. By adopting an omniscient point of view through the use of the third-person narrative, the Narrator magnifies and anticipates the social study that is at work in the *Search*. "Swann in love" is 'the mirror that reflects in miniature the big articulations of the novel per se'⁴⁹ (van Buuren 2008, 46) – thus underlining the importance of the plurality of visions. As the Narrator draws the picture of the Verdurin's social gatherings, his descriptions are structured with many borrowed expressions that aim at showing the specificities of the milieu.

Similarly, if a "faithful" had a friend, or an "accustomed" a flirt who would occasionally be able to have them "let go", the Verdurin (...) said: "Well then! bring your friend over.' And he started a trial-period, to see if he was able to not have any secrets for Mme Verdurin, if he was eligible to be aggregated to the "little tribe"⁵⁰ (Proust 1988, 282)

Overall, the section is written like a sociological study, borrowing the subjects of study's vocabulary. The great specificity of the vocabulary and the habits – whether behavioural or verbal – give the impression that the Narrator is transcribing what was observed over the course of a study. The borrowed vocabulary and the precise description of the inner workings of the Verdurin's society point at the Narrator's supposedly extensive regrouping of a plurality of individual opinions and testimonies. Proust has his reader enter

an intersubjective community with its specific world views and denominations. "Swann in love" thus mirrors what is constantly at work in *Swann's Way* and more generally in the *Search*. By focusing on sensory "objective" experience, the Narrator assures his scientific, unbiased approach to his past, allowing him to provide an unbiased and vivid picture of the French upper classes at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Chapter two: *The Tin Drum*, a quest for intersubjectivity

As previously mentioned, no research linking Grass to Proust and Husserl has ever been conducted. An important author of the second half of the twentieth century, Günter Grass pays very particular attention to the links between individual memory and collective history. This chapter aims at giving an overview of how these connections especially resonate when Grass' use of sensory memory and reflections on multi-perspectivity are compared to Proust and Husserl.

An objective sensory perception of the world

Discussing the role of the senses in *The Tin Drum* is especially interesting in light of *Swann's Way*. Oskar's sensory retention pigments the narrative by making it more than just mere recollection. Just like Proust, Günter Grass seems to bounce off Husserl's belief that to understand someone's conception of the world, you should first understand how they are 'motivated by (...) [their] environment just as [it] appeared to them' (Husserl 2000, 288). Experience, especially sensory experience, thus seems to be essential to understand the construction of Oskar's narrative.

However, Grass differs from Proust in several ways, mainly in his approach to the retrospective understanding of these past experiences. The Narrator focuses especially on his sensory experience, knowing there was something hidden behind the witnessed phenomena. Oskar-as-narrator details each one of his experiences including sensory perception or through their sensory dimension, but makes no Proustian attempt at understanding why specific senses result in specific feelings or emotions. At first glance therefore, *The Tin Drum* is led by Oskar-as-character's senses; yet they are not understood to be the centre of attention. The real difference seems to be in the treatment that is made of these past perceptions. Oskar-as-narrator and the Narrator's goals diverge when it comes to what is hidden behind the perceived smells, colours and noises. The Narrator's goal has already been looked into. The question is what Oskar's is.

A direct answer could be that Oskar is not interested in knowing how sensory experience shapes his perception of the world. Indeed, Oskar pays great attention to the sensory constitution of the world-about-him, to the point where one element of life is sometimes reduced to a single, strong, sensory experience. For example, Oskar-as-narrator

explains that 'it took only a sniff to get a noseful of school once and for all' before describing the

whiff of those poorly rinsed, half-eaten sponges and little rags for yellow-framed flaking slates, which, in knapsacks of the cheapest leather, retain the sweat of all that penmanship, the vapour of big and little multiplication tables, the sweat of squeaking, halting, slipping, spit-moistened slate pencils (Grass 2010, 76)

From the whiff of the rotten sponges a day of classroom work is materialised with Proustian technicity. However, the sense of distance between the experience and the narrative that characterised the Narrator's style is absent. Instead, the discomfort experienced by Oskar seeps into his writing through the use of sibilance, brought to a climax with the avalanche of discomforting sounds at the end: 'the sweat of squeaking, halting, slipping, spit-moistened slate pencils' (ibid).

The transparency of Oskar's style could be explained by the link between the experience of the body and the constitution of the spirit. Their unity 'is a two-fold one, and, correlatively, a two-fold apprehension (the personalistic and the naturalistic) is included in the unitary apperception of the human' (2000, 259). Literary style, considered as being part of the spirit, obeys this two-fold apprehension: the outside world influences and forms the spirit, which will in turn influence writing style. Reversely, style is used to convey a specific view of the world, as seen with Proust. The cited passage shows that Oskar's narrative fully obeys this reciprocal relationship. The translation of his non-verbal discomfort into the musicality of his writing underlines the strong tie, nurtured by experience, between the Husserlian physical and spiritual realms.

This passage also suggests that van Buuren's distinction between Proust and Husserl does not apply to the connections between Husserl and Grass. Indeed, Grass seems to mirror Husserl's theory on the constitution of memory. To Husserl, sensory perception as a whole 'plays among experiencing acts the part of an original experience' as they primarily – directly – relate to the body's intuition (1931, 127). The rest of the 'experiencing acts draw a chief part of [sensory perceptions'] power to serve as a ground' (ibid). When applied to Oskar's reconstitution of his life, it explains why Oskar-as-narrator give such importance to sensory memory without focusing on it as the Proustian Narrator does. Sensory perception anchors his perception of wider events, but is not a sign of anything more and therefore does not deserve to be analysed

in itself. This does not, however, explain fully why Oskar-as-narrator includes such an abundance of sensory detail when they are not the main focus of the act of recollection.

There are two hypotheses as to why that is. The first one is that Oskar's sensory perception obeys a particularly intimate form of synaesthesia similar to the Narrator's. As *The Tin Drum* opens, Oskar describes Bruno's eyes (his keeper) to be 'the shade of brown that can't see through blue-eyed types like me' (Grass 2010, 3). Colour is given a personal significance, as if his past experiences had led him to believe there was a fundamental difference in having blue or brown eyes. Later on, Oskar describes Bruno's visit after his visitors have left. He explains: 'often after airing [Bruno] finds time, sitting by my bed and disentangling the string, to spread a silence so prolonged that in the end I call the silence Bruno, and the Bruno silence' (ibid, 4). Another peculiar association that gives the reader insight into the conception of Oskar's world-about-him. Between these two passages however, sensory detail abounds as Oskar describes his visits; yet, they are not as out of the ordinary as the previous descriptions. Oskar could therefore be limiting his peculiar sensory associations to allow the reader some clarity, without fully estranging them from his world-about-him. This would be justified by Oskar's immediate warning to the reader that he is 'an inmate in a mental institution' (ibid), therefore branding his perception as being radically different and potentially incomprehensible to the (sane) reader's.

However, this hypothesis does not seem to hold afterwards. A few lines later, Bruno is referenced to under his full name, Oskar specifying that that is because he is 'done playing with words' (Grass 2010, 4). Here, the tone changes: Oskar becomes Oskar-as-narrator, both storyteller and objective observer who will not let his present subjective views tarnish his duty as an (auto)biographer. Another hypothesis arises: Oskar's unwillingness to reflect too long on the essence of his perception could stem from a simple wish to remain as objective and rigorous as possible. In the rest of the novel, sensory perception is mentioned and often detailed. However, trying to grasp their non-verbal essence would therefore mean playing with words, as the Narrator does. Hence, Oskar makes the active choice to refrain from doing so. This is nearly immediately confirmed as he later regrets having 'emphasised the paper's innocence by calling it virgin' (Grass 2010, 5) before his vow was made, as this image falls under the realm of his subjective perception.

