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On the Appetite Trail¹

Abstract: The article recounts actions oriented at experiencing and reliving culinary traditions, undertaken by the Local Action Group of the “Mroga” Society for the Local Community Development.

The Society operates in five communes: Koluszki, Brzeziny, Dmosin, Jeżów and Rogów, located in the north-eastern part of the current Łódź voivodeship, east of the city of Łódź. In the past, this area, which bordered regions whose characteristic features indicated their distinct regional identities (the Łęczyca Land and the Łowicz Principality from the north, the Rawa Land from the east, the Opoczno and Piotrków Lands from the south, and Łódź from the west), was devoid of definite features typical to folk culture. Currently it is still an area which, due to the absence of a consistent and enduring cultural foundation to refer to, cannot be described in the categories of an ethnographic or geographic region. By following the tourist trail laid by the Society, known as the “Appetite Trail”, I reconstruct the vision of what the community resident in the five communes covered by the activity of the “Mroga” Local Action Group defines as the region’s culinary tradition, and I deconstruct the Group’s actions that reduce the tradition to the level of a tourist attraction.

Key words: culinary tradition, regional product, the past and local remembrance.

1.

Anna Wieczorkiewicz observes that

Tourism [...] relies not only on a variety of actions of a commercial nature, but also on a peculiar ideological framework encompassing things described as “historical”, “national”, “natural” and “traditional”. Cultural resources undergo selection and appropriate processing. Local matter

1 The current text is an extended and translated version of my article *Tradycje kulinarne “Na szlaku łaknienia”* [Karpińska 2013].

is broadcast globally; this matter often returns to its original environment in a new version, applied as some group's mark of identity. Elements of tradition are reconstructed for the use of the tourist industry; afterwards, those reconstructions are imitated again and again, until the reproductions grow perfect enough to appear purer and more perfect than the original. It is precisely in this area that some phenomena can be observed in condensed, exceptionally clear forms, as if in a laboratory [2008b: 205].

Further on, she maintains that these phenomena exist due to the fact that people change their location in space, and that boundaries are invariably important in the process of establishing those social practices, because tourism needs them; it feeds on "the concept of differences between environments and cultures, as well as on the potential of making use of environments, people and cultures for specific purposes" [Wieczorkiewicz 2008b: 205–206]. In other words, tradition is here reduced to the level of a tourist attraction. In order for it to bring appropriate profits, it is transformed into a sign by being suitably costumed, included into diverse contexts and used to various ends. The following article focuses on the ways of transforming tradition into a sign on the example of actions oriented at experiencing and reliving culinary traditions undertaken by the "Mroga" Local Action Group of the Society for the Local Community Development.

The Society operates in five communes: Koluszki, Brzeziny, Dmosin, Jeżów and Rogów, located in the north-eastern part of the current Łódź voivodeship, east of the city of Łódź. In the past, this area, which bordered regions whose characteristic features indicated their distinct regional identities (the Łęczyca Land and the Łowicz Principality from the north, the Rawa Land from the east, the Opoczno and Piotrków Lands from the south, and Łódź from the west), was devoid of definite features typical to folk culture. Currently it is still an area which, due to the absence of a consistent and enduring cultural foundation to refer to, cannot be described in the categories of an ethnographic or geographic region.

Geographers identify the area of the Łódź voivodeship (both the current one and the one instituted after the 2nd World War) as the 'Łódź Region'. Ethnologists and historians are of the opinion that this term is

difficult to define and that the name has no grounding in history. Kazimiera Zawistowicz-Adamska emphasized that the 'Łódź Region' was in reality an economic region that emerged in the 1820s, and that, forming as a manufacturing district under the influence of industrial development, it absorbed "some areas of the ethnographic territories of Łęczyca, Sieradz and, to some extent, Mazovia and Greater Poland, and influenced them in a very definite way" [Zawistowicz-Adamska 1962: 4]. Regardless of whether our topic is the Łódź voivodeship or the Łódź economic region, it is necessary to be aware that, firstly, it is a transitional area encompassing parts of Mazovia, Greater Poland, Lesser Poland and Silesia, which absorbed the once visibly separate ethnographic territories of the Łęczyca, Sieradz, Łowicz, Opoczno and Rawa Lands, and, secondly, that both the boundaries of this area and the cultural phenomena occurring therein are fluid. The area's specificity results not only from complex historical processes, but also from its modern-day status.

