

interesting aspects as part of a process of revitalization or "returning to the whole," through multisensory or synesthetic food experiences. I then describe certain synesthetic qualities that are elaborated in Kalymnian and Greek experiences of food. (The Greek island of Kalymnos is in the eastern Aegean Sea.) Synesthesia is defined as "the union of the senses," or the way that sensory experiences cannot be compartmentalized, but seem, rather, to feed off each other. Finally I consider more general questions regarding synesthesia, memory, and categorization that lead back to the social quality of food memories...

That food frequently accompanies people in their travels across national borders may be obvious to customs officers worldwide, but its significance has only begun to be explored by anthropologists. While there has been some interest in the way migrant food has transformed eating in the US and other migrant destinations (Raspa 1984), less attention is given to the implications for identity of the food that migrants might bring with them, or have sent from home; indeed its importance is explicitly dismissed by Hannerz in his theorizing concerning "cosmopolitans" and "locals" (1996:103). Yet Fog Olwig and Hastrup (1997) argue for the importance of "cultural sites," localized cultural wholes that become points of identification for people displaced by migrations caused by larger global processes. Here I suggest that food might be analyzed as just such a cultural site, and is especially useful in understanding Kalymnian and Greek experiences of displacement, fragmentation, and the reconstruction of wholeness.

The experience of displacement is culturally elaborated in Greece under the concept *xenitia*, or absence from home. *Xenitia* is described as a condition of estrangement, absence, death, or of loss of social relatedness, loss of the ethic of care seen to characterize relations at home (Danforth 1982: 93ff.; Seremetakis 1991: 85, 175-6). It provokes a longing for home that is seen as a physical and spiritual pain, as Frantzis describes for the Dodecanese migrants to Tarpon Springs, Florida: "The sun-drenched shores of Florida [are] verdant with pine trees, orange trees, palms, beautiful tropical trees, and multicolored fragrant flowers. All of them resemble and remind them of their islands. Nevertheless, and in spite of it all, their heart withers, and the longing for the wild beauty of these chunks of rocks where they were born is alive in them" (Frantzis 1962: 105). Here the sensual landscape of Florida serves as a painful reminder of the home they have left. More usually, however, migrants are moving to an urban environment where there is a more striking sense of disjunction. Hence the need to have some physical object as a tangible site for memory which can facilitate a "return to the whole."

In using the concept of "wholeness" I am drawing on the ongoing work of Fernandez on the process of "returning to the whole," which he first discusses in the context of religious revitalization movements in West Africa. Bwiti, the revitalization movement among the Fang of Gabon where Fernandez worked, is seen as a response to the alienation and fragmentation brought

30 Synesthesia, Memory, and the Taste of Home

David E. Sutton

A flowerpot of basil can symbolize the soul of a people better than a drama of Aeschylus.

Ion Dragoumis

The reference to basil by Greek folklorist Ion Dragoumis provides a point of entry into my subject, the power of tangible everyday experiences to evoke the memories on which identities are formed. Dragoumis' aphorism was given substance by a comment passed on to me by Eleana Yalouri, a PhD student in anthropology living in London, who was visited by a recent migrant from Greece. Smelling a pot of basil on her windowsill, he told her with evident longing, "It really smells like Greece!" She noted that the ubiquitous leavening used for making bread contains and smells strongly of basil. That this is not an uncommon experience is further confirmed by Helen Zeese Papanikolas, in her account of Greek immigrants in the American West in the early years of the twentieth century. Papanikolas writes, "Basil plants grew in dusty cans on the window ledges of the restaurants and coffeehouses; men broke off sprigs to put in their lapels and from time to time brought them to their noses and breathed in the piquant scent. 'Ach, patridha, patridha,' [homeland, homeland] they said" (Papanikolas 1987: 156).

This chapter looks at food memory from the perspective of the senses. That is, it addresses issues of how and why food is memorable as a sensory as well as a social experience. It does this through a consideration of cross-cultural, cognitive aspects of sensory memory, but without neglecting how such cognitive potentials can be culturally elaborated or downplayed in specific ways. I begin with transnational food exchange, which has, I argue,

on by "the agents of the colonial world and simply modern times" (1982: 562). In the face of these radical changes in their society, the Fang use Bwiti to reintegrate the past and the present, to "recapture the totality of the old way of life" (1982: 9). Thus, as against the celebration of fragmentation in postmodern analysis, Fernandez provides an analysis of some of the ways that those whose worlds are being rent asunder attempt creatively to reconstruct them. Fernandez's approach is potentially applicable to many sorts of alienation, from that of victims of war, to that of refugees, migrants, downsized workers, those caught in major political shifts such as the fall of Soviet socialism, and all those who in the midst of change "are looking for firm ground under their feet" (Thomassen 1996: 44).