Looking for the right perspective

The study of Oskar's sensory experience hints at somewhat of a paradoxical basis to his narrative. On the one hand, the reader is, similarly to with *Swann's Way*, immersed in a first-hand experience that is not their own. Both the Narrator-as-child and Oskar-as-character are shown to learn the ways of the world, build the world-about-them and learn how to interact with world objects and other subjects. For Husserl, the world-about-me is both 'the world in which I find myself' and the world related to 'the complex forms of my manifold and shifting spontaneities (...), the diverse acts and states of sentiment and will (...), together with the sheer acts of the Ego' (Husserl 1931, 103-104). The world is therefore given to me 'furnished not only with the qualities that befit [its] positive nature, but with value-characters such as beautiful or ugly (...), pleasant or unpleasant, and so forth' (ibid). In other words, the world obeys the laws of nature but turns into the world-about-me – a subjective world – as my consciousness attributes certain values to its components. Whereas the Narrator-as-child interacts with the world according to what astonishes him or what senses are awoken, Oskar-as-character is like a small god: to him, the world is malleable according to the wishes he formulates. In other words, Oskar-as-character's relation to the world-about-him is thought of in terms of creation or destruction. The Narrator-as-child, in contrast, is a lot more passive: he receives sensory experience without answering back, and dissects it retrospectively.

In this regard, the Narrator-as-child can be deemed more perceptive than Oskar-as-character, as the former is already aware that what he perceives through his senses (the beauty of the hawthorn flowers, of the landscape, etc.) escapes his perception. However, Oskar-as-character tends to perceive the world as being solely his world-about-him, and not something entirely independent from him. This is revealed through the Oskarian dichotomy that revolves around the drum/scream axis. A constant back-and-forth between creation and destruction, the alternation evolves throughout the book. Although the drum and the scream start off as ways of expression of Oskar-as-character's 'spontaneities', 'states of sentiment and will', and 'acts of the Ego' (Husserl 1931, 103-104), they progressively turn into 'something much more complex' (Missner Barstow 1978, 160).

When looking at Husserl, the drum and scream can therefore be interpreted as instruments of protection against a world that wants to re-establish its dominance. As the world-about-me arises from my ego, I am, in a way, the reason for its existence: Oskar's refusal to grow can thus be interpreted as the refusal of an uncontrollable world. At the beginning of the novel, Oskar explains that

the ability to drum up the necessary distance between grown-ups and myself on a toy drum developed soon after my fall down the cellar stairs, almost simultaneously with the emergence of a voice that allowed me to sing, scream, or sing-scream at such high pitch (...) that no one dared take away the drum that pained their ears: for (...) when I screamed something quite valuable would burst into pieces (Grass 2010, 52)

Here, the scream and drum come to symbolise the barrier set between the child's belief in his demiurgic powers and the "distinctions which adult rationality imposes on the objects of perception" (Hamburger 1970 in Missner Barstow 1978, 158). Both scream and drum constitute are, for Oskar, 'a refuge from the adult world', a 'medium of expression' and weapons 'by which he wields magical control over a world of larger, fiercer beings' (McElroy 1986, 320). This is verified later on as, after having thrown his drum away, Oskar-as-character grows up and unsuccessfully seeks a new form of expression and control over the world. Unsuccessfully, because the power dynamics have changed: as he falls 'prey to art' (Grass 2010, 440) he is either represented untruthfully or reduced to his hump. It is only when he takes up the drum again at "The Onion Cellar" or in the hospital that he finally, temporarily or partially, regains control. His memoir is like an ultimate attempt to make the world-about-him a world belonging not to '*the merely subjective sphere of the solitary subject*', but to make it part of the '*surrounding world*' (Husserl 2000, 208).

On the other hand however, Oskar's previously mentioned objectivity emphasise his wish to distance himself as best he can from the story he is telling. Symbolically, the recurrent switches between the first and the third person act as a reminder to preserve the distance he wants to establish between the subject of writing and himself, the narrator. It has often been argued that it is a sign of schizophrenia, and therefore of his unreliability (Caltvedt 1978, McElroy 1983). Other elements of this distancing act allow to consider another theory: although it is done unconventionally, Oskar-as-narrator succeeds in fully separating himself from his past self and adopts an objective viewpoint similar, yet more radical, to the Narrator's.

Let us go back to the switch between first and third-person narrative. Antoinette Delaney already pointed out that, in *The Tin Drum*,

(...) the traditionally subjective self of the first-person narrator becomes an "object," seen and described by the third-person narrator (Stanzel, Theory 105). "This ability to regard even the self as an object like any other suggests scientific detachment..." (Parry 109). The notion of objectification highlights the significant role objects play in Grass's metaphors.

The idea of estrangement points to Oskar's need to create distance from the other figures and from the chaotic world (Delaney 2004, 16)

The parallel with Proust and Husserl brings this theory one step further. Through the use of the first-person narrative, the Narrator in *Swann's Way* underlines that there is a continuity between the past and the present self, resulting from the consciousness' reliance on past experience to apprehend present phenomena. Nonetheless, *Swann's Way* deals very little with what remains unanswered. In *The Tin Drum*, there is both the same and a radically different writing process that is at play: the continuity between past and present is constantly disturbed as the former takes over the latter in the narrative both in terms of grammar, voice and narrative structure. Moreover, the process of remembrance remains incomplete.

The key to this divergence is a different take on looking at past experience.

[Perceptual] experience is not, and never is, perceived in its completeness (...). It is essentially something that flows, and starting from the present moment we can swim after it, our gaze reflectively turned towards it, while the stretches we leave in our wake are lost to our perception (Husserl 1931, 140)

The stretches left in the wake of the swimmer can be interpreted as being the other aspects of the experience that are lost to the 'gaze', as they are behind the swimmer who focuses on what their senses perceive. In *Swann's Way*, the Narrator is aware of this but his aim is to reflect on subjective perception and how to communicate it to the reader. In *The Tin Drum*, Oskar-as-narrator does not try and interfere with his past self. Unlike the Narrator regularly does, he does not claim to have found answers to past questions. An illustrative example is when his school teacher strikes his drum.

What was she hitting it for? If she wanted to hit something, fine, but why did it have to be my drum? Weren't there enough crude louts behind me? Did it have to be my drum? Did she, who knew nothing of drumming, have to attack my drum? What was that glint in her eye? What animal longed to strike? Escaped from what zoo, seeking what prey, lusting for what? (Grass 2010, 70)

It is unclear if Oskar has since understood why the teacher acted this way. The use of the past tense could mean that Oskar-as-narrator, visualising the scene through the rhythm of his drum, is reflecting on her act; or refer to questions Oskar-as-character once asked, and that his adult self refuses to answer in order to not interfere with the objectivity of the process of recollection.

Opening up the reader's mind

Looking more broadly at Oskar's duality between character and narrator, this constant pointing out of gaps in his knowledge can be interpreted as stimuli for the reader's mind. With *Swann's Way*, the concept of bracketing appeared very clearly: its aims were for the Narrator to objectively look back on personal experiences to try and grasp their essence, and to communicate these intimate interactions with the world to the reader. The complexity of the syntax aimed at translating exactly non-verbal feelings into words. With Oskar, there is a slight divergence in objective: Oskar approaches his life somewhat scientifically, as a historian would.

Several elements argue in favour of this theory. First of all, the recurrent interrogative process mentioned above resembles what a historian would do when faced with an event which they cannot fully recount with the material at hand. This is especially visible in Oskar-as-narrator's account of his grandparents, and more specifically the death of his grandfather.

My grandfather's body was never found. Though I firmly believe that he met his death beneath the raft, I feel compelled, in order to maintain my credibility, to recount all the versions in which he was miraculously saved. (...) All that is nonsense and fishermen's tales. Nor do I give a fig for the reports of all those equally unreliable eyewitnesses in various ports who claim to have seen my grandfather shortly after the First World War in Buffalo, USA. (...) (Grass, 24-25)

The omitted passages are detailed accounts of the various tales of his grandfather's survival. Oskar-as-narrator shares all of the folktales with the reader even if he believes them to be 'nonsense', to 'maintain [his] credibility' (ibid). Yet, there is no indication as to what credibility that is. If it is narrative credibility, including all of these stories would assure some objectivity on his behalf, but nothing proves that he is not inventing these tales. It is more likely that, as a biographer, Oskar wants to preserve his credibility as an objective third-party.

The other strong argument is Oskar-as-narrator's apparent recurrent use of archives. Hayden White writes that for 'the narrative historian, the historical method consists in the investigation of the documents in order to determine what is the true or most plausible story that can be told about the events of which they are evidence' (1984, 2). The folktales mentioned above are a first example of that. More generally, Oskar-as-narrator's makes sure his language always underlines where his knowledge is failing when writing about his older relatives because of lack of archival material. He writes that he 'doubt[s]' his mother ever hugged Jan Bronski more happily when he is discharged for the fourth time, and comments that she held a diary, 'which unfortunately has been lost' (Grass 2010, 31). Yet, the most striking example of Oskar's use of archives is his analysis of the photo album. The pictures

show 'all things so clearly' (ibid, 38): the passage of time, relationships and family dynamics, as well as historical trends (clothes, hair, etc). Further on, Oskar uses the pictures to comment on several aspects of his life, picking up on clues on his and his relatives' lifestyle.

