

Giving Gustatory Aesthetics Its Place at the Table

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Abstract : Vision and hearing have been given metaphysical, epistemic, moral and aesthetic preference over the gustatory senses since the very beginnings of Western philosophy. This unjustified prejudice has directed philosophical inquiry away from taste and smell and the values and interests of those concerned with them. The metaphysical and epistemic prejudices that have hindered work in this field are confronted by accepting an oblique invitation from David Hume to pursue a gustatory aesthetics of taste. A framework for further discussion of gustatory experience is added by arguing that taste and smell are cognitively configurable senses capable of bifurcated intentionality and that the taste perception of states of affairs is influenced both by culture and personal preference. Taste perceptions are revealed to admit an aesthetic standard. Using both a Humean aesthetic and a Brillat-Savarin-inspired understanding of taste can explain and discriminate between untrained and expert aesthetic taste experiences and contribute a perspective free from traditional prejudice for future work in the aesthetics of taste.

Keywords : aesthetics, Hume, Korsmeyer, taste, Scruton

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