

## REPRESENTATION OF SENSORY PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES IN THE LANGUAGE OF LITERARY TEXTS

**Elina Koliada,**

Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University

Lutsk, Ukraine

[elina.koliada@vnu.edu.ua](mailto:elina.koliada@vnu.edu.ua)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5437-1320>

**Iryna Kalynovska,**

Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University

Lutsk, Ukraine

[kalynovska@vnu.edu.ua](mailto:kalynovska@vnu.edu.ua)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3406-1456>

*Received* October, 02, 2023; *Accepted* December, 09, 2023

### Abstract

The article is dedicated to the literary description of sensory perceptions and emotional responses. The authors of the article treat the latter as an effect of perceptual processes. Information about the world is acquired through the senses. Our most common folk model of the senses emphasizes the distinctiveness of each of the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) by its relation to a distinctive organ of the body. Literary narratives excel at depicting how our senses interact and provide correlated information about the world, with one sensory perception influencing and enriching another.

The examples taken from literary texts illustrate visual perception, auditory perception, gustatory perception, olfactory perception, and tactile perception. By engaging multiple senses, writers create a richer, more engaging experience. Descriptions of how characters perceive the world around them reveal their personalities and emotional states.

Writers rely heavily on declarative sentences and sensory vocabulary to effectively describe characters' sensory perceptions. Declarative sentences convey a sense of certainty and firsthand experience, immersing the reader directly in the scene. They state observations clearly and emphasize key details. Sensory vocabulary (language that describes things related to the five senses) helps writers create vivid descriptions. By using words that evoke sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, writers bring the depicted scenes to life. Precise sensory details create a unique and memorable image in the reader's mind, allows them to participate in the sensory experience, forming a deeper connection with the narrative.

**Key words:** sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, emotional response, literary text.

## Introduction

The human senses are what people use to gather information and understand the world around them. Traditionally, it has been determined that there are five basic senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. These are sometimes called the “Aristotelian” senses (Sorabji 1971), because the notion of sensory modality derives from Aristotle. He distinguished the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin as the five sense organs. Bodo Winter remarks that “the five senses model is a gross first-pass generalization that may form an adequate starting point for investigating language and perception” (Winter 2019, 28). Each sensory organ has dedicated neural tissue. Although each brain area performs multiple tasks, one can identify visual cortex as primarily responsible for vision, the auditory cortex as primarily responsible for audition, the somatosensory cortex as primarily responsible for touch, the olfactory cortex as primarily responsible for smell, and the gustatory cortex as primarily responsible for taste. It should be mentioned that the traditional five-sense framework, a cornerstone of our cultural understanding, is being re-evaluated by specialists who advocate for the inclusion of several additional sensory modalities, including temperature, balance, movement, and bodily awareness (D’Angelo 2022, 3).

Defining a sense and distinguishing one sense from another pose considerable challenges. It can be seen that understanding experience requires acknowledging the interplay of senses that are designed to work as a group (Biggs, Matthen and Stokes 2014, 17). Our senses work together, and our sensory perception results from multisensory integration. Sensory inputs are not just physical stimuli, but also consciously experienced sensations (Reynaert 2006, 19). Beyond our perception, our senses play an integral role in our emotional processing, learning, and interpretation. What we sense triggers a feeling. Our emotions and sensory cortices can impact one another in both directions. Vuilleumier (2005) hypothesized that this is due to learning from the sensory characteristics of emotional situations. Similar findings were present in the research of fear memory. Using fear conditioning, Sacco and Sacchetti (2010) found that sensory cortices affect emotional memory.

Let us consider the examples taken from literary works that demonstrate the influence of characters’ sensory perceptions on their emotional responses.

## Taste

The sense of taste determines not only the flavour of food, but also provides an awareness of whether or not something put in the mouth is safe or good to eat. Taste is characterized by intense interaction with smell. The folk model distinguishes these two senses, attributing the perception of flavour to the mouth and the tongue, even though flavour in fact arises from the interaction of taste and smell as well as other sensory systems (Spence, Smith and Auvray 2015). Indeed, although flavour is perceived by receptors in the eye, tongue, nose, and mouth lining, the brain interprets the overall sensation as occurring in the mouth (Taylor and Roberts 2008, 2).

It is worth highlighting that odours can induce taste-like sensations (Stevenson and Attuquayefio 2013, 5). Simultaneous olfactory (smell) and gustatory

(taste) stimulation can lead to cross-modal illusory referral of the odour percept from the nose to the mouth (Stevenson, Oaten and Mahmut 2011). For example:

And now Milos did the pouring, from the decanter into the pair of wide-mouthed tulip-shaped glasses Kim had set out. Half a glass each. He handed one to Cino, then raised his own. /.../ Milos took a sip and swallowed. It tasted ... awful. But he let nothing show on his face. He looked at his glass.

I spent two and a half grand a bottle for this shit?