The originality in Fernandez's work comes in his focus on the symbolic processes by which the "return to the whole" is attempted. Fernandez describes the "whole" as a "state of relatedness—a kind of conviviality in experience" (1986: 191). He suggests some of the difficulties of imagining or experiencing the whole given the atomization and fragmentation of present-day Fang society. It is the sense that there is a "lack of fit" or coherence between different domains of experience that leads to attempts to return to the whole. Returning to the whole requires a "mutual tuning-in" based on shared sensory experiences that are explicitly synthetic (crossing sensory domains). "Hearing, seeing, touching, tasting—in primary groups, families, ethnic groups, fraternal or sororal associations, etc. If we don't have these things to begin with we have to somehow recreate them by an argument of images of some kind in which primary perceptions are evoked" (193). This is where revitalization comes in, the process by which a domain of experience that is experienced as fragmented or deprived is revalued by simply marking it for ritual participation: "The performance of a sequence of images revitalizes, in effect, and by simple iteration, a universe of domains, an acceptable cosmology of participation, a compelling whole" (203).

In speaking with Greek students studying in Oxford, I found that the food they received from home (either through the mail or brought by friends or family members on visits) fell into three categories: (1) olives, olive oil, meat (in one case, two whole goats for Easter), eggs and other products produced by family members on family land; (2) baked goods associated with Easter and other festive times, either prepared by family members or store-bought; (3) mass-produced Greek products such as feta cheese. The first type of item produced immediate local knowledge: one woman, who had lived in London for ten years working in various jobs while taking courses in art and design (with hopes to become an icon painter), told me about the olive oil that her father made from family trees in Crete, and that the olives were especially good for oil because they weren't watered, but raised only on rainwater. She said it had zero percent acidity; that it sometimes became more acidic if you let the olives fall off the tree, but her father used a stick to knock them off the tree, and you had to knock in a certain direction, otherwise the olives would not grow again.

Aside from such local knowledge, sensory aspects of food sent from Greece were also stressed. Another woman, studying environmental planning, who had been in England for five years, spoke of the eggs sent from her father's farm, which she contrasted with "plastic" eggs in England, which had a particularly unpleasant smell, while eggs from Greece had a deep orange color to the yolks and an "intense" flavor. The second category had an obvious connection to Greek traditions as well as to the family, usually mothers, who had baked some of these items. But it was certainly not only mothers who put together such packages. Fathers, grandmothers, and grandfathers might send separate packages of foodstuffs, items that they had actually produced or that they had shared in the past with the receiving child...

The third category of mass-produced Greek products was less common in the late 1990s. One man noted that now (in 1998) it was possible to get these same products at British supermarkets, so that the only connection they had to Greece for him was the thought of his mother sending them. But others spoke of the importance of feta at earlier periods of migration, when Greek feta was not widely available. Dimitris Theodosopoulos, an anthropologist at the University of Lampeter in Wales, noted that new students who came from Greece wouldn't realize how much they were going to miss feta. "When they would return to Greece for Christmas, they would really stock up, fill their suitcases and bags with feta in all different kinds of containers. One trip I came back from Greece with a 10-kilo tin of feta cheese, which I preserved in brine... I would cut a little piece with my meal every night. It was like 'white gold' to me (laughing)."

What is the actual experience of such food events? They are often experienced in terms of a "burning desire" that is satiated through a sensory experience evoking local knowledge, at the same time that a domain of experience that has fallen into disuse, in Fernandez's terms, is revalued. They often explicitly evoke a wholeness, or fullness in experience, as in the following report by Kapella of a letter from a woman living in Germany upon receiving a package of Kalyimian honey and other local products: "My joy was indescribable, I laughed and cried at the same time. I took the package, left the post office, and in the street I felt like I was holding the whole world in my arms" (Kapella 1981: 36). The woman noted that she used the honey to make doughnuts and she "soothed her insides." She contrasts this feeling to her experience of the sensory deprivation of work in Germany in a few descriptive images: "We've made money, but we've molted in the factories. We don't see outside and we're dying of cold..." (1981: 36).

