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Sense-less Dreams Free Senses – Synaesthetic Aspects of Dreams and Writing: Walser and Soseki

In dream the dreamer recognises intimate experience intermingled with unpredictable switches and turns. Dream unfolds within the familiar an unknown sometimes surreal environment with an abrogated temporality. Is it an outbreak of Freudian covetousness or an emergence of the Lacanian imaginary? According to Lacan language is characterized by the symbolic, which suppresses the imaginary. Every language though contains metaphors that combine different domains of perception in a non – mimetic way.

When for example acoustic signals trigger optical or olfactory sensation, neurology speaks of synaesthesia. Recent research suggests that synaesthetic perception is not necessarily limited to synaesthetes: it is a stage of neurologic development in early childhood which can leave lasting traces. Synaesthesia can be experienced by many people in one way or another, e. g. by stimulants. Synaesthetic metaphors are rooted in our coenaesthetic perception ("the general feeling of inhabiting one's body that arises from multiple stimuli from various bodily organs" [Merriam – Webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/synaesthesia) Dictionary), that is why we accept and 'understand' them against logical, rational and scientific evidence. In my paper I will argue that first of all dream is coined by the multi – sensual constitution of human perception as Michel Serres describes in "Les Cinq Sens" (1985).

In dreams we are largely free of constricting cultural rules, be it morality, law, style or genre. Synaesthetic metaphors could be traced back to that multi – sensual experience. Whether Romantic or in the 'écriture automatique' of Surrealism, writers of all times were aiming for a style echoing dream. A comparative look at texts by Robert Walser and Natsume Soseki will examine that thesis of a synaesthetic dimension of language.