He took another sip. Not quite as bad as the first, but still awful. He glanced at Cino who looked as if she'd just spotted a maggot in the bottom of her glass.

"Eeeeuw! This tastes like cigarette ashes!"

"Don't be silly," Milos said. "It's delicious."

Actually, she wasn't far off. It did taste like ashes.

"Blech!" Another face as she returned the offending glass to the table and pushed it as far away as she could reach. "Like sneaker soles."

"Just try a little bit more." Milos forced a third sip. Ugh. How was he going to drink the rest of this? "It's really excellent."

"Tastes like dust bunnies. /.../"

"Perhaps you would taste it, Kim, and give her your expert opinion." /.../ He whisked this oversize silver spoon from his vest pocket and poured maybe half an ounce of the Petrus into it. He sniffed it, then slurped it up like hot soup—Milos never would have believed Kim could be such a slob—and rolled it around in his mouth. Finally he swallowed. His eyes rolled up in his head before he closed them. They stayed closed for a moment. When he opened them he looked like someone who'd just seen God.

"Oh, sir, it's wonderful! Absolutely magnificent!" He looked damn near ready to cry. "Nectar of the gods! Mere words cannot do it justice!"

"See," Milos said, turning to Cino. "I told you it was good."

"Laundromat lint," she said. /.../

"Twenty-five hundred dollars a bottle!" she cried. "For stuff that tastes like wet cedar shakes? I can't believe it!" /.../

He led Slobojan back into the living room where he had the 1947 Petrus breathing in a crystal decanter, the empty bottle beside it. /.../

Milos half-filled one of the decanter's matching crystal glasses and handed it to Slobojan. He watched closely as the director went through all the swirling and sniffing rituals, and wondered how he'd react when he finally tasted it. Here was a man who supposedly knew wine but had no idea if he was tasting something from France, California, or one of the dozen or so wineries right here on Long Island.

At last he took a sip. He made strange sucking noises, then swallowed. Justin Karl Slobojan closed his eyes as a look of beatific ecstasy suffused his features.

"Oh, dear God," he murmured. He opened his eyes and fixed Milos with a grateful stare. "I thought you were going to tell me you'd bought one of these so-called vineyards out here and this was your first bottling." He held up the glass and examined the ruby liquid. "But this is definitely French. An absolutely magnificent Bordeaux. I'm not good enough to identify the chateau, but I can tell you this is just about the best wine I've ever tasted."

Milos was delighted. He still didn't understand how people actually enjoyed drinking this acrid stuff, but at least he hadn't bought bad wine (Wilson 2006, 104–106; 218).

The example above illustrates taste perceptions. Milos Dragovic, a mobster, bought six bottles of Château Petrus 1947 Pomerol Cru Exceptionnel at auction, because the vintage year had special meaning: nineteen-forty-seven was the year of his birth. He had not tasted it. The wine was expensive and Milos thought that it had to be good. Kim Soong, who worked for Milos and really knew red wines, approved that it was pretty good stuff.

When Cino, a young model, was staying at his house for the weekend, Milos asked her to have a glass of wine. He poured two glasses and handed one to Cino. They each had a sip. Although the taste of the wine seemed awful for both of them,

Milos did not show any expression on his face when he drank it. He preferred to conceal his true emotions. His only thought was that it was not worth the vast amount of money he had spent on it (*I spent two and a half grand a bottle for this shit?*). On the contrary, Cino made it clear she did not like the Petrus. The descriptions of her physical responses provide clues to her emotional state (*He glanced at Cino who looked as if she'd just spotted a maggot in the bottom of her glass*). A response to a bad taste was “written all over her face.” Her evaluative utterances, containing source-based descriptions, were fueled by her emotional state (*Eeeeeuw! This tastes like cigarette ashes!; Blech!; Like sneaker soles; Tastes like dust bunnies; Laundromat lint; For stuff that tastes like wet cedar shakes?*). Exclamations *Eeeeeuw!* (a modified form from *ew* (an expression of disgust (Collins online Unabridged English Dictionary))) and *Blech!* (an interjection used to express disgust (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary)) imply nausea. Physiologically, nausea is treated as the signature of disgust. Behaviorally, there is a withdrawal from the object of disgust (Rozin 2007, 1: 255), and we can observe one in the fragment under consideration (*Another face as she returned the offending glass to the table and pushed it as far away as she could reach*).

Milos, masking his real emotional state, pretended he liked the wine (*It’s delicious, It’s really excellent*), but his thoughts revealed his true attitude toward it (*Actually, she wasn’t far off. It did taste like ashes, Ugh. How was he going to drink the rest of this?*). The interjection “*Ugh* is used in writing to represent the sound that people make if they think something is unpleasant, horrible, or disgusting” (Collins online Unabridged English Dictionary).