This gives a clear sense of one strategy for returning to the whole: through what Fernandez calls the shock of "recognition of a wider integrity of things" captured in the metaphor of the "whole world," but specifically triggered by *memory* of taste and smell. It is this memory that leads to the emotional affect described in the passage: simultaneous laughing and crying, and then a sense of soothing fullness, suggesting the evocation of other memories. The

expression "laughing and crying" implies that such moments of wholeness are bittersweet and temporary, a reminder of a homeland the return to which is deferred. Yet the soothing fullness also suggests that such moments give the migrants the strength to carry on with their *xenitia*. This sense of emotional/ embodied plenitude evoked above is echoed in the following passage from Papanikolas (1987: 217), describing several Greek immigrant men, cousins who were working in Idaho in an endless task of clearing sagebrush to homestead:

One night, working nervously, swearing obscenely, Louis made a *pita*. He could have waited for Sunday, gone the six miles to Pocatello . . . and had one of the Greek women who ran boarding houses make it for him, but he wanted it right then. Louis rolled out the pastry leaves, layered each sheet with butter and eggs mixed with crumbled feta. The helper gazed with tearful eyes, Yoryis avidly. That night they fell on their cots, satisfied.

Once again, the terrible emotional overload of *xenitia*—living in a foreign land—is temporarily relieved in the experience, which demands and receives immediate satisfaction.

And once again it is the iteration of a neglected domain, metonymically described ("Louis rolled out the pastry leaves . . .") that revitalizes it for the participants. Implicitly, the revitalization of one domain brings others with it, a point made by recent theorists of refugee displacement. For example, Nordstrom (1995) describes the everyday and ritual practices of resistance to the destruction wrought on people's lives by war in Mozambique. She concludes: "Worlds are destroyed in a war; they must be recreated. Not just worlds of home, family, community, and economy but worlds of definition, both personal and cultural" (1995: 147) . . . As Fernandez describes, integrity is restored through a remembered coherence, or structural repetition between domains. This occurs because the food event evokes a whole world of family, agricultural associations, place names and other "local knowledge." Even memories of water have this characteristic, partly owing to the fact that different qualities of water are said to produce different qualities of food (for example, water used for olive trees or water used to soak beans before cooking them). Papanikolas recounts migrants' memories of water sources from home (1987: 167), illustrating the almost sacred power of invocation:

The men talked constantly of the water in their part of Greece, which often had to be carried a long distance over rocky trails, how cold it was, a special taste, its curative qualities, how its fame was known throughout the province and people came from afar to drink it. They spoke the names of waters with reverence: Kefalovrissi—Head Springs, Palaïos Piatanos—Old Plane Tree, Mahi Topos—Slaughtering Place, Nifi Peplos—Bride's Veil, Nerolithi—Water Rock.

It is this same sense of the part that holds the key to revivifying a whole structure of associations that animates Marcel Proust's project of exploring involuntary sensory memory. Here is Proust describing the memory of the senses evoked by food, in his famous *madeleine* description:

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, *the vast structure of recollection*.

(Proust 1982: 50–1; italics mine)

Of course Proust was not speaking of migration, as I have been. But if the past "is a foreign country," then similar processes can be at work in temporal as in spatial or spatiotemporal displacement. And indeed Proust directs us once again to the power of sensory parts to return us to the whole, of the unsubstantial fragment to reveal the vast structure. Like the memories discussed above, Proust also points us to the emotional charge of the moment of consumption for keying, involuntarily, these associative memories. But why taste and smell . . .

Evocative Senses

Note that in his *madeleine* description, Proust does not single out taste, but rather taste and smell, as the senses that hold the promise of the return of the memorable whole. Taste and smell, it is generally noted, are interrelated senses. The chewing of food forces air up through the mouth to the nose, and a blocked nose can cause considerable reduction in the ability to taste (Vroon 1997: 24). In his 1975 work *Rethinking Symbolism*, Dan Sperber directly addresses the Proustian phenomenon in a consideration of the evocative power of smells. I believe his discussion could equally well be applied to taste, as will become clear from what follows. Sperber begins by contrasting smells with colors. While colors have a fairly elaborate classificatory terminology, hierarchically arranged so that we recognize shades of the same color, smells are organized much more simply along an axis of good–bad, and in terms of their causes and sometimes their effects: "the smell of coffee brewing," "a nauseating smell" (see also Engen 1991: 86). Attempts at scientific classification of smells in something equivalent to classes have led to little consensus concerning what might constitute clusters of smells and "primary smells," and attempted taxonomies seem forced and vague, such as Linnaeus' division of smells (on a gradient of best to worst) into (1) Aromatic, (2) Scented or perfumed, (3) Ambrosia or musk-like, (4) Sharp or garlic-like, (5) Stinking or goat-like, sweaty, (6) Repulsive and (7) Disgusting.

