

What Is Tradition?

A phenomenological study of how tradition is kept alive in the context of local food

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ABSTRACT | This paper aims at presenting an initial inquiry into the meaning of tradition through a study of how tradition is preserved in the context of foods that are rooted in local history. The framework is a phenomenological approach, supplemented with interdisciplinary insights. Departing from definitions of tradition in selected academic disciplines, the paper presents a phenomenological study of tradition. It involves three dimensions of tradition. The corporal dimension of tradition addresses the corporal “I can” as a *savoir-faire* that is essential to the mastering of a traditional craft. The sensory dimension of tradition is directed at the complexity of taste-experience and the syntheses that allow for understanding taste as a palatable whole and for establishing connections to a social reality. The emotional dimension of tradition uses the strength of taste-experience as the point of departure for examining the sentiments of identification and attachment that are linked to tradition. Together the three dimensions add a layer of incorporated knowledge, skill and sentiment that works at a pre-reflective level but has fundamental impact on our relationship to the past – and thereby our understanding of tradition.

KEYWORDS | Tradition; Local Food; Phenomenology, *Savoir-Faire*, Taste; Identification

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“[...] un lien particulier entre l'éleveur, l'animal, ses produits et la montagne, (un lien qui fonde) l'identité régionale.” (Lizet 1998, p. 36)

1 Introduction

Cultural heritage has received increasing attention over the past decades. In the context of food, traditional craftsmanship such as the seasonal droving of live-stock in the Alpine areas and Korean kimchi-making as well as social practices such as the French gastronomic meal and the Japanese *Washoku* are protected by conventions (UNESCO 2003). Food products inscribed in local cultural practices are protected by labelling schemes in order to protect producers and honour the quality of place-related products (Jacquet 2009; Bérard and Marchenay 2004, pp. 45–48; Hedegaard 2018), to conserve traditional knowledge (Tashiro, Uchiyama, and Kohsaka 2018) or to support socio-economic developments (Heng and Chheang 2017). Such practices and products are often presented as our legacy from the past and what we pass on to future generations, but recent policy recommendations attest that they are seen as means to encourage economic growth through tourism as well (CoR 2015). The effort to safeguard and the commercial agenda are not mutually exclusive, but it raises questions regarding the interplay between the rootedness of foods in the history of a local area and the (hi)stories attached to foods in order to add commercial value to a product.

In this context, tradition constitutes an interesting research theme. It implies continuity in the sense that it bridges the past and the present – and presumably the future due to the intentions of passing cultural practices on to future generations. There are potential pitfalls, however. If tradition becomes a mere repetition of the past, it risks becoming a folkloristic cliché (Ricoeur 1961). And, if seen only as a commercial agenda, tradition easily transforms into storytelling. Despite such challenges, tradition as a phenomenon is intriguing. It constitutes a reference to a shared past, but how is this past remembered? Individual recollection does not seem sufficient as it is unique to every single human being and limited to individual lifetime. It seems, hence, that tradition implies the existence of historical memory, but who is the subject of such memory? How does tradition become a collective reference and how is it maintained?

This paper aims at presenting an initial inquiry into the meaning of tradition through a study of how tradition is preserved in the context of foods that are rooted in local history. Hence, it is not the intention to address the outlined questions in their entirety. The framework will be a phenomenological approach, sup-

plemented with interdisciplinary insights. The first part of the paper will ask what tradition is and use approaches to tradition in other academic disciplines as a point of departure for the phenomenological study. The second part of the paper will present a preliminary phenomenological study of tradition within the context of local foods. This part will use the Abondance cheese as an example and relate the manufacturing of this cheese to three dimensions of tradition: the corporal dimension, the sensory dimension and the emotional dimension. Since the aim of this paper is to study the preservation of tradition, the third part will use the preceding parts of the paper to outline how tradition is kept alive.