The question is how this all relates to Husserl. As often mentioned before, it is necessary to look back on experience so as to enter a more objective world, and not stay stuck in the world-about-me. The act of bracketing is the process which allows this by refraining from judgement. More precisely,

We are putting in brackets, as it were, all our feeling-intentions and all the apperceptions deriving from the intentionality of the feelings by virtue of which they constantly appear to us, (...) charged with certain characters of value and practice (Husserl 2000, 27)

The 'feeling-intentions' and the 'apperceptions' derive from the primordial perceptual experience. They are also linked to the 'value-characters' mentioned above. Consequently, they are not part of the objective world, as they simply derive from our subjectivity. By adopting the stance of a historian, Oskar-as-narrator can be deemed to be taking a step back in order to neutralise all of these feeling-intentions that may cloud his account of the events. The historian stance is a way of distancing himself and bracketing as much as possible.

This is all done within the boundaries of the account of a truly personal experience for most of the novel. Whereas the Narrator analysed the essence of his experiences, Oskar-as-narrator's objectivity results into a very matter-of-fact style of writing: like Husserl's '*student of nature*', 'he fixes *what is concretely here* just as he experiences it' (Husserl 1931, 62). There is no retrospective interpretation of past experiences: they are described as they are, reinforcing the previous hypothesis as to why Oskar-as-narrator does not dissect his many sensory perceptions. A very interesting example in this sense is the very visual sex-scene between Maria and Matzerath.

The two of them didn't notice me. Had their heads towards the tile stove. Hadn't even undressed properly. Matzerath's underpants were hanging about his knees. His trousers in a pile on the carpet. Maria's dress and slip had rolled up over her bra to her armpits. Her panties were dangling from her right foot, which, along with her leg, hung twisted at an ugly angle from the sofa. (...) Between her legs Matzerath. (...) Then he asked if she was nearly there. And she said: I'm nearly there. Then she must have had a cramp in the foot hanging from the sofa, for she thrust it into the air, with her panties still clinging to it (Grass 2010, 268-269)

The memory is told as it was perceived in the moment. Just like with Proust, the scene is described in such a way that the reader visualises it as if looking through Oskar-as-character's

eyes. The very pictorial nature of the text allows for a pause in the narrative, thus constituting a 'bracketing' of his experience. The confusion between the foot cramp and Maria coming to a climax is a further illustration of the distancing at work. Husserl writes that 'we "behold the living experiences of others" through the perception of their bodily behaviour' (1931, 52). In other words, we only truly relate to other people's experiences once we learn how to interpret their body language as signs of their spiritual life. In this passage, Oskar is fairly ignorant of sexual matters. The previous scene where he has sex with Maria is confusing to the reader, and she is asleep. The theory that Maria gets a cramp here therefore translates his lack of sexual experience at the time. Yet, no retrospective interpretation is made of the act: once again, Oskar refuses to infringe on his subject of study's perceptions with his present knowledge.

Although Oskar's decision to write so matter-of-factly is first and foremost refusal to 'play with words' (Grass 2010, 4), there seems to be broader underlying goal: to stimulate the reader's critical mind. Just like Proust, Grass achieves intersubjectivity through a shared subjective experience. Both share the belief – also central to Husserl's thinking, as seen previously – that there is 'a multiplicity of realities' (Etaryan 2021, 130).

In Grass's narrative work, this is reflected in antithetically conceived constellations of characters, potentiations of the narrative perspective, the multiplicity of narrative strands that depict the multiplicity of realities. The same applies to the language game as a differentiation of the expressive sides of language. One's own (narrated) reality is thereby necessarily questioned (ibid, 131)

The Tin Drum explores this multiplicity of realities through the plurality of narratives incorporated in Oskar's story. As the Narrator included external points of view in his story, Oskar-as-narrator's archival work stems from his concern to materialise the multiple dimensions of the world. As the story goes on however, his concern turns towards how to tell a story made part of history.

There are several moments, therefore, where Oskar-as-narrator plays with the narrative structure. The scene at the pillbox is told like the dialogue in a play; some passages explore in detail the history of Poland like after the 'Peace of Oliva' (Grass 2010, 378); the chapter "Faith, Hope, Love" explores how one story can be told in many different ways, and plays with the individual lives and perspectives that constitute collective history, yet are hidden behind it. Through this heterogenous narrative, *The Tin Drum* explores various types

of storytelling as if to reflect on how to tell history while acknowledging the multitude of realities that constitute it. The novel 'proves a useful supplement or complement to the "non-fiction" accounts of historians (...) remind[ing] the reader of the limitations of the academic discipline of history and the cultural and academic icon of the historian' (Schaffrath 2007, 8). Oskar-as-narrator's promise not to play with words is a false vow of clarity. He calls onto the reader to exercise their critical thinking by staying aware of the multi-perspectivity of reality, as Husserl preconises. This is hinted at once, by Oskar-as-narrator describing the experience of getting his first day at school picture:

You're standing here in front of a blackboard beneath a no doubt meaningful, possibly ominous, description. It's true you're able to judge the inscription by the script and sense its associations, such as solitary confinement, protective custody, supervisory custody, and one-rope-fits-all, but you can't decipher the inscription (Grass 2010, 73)

By intertwining reality with Oskar's world-about-him, Grass entices the reader to decipher what hides behind words and narratives; to question who is telling the story, why, and how. The answers may give insight into the author's world-about-them, and reveal the true meaning of their words.

Chapter three: Oskar, the Narrator, and the epoché

From bodily perception, the reader is brought inside the character's consciousness as the world-about-them constitutes itself around them. This chapter will argue that in two passages selected from each novel (see appendices 2 and 3), the reader is presented with moments in which Husserl's epoché – the process through which world essence is attained – is successfully applied.

A transcript of the characters' consciousness

As seen before, the 'I's consciousness is constantly in relation to the world both as member of it and as it is in interaction with it as the 'world-about-me' (Husserl 1931, 103). Regarding other Egos, I recognise them as units themselves, and as part of the latter. I believe that they see the world as I see it, yet, we all have access to a different perception of the world in itself. This is at the basis of Husserl's theory of a multi-faceted aspect of the world that individuals tend to forget about. In this regard, Proust and Grass' narrative style as analysed previously play an important role. The use of the stream of consciousness effect allows the Narrator and Oskar-as-narrator to give the reader insight in the conscience of their younger selves. Picking up on Husserl's terminology, the reader is given access to the world-about-the-protagonists: what they are made conscious of, but also the world-about-them and the ways they interact with it. The stream of consciousness effect allows to visualise exactly the structure of their flow of experience.

The chosen extracts are illustrative of consciousness as a perceptual mosaic. Both narrations are characterised by the use of long sentences, where the recurrent use of the comma allows to section an otherwise ever-flowing stream of consciousness into more focalised perceptual experiences.

After an hour of rain and wind against which I had battled with glee, as I arrived on the banks of the Montjouvain pond in front of a small shack covered with tiles where Mr. Vinteuil's gardener would tighten his gardening tools, the sun had just reappeared and its gildings washed by the pouring rain freshly shone in the sky, on the trees, on the shack's wall, on its still wet tile-roof on the ridge of which a hen was strutting⁵¹ (Proust 1988, 237)

Each section of the sentence is a different perceptual experience, as the Narrator-as-child focalises on one perceptual “‘content’ which can be considered in its singularity’ (Husserl 1931, 116) at a time – the weather, the banks of the pond, the shack by the pond, the shining

sun, the sun on the trees, on the shack's wall, the shack's roof, the hen on the roof. Oskar's description of the start of his ascent of the Danzig tower is constructed in a similar way:

From the moment I directed my gaze upwards along the brick it proved hard to follow the line of the façade, for pigeons were busy taking off from niches and windows in the tower, coming to rest for brief pigeon-measured moments on water sprouts and in alcoves, then plunging down the wall, dragging my gaze along (Grass 2010, 92)

Here, the reader follows Oskar-as-character's gaze along the façade of the tower, the pigeons in the niches and windows taking off, the pigeons resting on water-sprouts and alcoves, the pigeons plunging down.

