



Book Review: Linda Pillière and Sandrine Sorlin (eds.). (2024). *Style and Sense(s)*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 311

Tin Lemac¹ ·  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8645-6997>

University of Zadar, Croatia

The book *Style and Sense(s)* is a monograph that unites research in sense theory and stylistics. Since sensory experience is one of the most important forms of experience in art, philosophy, and literature, its conceptualization within the scientific fields merits becoming the object of a monograph such as this.

Regarding this monograph, the theory of sensation has been expanded using stylistics research. As for the fields of stylistics covered in this monograph, we mention literary, discourse, cognitive, and multimodal stylistics. Each listed paper approaches its own topic in a clear and focused manner, with a high degree of scientific argumentation, extensive meticulousness, and reaching valuable conclusions that herald further perspectives.

The monograph is divided into four parts, each of which includes up to three articles. The first part deals with the experience of sensation in literature, the second with cross-genre sensory conceptualization, the third with the sensory presentation of otherness, and the fourth with sensibility in different media as semiotic systems. I will approach the material in a different order. In the first group of chapters, we will discuss texts related to literary discourse; in the second, works that apply theoretical synergy to literary and discourse analysis; in the third, contributions that offer theoretical perspective within sense stylistics; and in the fourth, a text centered on

¹ **Corresponding author** – Coast of King Petar Krešimir IV 2, Zadar (Croatia).

Email: tlemac22@unizd.hr

the medium of restaurant cards. I will summarize the framework of each of the mentioned texts and provide commentary on them.

The texts in the first mentioned part are “The representation of experience in modernist fiction” (Violeta Sotirova), “To make you hear, make you feel, make you see: Representing sense-perceptions in narrative fiction” (Michael Toolan), “The sense of the sense of smell in Virginia Woolf’s *Flush*” (Stéphanie Bélignon), and “‘You see, but you do not observe’: Sensory manipulation and sense-making in the Sherlock Holmes detective stories” (Catherine Emmott and Marc Alexander).

In the article “The representation of experience in modernist fiction,” Violeta Sotirova considers reflective and non-reflective discourses on consciousness and comments on existing theories. Her focus is on theorists such as Anne Banfield, Monika Fludernik and Dorrit Cohn. She interprets the form of free indirect speech, widely recognized in narratological theory, as free indirect thinking, an extended concept that is non-linguistic in nature. At the boundary between linguistic and non-linguistic definitions, she proposes a model of discourse on consciousness that integrated deixis, verbal aspect, modality, evaluative and emotional expressions, spoken statements, as well as interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative forms. She discusses how the depiction of action in prose encounters theoretical difficulties within the aforementioned theories and attempts to shift the focus toward experience in the description of action and character. This is illustrated through numerous examples from literary texts by Joseph Conrad, Ernest Hemingway, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf. In this article, the author also analyzes the relationship with literary stylistics (Johansen, 2002; Genette, 2002) from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

The article “To make you hear, make you feel, make you see: Representing sense-perceptions in narrative fiction” by Michael Toolan discusses the fundamental conceptualizations of sensation in prose. The author refers to Larry Stewart, who noted that some senses in literary texts reflect how they are defined and valued in Western culture, while other senses are considered less important. The author presents a corpus stylistic analysis of several eighteenth-century texts and finds that visual imagery predominates. He also observes some variation in the use of tactile and olfactory language, which appears to correlate with genre and the perceived authenticity of the texts. The central section of the article is devoted to the corpus analysis of the lexicon used to express feelings. The results of this analysis are applied to the literary works of Joseph Conrad and James Joyce. This article demonstrates how the relation between corpus analysis and literary stylistics can be productive.

In the article "The sense of the sense of smell in Virginia Woolf's *Flush*," Stéphanie Béligon analyzes the sense of smell in Woolf's well-known biographical novel. Focusing on the works that concern this sensory modality, the author provides a linguistic analysis of this emotion in the text by extracting adjectives and analyzing their semantic fields. The article raises the question of the subjective experience of an objective phenomenon through the sense of smell. She identifies two poetic strategies related to olfactory perception in Woolf's previous works: smell instead of using words, and smell and simultaneity. In the appendix, she includes a list of adjectives that denote odors in the text. This article offers a precise analysis within the field of linguistic stylistics (Josić, 2021).