2 What Is Tradition?

But what is tradition? A number of academic disciplines have addressed this question. In historical studies, tradition has been viewed as structures, for instance economies, institutions and cultural practices, that remain stable over time within a given area (Braudel 1966, pp. 7–8, pp. 498–499). In anthropology, tradition has been approached as a system of handed over patterns that communicate meaning (Geertz 1973, pp. 10–13) or as practices and relations created with the purpose of establishing steady points of reference in increasingly complex living conditions (Appadurai 1996, p. 44). In the field where ethnology and agronomy intersect, tradition has been studied through culturally embedded production methods (Bérard and Marchenay 2004). And geographical studies have engaged in studying tradition and cultural identity with regards to the ‘terroir’ (Pitte 1999). Across definitions, the overall consensus points towards tradition as referring to a past that groups of people share, that has emotional impact and is related to places. In line with the aforementioned interplay between commercial agendas and rootedness in local areas, it is noticeable that tradition has a dual reference as well, in the sense that it can refer to a genuine historical past as well as invented practices (Hobsbawn 1983). Common to these approaches is that tradition is studied as objects, structures or cultural practices, meaning that the studies are about representations of tradition. At a deeper layer, however, human experience is involved as objects, structures and cultural practices are attributed meaning. In this context, a study of tradition transforms into a questioning of the nature of memory, because – paraphrasing Maurice Merleau-Ponty – it is concerned with not only the subject’s temporal experience, but also with a social horizon and with a collective history that the subject passes on (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 495). In this respect, phenomenology seems to constitute a particularly relevant approach to study tradition.

Nevertheless, phenomenological research has shown limited interest in tradition. There is mentioning of a *Gemeingeist* (Husserl 1965, p. 55) through which the subject is embedded in a historical context that surpasses subjective experience. And there is reference to a distinction between the collectivity in the continuous progression of civilization over the *longue durée* and that of the fragmented and pluralistic development of cultures (Ricoeur 1961). This indicates that tradition refers to a phenomenon that situates the subject in a social reality. It involves historical memory in the sense that there is a historical context that cannot be recalled in a strict sense but resides in handed over artefacts and narratives (Schutz 1972, p. 209). But there are questions regarding the ways in which the past can be recalled that remain unanswered.

Two phenomenological works outline a way of approaching the unanswered questions through a study of the act of commemoration, namely Edward Casey's work on remembering and Paul Ricoeur's work on representations of the past (Casey 2000; Ricoeur 2000). According to Casey, commemoration provides a reference to people and/or events that have taken place in the past and have had important impact on society, for instance the ceremonies honouring the fallen soldiers on D-Day in Normandy. None, or very few, attending such ceremonies have actual recollection of the event and, hence, he asks what historical memory is. He accentuates that recollection is involved in the sense that even if the subject has no recollection of the actual commemorated event, there is recollection of the historical narrative of the event and perhaps of being present at former commemorations (Casey 2000, pp. 216ff.). In this respect, it is also a shared experience of being gathered with a particular purpose. In addition to being marked by such purpose, both Casey and Ricoeur refer to commemoration as events that are being held in a particular way, are associated with specific places and with a fixed time in the calendar (Casey 2000, p. 218; Ricoeur 2000, pp. 51–52). But Ricoeur adds to the account that the historical memory embedded in commemoration ought to be considered with caution as accounts of the past are selective in the sense that certain perspectives are chosen at the expense of other perspectives, thus risking what he refers to as an abuse of history (Ricoeur 2000, pp. 104–105). Consequently, commemoration illustrates the aforementioned point that there are questions regarding the interplay between subjective recollection, shared experience and historical memory that remain unresolved.

In other words, when studying tradition there is reference to a past that retains an impact in the present and there is questioning as to how individual recollection is associated with historical memory; precisely as in the examples concerning commemoration. Furthermore, when studying tradition in conjunction with local food, the risk of abusing tradition reappears in the aforementioned interplay be-

tween the historical rootedness of local foods and the (hi)stories attached to foods in order to add commercial value. How is it possible to distinguish clearly between the two? And, if insisting on tradition being different from storytelling, is there a risk of signing up to an understanding of tradition as static and primordialist? One way of addressing these questions is to study the role of food in the preservation of tradition through a phenomenological approach.

