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Why children are the better cooks and better people -

How *MasterChef Junior* reinforces the 'taste of luxury and freedom', gives children high culinary capital and portrays them as having a multitude of positive characteristics

A Master's Thesis for the Degree Master of Arts (Two Years) in
Visual Culture

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Abstract

In this paper I explore how the US-American competitive cooking show *MasterChef Junior* assigns its 8 to 13-year-old contestants with a notion of strength. In the first part of the paper I will demonstrate how the show constructs different categories of knowledge and values of food and food practices which I will define as soft and hard culinary capital. I will describe how food is presented, how cooking is illustrated and what information the audience can gain from how the jury judges the dishes in the show. The portrayal of food will be categorized with Bourdieu's ideas of 'taste of necessity' and 'taste of luxury and freedom'; the idea of cooking will be analyzed by applying the Kantian categories of 'genius', 'artist' and 'imitator' and the language of judging will be evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively. Those findings will demonstrate that the junior cooks possess high hard and soft culinary capital, as they are 'geniuses' and have practical cooking skills, while the viewer can only gain a vocabulary and some rules of how to judge food and express a distinct taste. The second part of the paper will show that the depiction of those young cooks can be seen as opposed to current concepts of children in popular media. I will provide an historical background of concepts of children and an overview of current roles of children in reality TV to demonstrate that children in *MasterChef Junior* are portrayed as more independent from adults as well as more equal to them than in most current TV roles and concepts of popular media. As a result the paper will explore connections of the visual culture of children and food in an example of the current phenomenon of cooking competition shows between children.

Keywords

MasterChef Junior

Culinary capital

Taste of luxury and freedom

Food as art

Visual culture

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Introduction

1.1 Problem diagnosis, background, research question

Alexander walks up to the front holding his plate of French pastry, carefully places it on the table in front of Graham Elliot and describes his dish confidently: “They are pistachio macaroons with a vanilla bean dulce de leche filling.”¹ Elliot answers: “That is amazing. Those look beautiful. You're 13 years old and those look to be the best macaroons that we've ever had in *MasterChef*.”² The other children and parents applaud. Elliot tastes it and says: “I wanna take this whole plate into that corner and just mow down. But I'll be nice and share them. Incredible!”³ Alexander laughs and politely thanks Elliot. The next child's dish to be judged is Sarah's molten lava cake which is according to Elliot: “(...) probably the best molten lava cake that we've had in *MasterChef* and you're 9 years old.”⁴ Those are moments from the first episode of *MasterChef Junior*. In 7 episodes 24 children aged 8 to 13 compete against each other in different cooking challenges quite similar to the adult version of *MasterChef*.

Starting in 1994, BBC was the first channel to introduce cooking shows for contestants with an age limit of 16 years. In 2010 the first shows with younger children started as a part of the children's programming block. Today there are several adaptations of the show of many countries, for example in Finland, France, Greece, Australia, Israel, India, Philippines and USA.⁵ Just recently Sweden aired its first version called *Sveriges Yngsta Mästerkock* starring 8 to 12-year-olds. In many countries the broadcasting time of *MasterChef Junior* is in the late afternoon or early evening, so that families can watch it together. *MasterChef Junior* by FOX is the most watched show among several target groups including adults 18-34, 18-49 and teens in the USA.⁶ Compared to the main target group which is between 25 and 54 years of the FoodNetwork, an American channel that runs only food related programs and exists since 1993, the viewers of *MasterChef Junior* are significantly younger. What is so special about children that cook? According to press the Australian version is popular because of its positive atmosphere and pedagogical value, the US-version is mostly admired for its strong contestants and their attitude. Willa Paskin, a TV critique, describes the strength of the children cooks by comparing them to the adult cooks: “What *MasterChef Junior* reveals is that it's adults who are fragile.”⁷

1 *MasterChef Junior* USA (*MJUSA*), Season 1 (S1), Episode 1 (E1), TC 34:04-34:09.

2 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 34:10-34:20.

3 *Ibid.*, TC 34:32-34:38.

4 *Ibid.*, TC 36:25-36:30.

5 By '*MasterChef Junior*' I refer to the USA-version; '*Junior MasterChef*' is the British version; when comparing I will use USA, UK and Australia behind the titles to avoid confusion.

6 A. Kondoloy, 'MasterChef Junior' renewed for second season by FOX, 19 December 2013, <http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2013/12/19/MasterChef-junior-renewed-for-second-season-by-fox/223731/>, (accessed 27 January 2014).

7 W. Paskin, 'Well done kids- Why MasterChef Junior is the best competition show in TV', 22 October 2013 http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/television/2013/10/MasterChef_junior_on_fox_reviewed.html, (accessed 9 March 2014).

After watching several episodes of *MasterChef USA, Australia* and *UK* I was very fascinated when I first saw a junior version. I as well had the reaction of being impressed of the complicated tasks they have to do and the overall performance in every section of the stressful cooking competition. This made me wonder how this notion of a strong, talented, in short, perfect child is constructed. With this research I want to analyze how the image of strong children is created based on how children are depicted through narrations and what kind of valuable knowledge in form of culinary capital they are assigned with. Culinary capital is a term used by Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco based on Pierre Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital and will be explained further in *Theories and Methods*.

Cooking shows are a subject of a diversity of studies concerning why the shows are watched and how the audience is influenced. They emerged simultaneously with the invention of television. In the USA the first popular TV chef was Julia Child with her straight-forward demonstrations of how to cook French food which first aired 1963. The history of food TV and its development during the time is summed up and embedded in the historical and political context in *Watching What We Eat: The Evolution of Television Cooking Shows*⁸ by Kathleen Collins. A summary on the development of the FoodNetwork can be found in Pauline Adema's article *Vicarious Consumption: Food, Television and the Ambiguity of Modernity*.⁹ She emphasizes the shift in food television from teaching how to cook to entertaining people and creating narrations of lifestyles around cooking and being a chef. Many current food studies thematize the topic of food practices as lifestyles and sign systems. One researcher working in this direction is Signe Hansen who claims that the viewer of food TV can be seen as a consumer and as a product of food media who consumes images but not food and is, therefore, kept in a state of hunger, lack and desire. She bases her theory on Debord's idea about the spectacle that gives us an illusion of choice and power but instead keeps us apart from recognizing actual material and social needs which means that we no longer can distinguish if we need something or just want it. Hansen concludes that the viewer is delivered to the advertiser who sells products that claim to satisfy the lack the viewer experiences. She also points out that reality TV stimulates the audience to show off their own life as they see others doing it constantly.¹⁰

Cheri Ketchum analyzes cooking shows of the FoodNetwork to explore narrations and other tactics food TV uses to create a fantasy world around food the viewer wants to consume through watching and buying related products such as cookware and books. He divides current shows into four categories which are *traditional domestic instructional cooking, personality-driven domestic cooking, food travel*

8 K. Collins, **Watching What We Eat: The Evolution of Television Cooking Shows**, New York, Continuum, 2009.

9 P. Adema 'Vicarious Consumption: Food, Television and the Ambiguity of Modernity', **Journal of American & Comparative Cultures**, vol. 23, no 3, 2000, pp 113-124.

10 S. Hansen, 'Society of the Appetite. Celebrity Chefs Deliver Consumers', **Journal of Food, Culture and Society** vol. 11, no. 1, 2008, pp. 49-67.

programs and *avant garde* and unravels dominant narrations which reinforce fantasy worlds for example through the narration of adventures, traveling and exotic food experiences in which the viewer can find different pleasures. The audience becomes part of the show's lifestyle and can experience intimacy with the host and even sexual pleasure by being put in a voyeuristic position as watching a chef lick a spoon.¹¹ Signe Rousseau also discusses narrations in food TV by concentrating on single examples such as the narration of an amateurish 'girl next door' created around Rachel Ray.¹² Through narratives the audience gets information about how to join the lifestyle and gets inspired to fantasize about their own life. Pauline Adema adds a more detailed analysis of the relationship between audience and celebrity chef. She claims that current food TV give the audience the false impression of being cultured as one needs minimal cooking knowledge to watch food TV. Instead the chefs empower the audience to “speak the language of cooking and cuisine”¹³ and, therefore, threaten the social hierarchy which is built upon food as cultural capital. Following Bourdieu she argues that the knowledge of cooking is a positive marker of an individual's economic and social status and that speaking the language of cooking distinguishes a person from ordinary eaters. She concludes that the more people are able to speak about palates, flavors and cooking techniques the more the value of food as cultural capital is decreasing.¹⁴

I will use Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital to summarize how knowledge of food and cooking is constructed by the show. I also claim that the language we learn from the show is one of the most striking tools to distinguish ourselves. By analyzing the culinary knowledge and values the show promotes, we can ascertain what lifestyle the show illustrates and what fantasy world around cooking is constructed. However, I argue that *MasterChef Junior* does not threaten the social hierarchy built on food knowledge since the actual knowledge of how to cook is not shared with the viewer. Moreover the viewer is put on a hold to admire chefs and taste and is invited to participate but only by language. What we learn is to use the language of food and food practices to distinguish ourselves from others and express our personality.

Cooking shows are part of the reality TV genre and, therefore, also discussed in the context of how those shows are perceived when it comes to the viewer's own life. Annette Hill analyzes audience discussions about reality TV and claims that the viewers value the elements of information in reality TV but only half of them think that they can actually learn something useful. According to this research reality TV shows the perception of the audience is contradictory.¹⁵ I claim that *MasterChef Junior* creates the notion of learning without actually teaching how to cook.

11 For more information about 'Food Porn' see S. Rousseau, **Food Media. Celebrity Chefs and the Politics of Everyday Interference**, London, Berg, 2012, pp. 74-78.

12 S. Rousseau, **Food Media. Celebrity Chefs and the Politics of Everyday Interference**, London, Berg, 2012, p. 65-71.

13 Adema, 2000, p.117.

14 Ibid., pp. 113-124.

15 A. Hill, **Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television**, London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 79-82.

1.2 Hypothesis

My first thesis is that *MasterChef Junior* creates a kind of culinary capital that formulates an elitist taste that can be compared to Bourdieu's idea of 'taste of luxury and freedom'.¹⁶ The show illustrates food and cooking in a way that enables the viewer to gain culinary capital and provides, therefore, a rise in social hierarchy. I will demonstrate how the language of the show provides a soft version of culinary capital in form of knowledge about judging food and expressing taste that can be easily gained by the viewer. Secondly I claim that the children are assigned with high soft and hard culinary capital. Hard culinary capital defines the practical knowledge of cooking and creating dishes. An individual with high hard culinary capital is able to add culinary capital by creating dishes that become exemplary for other chefs. Thirdly I argue that the children are depicted as having a multitude of good characteristics that make them likeable, admirable and strong through narrative strategies that distinguishes them from the adult competitors in *MasterChef* in a positive way.

1.3 Theories and methods, Structure of the work

For analyzing culinary capital I will use the theory of cultural capital and distinction by Bourdieu as well as Naccarato's and LeBesco's idea of *Culinary Capital*¹⁷ which is based on Bourdieu's theories. For analyzing the cooking process I will apply the ideas of Immanuel Kant on 'genius', 'originality' and 'exemplarity'.¹⁸ The theories will be used to analyze audiovisual material according to camera work, mise-en-scène, editing and dialogues. To define the actual portrayals and understandings of children in reality TV and cooking shows I will provide an historical overview of concepts of children to establish categories and characteristics of how children can be portrayed.

Naccarato and LeBesco discuss culinary capital by focusing on how the circulation of culinary capital and the changing of the values that give rewards to certain food practices influence food practices of individuals. By applying and adapting theories of Bourdieu, they see food as a marker of social status and mainly describe different mechanisms that assign values to food practices or change how values are connected to certain foods and food practices. Culinary capital is described through a wide range of examples of food practices such as shopping in E-groceries, watching TV cooking shows, taking part in eating competitions, reviewing restaurants online, buying food local, eating junk food etc. to understand how food practices as cultural practices socialize and shape individuals as well as how reward is transferred. As a framework serve Foucault's understanding of power as oppressive and productive with a focus on its capability to produce knowledge, pleasure and power and Nikolas Rose's theory of individuals

16 P. Bourdieu, **Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste**, trans. R. Nice, London, Routledge, 2010, pp. 165-222.

17 P. Naccarato and K. LeBesco, **Culinary Capital**, London, Berg, 2012.

18 KdU (Kritik der Urteilskraft) § 46-50, sec. 308-320, 1790.

that seek self-fulfillment but rely their choices upon a model of good citizenship. Food and food practices are, therefore, read “in relation to projects of the Self (...)”¹⁹ by witnessing culinary capital in action. Naccarrato and LeBesco also discuss culinary resistance based on the idea of Bourdieu that food and food practices can be used by the working class to challenge the upper and middle class in their power. Culinary capital is strongly connected to economic capital and class determined by income, but high cuisine cannot be automatically linked to upper classes as for example people strive to identify themselves with a higher class through food despite their low income.²⁰ It is also a “bellwether for a range of prevailing values and ideologies, including normative attitudes and assumptions about race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity.”²¹ That means culinary capital is “performed as a part of a middle-class ideal – a status effect of routine engagement in activities and labor understood to have class value.”²² In short, culinary capital is a performance that is shaped by economic capital, the drive to self-improvement and upper class elitism as well as resistance to social and cultural norms.

There are various formulas how to acquire culinary capital. One current notion is that individuals gain culinary capital by making sustainable food choices, buying food local and from organic farms rather than by eating out in expensive restaurants consuming rare and exquisite food. Another formula is omnivorousness which is based on being flexible and open-minded when it comes to food. The ones with the most diverse food experiences are the ones with the most culinary capital. The authors' aim is so contrast those discourses of culinary elitism with 'sites of resistance' which can be found in state fairs, junk food devotees or competitive eating.²³ The authors stress the diversity of culinary capital by describing food practices that differ from privileged eating practices by being unhealthy or excessive but providing culinary capital for people who enjoy them. One way of resistance is to enjoy unhealthy products that are against the diet regulations that are opposed to what a good citizen should eat as they ignore the current beauty ideal of a thin body as well as by the health concerns caused by spreading obesity and diabetes.²⁴ In general words, culinary capital results from consuming, preparing and talking about food which leads to the creation of an identity that has power, knowledge and a certain status depending on the cultural site it emerges from.²⁵

For the analysis of the culinary capital of *Junior MasterChef* I will use Bourdieu's theory on a smaller scale by trying to define a specific form of culinary capital and its content which is explorable by applying the definition of cultural capital. In *The Forms of Capital*²⁶ Bourdieu defines capital as

19 Naccarrato, LeBesco, 2012, p.5.

20 Ibid., 2012, p.7.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p.8.

23 Ibid., p.12.

24 Ibid., pp. 85-112.

25 Ibid., pp. 1-19.

26 P. Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' (1986), in A.H. Halsey, P. Brown, H. Lauder and A. S. Wells (eds.),

accumulated labor which is either materialized in form of goods or embodied in form of knowledge which can be used to “appropriate social energy in form of reified or living labor.”²⁷ It is “a force inscribed in objective and subjective structures”²⁸ as well as “the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world.”²⁹ He distinguishes between economical, cultural and social capital. The knowledge of cooking and the cultural practices that surround cooking and food fall into the category of cultural capital which is subdivided into the three forms of embodied, objectified and institutionalized cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital is described as “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body”³⁰, in the objectified state it is “cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.)”³¹ and in the institutionalized form cultural capital is recognized by institutions that give for example academic titles like university degrees.

The embodied cultural capital concerning food of *MasterChef Junior* is the knowledge and ideas about food and cooking the viewer perceives. Therefore, I will summarize and discuss what food is portrayed in the show, how it is portrayed in chapter 1.1 using Bourdieu's approach of dividing between 'taste of necessity' and 'taste of luxury and freedom' he formulates in *Distinction* based on studies of the cultural capital of the French society in 1972. Bourdieu gathered information about food consumption in terms of what people eat, how they eat and what class they belong to and concluded that it is the upper class which determines the food practices that are worth striving for and called this taste the 'taste of luxury and freedom'. He found out that the upper class follows a diet of lean meat, fruits and vegetables and limits eating itself in a formal and strictly structured performance which entails small portions, breaks between the courses and no alcohol. Whereas the 'taste of necessity' can be described as the popular taste and the taste of the lower class. It is shaped by the need for food that is filling, fatty and cheap as the economical capital is limited. However, Bourdieu emphasizes that not only the economical capital shapes the taste of an individual but also the cultural capital one gained from its family while growing up. This is how he explained why some people who raised in the social hierarchy by earning more money still prefer cheap, filling and fatty food. The current leading opinions in the 1970ies were either that the lower class eats cheap food because they have a limited income or that they like filling food which expresses a kind of class racism that relates everything fat and heavy to popular taste and lower class. Compared to the upper class the lower class enjoyed food in a more open and free way. Eating was seen as a satisfaction, a pleasure and a way to enjoy life in the moment.³²

Education, Culture, Economy, and Society, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 46-58.