In the years 2004–2006, the "Mroga" Society for the Local Community Development issued a call to the local residents to submit recipes and descriptions of culinary products that might apply for inclusion in the register of traditional products of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Of the forty-two items identified by the Society's staff as traditional products from the area of the Mroga and Rawka rivers and the Łódź Heights, some were entered into the Ministry's register, others were classified by the Marshal's Office in Łódź as traditional local products. Also, within the framework of the "Museum in Space – Multicultural Roots of the Łódź Region" project carried out since 2009 by the communes of Kolaszki, Brzeziny, Dmosin, Jeżów, Rogów and the town of Brzeziny, the Society laid several tourist trails, including the culinary trail known as the "Appetite Trail". The following data about the trail are found on one of the many information boards placed in the villages:

The 71-km-long Appetite Trail is dedicated to the region's culinary tradition. It runs in the vicinity of many gastronomic establishments that specialize not only in traditional Polish dishes, but also in foreign cuisine. Traditional fare most often includes *zurek* [sour soup], broth, tomato, pea and beetroot

soups, dumplings with various fillings, diverse chicken dishes and pork cutlets. Besides these, on offer are locally produced honey, traditional smoked meats and cheeses. Traditional dishes produced by local residents and village housewives' societies are also available within the "Museum in Space".

2.

In the present-day colloquial discourse, the noun 'tradition' and the adjective 'traditional' are commonly used labels. Applied in various contexts, they give shape to certain "commonplace images of tradition", that is to "tradition which is the subject of public interest" [Kajfosz 2009: 79, 70] and assumes the form of named and defined phenomena. In addition, owing to the fact that attributes carrying positive or negative associations are ascribed to them, those labels help to evaluate phenomena [Gomóła 2011: 177–178].

Phrases similar to those used on the information boards: "culinary tradition", "traditional dishes", "traditional smoked meats", current in the social discourse, carry positive connotations, all the more so since tradition and homeliness are in vogue in the contemporary culture. Also, culinary products may become an identity symbol as "a focus for practices integrating groups that otherwise differ in character" and an emblem "potentially applicable in creating self-image" [Wieczorkiewicz 2008a: 279]. This is due to the existing conviction that traditional cuisine is a value in itself and – because tradition is identical to what is old, constant and unchangeable, to all that "realizes" and "materializes" the past and attests to rootedness – that cultivating this cuisine lies in the interests of both the society and individuals [Studnicki 2009: 30]. The phrase "the region's culinary tradition" promises products and dishes which the depositaries of the culture of some region (in this case, the communes of Koluszki, Brzeziny, Dmosin, Jeźów, Rogów and the town of Brzeziny) consider to be theirs, historically associated with their space, even though varying degrees of localness: the regional, familial or Polish one, are ascribed to those items. The local identity label not only makes the offered products more attractive, but also hints at a conception of life in which traditional cuisine is a synonym of a tasty and healthy product. In

this way, tradition undergoes the process of mythologizing; this is attested to by actions conferring previously absent meanings on facts, objects, or even words (for instance words found on the information boards placed by the “Mroga” Local Action Group in a few communes near Łódź), which prompts a redefinition of reality [cf. Barthes 1991: 109–127, Sulima 2001: 102–103]. The usual situation is that as long as people live within a certain tradition, they do not know it. Anthony Giddens points out that even though oral cultures are the most traditional of all, tradition as such is unknown to them [Giddens 1996: 37]. Waldemar Kuligowski explains: “Final decades of the last century caused tradition to become a familiar topic; [...] human societies reached the conclusion that without tradition they would not be themselves” [Kuligowski 2007: 79]. And so they resort to tradition in various circumstances, including the culinary matters. Speaking of traditional cuisine or traditional dishes, they express their need of “an image of the past materialized in the form of a myth” [Studnicki 2009: 31], with the proviso that “the past” is imprecisely defined and its image is situated in opposition to the present time, that is to modernity; this is considered to be a reaction to the social and cultural condition of the present time. Thus the past undergoes a procedure that is called distortion and deformation by Roland Barthes [Barthes 1991: 128], and invention by Eric Hobsbawm [2003].

3.

Tradition has an important role in the process of searching for, constructing and reinforcing regional and local identity. It is used, indeed overused, by informal groups to increase the attractiveness of a given area or to invigorate civic participation of local communities who create tourist products on the basis of tradition. Culinary products have for some time been a cultural product, as well as an attractive indicator of a region’s cultural distinction. It might in fact be said that culinary products are the foundation for building a region’s brand. According to sociologists, this makes sense only in the conditions of globalisation; “in autarkic societies, local specialties were [...] not created, because the global counterpoint was absent” [Nieroba, Czerner, Szczepański 2010: 60]. However, the scholars warn that “it is currently anachronistic to simply juxtapose tradition versus modernity, or

the global versus the local aspects” [Kuligowski 2007: 107]. Tradition is a global concept today because everyone wants to be different from everyone else, and in addition it is viewed as “a source of exclusive knowledge and tangible financial profits” [Kuligowski 2007: 80].

Marek Krajewski [2005: 86] assumes that the explosion of diversity, which has been evident for a long while now, adds dynamism to culture, forcing it not only to adapt to new conditions, but also to redefine the foundations of identity and relationship to others. In his opinion, some elements of culture are transformed into a folkloristic ornament that becomes a commodity on the one hand, and a requisite “for the process of constructing and manifesting one’s self” on the other [Krajewski 2005: 87–88]; it is then helpful in building a tradition that attests to uniqueness and distinctiveness. Food – an inherent part of culture and a crucial “element of identity games” [Burszta, Kuligowski 2005: 90] – being transformed into a local specialty and the traditional national/regional/local cuisine, is a perfect example of this phenomenon.

This brings us to the point where it is necessary to focus on local foodstuffs produced by the residents of communes included in the actions of the “Mroga” Local Action Group of the Society for the Local Community Development, and on their example to investigate how culinary traditions are materialized in order to satisfy market demand.

4.

The communes covered by the “Mroga” LAG boast, among others, the following traditional products: goat-milk cottage cheese from Eufeminów, sourdough bread from Dmosin, smoked sausage from Jordanów, traditionally smoked sausage from Nadolna, potato doughnuts from Zalesie, *pyza* dumplings from Przeclaw, the round village bread from Kołacin, and *czarne*, that is blood sausage, from Marianów Kołacki.

In their Polish-language names, all these delicacies have either an adjective referring to a particular village or the name of the village itself. This is a way of demonstrating their distinctiveness, but also their belonging to a very definite space in the rural landscape. According to Tim Edensor, rural landscapes are “charged with affective and symbolic meaning”, since they

come to stand as symbols of continuity, the product of land worked over and produced [...], so that to dwell within them, even if for a short time, can be to achieve a kind of national self-realisation, to return to 'our' roots where the self, freed from its inauthentic – usually urban – existence, is re-authenticated [Edensor 2002: 40].

It is precisely this kind of landscape that provided the context for the activity of local groups in Poland: firstly, it is a manifestation of space that shapes the feeling of belonging and, at the same time, distinctiveness; secondly, it is used in the practice of creating myths and various visual phenomena, and also as a source of timeless values from which it is possible to draw in order to preserve local identity. The information board put up in Wola Cyrusowa, one of the villages on the "Appetite Trail", is an illustration to this realization:

In the nearby villages, housewives still prepare various traditional dishes, the recipes for which have been passed from generation to generation. [...] Residents of the nearby Nagawki greatly contribute to the preservation of the region's culinary heritage. No less than five of the dishes and beverages they prepare are now in the register of traditional products from the area of the Mroga and Rawka rivers and the Łódź Heights. These are: the Nagawki apples baked in juice, the ever-fresh bread from Nagawki, the Nagawki butter [...]. The Nagawki butter. In the past, butter was usually made only to be used in the household. It was in general use, both in peasant cottages and in the mansions of the gentry. The traditional way of churning butter from cream relies on the fact that, in the process of agitating, globules of fat amalgamate and turn into butter grains. The grains were removed from buttermilk and rinsed, and subsequently kneaded together to remove excess liquid.

The above text is quoted here in order to illustrate the manner in which the group attempts to convince an outsider that the given product constitutes its property and is authentic. Products offered by the villagers are also a "local attraction"; homely cuisine with simple recipes may thus be juxtaposed to "the refinement of foreign cuisines [...] that have recondite technological procedures" [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 125]. Also, the quoted passage shows that

the local residents perceive and interpret reality in traditional categories and do not sense a fracture in the continuity of cultural meaning.

Marcin Kula used the term “syncretic tradition” to describe situations when the tradition of a given group is fused with elements deriving from a different culture or from another place [Kula 2003: 163–183]. In social memory, syncretic tradition functions in the form a network of symbolic references, resulting in the emergence of new perceptions concerning the group’s tradition. Products registered as traditional in the Łódź voivodeship: goat-milk cottage cheese from Eufeminów and the ginger-and-lemon liqueur known as the “tears of St. Euphemia” [http://lodzkie.ksow.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/lodzkie/pliki/publikacje/Kulinarne_Szlaki_Regionu_%C5%81%C3%B3dzkiego.pdf] are examples of that. Description of the Eufeminów goat-milk cottage cheese found in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development website is preceded by information regarding cheese making in the Łowicz region:

Goat-milk cottage cheese from Eufeminów began to be made in Łowicz voivodeship after the 2nd World War. The land was devastated due to the war and farm animals were scarce. Residents of the Łowicz region soon began to prepare the soil for various crops, and more and more animals appeared in the farms. Those animals were chiefly goats, which adapted to difficult conditions very well and were often the family’s “sole providers”. Their milk was turned into enough cheese to satisfy the needs of the family; surplus cheese was sold at the market [...] [<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Jakosc-zywnosci/Produkty-regionalne-i-tradycyjne/Lista-produktow-tradycyjnych/woj.-lodzkie/Kozi-twarog-z-Eufeminowa>].

And the following is written about the liqueur:

Some village farms produced high-proof spirit. The ginger-and-lemon liqueur is made from lemons, ginger, spirit diluted with water, honey, sugar and cardamom, according to a traditional recipe. Water used in the making of the liqueur is drawn from wells owned by the residents of Eufeminów, and honey is produced locally [...] [<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Jakosc-zywnosci/Produkty-regionalne-i-tradycyjne/Lista-produktow-tradycyjnych/woj.-lodzkie/Nalewka-imbirowo-cytrynowa>].