3 Outline of a Phenomenological Approach to Tradition and Local Foods

To approach this preservation of tradition and to support the phenomenological investigation of tradition, the production of the Abondance cheese will serve as an example. The Abondance originates in the French Haute-Savoie. It is considered a local speciality, rooted in the terroir and, hence, carrying both natural and cultural significance. The Abondance obtained an “*Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée*” in 1990, but the production of this type of cheese in the area can be traced back to medieval times (Lizet 1998). The production requires a specific race of cattle, and it requires migration of the cattle through the high-altitude pastures during the summer, roughly from late May to mid-September. In these months in the high pastures, the cattle must be milked at various times during the day and night in order to produce the cheese on-site. A manufacturing-process that is carried out manually and requires considerable experience. One example is that the curdling time has to be determined after each milking as the coagulation-processes vary with the type of herbs available to the cattle and the composition of the herd in terms of age and physical status – a process that is carried out by plunging the hand into the fresh curd to determine the stage of curdling. Other examples are the adjustment of the drainage to achieve the desired texture in the cheeses, the second extraction that is carried out by the use of cloth and adjusted according to the presumed number of cheeses to produce, the addition of salt after twenty-four hours and the process of refinement of the crust achieved by the use of a cheese smear during the process of ripening (Bérard and Marchenay 2004, pp. 33–34).

There are, however, other ways of producing an Abondance cheese. With an enlargement of the zone of production, the natural barriers for production have been minimised and thus allowing for year-round industrial production (Bérard and Marchenay 2004, pp. 34, 77). The industrially produced Abondance can bear the name but does not have to conform to the locally embedded cultural practices of manufacturing. In other words, there is a double standard for the Abondance cheese: one that can claim its origin in the alpine pastures of the Haute-Savoie

and one that can claim its provenance in the Haute-Savoie. Origin and provenance are not the same, however (Hedegaard 2018). Origin is more than simply issuing from a place. The AOC-labelled Abondance constitutes an example of a local food connecting the farmer, the cattle, the alpine pastures and the cheese - a link that communicates a regional identity through taste and typicity (Lizet 1998, p. 36; Hedegaard 2018).

To approach a more detailed understanding of what makes the manual manufacturing of the Abondance a tradition, there is a need to move beyond the statement *that* a local food produced according to inherited practices constitutes a bond between a region and its people. Instead, by putting the human perspective at the centre, a gateway is provided to understand *how* tradition is maintained and *how* meaning is attributed to tradition. In the context of an inherited cultural practice as the production of the Abondance, the human perspective can be studied by focusing on the corporal skills making up the *sine qua non* for mastering a traditional manufacturing method, the sensory experience underpinning the embeddedness of the food in a collective history and the emotional attachment fostered by traditional local foods.

4 Corporal Dimensions of Tradition

Using the manufacturing of the Abondance as a point of departure, there can be little doubt that corporal skill is involved. In a phenomenological study, such skill is not merely understood in terms of a bodily capability that can be observed and described. The interest is in the fundamental structures of experience - and experience is corporal. This means that being an experiencing subject is being situated in a persistent relationship with the world and with other beings in the world (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 113). And, it means that rather than encountering the world through an “I think,” our most fundamental experience originates in an “I can” (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 160).

4.1 Savoir-Faire

This “I can” is experienced in everyday life. We are capable of talking, walking, eating and interacting without having to re-learn at every instance. These corporal skills are available and ready to be mobilised whenever needed (Ricoeur 2000, p. 32). In this sense, such everyday skills constitute a type of savoir-faire. However, savoir-faire unfolds at multiple levels. With a cursory reference to Bergson, such everyday skills resemble what he refers to as “*mémoire-habitude*”, the actions that are repeated according to a certain pattern and gradually transformed

into memorised lessons or incorporated movements (Bergson 1903, p. 76). There are no specific references in such skills; they are mere skills, available at all times and indispensable in our daily lives. This, however, does not mean that incorporated repetitive action is carried out in a void. The surrounding world is a horizon that accompanies our perceptions and actions permanently (Merleau-Ponty 1945, pp. VII–VIII). This horizon not only leads us to marginalise certain profiles when directing our attention towards objects, it also situates our experience in a temporal perspective where the relationship to the world appears as a continuum in which the present is a product of the past and the future is an outcome of the present (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 470). In this sense, a *savoir-faire* can have a historical reference.

