

John Maier

The Evaluative Dimension of Dispositional Properties

What is it for something to be edible, or for someone to be loveable? Like paradigm dispositional properties, such as fragility and solubility, edibility and lovability are properties that outrun the actual history of their bearers: an edible apple might never be eaten, and a loveable person might never be loved. Yet standard accounts of dispositional properties are inadequate as accounts of edibility and lovability (and similar properties). For these properties have an evaluative dimension that such accounts miss: at first pass, something is edible just in case it is fit to be eaten, and someone loveable just in case she is fit to be loved. Having rejected the prospect of extending standard accounts of dispositional properties to edibility and lovability, I consider how the present account of edibility and lovability might instead be extended to dispositional properties. On such an account, such properties have an (often suppressed) evaluative dimension, and their relationship to modality is more indirect than is commonly supposed.