These descriptions are an example of a “deft imitation of an ostensibly traditional original” [Burszta, Kuligowski 2005: 116] assessed in keeping with the obligatory evaluation scale, where the highest marks are given to products that are “ours” and old, preferably having a long history. Barbara Szacka observed that oldness is “one of the factors that have the power to sacralize. Whatever has a past, especially a long past, is perceived as worthier than all that has no such past. The long past is a synonym for durability and, indirectly, justifies the right to exist” [Szacka 2006: 48]. Descriptions of “traditional” products present a mythologized image of the village, an image that reinforces the tradition and imbues it with more value and prestige. This prestige is expressed by the absence of distance between what “is” and what “was”; selective ascription of cultural contents to territory is its characteristic feature. After all, as anthropologists constantly remind us, the Polish countryside was not “a land flowing with milk and honey”, where liqueurs were served and the diet was enhanced with lemons, sugar, ginger or cardamom [Burszta, Kuligowski 2005: 116–118]. As amply attested by memoirs of Polish peasants, only very rarely would such products appear on a peasant table, and in a poor household – never. Thus their perception as ingredients of “traditional rustic fare” is “an interpretative figure playing upon a certain exoticism and the aura of homeliness, rather than a historical truth” [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 125]. In reality, what is sold under the label of homeliness and village-ness is “what used to be characteristic to the elite culture, not to the rural population” [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 127]. For instance, propounding goat-milk cottage cheese as a “traditional” Polish village product, and moreover one typical to the Łowicz region, results in a deformed image of the past. Firstly, just for the record, Eufeminów was never located in the Łowicz region; the village was detached in the early 19th century from the Bedoń estate belonging to the Brzeziny commune. Secondly, as confirmed by ethnographers specializing in research on food-stuffs, cheese in Poland was made from cows’ or sheep’s milk, goat-milk was used very rarely, and when it was, it would be mixed with cows’ milk [Kowalska-Lewicka 1973: 197]. The Łowicz regional cuisine did have its distinctive features, but these never included the use of goat-milk. Thirdly, aware that “oldness” in cuisine evokes particularly favourable emotions,

leaders of the “Mroga” LAG accentuated the community’s durability by giving notice that goat-milk cottage cheese began to be produced after the 2nd World War, that is well over fifty years ago. In this way, they were constructing “oldness” in accordance with the current requirements: only products made for over 25 years can be entered into the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development register of traditional products – but, let it be underlined, this is “oldness” which is not “true history” or “historical awareness”, but a commodity supplied for entertainment and consumption [Krajewski 2005: 210].

In constructing the local culinary specificity, members of the “Mroga” LAG resorted to the Łowicz region – a space of stereotypically perceived “folk” and “Polish” culture – and came up with products intended to reinforce the local/regional identification (e.g. the goat-milk cottage cheese or ginger-and-lemon liqueur). Such actions, not at all unusual in the current reality, are facilitated by, among others, the unhampered flow of information and commodities of which local communities may avail themselves regardless of their religious, ethnic or national identity. This case perfectly illustrates the view of John B. Thompson, as quoted by Elżbieta Nieroba, Anna Czerner and Marek S. Szczepański, that “in imparting meaning on the world and creating the sense of belonging in themselves, individual people increasingly often rely on a mediated and non-localized tradition”. Tradition separated from a context that was single and localized (i.e. embedded in a concrete physical space and social relations), was remodelled and adjusted to the new context of everyday life by some group of people; this is possible due to the interlinked processes of globalization and mediation [Nieroba, Czerner, Szczepański 2010: 44].

In the context of the above example, it is necessary to emphasise (as many scholars have long been doing) the fact that cuisine is especially susceptible to innovation and outside influence. Traditional products promoted by local groups are cultural constructs, no more than elements selected from an available range [Burszta 2004: 112]. This phenomenon, associated with commodification of heritage resulting from the development of tourism, may be included into the category of “invented tradition” proposed by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. As noted by Marcin Lubaś, in

the conditions of enormous transformation of social relations, caused by, among others, increased mobility, emergence of new technologies, and the expansion of free market, tradition becomes the object of particular attention and is subjected to various processes aimed at imparting a reflective quality upon it [Lubaś 2008: 42–46]. Lubaś states that imparting a reflective quality upon tradition is closely linked with the process of traditionalising which is unavoidable and present in every society, that is with a conscious effort to selectively entrench some cultural content and forms. “By way of the process of traditionalising, traditions are formed and modified” [Lubaś 2008: 46] according to the needs of the moment. It might be said, quoting Jerzy Szacki, that the past as a culinary tradition is only invented

as a result of complex processes of remembering and forgetting, selecting and rejecting, affirming and negating, and even perhaps simply confabulating, and of repeated again and again attempts at establishing it – processes, with which the most familiar are not so much the experts on how things really were, but researchers of the contemporary society and its constantly fluctuating culture and politics [Szacki 2011: 25].