Transferring this latter type of *savoir-faire* to the manufacturing of the Abondance cheese, the mastering of each part of the process represents such repetitive action that is embedded in a historical horizon. The determination of the stage of curdling, the physical handling of the second extraction, the addition of salt and all the other manual procedures are skills that are incorporated as a tacit knowledge. It is not about conjuring up an image of an action that has been carried out on previous occasions and then repeating it, but a corporal dimension that cannot be translated into an image or a verbal expression, precisely because it is incorporated (Merleau-Ponty 1945, pp. 167–168). This kind of *savoir-faire* is about corporal knowledge in the sense of being a pre-reflective and pre-articulate dimension of experience that is rooted in previous encounters of a similar type (Casey 2000, p. 149). But the horizon of this *savoir-faire* is enriched by the history of the region and the cultural practices connected to the manufacturing of the Abondance.

4.2 Temporal Dimensions of Savoir-Faire

Based on this view of *savoir-faire*, the mastering a traditional craft consists in the acquisition of a corporal habit – an incorporated “I can” that is accompanied by a horizon that positions the craft in the past and the present at the same time. This temporal dimension is significant because it sets the traditional craft apart from mere repetitive action. The type of *savoir-faire* that is fundamental to the manufacturing of the Abondance is repetitive in the sense that there is a set of skills that is needed in order to perform the various actions, for instance the determination of the curdling. But it is at the same time a craft that represents historically embedded cultural practices. It is not just a specific way of performing a set of tasks, but a living cultural heritage which means that the horizon accompanying perceptions and actions is open to variation, for instance when working on the refinement of the crust during the ripening process.

Acquiring the necessary corporal knowledge is, hence, more than repeating a set of actions. It is learning and doing in the present with reference to a past through specific manoeuvres that are rooted in tradition. This handing over of a traditional craft may be communicated directly through participation (Schutz 1972, pp. 182–183). It can take place between close relations, either family or community, in which case it represents a way of working alongside someone who already possesses the corporal skill. In this process, experience is made, repeated action allows for incorporation of skills and a horizon for possible variation is provided. The handing over can also be communicated through historical sources (p. 209). These may consist in narratives and descriptions, discarded tools or written testimonials. Contrary to the participatory handing over, there is no acquisition of corporal skill, but rather a conscious establishment of a horizon of knowledge to accompany the corporal skill. The two ways of handing over of tradition are not mutually exclusive, but they refer to ways in which the inclusion into a social reality consisting of contemporaries and predecessors takes place.

5 Sensory Dimensions of Tradition

As mentioned earlier, the AOC-labelled Abundance constitutes an example of a local food manufactured according to tradition, that communicates a regional identity through taste and typicity. In a phenomenological study, taste is not merely a sensation caused by external stimuli and resulting in a compilation of mental states (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 240). This fragmented understanding of sensory experience is characteristic of the empirical sciences, whilst a phenomenological study brings forth the complexity of our sensory encounter with the world. This complexity has the capacity for shedding light on how taste is indispensable in uniting the subject with a collective history.

5.1 Taste as Sensory Experience

The complexity of taste-experience resides in our incomplete experience, meaning that our experience of our surroundings unfolds as a correlation between present and absent profiles that we are capable of making appear in a continuous process where different profiles are synthesised into an understandable whole (Merleau-Ponty 1945, pp. 270–272; Hedegaard 2019). All senses are part of this synthesis and in the process – to paraphrase Merleau-Ponty – they translate into one another without the need for interpretation (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 271). When considering taste as a synthesis of multiple sensory impressions, it emerges as being

much more than a transitory experience in the mouth. Each of the five senses contributes to the synthesis and provides a range of aspects that merge into the full taste-experience. Vision provides shapes and colours indicating the ripeness of a fruit, the progress of a cooking-process etc. Tactility offers not only impressions communicated through the use of our hands when for instance examining the viscosity of a soup, but also impressions in the mouth where the texture changes in the process of mastication. The olfactory sense enables us to identify ingredients and informs about possible decay. Sound is closely related to tactility as every texture has a sound when being prepared and when the first bites are taken. Only at the point in which the food enters the mouth is taste as it is most commonly referred to part of the experience, providing impressions that we experience as basic tastes. In all these profiles, the horizon of experience intervenes in the sense that past experience blends with the present and enables us to form expectations and to pronounce judgements of taste (Hedegaard 2019).

