

ABSTRACT

In the perspective of the phenomenology of perception, the body is the subject of perception. This means that the body plays a fundamental role in the process of perception and in shaping human experience of the surrounding world. On the other hand, differently-abled bodies are often perceived by normative society as limited or deficient. However, according to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, every body possesses the capacity to perceive the world. Therefore, when differently-abled individuals are able to write novels as expressions of their embodied experiences, such practices should be understood as entirely natural. By viewing differently-abled authors as individuals with different abilities in perceiving the world, this study positions their novels as works that hold equal potential to stand alongside those produced by normatively perceived bodies.

Within this framework, the general aim of this study is to recognize the diversity of differently-abled individuals as a form of 'normal' variation and to open new possibilities for understanding and approaching differently-abled subjects within the aesthetics of literature. In this way, society is encouraged to move beyond viewing differently-abled individuals as burdens, misfortunes, or objects of pity, and instead to recognize them as creative subjects with unique capacities. By adopting the perspective that each body perceives differently, various forms of discrimination against differently-abled individuals may be minimized. In other words, this study constitutes an initial step toward addressing the aesthetic challenge of difference grounded in perception. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) describe the perceptual world of differently-abled authors in their novels; (2) examine the influence of this perceptual world on the aesthetics of their novels; and (3) explain the factors underlying the formation of both the perceptual world and the aesthetics of these works.

Involving nine differently-abled authors as research participants, this study integrates multiple analytical frameworks within a single interpretative structure to examine twelve selected novels as its primary data sources. The phenomenology of perception is employed to uncover the perceptual world of differently-abled authors; structuralism is used to analyze the aesthetic elements of the novels; and a genealogical-archaeological approach is applied to trace the socio-historical factors shaping both perception and aesthetics.

The findings reveal that: (1) the perceptual world of differently-abled authors reflects distinctive ways of perceiving the world, shaped by the intersection of diverse sensory and embodied experiences; (2) this perceptual world constructs a perception-based narrative aesthetics that opens new possibilities of intentionality in meaning-making; and (3) the factors underlying these distinctive perceptual worlds and aesthetics demonstrate that the body functions not only as the center of direct perception but also as a site of power and discourse in negotiating existential spaces in the world.

Keywords: experience, perception, differently-abled, embodimen