'Each ego has its own domain of perceptual things and necessarily perceives the things in a certain orientation', the body 'bearing in itself the *zero point* of all these orientations' (Husserl 2000, 165-166). Yet, the 'functional center of orientation' is not fixed (Behnke, "Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology of Embodiment"): in these extracts, it is shown to be the characters' eyes – whether it is through the implicit movement of the Narrator-as-child's eyes or Oskar-as-character's explicit mentions of his gaze. Consequently, the reader is given access to their untainted interaction and interpretation of the world. Proust and Grass therefore achieve somewhat of a paradox. Going back to Husserl, 'the Body (...) is constituted as an Objectivity in its own right (...) because it 'preserves its identical properties over against changing external circumstances' (2000, 163). In other words, bodily experiences are objective because of their inalterability. If I feel my jaw with my hand, the sensation will not change regardless of external happenings (change in temperature, weather, noise, etc). Full access to the character's consciousness guarantees an objective account on behalf of the narrators of their past experiences, despite the latter being essentially entirely subjective.

The focus on vision in these extracts bears its own importance, as it is itself a proof-demonstration of the unity of consciousness, examined before. Its unity is given by a constant awareness of the continuity between the just-elapsed moment and the now. This is exemplified by Oskar's observation of the pigeons. As he looks at them, he is perceiving the same ones in essence, but experiences different perceptions of the pigeons as they move about him. The sense of unity is reinforced through the framing of the sentence by the double reference of his gaze following the pigeons' flight. As the text goes back and forth between his gaze (internal) and the pigeons (external egos), Grass gives internal unity to Oskar's narration, materialising his unity of consciousness. It ultimately emphasises the feeling of looking at the world through Oskar-as-character's eyes, and entering Oskar-as-character's

consciousness. Proust achieves this same unifying sense as the child looks around him, yet does so differently. Whereas Grass unifies the gaze through the observation of the same bodies perceived at different moments in the phenomenological timeframe, Proust links the intentional objects into one act of perceptual experience. Going back to the sentence quoted previously, the sun acts as a guide to the eye, which emphasises a unified sense of time and space that embodies the Narrator-as-child's gaze. The observation's start-point is the sun, and it then unfolds into the observation of the various elements constituting the Narrator-as-child's perceptual environment on which sunrays fall.

A detailed sensory experience

This attention to detail is justified by the resort to the child's perceptual experience. Traditionally associated with a more innocent view of the world, 'the child's superiority derives from his ability to grapple more flexibly with the little mysteries of his life, and to notice the novelty and freshness of things when seen in a new light' (Missner Barstow 1978, 153). The freshness of perspective in relation to Proust and Grass' novels manifests itself in two different ways. First of all, the child's consciousness is highly stimulated from a sensory perspective. The little mysteries of life are colours, sounds, smells that catch the children's perception and appear to be essential to the world, in their view. An adult whose thoughts and world-about-them are already constructed might not give as much importance to such details. Thus, both child voices convey the sense of an outsider's point of view: as outsiders of society, their attention is less focused on the abstract and more on their bodily experiences. Their consciousness can be considered to be pure, untainted.

Husserl's theory echoes strongly with these considerations.

(...) Consciousness, considered in its "purity", must be reckoned *as a self-contained system of Being*, as a system of *Absolute Being*, into which nothing can penetrate, and from which nothing can escape; which has no spatio-temporal exterior, and can be inside no spatio-temporal system; which cannot experience causality from anything nor exert causality upon anything, it being presupposed that causality bears the normal sense of natural causality as a relation of dependence between realities (Husserl 1931, 153)

If children are to be considered unexperienced in a Husserlian way, then their consciousness can be defined as being pure: it interacts with the world in a way that allows it to simply sense what is manifesting itself, rather than interpret it according to abstract thought. The world is 'the totality of objects that can be known through experience' (Husserl 1931, 52): 'every physical property draws us on into infinities of experience' (ibid, 54).

Although here Husserl is specifically addressing experiences in natural sciences, the precept can be enlarged to world experience. The child voice attaches importance to his senses and bodily perceptions because they are his only way through a world that otherwise remains vastly unknown, due to his lack of experience.

Thus, both extracts highlight the importance given to the body as a way of directly interacting with the world, as 'physical thought builds itself upon the basis of natural experience' (Husserl 1931, 161). The narrators' senses are stimulated in such a way that they are invited to interact with the world around them. The Narrator-as-child hits everything around him with 'his umbrella or his walking stick'⁵² and 'screams of glee'⁵³ (Proust 1988, 237), as if discovering how he can go about the world. Similarly, Oskar's climb of the tower and the scream directed at the Stadt Theater link his inner consciousness to the outside world, assuring him that he has a right of free movement in the world. Through their sensory experience, they are brought to better understand the world-about-them. The abundance of detail can hence be interpreted as a heightened alertness that plays into the children's mental development.

The second meaning that can be given Missner Barstow's freshness of perspective derives from these defining heightened senses. At first glance, Oskar-as-character and the Narrator-as-child seem to be at the natural standpoint: the lengthy descriptions give a sense of captivation in the acceptance of the world as it appears to them. The world perceived is not objective, but the result of external conditions (i.e: the weather) and individual experience – of their personalistic attitude, an 'attitude when we consider the things surrounding us precisely as our surroundings and not as "Objective" nature, the way it is for natural science' (Husserl 2000, 94). However, the seemingly united, subjective voice is constantly doubled by its older self. As the story is told, the reader hears a single voice that is echoing through time, the external narrator. Thus, the captured mind of the child is being retold by the more experienced voice of the adult. Both extracts are characterised by the narrative plurality that flows through both novels, ultimately reinforcing the objectivity of bodily experience mentioned above. Under their narrative persona, Oskar and the Narrator are able to adopt an external point of view in order to recount relatively objectively what they can remember. In a sense, they are taking a step back and analysing themselves just as the reader would. Although the narrators mainly use the past tense in these passages, the punctual use of the present tense signifies this dual voice. Hence, Proust talks of the 'bushy bank that protects

Montjouvain [where he] was hit'⁵⁴ with a revelation (Proust 1988, 237). His adult self also interjects by reflecting on abstract matters, which underline the retrospective process at work. Similarly, Grass writes about a view of Danzig 'still suffused, they say, with the breath of the Middle Ages' (Grass 2010, 91). The use of the third person to talk of his younger self further neutralising his perspective. The narrators set their story in both the past and the present, thus reliving these inner experiences to their full potential.

There is another interpretation of the role of the sensory experience in these extracts. Sensory experience is not to be fully discarded as it is 'a sign for itself' (Husserl 1931, 161). In other words, the children are not perceiving an illusion or a false appearance of the essence of reality, but part of a whole. Such an abundance of detail as seen through Husserl resonates with Barthes' theory of effects of reality, defined as an instance in literature where a detail will not have any other symbolic role than 'becoming the signifier in itself of realism'⁵⁵ (Barthes 1968, 88). Sensory detail is not given to the reader as being important to the storyline, but simply as an essential part of the Narrator and Oskar's consciousness going about the world. Their stream of experience is consequently characterised by a to-and-fro between their inner self and the outside.

In these extracts more importantly, there is a sense of 'the real world about [them being] at all times known not merely in a general way as something apprehended, but as a fact-world that has its being out there' (Husserl 1931, 107). The Narrator-as-child's narrative is characterised by two main elements. The Narrator punctuates it with present tense reflections which manifest the analytical aim of the story. The memory is given as an example illustrating a scientific argument.

Most of the so-called translations of our innermost feelings only just allow us to get rid of them by making them exit us under an undistinguishable guise, which does not teach us how to properly get to know them. Whenever I try to count up what I owe to Méséglise's way, humble discoveries for which it was the fortuitous setting or the indispensable inspirator, I remember that it was this particular autumn, during one of these walks, near the bushy bank that protects Montjouvain, that I was hit for the first time with this disharmony between our impressions and their usual expression⁵⁶ (Proust 1988, 237-238)

Here, the narration goes from the more abstract (a present reflection on how we fail to externalise our feelings), to the more concrete (a past experience that explains said belief). His past experience is shown to have led to his present beliefs – once again echoing Husserl's idea of an individual constructed through experience. Looking at the Narrator-as-child's voice, his awareness of the outside manifests itself through the identification of the elements

constituting his world-about-him. The shack is 'where Mr. Vinteuil's gardener would tighten his gardening tools'⁵⁷ (Proust 1988, 237-238), marking it as distinctly different from his world as it does not even belong to his family. As he contemplates the pond and its familiar surroundings, a sense of intrusion progressively arises. The Narrator-as-character walks in onto a sense that he is alien to his environment as it exists outside of his consciousness. The personification of the sun's reflection into the water (the land and the sky smiling at each other) enhances this idea, as if the world had a consciousness of its own. Instead of the Narrator-as-character's consciousness being the generator of the scenery, he discovers he is only a passing element in the world.