Transferring this synthesis of sensory impressions to the manufacturing of the Abondance, all senses contribute to the course of the process – from leading the cattle to the alpine pastures to the final taste-profile of the cheese. Vision and smell provide impressions enabling the identification of herbs and thereby guides the migration of the cattle to higher or lower pastures. Tactility is essential when the hand is plunged into the fresh curd to get an impression of the stage of curdling. And tactility merges with sound when the cheese smear is used to refine the crust in the process of ripening. Taste in terms of basic tastes play a less prominent role in the manufacturing process but is crucial for the palatable whole of the finished cheese. The step in the manufacturing process where basic tastes intervene is when salt is added to the curd. However, rather than making up a literal, gustatory experience, taste is guiding the corporal gesture that accompanies the salting. This corporal gesture is the manifestation of a knowledge that is literally at hand – a gesture that allows the correct salting with a swipe of the hand. This interplay between sensory experience and corporal knowledge is present throughout the manufacturing-process in the sense that gestures and actions are carried out to bring forth the desired gustatory qualities. This synthesis does not transpire in a void either. The horizon that accompanies our perceptions and actions provides a temporal perspective – a blend of past and present profiles that indicate a collective history.

5.2 Time and Taste

In other words, there is a temporal dimension in the sensory synthesis that unites the experiencing subject with the past. This embeddedness of experience in a

temporal dimension adds to the complexity of the gustatory experience, but it also provides insights into the ways in which sensory experience may be shared. This is basically what Marcel Proust's narrative of the taste of the madeleine tells us (Proust 1988/1913, pp. 44–47; Hedegaard 2019). The passage in the book refers to a moment when the narrator tastes the small cake and through the taste-experience is transported back to his childhood, the people who populated it and the place that he associates with the taste. What Proust essentially tells us about taste is that the momentary sensory experience can connect the subject to a collective history. Meaning that taste-experience not only serves as a gateway to individual recollection, but it provides access to a social world through the references to people and places (Hedegaard 2018).

In the context of the Abondance, the temporal dimension of taste emerges in various ways. There is a close association to the temporal dimensions of *savoir-faire* which is unsurprising insofar as taste-experience involves corporal ability. However, taste-experience not only influences the manufacturing-process, it also relates to the finished food product. In terms of the manufacturing-process, there can be little doubt that the synthesis of sensory impressions in its entirety has crucial influence on the artisanal execution. And that taste-experience bridges the past and the present in the sense that previous experience transforms into incorporated tacit knowledge that enables the manufacturing of a cheese that is recognisable over time. Concerning the finished food product, the taste-experience can bridge the past and the present as Proust told us. Like the madeleine, the taste of the Abondance cheese can bring about a present experience that has a strong reference to the past. This past may involve close relations who have handed over traditions related to the manufacturing of the Abondance and its place in the local food culture, but it may also speak into a larger context of cultural heritage where the Abondance is a medium for identification with the region without close relations as intermediaries.

6 Emotional Dimensions of Tradition

The phenomenon identification was introduced in the presentation of the Abondance cheese as a local food connecting the farmer, the cattle, the alpine pastures and the cheese and communicating a regional identity (Lizet 1998). This statement implies not only that a product can be identified with a geographical area, but also that human experience is involved in the sense that such identification must have a human reference and must be attributed meaning. Following the previous presentation of the corporal and the sensory dimensions of tradition, this meaning

may be established and maintained in two ways: through the corporal gestures and the sensory experience guiding the manufacturing process and through the taste-experience accompanying the matured Abondance cheese. Both indicate a relationship between a food and a place that links present experience with a past that involves human relations and cultural heritage in the form of tradition.