Sperber continues his contrast by noting that it is fairly easy to recall colors to mind, even when not in the presence of the actual stimulus. In other words, if asked to imagine the color of a Granny Smith apple, most people experience little difficulty seeing the color in their mind, or the apple itself. The same is not true for smells, or, I might add, for tastes. As Sperber notes, if one does want to recall a scent, one often employs an image: the church where one smelled a certain type of incense: "And I will almost have the impression that I sense that scent—a misleading impression, however, which will fade as soon as, relinquishing the recollection of the object it emanated from, I try mentally to reconstitute the scent itself" (1975: 117).

The failure to recall scents is related for Sperber to the way they are categorized, or rather, not categorized; in other words, there is no "semantic field of smells." By contrast, in the presence of a stimulus, smells can be recognized over a distance of many years. Recognized, but not analyzed and described in the fashion one might do for a color. Or for the face of someone one has seen before whom one runs into at the supermarket: once recognized, one can access or invoke prior information one has about the person to whom the face belongs, and add the fact that you shop at the same supermarket. With smells, however, because of the difficulty of analysis and invocation, one attempts evocation: "In the case of smells, the evocational field comprises all recollections likely to corroborate the feeling of recognition, and it is these recollections that evocation passes in review" (1975: 121). In other words, smells evoke what surrounds them in memory, what has been metonymically associated with the smell in question. Smells are prototypical symbols, in Sperber's terms "by virtue of the accepted definitions according to which the symbol is the part for the whole, or the object that gives rise to something other than itself, or the motivated sign, etc." (1975: 118).

Recent research has borne out Sperber's view of the relation between smell and memory. First, the idea that memory often works by synchronous convergence, i.e. the association of diverse things occurring at the same time, is "well documented" (Fuster 1997: 451). "If, for example, you are reading Dante's *Divine Comedy* about Beatrice while watching scenes on the television of refugees, then images of Beatrice and the suffering of refugees are likely to be associated in your memory" (Reyna 2002: 112; see also Engen 1991: 3ff.). But this property is more true of smells, as Vroon notes, because smells more easily connect with "episodic" than "semantic" memories (i.e. life-history memories as opposed to "recognition of a phenomenon" memories), and also because of the tendency for smell memories to be emotionally charged (Vroon 1997: 95, 104). This emotional charge is touched on by Sperber in noting that in trying to place a smell that one is re-experiencing "one may revive memories that are more captivating than the smell itself, more insistent than the original desire one had to identify it" (1975: 122). Or to quote a food author discussing the phenomenon of taste memory: "the hunger is in the memory, not in the biscuit, berries and cream..." (Lust 1998: 175).

Once again, if we extend this view to taste, which shares limbic system location, and low semantic/high episodic recall, then we have a confirmation that, on both counts, Proust was right....

Sperber speculates on the absence of other analyses of smell in anthropological discussions of symbolism, given that they are for him "symbols *par excellence*," and places the blame on their seemingly individual and idiosyncratic nature which "bypass[es] all forms of coded communication" (1975: 118). In other words, apricots evoke the Second World War for Yiannis, but they just give me hives. But say the words "Chinese Pressed Duck" and I am sent into reveries of early college years and love in bloom. However, Sperber goes on to argue that culture does in fact play a role in these types of phenomena. Through repetition in ritual and other forms, cultural symbolism "focuses the attention of the members of a single society in the same directions, determines parallel evocational fields that are structured in the same way, but leaves the individual free to effect an evocation in them as he likes" (1975: 137).

These ideas form a bridge to our consideration of the sensory worlds within which Kalyminian evocative fields are shaped, if not determined. And it is a bridge that, while hopefully leading us forward, also returns us to Fernandez's conception of the whole, since, as I will argue, it is the notion of synesthesia that best sums up the sensory experiences with which I will be concerned.

