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DIGESTING THE FINNISH NATURE AND PAST: FOOD, PASTNESS, AND THE NATURALNESS OF THE NATIONAL IN THE *WIKI-INVENTORY FOR LIVING HERITAGE*

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ABSTRACT
This article examines the inventorying of Finnish intangible cultural heritage with regard to UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. I analyse the participatory *Wiki-inventory for Living Heritage*, concentrating on entries that discuss food and foodways to study how food, materiality, and the national intertwine with practices of producing intangible cultural heritage. The article's theoretical background draws from the fields of banal nationalism and critical heritage studies. Food is eminently important in narratives of Finnishness: by using the concepts of naturalness and pastness, I show how Finnish food becomes interpreted as 'authentic' Finnish heritage. The concepts illuminate the complex processes in which the materiality of food, the Finnish terroir and landscape, narratives of the past, and the consumer who prepares, eats, and digests the heritagised food are tied to each other. These processes reinforce the banality of Finnishness, although the practices of inventorying paradoxically strive for the ideal of cultural diversity that UNESCO promotes.

KEYWORDS: food heritage • intangible cultural heritage • nationalism • naturalness • pastness

INTRODUCTION

Food is closely linked to survival, but also to being together – food brings people together to share experiences and practice traditions. Every country has its own food culture, featuring certain basic raw ingredients, preparation methods, specific spices and seasonings and even eating habits. What, when and how we eat in Finland provides information about the location of our country, as well as about Finnish nature, society, history, identity and culture. (WLH 2016)

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This quotation was written by the Finnish Heritage Agency and is taken from the Finnish wiki-based inventory, *The Wiki-inventory for Living Heritage* (WLH 2016), which is a part of the Finnish implementation of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ratified in Finland in 2013). In Finland, the process of inventorying intangible cultural heritage is carried out in a participatory manner: the Finnish Heritage Agency administers the wiki page and acts as an executor of the convention, although different communities submit entries to the WLH on subjects the submitters regard as intangible cultural heritage. The WLH and its submissions form a base from which entries are selected for *The National Inventory of Living Heritage* and the UNESCO lists.

The quotation is a prominent example of how the *Wiki-inventory* and its entries are framed at the institutional level: the Finnish Heritage Agency provides frameworks, guidelines, and discursive registers with which submitters modulate their entries. The quotation is from an introductory paragraph for the section that discusses food and food traditions. By using linguistic forms such as the possessive suffix *maamme* ('our country'), the text operates at the national scale and naturalises the idea of an imaginary national 'we' through the idea of Finnish food. This 'we' is represented as becoming authentically Finnish through the preparing, eating, and digesting of certain foods that point to the Finnish past (see also Andreassen 2014: 441). Thus, the 'we' refers to the stereotypical – and rather exclusive – representation of contemporary Finnish folk: white, Finnish-speaking, heterosexual, family-oriented, and middle-class. Overall, they are regarded as responsible consumers as well as broad-minded and innovative citizens, while simultaneously faithful to traditional Finnish virtues (Lehtonen and Koivunen 2010: 234; Rossi 2017). In contexts of heritagisation, the exclusiveness and traditionality of the Finnish 'we' tend to be emphasised in a rather quotidian way, even though the institutional inventorying practices are coloured by a liberal, cosmopolitan, and progressive ideal of inclusivity and cultural diversity (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020; Mäkelä 2021).

In this article, I discuss how the banality of Finnishness is maintained and reproduced in the processes of inventorying food-related intangible cultural heritage in Finland. I concentrate on the roles of food and the national in the WLH by exploring the food-related entries therein as well as the photographs published alongside them. I ask the following questions:

1) How is 'Finnishness' narrated in relation to food (especially berries, edible plants, and grains) in the WLH?

2) How is the past presented in these processes?

3) How does food become entangled in social relations in heritagisation practices?

The idea of food as intangible cultural heritage is a rather new one, and the contemporary Finnish food-related inventorying processes reflect the discussions on gastronomic heritage at the UNESCO level (Aykan 2016; Romagnoli 2019), although the majority of WLH entries do not intend to be inscribed in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Thus, while UNESCO-based transnational heritage practices and discussions lurk behind the inventorying processes, the materials of this article mainly reflect the national and sub-national scales.

By interrelating discussions on naturalness (e.g., Andreassen 2014), pastness (Holtorf 2013), banal nationalism (e.g., Palmer 1998; Tilley 2008; Paasi 2016; Balthazar 2017; Greenland 2017; Merriman and Jones 2017; Zubrzycki 2017), and food heritage (e.g., Di

Giovine and Brulotte 2014; Ichijo and Ranta 2015; Ranta 2015; Aykan 2016), I examine how food, especially edible plants, berries, and grains, is present in and signifies the heritagised narratives of Finnishness and the Finnish past. The heritagisation of food, which is invariably linked to formations of identity and belonging, is a bodily affective practice that has political consequences in contemporary societies (e.g., Wetherell et al. 2018; Smith 2020). For instance, the naming of edible plants, berries, and grains as Finnish intangible cultural heritage strengthens and naturalises the idea of Finnishness as something nature-related and thus a natural part of the world. This article asserts that naturalness and pastness are required qualities of heritagised food, as it is through these that Finnish food becomes interpreted as authentic Finnish heritage. Moreover, these qualities connect the materiality of food, the Finnish terroir and landscape, narratives of the past, and the people who prepare, eat, and digest the heritagised food.