Oskar's narration is constructed differently. Whereas Proust makes of the narrative a way to illustrate events of (mainly) an individual life, 'Grass creates a fluidity of perspective, multiplying the possibilities for bizarre incidents by diminishing the differences between (...) subjective and objective (...)' (McElroy 1986, 310). His character is constantly aware of the hundreds of egos who live in the world-about-him. The pigeons on the tower have their own sense of time as they pause for 'pigeon-measured moments' and 'trams and clerks [head] home from work' (Grass 2010, 91). His consciousness explores the world by trying to understand the consciousness of others: thus, interactions between the world and Oskar's consciousness are reciprocal. Furthermore, Oskar-as-character's multi-perspectivity as extended to inanimate objects can be seen as stemming from an attempt to understand where they stand in the world. To Jean Piaget, 'a child's conception of the world comes to include a differentiation between himself and external reality, (...) a conscious life [being] attributed to external things' (McElroy 1986, 313). Illustratively, Oskar interprets the tower stairs finishing at the top as a sign that they have 'tired too soon', and the setting sun is ignoring his annoyance and 'refuses to depart' (Grass 2010, 91-92). Like the Narrator-as-child, he is aware of an infinity of things going on without him being their initiator; unlike him, he does not yet seem to distinguish subjects from objects: he becomes the opposite of Descartes, in that everything is perceived as possessing consciousness.

Bridging the distance between past and present

As the children are at the natural standpoint, a distance is automatically established by the narrators with their characters: the former seem to be practicing the epoché, by bracketing their experience. This is due to the evolution of the Narrator and Oskar's world-about-them

due to accumulated experience. Proust's novel makes it obvious: his punctual interjections discussed previously show that the Narrator-as-child is able to draw a line between his present consciousness and his younger, unexperienced one.

Difficulties arise when it comes to *The Tin Drum*. Oskar's insanity makes him an unreliable narrator, thus casting doubt on his capacity to draw said line. However, the previously mentioned alternation between first- and third-person narration here seems to provide further insight into its purpose. As explained previously, Oskar-the-Narrator refers to his character in the third person as if taking a step back from his personal experience. This is an attempt to not be taken into his past self and forget about his narrative duty: providing an objective account of what he has witnessed throughout his life, unclouded by his accumulated experience. In the chosen extract, 'Oskar' is referred to twice.

(...) the door yielded, and before he had even pushed it fully open, Oskar was inside the tower, climbing the spiral staircase, leading with his right leg, pulling the left one after, reached the first barred dungeons (...), startled the pigeons into flight, met the same pigeons one turn of the stairs higher, led with his right leg again, pulling his left leg after, and as Oskar, continuing to switch legs, finally reached the top, he would gladly have kept on climbing, though both his right and left legs felt heavy. But the stairs had tired too soon. He grasped the absurdity and futility of building towers (Grass 2010, 91)

No one was trying to take Oskar's drum away, and yet he screamed. No pigeons had sullied his drum with his droppings, to be repaid with a scream. There was verdigris on copper plates nearby but no glass, yet Oskar screamed. What was he screaming at, what distant horizon lured him? Was it a focused attempt to demonstrate what he'd tried at random in the attic above the courtyard after enjoying his brick soup? What glass did Oskar have in mind? With what glass – and it had to be glass – did Oskar plan to experiment? (Grass 2010, 92)

The first extract marks a pause in the action of the story. Oskar describes his climb of the tower: nothing that helps the story go forward. This distancing can therefore be interpreted as a way for the narrator to remind both himself and the reader of his duty as a mere observer of the events. He is not young Oskar anymore. This is further accentuated in the second extract. Oskar-as-narrator questions Oskar-as-character's motivations behind the scream. Regardless of if he did not know why he was screaming at the time or if he has forgotten, Oskar-as-narrator launches into an analysis of his character's environment and hypothesises on the source of his action based on what information is available. Again, Oskar-as-narrator adopts a historian's view, whose subject partially escapes him despite the amount of information he has gathered.

Going back to both books, the narrator's distancing from its subject of study is done in two stylistic ways. Once again, the stream of consciousness effect is important to look at to

understand what is at play. Looking back at Husserl's definition of consciousness, the latter 'cannot experience causality from anything nor exert causality upon anything', causality being 'a relation of dependence between realities' (Husserl 1931, 153). When applied to such polyphonic narratives, causality can be interpreted as the influence the narrative voice can have on memories. It can reconstruct them – consciously or unconsciously – according to its current perception of the world. In other words, it would provide a world perception which has been constructed in retrospect. The use of the stream of consciousness effect is therefore seen to avoid this.

The distance is also established through the use of metaphors. Both Proust and Grass make of them the key to better understanding their past experience without confusing their current self with the child they used to be. The Narrator resorts to metaphors as a way of reconnecting with past feelings in their essence. He is able to look back on past experiences and channel the essence of the subject of his writing through style: 'the metaphor gives notion somewhat of a texture for the mind'⁵⁸, and is directed (namely) 'towards the past [and] towards the depth of the psychic interiority'⁵⁹ (Mattiussi 2012, 11; 3). Therefore, the image of the 'spinning top that has been thrown' (Proust 1988, 237) is meant to allow the Narrator to reconnect with that experience, but also to allow the reader to better grasp the child's outbursts of energy. The distancing process is there, although it is paradoxical: the narrator uses metaphors for a better understanding of the past – and to ultimately reunite with his former self – rather than giving an anachronistic interpretation. For the reader, there is actually an act of convergence with the Narrator: 'the task of the writer consists in replacing the "opaque" impenetrability of real things (...) with an assimilable immateriality (...)' (Freed-Thall 2009, 871).

Grass' metaphorical process is both similar and at odds with Proust's. Unlike the Narrator, with aesthetic tools to enlighten the reader, Oskar's metaphors 'are not easily understood because they are not directly related to a conventional reality' (Delaney 2004, 31). Just like the Narrator however, they are linked to his experiences – though Grass ignores the reader, as the metaphors are ways for Oskar to understand the world more than for the reader to rekindle with past experiences:

Oskar's preoccupation with his experiences is (...) to understand himself—his nature. (...) The source of Grass' metaphors is everyday objects. Through the creative use of verbs and the utilization of personification, familiar objects exercise their own autonomy (...). By

interacting with things, Oskar deepens his knowledge and expands his experiences, which explains the highly sensual quality of the novel (ibid, 31-32)

In the chosen extract, Oskar experiences for the first time an intimate link between the world and himself. He is like 'a modern painter, who, having at last found the style he's been seeking for years, bestows upon a stunned world a whole series of equally wonderful, equally bold, equally worthy, similarly formatted finger exercises in the same mode' (Grass 2010, 92). He therefore 'deepens his knowledge and expands his experiences' (Delaney 2004, 31-32) by discovering that his scream is not solely a defence mechanism, but a defining element of his identity. Like the Proustian metaphor, it is a way for Oskar-as-narrator to better understand what he felt like at the time. Yet, the choice of imagery also produces distancing with the reader: whereas the painter communicates through his art, Oskar destroys through his incomprehensible scream.

Grasping the essence

The child's consciousness of the world is used as a way to look at it from a different perspective. Ultimately, this leads to the possibility of grasping the essence of the world – implying an escape from the natural standpoint. To do so, Husserl's suggests to 'bracke[t] or disconnect[t] [the experience as lived]' (ibid, 109) from the world as observed naturally thanks to the epoché. The latter can thus be understood as a study of the first-person experience without any inferences from my judgment which would cloud the true essence of the experience.