Then Milos specifically invited Kim to taste the wine to confirm it was good. Kim sniffed it, took a sip, rolled it around his mouth and swallowed it. The taste of the wine made Kim roll his eyes. Then he closed them and kept them shut for a moment. The wine was so delicious that he could not find the right words to express how much he enjoyed it (“*Oh, sir, it’s wonderful! Absolutely magnificent!*”, “*Nectar of the gods! Mere words cannot do it justice!*”). The sincerity of his words was matched by his facial expression (*He looked damn near ready to cry*).

At the annual Milos Dragovic soiree, the host treated his guest Justin Karl Slobojan to Château Petrus. After a sip, the look of intense joy broke over Slobojan’s face (*Justin Karl Slobojan closed his eyes as a look of beatific ecstasy suffused his features*). He expressed his satisfaction by an interjection (*Oh, dear God*) and evaluative utterances: “*An absolutely magnificent Bordeaux*”; “*I can tell you this is just about the best wine I’ve ever tasted.*” Slobojan was very grateful to Milos (*He opened his eyes and fixed Milos with a grateful stare*), who, in his turn, was delighted that he had not bought bad wine, yet he did not understand how people actually enjoyed its acrid taste.

The act of tasting is the unity of sensuous pleasure/displeasure, meaningful interpretation, and emotional involvement that the taster experiences in the end. Richard Falckenberg remarks, “since the judgment of taste does not express a characteristic of the object, but a state of mind in the observer, a feeling, a satisfaction, it is purely subjective” (Falckenberg 2020, 318). As we have seen above, people differ widely in their taste perceptions. This is nicely illustrated in the proverb “Tastes differ.”

## Smell and Vision

The sense of smell identifies odours in the air around us and, as we can see from the above example, assists the sense of taste by enhancing or discouraging appetite and contributing to the appreciation or the rejection of flavours. It also protects us from breathing unsafe air or fumes and stops us from eating anything spoiled or poisonous. The sense of smell also helps with human memory recall (Bjorklund 2010, 6–13). Smell can be pleasant or unpleasant, but besides that, olfactory neuro-anatomy is intertwined with primary emotional areas. Incoming odours first trigger an emotional response, followed by cognitive recognition (Krusemark et al. 2013). Trygg Engen notes that “Functionally, smell may be to emotion what sight or hearing are to cognition” (Engen 1982, 3).

It should be pointed out that olfaction and taste require stimuli and often rely on vision for source localization (Rouby et al. 2002, 29). Sight, being one of the most important and frequently used senses, gives information about the environment. We use vision to determine the location of objects with respect to us, so that we can approach them, or avoid them as appropriate for our survival, as can be seen in the following example:

Whether it was the smell of smoke that woke her that morning or some other more mysterious summoning of her senses, Julia would never know. But as soon as she opened her eyes, she knew something was wrong. When she smelled the smoke, her first thought was that they had failed to kill the campfire and with a pang of panic she sat up in her sleeping bag and peered through the muted light toward the place where they had sat last night. All was still with not even a wisp of smoke to be seen and now when she sniffed again the smell had gone. She must have imagined it or smelled traces of campfire smoke on her clothes or in her hair and in her half-awake state turned it into something else. She breathed out in relief and again lay down.

.../ again she smelled the smoke. She sat up once more. Everyone around her was still asleep. .../ Julia looked at her watch. It was a little after five-thirty. She slipped from her sleeping bag and stood up. She took her shorts and boots from the locked duffel bag that she used for a pillow and put them on then headed off up through the trees.

There was a narrow trail made by deer and she followed it for about half a mile, glancing up from time to time through the pines that towered above her, their tops swaying back and forth in the wind. The smell of smoke was growing stronger all the time. At last she saw a clearing ahead of her and as she came to it and stepped out of the trees, she got her first clear view of the sky and of Snake Mountain rearing above her, the sun just catching its eastern tip and lighting the cloud that was drifting away behind it. And Julia was just thinking how beautiful it looked when she noticed that the sky elsewhere was clear and that this wasn't a normal cloud, but a windblown column of smoke and she felt a chill of dread run over her (Evans 2002, 179–180).

This text fragment describes Julia's olfactory and visual perceptions of a forest fire. She woke up early in the morning and sensed that something was wrong. She realized that she was smelling smoke. At first, she thought that the campfire had not been completely extinguished and became terrified (*When she smelled the smoke, her first thought was that they had failed to kill the campfire and with a pang of panic she sat up in her sleeping bag*). She sat up and peered through the semidarkness toward the place where their campfire had been. There was no sign of smoke, and she could not smell anything either. There was no reason for the feeling, and she calmed down (*She breathed out in relief*). Lying in her sleeping bag, she stayed awake. Then all of a sudden, she smelled smoke again. She slipped out of her sleeping bag, stood up, put on her shorts and the boots, and went to a clearing in the woods. The smell of smoke seemed to be growing stronger all the time. And then

she saw the sky, the mountain with the rising sun behind it, and a drifting cloud, all overflow with beauty. On the spur of the moment Julia was horrified to find that it was a smoke cloud (*she noticed that the sky elsewhere was clear and that this wasn't a normal cloud, but a windblown column of smoke and she felt a chill of dread run over her*), the inference being that there was a forest fire on the other side of the mountain.