"Listen to That Smell!": The Cultivation of Synesthesia

In studying phenomena in comparative, cross-cultural perspective—from concepts of personhood, gifts and commodities, to embodiment—recent anthropological work has stressed that we are dealing not, for the most part, with radical cultural difference, but with shifting emphases, with cultural elaborations on a continuum of experience. Thus ideas of the "individual" vs. the socially embedded "dividual" do not characterize entire cultures, but rather may represent dominant understandings without precluding the coexistence of subordinate understandings opposed to these within the same culture. Such a view is applicable to the attempt to describe different, "non-Western" sensory worlds: we are not dealing with phenomena of radically different perceptions, but rather with the cultural elaboration of certain sensory registers and the relative dormancy of others. The study of smell and taste in one society might lead one to look at the realm of myth and the afterlife (Bubant 1998), in another to issues of healing (Rasmussen 1999), and to the domain of advertising in a third (Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994: Ch. 6). In trying to give a sense of Kalyminian smell- and taste-scapes, I will focus on the domains of religious experience and cooking, stressing the cultural elaboration of the synesthetic nature of these domains that leads to their prominence in memory processes. By synesthesia I refer

to the way that the different senses elaborate on each other, rather than being considered separate domains of experience. Thus in the case of taste, we must also consider not only smell, but vision, touch, and even hearing (see below). Cultural elaboration of these sensory properties is reflected, but not completely comprised, in linguistic elaboration. Thus, while I will focus on Kalymnian discussions of taste and smell, which of course provide the easiest access for the ethnographer, I will also describe ways in which these senses may be elaborated non-linguistically.

"Orthodox ritual stimulates the senses—sight, sound, touch, taste and smell" (Hirschon 1998: 21). Indeed, it is difficult to enter a church on Kalymnos and not feel overpowered by sensory stimulation, from the smells of myrrh and frankincense that are spread by the priests swinging censers rhythmically back and forth, to the flicker of the candles that each person lights and places in front of the icon when entering the church. One experiences the kinesthetics of making the cross and kissing the icon, the press of bodies in the often confined space of many of the small chapels on Kalymnos, and the reverberating nasal pitch of the liturgy being sung by the cantors. And, of course, there is the multicolored sight of the icons, illustrating key stories from the Bible, and the taste of the communion bread and wine mixed to the consistency of gruel and presented by the priest on a spoon...

Another key sensory aspect associated with Orthodoxy is the question of the smell of decay associated with sin and death. Although the body and other matter is not inherently sinful, matter is corruptible as well as redeemable, a distinction made by Ware between "body" and "flesh" (1979: 79; see discussion 59ff.). On Kalymnos this distinction tends to play out in the realm of smell, with sinful flesh smelling putrid, while redeemed flesh smells "wonderful," perhaps an association with the incense that envelops priests and the church (cf. Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994: 52). The corpse of a bad person is said to putrefy quickly, and to stink very soon after death. One man told me a story about someone on his deathbed who feared he might have such a fate. He instructed his wife to place a small vial of perfume in his funeral jacket when he was buried, so that later people would smell it and say, "Mmm (making a gesture of smelling) this must be a saint, he smells of frankincense"; and thus gravediggers checked the pockets of the people they were burying against such frauds. Similarly, the proof adduced by many people that a Kalymnian man who had died in the 1960s was indeed a saint was the fact that his remains, on display at one of the island monasteries, had not putrefied after all those years. A considerable part of this was seen as related to a rejection of food and animal flesh in particular, the food most directly associated with religiously required abstinence from certain foods (see Sutton 1997 for a full discussion). One man told me of the decayed smell of meat that remained caught between his teeth overnight, as compared to vegetables, which he claimed did not have such a smell.

Discourse surrounding food focuses on sensory qualities as well, smell in particular. One particularly striking one is the expression "Listen to that smell" which is used approvingly to refer to the odor of food cooking, and is often accompanied by a noisy intake of breath through the nose. The opposite, to indicate the failure to taste a dish, is "It is not hearable," a seemingly direct appreciation of the process of synesthesia, even if coded in everyday metaphor. One way to refer to a tasteless food is "water-boiled," in one case used by a woman to describe the noodle casserole made by her cousin on the neighboring island of Kos without nutmeg to give it its proper aroma. Metaphor is also prominent in Kalymnian discourse on food. A particularly delicious batch of bean stew is called Turkish Delight... A man tells his friend that he ate prickly pears the other day and they were tasteless, but today "they were honey!" A woman refers to fresh-caught tuna as "souvlaki!" and a man describes a batch of oranges he bought as "banana!" In these cases it seems that a superordinate category of "sweet foods" is used to relate prickly pears and honey, or oranges and bananas. What is interesting is the vividness of the metaphors, so that in the latter two examples, any conjugation of the verb "to be" is dropped entirely: "I ate one of those oranges ... banana!" The Kalymnian practice of using multisensory terms and metaphor is not in itself unusual. In his study of restaurant workers, Fine (1996: 207ff.) discusses the imprecision of discourse surrounding food taste, even among chefs. The tendency is either to use superlatives ("it tastes wonderful"; "It tastes like shit") or to rely on similes and metaphors, although, interestingly all the examples he provides are of similes rather than metaphors, while in my Kalymnian examples the seemingly more direct and vivid metaphor is employed: "The prickly pear today, it was honey."

