Artikel: Educated tastes: En fænomenologisk tilgang til smag

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Introduktion:
Denne artikel undersøger smag i en fænomenologisk kontekst og præsenterer mulighederne for at benytte en fænomenologisk tilgang til smag indenfor rammen af uddannelsesteori. Ud fra denne tilgang opstår smag som en kompleks interaktion mellem alle sanser og som et samspil mellem erindringer og forventninger. I denne henseende er smagsoplevelser tegn på en privilegeret, men hidtil relativt uudforsket adgang til kognition. Det er et sanseligt møde, der omfatter læringsmuligheder ikke kun om smag, men også om andre emner gennem smag.

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Educated Tastes

Abstract
This paper explores taste in the context of phenomenology and outlines possibilities for situating a phenomenological approach to taste within the framework of educational theory. In such an approach, taste emerges as a complex interaction between all senses and as interplay between recollection and anticipation. In this respect, taste-experience is indicative of a privileged but hitherto relatively unexplored access to cognition. It is a sensory encounter that encompasses possibilities for learning, not only about taste but also about other subjects through taste.

Keywords
taste, phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty, Dewey, aesthetic learning-processes

Educated Tastes

"[…] the central problem of an education based on experience is to select the kind of present experience that lives fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences".[1] With this phrase, John Dewey pinpoints that the employment of experience in education is more than the use of enjoyable distractions providing transient moments of pleasure. Experience, in the context of education, must be selected in a way that provides opportunities for expanding the horizon of the pupils and initiates incentives for growth.[2] The question that inevitably arises out of this context is which experiences fulfil the outlined requirement.

Dewey is not particularly clear in this regard. From an overall perspective, the critique of the separation between thinking and experiencing in traditional education forms a focal point. This critique results in an insistence upon experience as a basis for thinking[3] and the importance of experience in order to shape meaning.[4] Such experience is not confined to a narrow conception of sensory impressions caused by the material world,[5] but points towards bodily embeddedness or tacit knowledge that is acquired through continuous

1 John Dewey. *Experience and Education.* (Indianapolis: Kappa Delta Pi Publications, 1938), 5.
2 Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 9.
3 John Dewey. *Democracy and Education.* (New York: The Macmillan Company,[1916] 1922), 180-181.
4 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 166-167.
5 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 180.

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trials and subsequent adjustments cumulating into the formation of richer experience.[6] In Dewey's words, it is a process of doing and undergoing in terms of interplay between passive reception and active trying.[7] A process that is meant to foster action that must then consciously be connected to consequence. It seems, hence, that the employment of experience in education is supposed to create encounters with the world through which the pupil is encouraged to discover the connection between things. Encounters with an inherent capacity for movement and change, thus opening the mind and fostering curiosity.[8] Even if such experience seems inescapably to be based on sensory impressions, the employment of the senses is largely left in the margins by Dewey. Sensory experience is acknowledged as a means to form impressions of colour, shape, texture, taste and other sensory qualities, but is seen as insufficient in order to acquire knowledge of the meaning of things.[9]

The idea of sensory experience as influential on the motivation for exploring and learning is, however, widely employed in schools. Experience through sight, hearing or tactility has been used in various subjects as approaches to works of art, dramatic narratives or physical objects such as utensils from past centuries[10] with the purpose of awakening curiosity and thereby encouraging learning by means of surprise, appeal or provocation. Smell and taste, however, seem seldom to transcend the function as sensory stimuli in classes involving cooking. This relatively narrow focus may conceal possibilities for employing taste in the wider context of educational activities. Taste is much more than the transient experience through which we can distinguish the five basic tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami. And, it is more than a capacity for expressing likes and dislikes or a differentiating concept with the capacity for separating 'good taste' from 'bad taste'. Taste is a way of experiencing our environment that offers a unique approach to learning, not only about taste in terms of the corporal encounter with edible goods, but also about other subjects through taste.

This may seem a rather eccentric note given the marginalised position of taste in the context of cognition throughout the history of philosophy. Not only taste, but sensory experience as a whole has been questioned. A questioning that is palpable in Plato's distinction between the world of material bodies and the world of forms[11] and is manifest in the Cartesian dualism that distinguishes between the clear and distinct ideas on one hand, and the unreliable sensory experience on the other hand.[12] Evidently, there have been proponents of sensory experience as the gateway to cognition. One such example is in John

6 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 166-167; Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 27.

7 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 163.

8 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 245.

9 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 35.

10 Peter Brodersen, "Oplevelse, fordybelse og virkelyst – et æstetisk perspektiv på undervisning". In *Oplevelse, fordybelse og virkelyst*, eds. Peter Brodersen, Thomas Illum Hansen and Thomas Ziehe (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2015), 25.

11 Plato. *Republic*, trans. Frances M. Cornford (Cambridge: Clarendon Press, 1941), 514a – 521b.

12 René Descartes. "Méditations métaphysiques". In *Discours de la méthode et Mediations metaphysiques* (Paris : Flammarion, [1637] 1900), 82-98.

Locke's allusion to the human mind as possessing no innate ideas,[13] but depending upon sensory experience in order to attain knowledge. The opposition between rationalists and empiricists embedded in this reference is commonly ascribed to the 17th and 18th century philosophers, though not always emphasising the complexity of the debate. What is clear, however, is that the debate largely ignored sensory experience in terms of the perception of what might be referred to in terms of beautiful qualities. In this context, Alexander Baumgarten's *Reflections on Poetry* represents a break in the sense that he positioned sensory experience – in his words, aesthetic sensibilities – within the sphere of cognition; as providers of knowledge that is different from logical reasoning, but nevertheless knowledge.[14] Though taste enters the sphere of cognition as a capacity for judgment with Baumgarten, taste in terms of the corporal, gustatory encounter with the world has for the most part been absent in philosophical discourse. Immanuel Kant offers a particularly clear example of this disregard in linking the gustatory experience to subjective pleasures guided by interest or desire, thus positioning the corporal experience in opposition to the intellectual pleasure in the aesthetic judgement that is believed to be valid for everyone.[15] There are exceptions, though. As in David Hume's work on the standards of taste where there is a parallelism between the corporal taste for the sweet or the bitter and the sensibility for beauty or deformity in the sense that both are rooted in human nature – both being demonstrated through the particular awareness of detail.[16] There can be little doubt that Kant's work has exercised great influence in the context of philosophical inquiry. Taste remains largely a concept employed in terms of aesthetic judgment, whereas the potential of the corporal, gustatory encounter with the world has been left relatively unexplored.

The interest of this paper is to explore taste in the context of phenomenology and to position this approach in the context of education. Hence, taste will be considered not only as an immediate sensory encounter with edible goods triggering likes or dislikes, but as sensory experience initiating learning *about* taste as well as *through* taste in its employment in educational activities. The paper will start by outlining the complexity of sensory experience with reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception*. In this context, the approach to our environment takes place in a synthesis of sensory impressions – not in the sense that sight, hearing, tactility, smell and taste are directed towards the same objects, but understood as a complex interplay between the contributions of each sense. Taste, however, is as good as absent in Merleau-Ponty's account for this interplay. Nevertheless, the following sections of the paper will use his insights as inspiration to

13 John Locke. *Philosophical works. Volume I.* (London: George Bell and Sons, [1689] 1892), 179-180.

14 Alexander Baumgarten. *Reflections on Poetry*, trans. Karl Aschenbrenner and William Holther (Berkeley : University of California Press, [1735] 1954), 78; Liselotte Hedegaard. "Filosofiske forståelser af smag". In *Perspektiver på smag*, eds. Liselotte Hedegaard and Jonatan Leer (Odense: Skriftserie Smag, 2017), 97.

15 Immanuel Kant. *Kritik der Urteilskraft.* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, [1793] 1974), B19-20/A19-20; Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 97.

16 David Hume. "Of the Standard of Taste". In: *Four dissertations* (London: A. Millar in The Strand, 1757), 217-220; Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 97.

the formulation of an outline of how the synthesis of taste-experience takes place and ask whether the complexity of taste might be indicative of a privileged access to cognition. The final part of the paper will take the previous sections as the point of departure for proposing a potential role for taste in educational activities. A role that merges a phenomenological approach to taste and an approach to learning based on experience. Not with the purpose of providing a full account for the employment of taste in education, but as initial considerations on the possibilities that taste offers in the context of education.

Merleau-Ponty's synthesis of sensory impressions

Throughout his *Phénoménologie de la perception,* Maurice Merleau-Ponty formulated a critique of the fragmented and rational understanding of sensory experience embedded in the empirical sciences and proposed an alternative understanding that stresses the pre-reflective encounter with the world. An encounter through which sensory experience is separated from the trivial appreciation of sight, sound and spatial movement, and is rearticulated as a synthesis uniting the sensory aspects and making them understandable.[17]

In this context, sensations are not understood in terms of being caused by external stimuli and sensory experience is not conceived as a compilation of mental states.[18] Sensory experience is embodied, and even if we can observe both the body of others and our own body, the body is not analogous with an object that can be studied according to the criteria of the empirical sciences. Instead Merleau-Ponty emphasised the body as the fundamental condition for experience in the sense that being an experiencing subject is being immersed in a persistent relationship with the world and the other beings in the world.[19] The attention is, hence, directed towards the subject of experience – not with the purpose of neglecting what the experience is directed towards, but as a change in interest through which the differentiation between the concrete experience of an intended object and the fundamental conditions for such experience is accentuated. In this perspective, Merleau-Ponty thematised our incomplete experience of our environment as a correlation of present and absent profiles that appear to us as recognisable due to our capacity for movement.[20] Or, to state it otherwise, it is our capacity for movement that is fundamental to the unity of senses that we encounter in the elementary form of sensory experience in which all senses partake and translate into one another without the need for interpretation.[21]

There is no explicit hierarchy among the senses in the *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Unlike Aristotle who positioned sight as superior to the other senses in the very first

17 Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 98.
18 Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phénoménologie de la perception.* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), 240.
19 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 113.
20 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 235.
21 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 271.

sentence in his *Metaphysics*[22] and Descartes who called sight the noblest of the senses,[23] Merleau-Ponty emphasised the equal importance of all senses in our encounter with the world.[24] Taking this into account, it is noticeable that Merleau-Ponty actually prioritised sight and the correlation of sight and movement. This synthesis is brought up in a number of varieties. It is exemplified in the recognition of a cube through the correlation of sight and the experience of mobility.[25] And, it is illustrated in the aforementioned acknowledgement of vision as limited due to the momentary position of the body, yet open to new perspectives through movement.[26] Furthermore, it is outlined in the context of experiments through which the correlation between sight and movement is altered.[27] Tactility is thematised in the context of sight and movement as a mode of apparition through which terms such as the rough and the smooth are understood,[28] and it is illustrated through the synthesis of sight and touch in the identification of a table as the same table that is seen by the eye and felt by the hand.[29] Audible perception is mentioned in passing when criticising the concept of sensation in the empirical sciences in the process of approaching a definition covering the correlation of sight and hearing as phenomena.[30]

When it comes to smell and taste, however, the thematisation is sparse – in the case of taste, it is even absent. There is no explicit justification for this disregard. As the dominant critique in the *Phénoménologie de la perception* is targeting the narrow understanding of sensory experience in the empirical sciences, a likely motivation for leaving the olfactory and the gustatory sensations in the margins may well be the limited scientific interest in these two senses. Sight, sound and touch are instrumental to the empirical sciences, whereas smell and taste are peripheral. In the *Phénoménologie de la perception*, smell is referred to merely as a part of phenomena that will come to existence only through the other senses, as in paintings where the smell of the landscape emanates from the canvas[31] and taste is mentioned just once without being thematised.[32]

An outline of the synthesis of taste-experience

The synthesis of sensory experience as it is presented in the *Phénoménologie de la perception* nevertheless provides a model-example of the complexity of the sensory encounter.

22 Aristotle. *Métaphysique*. I, trans. J. Tricot (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin. 2000), 980 a 21-25.
23 René Descartes. "La dioptrique". In: *Discours de la méthode, plus La dioptrique et Les meteores.* (Paris: Henri le Gras, [1637] 1658), A1.
24 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 260.
25 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 235.
26 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 250.
27 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 282-283; 311-312.
28 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 363-366.
29 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 266.
30 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 264-265.
31 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 368.
32 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 41.

Not only does it offer insights into the ways in which the senses merge the impressions and enable the cognition of external objects, it also draws the attention to the perception of one's own body as a facet of the same act.[33] This latter type of perception appears to be of particular relevance in the context of taste-experience, because the physical encounter in the mouth provides an exceptional case of sensation due to the actual dissolution of the object and the following incorporation.

When approaching taste as a synthesis of multiple impressions inspired by the works of Merleau-Ponty, taste stands out as a particularly complex experience that is much more than the immediate and transitory experience in the mouth. Each of the five senses contributes to the synthesis and they provide us with different aspects of the full experience. Nevertheless, we do not ordinarily contemplate the sensory impressions separately – in Merleau-Ponty's phrasing, such action requires a particular attitude that is different from the way in which we customarily perceive our environment.[34] In order to present the synthesis in a comprehensible manner, the following outline will focus on the contributions of each sense – separately and in combination with other senses. This is neither claiming that the sensory impressions are perceived in a specific order, nor asserting that the outline presents an exhaustive range of possibilities:

Sight presents food as an amalgamation of shapes and colours indicating the freshness of food-items, the progression of cooking-processes and the composition of food served on the plate or at the table. Our vision is partial, meaning that the food appears in one specific profile. We can, however, move the gaze or the body in order to make new profiles appear. In this process, the ability for movement contributes to the possibility of making the interplay between food-items and dishes emerge as a palatable whole. Tactility provides us with the capacity for making hitherto absent profiles of food-items or dishes available to the eye. In this context, movement is involved in the sense that we can examine a food-item by rotating it in our hands, thereby creating a succession of present and absent profiles. At the same time, the handling of the food-item enables a succession of tactile impressions through the hands indicating the tenderness of meat or the crispness of vegetables. Tactility, however, plays a role in the mouth as well. Here, impressions of the texture of food-items and dishes appear as mouth-feel, a type of sensation that changes in the process of chewing as the mechanical actions transform the food before swallowing. The olfactory sense enables the identification of ingredients such as spices, hence indicating the taste that will be discernible if we actually put the food into the mouth. Smelling is linked to tactility and movement in the sense that movement is needed in order to bring the food-items or dishes closer to the nostrils, whereas touch is needed in case it is the hands that are used to carry the food towards the face. Sound comes into play with the first bite and is closely connected to tactility as every possible texture is characterised by a specific sound. We experience the sound of crunchy food-items as sharp, the sound of liquid dishes as

33 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 237.

34 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 260-261.

slurping, the sound of tender ingredients as a soft squeaking. Only after the food is brought into the mouth-cavity is taste experienced as the impression that we commonly refer to as tasting and through which one or more of the five basic tastes: sweet, sour, bitter, salty or umami appear. In the course of the mechanical actions through which the food is gradually chewed and dissolved, different taste-profiles might stand out. The initial impression might be dominated by one basic taste, while another takes over when the food is crushed – and the remaining flavour after having swallowed the bite might be dominated by a lingering of a third basic taste.[35]

In Merleau-Ponty, as already indicated, the synthesis of the sensory impressions that enables the understanding of the intended object – in this example the food-item or the dish – does not take place in separated instants, but in a continuous process in which the present and absent profiles are merged into an understandable whole. Only then can we say that a food-item or a dish is *this* food-item or *this* dish. When combining these insights with the analysis of taste as a combination of direct, complete and reflected sensation as in Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du gout*,[36] new dimensions emerge. His account for the correlation of sensory impressions is not as elaborated as in Merleau-Ponty. His interest was to position gastronomy in the context of science by contemplating theoretically on sensory experience and in morality by separating the discernible gourmand from the uncivilised glutton.[37] Nevertheless, the two works complement each other in the sense that Merleau-Ponty lays out the foundations for the way in which we meet and understand our environment through sensory experience, while Brillat-Savarin contributes with insights into the reflections on taste.

In Brillat-Savarin, the five above-mentioned phases correspond to what he named the direct and complete sensations. In addition to these, he described a final phase, which he named the reflected sensation. This phase is where we contemplate the sensations in order to reach a final assessment – like or dislike at the most primitive level of assessment, verbally elaborated in the case of a more sophisticated response. Contrary to the outline of the synthesis of taste above, Brillat-Savarin limited the direct and complete sensations to the physiological process taking place in the mouth. But he was not oblivious to the influence of the other senses, in particular smell,[38] and he acknowledged sociability as significant to the reflected sensation.[39] This latter perspective is interesting in the sense that it seems to add a dimension to the synthesis articulated in *Phénoménologie de la perception*. A dimension that is hardly irrelevant in the context of tasting given the extensive amount of sources pointing out the cultural and social dimensions of eating – sources ranging from the mean-

35 Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 98-100.

36 Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. *Physiologie du goût ou méditations de gastronomie transcendante.* (Paris: Charpentier Librairie-Éditeur, 1865), 32.

37 Brillat-Savarin. *Physiologie du goût ou méditations de gastronomie transcendante,* 25, 305.

38 Brillat-Savarin. *Physiologie du goût ou méditations de gastronomie transcendante,* 30-31.

39 Brillat-Savarin. *Physiologie du goût ou méditations de gastronomie transcendante,* 162.

ing of commensality in the public meals in ancient Greece[40] to present-day accounts of the role of food in the shaping of identities.[41] This apparent lapse, however, does not mean that Merleau-Ponty ignored the influence of phenomena in the periphery of our attention. He referred to the surrounding world as a horizon that accompanies our perception permanently.[42] This horizon consists in the marginalising of certain profiles when directing the attention towards one particular profile of an object as well as in past profiles that fade and future profiles that emerge in the examination of an object.[43] There is, hence, a temporal perspective that seems particularly interesting because it emphasises the persistent relationship between us and the world as being a continuum in which the present is a product of the past and the future is an outcome of the present.[44] Neither former, nor future experiences are isolated mental activities that are added to the act of perceiving, but a continuous synthesis that is intimately linked to our consciousness.[45]

A particularly strong corporal imprint?

Out of this context, the questions emerge of whether the temporal perspective suggests an important influence of recollection and anticipation on the taste-experience and whether the multi-faceted nature of taste is indicative of a privileged but hitherto relatively unexplored access to cognition. The questions are closely intertwined – and neither Brillat-Savarin, nor Merleau-Ponty offer explicit responses.

Focusing on the question of temporality, there is a passage in Marcel Proust's *À la recherché du temps perdu* that is cited so often that it is almost a cliché. It might, however, offer more nuanced insights into the role of recollection and anticipation in the context of taste.[46] Despite being borrowed from a work of fiction, the passage nevertheless carries some philosophical weight. In the passage, Proust's narrator tastes a bite of a *madeleine* left on a spoon from which he sips some leftover tea and when tasting it he realises that the joy accompanying the sensory impression refers to the Combray of his early childhood. To Sunday mornings in the company of his aunt who let him taste small bits of *madeleine* soaked in tea. When struggling to recall the images of these mornings, he repeats the tasting-process, expecting to recreate the gustatory encounter and thereby coming to understand the emotional response to the taste of the *madeleine*. In the course of this process,

40 Pauline Schmitt Pantel. *La cité au banquet. Histoire des repas publics dans les cites grecques.* (Paris: Les classiques de la Sorbonne, [1988] 2011).

41 Maurice Bloch. "Commensality and poisoning". *Social Research.* 66:1 (1999): 133-149; Christy Shields-Argèles. "Imagining Self and The Other: Food and Identity in France and the United States". *Food, Culture and Society.* 7:2 (2004): 13-28.

42 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, VII-VIII.

43 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 82-83.

44 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 470.

45 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 473-474.

46 Marcel Proust. *À la recherché du temps perdu*, 1. *Du côté de chez Swann*. (Paris: Folio classique, Éditions Gallimard, 1988), 43-47.

he understands that the images are neither in him, nor in the cake. They are in the connection that is formed in the sensory encounter. And, he realises that the recollection is mediated by taste and not by sight as he remembers having seen the cakes in the windows at the bakery without having formed the link to his early childhood. What the passage reveals is that what might be called the traditional hierarchy of senses in the context of cognition is reversed. The position of taste as a gateway to cognition is reinforced at the expense of sight – it is in the moment where the narrator tastes the *madeleine*, not when he sees it, that he is overcome with emotion and up of his teacup emerges a past that is no longer retrievable except in the form of mental images. The strength of these images is articulated as a distinction between, on one hand, the recollection of physical objects that are reconstructed in a reflective process and recalled in the form of rather vague mental images and, on the other hand, the stronger and more persistent recollection through taste. Hence, Proust suggests that in recollection the images of physical objects having appeared to the eyes are vague, while taste initiates a different kind of recollection that is stronger and more persistent, even if it is also more delicate. Furthermore, he implies interplay between recollection and anticipation in the sense that anticipation is a product of recollection – it is in the recreation of a former gustatory encounter that Proust's narrator anticipates a pathway towards understanding the emotional impact of re-taste.[47]

In the question of whether the multi-faceted nature of taste is indicative of a privileged but hitherto relatively unexplored access to cognition, the interplay between recollection and anticipation provides another component to the synthesis of the sensory impressions. An additional facet that might provide a basis for implying a particular strength in the taste-experience as indicated in Proust. The synthesis of an external object, a cube as an example, is also a synthesis of multiple sensory impressions in which the prior encounter with the object plays a role in the determination of the cube as a cube. What is it then that should make taste a stronger vehicle for cognition than sight or tactility or hearing or smell? Incorporation comes to mind. It was mentioned previously that the physical encounter that takes place in the mouth provides an exceptional case of sensation. It is a particular instance of the interplay between the perception of external objects and the perception of one's own body. Contrary to sight, as an example, where the intentional act is directed towards the external object and not one's own eyes, taste involves both the external object and the bodily sensation in the mouth. In the process that takes place in the mouth the food transforms significantly, culminating in the moment of incorporation. At this moment, the tasted food ceases to be an object. It enters the body and transforms into being part of the body. The corporal imprint left by this kind of sensation is, hence, of an entirely different nature than the lingering but vague images and effects derived from sight, sound and touch.

47 Liselotte Hedegaard. *The Taste of Place*. (Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, 2016), 77-78.

Learning about and through taste

If, as put forward by Dewey, the task in education is to select the kind of present experience that provides opportunities for expanding the horizon of the pupils and inspire them to personal growth, then the question that arises out of the previous pages is how the apparent strength of experience through taste translates into educational activities. As already mentioned, a body of works referring to the employment of sensory experience in educational activities already exists. Such activities are often referred to as aesthetic learning-processes. However, aesthetics is a concept that is used in numerous contexts and not always with the same meaning, hence conceptual clarification seems relevant.[48]

In the context of this paper, aesthetics is to be understood in terms of '*aisthesis*', meaning that aesthetics is more than a concept to be used in the context of art – it is about what we perceive, observe, notice and grasp.[49] Aesthetics is, hence, also more than a question of what is considered beautiful or tastefully arranged as it is often understood in everyday language. It is about sensory experience in a broad sense. In this broad sense, the capacity for separating various forms of experience is relevant, not the least because the English language leaves little room for distinguishing by means of language alone. In German language, there is a difference between experience in terms of '*Erlebnis*' and in terms of '*Erfahrung*'. Experience in the sense of '*Erlebnis*' emerges in our immediate and pre-conceptual encounter with the world[50] and is characterised by taking place in a limited time-frame. Experience in the sense of '*Erfahrung*' takes place in processes through which a thematisation of present and previous encounters with the world takes place, paving the way for new understandings.[51] This is not something that is merely subjective experience, but something that happens in the interplay with others.[52] Aesthetic experience in the context of '*Erlebnis*' and '*Erfahrung*' is, hence, to be understood in terms of either an immediate and temporally delimited encounter or a process through which the thematisation of experience contributes to new understandings. Lastly, a broad understanding of aesthetics encompasses aesthetic judgment – not merely in the form of assessing what is beautiful, pleasant or delicious, but as judgment regarding the whole spectre of sensory impressions. Whether such judgment is passed by means of rationality or emotion has been discussed in the course of the history of philosophy. The strongest position being that of Immanuel Kant, to who the aesthetic judgment referred to a human ability to perceive objects in a disinterested manner and, hence, reach universally valid judgments.

Transferring these insights to the field of educational activities, aesthetic experience in terms of '*Erlebnis*' might seem irrelevant due to the temporal limitations. However, taking

48 Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 101.

49 Carsten Friberg. "Æstetik som 'aisthesis'". In: *Æstetisk erfaring*, red. Ole Thyssen, (Copenhagen: Forlaget Samfundslitteratur, 2005), 109.

50 Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik.* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, [1960] 2010), 67; Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* 269.

51 Gadamer. *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 359.

52 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception,* XV.

the afore-mentioned strength of the corporal imprint into account, this kind of aesthetic experience is interesting in the context of learning-processes because situations can be formed in the classroom that exercise an influence on the pupils and initiate reactions towards non-conceptualised impressions. Such experience is instantaneous and is quickly followed by identification, but before this identification there is a short window of time that calls upon the attention of the perceiver and influences his/her view of things and situations.[53] It is this attention or directedness towards a kind of disturbance that taste-experience can offer when integrated into the classroom as a means of prompting the curiosity of the pupils. This can take place through unexpected stimuli such as opening a class in physics/chemistry with a tasting of red cabbage. The means to catch the attention of the pupils is the glimpse of unrecognizability when the cabbage is presented in a range of different colours. This way of catching their attention is then subsequently used to let the pupils experiment with various recipes, thereby fulfilling learning-goals in physics/chemistry regarding pH-values and in home-economics regarding experiments in cooking involving the physical/chemical properties of foods.[54] The instantaneous encounter can also take place through puzzlement such as presenting the pupils with historical artefacts and local herbs – and utilise the attention prompted by surprise to guide the pupils towards specific learning-goals through the production and seasoning of mustard. In this case, the unexpected introduction of mustard-production can be followed by a session, in which they are asked to produce a commercial, promoting their mustard in order to meet learning-goals in the Danish language through the use of dramatic or interactive devices in media, and in history through the knowledge and understanding of the impact of historical events on local areas.[55]

Aesthetic experience in terms of '*Erfahrung*' may seem more adequate in the context of education as it refers to processes in which present and previous experience is thematised, thus forming a basis for new insights. According to Dewey, it is crucial that such processes apply to the principle of continuity in the sense that the knowledge and skill gained has the capacity for becoming instruments of understanding and mastering in future situations.[56] This can take place with reference to the afore-mentioned synthesis of sensory impressions through which the awareness of the contribution of each sense to the palatable whole modifies the quality of the experiences that follow because the pupil gradually acquires tools for discerning. In the classroom, the exploration of the role of each of the senses in the taste-experience is not limited to classes involving cooking, but speaks into the context of several other subjects. The role of sight can be explored by letting the pupils choose an apple from a larger bowl of different types of apples. Presumably, they will observe the

53 Friberg. *Æstetik som 'aisthesis'*, 131-132; Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 102.

54 Smag for Livet. *Rødkålen, der skifter farve* Accessed on December 14th 2017: http://www.smagforlivet.dk/materialer/pr%C3%B8v-selv-r%C3%B8dk%C3%A5len-der-skifter-farve.

55 Smag for Livet. *Smag i alle fag.* Accessed on December 14th 2017: http://www.smagforlivet.dk/sites/default/files/documents/Smag%20i%20alle%20fag.pdf . 2016.

56 Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 13-14.

bowl of apples from various perspectives or take up different apples before choosing one. When each of the pupils has chosen an apple, the teacher can ask them to consider why they chose this particular one and discuss the considerations with their classmates. In this way, the preconceptions of the pupils are activated in the sense that they are likely to realise that previous taste-experiences have played a role in their choice – that they have sought to identify an apple with an exact colour, assuming that red apples are sweet, whereas green apples are acidic.[57] The role of hearing and tactility can come about by asking the pupils if they can mention food-items and dishes that are supposed to be crispy and what happens when they are not. Again, the pupils are likely to realise that their preconceptions determine the expectations linked to taste-experiences. In both cases, the awareness of the role of sight, hearing and touch will contribute to a modification of the quality of the experiences to follow. And, furthermore, the activities serve as instruments to meet learning-goals related to exploration and vocabulary in nature/technology and related to dialogue and linguistic awareness in Danish language. In continuation of such activities, the pupils can work with the creation of a language for taste by participating in situations in which they are part of open dialogues concerning what is called to mind by tasting either known or unknown food-items. In such activities, the pupils can be asked to express associations derived from prior experience in the form of essays, photos or video-clips as the basis of dialogues. In these processes, the principle of continuity applies in the sense that associations may establish connections that passed as unnoticed previously. Recollection may unfold as anticipation of future experience or it might trigger an emotional response through which the pupil is enabled to connect the present taste-experience with a place visited or an event having taken place at an earlier point in time. In this way, internal factors such as remembrance or expectation intermingle with external factors related to the tasting, thereby making up a model-example of the principle of interaction.[58] The communicative skills gained by sharing with other pupils the images that specific tastes bring forth or presenting these in larger forums might inspire personal growth in the sense that presenting what is called to mind by tasting provides tools for the participation in open dialogues in which listening and expressing carry equal weight.

Aesthetic judgment in terms of the assessment of sensory impressions is not merely a question of aesthetic appreciation, positioning aesthetic experience in the context of good manners and good taste as it is referred to in Dewey's work.[59] Rather, aesthetic judgment is positioned in the sphere between objective and subjective judgment. As mentioned above, Kant regarded the aesthetic judgment as universal based on the presumption that objects can be perceived in a disinterested manner – that is, without ascribing any personal needs or particular interests to them. In this sense, the aesthetic judgment is subjective because it is embedded in subjective experience, but objective because it is based on the

57 Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 103.
58 Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 12-13.
59 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 21.

qualities of a specific object.[60] Transferring this to the context of education, the teacher can introduce a tasting of broad beans or similar types of large beans. First, the pupils can be asked to express their subjective judgment, in which case it is likely that they will come up with different expressions. Some might connect the taste to specific dishes or events, while others might limit their answers to expressions of like or dislike. Afterwards, the teacher can introduce the technical terms for the physical/chemical properties of food to the pupils.[61] When turning the attention towards these technical terms, the pupils will experience that regardless of their subjective experience, there is a precise vocabulary referring to properties inherent in food-items: in this case that the beans are mealy. In addition, the communicative skills gained in this context provide tools for understanding the distinction between everyday language and a precise terminology. Thereby learning-goals in Danish language concerning communication and interpretation are met as well as learning-goals in nature/technology regarding technical vocabulary and in home-economics regarding knowledge of ingredients. Furthermore, the exercise enables the pupils to surpass the spontaneous judgment of likes or dislikes and to qualify their judgment regarding taste.

Educated tastes

Though limited in scope, these examples suggest that taste can be employed not only as a means to learn *about* taste, but also as a point of departure for learning *through* taste. The multi-facetted experience unfolding in the course of the sensory encounter provides a framework within which activities encouraging cumulative growth can be selected. The pupils can learn *about* taste when exploring the particular attention required in separating the contribution of each of the senses in the process of tasting, they can learn about basic tastes and they can learn about properties in food-items influencing the taste-experience. Furthermore, the pupils can learn about other subjects *through* taste when sensory experience is employed with the purpose of setting the stage for acquiring knowledge and skills in a variety of subjects ranging from home-economics to nature/technology, Danish language or any other subject.[62]

The specific contribution of a phenomenological approach within the framework of Dewey's educational theory lies in the combination of a more nuanced understanding of experience as an amalgamation of a synthesis of sensory impressions and the influence of the horizon that accompanies our perception permanently with a practice-based approach to learning. When taste makes up the focal point, the sensory experience transforms food-items into tools for analysis, craftsmanship and communication. The pupils can analyse

60 Hedegaard, *Filosofiske forståelser af smag*, 104.

61 Smag for Livet. *Teksturkort*. Accessed on December 14th 2017: http://www.smagforlivet.dk/materialer/teksturkort-s%C3%A5dan-kan-du-beskrive-hvordan-maden-f%C3%B8les-i-munden.

62 Smag for Livet. *Smag i alle fag.* Accessed on December 14th 2017: http://www.smagforlivet.dk/sites/default/files/documents/Smag%20i%20alle%20fag.pdf . 2016.

various properties and their impact on the taste-experience, they can translate this experience into cooking-skills and they can use their knowledge in communicative processes. There is, hence, indications of a double benefit by employing taste in educational activities. On one hand, the focus on taste seems to point towards wide possibilities for experimentation and creativity within the framework of education regulated by learning-goals. And, on the other hand, the de-contextualisation of food from questions of nourishment and health seems to provide opportunities for transforming food from a battleground into a valuable tool for learning,