This article begins by introducing theoretical discussions on critical heritage studies, banal nationalism, and food, followed by a short description of the materials and methods used. The subsequent sections analyse how edible plants, berries, and grain products are narrated in relation to Finnishness and the concepts of naturalness and pastness. I conclude the article with a discussion of the results and findings.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, NATIONAL SCALE, AND FOOD

The concept of intangible cultural heritage is understood here as an emic conceptualisation that stems from the institutional processes and taxonomic systems of producing and categorising heritage. The WLH is a prominent example of heritagisation: a material-discursive process of naming, disseminating, and experiencing things that are understood as heritage. In this process, intangible and tangible elements are understood as intertwined (e.g., Smith and Campbell 2018; Smith 2020; see also Kuutma 2009.) Thus, while the idea of cultural heritage connotes a claim of referentiality to the past, the referentiality must be formalised through material symbolism: the intangible and ephemeral comes inevitably into being through material forms such as books, recordings, festivals, archives, or, of course, food (Graham et al. 2000: 4–5; Kuutma 2009: 6–7).

Intangible cultural heritage is a concept of institutional discourse that initially tried to question the role of tangible World Heritage as the dominant way of thinking about heritage in modern society. Even though the aim was to bring forth heritage from underrepresented communities and lessen the role of privileged expertise, studies have shown that because the UNESCO-related administration of intangible cultural heritage must act on a national scale and not directly with sub-national or transnational communities, this aim has not been accomplished (Aykan 2015; Smith and Campbell 2018; Buljubašić and Lähdesmäki 2019). Furthermore, the processes of categorising and producing intangible cultural heritage seem to reinforce the normative categories of race, class, and nation. Indeed, the WLH could be described as a tool for strengthening and reproducing colour-blind whiteness and the values of the Finnish middle class, despite the *Wiki-inventory*'s participatory nature and the UNESCO-related universalist aims (see UNESCO) it stands for. This is manifested, for instance, in the pictures that are chosen to represent Finnish heritage in the inventory (Mäkelä forthcoming). This kind of

balancing between progressive and conservative values has become a defining feature of different kinds of heritage site, as these sites are not only places for heritage agencies' educational views, which have a tendency to be progressive and cosmopolitan, they are also complex spaces for performing heritage consumers' expectations, identities, and engagements (Smith 2015; 2020; see also Seljamaa 2021).

This article discusses the function of the national scale in the naming of food as intangible cultural heritage. Other scales, such as the transnational, local, and global, are always embedded in heritagisation practices in the contemporary world (e.g., Lähdesmäki et al. 2019), but detailed analysis on the ways in which the national is intertwined with heritage-making practices is still needed due to the globally increasing "pressure to strengthen national borders" (Billig 2017: 308), and especially due to issues such as the flows of migrants, misinformation spread via social media, the possible effects of COVID-19 and the inward-looking nationalist discourses these pressures produce. UNESCO practices and their relation to (re)producing the national and the conflicts that have arisen due to these processes are fairly well discussed (e.g., Aykan 2015; Ichijo 2017; Smith and Campbell 2018; Buljubašić and Lähdesmäki 2019); therefore, this article concentrates on intangible cultural heritage production in a situation where sub-national local communities interact with national-level stakeholders in a way that the banality of the national scale is strengthened in a non-violent and peaceful manner.

The heritage sector in Finland is moderate, state-led, and tightly tied to the admired and widely accepted narrative of a modern Nordic welfare state. The narratives of homogeneous Finnishness, which stem from the national romantic period of the 19th century, are discussed surprisingly little and reproduced in and through the institutional heritage sector (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020), although the research on heritage has critically considered these kinds of grand narrative in the formation of heritage (e.g., Smith 2006). In this article, I study the ubiquitous, fluid, and subtle forms of nationalistic phenomena and draw from studies on banal nationalism, including a theoretical approach that was elaborated by Michael Billig (1995; 2017). The most up-to-date studies in this area have contested and refined the idea of banal nationalism in multiple ways: the reproduction of the national has been studied, for example, in light of spatial dimensions, the everyday, and affect (e.g., Paasi 2016; Antonsich and Skey 2017; Merriman and Jones 2017). Furthermore, a growing body of literature discusses the role of materiality, images, sounds, infrastructures, textures, smells, and even tastes in relation to the national (e.g., Paasi 2016; Balthazar 2017; Greenland 2017; Zubrzycki 2017). This article draws from studies that scrutinise social meaning-making, as the national cannot be intrinsic in objects, spaces, or places but is always performed and produced in social relations (see Paasi 2016; Zubrzycki 2017).

In the material-discursive processes of producing the national, food has been characterised as a mundane but exceedingly powerful tool for expressing belonging and non-belonging (Appadurai 1988; Palmer 1998; Ichijo and Ranta 2015; Ranta 2015; Aykan 2016). Food is inherently affective in nature, and, if possible, even greater emotional meanings are associated with it when it is presented as heritage. For example, at the national scale, food heritage can be used as a tool for homogenising cultural diversity. Food heritage embodies the memories of people and places across space and time: food becomes, as expressed in a Bakhtinian manner, an edible chronotope. The naming of food as heritage also strengthens the categories of belonging with which the distinctions

between and representations of us and others, or in-groups and out-groups, are identified (Di Giovine and Brulotte 2014: 2–4). Thus, the heritagisation of food is an affective practice that affects the present (Wetherell et al. 2018; Smith 2020): the mundane, bodily practices of eating, experiencing, cooking, and interpreting food become, in the context of the WLH, elevated to a nationally significant level. At the same time, the experience of national uniqueness and cultural specificity is meant to be banalised and anchored to everyday practices (see Kowalski 2017: 125). This banalisation can, however, strengthen the underlying racist tendencies and power relations through which discourses on the alleged 'superiority of the white race' and colonial relations are maintained and reproduced (e.g., Andreassen 2014).

In this article, my aim is to scrutinise how food becomes entangled in social relations and narratives on Finnishness in heritagisation practices. In the analysis, I follow berries, plants, and rye and barley and scrutinise their roles in the WLH. I utilise the concepts of naturalness and pastness to explain how Finnishness becomes actualised in the processes of producing food heritage in Finland. These concepts, which refer to the ways heritagised food objects are interpreted as stemming from the Finnish nature and past, are necessary parts of the heritagisation practices through which the banality of Finnishness and its polished and somewhat exclusionary imageries are maintained.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The WHL is an official wiki-based inventory platform that began in 2016. In March 2021, the WLH contained over 200 submissions, with material consisting of texts and pictures. I have analysed all 25 entries that discuss food and foodways (see Sources). Finnish nominations for inscription onto UNESCO's cultural heritage lists are made based on the submissions of the WLH. For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture nominated "Finland's sauna culture" and "Kaustinen folk fiddling" for inscription in spring 2019, and in December 2020, "Finland's sauna culture" was inscribed onto UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. No food-related entries have yet been nominated in Finland.

The WLH is an open access publication that could be described as an interface of institutional and vernacular heritage production: WLH submissions are identified and produced by different societal communities in the spirit of bottom-up ideology that has been a large-scale trend in, for instance, new museology (e.g., Alivizatou 2012: 20), but the Finnish Heritage Agency controls, administrates, and frames the process of publishing the WLH. The titles of submissions vary, from "Tar burning in pits" to "Santa Claus tradition in Finland". The submissions are written in Finnish, with some translated into Swedish, English, and even Sami and Roma.

The *Wiki-inventory* is divided into subsections such as "Festivities and Practices", "Music and Dance", "Performing Arts", "Oral Traditions", "Crafts", and "Food Traditions", the titles of which are provided by UNESCO. All entries are affixed under these. The published entries are mainly written and produced by the submitters, although the staff at the Finnish Heritage Agency administers them and may ask submitters to, for instance, broaden their list of references or include other significant information (see Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020). Those who submit to the WLH come from different areas of soci-

ety, although many of them are well-known third-sector organisations. This is important, as the entries and their relationship to the national scale need to be considered in the bigger picture: the national scale becomes emphasised in the WLH partly because the submitters represent large organisations that act in the field of the promotion of Finnish culture. These organisations often have the necessary resources and abilities to participate in environments such as the WLH, while smaller, more local societies may not have similar prospects. This, in turn, obscures local and regional scales in the WLH.

For the submission of entries to the WLH, the Finnish Heritage Agency provides a pre-structured online form. The instructions urge applicants to follow Finnish law, respect diversity and sustainable development, avoid stereotypical understandings, and recognise underrepresented groups and weakly documented heritage. Commercial and political organisations are excluded from the WLH (see WLH 2016). However, despite these instructions and the wishes of the Finnish Heritage Agency, the WLH includes only a few entries that represent the heritage of minorities: Sami and Roma communities play a small role in the WLH, while other groups are almost entirely absent (Mäkelä forthcoming). In doing this, the WLH is reinforcing established minority groups, such as the Sami, that have been (at least for the last decade in progressive discussions) included in the idea of Finnishness because of their status as a homogenous, rural, and indigenous (see also Seljamaa 2021). Furthermore, many of the entries include stereotypical examples of Finnish culture, such as "Making national costumes", "Sauna bathing", "The forest relationship in Finland"; however, many local phenomena are also included. As I revealed in a previous article, the localities in these submissions are often reflected in relation to the national scale, which can be seen in, for instance, linguistic patterns such as the use of the national 'we' and possessive suffixes that refer to the 'we-group' of Finns (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020).

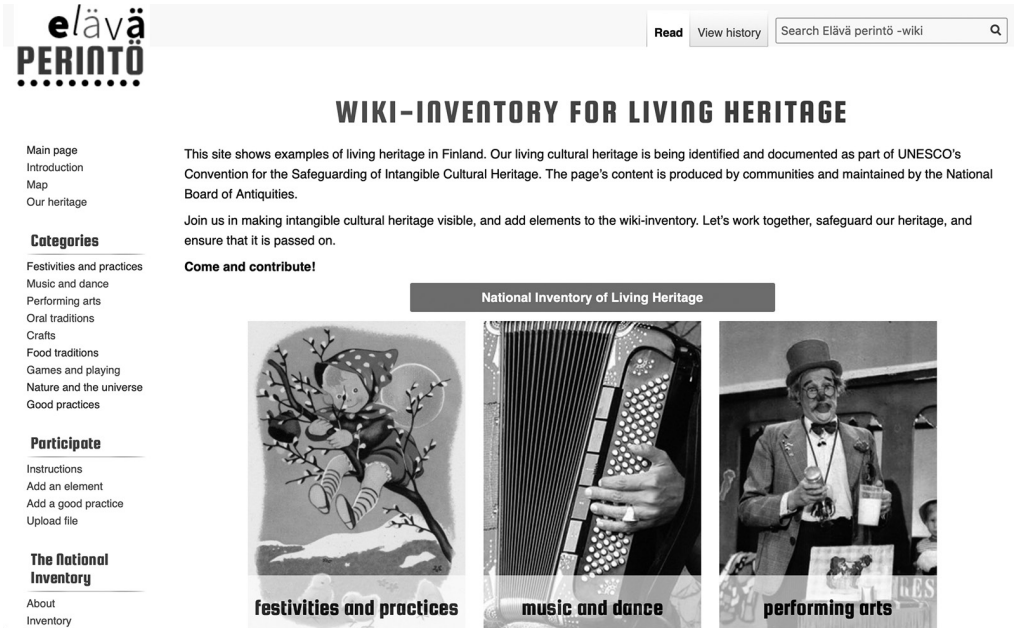


Photo 1. The front page of the WLH (English version), accessed November 21, 2019. CC BY 4.0.