This does not mean that an invented tradition is not a tradition at all. The observation made by Edward Shils is worth recalling: that traditions have a specific, sequential social structure; they require neither the identicalness of contents nor the continuity of transmission, they can alter and they can be referred to:

It is not the intertemporal identity of beliefs or actions which constitutes a tradition; it is the intertemporal *filiation* of beliefs which is constitutive. [...] Filiation entails not only handing down but receiving as well. [...] We often speak of the traditional acceptance of a belief as an *unthinking* acceptance of a belief previously accepted by others. The unthinkingness of the acceptance might be tantamount to the acceptance of the model of the already existent as a whole. Alternatively the model might be accepted after scrutiny to determine whether it conforms with certain criteria which are themselves unthinkingly accepted. Or again it might entail the

discovery of a new pattern of belief by the application of criteria which are unthinkingly accepted. In any case, a fully traditional belief is one which is accepted without being assessed by any criterion other than its having been believed before [Shils 1971: 127–128].

This means that even if the views on cuisine, and the cuisine itself, are not really identical to the views held and dishes eaten in the past, they are nevertheless thought to be traditional and perceived as such, and this precisely because (and *only* because) they originate from the bygone days.

5.

The product's packaging is not without its influence on the materializing of culinary traditions. Appropriately packaged, it becomes a sign founded on homeliness, localness and tradition, that is on the signal that the given foodstuff is "Polish", "regional", "peasant" or "from here": from Eufeminów, Nagawki or Jordanów. In addition, it is important to indicate that the product obtained an award at some national or local culinary contest, or used to be an important element of some holiday, celebration or the village/parish/regional feast.

Gołąbki [cabbage-leaf rolls] and cabbage-and-peas are worth mentioning among the traditional delicacies prepared in Osiny. *Gołąbki* are distinctive due to their taste, unique ingredients and simplicity of preparation. In the vicinity of Dmosin, cabbage-and-peas is an obligatory Christmas Eve supper dish, and it is served as an accompaniment to meat dishes on ordinary days. Cabbage-and-peas won the 1st award in the "Regional cuisine – a development opportunity" contest celebrating the 600th anniversary of Dmosin,

states the information board in Koziółki near Cyrusowa Wola. The inn in Buczek, in turn, is very proud of its *łódzka zalewajka* soup. In front of it, another information board announces:

The taste of traditional *zalewajka* and many other traditional Polish and regional dishes can be enjoyed in the Summer Inn of Inter-Solar Co. in

Buczek. The “Zalewajka Feast” is organized here every summer on the first Sunday of July. Inter-Solar Co. participates also in the Festival of Christian Culture in Łódź and is the organizer of the (whole!) ox-broiling event during the art workshops section of the “Colours of Poland” Festival.

And the producer of the ginger-and-lemon liqueur boasts:

The ginger-and-lemon liqueur is presented at the annual feast in Eufemińów celebrating the martyrdom of St. Euphemia. The patroness of the village, who died for her faith in the Roman Colosseum on 16th September 304, is given flowers and loaves of bread by the residents, and the feast is accompanied by promotion of local products. The highlight of the feast is the liqueur contest [<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Jakosc-zywnosci/Produkty-regionalne-i-tradycyjne/Lista-produktow-tradycyjnych/woj.-lodzkie/Nalewka-imbirowo-cytrynowa>].

Tourist trails laid by the “Mroga” LAG within the framework of the “Museum in Space – Multicultural Roots of the Łódź Region” project carried out in the communes of Koluszki, Brzeziny, Dmosin, Jeżów, Rogów and the town of Brzeziny create an interlinked network. According to an information board in Cyrusowa Wola,

the largest villages, administrative centres with many interesting monuments, are crucial to the entire network of trails [...]. The trails' key points are the Living Skansen – Polish Folklore Centre in Nagawki, The Jurassic Botanic Park, the Rogów Arboretum, the Rogów Narrow-gauge Railway and the 1st World War cemeteries, some of which include also graves from the 1939 September Campaign.