The olfactory process is represented by nouns (*smell, smoke*) and verbs (*smell, sniff*). The verbs of visual perception are: *peer through, see, look, glance up*, and *notice*. In the example under consideration, we can observe that information from two different modalities combines to form a single multisensory representation of a forest fire. The two senses, hearing and vision, enhance each other and trigger a strong emotional response. In addition, it should be noted that vision is most advantaged when it comes to the perception of space (Winter 2019, 56).

## Vision and Touch

A prevailing viewpoint within sensory research posits that the effectiveness of visual and haptic modalities varies across perceptual tasks. Specifically, studies have suggested that haptic perception excels in discerning textural information, while visual perception surpasses in discriminating details of spatial geometry (Verry 1998). Moreover, Ernst and Banks (2002) argue that perceptual judgments arise from a weighted integration of visual and haptic cues, with the weights dictated by the reliability of each modality within the specific context.

Let us consider the example which illustrates the interaction between visual and haptic modalities. The skin, the largest organ of the body, contains most of the sensory receptors for touch, each of which is responsible for recognizing different types of sensation, such as pressure, pain, or temperature (Bjorklund 2010, 14–15). The sense of touch gives information on such qualities as hardness and softness, texture, shape, pliability, weight, hollowness or solidity, and atmosphere (dry, steamy, cold, warm) (Farrell 2010, 4).

Toby was still barking.

Frowning, Derek started to pick his way carefully down the beach, skirting the dark patches of mud and debris as he followed the sound towards a broad bank of reeds. /.../

‘Toby?’ he called out, irritated. ‘Toby!’ But a sudden gust stole his voice away from him.

What had got the stupid dog in such a state this morning?

He paused for a moment, reluctant to get his shoes too muddy. /.../

Only when he was a few yards away did he look up to see what Toby had found.

She was dead – had to be, lying face down in the mud. The white T-shirt was soaked through, and water glistened on the back of her legs below her blue shorts. He hesitated, uncertain whether to run for help or to check her pulse and make sure. Taking a step forward, he wavered for a moment, then gingerly reached down, nervous fingers hovering over her pale wrist. A flutter of panic rose in him as he touched her cold, stiff flesh, and he jerked his hand back violently, almost losing his footing as he retreated from the body. She was definitely dead.

He stood for a moment, trying to gather himself, trying to tear his eyes away from the sprawling limbs, the bedraggled ponytail, the sodden shoes ...

Why the hell had he touched her? He cursed his stupidity. Mustn't touch anything – everybody new that! /.../

Breathing fast, he turned and stumbled back up the beach. He was halfway to the sea wall before he remembered the mobile phone in his pocket and, hands shaking, dialed 999 /.../

‘My dog found her,’ Derek said, half to himself. He found it difficult, but managed to pull his eyes away from what the female officer was doing. ‘I didn’t touch anything, except to check if she was ...’

He paused, remembering how wrong her skin had felt. That horrible lifeless cold that he could still sense in his fingertips. He shuddered (McNeill 2012, 47–49).

In the early hours of the morning Derek was walking his dog, Toby. He watched as Toby bounded away, down onto the beach. In the distance the dog started barking. Derek called for him two times, but the dog just ignored him. He continued barking for Derek to come and see what he had found. Derek went down the littered beach towards a dense reed bank. There he saw a dead young woman lying face down on the ground about a few yards ahead of him. Derek was perplexed (*He hesitated, uncertain whether to run for help or to check her pulse and make sure*) but decided to approach the dead woman. (Under some circumstances, “it is impossible for a single modality to perceive all of an object’s properties in detail” (Calvert, Spence and Stein 2004, 129).) He touched her cold wrist and felt intense fear that made him jerk his hand back and take a step back (*A flutter of panic rose in him as he touched her cold, stiff flesh and he jerked his hand back violently, almost losing his footing as he retreated from the body*). He was overwhelmed with negative feelings and thoughts (*He stood for a moment, trying to gather himself, trying to tear his eyes away from the sprawling limbs, the bedraggled ponytail, the sodden shoes ... Why the hell had he touched her? He cursed his stupidity; Breathing fast, he turned and stumbled back up the beach*). Then Derek remembered the mobile phone in his pocket and called the police. When he was telling the police officer that he had touched the dead woman, he shuddered, remembering her stiff, cold flesh (*That horrible lifeless cold that he could still sense in his fingertips. He shuddered*). So, we can draw a conclusion that tactile information had a deep impact on the character.