The WLH is a CC BY 4.0 licenced publication, which allows users to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, and thus also study it without permission. Other than downloading and saving the dataset (between August 2018 and January 2021) for research purposes, I have not changed or otherwise interfered with the data. In this article, the WLH is analysed as a whole, not in relation to one person's opinions or the context of a single submission. Although nationalism is not regarded as positive or negative here but as an analytical tool, I recognise that it might be a concept that raises negative associations; therefore, I have not mentioned any individuals' or Finnish Heritage Agency staff members' names. Furthermore, I have blurred the individuals' faces in the photographs published in this article.

I have chosen to concentrate on the entries that discuss edible plants, berries, and rye and barley since the majority of the food-related submissions deal with plant- and grain-based products and cookery (see Sources). These products, especially grains, have also been acknowledged as important in the foodways of the Finnish area in earlier studies (Kylli 2018). I read all the food-related entries in the WLH closely and scrutinised the texts and pictures in a relation to one another, then placed them systematically side-by-side and identified similarities and analogies, as well as differences and inconsistencies. In addition to this, I scanned through the pictures of the WLH entries to see how the textual and narrated discourses interact with the visual material and form a multimodal entity.

RYE AND BARLEY: FINNISH PASTNESS

Archaeologist Cornelius Holtorf (2013: 431) argues that

> a useful term denoting the quality or condition of being (of the) past is pastness; authentic archaeological objects can be defined as objects that possess pastness […]. Pastness is the result of a particular perception or experience and as such it is firmly situated in a given cultural context.

In this section, I discuss how rye and barley have been heritagised in relation to the idea of pastness. I concentrate especially on the relations between the constructed pastness of food and the national.

In the WLH, 11 entries discuss different kinds of cereal product and food made of grain: "Baking the Karelian pies", "Baking the traditional Eura twists", "Beer culture", "The bread tradition", "Cutting and threshing rye with traditional methods", "The Finnish *rieska* tradition", "*Kropsu*", "*Kalakukko*", "Karelian pie tradition", "The *mutti* fair", and "The *Rotina* tradition". Historically, grains have played a significant role in the foodways of the Nordic area (e.g., Raento and Raento 2001; Kylli 2018). Even today, the role of cereal products in the nutrition recommendations of the Finnish Food Authority (2020) is emphasised: "The recommended daily intake of whole grain cereal products is some six portions for women and nine for men". Cereal products also represent Finnish food culture in imageries of popular entertainment as well as in the minds of Finnish citizens. For example, according to a survey study, some of the foods considered the most Finnish were rye bread, the Karelian pie, macaroni casserole, and *mämmi*

(a traditional Easter dish made of rye malts and rye flour) (Raento and Raento 2001: 21–22; see also Kylli 2018).

According to Holtorf, to be considered an emblem of the past or seen as possessing pastness, an object needs to meet three requirements: 1) it has to include certain material clues, such as patina, cracks, and decay, that index pastness; 2) it has to meet the expectations of the audience on how an object from the past should look and match their preconceptions strengthened by, for example, popular culture; 3) the object must be linked to a plausible and meaningful narrative relating 'then' with 'now' (Holtorf 2013: 432–435). Even though food differs from the stereotypical idea of an archaeological artefact, the concept of pastness is useful when considering the processes through which food becomes (national) heritage.

Rye, barley, and the products made thereof are able to evoke pastness in people's minds, even though food is exceedingly ephemeral and nondurable when considered in the human–food cycle of growing, harvesting, eating, and digesting. The idea of pastness is important in the heritagisation of food, as each of Holtrof's three requirements (material clues, expectations of the audience, meaningful narrative) become fulfilled. First of all, the very act of heritagisation is the relation between the past and the present: the WLH entries "Baking the Karelian pies" and "The Karelian pie tradition" depict how these well-known rye pastries (see Photo 2) have been baked in the border areas of Russia and Finland for centuries, as well as how Karelian evacuees took the tradition to other parts of Finland after the Second World War:

> After the Continuation War [1941–1944], over 40,000 Karelians had to leave their homes, and they were relocated in different parts of the remaining Finland. The evacuated Karelians brought, among other things, oven-baked foods and the well-known Karelian pie to the Finnish food culture. (WLH: "The Karelian pie tradition", translated by the author)

Indeed, this narrative is full of important meanings in relation to discourses on Finnishness and the past, as the mnemonic processes related to the Second World War are one of the most crucial nationalist practices in Finland (e.g., Paasi 2016; Matila 2020). Thus, the narrative attached to a small rye pastry is a grand one that indexes significant understandings of the Finnish past.



Photo 2. Karelian pies (front), egg butter, and vatruskas – pastries made of wheat dough (background). Photo by Pohjois-Karjalan Martat/Heidi Korpelainen (WLH: "Baking Karelian pies"). © Pohjois-Karjalan Martat.