The distancing between narrator and reader as well as narrator and character in *Swann's Way* and *The Tin Drum* strongly connects with this mental experience. Oskar-as-narrator and the Narrator refrain from any judgment by limiting themselves to the exact transcript of a pure consciousness. The textual polyphony shows its importance once again. Oskar-as-narrator and the Narrator's past consciousness are given in their entirety, and not altered as a result of the narrators' retrospective choice to then be presented as authentic. This is especially striking with Oskar: when Oskar-as-narrator omits details or admits that he has no knowledge of what happened, he makes a point of telling so to the reader. He refuses to 'bore [the latter] with a bird's eye-view of Danzig' (Grass 2010, 91), and the questioning previously mentioned about the origin of his scream is but one example of an attitude that resembles the Husserlian epoché. It is less obvious with Proust. *The Search* is the story of how

the Narrator became a writer. In this sense, it is legitimate to suspect that elements of his past childhood would be left behind in order to glorify the discovery of his calling. Yet, the Narrator's life is

never crowned with success, otherwise relative and temporary, but on the contrary consists in a succession of small failures and deceptions that even the force of the final revelation [of his calling as a writer] will not succeed in fully redeeming⁶⁰ (Carrier-Lafleur 2015, 264)

The chosen extract provides a perfect example of these failures. The Narrator-as-child faces something that he feels in his innermost self, yet fails at vocally expressing said feeling. He understands in that moment that he should 'not leave it to these obscure words and (...) try and see more clearly into the source of [his] rapture'⁶¹ (Proust 1977, 238). Through this meaningful failure for a writer – meant to be able to communicate his feelings with words –, the Narrator confirms his undertaking of an unbiased, archaeologic account of his life.

To write the history of a writer (...) would imply giving a literary significance to the life-constituting events, would imply flattening and straightening his journey to transform it into an evolution. But to do their archaeology, that implies paying attention to the thresholds that populate this life and that, at every possible moment, threaten to turn it into something devoid of any sense⁶² (ibid, 254)

The Narrator-as-child's failure at fully understanding what he is feeling is significant both from a retrospective and from the character's point of view. The purpose of both novels is to grasp the sensory essence of their subjectivity; it can be argued that these two extracts are illustrative of moments in which the narrators as children have been close to grasping the essence of the experience the reader is being told about. 'Each individual event has its essence that can be grasped in its eidetic purity' (Husserl 1931, 115), eidetic meaning 'essential', invariable (Behnke, "Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology of Embodiment"). Here, the eidetic purity of the experience is sensory because the bodily experience is the primary, objective experience.

The two extracts confirm the importance of bodily sensations in grasping the essence of the experience. The Narrator-as-child experiences a 'rapture' (Proust 1988, 238). 'Literally, the state of being carried away' (Freed-Thall 2009, 876), it is shown here to be a near-to-physical feeling of astonishment that pushes him to act on his feeling, even if he does not have the verbal power to explain what caused it. The Narrator-as-child's stutter 'marks the perception of a joltingly uncodable object or assemblage of objects (...), pointing toward an insignificant *thereness*' (ibid, 881). Oskar-as-character's experience at the top of the tower is

extremely similar. He is looking at the sunset reflecting into the windows of the theatre and, 'annoyed', suddenly feels the need to scream 'without cause or compulsion' (Grass 2010, 94). Like the Narrator-as-child, Oskar-as-character seems to be faced with a new sight that suddenly pushes him to react. He is experiencing something that he cannot grasp or understand given his accumulated experience. The identity-defining scream becomes a way of taking control of a situation that he feels is not in his control. As mentioned before, these two events constitute the moment in which Oskar-as-character and the Narrator-as-child could be, to an extent, realising that the world does not stream from their consciousness, but exists outside of it. It can also be pointed out that, interestingly, their astonishment is provoked by the sun reflecting onto the world – therefore literally and symbolically constituting a form of enlightenment. Yet, whereas the Narrator-as-child interprets the moment as a sign that there is something more, Oskar reacts defensively: he feels 'joy and telltale pride' when 'two mid-level panes in the left window of the lobby [are] forced to surrender the evening sun' (Grass 2010, 93). These experiences of ravishment corroborate Husserl's reflections on reality:

Reality (...) essentially lacks independence. (...) Reality is not in itself something absolute, binding itself to another only in a secondary way, it is, absolutely speaking, nothing at all, it has no "absolute essence" whatsoever, it has the essentiality of something which in principle is *only* intentional, *only* known, consciously presented as an appearance (Husserl 1931, 154)

By interpreting Husserl, reality could therefore be acting as a buffer zone between the subjectivity of consciousness and the eidetic world. Thus, these experiences of ravishment constitute moments in which the realm of reality thinned enough for the two characters' consciousness to catch a glimpse of the essence of the world.

Conclusion

The dissertation aimed at verifying the following hypotheses: 1) senses are prevalent in the narrative because sensory experience is both a memory pin and the most objective way to apprehend the past; 2) this is enhanced through the use of a child's perspective, ultimately aiming at mirroring the multi-perspectivity of reality; 3) the choice of the first-person narrative and of human consciousness analysis is a way to stimulate the reader's critical and analytical mind.

These ideas have largely been verified throughout the analysis of *Swann's Way* and *The Tin Drum* in relation to Husserl's *Ideas*. The use of the child's perception is the pivotal key. It allows for enhanced attention to sensory experience, which is the best way to objectively perceive the world. The duplicity of the subject gives the narrative figure a form of omniscience while telling its own, personal story. It is thus a way for the adult narrator to practice his epoché, by forcing him to step back and therefore himself to adopt an objective point of view. Paradoxically, the focus on child narrative is a successful way to reflect the multi-perspectivity of reality as it allows to include a plurality of other voices in order to complete the child's unexperienced and somewhat naïf perception of the world.

Although they have been explored here, some points would benefit from further research. First of all, in the full range of sensory perception that there is, perception of colour especially plays a very interesting part in both books. It would be worthwhile to analyse links between perception of reality, colour and its symbolism, and artistic representation through the lens of phenomenology (not limiting it to Husserl, as he does not specifically address art). In continuation with this dissertation however, the latter has touched on how these novels both can be considered as pieces of sociological and/or historical research, but mainly works of fiction that reflect on how research is conducted within these fields. More specifically, they echo epistemological matters that also emerged over the course of the twentieth century in order to understand what it is to be scientifically objective when dealing with human matters. If conducted, Husserl could prove again to be the basis for important intellectual discoveries.

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Appendix 1: original French text from cited works

1. 'suggèrent la multitude des métamorphoses qui (...) ont affecté l'économie sensorielle de l'[humain]'
2. 'de 1890 à 1930 environ, une crise spirituelle, politique et sociale [qui resta insurmontée], d'une part, et des perspectives optimistes offertes par un progrès technique qui pénétrait dans la vie privée de toute la population d'autre part, ont amené les artistes à (...) remettre en question les valeurs traditionnelles de la vie humaine et de l'art.'
3. 'les structures sociales et historiques qui, tout en étant fictives (...), étaient (...) homologues aux structures existantes de la société.'
4. 'plutôt un discours qu'une histoire (...) une parole que le narrateur adresse au lecteur'
5. 'le référent du langage se trouve plutôt dans les structures psychiques qui n'ont pas d'homologue dans les structures réelles.'
6. 'sous l'influence initiale d'une impression sensorielle (...) plus « primitive » que la vue'
7. 'La vue (...) est, dans la philosophie de Proust, incapable de déclencher la mémoire involontaire. C'est parce que les impressions des quatre autres sens ne se laissent pas ou difficilement classer qu'elles échappent à l'attention de la mémoire volontaire et (...) [attendent] l'impulsion d'une impression identique pour faire élater les vases dans lesquels elles étaient enfermées. Mais, une fois ce vase ouvert, la conscience essaie de dépasser le « sens-déclencheur » et de développer le riche contenu en image.'
8. 'un œil pensant, établissant la tension entre la vision intérieure et l'aperception extérieure'

