

Alexandra Dittmar (Ed.)

Synaesthesia
A “Golden Thread” through Life?

Table of contents

Introduction	13
Part I Theory	15
A. Synaesthesia	17
1. What is synaesthesia?	17
a. Explanation	17
b. How common is synaesthesia?	26
c. Is synaesthesia pleasant or not?	27
2. Forms and definitions of synaesthesia	29
a. Genuine synaesthesia	31
b. Inducing stimuli and induced synaesthesia: the many variants	32
c. The inducer as a criterion, or: The “big three”	34
Sensory synaesthesia	34
Cognitive/conceptual synaesthesia	35
Emotional synaesthesia	38
d. Activated brain areas	41
Lower and higher synaesthesia	41
e. Localisation	43
Projectors, associators and the spatial reference frame	43
f. Lower – higher synaesthesia in relation to projectors – associators	46
g. Intermodal analogies and associations	47
h. Literary-artistic synaesthesia	49
i. An example	49
3. On the temporality and spatiality of synaesthesia	51
a. Temporality	51
b. Spatiality	52
c. Number forms	55
Digression: The mental number line, or: SNARC effect	56
4. Change and loss	58
a. Change	58
b. Loss	61
5. Synaesthesia from the viewpoint of different disciplines	63

B. Orientation	67
1. General explanation of the term	67
a. A look at philosophy: Immanuel Kant	67
b. Orientation: scope and diversity of the term	69
2. Orientation in groups	71
a. Orientation and disorientation	71
b. Forms of orientation in other cultures: relative and absolute spatial orientation	72
c. Orientation and culture	74
3. Individual forms of orientation	77
4. The senses and orientation	79
5. Summary and final comments	82
C. Synaesthetic experience – points of orientation and a “golden thread”?	85
1. Synaesthesia in detail	86
a. Music	87
b. Letters, words and numbers	89
c. Time units and other sequences, or: Number forms	93
d. Spelling	96
e. Languages	96
f. Learning systems	98
g. Cooking	100
h. Health and illness	101
2. On the characteristics of synaesthetic orientation: a description	102
3. How can synaesthetic experiences provide a “golden thread”?	106
a. The intensity of synaesthesia as an orientation	107
b. The content of synaesthesia as an orientation	108
Quicker recognition	108
Aiding memory processes	108
A greater wealth of detail	114
Forms of synaesthesia	116
Synaesthetic spatiality as the basis for orientation	117
Classification – interpretation – evaluation	119
“Either-or” or “as well as”?	119
4. Determination of the position: a “tower of strength” or “inflexible framework”?	121

Part II Personal documentations	123
1 Synaesthesia as Orientation: Interview with Sabriye Tenberken	125
2 Torsten Fellner: Synaesthesia in Children: The Beginnings of Orientation?	134
Introduction and theory	134
Example 1: Aunt Leni ‘speaks blue’	135
Example 2: You’re playing the wrong notes!	136
Example 3: How do you spell that?	136
Closing remarks	138
3 Melanie Ahrling: My Colourful Internal System	139
The week as orientation system	139
The year and the months	141
Numbers and data	141
Historical dates and periods of time	142
Words and letters	143
Coloured hearing	144
Synaesthetic experiences and orientation in learning	146
Closing thoughts	147
4 Birgit Fork: My Second Birthday	150
Colourful insights – colourful realities	150
Coloured letters and numbers as orientation aids	151
Units of time – years – months – weeks – days – minutes	152
Closing thoughts with no conclusion	153
5 Judy de Chantal: Judy de Chantal and Synesthesia	155
My Synesthetic “maps”	157
More about my Synesthesia	159
My Synesthesia letters and numbers in colors and textures	160
Days of the week	161
The months and years	162
The age of the earth	162
Further notes	163
Sounds	164
An interesting thought	164
Appendix	165
6 Carol Steen: From Sound and Pain: Useful Colors	174
Synesthesia Secrets, and My Art	174
My Various Synesthetic Perceptions	175
Using My Synesthesia to Heal Myself	176
Notes from My Journal	178

7	Elisabeth Sulser: Coloured Notes and Sweet-Tasting Thirds.....	181
	Synaesthesia as orientation	181
	The discovery of coloured sounds.....	181
	The different forms of my synaesthesia	181
	Synaesthesia as an aid	184
	Synaesthesia as a part of myself.....	186
8	W. Joseph Long: Music And Colour.....	188
9	Talei Lakeland: Synaesthesia as Orientation when Playing an Instrument, Dancing and Reading	191
	Introduction.....	191
	Language.....	191
	Reading music.....	192
	Music	192
	Dance	193
	Synaesthesia.....	193
10	Jasmin Sinha: E is Not the Same as E, or: $8 + 8 = 19$	194
	1. The challenge of remembering strings of numbers	195
	2. Remembering names	196
	3. Foreign languages.....	197
	4. How to fail a maths test.....	198
	5. E and O.....	198
	6. Walking Down the Street (The Real Group).....	200
	7. A car accident and synaesthesia	203
11	Sean A. Day: In Search of a Means to Explore.....	209
12	Matthias Waldeck: Not to Read is Not to Understand! Or: The Importance of ‘Ticker Tapes’ in Conversation	213
13	Jennifer Maite: Synesthesia: A Pattern-Filled Perspective	215
14	Barbara Ryan: Encountering Language – Memories of Synaesthetic Decoding Systems in Childhood.....	220
	Part 1. Encountering Written English	220
	Learning to Read.....	224
	Part 2. Learning Foreign Languages	226
	Language Learning in Adult Life.....	229
15	Ursula Ramseier: From a Green “Gemse” to a Silver “Gämse” – The New German Spelling System.....	231
16	Alissa Maresa Rohrbach: Synaesthesia and Spelling.....	234

17 Harry Zingel: What on Earth is Synaesthesia?.....	236
My own personal learning strategy	236
Multifaceted perceptions	237
Synaesthesia and spelling.....	237
Synaesthesia and foreign language learning	238
Other connections?.....	238
18 Sarah H. Kirsch: Synaesthesia and Cooking.....	240
19 Michaela Supper: My Life with Synaesthesia BEFORE the Stroke and AFTER	243
My previous types of synaesthesia.....	245
Difficulties after the stroke	246
My current types of synaesthesia	247
Currently I find myself going through a phase of change	248
20 Marcia R. Smilack: Synesthesia: Straddling Layers of Consciousness.....	251
21 Patricia Lynne Duffy: Is There a Synesthete Sensibility?.....	255
Literature	261
Index.....	286
About the authors.....	291