27 Naccarato, LeBesco, 2012, p.46.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., p.47.

31 Ibid.

32 Bourdieu, 2010, pp. 165-199.

Besides describing the food the show portrays I will analyze what taste is promoted by situating it within the concepts of 'taste of necessity' and 'taste of luxury and freedom'. I will combine Bourdieu's definition of these categories with the more modern ideas by Elinor Ochs, Clotilde Pontecorvo and Alessandra Fasulo.³³ They observed dinner practices of middle class Caucasian American and Italian families, and applied the Bourdieuan categories to describe differences in tastes. Furthermore, they extended the categories with repetitive factors they could observe since they concluded that American families value food as nutrition, material good and as reward over food as pleasure. For the Italian families the opposite could be found as they give more priority to food as pleasure than the other categories. They encourage children to express their own taste as part of their personality, whereas American families divide between food children like and food adults prefer. From this study we can derive modern definitions of the Bourdieuan categories of taste and extend his concept. 'Taste of necessity' is interpreted by Ochs et al as food as nutrition, food as reward and material good. Ochs et al conclude that the taste of American families can be more situated in the category of the 'taste of necessity' as the families discuss food in terms of what a child should eat to gain physical strength, health or for moral reasons. Besides, they use dessert as a reward for the child to make it eat nutritional food. Italian families can be associated with having a stronger 'taste of luxury and freedom' as they assist their children in developing their personal taste.

Cooking can be seen as performance of embodied cultural capital and will be discussed in chapter 1.2. The focus will be to analyze how cooking is portrayed and what values are connected to cooking. As cooking is the ultimate test to measure an individual's culinary capital this chapter will examine how the cooking skills of children are illustrated. By using Kant's ideas of 'genius', 'originality' and 'exemplarity' I will demonstrate that children are portrayed not only as having high culinary capital but also as adding culinary capital. To complete the picture of culinary capital I will analyze how food and taste is judged and in which context food and eating is set. The focus of chapter 1.3 will be on how taste is connected to lifestyle and values by describing the language the judges use to talk about food and cooking.

High culinary capital is not the only factor that creates a strong image of the children. In chapter 2.1, I will give an overview of historical concepts of children to provide a context for a deeper analysis of how children are portrayed in *MasterChef Junior*. It is important to understand what ideas society had and has about children since this influences education and parenting as well as media roles of children. Therefore, chapter 2.2 gives an overview of current reality TV shows with children which as well serves as context for the analysis of the junior cooks. As TV is a huge influence for children and adults today it is valuable to see how children are depicted to understand how it can influence young and old viewers. Rachel Goodchild conducted a mixed method study of *MasterChef Junior Australia* and questions

33 E. Ochs and C. Pontecorvo and A. Fasulo, 'Socializing Taste', *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 61, iss.1-2, 1996, pp.7-46.

children and parents on why they watch the show, how they feel about the contestants and what they think about cooking and family connectedness. She concludes that children enjoy watching someone their own age perform in TV, that children identify with the cooks and that they also watch the show as vicarious pleasure.³⁴ It is, therefore, fruitful to gather information about children's roles in reality TV as it influences children, adults, says something about how society perceives children and enables us to detect relationships between values, myths and portrayal. In chapter 2.3, I will summarize ideas and collect findings about popular concepts of children and children's roles in reality TV and use them to describe the depiction of children in *MasterChef Junior*.

1.4 Review and state of current research, relevance of the work, delimitation

Current food studies and visual culture studies rarely examine children in food media. There is a need to analyze children's roles in food TV to get a general idea of current appearances of children since most studies focus on the adult *MasterChef*, mostly on the Australian version. Mainly, these studies discuss the connection between food and life-style or the positive notion of the shows. Tania Lewis for example analyzes how the show creates consumer fantasies and shapes the social identity of the viewer through democratizing high-end culinary taste. She stresses that *MasterChef Australia* works as a vehicle for popular pedagogy and promotes Australian myths like 'mateness', ordinariness and an entrepreneurial modal of self hood.³⁵ Michelle Phillipov is also interested in pedagogical influences of the show and researches how its popularity can be used to promote healthy eating. She concludes that even though the show leads to a higher consumption of butter and cream, the positive attitude towards food can be used for promoting health. She emphasizes that the show portrays cooking from scratch as essential to have good flavors and eating as something without restrictions and rules which makes it a pleasure.³⁶ The positive atmosphere of the show serves also as research question for Monika Bednarek who analyzes *MasterChef Australia* and *Junior MasterChef Australia* to explore how the supportive and uplifting notion is constructed.³⁷ She evaluates shot types, dialogues, non-verbal behavior and reactions of the audience and records facial expressions, vocal cues, gestures and body movements which are indicators of an “**embodied performance** of affect”³⁸ (bold face in original). Bednarek concludes that the shows are

34 R. Goodchild, 'The 'reality' of the Australian 'Junior MasterChef' television series for preadolescents and their parents.' Bachelor of Psychology. Murdoch University 2012.

35 T. Lewis, 'You've put yourselves on a plate: The labours of selfhood on *MasterChef Australia*', in H. Wood and B. Skeggs, **Reality Television and Class**, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, pp. 104-116.

36 M. Phillipov, 'Communicating health risks via the media: What can we learn from *MasterChef Australia*?', **Australasian Medical Journal**, vol. 5, no. 11, 2012, pp. 593-597.

37 M. Bednarek, 'There's no harm, is there, in letting your emotions out': a multimodal perspective on language, emotion and identity in *MasterChef Australia*', in N. Lorenzo-Dus and P. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (eds.) **Real Talk: Reality Television and Discourse Analysis in Action**, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2013, pp. 88-114.

38 M. H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin, 'Emotion within situated activity', in I.E.Sigel (ed.), **Communication: An Arena of Development**, Stamford CT, Ablex, 2000, p.49, cited through M. Bednarek, 2013, p.93.

uplifting because of a manufactured positive emotionality. This results from mainly close, frontal, eye-level shots, mostly positive reaction-shots of the contestants and supportive judges that point out the good work of the cooks.

This analysis will contribute to the the understanding of how children are depicted in cooking shows by discussing how they are assigned with values connected to food. My approach offers an exemplary model of how to analyze depiction of food in the context of capital and children in *Junior MasterChef USA*, which is so far not examined. Therefore, this study provides a basis for further analysis of the American junior-version of the worldwide present *MasterChef* TV-format. When it comes to the subject of children in visual culture there is a general need to discuss their role as active individuals that are assigned with values but also assign objects with values.

I will only discuss examples of how children and food are portrayed and not provide a complete evaluation of all the material of *MasterChef Junior* as the scope of a master thesis does not allow an analysis in these dimensions. Without the quantitative and qualitative data based on studies of how the viewer's ideas about food and eating are influenced by the show, I will focus on describing and contextualizing repetitive patterns. Another delimitation is the premise of taking the shows content as a constructed reality which I will not question in terms of if the children are really able to cook, if the winner is already determined from the beginning or if the children are actors.

1 What are you making for us today?

Regarding the role of food and cooking in *MasterChef Junior* there is a certain dramaturgy that is repeated in modified versions that will set the structure for the analysis. It begins with the introduction and presentation of the 'beautiful' raw ingredient or an already perfectly cooked dish, continues with the transformation of raw ingredient into a 'restaurant-quality' dish and ends with the presentation of the dish showing its quality in the 'moment of truth' when the jury tastes it. I will describe exemplary scenes of the show which will take a lot of space what makes this thesis more extensive but is unavoidable regarding the need for analytical material. Beginning with describing the presentation of food, I will continue with analyzing the way cooking is portrayed and end with a discussion of the judgment of the dishes to get an idea of the content of the culinary capital of the show and how it is constructed.

1.1 Taste of luxury, necessity and the exclusion of children's taste

First, it is necessary to explore what and how food is presented in the show. By describing scenes of how food is introduced I will summarize ideas of what values are connected to food and describe what taste the

show promotes by applying the Bourdieuan categories of 'taste of necessity' and 'taste of luxury and freedom'. Secondly I will demonstrate how the show distinguishes between adult food and children's food.

1.1.1 Of lobster, Tiger Shrimp, Abalone and eggs

1.1.1.1. The dramatic revealing of expensive food

It is time for the children to find out what they have to cook to stay in the competition. They are called down, line up and face the jury that stands on the stage in front of a curtain that is hiding the food theme for the next challenge.³⁹ Graham Elliot says some introductory words about the theme he chose while the children tell us in reaction-shots what they think about the curtain. "I was like, what's behind the curtain,"⁴⁰ says 11-year-old Lisai. "I'm hoping for there not to be like cabbage or liver. I don't like cooking organs,"⁴¹ tells us Sarah, who is 9 years. While the children speak we can see some close-ups of the curtain as the camera circles the curtain curiously. Elliot goes on: "I'm the one who got to set up this challenge so I picked one of my favorite kind of foods. They are challenging, difficult to perfect, but are guaranteed to put a smile on everyone's faces."⁴² Now the camera show the surprised and excited faces of the children as a reaction to Elliot words. The jury leaves the stage so that the curtain has the main attention. Elliot continues as the music grows louder and faster, emphasizing every word of the sentence: "Your next cooking challenge is (...)."⁴³ The music stops, we hear the strings that hold the curtain snap and see it falling. The children act surprised and we see their excited faces. We cannot yet see what the curtain was hiding we have to wait because of a commercial break.

Some minutes later we see the curtain falling completely and learn that there is a huge table with all kinds of desserts. The children clap and cheer as the camera goes closer to the table. The table is covered with a white cloth and the different desserts are arranged on glass plates and white porcelain plates in different levels so that every dish is showcased individually. On the highest level we can see a chocolate fountain with all sorts of fruit, lower there are several cakes, tarts, cupcakes and biscuits decorated with fruits, flowers and colorful creams. We see the children cheering and clapping followed by a close-up pan over the table showing the desserts in more detail. The arrangement of the dishes and the top shot pan creates a notion of flying over a landscape of desserts. The pan lasts for about one second which gives us not enough time to see all the details and leaves us to speculate ourselves what it could be and how amazing the dishes must be as we have Elliot's descriptive words in mind and hear and see the reaction of the children. What we can see in the short pan are perfectly decorated, detailed desserts that are

³⁹ Screen shot sequence in Appendix A1, pp. 63.

⁴⁰ *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 28:25-28:27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, TC 28:28-28:35.

⁴² *Ibid.*, TC 28:36-28:51.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, TC 28:53-28:57.

colorful and beautiful. The second notion we get is that there is a huge variety as we mostly see close-ups and quick pans that makes it hard to estimate how much desserts there actually are. While the children are clapping and cheering we see some close-ups: a zoom into the chocolate fountain, macarons and a piece of layer-cake. The editing of the close-ups is matched by the rhythm of the music. This empathizes the ideas of food as a composition and the arrangement of dishes as a composition. “Cake, chocolate fountain, cupcakes”⁴⁴, is what the children shout out happily. There is another quick pan over the table and 8-year-old Nathan tells us in a reaction-shot how much he likes treats. The next shot shows the jury standing behind the table facing the children and explaining the task. They have to make an “amazing dessert, that any of us three (the jury) would put in one of our restaurants”⁴⁵ in 60 minutes.

In the precedent example food is presented in a spectacular way. The audience gets verbal information from a judge and some children while the curtain hides the food. When the curtain falls we hear cheering and clapping, see excited, happy faces as well as pans and close-ups of a perfectly arranged table with noble plates and colorful desserts. The editing presents the food as something that gives excitement and is noble. Besides, we get the idea that the variety of desserts is enormous since we cannot see every single dish. The camera is either too far away, too close or pans too quickly over the table which gives us room to speculate and think about all the desserts that put a smile on our faces. The obscuring of the exact amount and varieties of dishes on the table gives, on the one hand, the idea that there is plenty food and, on the other hand, the stimulus to think of personal favorite treats.

There is a similar scene in the same episode when another group of children finds out what they have to cook.⁴⁶ This time it is a table covered with a white cloth. Gordon Ramsay starts to speak: „Every chef loves to work with the freshest, most incredible (...).”⁴⁷ Joe Bastianich and Elliot lift the cloth when Ramsay finishes his sentence with “(...) seafood.”⁴⁸ Again, the children applaud and make approving and excited exclamations while the camera shows a medium close-up of the seafood. The table is packed with ice and slightly lower in the front which creates a height difference that makes the seafood fully visible. The mussels are arranged to form a little staircase in which every mussel can be seen and the head of the octopus lies higher while its arms fall slightly down. We can read some name tags like Dungeness crab, abalone, tuna, Osetra caviar, loup de mer, Chilean seabass, but only if we are very quick since the shot lasts only for a short moment. Then the camera swipes over the table and more seafood such as baby octopus, needle fish, squid, black mussels and green mussels can be seen. Again, the shot lasts only for a short moment. The following shots of the food are a close-up, an angled top shot panning and another

44 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 29:25-29:28.

45 *Ibid.*, TC 29:41-29:46.

46 Exemplary screen shots in Appendix A2, pp. 71.

47 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 03:41-03:46.

48 *Ibid.*, TC 03:51-03:52.

close-up with more horizontal angle. We can see some close-ups and medium shots of happy children in between. Very close shots of food follow when Ramsay describes what we see: "Look at that octopus, king salmon, delicious Dungeness crab, live lobster, please be careful with that one and loads loads more."⁴⁹ The camera shows the four food items very close with slight horizontal or zooming movements. This is followed by three very quick shots on the seafood from different angles distances and with different movements. Then the jury explains the task and we see the seafood as in between jury and children.

In this example the food is as well presented with quick or distanced shots that makes it impossible to read all the name tags and see all the seafood, but the words of Ramsay and the reaction of the children along with the impressions we get from the showcased food gives the notion of high quality, fresh and extremely good food. The way it is presented makes it also look expensive which is emphasized by the name tags. The tags show what specific seafood we can see, where it comes from or which special sort it is. Dungeness crab for example is in the center of the first close-up, especially mentioned by Ramsay who refers to it as delicious, and seen in most other seafood shots. Even if the viewer is not familiar with that type of food, one gets the impression that Dungeness crab is something special and not like any other crab. Indeed is Dungeness crab a special species that only lives in the waters of the West coast of North America. The last years the prices were increasing as the demand in America and especially China is growing.⁵⁰ In fact some of the seafood on the table are one of the most expensive foods you can buy. Abalone is very popular in America and even more popular in Asia, where a dried version can sell for up to 2000 US-dollars per kilo.⁵¹ In New York, a restaurant offered a special dish for their opening which was an entree of Japanese abalone with black truffle for 888 US-dollars.⁵² One of the seven species that can be found in California has already been enlisted as endangered species and a second one, the white Abalone is in discussion to be red-listed.⁵³ The choice of those foods and the ways they are presented gives a notion of the kind of upper class culinary elitism that Naccarato and LeBesco describe as rather outdated form of culinary capital as one is no longer "limited to demonstrate one's sophistication and worldliness by importing pricey, domestically unavailable products or by dining out at upscale bastions of traditionalism like The 21 Club or The Russian Tea Room."⁵⁴

49 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 04:01-04:11.

50 J. Stewart 'Dungeness crab prices flying up and away', 28 January 2014, <http://www.undercurrentnews.com/2014/01/28/Dungeness-crab-prices-flying-up-and-away/>, (accessed 9 April 2014).

51 Fishtech, 'Opening speech: 4th International Abalone Symposium Cape Town South Africa 2000', <http://www.fishtech.com/speech.html>, (accessed 17 April 2014).

52 G. Morabito, 'Hakkasan Opening Tonight With 888\$ Abalone Entree', <http://ny.eater.com/archives/2012/04/hakkasan.php>, (accessed 17 April 2014).

53 California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 'Abalone', <https://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/response/abalone.pdf>, (accessed 17 April 2014).

54 Naccarato, LeBesco, 2012, p.8.

1.1.1.2 The prosaic presentation of tricky food and dishes

The least spectacular revelation of food in the first episode is a pasta dish that symbolizes the theme for the another group of children that have to cook.⁵⁵ Between the children and the jury there is a small table with a single plate covered by a silver cloche that hides what Bastianich describes with: “What's under here is a true test of a great chef (...).”⁵⁶ He puts on a napkin in a big gesture, lifts the cloche and ends his sentence “(...) a beautiful plate of pasta.”⁵⁷ We see a close-up of spaghetti with tomato-sauce decorated with a green leaf on a simple white plate on a silver serving plate. The children react happy and one tells us in a reaction-shot that pasta is easy to make. Next, we see Bastianich tasting the pasta and expressing his approval of this “simple spaghetti in marinara sauce”⁵⁸ followed by the statement that he loves fresh pasta which means that the children have to make pasta from scratch. The children react surprised but determined to succeed. The visual and verbal presentation of the dish is very simple as the specialness of the dish lies in its taste which is expressed through the judge tasting and approving it. We cannot see that the pasta is homemade, therefore, we need a verbal explanation. Food is presented as simple but delicious that does not show on first sight how much effort is put into it. It is also introduced as a way to test the skills of a cook. If you are able to cook fresh pasta, you are a great chef.

There are more examples of how simple food serves as vehicle to proof skills, strength and feeling for cooking. In episode 6, Ramsay introduces the ultimate test for a chef and lifts a cloche under which we see an egg. He cuts it open and explains how it should look like when it is perfectly soft-boiled and how it should taste while we see close-ups and medium shots of the egg. He also mentions the trickiness and how much skill it takes to cook a perfectly soft-boiled egg. Again, food is visually introduced in an unspectacular way with no panning or festive mise-en-scène. Instead, the editing gives us a visual manual of how you can judge if an egg is perfectly soft boiled. The shots of the food are close-ups of a firm egg-white and a runny yolk matching the explanations of Ramsay. Another basic skill is tested in episode 3 where the children have nothing but a bowl and a whisk to whip cream into 'stiff peaks' which needs skill and stamina. Those examples add another notion of what food and cooking in *MasterChef Junior* is about as it emphasizes a way of cooking that is not concerned about convenience and time saving but with cooking fresh and from scratch without processed or semi-fabricated ingredients. I assume that there are not too many viewers in the audience who make pasta themselves or whip cream without a mixer. This idea will be developed further in the next chapter which is about the portrayal of cooking.

⁵⁵ Exemplary screen shots in Appendix A3, p. 72.