9. 'pour exprimer une expérience et en même temps pour engendrer un sens'
10. 'espèr[e] percer le mystère de son existence'
11. 'les figures de la synesthésie, de l'hypallage, ou d'autres formes rhétoriques traduisent non pas une exigence formelle, un besoin vital d'exprimer la foule de sensations qui traversent le corps du Narrateur.'
12. 'd'arrêter le flux du temps'
13. 'un ensemble complexe d'impressions sensorielles'
14. 'peut être considéré comme un projet phénoménologique (...) [qui] correspon[d] aux concepts fondamentaux de la phénoménologie'
15. 'une reproduction aussi fidèle que possible de la perception'
16. 'une construction de l'esprit, comparable à la construction d'une œuvre d'art'
17. 'Sans doute pour avoir à jamais indissolublement uni en moi des impressions différentes rien que parce qu'ils me les avaient fait éprouver en même temps, le côté de Méséglise ou le côté de Guermantes m'ont exposé, pour l'avenir, à bien des déceptions et même à bien des fautes. Car souvent j'ai voulu revoir une personne sans discerner que c'était simplement parce qu'elle me rappelait une haie d'aubépines, et j'ai été induit à croire, à faire croire à un regain d'affection, par un simple désir de voyage. (...) en restant présents en celles de mes impressions d'aujourd'hui auxquelles ils peuvent se relier, ils leur donnent des assises, de la profondeur, une dimension de plus qu'aux autres. Ils leur ajoutent aussi un charme, une signification qui n'est que pour moi.'
18. 'si la réalité [ainsi qu'elle est présentée au travers du regard du Narrateur enfant] est totalement faussée'

19. 'l'image, elle, existe bien (comme d'ailleurs les sentiments qu'elle suscite)'
20. 'La technique du point de vue [explore] les rapports du narrateur avec le monde'
21. 'L'enfant se fait alors tout entier regard « ce regard qui n'est pas que le porte-parole des yeux, mais à la fenêtre duquel se penchent tous les sens, anxieux et pétrifiés le regard qui voudrait toucher ; capturer, emmener le corps qu'il regarde et l'âme avec lui. »'
22. 'La vision Proustienne (...) engage donc la vue, mais entraîne aussi toutes les autres esthésies.'
23. 'Mais, quand d'un passé ancien rien ne subsiste, après la mort des êtres, après la destruction des choses, seules, plus frêles mais plus vivaces, plus immatérielles, plus persistantes, plus fidèles, l'odeur et la saveur restent encore longtemps, comme des âmes, à se rappeler, à attendre, à espérer, sur la ruine de tout le reste, à porter sans fléchir, sur leur gouttelette presque impalpable, l'édifice immense du souvenir.'
24. 'mariage des sens'
25. 'révèle la prédilection du Narrateur pour la vue et la possibilité magique que cette percep- tion lui offre'
26. ' (...) il me fallut monter chaque marche de l'escalier, comme dit l'expression populaire, à « contrecœur », montant contre mon cœur qui voulait retourner près de ma mère parce qu'elle ne lui avait pas, en m'embrassant, donné licence de me suivre. Cet escalier détesté où je m'engageais toujours si tristement, exhalait une odeur de vernis qui avait en quelque sorte absorbé, fixé, cette sorte particulière de chagrin que je ressentais chaque soir et la rendait peut-être plus cruelle encore pour ma sensibilité parce que sous cette forme olfactive mon intelligence n'en pouvait plus prendre sa part.'

27. '(...) mon chagrin de monter dans ma chambre entrainait en moi d'une façon infiniment plus rapide, presque instantanée, à la fois insidieuse et brusque, par l'inhalation — beaucoup plus toxique que la pénétration morale — de l'odeur de vernis particulière à cet escalier.'
28. 'immense acte intentionnel'
29. 'quand il parle de la « représentation » de notre conscience il la considère automatiquement comme un phénomène visuel.'
30. '« réalisme subjectif », (...) grâce [auquel] la réalité est, en quelque sorte, découverte et mise en perspective à partir du [Narrateur].'
31. 'le récit itératif'
32. 'l'expression pure de la durée'
33. 'il y a de la place, ici ou là, pour l'exception'
34. 'La haie laissait voir à l'intérieur du parc une allée bordée de jasmins, de pensées et de verveines entre lesquelles des giroflées ouvraient leur bourse fraîche, du rose odorant et passé d'un cuir ancien de Cordoue, tandis que sur le gravier un long tuyau d'arrosage peint en vert, déroulant ses circuits, dressait, aux points où il était percé, au-dessus des fleurs dont il imbibait les parfums, l'éventail vertical et prismatique de ses gouttelettes multicolores.'
35. 'le romancier espérait traduire sa vision complexe du monde'
36. 'Bayeux si haute dans sa noble dentelle rougeâtre et dont le faite était illuminé par le vieil or de sa dernière syllabe ; Vitré dont l'accent aigu losangeait de bois noir le vitrage ancien ; le doux Lamballe qui, dans son blanc, va du jaune coquille d'œuf au gris perle ;

Coutances, cathédrale normande, que sa diphtongue finale, grasse et jaunissante couronne par une tour de beurre ; (...) Benodet, nom à peine amarré que semble vouloir entraîner la rivière au milieu de ses algues, Pont-Aven, envolée blanche et rose de l'aile d'une coiffe légère qui se reflète en tremblant dans une eau verdie de canal ; Quimperlé, lui, mieux attaché et depuis le Moyen Âge, entre les ruisseaux dont il gazouille et s'emperle en une grisaille pareille à celle que dessinent, à travers les toiles d'araignées d'une verrière, les rayons de soleil changés en pointes émoussées d'argent bruni (...)'

37. 'véritable *interface* [au travers de laquelle l'on] filtr[e] (...) [et] moul[e]'

38. 'qui n'étaient pas artificiellement combinés pour mon plaisir, mais étaient nécessaires, interchangeables, — les beautés des paysages ou du grand art.'

39. 'ce à quoi aspirait mon imagination et que mes sens ne percevaient qu'incomplètement et sans plaisir dans le présent'

40. 'un regard rétrospectif embrasse toute l'œuvre, et s'efforce de donner (...) au moins [un sens] subjectif (...) à ce qui a été vu et vécu'

41. 'ne connaît qu'imparfaitement ce qui le fait agir'

42. 'a saisi une « vérité subjective »'

43. 'la vérité objective, qui échappe peut-être à la narration, même précise (...) le je remonte alors jusqu'aux « significations plus éloignées »'

44. 'demeur[e] obscure'

45. 'Ses yeux noirs brillaient et comme je ne savais pas alors, ni ne l'ai appris depuis, réduire en ses éléments objectifs une impression forte, comme je n'avais pas, ainsi qu'on dit, assez « d'esprit d'observation » pour dégager la notion de leur couleur,

pendant longtemps, chaque fois que je repensai à elle, le souvenir de leur éclat se présentait aussitôt à moi comme celui d'un vif azur, puisqu'elle était blonde : de sorte que, peut-être si elle n'avait pas eu des yeux aussi noirs — ce qui frappait tant la première fois qu'on la voyait — je n'aurais pas été, comme je le fus, plus particulièrement amoureux, en elle, de ses yeux bleus'

46. '(...) éparpillés dans l'espace, étalé dans le temps, une série de foyers d'observations secondaires mettent en forme, pour eux, donc pour nous, le récit. Ces foyers, même lorsqu'[ils s'] opposent les uns aux autres, sont soumis à leur tour à un regard central, qui récupère toutes les visions, toutes les images, ne laissent rien perdre'
47. 'Le savoir du narrateur qui récrit le récit de sa vie passé bouche les trous de l'évènement et l'éclair d'un jour nouveau'
48. '(...) j'avais appris, au sujet d'un amour que Swann avait eu avant ma naissance, avec cette précision dans les détails plus facile à obtenir quelquefois pour la vie de personnes mortes il y a des siècles que pour celle de nos meilleurs amis, et qui semble impossible comme semblait impossible de causer d'une ville à une autre — tant qu'on ignore le biais par lequel cette impossibilité a été tournée.'
49. 'le miroir qui réfléchit en miniature les grandes articulations du roman proprement dit'
50. 'De même, si un « fidèle » avait un ami, ou une « habituée » un flirt qui serait capable de faire « lâcher » quelquefois, les Verdurin (...) disaient : « Eh bien ! amenez-le votre ami. » Et on l'engageait à l'essai, pour voir s'il était capable de ne pas avoir de secrets pour Mme Verdurin, s'il était susceptible d'être agréé au « petit clan ».'
51. 'Après une heure de pluie et de vent contre lesquels j'avais lutté avec allégresse, comme j'arrivais au bord de la mare de Montjouvain, devant une petite cahute recouverte en tuiles où le jardinier de M. Vinteuil serrait ses instruments de jardinage, le soleil venait de reparaître, et ses dorures lavées par l'averse reluisaient à neuf dans le ciel, sur les arbres, sur le mur de la cahute, sur son toit de tuile encore mouillé, à la crête duquel se promenait une poule'