6.1 Identification through Tradition

However, the reference to the past in present experience does not explain the identification with and attachment to a region that is communicated through cultural heritage. To approach an understanding of this emotional layer of tradition, it seems pertinent to depart from the notion that experience always has a place of reference. This may seem evident, even trivial, as a human being inevitably is positioned in a place. There is, however, more to place than being a location determined by name or by reference to longitude and latitude, even if philosophy has treated place in this way for the most part. By viewing place as a spatial position, a 'where' a given location is, philosophy has ignored the interplay between location and lived experience (Ricoeur 2000, p. 186). In terms of experience, our point of departure is the place from which we see the world and from which we form our opinions. And as experience is situated it follows that our point of departure has a reference. This place of reference might be a place that we only occupy for a limited space of time in which case identification is unlikely to come about as it leaves little if any lasting imprint. But it may be a place that we inhabit in the sense of putting down roots in which case the attachment to place is formed – it evokes a sense of belonging (Hedegaard 2021).

When considering this meaning of place in the context of the Abondance, the attachment to and identification with the region seems closely related to the corporal and sensory experience that guides the manufacturing-process. And, as the temporal dimension of sensory experience indicated, the taste of the Abondance has the potential to bring about references to the past that bring to mind not only experience related to close relations but also to a social world of predecessors. It seems, however, that there is an additional layer in the taste-experience. If tasting the Abondance for the first time, it seems unlikely that there can be a reference to its place of origin inherent in the taste-experience. This does not mean that there is no horizon influencing the experience, only that the link between the taste and the place of origin must come about by intermediary – for instance a narrative. But Proust told us that the taste-experience itself has the capacity for connecting us to a place and a collective history. To do so, there must have been previous taste-experience that has left a corporal imprint – an imprint that is then revived in the

present taste-experience as a confirmation of the link between the taste and the place. In other words, the taste-experience related to tradition is an instance of re-taste (Hedegaard 2018).

6.2 History and (Hi)stories

There can be little doubt that the inscription of taste into a place and a collective history has emotional impact. Our attachment to places is evident in everyday language when describing how we put down roots when we feel at home in a place and how moving away from such a place is a process of pulling up roots. The significance of rootedness resides in the situatedness of experience – it is not a coincidence that everyday language speaks of events as taking place (Ricoeur 2000, p. 49) and that we place ourselves somewhere (Ricoeur 2000, p. 185). It means that unless we occupy a place transitorily, the place we dwell in is likely to mean something to us. Likewise, the pulling up of roots signifies that the move away from a place that means something to us has emotional impact as well. Such a place is likely to remain a reference even after being left behind. In terms of taste, there are indications that this complex sensory experience leaves corporal imprints that provide strong references to places and a collective history. Such indications are echoed in expressions such as the *“goût de terroir”*, the taste of place that unites cultural heritage and gastronomy (Csergo 1995). There is nostalgia in such references, an underlying desire to be transported back (Casey 2000, p. 201) – in time or to a place that can confirm a sense of belonging.

In the context of the Abondance, this sense of belonging materialises in the corporal knowledge guiding the manufacturing of the cheese as well as in the taste-experience. There is a double reference, though. On one hand, the alpine pastures, the corporal knowledge guiding the manufacturing and the taste of the matured cheese have strong references to a cultural heritage that is specific for the place. On the other, the industrially produced Abondance refers to the same tradition, but involves neither the alpine pastures that are essential for the quality of the milk, nor the corporal knowledge that is essential for the manual manufacturing. This discrepancy between the Abondance as a cheese with a specific origin and a cheese that issues from a place of the same name displays a tension that may be expressed through the differentiation that Eric Hobsbaw established between tradition as genuine historical references and invented tradition (Hobsbaw 1983). Whether this discrepancy influences the taste-experience remains an open question, but in terms of the emotional dimension, it seems likely that both types of Abondance may bring about sentiments of attachment and identification. Only, the references to the past differ. The Abondance that is manufactured manually

in the alpine pastures refer to history – to the cultural heritage of a region. The industrially produced Abundance refer to (hi)stories – to a commercial agenda.