⁵⁶ *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 16:04-16:08.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, TC 16:12-16:19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, TC 16:30-16:33.

There is one last silver cloche to mention that covers a complicated dish which is a beef Wellington cooked in a way Ramsay developed.⁵⁹ The visual strategy goes with the way Ramsay presents his dish. When he says that the dish is one of the most complicated we see it from all angles, in all its beauty, and are, therefore, enabled to see what he means with complicated. The technicality of the dish is illustrated by him explaining the layers, deconstructing the dish with his fork, and by the strict mise-en-scène of the top shot view of the ingredients which lay orderly like surgical instruments. The freshness and specialness of the food is portrayed with very close shots that emphasize color and let us read the name tags. The use of the silver cloche to introduce food is the most common way in *MasterChef Junior*. As we learned, it is not connected to a certain message about food as those are constructed through camera work as well as through verbal and bodily expressions.

The notion of food as being available in an multitudinous amount and variety is substantiated through another repetitive momentum which is called 'five minutes in the pantry'. The pantry scenes are quite similar to each other; they are hectic, fast cut and short. The first time the children enter the pantry is after they got to know the topic of seafood for their first challenge.⁶⁰ Ramsay give the signal and they head off to the pantry. While the children are running towards the entrance the narrator repeats the task. The gates open automatically like in a supermarket and the entrance of the children as well as the leaving of the pantry is shown from a top shot. The first shot of the inside of the pantry is a close-up of cases of colorful apples behind some fruits that are cut in half and decoratively placed in the foreground while pots with fresh herbs stand behind the apples. In the background we can see shelves with spices and labeled baskets of something that could be dried goods or herbs. It is impossible to read as the camera moves to quickly and the shot itself is too short. The impression that you can get is that there is a lot of different things and that they are of good quality since the containers are of organic material such as wood and the fruits are fresh, colorful and spotless. The next shot shows a table from a medium close-up so that we can see the full table and some more of the shelves on the walls of the pantry. On the table we can see apples, lemons, oranges, red peppers, garlic, a melon an some peas. It seems as if there is no thematic concept for that table for example that it contains all the citrus fruits, it seem to be more about showing all the colors of fresh food and arranging it nicely in baskets to emphasize its value. The following shots show the children running around, grabbing silver shopping baskets and being in each others way. The atmosphere is hectic and we can hear exclams like “hey, hey, hey, that's mine, sorry, let me through”⁶¹. In front and behind the children we get some glimpses of other food that is stocked in the pantry. There are shelves with all kinds of vegetables in various kinds for example there are several sorts of

59 Exemplary screen shots in Appendix A4, pp. 72.

60 Screen-shot sequences in Appendix A5, pp.75.

61 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 04:49-04:52.

potatoes next to each other in one bottom shelf. The pantry seems to be arranged like a supermarket except for the table in the middle and that first close-up which I could not connect to any other picture of the pantry. In a reaction-shot Jack tells us that the “pantry is just gigantic”⁶². The camera follows him looking for sour cream and then switches to Sophia who tells us what she saw in the pantry which is “(...) truffle, truffle oil, pak choi, duck heart and chicken paté (...),”⁶³ with her off-voice recorded from a reaction-shot while we see her running around and talking to herself: “Where the hell are the pomegranates?”⁶⁴. Some seconds later the images from the interview are faded in and we see and hear her simultaneously finishing her sentence: “(...) I kid you not.”⁶⁵ The size of the pantry and its range of products is not only illustrated by the descriptions of the children and the images of various food but also through the notion that the children are disoriented in this room full of food. The shots are very short, shaky and blurred through quick pans and create not only an idea of confused children but lead also to a disorientation of the viewer who is not able to understand the scale and structure of the pantry. The exact amount and variety remains unclear but the reactions of the children and the visual material encourage us to imagine an endless amount of all kinds of foods we can think of. Again, the naming of expensive items like truffle and exotic ingredients like pak choi add a notion of luxury and limitlessness of variety.

1.1.1.3 Summary

So far I could find several messages about food constructed with different methods. Food in *MasterChef Junior* is portrayed as fresh, expensive, of good quality, exquisite, delicate and unlimited. Those notions are constructed through an interplay of images, camera work, language and human behavior. The food resembles a current 'taste of luxury and freedom' that is defined by expensive goods, rare goods and everything in between since limitless freedom of choice is an important notion of how food is presented. The focus lies on exquisite products as seafood and filet mignon but even simple ingredients such as potatoes play an important role which is emphasized in the beef Wellington dish. The 'taste of necessity' is insofar present as the show promotes simple, everyday ingredients such as eggs and potatoes to be cooked into something delicious if you have the right knowledge. In the context of this thesis *MasterChef Junior* is seen as belonging to the upper middle class taste-makers, Naccarato and LeBesco describe to be responsible for the more prevalent taste of expensive, rare and complex food. They emphasize the plurality of tastes that emerged from distancing oneself from this elitist taste and also the constant changing of values in the elitist taste as well.⁶⁶ In *MasterChef* we notice a slight change away from truffle and caviar as

62 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 04:52-04:54.

63 *Ibid.*, TC 04:57-05:03.

64 *Ibid.*, TC 05:03-05:04.

65 *Ibid.*, TC 05:05-05:06.

66 Naccarato, LeBesco, 2012, p.114.

they are present but not celebrated as much as in the beginning of the *MasterChef* shows where truffle was more present. The specific ingredients and dishes *MasterChef Junior* promotes will be elaborated more in chapter 1.3. Next, we will explore another differentiation of taste that plays an important role in the show.

1.1.2 Difference between children's and adult food

1.1.2.1 Of burgers and blue cheese

The second Mystery-Box-Challenge in episode 4 thematizes the difference between children's food and adult food, respectively gourmet food. While the jury talks we see many different shots of children next to their boxes; the visual emphasis lies more on the children and the boxes than on the boxes alone compared to the scene where the Mystery-Box was initially introduced. When the children lift the boxes we see and hear their reactions of disgust and dislike while we see a horizontal shot of the ingredients.⁶⁷ “Eww this is so not gummy bears,”⁶⁸ is how 9-year-old Sarah puts it while shaking her head. We can see blue cheese, snails, fennel, liver, kidney, an eggplant, artichokes, sardines, olives and dates arranged on a wooden plate and in glass bowls. The items are organized according to size so that the bigger items are in the back and all the ingredients can be fully seen. The liver moves a bit when the box is removed and we can hear the squishing sound it makes. Again, the products look spotless, shiny, colorful and beautiful. The first shot in which we see the ingredients has the jury in the background and functions as a visual reminder of who's food this. The judges which are food experts, Michelin-starred restaurant owners and gourmets, are placed behind food that Elliot describes ironically as “(...) ingredients that all kids just love to eat”⁶⁹ and names them individually while we see corresponding close-ups. The reactions of the children are throughout negative which means that the younger as well as the older children all share a dislike of the ingredients which is illustrated with medium close-ups of almost every child grimacing in disgust and the answer “No, chef!”⁷⁰ in unison when Elliot asked them if they think the ingredients sound good. Especially the blue cheese and its smell is illustrated as strongly disliked as we hear and see several children reacting negatively for example by covering their noses or sticking out the tongues. “When I lifted it up I immediately stepped back by the stench and looks of it,”⁷¹ explains 10-year-old Gavin. The sardines are also showcased specially through Elliot who refers to them as “sardines with their faces on them”⁷², followed by shot of Sarah who hides her face and shouts “eww”⁷³. Some seconds later Sarah is depicted in a reaction-shot telling us how disgusting it is and that it feels as the the sardines are watching you.

67 Exemplary screen shots in Appendix A6, pp.78.

68 *MJUSA*, S1E4, TC 02:41-02:43.

69 *Ibid.*, TC 02:50-02:53.

70 *Ibid.*, TC 03:11-03:13.

71 *Ibid.*, TC 02:43-02:47.

72 *Ibid.*, TC 02:59-03:01.

73 *Ibid.*, TC 03:01.

The distinction of adult food and children's food is further developed when the judges present food they used to like when they were children in the second episode for the Elimination-Challenge. Jack is called into the pantry and has to decide between three dishes that each judge has picked based on what they liked when they were 8 years old.⁷⁴ To make it clear that it was what they once liked they each show a photograph of them as children. Bastianich chose “chicken wings smothered in a delicious tangy sauce”⁷⁵ which he could eat everyday when he was a child. Elliot's favorite food was a hamburger which he refers to as a “party in a bun”⁷⁶. He still likes them and for him burgers represent “whats best about America: beef!”⁷⁷. Ramsay's favorite food was “crunchy and delicious”⁷⁸ fish fingers. Every judge lifts a silver cloche that hides a plain white plate with the dish on a silver serving plate and places the photograph directly next to the dish. The food itself is presented with almost no additional sides or decoration. The hamburger for example comes without fries or salad and the bun does not have any sesame seeds on it which makes it look very plain in comparison to the beef Wellington or even the pasta dish from the first episode. The shots in which the food is presented are either from an horizontal angle or from an angled top shot with almost no camera movement such as panning or zooming. Compared to the visual presentation of previous dishes the children's food is presented rather monotonously. Jack selects the hamburger and when Elliot lifts the cloche in front of all of the cooks the children applaud and react happy until they hear what the judge has to say: “We are not looking for a plane, flat, narrowly looking burger like this one, we want a gourmet burger.”⁷⁹

1.1.2.2 Summary

To sum it up, we can say that the differentiation of adult food and children's food is constructed through several modes. Visually, the adult food is allocated to adults, and children's food to children though *mise-en-scène* as the children's food is shown several times with the photographs of the judges as 8-year-olds in the same frame which connects hamburger, fish fingers and chicken wings to children. On the other hand, the first and the last shot of the ingredients of the Mystery-Box with food that children do not like is showing the food in the foreground and the judges standing behind it in the background which emphasizes that gourmet food belongs to adults. Another stylistic device that creates a differentiation between adult and children's food is the camera movement. The gourmet food is shown in several repetitive close-ups, from different angles and with zooms and slow pans. The childhood-favorites instead are shown from a bigger distance and only from two angles with almost no camera movement. The

74 Exemplary screen shots in Appendix A7, pp.82..

75 *MJUSA*, S1E2, TC 18:34-18:38.

76 *Ibid.*, TC 18:57-18:58.

77 *Ibid.*, TC 19:05-19:07.

78 *Ibid.*, TC 19:21-19:22.

79 *Ibid.*, TC 21:21-21:30.

plainness of the food is emphasized through the simpleness of the camera movements that are less lively as with other foods. Another way of illustrating the difference between adult taste and children's taste is by showing the opposite reactions and attitude of every group towards the two different foods. When we see the children in the same frame with the gourmet food of the Mystery-Box like organs and blue cheese we see them reacting with disgust that is articulated through comments and body language whereas the children's reaction to the burger is positive. The judges refer to their food as wonderful while the children gasp and have to step back because of its smell and its looks. The most noticeable difference between adult and children's food is that the latter is associated with fast food. Children like chips, burgers, fish fingers, chicken nuggets, chicken wings which are all dishes you can find in fast food chains, school canteens and family dinner tables. This is a popular idea that is spread by media for example in *Jamie's School Dinners* and *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution* which will be described in chapter 2, but also in quantitative studies. Shanthy A. Bowman et al analyzed the eating behavior of 6212 children and adolescents in the USA and found out that almost a third consumed fast food on a daily basis and eat less healthy when they prepare their own meals.⁸⁰

1.1.2.3 Conclusion

Children's food is defined by the show as simple, but delicious food you eat with your fingers without respecting any formal rules of dining. The show emphasizes that the jury liked fast food when they were children and did not know better. The jury distances themselves from their earlier tastes as they show photographs of themselves as children which they place next to the dish. The idea that the jury members today are different than the children in the photographs is emphasized by Jack not being able to discover a resemblance. Every judge asks Jack if he recognizes the child in the picture which Jack repeatedly fails to do. Today they are professional chefs that do not eat fast food but restaurant-quality versions of fast food. Adult food is displayed as food that is enjoyable for people with knowledge about the ingredients and experiences with food which are resembled by the judges. They enjoy kidney, liver and snails as they focus on the taste of the finished dish instead of the looks of the raw product. The ingredients of the Mystery-Box range from expensive to cheap but have a unique flavor in common that is declared by the taster-makers to be a good taste. Children have to learn to enjoy the foods if they want to be a chef, and indeed Jack and Alexander learn to like organs after cooking them.

Applying Bourdieu's categories of taste and using Naccarato's and LeBesco's contemporary overview we can define fast food as food that falls into the category of 'taste of necessity'. It is fatty, salty

80 S.A. Bowman, S.L. Gortmaker, C.B. Ebbeling, M.A. Pereira and D.S. Ludwig, 'Effects of Fast-Food Consumption on Energy Intake and Diet Quality Among Children in a National Household Survey', *Pediatrics*, vol. 113, no.1, 2004, pp. 112-118.

and mass produced and satisfies a consumer who is free from constrictions of health and formal eating. Fast food is connected with values of being cheap, tasty, unhealthy and being a lower class meal. Naccarato and LeBesco also explain how fast food or junk food is valued as carnivalistic escape from strict rules of health and pressure of eating rules and as site of resistance towards the fine dining culture.⁸¹ Again, the show raises simple, cheap food that belongs to the 'taste of necessity' to food that fits the 'taste of luxury and freedom' of the upper class through cooking it in the right way which turns fast food into gourmet food. The show combines the elitist taste with hedonistic pleasure of food that Bourdieu connects to the 'taste of necessity', but still values formalities and structures in eating practices as plating and small portions play an important role. Food also has to be prepared by certain rules and presented in certain ways which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Food as a reward plays a minor role in *MasterChef Junior* but is also connected to children. In episode two Jack is displayed with a pineapple filled with a dessert that is not further explained or showed but I would guess it is ice cream as we can see some colorful sprinkles in a later shot. Sarah as well earns a whole column filled with gummy bears after she won the layer-cake challenge.

1.2 The act of cooking or How to 'wow' the judges

1.2.1 Of cooks as 'geniuses' and 'imitators'

The portrayal of cooking in *MasterChef Junior* can be divided into two different types. On the one hand, cooking is shown as obscured creative act, on the other hand, cooking is shown as following the rules of a recipe the viewer was made familiar with. Those two opposite notions that I could discover after watching the shows repetitively can be based on Kant's ideas of 'genius', 'originality' and 'exemplarity'.⁸² Kant defines a 'genius' as an individual that has innate talent that enables the individual to set rules for art based on nature. An artwork is only considered to be by a 'genius' when it fulfills several principles: it must be new and inspired by a previous genius' work, it must be communicable for an audience and their taste, and it must be able to serve for several forms of reuse such as

“an archetype (Urbild) for the emulation (Nachfolge) of future geniuses, as a pattern (Muster) for the imitation of future artists, as a model (Modell) or precept (Vorschrift) for the replication (Nachmachung) by schools, and as an expression of peculiarity (Eigenthumlichkeit), which may serve for the aping (Nachäffung) of counterfeits, plagiarists and “tyros”.”⁸³

Through applying these concepts on the way cooking is portrayed there can be found different variations of creating exemplary dishes (like a 'genius'), developing an own version of a dish (like an 'artist'), replicating a dish respectively cooking by schools (cooking by the rules). Aping is not thematized in

81 Naccarato, LeBesco, 2012, pp. 85-94.

82 KdU (Kritik der Urteils kraft) § 46-50, sec. 308-320, 1790.

83 M. Gammon, "Exemplarity Originality": Kant on Genius and Imitation', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 35, iss. 4, 1997, p.588.

MasterChef Junior but after watching the adult version of *MasterChef* a viewer can get an idea of not only what cooking mistakes to avoid but also what ingredients or combinations are considered as forms of aping in the sense of amateur-like cooking (like a 'tyros'). One example would be the frowning upon of the usage of truffle oil by a contestant in season 2 of *MasterChef*. Ramsay explains that white truffle oil is one of the most ridiculous and pungent ingredients known to a chef. Bastianich adds that the woman has apparently no idea what she is doing. This serves not only as an example of cooking as a craft that amateurs easily fail to perform but also as an example of a difference between the junior and adult version in terms of negativity and display of failing which will be discussed more when analyzing the portrayal of children.

To be able to use the terms of Kant for analyzing the portrayal of cooking I will avoid situating the actual levels of originality when it comes to a dish the children created withing the world of gourmet food. Rather I will concentrate on how the principles of 'originality', 'imitation' and 'replication' are depicted and narrated in the context of the show. Therefore, I will focus on dividing between cooking as creative act and cooking as following rules while the division between 'genius' and 'artist' is merely a sub-concern and serves to illustrate the variety of creativity levels the children have to demonstrate. The main focus of portraying cooking lies in the depiction of cooking as creative act. In 7 episodes we find 9 of the 13 cooking challenges to be inventing dishes which can be divided by the various constraints the challenges come with such as having to follow an overall topic or limitation of ingredients. There are 3 challenges in which the children have one ingredient they must include in the dish which are seafood, pasta, a cut of chicken; 1 challenge in which the children have to cook a dish within the food category of desserts; 2 challenges in which the children have to create their own version of a dish - a hamburger and a three-layer-cake; and 2 challenges where the main ingredients are limited to the content of a Mystery-Box. In the finale there are no constraints, therefore, Alexander and Dara create their own three course menus freely. To get an idea of how creativity of cooking is constructed, what other notions of cooking are implied and what characteristics a good cook needs I will describe and analyze the cooking of the seafood of the first episode.