Catherine Emmott and Marc Alexander, in the article "'You see, but you do not observe': Sensory manipulation and sense-making in the Sherlock Holmes detective stories," examine the sensory style in the Sherlock Holmes detective stories. They discuss certain poetic considerations in these texts, the relationship between sensory style and the conventional genre structure of the detective story, and apply this framework to the Sherlock Holmes stories. Through the analysis of rhetorical strategies of sensory style, the article investigates sensory manipulation and the creation of sensations as poetic features of the narratives. This article demonstrates in a precise manner how genre studies and poetics can be connected to literary stylistic analysis.

The texts discussed in the second part are "Painting a world before language using language: A cognitive stylistic analysis of synaesthetic metaphors in the imagery of Keki Daruwalla's *Before the Word*" (Sreenidhi Sivakumar and Maitali Khanna), "Remaking the sense(s) in Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree*: A stylistic analysis" (Esterino Adami), and "Creative writing practice of ekphrastic intervention: A case study of literary responses to *A Blind Girl Reading* by Ejnar Nielsen" (Polina Gavin).

Sreenidhi Sivakumar and Maitali Khanna, in the article "Painting a world before language using language: A cognitive stylistic analysis of synaesthetic metaphors in the imagery of Keki Daruwalla's *Before the Word*," present a conscious and exhaustive cognitive analysis of synaesthetic metaphors in the aforementioned poem. The analysis is motivated by the poetics of certain poets in whom sensory style has a strong connection with the aesthetic dimension. The cognitive approach is both exemplary and interpretative, and synesthesia is discussed from a stylistic perspective. The authors focus specifically on synaesthetic metaphors. Their analysis derives these metaphors from the synaesthetic images based on conceptual metaphor (FORM IS MOTION) and image schemas (SOURCE-PATH-GOAL). The article

offers a precise and insightful reading, fruitful for the interpretation of the poem (Vuković, 2010).

Esterino Adami's article "Remaking the sense(s) in Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree: A stylistic analysis*" undertakes a stylistic examination of the title work, situating sensibility within anthropological, poetic, and stylistic frameworks. Particular emphasis is placed on the language of trees in the text, which contributes to an ecostylistic interpretive perspective. This perspective proves particularly productive for a text of this nature and for its central motif.

In the article "Creative writing practice of ekphrastic intervention: A case study of literary responses to *A Blind Girl Reading* by Ejnar Nielsen," Polina Gavin examines the ekphrastic style patterns in creative writing. In doing so, she approaches ekphrasis as a stylistic procedure through the lens of Text World Theory. Through the interface of textual, contextual, and crosstextual intervention, the study arrives at an investigation of the ekphrastic stylistic effect in the literary text mentioned in the title. This analysis, grounded in the interconnection between creative writing, Text World Theory, and the theory of ekphrasis, offers several insightful perspectives.

The third part contains three texts: "Experiencing mind style: From iconicity to sensory simulation" (Louise Nuttall), "Putting some flesh on sensory language: An experiential approach to style" (Jean-Rémi Lapaire), and "'The sound must seem an echo to the sense': Experiencing oral and silent reading of poetry" (Willie van Peer and Anna Chesnokova).

In the article "Experiencing mind style: From iconicity to sensory simulation," Louise Nuttall discusses the so-called "mental style" and seeks to relate it to iconicity and sensory communication. Mental style is associated with fragmentary syntax, free direct thought, and free direction of mind. Iconicity, according to Haiman, is divided into three modes: iconic sequences, iconic proximity, and iconic quantity. These conclusions are drawn from a cognitive and semiotic theoretical framework. Nuttall presents several perspectives within the field of theoretical stylistics.

In the article "Putting some flesh on sensory language: An experiential approach to style," Jean-Rémi Lapaire introduces the so-called "physical reading". It is based on the sensory evocation of the meaning of fragments from various discourses. These are produced through conceptual reification and ception. The listed categories are described through a precise stylistic procedure. This article in the book is related to the theoretical questions of stylistics.