In addition to the Second World War, food narrated as representing Finnish pastness is quite often associated with nationally significant mythological narratives. In the Finnish case, the national epic *Kalevala* (published in 1835/1849) and its mythic poetic worlds are very often brought forth in the intersections of food and pastness. Indeed, in addition to things such as landscapes, certain bodies and animals, or artefacts (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2019), food cultures are often justified as Finnish through references to *Kalevala* in the WLH. Even though Kalevalaic mythology is not mentioned in the "Baking Karelian pies" entry, the presence of it may be interpreted as implicitly inherent: the area of Karelia, which is located on both sides of the border of Finland and Russia, was the territory of Kalevalaic runo singers and oral poetic cultures, even during the 19th century. In the national romantic period, Karelia was considered an origin of Finnishness and a window to bygone days (e.g., Anttonen 2005: 138–143).

Kalevalaic mythology is used in heritagisation practices often with no reference to the Karelian area. In today's Finnish society, "ideas, images, and entities that are interpreted as stemming from the *Kalevala*, or as reflecting its aesthetics, values, and language, are often called 'Kalevalaic'" (Tarkka et al. 2018: 19). Thus, references to the content of the *Kalevala* – or the geographical locations where the old oral traditions were practiced – are often vague and signify a more general symbolic nationalistic value, especially in public. The pastness-related narratives of the WLH emphasise Kalevalaic mythology in a similar manner, for instance, in the following quotation from the "Beer culture" entry, wherein the origin of Finnish beer and its brewing is described as having evolved from the *Kalevala*:

> In Finland, beer is part of a wide variety of occasions. It is drunk with friends, at a summer picnic, with meals and when having a sauna – something very typical in Finland. […] *Sahti* [a special top-fermented home-brewed beer] and beer brewing have a long history in Finland. The legends of how beer was first created are part of our national epic, *Kalevala.* (WLH: "Beer culture")

In this submission, the liquid matter of beer and the consumption of beer, which could quite often be described as problematic binge or intoxication drinking in everyday contexts in Finland (Mäkelä 2011), are elevated in the heritagisation process as a part of the nation's mythic history and traditions. In the Finnish context, mention of the *Kalevala* refers to an elevated and even sublime discourse through which the mythic narrative on Finnishness is circulated: if the *Kalevala* is mentioned in the contexts of heritagisation processes, the heritage object becomes performatively more valuable and significant (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2019). This relation is thus exceedingly important when narrating the pastness of cereal products in Finland.

The second requirement of pastness becomes fulfilled in rye and barley-related heritagisation as well: the very materiality of grain-based products meets people's expectations for what material, food-related Finnish ancient-ness looks like. Rye is a key symbol in the narratives of Finnish food (Kylli 2018), and rye bread and Karelian pies do match the imageries of Finnish food circulated in popular culture and literature. For example, the "Bread tradition" entry in the WLH includes a photo of several types of rye bread that have been placed on a table in a way that the viewer can see the deep brown colours, the floury crusts, and the cracks in the baked surfaces (see Photo 3). Most of these resemble traditional hole-bread (see Photo 5) or loafs; however, bread

eaten in contemporary Finland is, for the most part, industrially baked. However, the second requirement of pastness is fulfilled as the materiality of rye flour, the brown colour, and the taste and texture of the bread are strong symbols of the Finnish past. In advertisements produced by the bread industry, these symbols and the audience's expectations are often strengthened through references to Finnish nature (see Photo 4), which intersects the idea of pastness with that of naturalness. However, in heritagisation practices, the industrial production of food is minimised, while the handmade-ness of the cooking or baking process is emphasised.



Photo 3. Rye bread is one of most traditional breads in Finland. Photo by Leipätiedotus (WLH: "The bread tradition"). © Leipätiedotus.



Photo 4. A screenshot from Fazer's advertisement video "Do you know who bakes your bread and where it comes from?" (see Fazer 2021). © Fazer.



Photo 5. Loaves of rye bread are put up on a pole. Photo by Pekka Kyytinen, circa 1940. Finnish Heritage Agency/Historical Picture Collection/The Collection of the Finnish Tourist Board. CC BY 4.0.



Photo 6. The Marthas of Northern Karelia baking Karelian pies at a pastry workshop in Joensuu marketplace. Photo by Heli Sorjonen (WLH: "Baking Karelian pies"). © Pohjois-Karjalan Martat.

Finally, the requirement of material clues that often include patina and cracks in heritagised objects is present in the processes of the heritagisation of food through the idea of handmade-ness: the touch of human hands gives the material food object an aura of imperfection and oldness that is similar to the patina and cracks of museum artefacts. For instance, in the case of Karelian pies (see Photos 2 and 6), the crinkled sides of the pastry indicate the touch of human fingers and their limited ability to form the thin rye dough. The form of the pastry is not perfect or completely symmetrical, which gives the object an air of authenticity. Furthermore, knowledge of the baking tradition and the idea that the pastry has always been baked in a similar manner enhances the affective feeling and experience of pastness. The environment of the WLH also urges submitters to emphasise the non-commerciality of the traditions and products, as heritagisation practices often balance between 'authentic' traditions and ways to utilise these in commercial contexts (e.g., Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995).

In pictures on the WLH, the pastness of grain products is highlighted in a manner that emphasises their authenticity. For example, in the "Baking Karelian pies" entry, the pastries are being baked by apron-wearing ladies who are depicted almost like collective foremothers: gendered representations of Finnishness (see Photo 6). This underlines the pastness of the heritagised objects, as the ladies' presence embodies and interconnects narratives of the Finnish past and the ability of their hands to produce authentic pastries. The presence of the foremother-like figures in the entry also emphasises that the pastries are not meant to be mass-produced or commercial but created in an atmosphere of collectivity and care. Pastness is thus related to the materiality of food

and interpretations thereof, and also to the people who touch, create, narrate, and eat the food, and these cannot be separated from one another. By baking Karelian pies, the ladies in Photo 6 become an intrinsic part of the ideals and narratives of pastness, and their bodies intermingle in a very concrete way with the complex relations between the materiality of the pastries, national narratives, traditions, and claims of authenticity as they touch the ingredients, bake the pastries, and perhaps even eat them.