1.2.2 You cook like a 'genius'

“To earn your place in the next round of the competition we want each of you to cook us an incredible seafood dish using any of the amazing ingredients you can see here in front of you,”⁸⁴ explains Bastianich to 8 children that are about to cook for the first time in *MasterChef Junior*. Ramsay give the signal to start their 60 minutes and the children run off to the pantry, grab ingredients and start cooking.⁸⁵

84 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 04:12-04:24.

85 Sequence of screen shots in Appendix A8, pp. 83.

After we see the children running back to their stations from the pantry we see a medium shot of Franco lifting his basket with ingredients on his bench, and Sophia unpacking food in very short shots. Next, we see Jack who is still in the pantry struggling to get some equipment from the top shelf saying: “Oh my God, how am I supposed to reach these?”⁸⁶ and hear Justin answering him: “I know.”⁸⁷ We are back in the kitchen and see a close-up of Molly's face followed by a close-up of her cutting an onion. Then we see Jack jumping and touching the cups from below so that they fall down. Again, we are in the kitchen where we see a close-up of Daniel filling a pot with water, followed by a top shot of the same scenario. Thereafter, we see Sophia checking on her pot and Jack cutting with a lot of input, before we see a wide top shot of all cooks, and a medium shot of the jury.

All the so far mentioned shots have in common that they are mostly close-ups with camera movements like zooming or panning that are edited in a fast pace. Besides, the switching of the locations between pantry and kitchen add another dimension of pace and being in a rush. While the children are cooking, the judges explain their feelings about the situation. They mention that those 8 to 13-year-old children are “the best junior home cooks across America”⁸⁸ and that it is “one thing to cook at home, it's another thing to come here to the *MasterChef* kitchen and be given seafood.”⁸⁹ When Bastianich says the word “seafood” we see a close-up of the squid which Daniel holds up and tells us that he is familiar with that ingredient: “I tasted this before and it was great.”⁹⁰ Next, we see a close-up of Mina's concentrated face and a close-up of her hand dipping shrimp into a batter; followed by the same shot-pattern for Justin which shows his face and him cutting fish. Then we see a close-up of the octopus and a zoom out that shows Daniel cutting it. Those images run while we hear Bastianich expressing doubts of the children's ability: “They are only 8 to 13 years old. I hope everyone gets a dish together and does not implode under the pressure and difficulty of cooking seafood.”⁹¹ Just when he finishes his sentence we see Molly knocking over some ingredients, Jack struggling with opening a jar and Justin dropping what he was doing and running to the pantry because he has forgotten something.

After this hectic phase of getting started we see and hear some children explaining what they cook. We hear Roen starting to speak while we still see the images of Justin running which is followed by a shot of a woman who is probably Justin's mother smiling and shaking her head on the balcony before we see the fitting visual material of Roen who is filling some kind of cream into a bottle while explaining to us what he is preparing: “I'm gonna make a salmon sushi with tuna sashimi. Since I was (...) 3 years old I would eat (...) octopus and these crazy Japanese foods and sushi is probably my favorite food. So I'm

86 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 05:15-05:16.

87 *Ibid.*, TC 05:17.

88 *Ibid.*, TC 05:32-05:35.

89 *Ibid.*, TC 05:35-05:40.

90 *Ibid.*, TC 05:41-05:43.

91 *Ibid.*, TC 05:48-05:57.

trying to do my best.”⁹² While he talks we see a close-up of his tuna with salmon in the background when he says “tuna” and Daniel handling the octopus on “octopus” as well as a smiling woman on the balcony who is probably Roen's mother after that we see him again filling the bottle and finishing his sentence. Next, we see a close-up of Mina who tells us her dish which is shown in the same dramaturgic way as Roen's. After Mina we see a close-up of Sophia's face which pans down to her pan and stops at a close-up of a frying fish. As the children before she explains her dish: “I'm going to make an almond-crusted Chilean seabass with wilted garlic spinach and roasted baby eggplants.”⁹³ Again, we see the image of the fish when she says “seabass” and a close-up of her putting spinach in a pot when she says “spinach”.

The notion of time pressure and stress is kept upright through quick editing and through playing in an audio which fits an image that is faded in a moment later. That means we hear children speaking before they are in the frame. This adds a notion of pace and disorientation that is strengthened by the quick camera movements and close-ups. The viewer is very close to the children and the actions which creates a feeling of involvement and emotional attachment. The cooking itself is shown in non-chronological close-ups that fit the words of the children and show actions that have occurred earlier or later to the moment they explains the dish. For example when the camera approaches Sophia she is frying her seabass, when she starts talking she is putting some cut eggplant slices on a baking tray and we can see that the spinach is in a box. Next, we see a close-up of her putting the spinach in a pot, then we go back to when she was talking and the spinach is still in the box. The editing of non-chronological images appeals to show logically coherent images due to Sophia's voice-over. Her words function as a continuous bow that hold the images together and creates a logic that is familiar to the viewer and prevents confusion. Nonetheless, the cooking itself is fragmented and shown in short glimpses that illustrate the idea of the dish and leaves the viewer to imaging how exactly the cooking is performed.

Before we learn what the other children cook we see a short interplay of very quickly edited shots of children in action while the jury reminds them of the pressure. We see Daniel putting lemon into his pot, Justin carrying a bowl, Franco searing scallops, Jack forming crab cakes and Molly looking towards the jury accompanied by Ramsay saying: “One dish to keep you in the competition. Speed up.”⁹⁴ After that Bastianich and Elliot go over to Jack, stop on the opposite of his bench and ask him: “What's happening? What's the dish?”⁹⁵ We see a top shot of his bench where he has a pan with the crab cakes already searing in it. While he says: “It's a crab cake with a garlic aioli”⁹⁶ we see a top shot close-up of the searing cakes. Bastianich replies: “Its a tricky dish”⁹⁷ tastes a bit of it and asks Jack another question: “Do

92 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 06:03-06:15.

93 *Ibid.*, TC 06:23-06:29.

94 *Ibid.*, TC 06:32-06:36.

95 *Ibid.*, TC 06:38-06:40.

96 *Ibid.*, TC 06:40-06:43.

97 *Ibid.*, TC 06:44-06:45.

you wear this shirt when you play poker?”⁹⁸ Jack answers: “This? I don't play poker.”⁹⁹ Bastianich encourages him to wear that shirt if he ever plays poker since it is a good poker shirt in his opinion.

Again, we have an interlude of quick edited close-ups and medium shots that illustrate the time pressure. Next, we see Ramsay walking over to Justin who we just saw being about to cut a cucumber, and asking him how he is feeling. Justin replies to be comfortable what Ramsay likes. We see that the cucumber is already cut and in the bowl with other ingredients. The judge tastes some of Justin's food and asks what he cooks. Justin answers: “Fried red snapper with a side of Greek salad.”¹⁰⁰ Ramsay expresses admiration: “It's a very smart way of serving a fish when its whole like that. Use your time wisely Justin.”¹⁰¹ We see Justin and Ramsay mainly in a shot/reverse shot pattern when speaking to each other and two different close-ups of the red snapper. First, we see the fish lying already fried on a pan, next, we see the fish being fried. Maybe it is an early shot of the later done fish or Justin fries the fish several times. Next, Bastianich and Elliot approach Molly asking her how she is doing what she answers with “good.”¹⁰² When she is asked what she is making she replies: “I'm making cod-fish tacos with a pomegranate salsa and crema.”¹⁰³ Bastianich looks curiously at the taco shells Molly has lying on her bench and asks: “You are making your own taco shells?”¹⁰⁴ Molly affirms this confidently and Bastianich and Elliot are impressed.

Obviously, we see only very short snippets of the cooking process as the children have 60 minutes which are shown in just over 3 minutes of edited material. However, the way how the images are edited gives us an idea of continuity. We already discussed the use of a voice-over to glue together images of non-chronological order. Another method is to follow characters, therefore, we can see Justin in the interlude just before Ramsay approaches him. The same applies to Jack as we can see him forming crab cakes a short moment before Bastianich and Elliot approach him. In both cases we can observe that each of the cooks is doing something else as they were doing in the shots we saw them just a moment before. Jack has the crab cakes he was half way done with forming already in the pan and Justin's cucumber he was about to cut is already cut and mixed with the rest of the salad in a bowl. Those quick time jumps that are edited in a flow add to the notion of cooking as obscured. So far we have not seen cooking as a step-by-step procedure, on the contrary, we only see short fractured moments of cooking. We saw moments of preparation like cutting of herbs, the chopping off of the ends of a cucumber and filling water in a pot. Followed by moments of using prepared elements for further preparation as dipping shrimp in batter and

98 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 06:47-06:49.

99 *Ibid.*, TC 06:50-06:52.

100 *Ibid.*, TC 07:06-07:07.

101 *Ibid.*, TC 07:10-07:13.

102 *Ibid.*, TC 07:17.

103 *Ibid.*, TC 07:19-07:22.

104 *Ibid.*, TC 07:23-07:24.

filling sauce in a bottle. Last but not least we saw moments of transformation such as searing fish, frying fish, searing scallops and braising of the octopus. All those intermediate steps of each cooking process are shown in short glimpses so that we do not see any continuous on-goings. The viewer is left with questions of what the recipes might contain. We cannot follow what ingredients Mina puts in her shrimp batter or what Jack makes his aioli of. Instead of giving us verbal information about the food or the cooking process, we hear information that is entertaining or enlarges our curiosity and interest. Mostly our admiration for the young cooks is encouraged as we hear how the jury is impressed or that Roen did liked seafood when he was only 3 years old. I assume that many adult viewers are reminded of their own childhood or their children's younger years and imagine if they would have eaten octopus at the age of 3.

Besides praise and admiration, the verbal comments are meant to be entertaining and lighthearted to create some moments of comic relief where we do not feel the pressure. Jack's Hawaii shirts are a reoccurring topic throughout the season. In the second episode Bastianich gives him the name "Hawaii Jack".¹⁰⁵ In episode 1 Ramsay asks for Dara's red hairband and puts it on his head. He also asks her about her food dream which is to own a restaurant and be a judge on *MasterChef*. Ramsay asks her whose job she would like to take which she answers with: "Joes."¹⁰⁶ To test her ability Ramsay wants her to do Joe's 'typical death stare' which she does and makes the parents, jury and other children laugh. After learning what most of the children are preparing we see again a short interlude of quick cuts which reminds us of the time. We can see Sophia shaking some kind of dressing, Franco putting seared scallops from the pan onto a plate, Molly fighting steam with a towel and a close-up of the loud ticking clock accompanied by Elliot's reminder of the time: "Guys this is where it counts. 5 minutes left."¹⁰⁷ This rings in the moment of finishing the cooking challenge. We see a pan of cheering and applauding parents followed by Elliot saying: "Its all about plating, seasoning."¹⁰⁸ While he speaks we see compatible close-ups of Molly plating some green creme and Roen tasting sushi. Bastianich repeats how important tasting is and we see Jack tasting a sauce as well as a close-up of Daniel chewing critically. A medium shot of Franco wiping his forehead before he tastes his food adds a notion of stress. The encouragement from the jury goes on, for instance Ramsay shouts: "Let's go!"¹⁰⁹ while we see close-ups of Molly's face, her searing her fish and the searing snapper. The speed of the editing is slowed down a bit as we see and hear the jury talking admiringly of the children's abilities which is inter-cut with shots of the cooking acts they talk about. Bastianich: "I am totally blown away because I did not believe we could get this kind of result out of 8 to 13-year-olds. Franco's got some seared scallop, some fried rice."¹¹⁰ Elliot interrupts him: "The fried rice is

105 *MJUSA*, S1E2, TC 07:14-07:19.

106 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 19:13.

107 *Ibid.*, TC 07:30-07:33.

108 *Ibid.*, TC 07:35-07:36.

109 *Ibid.*, TC 07:44.

110 *Ibid.*, TC 07:48-07:55.

killer, its nice and crunchy.”¹¹¹ Bastianich agrees. Elliot goes on pointing out the skills of the children: “Roan, his knife skills are out of this world.”¹¹² Ramsay joins: “Daniel is braising the octopus (...) how many 11-year-olds do know that you can braise octopus?”¹¹³ As already mentioned we see shots of Franco, his rice, Roan cutting sushi rolls and Daniel braising the octopus. The latter is shown how he backs off from his bench when the octopus he just braised pops with a crack. The last moments are about to come, we see a close-up of the clock and Bastianich announces the last minute. Close-ups, medium shots with zooms and pans of plating and finishing touches are edited quickly. When the countdown reaches zero we see one last close-up of the clock and the jury shouts stop. The children lift their arms and react relieved with smiling and cheering.

To sum it up, cooking is portrayed in a way that obscures the individual steps of cooking itself. This is achieved mainly through quick editing, camera movement such as panning and zooms and discontinuous editing. The images themselves do not show cooking as a process from raw ingredients to finished dish but show a non-chronological order of raw, cooking or done ingredients. All in all, those stylistic devices lead to show cooking in almost anachronistic glimpses that leave the viewers unclear in what exactly to expect from each dish when it comes to seasoning and flavors. We see the jury tasting but they do not yet share much information about the taste of the dishes. We have to trust the admiration of the jury when it comes to the cooking skills of the children. For example we never see Roan actually cutting fish or making the sushi roll. We have to believe Elliot who says that his knife skills are very good since he might have seen Roan cutting the fish. We see him using the knife only to cut the ready sushi rolls which does not require as much special skills compared to cutting raw fish. Besides, it would have been informative and interesting to see a short image of what he puts inside the sushi; but we only see him with a sauce that is not closer explained, raw fish and a finished roll of sushi. This example shows how cooking is portrayed as a creative act that is not tangible for the audience. We can compare the depiction of cooking with the hidden coming into existence of a painting; we see the empty canvas, brooms and mixing of the colors, hear the title of the painting, but cannot see the actual moment of creation. Cooking is portrayed as creative process, a magical transformation of which the details are left to the viewer to imagine.

The notion of cooking as creative act is emphasized in almost every cooking challenge. “Let your imagination go wild,”¹¹⁴ are the encouraging words Ramsay uses to motivate the children in the second episode. Bastianich explains to us that the imagination of the children is very wide so that when they lift a

111 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 07:55-07:57.

112 *Ibid.*, TC 07:58-08:00.

113 *Ibid.*, TC 08:01-08:08.

114 *MJUSA*, S1E2, TC 05:55-05:56.

Mystery-Box “the world is their oyster.”¹¹⁵ Close to the end of the cooking time Elliot reminds the children: “be creative, show up your artistry your talent.”¹¹⁶ The episode where cooking as art and way to express personality is stressed the most is the finale, where Dara and Alexander compose a three course menu without any restrictions. Besides, the children are illustrated as having an innate talent for cooking for example by Roen who tells us that he started eating seafood when he was 3 years old.

1.2.3 Cooking as highly complicated craft

Opposed to being illustrated as creative act, cooking is as well portrayed as activity that requires to follow rules. In the third episode the children cook in pairs that were arranged by Alexander in a Tag-Team-Challenge. The children have to cook a beef Wellington following the recipe of Ramsay who serves it as a signature dish in his restaurants. The cooking sequence takes over 10 minutes and shows not only how the children follow the cooking rules but also how they communicate in teams. Besides it illustrates their age differences, character differences and elements of competition. As soon as Ramsay gives the start signal one of each group begins to cook. All have to follow the same recipe so that we see them doing the same things such as putting a pan on the stove, pouring oil in it, seasoning the filet mignon and peeling potatoes. While one child is doing that, the team-mate gives short instructions. Alexander says to Troy: “Get the pan out, start to heat it up,”¹¹⁷ while Troy looks for it hectically and interrupts Alexander: “I don't know where it is.”¹¹⁸ Next, we see Jewels fixing her hair impatiently. “Oil, good,”¹¹⁹ is what we hear from Jack delegating Kaylen. After that follows a very short pan of Jewels closing a cupboard, then we see Sarah running while Dara tells her to get the pan what Sarah comments with: “I know.”¹²⁰ We see a very short close-up of a pan with oil being tossed around in before we see Sarah from a top shot salting the meat. Dara says: “Season the steak, salt and pepper,”¹²¹ again Sarah answer with: “I know.”¹²² This sequence lasts for about 30 seconds and consists of medium shots and close-ups from different angles with movements in various directions and speed. The frame is almost never static, therefore, a notion of hectic, movement and stress is created since the eyes of the viewer cannot rest. The missing of a wide-shot keeps the viewer close all the time so that we get more involved and feel the pressure with the children.

Next, we hear and see the jury doubting the children's ability to master this challenge. “These are 8 to 13-year-old home cooks, so, so much complexity so much difficulty to ask young cooks at this age to

115 *MJUSA*, S1E2, TC 06:17-06:18.

116 *Ibid.*, TC 09:35-09:38.

117 *MJUSA*, S1E3, TC 15:38-15:40.

118 *Ibid.*, TC 15:39.

119 *Ibid.*, TC 15:41-15:42.

120 *Ibid.*, TC 15:43.

121 *Ibid.*, TC 15:46-16:48.

122 *Ibid.*, TC 16:48.

execute a beef Wellington, well I think we are out of the realm.”¹²³ Elliot interrupts Bastianich and asks if he thinks it is possible for them to succeed. Ramsay reminds them of the previous achievements and expresses some confidence as those children are the best 10 of all America. While the judges talk we see how the first children put the filet mignon into the pan. After that we see the children cutting potatoes and searing the meat. Jack keeps on motivating and pushing Kaylen and Alexander reminds Troy to cut the potatoes small so that they cook faster.