In the intention of the creators of the project, these places are to be a target of tourist pilgrimages. According to Tim Edensor, such spots are ideologically charged so strongly that they may actually affect the sense of identity [Edensor 2002: 40]; in addition, they are a heritage that incontrovertibly emphasises the sense of belonging to a place. From the standpoint of the group, they are what Edensor terms “iconic sites”,

that is “highly selective, synecdochal features which are held to embody specific kinds of characteristics” connoting or commemorating historical events, or providing evidence of past cultures [Edensor 2002: 45]. They are significant as distinctive points in a land “etched with the past, so that ‘history runs through geography’” [Edensor 2002: 40]. In the case under discussion here, their connotation is reinforced by the appropriately packaged “culinary tradition of the region”, which is an inseparable element that organizes the Society’s tourist project. Looking from the economic perspective and recalling Rosario Scarpato’s statement as interpreted by Anna Wieczorkiewicz: that “food is treated as the expression of culture, and culture as the expression of food”, it might be said that there are some places where cuisine is used as a marketing tool for tourism, and there are those which use tourism to promote cuisine [Wieczorkiewicz 2008b: 213].

The above examples demonstrate that what we are dealing with is the process of creating a myth of the place and of local tradition. Members of the “Mroga” LAG come to stand as the opinion-forming authority: they explicate and reproduce tradition, they indicate things that are worthy of remembrance, they suggest appropriate symbolism to link with a given historical event, and they determine which elements may become the hallmark of a given locality. Apart from constructing the region’s specificity (the 1st World War cemeteries, the arboretum), their actions shape new phenomena inscribed upon local traditions (cuisine, the skansen, i.e. the open-air museum). It is upon their initiative and due to their actions that the myth of a community emerged, and this community is now applying it in order to construct its own identity. Localness based on mythical foundations causes

characteristics of people and objects to be perceived as resulting from the influence of a given place’ it is the place that imbues them with specific features that constitute their distinguishing mark. Yet mythical awareness does not look for justification for these emergent features [...]. In mythical awareness, these physical, material, economic and social determinants are less significant than the special metaphysics of a place; it is the latter that determines the properties of elements belonging to the given local system [Wadowski 2011: 235].

6.

Tradition is not static; it is susceptible to change, and, as argued by Giddens, innovations are an element of every tradition. Durability of a tradition is not the same as durability in the objective sense [Kajfosz 2009: 81]. Katarzyna Łeńska-Bąk observed that the market selects whatever is attractive from Polish tradition, and afterwards

conveys it to the current time but, of course, without situating it in the context of the bygone culture; from then on, the market utilizes only labels or, at the most, memories of the culture of the past, but they are by then devoid of their proper sense, meanings, and functions, and located in an entirely different discourse. In fact, quite contrary to the consumers' perception, the process does not consist in discovering the Polishness enclosed in tradition, but on presenting another commodity in the supermarket of culture, to be neatly displayed and selected by the buyer [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 127],

commodities from the range of culinary tradition are, of course, included. As it has been shown here, they can be combined, fused, remodelled in any possible way, and even fabricated, with no great consequences [Kajfosz 2009: 87]. Local features are underlined for economic reasons, but also from the feeling of belonging to a given place. Speaking about „the past and culinary tradition” and actions which Paul Willis terms “creative cultural practices”, which “produce something that was not there before, at least not fully or in the same way” [Willis 2000: xiv] add colour to the community, at the same time constituting the “object of consumerist pleasure” [Krajewski 2005: 210] and the “core of consumerist attractiveness” [Nieroba, Czerner, Szczepański 2010: 60]. In addition, they are used to structure the world into the “us” and “them”, and to construct fresh cultural identities which others would recognize.

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