However, the performances of pastness are not covered only with delicious tastes, the quality of being hand-made, and happy smiles, they also become intertwined with narratives of national otherness. The "Bread tradition" submission, for instance, discusses the materiality of Finnish rye bread in relation to other rye bread cultures:

> In Finland, the rye flour, as well as the other flours that are used in baking, is wholegrain, whereupon the fibrous bran of a kernel is utilised. For example, our eastern neighbours remove the bran layer of the rye kernels, and the bread is made of low-fibre flour. (WLH: "Bread tradition", translated by the author)

In this case, Finnish otherness is located to the east (Russia), with the Russian way of making bread seen as unhealthy and unwise through contempt for wholegrain flour. A hostile attitude toward Russia is a prolonged discourse that stems mainly from the time Finland gained its independence (1917), and the former mother country, Russia, became an enemy in public speech (Paasi 1997). Echoes of this can be heard in the text: low-fibre flour represents Russian otherness, whereas wholegrain bread becomes an "edible home" where the taste, texture, and look of the object imply Finland's history and prosperity. This beautifully summarises how the requirements of pastness for heritagised foods are closely linked with complex identity formation and politics, as well as the ways boundaries are drawn between 'us' and 'them'.

BERRIES AND EDIBLE PLANTS: FINNISH NATURALNESS

The Finnish heritagised past and the pastness of heritagised items are commonly constructed in public speech through connections to nature, which is often understood as something non-urban, but rarely outright wilderness (Mäkelä forthcoming). The naturalness of Finnishness means something nature-related, which, in the Finnish case, is strongly tied to the canonical national imageries of forested lake landscapes (Häyrynen 2000). In the WLH, nature is regarded as something that can be utilised and exploited by humans, but it is simultaneously described as something mystical, powerful, old, primitive, and worthy of admiration. Nature is seen as a testimony of the Finnish distant past. In the WLH, nature and certain material objects that are understood as representing it function as material traces of the Finnish past. These nature-representing things, such as forests and other natural places, plants growing from Finnish soil, and products made of wood, are able to represent the presence of an historical time and evoke an affective experience of facing the past directly and concretely; in other words, they create a feeling of historical immediacy (Siikala and Siikala 2005: 120), even though they do not necessarily originate from the distant past.

In the heritagisation of food, edible matter is able to evoke vast time spans and the mystified, primitive forest-nature, even though the actual lifecycle of the food matter is

impermanent. This is manifested in the WLH in submissions that discuss "forest treats" such as edible plants, fungi, and berries ("Berry-picking", "Horta hunting, foraging for wild greens and herbs", "Picking mushrooms"). In this section, I concentrate on how berries and edible plants are heritagised in the WLH, and how they are tied to understandings of nature-related Finnishness and Finnish natural food culture. Although berry picking is often associated with a rural lifestyle, older age, and being female, berries are an important part of the Finnish diet in general (Pouta et al. 2006); thus, it is not surprising that berry-picking is understood as a heritagised tradition in the WLH. In contrast, wild greens are not commonly consumed in Finland, although their presence in the WLH is understandable when considered in relation to the idea of Finnish naturalness.

As the ethnologist Ester Bardone (2013) noted, practices such as berry picking create a feeling of belonging to a place and are a way to resist mass production and find temporary respite from urban and technologically mediated life. Through these kinds of practice, people engage in an ecological and sustainable lifestyle:

> Self-gathered and self-preserved berries are once again a valuable part of a households' food economy, although not because of possible food shortages, but because of the need for knowledgeable choices in the era of mass-produced food and impersonal food consumption (Bardone 2013: 42).

Ethnologists who study food production in the Nordic area have made similar observations on food marketing and place branding:

> What once was evidence of poverty in food production is increasingly becoming a sign of exclusiveness and quality for the discerning consumer. Many customers are prepared to pay extra for food that is foraged, homemade and made on a small scale. (Larsen and Österlund-Pötzch 2015: 41)

Overall, the qualities of locality and naturality have become key issues in Nordic food trends and marketing (Bergfløt et al. 2012; Andreassen 2014; Jón Pétursson 2018). In the case of the heritagisation of berries (for example bilberries, see Photo 7) and edible plants, naturalness is considered a significant and inherent feature of matter that originates from Finnish forests and natural environments. Furthermore, the bond between the human who gathers the product of the forest and the product itself must be authentic and unbroken in the sense that the person goes into nature, touches and possibly cooks the plant, then eats and digests it. This is related to contemporary transnational ideas of the naturalness of food in general, as studies have shown that people often understand "natural food" as being produced without artificial ingredients or chemicals and/or grown locally (Pratt 2007; Siipi 2008; Knight 2012; Jón Pétursson 2018; Jorge et al. 2020).