The editing is a bit slower now but the time pressure is still noticeable especially through the children's voices and concerns. Next, the jury explains the difficulties of the dish which lies in the correct execution of each single step which is harder to fulfill if you divide the tasks by two. Again, Ramsay repeats the steps which are: searing of the meat, putting enough mustard on it, wrapping it in prosciutto, wrapping it in crepe and last in puff pastry. The jury mentions that if one of the team partners screws up, their place in the competition will be endangered. Alexander checks if the sear on Troy's filet mignon is perfect and confirms that it is good. He asks Troy if he remembers when the mustard has to be put on and reminds him of Ramsay's words who said that the meat has to be warm when the mustard brushed on, but Troy does not remember this and decides not to put mustard on. In a reaction-shot Alexander shares his concerns with us: “I picked Troy but now he's just disagreeing with me. I'm wondering if Troy and I can pull it off. We could be at risk of going home.” After the commercial break the reaction-shot with Alexander continues: “I did let Troy put the steak in the blast-chiller without the mustard. He kinda confused me with whether or not it should have mustard on it. So I'm gonna leave it, (...) and then brush it afterwards, I really hope we're doing it properly.”¹²⁴ The attentive viewer remembers how Ramsay explained the steps and knows that Alexander is right and now wonders with him if this was the one step that might lead to an elimination of both team members. Next, the children are questioned by the judges about their progress. Elliot talks to Roen and encourages him to communicate more with Jewels who is cooking to guide her through the tasks. Ramsay announces that only 30 seconds are left before the first switch which is followed by an interlude of quickly edited close-ups. We see how Kaylen is putting pieces of potatoes into a sieve and telling that Jack might have to do this if she runs out of time. Jack encourages her: “You can make it, just go, go, go, as quick as you can,”¹²⁵ while jumping excitedly up and down. We see a close-up of the clock and hear Ramsay counting down and see some close-ups of children getting ready to swap. They run, high five each other and spur each other on.

Again, the hectic is underlined by quick editing and fast camera movement. Troy tells Alexander what to do: “Remember pastry, crepe, duxelles, prosciutto,”¹²⁶ what Alexander calmly answers with: “I

123 *MJUSA*, S1E3, TC 16:05-16:15.

124 *Ibid.*, TC 18:03-18:21.

125 *Ibid.*, TC 19:00-19:02.

126 *Ibid.*, TC 19:18-19:20.

know, buddy.”¹²⁷ Next, we see a close-up of Roen and hear a high pitched voice shouting repeatedly “put the paper off, put the paper off”¹²⁸, there is a cut and we see that it is Jewels who commands Roen who calms her down with: “I know, I know”¹²⁹. On the other bench we see Gavin still searing the steak followed by a close-up of Dara's face and one of her hands placing carefully prosciutto on top of puff pastry, crepe and duxelles. “Duxelles, do the duxelles”¹³⁰, says Kaylen to Jack who responds with “Gottcha”¹³¹. “Put an even amount,”¹³² reminds him Kaylen when we see a close-up of the duxelles being spread on the crepe what Jack answers politely and even says thank you. More hectic moments follow as Jack's water boils over, Sophia disagrees with Gavin about the sear on the meat an Dara pushes Sarah to help her and tell her what to do next. When Sarah tells her to put the meat on the other side and roll it towards her, Dara answers her she will do it backwards as this is the way she is used to do it. In a reaction-shot Sarah tells us how she feels about this: “I think because I'm younger Dara thinks I don't know as much as her. I don't know how long she's been cooking, but I'm a 9-year-old and I made it this far.”¹³³

Then Ramsay approaches Alexander and Troy asking them how there are doing, where the beef is and if it is brushed in mustard. They realize that Alexander was right so he runs and gets the beef to brush it. Ramsay reminds them to work in a team, that someone is going home tonight and that they should get it together. In a reaction-shot Troy lets us know that he now wants to work in a team and make no more mistakes. Next, we see short images of Dara scattering chopped onions in a pan, Roen wrapping the Wellington in foil, Alexander folding the Wellington and brushing it with egg wash and Jack wrapping foil around the Wellington while Kaylen tells him: “Doing good Jack,”¹³⁴ to what Jack responds with: “Thank you.”¹³⁵ Ramsay announces the nearing second swap after that we see a close-up of a pan with broccolini that are stirred followed by a medium shot of Gavin and Sophia. Then Roen tells us while stirring his sauce that he feels confident and that he heard some people struggling. Sophia advises Gavin to not drop the beef Wellington as we see him running off with it. Again, we see Roen stirring the sauce, this time in a big close-up. Jewels asks him if it needs more semi-glaze but Roen denies, what makes Jewels look away in concern. Ramsay counts in the swap and the children change places. Shortly before and after the switch the editing is again a bit faster and the frames are more in movement. Next, Bastianich approaches Jack to ask how he and Kaylen are doing but does not stay long as Jack is busy delegating his team partner. After that Ramsay goes over to Sophia, asks her about the meat, tastes her mash and asks

127 *MJUSA*, S1E3, TC 19:21.

128 *Ibid.*, TC 19:22-19:23.

129 *Ibid.*, TC 19:23.

130 *Ibid.*, TC 19:30-19:31.

131 *Ibid.*, TC 19:31.

132 *Ibid.*, TC 19:32-19:33.

133 *Ibid.*, TC 20:17-20:25.

134 *Ibid.*, TC 21:22.

135 *Ibid.*, TC 21:23.

her to taste it as well. “First thing that comes into you mouth?”¹³⁶, he asks her. She replies: “No salt.”¹³⁷ Ramsay tells her it is also lumpy and she should think about using the remaining 20 minutes to cook a new mash, as they want a “royal mash, a delicious mash.”¹³⁸ After that follows a medium shot with a pan of Troy getting out the Wellington of the oven that according to Alexander looks perfect. Jack explains Kalyen to spray the baking sheet from a higher altitude and Sarah asks Dara to tell her how much vegetable stock to put in. Dara shouts stop but Sarah pours in a bit more. Jewel puts the Wellington in the oven when Ramsay announces that there is only 1 minute until the next swap.

Again, Ramsay talks about a problem the young cooks face which is that they are too concentrated on the meat to cook the sides perfectly. The other judges agree and state that “all three components have to be perfect.”¹³⁹ While they speak we see several children pressing the potatoes through the ricer or tasting them. Then Sarah opens the oven and we see a close-up of a nicely baked Wellington, Sarah grabs it, lifts it out, shouts: “Hot!”¹⁴⁰ and drops the tray. We see several surprised faces of children and the jury before the commercial break starts. After that we learn that the Wellington is still on the tray and undamaged, therefore, Sarah just goes on. The final switch is on and instead of seeing a row of high fives the children more or less run into each other, block each others ways and we see less smooth changes than before. The children now stir the mash and make sure that there are no lumps in it and take the temperature of the meat with a thermometer. Alexander says that their meat is at 124.5 and that this is perfect. Sarah tells Dara to stick in the thermometer through the top which she does and tells Sarah that the temperature is still climbing which both know is a good thing. Gavin gets the beef out of the oven and Sophia is pleased with the look. Dara starts plating while Sarah reminds her: “Finesse Dara, we want it to look the same.”¹⁴¹ Dara replies with: “Do you even know what finesse means?”¹⁴² Sarah says: “Yes, I actually do,”¹⁴³ and seems to be disappointed in Dara. We see a close-up of an almost finished plate followed by a medium shot showing Gavin applying sauce. His method makes Sophia turn around impatiently but he calms her down by telling her that he knows what to do. Jewels asks Roen to make the broccolini face the same direction but he ignores it. Kaylen tells Jack to apply the sauce with a gesture.

Bastianich announces the beginning of the last 30 seconds, the children now clean the plates and some are still busy with the sauce. Dara tells Sarah that she will do drippings, Sarah tells her not to do it because there is not enough time but Dara does it anyways. While Ramsay counts the last 10 seconds we see quickly edited close-ups of plates being cleaned from sauce drops and concentrated faces. All in all, we

136 *MJUSA*, S1E3, TC 22:46-22:47.

137 *Ibid.*, TC 22:48.

138 *Ibid.*, TC 22:57-22:58.

139 *Ibid.*, TC 23:38-23:38.

140 *Ibid.*, TC 23:48.

141 *Ibid.*, TC 25:09-25:11.

142 *Ibid.*, TC 25:12-25:13.

143 *Ibid.*, TC 25:14.

can see glimpses of every single step of the cooking process in an chronological order. We are repeatedly reminded of the order of the layers and the steps. The cooking itself is still shown in short images, we never see one child peeling and cutting one potato but always different children performing different stages of peeling and cutting. The overall editing is also in a high pace and with lot of camera movements so that we feel the time pressure and stress of the children. By replicating the dish of Ramsay the children cook by the rules of a 'genius' who cooked an exemplary dish. Alexander already knows what Ramsay's signature dish is before Bastianich says it and reacts overwhelmed by the thought that they have to cook it. This creates a notion of the dish as being famous and known at least in the high-end restaurant world, as well as being complicated to cook. Cooking in this sequence is portrayed as a technical craft that requires skill, concentration and absolute focus. It is also shown to be a performance for one person as the jury explains that it is harder to cook in a team and communicate while being under time pressure. This is emphasized showing the children shouting hectically at each other in high voices and not following orders of their team members. Even though we know the single steps of the cooking process the emphasis lies not on showing the viewer how to cook. The pace of the editing is to high and we do not learn all necessary information for example how long the meat has to sear, rest and bake or how the sauce is made.

1.2.4 Summary

The two exemplary cooking sequences show cooking as a creative act, as art and a demanding craft that is performed by the children under time pressure. Those two notions of cooking are dominant and permanently stressed, especially through the jury who praises the skills and creativity of the children everytime they cook. More dimensions of cooking are added through showing children in situations where they have to trust their feeling when boiling an egg or use their muscles for whipping cream. This illustrates cooking as a natural talent, mental strength and physical challenge and as extremely difficult. The notion of cooking as a natural gift, the children as being very talented and having an innate desire to cook is emphasized in various moments in the show for example through telling us that Alexander cooks 5 to 6 times in an average week. Additionally, Elliot tells Alexander that he was not as good as him when he was his age, and that he is curious what he will create in this competition. This statement give the viewer an impulse to imagine Alexander's talent to be enormous. The children can be categorized as 'geniuses' in the Kantian sense as they are portrayed to have a natural understanding of cooking that enables them to create exemplary dishes which inspire other chefs and can be used as exemplary recipe to follow. The children's talent is further thematized in the moment of judging which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Another notion of cooking as transformative process is emphasized especially when it comes to cooking organs. When the children open the Mystery-Box with the ingredients that adults prefer Jack cooks kidney even though he has never eaten it and thinks they are gross but later he tastes them and answers: “surprisingly I like it,”¹⁴⁴ when Ramsay asks him about his opinion on the taste. Cooking not only transforms raw ingredients into something cooked it also changes disliked foods into tasteful dishes. The willingness of the children to try everything shows their openness, curiosity and courage which are characteristics a good *MasterChef* needs to have. To sum it up, a good cook is portrayed to need creativity, skills, knowledge, focus, accuracy, openness, courage, mental and physical strength and the willingness to learn. I suggest to define the described characteristics of cooking and being a successful cook as having hard culinary capital and being able to cook and actively create food. This makes it easier to distinguish between the culinary capital the children are assignment with and the culinary capital the viewer can gain which is analyzed in the following chapter.

1.3 The moment of truth

The judging of the dishes is the climax of the show since we see the finished dishes and get to know if the children failed or were successful. It is “the moment of truth” as Elliot explains to Sarah before he cuts into her molten lava cake to see if she had baked it correctly to get the right amount of liquid chocolate in the core. My emphasis in this chapter is to analyze the language the judges use to describe the food and taste as this is the only way to give the audience an idea of the sensory experience of smell and taste. Francis Coleman argues that a dish can be discussed as an artwork:

“A well-prepared dish is an ‘organic whole’ in basically the same sense as a well-conceived painting: elements are contrasted with each other but not contrasted so sharply that they fail to cohere. We often find that a dish ‘needs something’, that ‘there is something missing,’ just as we sometimes do with a painting. This is not to say that as far as their aesthetic merit or worth are concerned a well-prepared dish and a well-conceived painting are the same, but only that both are fit subjects of an aesthetic judgment.”¹⁴⁵

Based on Coleman's idea I claim that the language around food in *MasterChef Junior* can be compared to a language people use to talk about art as I noticed that the concept of balance of a dish is repeatedly commented by the judges.

1.3.1 A bite says more than a thousand words

As we already learned about the display of seafood and the cooking process, I will now describe the scene of the judging of the first child's dish which illustrates the camerawork and overall structure of the judging

144 *MJUSA*, S1E2, TC 06:16-06:17.

145 F. Coleman, (1965) ‘Can a Smell or a Taste or a Touch be Beautiful?’, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 2, no.4, pp. 319-24, cited in J. Gronow, ‘The Sociology of Taste’. London, Routledge, 1997, p.133.

scenes exemplary. As the judging always follows the same pattern it is enough to only describe one scene closer. After describing the dramatic pattern I will evaluate the language in all the judging scenes.¹⁴⁶

“It smells amazing here tonight, it is now time to find out if your dishes taste as good as they smell. Let's start with Sophia, let's go.”¹⁴⁷ When Ramsay calls Sophia's name we see her in a close-up that is inter-cut with a close-up of her mother before she grabs her plate and starts walking to the front. While she walks we hear her saying in a reaction-shot: “Looking at my finished plate, I do think the quality of my dish will get me to the next round, definitely.”¹⁴⁸ The walk is shown from different angles and distances and ends with an angled top shot depicting her putting the plate down on a small table that stands between her and Ramsay. Then we see a big close-up of the dish, which is put into correct place by Ramsay while he asks Sophia to describe the dish. “It's an almond crusted Chilean seabass with wilted garlic spinach, roasted baby eggplants, curry yogurt sauce and pomegranates and roasted almonds.”¹⁴⁹ Ramsay starts analyzing the food by cutting into the fish which we see in a big close-up and finds it to be “cooked beautifully, glistening in the center, not dry, beautiful stir,”¹⁵⁰ before he takes a bite. Then he comments on the texture: “I quite like that crusts of the pomegranate, the sort of crunchiness it gives it.”¹⁵¹ Before he sums up his opinion: “Technically and visually, young lady, this is pretty phenomenal. I'm blown away. Great job.”¹⁵² While he speaks we see a sequence of images in a quite steady rhythm: a close-up of Ramsay taking a bite, a close-up of Sophia watching him with eager, a big close-up of the dish, a big close-up of Ramsay, a medium top shot of the dish, a medium shot of the mother watching from the balcony, a medium full shot from behind Sophia, a medium shot of Sophia with a sleeve of Ramsay in the foreground and a medium shot of Daniel to capture his reaction when Sophia gets only good remarks. Next, we see a top shot of the dish and Bastianich walking towards it, followed by a big close-up of the dish where we see Bastianich's fork getting some fish. We see him tasting succeed by a medium shot of Sophia looking up to him in anticipation. Bastianich asks Sophia if that was just luck or if she can do it again. Sophia answers confidently that she could do it again. Bastianich pays a compliment and they high five before Sophia goes back to her station.

The structure and camera work of the judging emphasizes the professionalism of the jury and the complex role of food. First of all, the child has to walk to the jury, place its creation in front of them and wait for them to comment which emphasizes the higher status of the jury as judges. The confrontation on the table is shown in a shot/reverse shot pattern which is used in a more distant way we know for example

146 Sequence of screen shots and compendium of the judges dishes in Appendix A 9, pp.99.

147 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 08:54-09:02.

148 *Ibid.*, TC 09:05-09:10.

149 *Ibid.*, TC 09:14-09:23.

150 *Ibid.*, TC 09:24-09:29.

151 *Ibid.*, TC 09:32-09:35.

152 *Ibid.*, TC 09:35-09:40.

from Hollywood movies where it is common to film a conversation from over the shoulder of the partners to create maximum emotional involvement for the audience. In *MasterChef Junior* the camera films not from directly over the shoulder but more behind and sideways which creates a distance. We still see the facial expressions but are at the same time more observant than emotionally attached. This creates a notion of objectivity and neutrality and makes sure the viewer understands the legitimacy of the judging. The few close-ups we see show Ramsay from the side with a blank facial expression. He analyzes the food professionally and shows no emotions as he is working and not feeling. The professionalism of the jury is contrasting and, therefore, emphasizing the emotionality of the children. Sophia looks up at the judges hopefully and excited. Other children cry because of nervousness, excitement or just being overwhelmed by emotions.

Another difference of the way the shot/reverse shot pattern is used is the lower angle from which the children are shown. The camera is on the height of the jury's upper arm instead of over the shoulder which leads to frames in which Sophia is in the background and a part of a back of the jury in the foreground. This lets Sophia look smaller, especially as this camera position emphasizes as well that she has to look up to the jury. It also brings the viewer down to her perspective, literally puts us at the same level as her, makes us feel respect and appreciate the professionalism of the jury.

The importance of the finished dish is strengthened by showing it from many angles, especially big close-ups in a frequent pace. When we first see the dish being put down on the table where it will be judged, Sophia describes the dish while we can read the title at the same time "Chilean seabass with wilted spinach and baby eggplants" before the image fades slowly into a very big close-up and the camera slowly pans over the dish. The slow fading is as well a stylistic device that can be found in many classical Hollywood movies. It is a very slow and outdated way to edit images and definitely sticks out compared to the fast editing, panning and the shaky camera work. It creates a notion of classiness and presents the ready dish as something special and valuable. As Ramsay still stands back at this moment there is no shadow on the dish and we can see the colors and shininess of its elements perfectly.