52. 'De parapluie ou de canne'
53. 'des cris joyeux'
54. '[le] talus broussailleux qui protège Montjouvain [où] je fus frappé'
55. 'la carence même du signifié (...) devient le signifiant même du réalisme.'
56. 'La plupart des prétendues traductions de ce que nous avons ressenti ne font ainsi que nous en débarrasser en le faisant sortir de nous sous une forme indistincte qui ne nous apprend pas à le connaître. Quand j'essaie de faire le compte de ce que je dois au côté de Méséglise, des humbles découvertes dont il fut le cadre fortuit ou le nécessaire inspirateur, je me rappelle que c'est, cet automne-là, dans une de ces promenades, près du talus broussailleux qui protège Montjouvain, que je fus frappé pour la première fois de ce désaccord entre nos impressions et leur expression habituelle.'
57. 'où le jardinier de M. Vinteuil serrait ses instruments de jardinage'
58. 'La métaphore donne une certaine consistance pour l'esprit à la notion'
59. 'vers le passé [et] vers les profondeurs de l'intériorité psychique'
60. 'n'est jamais couronn[é] de succès, sinon relatifs et temporaires, mais au contraire consiste en une succession de petits échecs et de déceptions, que même la force de la révélation finale n'arrivera pas complètement à racheter.'
61. 'ne pas m'en tenir à ces mots opaques et (...) tâcher de voir plus clair dans [s]on ravissement.'
62. 'Faire l'histoire d'une vie d'écrivain (...), c'est donner une signification littéraire aux événements constitutifs de cette vie, c'est en aplanir et en redresser le parcours pour le transformer en évolution. Mais en faire l'archéologie, c'est être attentif aux seuils

qui peuplent cette vie et qui à chaque occasion la menacent de basculer dans le non-sens.’

Appendix 2: personal translation of the extract from “Combray”, *Swann’s Way*

‘My walks during this particular autumn were made even more pleasant as I would usually do them after long hours spent reading a book. When I had tired out from having read all morning in the small sitting room, having thrown my plaid onto my shoulders, I would go out: my body, having had to stay motionless for a long time, but having thus charged itself with accumulated vivacity and speed, now felt the need, like a spinning top that has been thrown, to dispense of them in all directions. The walls of houses, the Tansonville hedge, the trees from the Roussainville wood, the bushes Montjouvain leaned against would receive hits from my umbrella or my walking stick, hear cries of glee, both of which were nothing but confused ideas that exalted me and had not achieved their repose in enlightenment, for they had preferred to a slow and difficult enlightening the pleasure of an easier drift towards an immediate outlet. Most of the so-called translations of our innermost feelings only just allow us to get rid of them by making them exit us under an undistinguishable guise, which does not teach us how to properly get to know them. Whenever I try to count up what I owe to Méséglise’s way, humble discoveries for which it was the fortuitous setting or the indispensable inspirator, I remember that it was this particular autumn, during one of these walks, near the bushy bank that protects Montjouvain, that I was hit for the first time with this disharmony between our impressions and their usual expression. After an hour of rain and wind against which I had battled with glee, as I arrived on the banks of the Montjouvain pond in front of a small shack covered with tiles where Mr. Vinteuil’s gardener would tighten his gardening tools, the sun had just reappeared and its gildings washed by the pouring rain freshly shone in the sky, on the trees, on the shack’s wall, on its still wet tile-roof on the ridge of which a hen was strutting. The blowing wind tugged at the wild grass that had grown from cracks in the wall and at the hen’s down feathers, which floated out horizontally, at the whim of its breath, to their full extent, with the abandonment of light and lifeless objects. The tile roof projected into the pond, which the sun had made reflective again, a pink marbling, to which I had never paid attention before. And upon seeing on the water and on the side of the wall a pale smile answering the sky’s smile, I cried out in my enthusiasm while brandishing my closed umbrella: “Rats, rats, rats, rats.” But in the same moment I felt that my duty would have been to not leave it to these obscure words and to try and see more clearly into the source of my rapture.’ (Proust 1988, 237-238)

Appendix 3: Extract from “Long-Distance Song Effects from the Stockturm”, *The Tin Drum*

‘I stood before the buttressed brick of the Stockturm, which rose steeply towards the sky, and only by chance, stirred by encroaching boredom, lodged my drumsticks between the brickwork and the ironclad frame of the tower door. From the moment I directed my gaze upwards along the brick it proved hard to follow the line of the façade, for pigeons were busy taking off from niches and windows in the tower, coming to rest for brief pigeon-measured moments on water sprouts and in alcoves, then plunging down the wall, dragging my gaze along.

This pigeon business irritated me. My gaze deserved better; I withdrew it and, to dispel my irritation, used both my drumsticks in earnest as a lever: the door yielded, and before he had even pushed it fully open, Oskar was inside the tower, climbing the spiral staircase, leading with his right leg, pulling the left one after, reached the first barred dungeons, spiralled still higher, leaving behind the torture chambers with their carefully polished and instructively labelled instruments, cast a glance through a narrow barred window as he continued to climb – now leading with his left leg, pulling the right leg after – estimated how high he was; noted the thickness of the masonry, startled the pigeons into flight, met the same pigeons one turn of the stairs higher, led with his right leg again, pulling his left leg after, and as Oskar, continuing to switch legs, finally reached the top, he would gladly have kept on climbing, though both his right and left legs felt heavy. But the stairs had tired too soon. He grasped the absurdity and futility of building towers.

(...)

As the spiral staircase tired too soon, I had to stop at a gallery that circle the tower’s dome. I sat down, thrust my legs between the little columns of the balustrade, leaned forward, and peering past a column I had wrapped my right arm around, gazed down at the Kohlenmarkt, while with my left I made sure of my drum, which had shared the entire journey.

I have no intention of boring you with a bird’s eye-view of Danzig, with that panorama of bell towers, still suffused, they say, with the breath of the Middle Ages, portrayed in a thousand good engravings. Nor will I go on about the pigeons, even if it’s true ten times over that pigeons, which some people call doves, are good literary material. (...)

My gaze had turned towards something totally different: the Stadt-Theater, which I’d found closed upon leaving the Arsenal Arcade. The bow with its dome bore a fiendishly close

resemblance to a senselessly enlarged, neoclassical coffee grinder, though it lacked the handle on the rounded top of its dome which, in that temple devoted to culture and the muses filled to the brim each evening, would have allowed it to grind and grisly scrap a five-act play with its entire assemblage of tragedians, stage sets, prompters, props, and curtains. This building, from whose column-flanked lobby windows a sagging afternoon sun, steadily applying more red, refused to depart, annoyed me.

At that hour, some one hundred and fifty feet above the Kohlenmarkt, above trams and clerks heading home from work, high above Markus's sweet-smelling junk shop, above the cool marble tables at the Café Weitzke (...), I, who up till then had screamed only when forced by circumstances, now screamed without cause or compulsion. Until I climbed the Stockturm, I'd only sent my piercing tones (...) when someone tried to take away my drum; now on the tower I screamed down, though my drum was not threatened in any way.

No one was trying to take Oskar's drum away, and yet he screamed. No pigeons had sullied his drum with his droppings, to be repaid with a scream. There was verdigris on copper plates nearby but no glass, yet Oskar screamed. What was he screaming at, what distant horizon lured him? Was it a focused attempt to demonstrate what he'd tried at random in the attic above the courtyard after enjoying his brick soup? What glass did Oskar have in mind? With what glass – and it had to be glass – did Oskar plan to experiment?

It was the Stadt-Theater, the dramatic coffee grinder, whose setting sun windowpanes attracted my newfangled tones, first tested in our attic and bordering now, I might say, on mannerism. After a few minutes of screams of various calibres, which however produced no results, an almost soundless tone took effect, and Oskar could report with joy and telltale pride that two mid-level panes in the left window of the lobby had been forced to surrender the evening sun (...).

This success required further confirmation. Like a modern painter, who, having at last found the style he's been seeking for years, bestows upon a stunned world a whole series of equally wonderful, equally bold, equally worthy, similarly formatted finger exercises in the same mode, I proceeded to put on a show.

(...) I was just setting out on an even bolder experiment to lay bare the inner essence of all things, namely to project a special scream through the open lobby, (...), when I spotted a rust-brown suit in the crowd outside the theatre.' (Grass 2010, 90-93)