The writer uses descriptive language to add a layer of realism and sensuality to writing. The visual sensations are represented by the verb *see*, literal descriptions of the visual characteristics of the dead woman (*The white T-shirt was soaked through, and water glistened on the back of her legs below her blue shorts, sprawling limbs, the bedraggled ponytail, the sodden shoes*) and her position (*lying face down in the mud*). The tactile sensations are expressed by verbs (*touch, feel, sense*) and word combinations (*her cold, stiff flesh, That horrible lifeless cold*).

## Hearing

After the sense of sight, the sense of hearing is the most developed sense in the human anatomy. Our auditory system can trigger different emotions. One of the main ways which we interact with other people is through speech. When we speak, we often display emotions in our words or voices. The studies by Buchanan et. al (2000), Grandjean et al. (2005) and Ethofer et al. (2006) examined how vocal differences affect the brain. Their findings tell us that the auditory cortex is very involved in identifying voices as bearing some emotion. The below example illustrates how the auditory information can evoke a strong emotional response.

“I called the parents and Mr. Kranston. They should be here shortly /.../”

One by one the adult members of the household began coming home. Each became upset and distraught over what they learned. Abbey Stevens grabbed her daughter and said nothing. She just hugged the child, her eyes wide with fear. /.../

CW arrived last and reacted the worse. He entered the front of the house, obviously aware that something had happened, the police were everywhere. His wife, Myra met him in the foyer, and told him what had happened through her tears. CW lost his color and couldn't stand up straight. Getting him to a chair just in time, Myra called out for help. He had gone almost pale white and was sweating profusely. Myra kept saying it was his heart. He was having a heart attack. She screamed for someone to call 911.

It didn't take the paramedics long to arrive at the house. CW did not look any better, but they were unable to declare his condition a heart attack. Starting an IV, they transported him to the hospital. Myra accompanied him in the ambulance and was in a frightful state.

/.../ She would look at CW, touch his leg and ask if he was having chest pains. CW ignored her, as did the medic. Lying there, he stared at the ceiling of the ambulance, as if in a trance. Arriving at the hospital, he was taken through emergency to the cardiac care unit. Myra was asked to wait outside, but she tried to ignore the request. /.../. Minutes seemed like hours to her, but a doctor finally came out to speak with her.

"Mrs. Kranston? Your husband will be fine. It was not a heart attack. He experienced an anxiety attack. I know it appeared that he was having a heart attack, but he wasn't. His heart is fine. Basically, he is suffering from stress. /.../" (Freyer 2003, 52-58).

The members of the Kranston family were told of the death of Frank Stevens, a twelve-year-old boy, and arrived home. When Charles W. Kranston, who wanted people to call him CW, came home, his wife Myra informed him that their grandson had been found dead in the kitchen (*His wife, Myra met him in the foyer, and told him what had happened through her tears*). (The verb *tell* refers to the activity of social communication, portrayed as a process that involves four parts: a communicator C, a recipient R, a topic T, and a symbol system S (Fiedler 2011, 3).) On hearing the awful news, CW became very pale and sweaty (*He had gone almost pale white and was sweating profusely*) and began to sway (*CW /.../ couldn't stand up straight*). His wife thought he might be having a heart attack (*Myra kept saying it was his heart. He was having a heart attack*) and called out for help. CW was taken to hospital for medical examination. On the way to hospital, he seemed detached from reality (*CW ignored her /.../. Lying there, he stared at the ceiling of the ambulance, as if in a trance*). In the cardiac care unit, the doctor explained to CW's wife that her husband was having an anxiety attack as a response to stress.

The emotional reactions of the other family members were less strong. Being told of the boy's death, they felt upset and distraught (*Each became upset and distraught over what they learned*). Abbey Stevens, Frank's mother, experienced fear (*She just hugged the child, her eyes wide with fear*).

In the text fragment above, declarative sentences depict vivid emotional and bodily responses to the obtained auditory information, revealing characters' emotional states (*Each became upset and distraught over what they learned; She just hugged the child, her eyes wide with fear. CW lost his color and couldn't stand up straight; He had gone almost pale white and was sweating profusely; Lying there, he stared at the ceiling of the ambulance, as if in a trance*).

Thus, information perceived through hearing can cause different emotions from person to person. This can be explained by their emotional sensitivity (Wall et al. 2018).



## Vision and Hearing

Vision and hearing are involved in communication. Visual and auditory experiences are coordinated, when we see and hear a person speak (Biggs, Matthen and Stokes 2014, 4). Combining visual and auditory information can actually enhance our overall perception of a state of affairs. Moreover, it appears that our experience of the world is not purely a consequence of sensory input but also reflects the influence of our existing knowledge, expectations, and mental states (Kühle 2020, 237). We can illustrate this with an excerpt taken from the novel “Ruined Lives” by Grayce Higgins:

“Miss. Shores, how nice to see you. Do you have news for me?”