On the one hand, the dish connects child and jury as it is the interface where the knowledge of the child meets the knowledge of the judge and shows their common interest, on the other hand, it shows the difference as the children are emotional and the jury is professional when it comes to the dish in between them. The food is shown in many top shots which emphasize the binding and dividing character. To sum it up, the judging creates a narrative in which a home cook, who puts its personality and heart into a dish and tries to please the professional, all-knowing jury. We as viewers are on the level of the children but also a bit more distant, which means we do not know as much as the jury but we do not have to worry or feel uncomfortable as we are not too directly involved due to the camera perspective.

1.3.2 Some rules for how to be a judge on *MasterChef Junior*

After quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing the judging scenes in *MasterChef Junior* following strategies of communicating and constructing taste become visible.¹⁵³

1. The jury judges by relying on their personal taste and on the authority to judge based on their experience, institutionalized culinary capital such as star-restaurants and popularity through other shows, which applies especially to Ramsay. Personal preferences are mentioned several times and create the notion that a chef expresses personal dislikes and favorites as part of one's personality. Bastianich for example is very skeptical towards Tommy's turkey burger as he just does not like it. One of the best remarks a dish can get is that it is good enough to be served in one of the judges restaurants which enforces the jury's status as taste-makers.

2. Sweetness is a flavor that can be easily too much or too less. Bourdieu discusses the liking of sweetness in the context of criticizing Kant and points out that sweetness is associated with primitive and infantile taste as it is seen as facile.¹⁵⁴ Sweet things and desserts are a main topic in the show but are also criticized. Sophia for example does not like cake and distinguishes herself by adding: "I don't like associating myself with it."¹⁵⁵ Again, the expression of personal taste is shown as saying something about a person's character.

3. Flavors have to be complex and textures have to be spot on. Flavors are discussed as being balanced and range from sweet, salty, spicy, to less tangible adjectives as rich, beautiful and sophisticated. Textures are described with smooth, grainy, crunchy, dry, crispy, light, thick and as well as beautiful, nice and gorgeous. Meat should be cooked medium-rare and be pinkish in the middle, with a beautiful sear on the outside. Fish should glisten in the center and shrimp should be not transparent or rubbery but white. The way the jury talks about taste in terms of flavors and texture makes a dish sound like a highly complex object which contains different elements that all have to be in a certain way to be perfect and work together to create an experience. Here we can notice a similarity of the usage of language to Coleman's comparison of a dish to an artwork. The jury describes a dish as a composition of elements that interact with each other and create something more than the summary of its components.

4. Form and aesthetics matter. Before the jury comments on taste they judge the visual presentation which refers mostly to plating and the sear and color of the meat. "Visually beautiful" is one of the most used expressions by Ramsay. The rules of how to plate and present food are not described closer, but "finesse" is a keyword that the viewer learns when it comes to formalistic analysis of a dish.

5. Food is not to satisfy primitive needs. The portions of the dishes are small; eating is all about

153 Transcription of judging in Appendix A9, pp. 99.

154 Bourdieu, 2010, pp. 488.

155 *MJUSA*, S1E4, TC 18:52-18:55.

complex taste experiences and not satisfying hunger or cravings. The children do not take their dishes back to their stations and from the adult *MasterChef* we know that the dishes are thrown away after tasting. The jury just takes small bites and we see a lot of close-ups of them how they chew and look in a distance. This creates suspense and also illustrates tasting as a process of critical analysis of tastes. Those examples put food in the position of being evanescent objects of complex tastes and not as something that is enjoyed in large quantities. We do not see the children eating in pleasure but being interested in learning about flavor and textures. The show emphasizes the concept of food as complex material that is difficult to handle.

6. The children are natural talents. The jury declares some children as geniuses and praise them for their inspiration and creativity. Elliot and Bastianich claim that the children show more talent as they had when they were their age while some of the children's dishes are hold as the best ever in *MasterChef*. This strengthens the idea that the junior cooks are portrayed to fall into the Kantian category of 'genius' since they are said to produce dishes that have the potential to inspire other cooks.

Those findings exemplify the way information about food is constructed and what kind of knowledge the viewer can gain from watching the show when it comes to expressing one's opinions of food. It also shows what values are connected to food and serve as markers for a lifestyle. For example is it favorable not to like sweets or at least be aware of the childishness that is connected to this flavor to create a notion of having a sophisticated palate. The quantitative use of food-language that is used in the show can be illustrated with a word cloud which shows words in different sizes according to their frequency in a text.¹⁵⁶ The minimum of mentions for a word to be in the word cloud is 6 times, which creates for example a word the size of "moist". "Beautiful" is used 21 times, "beautifully" 14 times, "delicious" was counted 37 times and "good" is the most used word with 49 times. "Like" is also used a lot for describing preferences and comparing elements of the dish. I excluded the usage of "like" as a fill word by not transcribing it but setting brakes to get a result that focuses on content and not on speaking practices.

1.3.3 Conclusion

Regarding Bourdieu's study the upper class decides what good taste is and determine which food practices make an individual rise in social status. In *MasterChef Junior* the jury works as taste-makers since they explain and decide which dishes are good in terms of form and taste. The viewer gets introduced to a vocabulary that enables to participate in food discussions and distinguish oneself from ordinary eaters. We learn from the show that it is a sign of high culinary capital to develop a personal taste and talk about

¹⁵⁶ See Appendix A10, p. 135.

it. By communicating a certain taste an individual situates itself in a context of a lifestyle. Bourdieu describes this process the following:

“Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life-style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis.”¹⁵⁷

That means what we eat and how we eat decides about our social status and reveals which lifestyles we follow. This is dependent on an individual's economical and cultural capital as well as on the need for an individual to situate oneself in society. However, *MasterChef Junior* provides an easier way to raise in social status by introducing the audience to the language of fine dining. I categorize the knowledge of the language of cooking and taste as soft culinary capital since it is a theoretical knowledge that can be based on a person's active cooking skills but can also be acquired by individuals without any cooking skills by watching the show. The jury and children teach us soft culinary capital in terms of language and showing in which situations which words can be used. Nevertheless, taste itself stays a subjective experience and we are left to imagine and fantasize about how exactly a balanced or rich dish might taste like. The aesthetics of a dish are repeatedly emphasized by the jury but taste is the dominant factor in the show. This is emphasized by the winner of the third season of the adult *MasterChef*, who is blind and praised for her distinct palate.

1.4. Soft and hard culinary capital: Of division, distinction and democratization

As I demonstrated *MasterChef Junior* constructs an elitist taste which assigns food, cooking and a chef with certain values. Food itself is illustrated as of good quality, fresh, expensive, rare, exquisite, exotic etc. The taste which is promoted by the show can be seen as a modern version of Bourdieu's category of 'taste of luxury and freedom'. Similar to the French upper class, the show values food of higher quality as lean meat for example filet mignon, seafood and chicken over pork. However, the show broadens the definition of which food is to be seen as good food as the variety and limitlessness of food is emphasized. Food that belongs into the category of popular taste such as plain potatoes or cheap hamburgers can be elevated through the right cooking techniques and become part of the desirable foods. To sum it up, all food is good when it is cooked the right way while expensive products are always good. Those two different ideas are illustrated in a discussion between Bastianich and Ramsay when they evaluate Dara's and Alexander's appetizers in the final. Bastianich prefers Alexander's dish as he likes its simpleness and purity and praises Alexander's trust in the quality of the ingredients. In Bastianich's opinion this way of cooking is preached in the restaurants today. Ramsay disagrees and favors Dara's dish since it shows technical cooking skills which is the most important ability of a chef in Ramsay's opinion. Their dissent is

157 Bourdieu, 2010, p. 169.

not solved and, therefore, opens up the image of a chef as creative, knowledgeable in flavors and ingredients and as technically highly skilled. That defines a chef as follows: creative, inventive, skilled, trained, patient, open to learn and as having a deep knowledge of cooking. The difficulty of cooking is strengthened by portraying the young chefs as multi-talents that are able to create food that has balanced flavors, complex textures, protein with the perfect temperature and is better than the dishes of the adults. The variety of ingredients they can choose from and the complicated tasks the children have to fulfill emphasize the notion that cooking is a craft and an art to be performed by skilled, trained and talented cooks. The show constructs the idea that good dishes can only be cooked by 'geniuses' and even replicating a dish needs a lot of talent. Cooking is shown to be a creative act, that is not understandable for ordinary people but described for us by the jury. This divides the jury and children from the viewer. The chefs are the only ones who know how to cook in the right way and are able to invent dishes based on their knowledge and talent and, therefore can add new culinary capital. They have hard culinary capital as they are able to actively use their knowledge and produce something materialistic that can be looked at, tasted and discussed.

The dishes the show features are shown to be complex creations of various elements with long titles such as "Seared Crab Cakes with Garlic Aioli" or "Tortellini with Sage Butter Sauce" that are claimed to be restaurant-quality which are always made from scratch. The jury emphasizes that the dishes the children cook can be served in one of their starred-restaurants which assigns the dishes with expensive high cuisine quality. Bastianich repeatedly demonstrates the economic values of some dishes by stating the amount of money he would pay for a dish made by a child for example 45 dollars for Dara's spot prawns she cooks in the final as entree. Analyzing the depiction of food through the categories of taste by Ochse et al reveals that food as nutrition plays a minor role and is rarely mentioned which also applies to food as material good. Food as reward is present and assigned to children. The two younger ones are rewarded with sweets after they won a challenge. However, similar to the Italian parents, the show encourages us to express and develop an individual taste that distinguishes us from others and provides us with the language we need for this. This leads to the conclusion that *MasterChef Junior* provides an elitist taste as the upper class of Bourdieu's survey that the viewer wants to follow to raise in social hierarchy. The show provides the language for the viewer to participate in culinary distinction which can be called soft culinary capital as the viewer does not actually produce anything and does not need to know how to cook. As the language is easy to gain we can say that the show democratizes culinary capital as the viewer does not need any knowledge but has to invest time in watching the shows. At the same time the show only provides soft culinary capital and, therefore, divides between the chefs on TV and the audience. The latter can participate but only in an uncreative way that is based on following the rules of a vocabulary that the

chefs make and teach. The show illustrates in a detailed way how to judge in terms of language and which elements to analyze. The viewer learns among other things to consider balance of flavors, texture, complexity of a dish as well as aesthetics and visual composition. However, the soft culinary capital enables the audience to express personal taste that distinguishes themselves from others and puts them in a higher position in the hierarchy of the food world.

Hard and Soft culinary capital are categories that oppose each other.¹⁵⁸ Hard culinary capital is the knowledge of cooking, that means being able to perform an active task where a dish is produced. Cooks with high culinary capital are able to create exemplary dishes for consumers living the 'taste of luxury and freedom' and are for example chefs in Michelin-starred restaurants whereas cooks with low culinary capital are for example working in restaurants where the craft of producing food is dedicated to satisfy the 'taste of necessity' as in cheap fast food restaurants. Soft culinary capital is knowledge about how to express one's taste especially in terms of language. It is passive in the sense that food is not produced or altered through the consumer but eaten and judged. The term of passivity is useful to understand the contrast of cooking and speaking about food, but it is also important to notice that soft culinary capital can be trained and extended which can be described as active learning. Nevertheless, I want to emphasize the opposition of actively creating a dish and passively consuming it. A person with low soft culinary capital is not able to express its taste verbally as this is just not part of the everyday practices or the individual does not care about food as describing one's personality. I categorize them as 'ordinary eaters' who just eat what is convenient or even see eating more as a necessity than a pleasure. A more exact definition is not necessary as the most important characteristic of an 'ordinary eater' is the lack of good taste, and therefore, serves a person with high soft culinary capital to distinguish itself from. In *MasterChef Junior* the 'ordinary eaters' are all the people who do not know what the viewer learns from the show. If an individual has high soft culinary capital we can describe them in general as connoisseurs of which the food critique would be a specific profession.

The two categories of soft and hard culinary capital are not only opposing each other since it is possible to move in between. Ramsay can be seen as an example as he started as a cook with high hard culinary capital and became a TV chef through matching his hard culinary capital with soft culinary capital. He acquired the needed language of cooking which enables him to explain food and cooking to the viewer and enable them to participate. In *MasterChef Junior* Ramsay functions as 'genius' who teaches other 'geniuses' while the viewer learns how to be a connoisseur who is able to talk about the work of 'geniuses'. The children are to be situated as having high hard and soft culinary capital but still less of both than the jury – at least for now. As the judges explain to us that the children can cook exemplary

158 See model in Appendix A11, p. 135.

dishes which they assign them with high hard capital; as the children are able to describe tastes and aesthetics of dishes or cooking processes they are shown to have high soft culinary capital. The potential of the children is mentioned many times and creates the idea that the children will surpass Ramsay and the other judges in both categories of culinary capital. To complete the culinary capital of the show the other elements of cultural capital have to be considered. The objectified form of culinary capital is most present in the forms of various machines the children use, but when it comes to cooking children rely mostly on their embodied cultural capital and their skills. The institutionalized form is repeatedly mentioned to be most important for the children which is the title of the first 'Junior MasterChef USA' symbolized by a trophy and economically valued with 100.000 US-dollars.

The lifestyle that is constructed through the show is living a life celebrating food. Eating is shown as being a pleasure, an exquisite experience, a multiplex surprise and food has no limits in variety which means every day one can experience new pleasures. The way food functions can be compared to Bourdieu's idea of art appreciation. According to Bourdieu art appreciation is not only about possessing art or knowing the code to decipher the meaning it is also a social practice that is influenced by various agents as well as produced and consumed with religious, moral and social values.¹⁵⁹ The same can be said about food as it is portrayed in *MasterChef Junior* which has the social function of assigning an individual with high soft culinary capital. Usually to be a connoisseur one has to pay constant attention to food, eating, food practices and other food related thoughts to develop a personal taste and individual preferences as part of one's personality. Again, food can be compared to art as Bourdieu states that a connoisseur needs practical mastery based on slow familiarization and learning to be able to judge art.¹⁶⁰ The show offers the viewer not only soft culinary capital but also the idea of improving their life by gaining pleasure in food and raising in social hierarchy by repeating the vocabulary of the show and living the values the show connects to food and food practices. *MasterChef Junior* enables the audience to bypass the slow process of learning and developing the knowledge of a connoisseur by providing the viewer with the short cut of vocabulary and strategies to use it. Being able to comment on taste and visual aspects of food gives the viewer an aura of being sophisticated, knowledgeable and cultivated. As taste itself stays undefined and words as “rich”, “balanced” and “beautiful” remain subjective everyone can participate and see their preferences as legitimate tastes. This encourages people to follow the lifestyle of celebrating food as using their own fantasy since developing personal opinions are the conditions of participating.

159 J. F. Lane, **Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction**, Sterling, Pluto Press, 2000, pp.141.

160 Bourdieu, 2010, p. 59.

2 Of blank slates, noble savages and princesses

In 1774 Bernhard Basedow published his *Elementarwerk*¹⁶¹ (Elementary Book) which consists of several books that contain Basedow's ideas about teaching children. It is aimed for children, teachers and parents and summarizes all spheres of knowledge a child was thought to need for a general education. Basedow was an educational reformer who believed in the benefits of making learning interesting for children since it encourages them to read and be curious towards the world. Therefore, the books are accompanied by 96 copper plate illustrations made by Daniel Chodowiecki that should entertain older children and serve as learning material for younger children who for example learn naming objects within the images. The books encompass knowledge of natural sciences, history, religion as well as child's play, reproduction and crafts to teach about everyday life and society. Basedow starts with a child's first knowledge and describes a its environment to provide a possibility for children to relate to the book with their own experiences.

The first illustration is titled *Die meisten Arten der Nahrungsmittel*¹⁶² (The most common kinds of food) and shows a mother with her four children and her maid sitting in an eating room surrounded by all kinds of food.¹⁶³ In an explanatory text Basedow describes the food we can see which are mostly different kinds of bread, fruit, vegetables, seafood and meat in a detailed way. We can also see the different stages of eating in childhood as we see a baby being breastfed, a toddler being fed with a spoon, and two older children that could be about the same age of which one is eating a carrot next to her mother while the other one is reaching for food on the table by itself. Besides documenting food Basedow explains also how children should be introduced to food by showing that their taste should be allowed to develop independently when they are at a certain age. The depiction of the two older children could also be read as an indication that some children might orient more on the taste of their mothers since we see one child standing close to her mother while others might develop more individual food preferences which is illustrated by the child that chooses food freely for itself behind the back of the maid. This image can be read as neoclassical depiction of the idea of acquainting children with all kinds of food and encouraging them to develop a personal taste. In other words we see how adults set the base for children's soft culinary capital by introducing them to a diversity of food and tastes. By tasting different food children can develop a wide palate and gather knowledge about food. This embodied knowledge serves as basis for developing and learning how to formulate their personal taste when they learn speaking. By having been trained in distinguishing between food and follow own preferences it is very likely that a child develops a personal taste that might fall into the category of 'taste of necessity and freedom' since it has high soft culinary capital.

161 J.B. Basedow, **J.B. Basedows Elementarwerk mit den Kupfertafeln Chodowieckis** ed. by T. Fritzsche, Leipzig 1909, commented edition in three volumes of the 1785 published 2nd edition of 'Elementarwerk'.

162 Basedow, 1909, Band 3, Tab I.

163 Image in Appendix A12, p. 136.

This idea of a child as eager to learn if encouraged and instructed in a caring way arose in the West during the area of the Enlightenment. As we see the idea of what a child is and how an individual's taste is formed are closely related and is still actual as we could see in the way the children are portrayed as passionate cooks that want to learn all about food and taste. To analyze the portrayal of children in *MasterChef Junior* it is important to understand the ideas and concepts of children and childhood in a larger context. Therefore, I will summarize briefly historical concepts of children to introduce characteristics and values that children can be associated within the Western world and explain current trends in education followed by a discussion of actual portrayals of children in reality TV which will give an overview of roles children are illustrated to have. The last chapter describes and discusses the depiction of children in *MasterChef Junior* based on the findings of the historical and current conceptions of children.