7 Keeping Tradition Alive

At the beginning of this paper, the question was asked as to how tradition is preserved. The corporal, sensory and emotional dimensions of tradition provided a framework for addressing this question. The corporal dimension of tradition established that there is a *savoir-faire* that is essential to the mastering of a traditional craft. This *savoir-faire* consists in corporal knowledge that is pre-reflective and pre-articulate; it is corporal knowledge that is at hand in the sense that it is incorporated through repetition. This repetition, however, is open to variation because it is accompanied by a horizon that positions the *savoir-faire* in the present at the same time as the specific manoeuvres related to the manufacturing process are rooted in a living cultural heritage. The sensory dimension opened towards the complexity of taste-experience. A complexity that consists in the synthesis of multiple sensory impressions involving all senses that are merged into an understandable – and in this case palatable – whole. But this synthesis does not account for the complexity in its entirety. As with the corporal dimension, the synthesis of sensory experience is accompanied by a horizon that serves as a gateway between individual recollection and a social world of contemporaries and predecessors. In this synthesis of present experience and past reference, taste-experience leaves a corporal imprint that seems particularly strong. It seemed to be the strength of taste-experience that formed the foundation of the sentiments of identification and attachment that characterises the emotional dimension of tradition. On one hand, this is because taste not only provides a gateway between individual recollection and a social world of shared experience. It also speaks into the context of rootedness in places that have meaning and thereby evokes a sense of belonging. On the other hand, the examination of taste indicated that taste in the context of tradition is an instance of re-taste. That is, an imprint of a previous taste-experience that is revived in a present experience, thereby confirming a relationship between the taste and a place.

In the same way as impressions provided by each sense are synthesised in order to merge into a palatable whole, the three dimensions of tradition merge into a renewed understanding of tradition in the context of local foods. Instead of limiting the examination of tradition to representations in the form of artefacts, structures and observable practices, the involvement of corporal, sensory and emotional dimensions adds a layer of incorporated knowledge, skill and sen-

timent that works at a pre-reflective level but has fundamental impact on our relationship to the past – and thereby our understanding of tradition.

But is there a risk of flirting with a language of geographical determinism when suggesting that these layers forge a bond to places in which tradition is kept alive through agricultural production and supplementing with an emphasis on rootedness as an essential emotional dimension? And, is there a risk of signing up to an understanding of tradition as static and primordialist when putting forward that tradition is different from storytelling? It seems at least that there is a possibility for such misinterpretation. However, suggesting that tradition encompasses a close relationship to the land is not the same as asserting identification between the land and an alleged uniqueness of a regional character by reference to the “*genius loci*” of a place. And, putting forward that tradition is more than an added layer of narratives is not the same as asserting that tradition is an unchangeable and objective fact.

The narrative dimension indicated here refers back to a question that was asked in a previous section, namely how it is possible to distinguish between the product rooted in tradition and the product that is produced industrially. A question that resurfaced in the examination of the emotional dimension of tradition. A way of addressing this question in a tentative manner is to take the three dimensions of tradition as a point of departure and examine tradition as a double movement. In the first movement, historical memory establishes a tradition as a cultural practice that is rooted in a place. In the case of the Abundance cheese, historical memory is documented in the form of written sources that dates the manufacturing of the cheese back to medieval times. The historical memory is kept alive in the sense that the tradition is handed down in the area through generations, thereby transforming into shared experience. Meaning that the manufacturing of the Abundance constitutes a living cultural heritage in the sense that the craft is kept alive by handing over of the tradition by working side by side and gradually incorporating the skill and the horizon for possible variation. This incorporation marks a passage from shared experience to individual recollection. This recollection, however, is not merely intellectual, but resides in the corporal, sensory and emotional dimensions that constitute the synthesis in its entirety. A synthesis that provides a gateway for uniting the corporal gestures and the taste in a sense of belonging. In the second movement, the corporal, sensory and emotional experience constitutes the point of departure in the sense that the corporal gestures and the taste are united through a horizon that bridges the present with a past that adds a layer of identification. In the case of the Abundance, this means that the present corporal and sensory experience of manufacturing has to be accompanied by a horizon that unites the present with previous experience and his-

torical memory. Only then is the manufacturing experienced in terms of tradition. In other words, keeping tradition alive necessitates a double movement through which historical memory, shared experience and individual recollection interact and constitute tradition as tradition.

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