In Finnish heritagisation processes, the idea of an authentic bond between the gatherer and the food itself produces affective experiences of sublimity, mind-nourishment, and creativity. In the following example, wild greens are described as local and easy, and also as being a link between the modern Finn and forested nature:

> Finns like to go outdoors to enjoy nature and spend time at summer cabins. Horta hunting is just as much about being out in nature as it is about foraging for wild greens. Horta hunting opens a door to a much more varied world than just collect-

> ing plants. It nourishes the mind, brings people together, opens up our views on nature, offers a new perspective on our food culture, and inspires creativity. […] Wild vegetables are local food that travel from forest to plate quickly and easily. The local forests, meadows, organic fields, and our gardens are like huge treasure chests. (WLH: "Horta hunting, foraging for wild greens and herbs", partially translated by the author)

In this example, the forager, the wild greens, and the soils of the "local forests, meadows, […] fields, and […] gardens" form an entanglement in which Finnishness is a significant attribute. In heritagisation practices, the authentic bond between edible plants and humans is made nationally significant by mentioning that the plants grow in and originate from the Finnish soil and environment. As Michael Di Giovine and Ronda Brulotte (2014: 6) noted, food-related heritagisation processes are often tied to the concept of terroir in a very distinguishing way, as "it posits that the biological components of an environment bestow uniqueness and authenticity onto a place's product, prohibiting it from being replicated elsewhere in the world".



Photo 7. Berry picking by hand. Photo by Arktiset Aromit ry:n kuvakokoelma (WLH: "Berry picking").

The Finnish terroir plays a significant role in the WLH, as do the traditional ways of manipulating it. In heritagisation practices, the naturalness of berries and plants needs to be tied to earlier times, something that is done by connecting the act of berry picking or horta hunting and the relationships between humans' bodies and edible matter, to the ways the "Finnish forefathers" used to live. Thus, the temporal frame of the heritagisation of, for instance, berries is extended in the WLH to the time of the first homo

sapiens, which, in the case of the current Finnish territory, was approximately 11,000 years ago. In the quotation below, submitted to the WLH by the *Arktiset Aromit* ('Arctic Aromas') foundation, Finland is mentioned as having been existent during the time of hunter-gatherers, hence the frame of the national narrative is extended to the prehistory of the geographical area. In the following example, wild berries and the act of berry-picking bring together the first habitants of the area and the childhood memories of contemporary Finns:

> Even the first hunter-gatherers who came to Finland utilized berries in addition to other food that nature offered. Nearly every Finn remembers, even today, berry-picking trips with friends, parents, or grandparents. […] The effects on well-being and health benefits of natural food are more and more understood, which increases interest in utilizing them. The growing interest in local food is apt to develop the using of natural products. Berry-picking and other knowledge on nature is taught for kids by kindergartens, schools, parents, grandparents, and organizations. New generations will continue to preserve the tradition. (WLH: "Berry-picking", translated by the author)

The connections made between contemporary Finns, different generations, berries, the act of picking berries, locality, and the hunter-gatherers are meant to evoke a temporal connection to bygone days, and thus to authenticate and naturalise these relations. However, the hunter-gatherers who lived in what is now Finnish territory were not Finnish in a cultural or linguistic sense (e.g., Lang 2020).[1] In heritagisation contexts, these kinds of overstated temporal relationship between generations are used to emphasise the naturalness, traditionality, and oldness of the heritagised food on the one hand and Finnishness on the other. The similarity of the contemporary berry-matter to an ancient berry, the idea of berry picking forefathers, and the fact that the berry grows in the soil of Finnish terroir enable the idea that berries and berry picking are able to bring together and transcend spatial, temporal, experiential, and even genetic layers.

Emphasising edible plants and berries as natural and the narrative of contemporary and bygone Finns as their natural pickers and eaters raises the question of whether these narratives promote underlying racial categories. The narrated genetic connection between former generations and both contemporary Finns as well as the berries that grow in the soil of Finland seems to tell a story of a "homeland" in which the bodies and the earth are regarded as having an intrinsic, permanent relation to one another. As John Wylie (2016: 413) noted, this kind of essentialist "homeland thinking" is problematic, as a homeland is an ideal that exists only in a distant past or location. However, as Rikke Andreassen (2014) argued, these kinds of alleged intrinsic relations between a homeland, the past, food, naturalness, and people could indicate tendencies to reinscribe racial histories that, in the Nordic case, emphasise whiteness, mono-culturalism, and mono-racialism. In Denmark, references to the Vikings in food discourses is an obvious example of this (Andreassen 2014), although such analogues cannot be made as easily in the Finnish case. The only bond between the hunter-gatherers and contemporary Finns is the shared soil; even the whiteness of Finns was questioned in Nordic race science discussions as late as the early 20th century, as Finns were regarded as of Mongolian descent, hence a part of the Asian race. The construction of Finnishness as a

white and Western phenomenon is considerably new (Keskinen 2019). Thus, as the connections between Finns, the "homeland", and the past are definitely framed as a white performance (see, for example, Photo 7, which includes white hands), WLH practices refer to somewhat novel constructions of what Finnishness is. Therefore, the category of "Finnish nature" is needed in order to assert that heritagised foods are indeed Finnish and stem from the Finnish past; "Nature" is thus a diffused category into which new and middle-class-oriented understandings of Finnishness can be inscribed.

CONCLUSION

The category of food is an important feature in the heritagisation of the Finnish past. Analysis of the WLH shows that food ignites a complex process in which the very materiality of the matter (textures, forms, etc.) evokes Finnishness, Finnish pastness, and memories, and invites identification with the banal processes of belonging. The picking, eating, cooking, and touching of heritagised ingredients, such as edible plants and berries, become an affective practice in which the physical presence and emotional reactions of humans intermingle with the images of the nationally laden past, the 'forefathers', and the Finnish terroir.

In the case of the WLH, the objects described as traditional are, in many ways, new or contemporary: the life of a loaf of rye bread or wild berry is ephemeral, and Karelian pies are made *now* even though they refer to a traditional way of making them. However, pastness (Holtorf 2013) is necessary in the processes of heritagisation. In the WLH, pastness is constructed through qualities such as handmade-ness and naturalness. These features are indexical and temporal properties of the heritage objects: they connect the things to the national past both metaphorically and metonymically. Edible items that are considered heritage are not only made in Finland, they also originate from Finnish soil and nature, which gives them an aura of authenticity. Furthermore, heritagised food is understood as representing temporal continuities and stability, in contrast to ephemeral, homogenous, and mass-produced cultural artefacts (see also Balthazar 2017: 222).

In creating Finnish food-related heritage – or heritage in general – the idea of naturalness is important (Mäkelä forthcoming). Contra to the Central European heritage ideal of castles, ruins, and upper-class monuments (Sargent 2016), Finnish heritagisation processes embrace connections with nature. This nature is often understood as not being outright wilderness but semi-peripheral places, such as forests located near settlements, fields, and meadows. Nature is regarded as something that humans can admire but also utilise to feel creative and connected to nature and the past. The heritagisation of edible plants and berries naturalises the category of Finnishness: it simultaneously emphasises the ideas of Finnish heritage and the Finnish past as nature-related and creates an image of Finnishness as a natural part of the world. The understanding of Finnishness as something nature-related is rather exclusive: heritagisation practices seem to reinforce, in many imperceptible and banal ways, the values of the Finnish middle class as well as the rural images the country-branding committees wish to generate (e.g., Kalaoja 2016; Printsmann et al. 2019). However, references to nature obscure the complex racial discourses concerning the Finnish forefathers who were placed lower in

hierarchies when compared to, for example, the Nordic race. The past of Finnishness is thus represented through connections to the natural environment, while the banal claim of whiteness reflects contemporary middle class values as well as current norms in the Western world. The idea of naturalness fits well in the discourses related to the broad-mindedness of the middle class (see Lehtonen and Koivunen 2010), as it represents the Finnish normative 'we-group' as a leading nexus that appreciates nature and environmental values in the contemporary, climate-concerned world.

As Laurajane Smith (2020) argued, it is important to follow what the practices of past-presenting *do* in the world and how they influence the material environment as well as social relations in contemporary contexts. Following this, I propose that naming things such as edible plants, berries, and rye and barley (or the traditions related to them) as intangible cultural heritage in contemporary Finland strengthens the pre-existing discourses on Finnishness as, for example, a nature-related phenomenon. Furthermore, these processes can strengthen the value of these products in Finnish food marketing and influence the tourism sector through the formulaic narratives attached to the products.

Everyday experiences and more informal and/or marginal heritagisations have faded into the background somewhat, even though the participatory environment of the WLH strives to include and support sub-national communities and emphasise their views and experiences. This is an outcome of complex relations and practices: on the one hand, the submitting communities aspire to meet the expectations they assume of the Finnish Heritage Agency. On the other hand, the guidelines of the WLH, which are provided by the Finnish Heritage Agency, emphasise the national scale in a banal way, which in turn leads to submissions that follow this tone. Therefore, the UNESCO-based aim of cultural diversity is not being fulfilled, though one might ask whether UNESCO's processes are ever able to achieve such aims when considering their emphasis on privileged expertise and bureaucracy (e.g., Beardslee 2016). It is also important to note that critical analysis on whiteness and nationalism may unintentionally reinforce the stability of certain power relations and categories (e.g., Keskinen et al. 2015). Thus, in the future, it might be necessary to examine the cracks and counter-narratives of banal Finnishness in the WLH, even though this banality permeates the ways every heritagised bite is interpreted.

NOTES

1 Finnish, which belongs to the Finno-Ugric language group, was not spoken in the area at the time of the first inhabitants; the first Proto-Finnic speakers settled the area approximately 3,000 years ago (e.g., Häkkinen 2014).

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The food-related entries in the WLH are:

Allotment gardening (*Siirtolapuutarhaviljely*)
Baking Karelian pies (*Karjalanpiirakoiden leipominen*)
Baking traditional Eura twists (*Euranrinkilöiden leipominen*)
Bread cheese (*Leipäjuusto*)
Bread tradition (*Leipäperinne*)
Cheese soup tradition (*Juustokeittoperinne*)
Cutting and threshing rye with traditional methods (*Rukiinleikkuu ja puinti perinteisin menetelmin*)
Feast table of Häme region (*Hämäläinen pitopöytä*)
Finnish beer culture (*Suomalainen olutkulttuuri*)
Finnish *rieska* [unleavened barley bread] tradition (*Suomalainen rieskaperinne*)
Horta hunting, foraging for wild greens and herbs (*Hortoilu eli villivihannesten ja -yrttien kerääminen*)
Kalakukko [a traditional food that is made of small fish baked for hours inside a loaf of dark rye bread]
Karelian pie tradition (*Karjalanpiirakkaperinne*)
Kropsu [Ostrobotnian pancake]
Liver casserole (*Maksalaatikko*)
Local heritage festivities (*Kotiseutupäivät / kotiseutujuhlat*)
Mutti [porridge made of barley flour and water] fair (*Muttimarkkinat*)
Picking berries (*Marjastus*)
Picking mushrooms (*Sienestys*)
Preparing *mykyrokka* [a soup made of potatoes, meat, offal, and dumplings made of blood and flour] (*Mykyrokan valmistaminen*)
Rotina [food taken to a woman who has given birth] tradition (*Rotinaperinne*)
Särä [potato and lamb stew] tradition in Lemi (*Säräperinne Lemillä*)
Sautéed reindeer (*Poronkäristys*)
Skewer-roasted whitefish (*Varrassiian paistaminen*)
Traditional fishing culture in the Torne River rapids (*Tornionjoen perinteinen koskikalastuskulttuuri*)

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