2.1 History of child images and concepts of children in popular culture

One of the first books on childhood as a concept of modern society is *History of Childhood* by Philippe Ariés.¹⁶⁴ The idea that a child is different from an adult and to be treated differently first arose in the 17th century. Before that children were as soon part of the adult society as they were able to talk and walk without help which was around the age of 5 to 7. In medieval paintings children are depicted as adults on a smaller scale. According to Ariés two concepts of childhood developed shortly after each other. The first concept was shaped when adults discovered an entertaining potential in their children. Due to their sweetness, simplicity and drollery children became an amusement. This concept of 'coddling' was disliked by many moralists and pedagogues in the 17th century as they were concerned of spoiling the child. The common opinion among the opponents was that it is wrong to trick children into giving illogical conclusions, get them caught in traps or make them say foolish remarks because it sets children on a level with little monkeys or dogs. The second concept of childhood was mainly developed by ideas of churchmen and moralists that saw the child as "fragile creature of God who needed to be both safeguarded and reformed."¹⁶⁵ Therefore, schools and education started to become more important.

In the late 17th century two concepts were developed by John Locke and Jean-Jaques Rousseau. While Locke defined children as blank slates that have to be formed and filled with values and knowledge by adults, Rousseau's concept sees children as noble savages that grow up to good adults because of an innate sense of right and wrong.¹⁶⁶ Ariés and fellow historians researching childhood agreed on the understanding that childhood is a sociohistorical construct and not biologically given.¹⁶⁷ That means there

164 P. Ariés, **Centuries of childhood**, trans. R. Baldick, New York, Vintage Book (Division of Random House), 1962.

165 Ibid., p. 133.

166 L. E. Berk, **Infants, Children, and Adolescents**, 7th edn., Boston, Pearson, 2012, pp. 12.

167 K. Darian-Smith and C. Pascoe, **Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage**, New York, Routledge, 2012, p.6.

are no physical or mental characteristics that distinguish children from adults objectively but rather every time and culture has its own definition and idea of childhood.

As culinary capital is partially a result of education it is important to discuss different approaches of educating children. Currently two poles can be described, one extreme idea is that children need strict rules and guidance by adults which was for example recently a media topic discussing strict education methods of Amy Chua who is also known as Tiger Mum.¹⁶⁸ The other concept sees children as free spirits that will learn themselves what is best and need no strict rules or grading systems. This approach is for example popular in Germany where there are schools where children are not graded until the final exam.¹⁶⁹ The common education and parenting approach can be seen somewhere between controlling every part of a child's life and providing no rules. What is noticeable is a shift of the priority of competition in a life of a child which can be based on Ariés' argument that today children are less free than in medieval times as they have to follow strict rules of institutions and family life. Since 2000 the PISA study measures students knowledge every three years through letting children write tests and evaluate the result. The results are published in a form of a ranking so that one can see which countries have the smartest children. For each country there is a more detailed ranking available so that counties can be compared to each other.¹⁷⁰ Not only the educational sector encourages competition also adults turn leisure activities like sports into winning oriented activities.¹⁷¹

Today it is very common in the Western world that children are represented as vulnerable and innocent. A child becomes a canvas for adult anxieties and concerns. The already discussed concern that children do not play as spontaneously today as they once did because they are pressured to perform in school and private life is also spread by popular media. Other mediated worries are that children do not experience enough nature, are more often victims on crimes, are sexualized and commercialized. According to Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe the idea of a vulnerable child that adults have the need to protect are dominating contemporary representations of children.¹⁷² Many parents are affected by the fear for their child and tend to overprotect it. In America this style of parenting is called 'Helicopter Parenting' as parents surveil their children nonstop; in Scandinavia it is called 'Curling Parenting' referring parents to smoothen the path for their children as the sweepers the ice for the slide stone.¹⁷³ The

168 E. Kolbert, 'Americas's top parent. What's behind the „Tiger Mother“ craze?', 31 January 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2011/01/31/110131crbo_books_kolbert?currentPage=all, (accessed 8 May 2014).

169 Association of Waldorf Schools in North America, 'Waldorf Education: An Introduction', http://www.whyywaldorfworks.org/02_W_Education/index.asp, (accessed 8 May 2014).

170 OECD, 'About PISA', <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/>, (accessed 21 March 2014).

171 C. Mithers, 'Are Kids' sports too competitive?', <http://www.parenting.com/article/are-kids-sports-too-competitive>, (accessed 8 May 2014).

172 Darian-Smith, Pascoe, 2012, pp. 3f.

173 M. Carling, 'A second take on Swedish parents', 31 October 2011, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/brainstorm/201110/second-take-swedish-parents>, (accessed 20 May 2014).

next chapter will show how those popular ideas of children and parenting affect the way children are depicted in current reality TV. As this format claims to show reality it is very likely to influence the viewers in their ideas of children and parenting.

2.2 Overview of children's current roles in reality TV

The following chapters describe different portrayals of children in current reality TV shows with a focus on adult-child relationship, entertainment-value, innocence, vulnerability, children as competitors and on what values and behaviors are portrayed to be childlike or childish. First, I will give an overall idea of current shows and then focus on children in cooking shows. The overview does not encompass all shows but exemplifies the variety of how children are portrayed in North-American programs and shows with Jamie Oliver as he started his career in the UK but later also works in the USA and some of his shows are shown worldwide.

2.2.1 Children in North-American reality TV

2.2.2.1 Children as mini-adults: Kid Nation

Kid Nation is an American reality TV show that aired in September 2007 on CSB. It ran Wednesdays at 8 pm for about 45 minutes. The show is about 40 children between 8 and 15 years that have to run a pioneer town by building up a government system and social system with minimal help from adults. Children are portrayed as very independent as the adult host visits the children not everyday and only for short moments for example to explain and observe the weekly challenges. The show is rather competitive as the children are divided into 4 classes resembling the population of a pioneer town which are from the least payed to the highest payed: laborers, cooks, merchants and upper class. Every week the 4 teams compete against each other to determine which group is in which class and has to do the chores assigned to their social status. The age difference between 8 and 15 is portrayed in various ways. For example younger children are making less rational decisions and vote for a TV instead of more toilets while the older children realize the need for more outhouses and think practically than fun oriented.¹⁷⁴ Besides, some younger children are shown to be homesick, cry and some leave the show as they miss their parents. Another sign of vulnerability of the younger children is shown in 9-year-old Emily who does not want the chickens to be killed and reacts sad when they are slaughtered.¹⁷⁵

The children can win a gold star that is worth 20.000 US-dollars and as soon as they know about it the former rebellious and trouble making older boys start to conduce to the success of communal life for example by offering to slaughter the chicken. Therefore, children are portrayed on the one hand as

¹⁷⁴ *Kid Nation*, S1E1.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, S1E2.

rational and success oriented when there is a reward and on the other hand as naturally interested in helping, organizing and leading as there are some children who do good from the beginning and without having the reward of the gold in mind. One dominant figure is 10-year-old Taylor who is rather egoistic and disrespectful and needs to learn from the older children how to be a good leader in terms of contributing and getting to know everyone. Nevertheless, she is voted out of being a leader as she does not learn quickly enough. The children are depicted as having all kinds of attitudes and characteristics that are opposed to each other from lazy-hardworking, empathetic-egoistic, selfless-money oriented, rational-irrational to homesick-brave. There is an overall notion of innocence as they are young and act out as their parents and society formed them. At the same time there is a notion of danger as they have so much responsibility and decide for example to kill animals which reminds of the potential of violence taught in our society thematized in William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*. The whole show can be seen as a social experiment in which we can watch what children do, think and decide according to the values they have learned from society. To sum it up, the younger children are illustrated as more vulnerable than the older. Egoism is not connected to any specific age group, but especially connected to a young girl and the oldest boy. Good leadership in terms of rational decisions, responsibility and empathy is shown more in older children which results in having older ones as democratically elected town councils.

2.2.2.2 Girls as blank slates: Dance Moms

This show airs its fourth season this year and tells the story of a group of mothers trying to turn their daughters into award winning dancers and get them as many solo acts as possible. The main space of the show is a dance academy which is led by the very strict and competitive instructor Abby Lee who pushes the children and makes them aware of the pressure. Failing, mistakes and missing lectures lead to degrading, losing and exclusion of the company as for example a girl who missed the training camp is denied the solo she was waiting for.¹⁷⁶ The children are between 9 and 16 and are portrayed as quiet, obedient and dependent on the adults and play a minor role in the show which is more about the fights between different mothers and mothers and Abby Lee. This show clearly depicts children as having to be pushed and ruled by adults who know what is good for them. Dancing is not seen as a hobby but as a competition that must be won.

2.2.2.3 Girls as princesses with attitude: Toddlers and Tiaras, Here comes Honey Boo Boo

Toddlers and Tiaras is a show about beauty pageants for young girls that started in 2009 and has so far 6 seasons. The participating children are between 2 and 11 and mostly female. One important factor is the

¹⁷⁶ *Dance Moms*, S4E1.

makeover of the girls which involves a long procedure of making the girls look like dolls. They get hair-does, make-up, false lashes, false teeth, spray tanning, eyebrow shaping, nail-polish and wear various outfits from swimwear to princess dresses over cowgirl costumes to clothes that represent their favorite doll. The fifth season ran in 2012 and features 6-year old Alana, also known as Honey Boo Boo, who got her own reality show in the same year. In *Toddlers and Tiaras* Alana and the other girls are shown as very loud, active, in high spirits or crying, tired and refusing to participate. The girls' personality is showcased and they are often portrayed as cheeky, rude and having an attitude. 8-year-old Laci for example tells us in an reaction-shot that she is better than the other children, because she is sassy and emphasizes the last word by adding a 'meow' and imitating a movement of a cat's paw with her hand, showing her 'wild' side. The children are sexualized by turning them into dolls, making them wear short outfits and teaching them the language of adult women. As in *Dance Moms* winning is very important and the children are aware of the pressure and the money involved. One of Alana's signature quotes is "A dollar makes me holler, Honey Boo Boo," and she tells us that she wants to win money. When she comes only third Alana is very disappointed and cries.¹⁷⁷ The children are portrayed as dependent on their parents who push them even when they are tired or upset but at the same time wilder, more active and more resistant as the girls in *Dance Moms*. The children are also portrayed as entertaining as we hear them saying grown up things with imitating a way of speaking that shows attitude and personality or we see them just behaving like crazy. This entertainment factor is further developed in *Here comes Honey Boo Boo* which shows the life of Alana and her family. Alana is portrayed as having a strong personality, being outgoing and a bit uncivilized as she is shown sneezing, burping and coughing a lot.

2.2.2 Children in cooking shows

2.2.2.1 Children as victims of food industry, media and school system

Jamie's School Dinners is a series with four seasons that aired in 2004 which shows the attempt of celebrity TV chef Jamie Oliver to change canteen food in the UK. He worked among others with a primary school in Greenwich trying to serve healthier food with vegetables and less fat to about 700 children who are used to and prefer fast food such as chicken nuggets, fries and pizza. The children are portrayed as innocent victims of various factors such as school system, media and parenting that teach them to like salty and fatty food. Most of the children are shown to have a lack of knowledge when it comes to vegetables and fruits and a high resistance to change their eating preferences. Oliver fails several times to convince children to try vegetables and we see some spitting it out and other following their example. Pedagogical tactic is needed to convince the children that are the ones who set the tone and

¹⁷⁷ *Toddlers and Tiaras*, S5E1.

finally we see some children eating healthy food and not disliking it.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the follow up *Jamie's Return to School Dinners* which premiered in 2006 in the UK illustrates the difficulty to change the children's taste preferences as we learn that a lot of children refuse to eat Jamie's dinners and went back to their usual diet of fast food.

2.2.2.2 Children as innocent victims with potential to change

Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution covers the same idea of making school food healthier but this time in America and the children are already teenager and, therefore, more eloquent. They are still portrayed as victims for example directly by Oliver when he takes one of the parents babies and asks them to “look at this sweet child” which he describes as “beautiful, perfect, unspoiled”¹⁷⁹ and then shows them a pile of plastic-wrapped processed food the children eat when they are in school. The group of children Oliver works with during the show consists of ten teenagers around the age of 17. One girl Sophia repeatedly tells the about how unhealthy eating influences her family as all of them have diabetes, even her 13-year-old sister and Sophia herself is scared to get diabetes as well. However, the children are also portrayed as willing to learn and able to change their situation themselves as they are able to understand the consequences and take responsibility. The show portrays also how Oliver works with Sophia's image as a victim as he asks her to assist in different meetings to convince for example a fast food restaurant owner to change his menu. All in all, the image of the children in the show changes from showing them as innocent victims who lack knowledge and understanding to showing some children realize their situation and try to change it. The potential of change and willingness to actively participate is shown as being awakened by Oliver especially in the group of students who win the cooking competition in the end. Sophia is thankful in the end and motivated to fight for a change. Therefore, the main image of children portrayed in the show is their potential to make right decisions and do good but they also need help of an adult as the influences of society can be confusing to understand when it comes to food.¹⁸⁰

2.2.2.3 Children as helpers and assistants

The role of children as helping hand for a chef is the most common role of children in food TV. Often TV chefs use their own children as assistants. Jamie Oliver's daughters were cooking with their father in 2009 in an episode of *Jamie's Family Christmas* which aired 2009. 7-year-old Poppy and 6-year-old Daisy are measuring flour and milk, crack eggs while Jamie explains the pancake recipe to the viewer. He takes over the more dangerous part of the cooking as frying the pancakes and grating pears.¹⁸¹ The children also

¹⁷⁸ *Jamie's School Dinners*, S1E1-4.

¹⁷⁹ *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution*, S1E1, TC 09:11-09:15.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, S1E1-6.

¹⁸¹ *Jamie's Family Christmas*, S1E2.

function as partners for funny dialogs and as reciter for further variations of the pancake recipe. Oliver's children are portrayed more as cute and entertaining than as knowledgeable or talented cooks as they are rather young. He also posts his own cooking-videos on YouTube that show him cooking with his younger children 4-year-old Petal and 2-year-old Buddy, who are dressed as pirates and function as entertaining elements of the show.¹⁸² In *Christmas with Bells on* Oliver cooks again with his two older daughters and friends of them. The children taste ice cream, make chocolate bars¹⁸³ and a 'Rocky Mountain'¹⁸⁴, all dishes are sweets and consist of easy and fun tasks.

Children are also portrayed as more serious help for example in *Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Home Cooking* where Ramsay's son 13-year-old Jack helps preparing chicken wings. Jack mixes the marinade and asks how long the chicken wings have to cook. He learns how to toss garlic in a pan and asks what blanching does to beans.¹⁸⁵ Jack's functions as on-screen substitute for the viewer who learns and asks what the viewer might ask. He is portrayed as curious and funny as well as being able and willing to learn from his father.

2.2.2.4 Children as jury

Season 2 and 4 of *MasterChef USA* have each an episode in which the contestants have to cook for a group of children who vote for the winner. The Australian adaption copies that concept and devotes a complete week to children in which the contestants have to cook with ingredients from a children's lunch box, cook for 450 students and invent a dish that is judged by 8 and 9-year-olds. As already mentioned is the Australian version different from the US version in terms of creating a narration around friendship, caring and family values following the Australian values. Therefore, I only want to describe how the children are presented in the latest season of *MasterChef USA* in which over 300 elementary school children are deciding which team wins the challenge. Team Blue cooks pasta with turkey meatballs, string bean salad and apple crisp while the red team prepares chicken teriyaki with rice and corn, and strawberry crumble. The children are portrayed as liking more simple children's food through being asked about their taste. Ramsay interviews some children about what they like and they raise their arms ecclesiastically when he asks about turkey, spaghetti and chicken but stay silent when he asks about chicken teriyaki. When the food is cooked all children come running towards the cooks, making a huge noise by screaming and laughing. The contestants describe the children as a sea, flood and tsunami. Two of the younger, childless contestants utter concerns about serving all those children and refer to it as painful, as a

182 J. Oliver, 'What's Jamie eating today? #4 ft Buddy & Petal', 16 June 2013, (Youtube), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYcWlwwvQAQ>, (accessed 13 May 2014).

183 *Christmas with Bells on*, S1E1.

184 *Ibid.*, S1E2.

185 *Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Home Cooking*, S1E3.

nightmare and do not feel comfortable with the fact that the children decide what James expresses with: “our fate is in their, little, tiny, creepy hands”¹⁸⁶. Bastianich asks the children about which dish they like better and summarizes that the chicken teriyaki sauce is sweeter than usual what the children really like but that other children just love pasta and will vote for the other dish. To vote the children run to their favorite team.¹⁸⁷ All in all, the children are portrayed as loud and active but also as polite and having a distinct taste that is not easy to please. Besides, we can see that, again, simple dishes like pasta and sweetness are categorized as children's favorites.

In one episode of *Junior MasterChef UK* the children have to cook for 10-year-old actresses who function as judges. They are depicted as open minded and eloquent in describing the tastes of the food. For example one girl likes the spring rolls because of the crunchiness of the pastry. Another girl explains that she now likes fish, which she did not eat before. They are also illustrated as being sensitive to hot food as they all drink a lot of water after tasting a curry and as not familiar with every dish as one girl does not know cannelloni.¹⁸⁸

2.2.2.5 Children as motivation to cook

After watching *MasterChef USA* I noticed that many contestants refer to their children when they are asked why they participate and want to win. This is especially demonstrated by the relationship between Krissi and her 13-year-old son from the first episode on in *MasterChef USA* season 4. She explains to us that her son motivates and encourages her to win and that she wants to make life better for both of them through taking part in the show. Her son is portrayed as nervous but able to control his appearance when he is speaking to Ramsay who is his idol. He is portrayed as as polite and well-mannered and as supporting and loving his mother what even moves Bastianich to misty eyes.¹⁸⁹ As mentioned in *I.1* cooking in TV shows is mediated as a way to care for one's family especially through shows that fall into Ketchum's category of *traditional domestic instructional cooking*. In *MasterChef USA*, however, the idea of showing love and nurturing children with food is combined with the idea of making them also proud by winning which could serve as a legitimization of the adults partly ruthless behavior in the competition which will be described further in chapter 2.3.