/.../ This Mrs. Logger, looking ten years younger with every hair in place in an elaborate hairdo, had on a dress that had to be an original. She was most gracious to both of us. I knew she was curious about Tracy, but was too well bred to ask.

“No, ma’am, I’m afraid not. What I need is a picture of your husband’s chain. I have determined that it was either jerked off or your husband’s neck was scratched by a fingernail when it was removed.”

“Of, course, won’t you and your friend come in.”

“May I introduce Tracy Fuller?” I held my breath.

I’ve heard of a multitude of expressions racing across someone’s face, but had never encountered it before. It was like watching a movie. First surprise, followed quickly by curiosity, shame, shock, anger and finally, rage.

“How dare you bring that child here?” She was holding tightly to the door frame, looking like she might fall to the carpet if she didn’t have it for support.

“I’m sorry. I don’t understand.” All the time I was thinking: Oh, Lord, I’ve really messed up this time. She does know about Tracy.

“That child ... don’t tell me you didn’t know that boy is my husband’s only child. One that I didn’t know about until last week. Oh, my God, I can’t stand it. Please leave. I must have time alone.” I heard her tell the butler to inform her quests that she would be unable to continue with their bridge game (Higgins 2002, 61–62).

The dominant senses illustrated with the example above are vision and hearing. Investigating the murder of Mr. Logger, detective Cassandra Shores decided to take Tracy, Mr. Logger’s illegitimate son, with her to see Mrs. Logger. She had been fairly certain that Mrs. Logger did not know about him. When they arrived, Cassandra formally announced the purpose of her visit. The hostess was gracious to her visitors and asked them to come in. She looked curious to know who Tracy was (*she was curious about Tracy*). (It should be noted that “The adjective ‘curious’ refers to both subjective and objective states – it means both ‘eager to learn’ and ‘exciting attention’ or ‘awakening surprise’” (McSweeney 1998, 5).) The detective introduced the boy to Mrs. Logger. When she looked at Tracy and heard his name, she felt a tremendous shock. An odd parade of emotions crossed her face (*First surprise, followed quickly by curiosity, shame, shock, anger and finally, rage*). She looked like she might fall (*She was holding tightly to the door frame, looking like she might fall to the carpet if she didn’t have it for support*). She blamed the detective for having brought the boy to her house (*How dare you bring that child here?*). She could not stand the situation and wanted to be left alone (*Oh, my God, I can’t stand it. Please leave. I must have time alone*). The interjection *Oh, my God* indicates negative affect related to frustration (Muldner 2009, 144).

We can conclude that both audio and visual channels were combined, however, the presence of visual information was crucial.

## Vision, Hearing, and Smell

Information from different modalities can converge to provide a more complete representation of the object. The following passage, an excerpt from *Cause to Dread*, a novel by Blake Pierce, illustrates emotional experiences in relation to the senses of sight, hearing, and smell.

Lawnbrook's car was parked in its usual spot, so Rosie knew he was home. Still, despite the hammering, Al Lawnbrook did not answer the door. /.../ When there was still no answer, Rosie /.../ drove the key into the lock, turned the knob, and entered the apartment. "Alfred Lawnbrook! It's Rosie Dobbs, your landlord. You're three weeks late and –"

But Rosie knew right away that he was not going to get an answer. There was a stillness and quiet about the place that let him know that Lawnbrook wasn't home. *No, that's not quite, it, Rosie thought. It's something else ... something feels off. Sort of stale and ... well, wrong.*

Rosie took a few steps further into the apartment, stopping when he came to the center of the living room. That's when he noticed the smell. At first, it reminded him of potatoes that had gone bad. But there was something different about it, something more subtle.

"Lawnbrook?" he called out again, but this time there was a wave of fear in his voice.

Again, there was no answer ... not that Rosie had been expecting one. He walked through the living room and peered into the kitchen, thinking maybe some food had been left out and started to spoil. But the kitchen was fairly clean /.../ *Call the cops*, some wiser part of Rosie said. *You know something is wrong here so call the cops and wash your hands of it.* But curiosity is a hell of a drug and Rosie was not able to turn away. He started down the hallway and some sick intuition cast his eyes directly toward the bedroom door. /.../ He had to know ... had to see.

/.../ Still, his morbid curiosity pushed him and Rosie found himself heading to the closet. /.../ Before he turned the knob, he saw something out of the corner of his eye. He looked down to his feet, thinking his nerves were just wrecked and playing tricks on him. But no... he *had* seen something. Two spiders came rushing out from under the door. They were both rather large, one the size of a quarter and the other so large it barely fit through the crack. Rosie jumped back in surprise with a little scream escaping his throat. /.../

Adrenaline pushed him on. Rosie grabbed the knob, turned it, and pulled it open. He tried to scream but his lungs seemed paralyzed. Nothing more than a dry noise came from his throat as he slowly backed away from what he saw in the closet. Alfred Lawnbrook was splayed out in the back corner of the closet. His body was pale and motionless. It was also almost entirely covered in spiders. /.../ As Rosie stared in horror, a spider the size of a golf ball went parading across Lawnbrook's forehead. Another smaller one scrambled up over his bottom up.