In the article “The sound must seem an echo to the sense’: Experiencing oral and silent reading of poetry,” Willie van Peer and Anna Chesnokova examine the differences between reading poetry as a speaking act and as a reading act. Statistical analyses present the results of sense distribution in the reception process. Various dimensions, such as cognition, emotionality, musicality, eroticism and sociability, are introduced, and through them, the aforementioned categories are explored. This study offers significant contribution to the central connection between stylistics and reception theory.

The fourth part contains only one text: “The Mt Everest of dining experiences’: Multisensory style in restaurant reviews” (Áine Dougherty and Craig Hamilton).

In this article, the authors explore the multisensory style in restaurant recommendation texts. This investigation relates to the language of food, which is analyzed in several other research areas such as computer science, linguistics, and psychology. This corpus of recommendation texts includes writings by both professionals and amateurs. The material is examined by precise schematic structures that the authors refer to as multisensory style. Dougherty and Hamilton approach this text from the perspective of cognitive stylistics and rhetoric. The authors highlight that conceptual metaphors—EATING IS A JOURNEY and THE RESTAURANT IS THE THEATER—are essential to such discourse, while strategies for evoking emotion and evaluation are emphasized at the rhetorical level. This level features rhetorical questions, metaphors, similes, and systrophes. At the end of the article, the authors provide a list of reviews by score and year of publication. The study demonstrates the productive connection of two disciplines in the analysis of a type of discourse that is not commonly studied (Lakoff & Turner, 1989).

This monograph, in its entirety, demonstrates how the sensory perspective can be connected to various areas of stylistics, and how its theory, analysis, and the application of results can engage with different layers of diverse discourses. These connections between distinct stylistic branches illustrate how recent assessments can reveal specific perspectives without interference.

Interference, in this context, can be fruitful in the analysis of literary and other types of discourses, such as the integration of sense theory with cognitive and literary stylistics, ecostylistics, Text World Theory, linguist stylistics, and others mentioned in the previous text. This conclusion illustrates how various literary texts from different poetic periods can be illuminated by newer theories, while non-literary discourses can also reveal their significance through these approaches. It demonstrates how theoretical synergy, emphasized from a stylistic perspective, is productive in the analysis of discourse.

About the author

Tin Lemac was born in Zagreb (Croatia) where he attended primary and secondary school. He graduated on the Faculty for philosophy and social sciences in Zagreb in 2007. In the period from 2008 to 2013 he attended Doctoral studies in Croatian philology where his research interests were related to linguistic stylistics, literary stylistics and literary semiotics. He got his Ph.D. in 2013 with the thesis *Styematic characteristics of lyrical idiom of Anka Žagar*. He is literary theorist, literary critic, editor, poet and university professor. He works as assistant professor on the Department for Croatian language and literature on University of Zadar. His research interests are related to poetics and stylistics of modern Croatian poetry and stylistic theory of the poetic media. He has published over a hundred scientific and critic papers, eight scientific monographs, three books of poetry and one short novel. He has participated in many conferences in Croatia and other foreign countries. He speaks and writes in English and Spanish language and reads in German and French. He is a member of Society of Croatian writers, Matrix Croatica, Croatian philological society, Comission of stylistics in International Slavic Committee, International Network for the Study of Lyric and Poetic and linguistic Association (PALA).

Authorship and contribution policy

Authorship

Conceptualization: Tin Lemac
Methodology: Not applicable.
Software: Not applicable.
Validation: Tin Lemac
Writing – original draft: Tin Lemac
Writing – review & editing: Tin Lemac

Funding

Full name of the funding agency: Not applicable.
Project reference number (if applicable): Not applicable.
Project or program title (if applicable): Not applicable.

Image use consent

Not applicable.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data availability statement

Not applicable.

License

This book review is published under the CC BY 4.0 License.

Editorial history

Received: 7 March 2025

Accepted: 21 April 2025

Revised: 24 April 2025

Published: 30 June 2025

References

- Johansen, J. D. (2002). *Literary discourse: A semiotic-pragmatic approach to literature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Genette, G. (2002). *Fikcija i dikcija*. Zagreb: Ceres.
- Josić, L. (2021). *Hrvatska lingvostilistika*. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.
- Lakoff, G., & Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. University of Chicago Press.
- Vuković, Đ. (2010). *Sinestezija u poeziji*. Sremski Karlovci: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića.