

**David Monroe: The Second Tongue: Michel Serres on Taste and Knowledge
Staffordshire University; St. Petersburg College**

In his seminal work on perceptual experience, *The Five Senses*, Michel Serres offers a sophisticated, nuanced and rich discussion of the sense of taste. Despite the lushness of Serres' work on taste, there is little elaboration by Anglophone scholars of his corpus, and, surprisingly, scant attention from contemporary philosophers of taste and gustatory aesthetics. The aim of this paper is to explore Serres' account of taste and its relation to knowledge, with the hope of drawing attention to the significance of his work.

I begin by sketching a basic understanding of the "second tongue" in *The Five Senses*, contrasting Serres' conception of taste's role as a sensory modality with that traditionally assumed through the history of western thought. From there, I will outline the problem of the seeming relativity, either subjectively or culturally, of judgments associated with taste, framing them as challenges Serres aims to overcome. The remainder of the paper focuses on how taste is able to make contact with reality and is able to provide genuine knowledge.