That's what broke Rosie out of his frozen state. He nearly tripped over his own feet as he went blazing out of the room, shrieking, swatting at the back of his neck, feeling as if there were millions of spiders crawling all over him (Pierce 2018, 1–4).

Seeing Alfred Lawnbrook's car parked in its usual spot, Rosie Dobbs, a landlord, was sure he was at home, but the stillness of the apartment let him know that Lawnbrook was not in. Searching the apartment for Alfred, Rosie noticed a bad odour in the living room. It occurred to him that there was something wrong there. He became scared (*this time there was a wave of fear in his voice*) and thought about calling the police right away (*Call the cops*, some wiser part of Rosie said), but curiosity drove him forward (*He had to know ... had to see*).

The surprise to see two large spiders caused an adrenaline rush in Rosie which pressed him on (*They were both rather large, one the size of a quarter and the other so large it barely fit through the crack. Rosie jumped back in surprise with a little scream escaping his throat. /.../ Adrenaline pushed him on*).

When he opened the closet and found Lawnbrook's body almost entirely covered in small and big spiders, he felt paralyzed by horror (*He tried to scream but*

*his lungs seemed paralyzed. Nothing more than a dry noise came from his throat).* Rosie shrieked and ran out of the bedroom, having the sensation of spiders crawling on him (*feeling as if there were millions of spiders crawling all over him*).

Thus, the character experienced fear, surprise, horror, and a tactile hallucination under the influence of the information gained by his senses. The auditory, visual, and olfactory information is conveyed by declarative sentences (*There was a stillness and quiet about the place that let him know that Lawnbrook wasn't home, Again, there was no answer; Two spiders came rushing out from under the door, His body was pale and motionless; At first, it reminded him of potatoes that had gone bad. But there was something different about it, something more subtle*) that provide a literary description of the objects perceived by the character through hearing, sight, and smell. This sensory description allows the reader to not only witness the character's emotional states but also experience them alongside the character.

## Conclusion

Literary narrative has the specific capacity to represent what characters see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. It exhibits emotions as part of characters' perception of the external world. Visual descriptions provide information about the visual appearance of objects, people, spaces, and their surroundings. Auditory information encompasses a wide range of sounds. An olfactory description conveys the physical characteristics of the smell. Writers use descriptive language to focus on gustatory experiences, representing the sense of taste. The language of touch is employed to describe haptic experiences. Sensory perceptions can trigger a wide range of emotional responses. Literary texts describe interactions between sensory modalities, how they influence and enrich each other, creating a richer and more unified understanding of the fictional world. By evoking the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures of the depicted world, the writer creates a shared experience with the reader.

## References

Biggs, Stephen, Matthen, Mohan, and Stokes, Dustin. 2014. "Sorting the Senses." In *Perception and Its Modalities*, edited by D. Stokes, M. Matthen, and S. Biggs, 1–22. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bjorklund, Ruth. 2010. *The Senses (The Amazing Human Body)*. New York: Cavendish Square.

Buchanan, Tony W., Lutz, Kai, Mirzazade, Shahram, Specht, Karsten, Shah, N. Jon, Zilles, Karl, and Jäncke, Lutz. 2000. "Recognition of emotional prosody and verbal components of spoken language: an fMRI study." *Cognitive Brain Research*, 9(3): 227–238. DOI: 10.1016/S0926-6410(99)00060-9

Calvert, Gemma, Spence, Charles, and Stein, Barry E., eds. 2004. *The Handbook of Multisensory Processes*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Collins online Unabridged English Dictionary. 2023. URL: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/>