These materials have a number of suggestive implications. First, memory theorists note the importance of "encoding specificity" for later recall: "What is stored is determined by what is perceived and how it is encoded, and what is stored determines what retrieval cues are effective in providing access to what is stored" (Tulving and Thompson, cited in McGlone 1996: 557). Second, as Tilley notes: "A vivid metaphorical image, such as saying 'they cooked the land,' is likely to be remembered far longer than a statement such as 'they burnt down the forest.' In so far as metaphors can evoke vivid mental images, they facilitate memory" (Tilley 1999: 8). This suggests some basis for the Proustian phenomenon of remembering through evocation of a powerful sensory image: the sweetness of a banana hardly seems similar to that of an orange, and yet, as an image of a food with a strikingly sweet flavor, "banana" does have a certain evocative power. It should be pointed out here that, as noted in my discussion of Sperber, the significant quality of smell and taste is that it is possible to recognize them, but much more difficult to recall them. As Engen (1991: 80) notes, in cases in which people do claim to be able to recall odors, as with perfumers working on creating a new scent, it is more likely that a visual image is what is evoked. Through metaphor,

Kalymnians seem to be providing the powerful images that might facilitate recall.

One other aspect of odor memory stressed by Engen (1991: 81ff.) is that time seems to have no effect on dissipating recognition ability. Indeed, a powerful (positive or negative) first experience of the smell of a certain food may color all subsequent sensory experiences of that food (or other odor). In the cases discussed above, the food referred to had been consumed recently. However, in one case I recorded, a man discussed the meats and cheeses that the Italians brought to Kalymnos during the Occupation (sixty or more years previously) first by a metonymical listing: "Mortadella, prosciutto, provolone," and ending with the declaration: "Aromal," here citing the sensory experience directly through invocation rather than metaphor. He did follow this, however, with a striking metaphor, phrased in the infinitive: "To eat and to have your insides open up from joy." Through use of metaphor, as well as through invocation, the sensory intensity of the experience is either stressed for the interlocutor or recalled to mind by the person himself or herself...

While the relationship of synesthesia and memory seems to be an open question from the point of view of experimental psychologists (see for example Jones 1976; but cf. Cytowic 1993: 129 fn. 2), intuitively it seems to be the case that synesthesia is an aid to memory. This relationship has been particularly described by Luria, in his classic study *The Mind of a Mnemonist*. According to Luria, S. used synesthetic associations to code words and other objects for future remembrance. This additional information acted both as a prompt to recollection, and as a screen for false memories, i.e. if a word was altered by the experimenters, it would not produce the same taste, sense of weight, or emotions (Luria 1968: 28). S. was, of course, synesthetic in a clinical sense, rather than having been culturally encouraged toward synesthesia, so his case must be used with caution. But his subjective perception that synesthesia aided his memory is what is of interest to me here. For my purposes it is these subjective associations that are crucial, rather than experimental assessments of synesthesia and memory, since I am looking at *claims* to remember food, the accuracy of which I have little way of testing.

Conclusion

Perfume is symbolic, not linguistic, because it does what language could not do—express an ideal, an archetypal wholeness, which surpasses language.

(Gell 1977: 30)

The experience of synesthetic memory brings us back to where we began this chapter: the return to the whole. In this chapter I have argued that we can

understand the evocative power of food by examining some of the properties of taste and smell, which are universal but which can be culturally elaborated to different degrees and in different ways. The fact that taste and smell have a much greater association with episodic rather than semantic memory, with the symbolic rather than the linguistic, and with recognition rather than recall, helps to explain why taste and smell are so useful for encoding the random, yet no less powerful, memories of contexts past than, say, vision or words. But at another level there is no need to counterpoise the senses in this way, since I have argued that the experience of food in Greece is cultivated synesthetically and emotionally, so that eating food from home becomes a particularly marked cultural site for the reimagining of "worlds" displaced in space and/or time... The union of the senses is not only a metaphor for social wholeness; it is an embodied aspect of creating the experience of the whole. Food is not a random part that recalls the whole to memory. Its synesthetic qualities, when culturally elaborated as they are in Greece, are an essential ingredient in ritual and everyday experiences of totality. Food does not simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and recreation.

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