- D'Angelo, Lorenza. 2022. "Emotional Experience and the Senses." *Philosophers' Imprint*, 22 (20): 1–20. DOI 10.3998/phimp.2115
- Engen, Trygg. 1982. *The Perception of Odors*. New York: Academic Press.
- Ernst, Marc O. and Banks, Martin S. 2002. "Humans integrate visual and haptic information in a statistically optimal fashion." *Nature*, 415: 482–433.
- Ethofer, Thomas, Anders, Silke, Wiethoff, Sarah, Erb, Michael, Herbert, Cornelia, Saur, Ralf, Grodd, Wolfgang, and Wildgruber, Dirk. 2006. "Effects of prosodic emotional intensity on activation of associative auditory cortex." *Neuroreport*, 17(3): 249–253. DOI: 10.1097/01.wnr.0000199466.32036.5d
- Evans, Nicholas. 2002. *The Smoke Jumper*. New York: Dell Publishing.
- Falckenberg, Richard. 2020. *History of Modern Philosophy*. Norderstedt: BoD – Books on Demand.
- Farrell, Michael. 2010. *The Effective Teacher's Guide to Sensory and Physical Impairments*. London: Routledge.
- Fiedler, Klaus. *Social Communication*. New York, Psychology Press, 2011.
- Freyer, Leonard J. *Passive Poison*. Bloomington : iUniverse, Inc., 2003
- Grandjean, Didier, Sander, David, Pourtois, Gilles, Schwartz, Sophie, Seghier, Mohamed L., Scherer, Klaus R., and Vuilleumier, Patrik. 2005. "The voices of wrath: brain responses to angry prosody in meaningless speech." *Nature neuroscience*, 8(2): 145–146. DOI: 10.1038/nn1392
- Higgins, Grayce. 2002. *Ruined Lives*. Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation.
- Krusemark, Elizabeth A., Novak, Lucas R., Gitelman, Darren R., and Li, Wen. 2013. When the sense of smell meets emotion: anxiety-state-dependent olfactory processing and neural circuitry adaptation. *JNeurosci*, 33(39): 15324–32. DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1835-13.2013
- Kühle, Lana. 2020. "The Emotional Dimension to Sensory Perception." In *The Epistemology of Non-Visual Perception*, edited by Berit Brogaard and Dimitria Electra Gatzia, 236–255. New York, NY, USA.
- McNeill, Fergus. 2012. *Eye Contact: The book that'll make you never want to look a stranger in the eye*. London: Hachette UK.
- McSweeney, Kerry. 1998. *Language of the Senses: Sensory-Perceptual Dynamics in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Thoreau, Whitman, and Dickinson*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2023), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>
- Muldner, Kasia, Christopherson, Robert, Atkinson, Robert, and Burleson, Winslow. 2009. "Investigating the Utility of Eye-Tracking Information on Affect and Reasoning for User Modeling." In *UMAP 2009. LNCS*, edited by G.-J. Houben, G. McCalla, F. Pianesi, and M. Zancanaro, 5535: 138–149. Berlin: Springer.
- Pierce, Blake. 2018. *Cause to Dread*. Kindle Edition.
- Reynaert, Peter. 2006. "What is it Like to be Embodied, Naturalizing Bodily Self-Awareness?" In *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of The Logos. Book Two: The Human Condition in-the-Unity-of-Everything-there-is-alive. Individuation, Self, Person, Self-determination, Freedom, Necessity*, edited by A.-T. Tymieniecka, 15–22. Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Rouby, Catherine, Schaal, Benoist, Dubois, Danièle, Gervais, Rémi, and Holley, A., eds. 2002. *Olfaction, Taste, and Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rozin, Paul. 2007. "Disgust." In *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, edited by Roy F., Baumeister and Kathleen D., Vohs, 1: 255–257. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Sacco, Tiziana and Sacchetti, Benedetto. 2010. "Role of secondary sensory cortices in emotional memory storage and retrieval in rats." *Science*, 329(5992): 649–656. DOI: 10.1126/science.1183165

Sorabji, Richard. 1971. "Aristotle on demarcating the five senses." *The Philosophical Review*, 80, 55–79. DOI: 10.2307/2184311

Spence, Charles, Smith, Barry, and Auvray, Malika. 2015. "Confusing tastes and flavours." In *Perception and its modalities*, edited by D. Stokes, M. Matthen, and S. Biggs, 247–274. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stevenson, Richard J., and Attuquayefio, Tuki. 2013. "Human olfactory consciousness and cognition: Its unusual features may not result from unusual functions but from limited neocortical processing resources." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4: 819. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00819

Stevenson, Richard J., Oaten, Megan J, and Mahmut, Mehmet K. 2011. "The role of taste and oral somatosensation in olfactory localisation." *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*. 64, 224–240. DOI: 10.1080/17470218.2010.491922

Taylor, Andrew J. and Roberts, Deborah, eds. 2008. *Flavor perception*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Verry, René. 1998. "Don't Take Touch for Granted: An interview with Susan Lederman." *Teaching Psychology*, 25: 64–67. DOI: 10.1207/s15328023top2501\_21

Vuilleumier, Patrik. 2005. "How brains beware: neural mechanisms of emotional attention." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 9(12): 585–594. DOI: 10.1016/j.tics.2005.10.011

Wall, Kiana, Kalpakci, Allison, Hall, Karyn, Crist, Nicholas, and Sharp, Carla. 2018. "An evaluation of the construct of emotional sensitivity from the perspective of emotionally sensitive people." *Borderline Personality Disorder and Emotion Dysregulation*. DOI: 10.1186/s40479-018-0091-y.

Wilson, Francis Paul. 2006. *All the Rage*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC.

Winter, Bodo. 2019. *Sensory Linguistics: Language, Perception, and Metaphor*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.