2.2.2.6 Children as happy cooks: *MasterChef Junior Australia*

Bednarek describes the children in *MasterChef Junior Australia* as being characterized with positive emotions that create an uplifting mood. She argues that the children who are better in expressing their

186 *MasterChef USA*, S4E5, TC 18:39-18:42.

187 *Ibid.*, TC 12:02-20:55.

188 *Junior MasterChef UK*, S2E14.

189 *MasterChef USA*, S4E1, TC 36:28-41:26.

emotions and feelings are more likable to the viewer as they are easier to connect with and feel with. One way this is constructed is through showing the children in authentic reactions through intimate interviews in which they explain their excitement with expressions that demonstrate the intensity of their feelings for example 'biggest, over the moon, ever, really, everyone, great, good, fun, wow etc'. Body language such as smile and laughing strengthens this positive emotionality. Further observations that add to the image of an happy, positive child are that children are shown as being glad for other children's success. The portrayal of the children is just one factor in Bednarek's analysis of how the positive mood in the show is constructed.¹⁹⁰ All in all, the children are indeed portrayed as happy and positive and also as being guided and encouraged by the judges when they are nervous or overwhelmed by the pressure. This is for example illustrated in episode 1 of the first season, where judge Gary helps a boy who could not remember the ingredients for a dish and another judge encouraging a girl to be more confident.¹⁹¹

2.2.2.7 Children as serious cooks: Junior MasterChef UK

The UK version is called *Junior MasterChef* and is the template for all other versions. The show portrays children as cooks that should only work in the kitchen under supervision of adults. The main judge mentions this and we see a younger judge taking over more dangerous tasks as cutting a pear and watching over the children using the stove.¹⁹² Compared to the children in *MasterChef Junior Australia* the British children express themselves in a less excited way which portrays them as serious about cooking and more concentrated on preparing food and hoping for success than being emotionally overwhelmed.

2.2.2.8 Summary

The illustration of children in current reality TV can be divided into two categories depending on the age of the children. Young children until the age of 11 or 12 are depicted as either loud and wild or playful and lively but always as making decisions and acting in a different way than adults who make rational decisions. They are depicted as fun oriented, optimistic and as very different from adults, what some adults even scares as a child and its behavior are unknown to them. Ways to illustrate childishness is by showing children play, speak with expansive gestures like showing how big something is with one's arms and being silly. For example can we see one of the pageant girls rolling theatrically over the floor while singing and screaming how much she likes chocolate. Older children from the age of 11 onwards are depicted as more rational and goal-oriented by showing them making smart decisions, explaining, learning or engaging for their own advantage. They are also shown as taking responsibility and having an understanding of what needs to be done to be successful. Those categories are permeable as sometimes

190 Bednarek, 2013, pp. 92-99.

191 *MasterChef Junior Australia*, S1E1.

192 *Junior MasterChef UK*, S2E14.

younger children are depicted as rational or both categories can be applied to one child. The majority of shows, which means all the discussed ones expect for *Kid Nation* shows the children as being under protection of adults. Either parents, teachers or Jamie Oliver function as care-taker, adviser and teacher that make children do what parents want them to do. It is usually argued that the adults support the children's wishes and want the best for the children. While cooking is depicted to be enjoyable for the children pageant shows and dancing classes illustrate the pressure children have to deal with and shows them quite often crying, protesting and being tired.

2.3 Children in MasterChef Junior USA

The preceding chapters already describe the children of *MasterChef Junior* and some of the characteristics they are assigned with. The most dominant portrayal is the child as a talented, skilled and knowledgeable chef that cooks dishes that are commonly seen as too complicated for their age. The following analysis describes the most repetitive characteristics the children are illustrated to have through various narrations. I will also compare the illustration of children to the depiction of adults contestants of *MasterChef USA* season 4 to exemplify the difference as it is very likely that the audience has seen an episode of the adult *MasterChef* before watching *MasterChef Junior*.

The most dominant narration is about children overcoming obstacles that arise due to their young age and small stature which portrays them as strong and determined. Jack for example needs to jump to reach the top shelf in the pantry, Sarah cooks while standing on a stepping stool and several children are shown carrying the heavy baskets from the pantry with difficulty. In episode 1 the jury points out the youngest and the oldest contestant which are Alexander with 13 years and Nathan with 8 years. While Alexander tells us that he loves to make French pastry such as macaroons and cream puffs and explains that light brown sugar has less molasses than dark brown sugar Nathan tells us excitedly that he loves to cook in that kitchen. In a direct comparison of the way the two children speak, Nathan is portrayed as less mature than Alexander. For example it is hard to understand Nathan as he speaks inarticulate, varies in tone and volume, moves his head around and claps. Additionally, his facial expressions, gestures and behavior portrays him as lively child. Nathan also tells us that “some of the equipment is bigger than me,”¹⁹³ as we see him carrying a mixer to his bench. The judges watch him and Ramsay wonders how he is going to lift it on the bench. The 8-year-old uses a stepping stool, manages to place the mixer where he wants it and gets complimented by the judges. As neither of the judges intends to give a hand to Nathan, the children are illustrated as independent and able to solve problems themselves.

193 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 30.52-30.55.

The biggest obstacle the children overcome in each episode is to cook those complicated dishes and please the judges. This is repeated in different variations for example through the narrator who introduces the children with the following words: "Americas smallest home cooks with giant results (...) they might be small but their challenges are giant".¹⁹⁴ Additionally, every episode contains at least one moment where the jury describes the difficulty of the specific cooking process the children are facing and doubts that they are able to deliver and every single time the children prove them wrong and create dishes that exceed the expectations of the jury. To remind the viewer of the children's talent they repeatedly ask them how old they are and state that they cannot believe the number of years they hear.

Another obstacle some children overcome is their distaste of ingredients such as liver and sardines. Sarah chose to cook sardines even so she is scared of them and Jack and Alexander both cook liver for the first time, taste it and approve of the taste. The children are portrayed as understanding the difference between their own taste and high cuisine and as able to overcome their personal preferences and create a good dish out of unfamiliar ingredients. That means the children in *MasterChef Junior* are aware of the difference between restaurant-quality food and food that is associated as being children's food. Despite their age they are illustrated as being familiar with an adult taste and being able to cook, understand and like food which falls into that category. This portrays children as open minded and able to learn as well as being able to partake in a field that is usually reserved for adults. Some are even portrayed as inspiring the jury and Alexander's entree that he cooks in the final is said to be the best dish in *MasterChef*, which means the 13-year-old is better than all previous adult contestants. Luca Manfè, the winner of *MasterChef* season 4, is guest at the final episode and strengthens this notion by stating that he is happy not to be cooking against Dara and Alexander as he is not sure if he would win. He also explains that he was not able to fry an egg when he was 8 and that he is very impressed how the children handle the pressure as he remembers how stressful it felt for him to cook in the final.

Another notion of strength of the children is created through narrations that depict them as independent and self-reliant. There are only scarce moments in the show when children get help from Ramsay. Mainly all the help children get are encouraging words after failure like Dara when she fails in baking souffles in episode 4. Ramsay explains her the mistakes and tells her not to worry as she is crying a little. In the same episode Sophia struggles to bake a three-layer-cake as she dislikes cake and is unfamiliar with baking. Ramsay sees her crying as her mixture is not turning into a smooth dough, so he steps in and helps her mixing the ingredients in the right order and encourages her to keep going. Nevertheless, her cake does not make it into the next round and she is eliminated. In an earlier episode we see Molly having problems with the creation of an Korean inspired burger. She first explains her dish sanguinely but

194 *MJUSA*, S1E1, TC 00:17-00:23.

starts worrying when Ramsay doubts the coherency of the elements. We see her loosing confidence under time pressure and failing to convince the judges. As we see a lack of self-reliance and need for assistance of adults are followed by elimination. On the contrary, the success of the children is dependent on their autonomy. Nevertheless, the show portrays the independence and confidence of the children in every episode by showing the children having always an idea of what to cook and how to cook the second they get to know the task. It seems like they already have a recipe in their mind the moment they get to know their task, for example when they lift a Mystery-Box as they run to the pantry without hesitation and grab ingredients of a mental list. Besides, we hear several statements of confidence for example by Dara who tells us that she baked her mothers wedding cake when she was 10 and has no doubt to shine in the layer-cake challenge and and when being announced team leader for the restaurant take-over she states: "I know that I am one of the best junior chefs in America and I'm pretty competitive (...) so I know how to win."¹⁹⁵ Their integrity in the kitchen is not only illustrated by showing them cooking but also by showing them telling the judges to step back or be careful. Alexander for example tells Bastianich to step back when he is about to fry kale, Bastianich doubts it: "I may wanna stand back?"¹⁹⁶ but understands the danger when Alexander drops it into the hot oil which splashes and moves to a safe distance. Overall the show illustrates the children as balanced between being confident and struggling or doubting their ability which shows a respect for the difficulty of the dishes they have to cook. For the audience this openness when it comes to what the children feel and how they reflect their own ability offers an honest insight and enables the viewer to feel with the children and build an emotional attachment.

Another constant narration depicts the children as balancing between being empathetic friends and smart competitors which is probably one of the most striking differences between the portrayal of adult and children contestants in MasterChef. The children are portrayed as being supportive and positive with each other. "Troy is just an amazing cook and I think that he deserves it," explains Gavin unselfishly when Troy's dish is picked and not his. The children are also shown hugging each other, being sad when others get eliminated and interacting in other compassionate ways. Alexander for example stops cooking in the final when he sees Dara panicking and strokes her back as she feels dizzy. Nevertheless, the children are aware of what is at stake. From the second season on the children are portrayed to think strategically when choosing teams and dishes for others to cook. Jack for example wins the challenge of the first Mystery- Box and picks a burger to cook for the others since he thinks that Alexander might over think it and struggle. He aims to make it difficult for Alexander as he is one of the strongest competitor in Jack's opinion. However, Alexander creates an excellent dish which the jury likes a lot. Two episodes later he is again the target of the contestant who won the Mystery-Box-Challenge since Sarah picks the three-layer-

195 *MJUSA*, S1E5, TC 03:47-04.00.

196 *Ibid.*, S1E2, TC 26:22-26.23.

cake and the jury interprets her strategy as trying to make Alexander over think the cake because of his ambition and skills. This time he struggles and is disappointed in his result and cries a little. Kaylen and Jack comfort him, tell him that he did great and reassure him that he will go through. Troy thinks more practical and tells us in a reaction-shot: "I really wanna see Alexander going home, we've become great friends but he's tough competition (...)." ¹⁹⁷ This strategic behavior is encouraged by the structure of the show itself as the children win advantages and are enabled to pick something for the other children to cook or set up teams.

The portrayal of the children as being friends and being selfish in order to win is as well portrayed when it comes to team work. As described in chapter 1.2.3 Dara and Sarah cook the beef Wellington together and there are several moments where Dara does not listen to her younger partner as she doubts her ability. Sarah gets upset but knows it is because of her age and just gets more determined to show her skill. In episode 5 Troy, Gavin and Sarah work together in the Restaurant-Takeover and Troy dominates the group even though the 2-years-younger Gavin is team captain. Troy and Sarah have problems working with each other as Troy does not trust Sarah's skills especially when it comes to plaiting. She also over seasons vegetables which Troy points out, Sarah admits her mistake, but they keep on fighting: "I'm trying to do what you messed up, so hold on," says Troy to Sarah. ¹⁹⁸ Compared to the adult cooks in *MasterChef*, the children are illustrated as friendly, kindhearted and fair competitors as the adults constantly fight, swear and express personal dislike of other contestants. They are shown to be aiming to win and being egoistic and envious from the first moment on. In episode 4, where they cook for the first time in the kitchen of the ingredients from a Mystery-Box, Natasha for example tells us that "I am shocked that Krissi's name is called, anyone can do a fritata." ¹⁹⁹ A moment later we get to know in another reaction-shot that the dislike is mutual as Krissi says: "Don't get me wrong, I definitely want the advantage but I definitely wanna beat Natasha." ²⁰⁰ This is an example for personal issues that seem to be there right from the beginning. Throughout the show there are several fights that evolve out of the situation. In episode 7 Natasha and Beth start fighting after losing a challenge since Beth calls a dish disgusting which makes Natasha angry and she shouts on even though Beth breaks into tears and others step in to stop Natasha. Krissi points out that is is her second Pressure Test and she is not having a melt down. ²⁰¹ The moments of supporting and understanding between the contestants are rare and mostly connected with wanting to win. Natasha and Krissi overcome their dislike as they are forced to work together in a Tag-Team-Challenge to produce sushi in episode 17. The tone in the adult show is very

197 *MJUSA*, S1E4, TC 37:05-37:10.

198 *Ibid.*, S1E5, TC 26:02-26:04.

199 *MasterChef USA*, S4E4, TC 14:12-14:16.

200 *Ibid.*, TC 15:27-15:33.

201 *Ibid.*, S4E7, TC 20:56-22:06.

different from the one in *MasterChef Junior* they insult each other with expletives and laugh at others misery. Especially Krissi polarizes as she is been called a bitch a lot and laughs when Bime's cake in episode 10 fails and he is eliminated. I would even go as far as to claim that the adult version is more about emotional drama and watching people fail, fight and having nervous breakdowns than cooking while the junior version concentrates more on illustrating food and the mystery of cooking as an art and a craft. It is also interesting to see that the adults are shown to fight and disagree with the judges and even mistrust their evaluation of dishes while children are shown to always understand their mistakes and being open to learn from the judges.

When it comes to cuteness, funniness, cheeky and entertaining behavior we can notice as well an age difference between the 8 and 9-year-olds and the 12 and 13- year-olds. I already described Nathan as talking in an excited, mumbling way that can be described as childish. However, he is eliminated in the first episode and after that Sarah and Jack are the youngest with 9 years each. Both of them are shown several time struggling because of their age, as well as being rewarded with a treat for winning a challenge as described in chapter 1. Additionally, both of them show behavior in all kinds of situations that distinguish them from the older ones. Jack for example grimaces and shakes his whole body when he cuts herbs, Sarah as well moves her complete body when mixing a dough. When Gavin, Alexander and Kaylen have to whip cream, Sarah cheers for Gavin screaming at the top of her head: "Whip it like a man, Gavin,"²⁰² while jumping up and down. Dara finds this funny, notices a bit irritated: "This is a different side of Sarah,"²⁰³ and pets her on the head. After Dara's comments on Sarah's behavior we see Bastianich smiling what characterizes her performance as entertaining and nothing to take serious. She is situated as child, that emerges easily in a game and does not consider what others might think of her. Dara is surprised by Sarah's different side which shows that young children's behavior is unexpected and irrational for older children and adults. Besides this scene Jack and Sarah are more portrayed in silent cuteness for example by showing them having a hard time looking over their Mystery-Boxes.

The younger children are portrayed more often as being cheeky as the older ones. When Kaylen is about to tilt the bowl of cream over Ramsay's head Sarah encourages her with: "Kaylen, aim for the face, aim for the face,"²⁰⁴ and in the first episode Bastianich asks Jack about his food dream who answers that he wants to own a restaurant. Bastianich likes the idea and asks him if he wants to be partner what Jack turns down. As described in chapter 1.2 the jury goes around in almost every cooking challenge, asks about the food and chats with the children. For example Bastianich and Jack talk about Jack's Hawaii shirts and Ramsay with Jewels about boyfriends and mustard. The tone is friendly and jokingly which

202 *MJUSA*, S1E3, TC 04.31-04.33.

203 *Ibid.*, TC 04.38-04.40.

204 *Ibid.*, TC 08:46-08:49.

creates moments of relief from the pressure of cooking and competing the children are under. It also depicts a more causal and easygoing way of communicating between competitors and jury. The probably most striking moment of depicting the children's freedom is when Gavin, Alexander and Kaylen are asked to step on ladders and tilt the bowls with more or less whipped cream above the judges' heads to test the result. As Alexander is the first one to be done, it is very unlikely that the others' cream is whipped as well, therefore, we see Bastianich and Ramsay getting lavished with cream while Elliot is save until Alexander decides to place the bowl like an hat on his head. Elliot starts dancing and Ramsay initiates a little cream fight by throwing some at Elliot. The children join in and everyone is laughing for a moment until Ramsay asks them to step down carefully from the ladders and Bastianich announces Alexander as the winner.²⁰⁵ The moments of play and childish behavior of the adults serves as one more element that equalizes jury and children in *MasterChef Junior*.

All in all, we can see a portrayal of age difference similar to the one discovered in general depiction of children in reality TV. *MasterChef Junior USA* depicts younger children as well as more childlike than the ones over the age of 10. However, the junior chefs are depicted as far less silly than children in extreme formats such as *Toddlers and Tiaras*. Cheeky answers of Jack, Sarah and other children are mostly provoked by questions of the judges and childish, funny moments last only for a short time since the children are focused on cooking and winning. The biggest contrast between the previously described shows and *MasterChef Junior* is the independence of the children and the equality to the judges. We see children tell adults to step back from the oven as their cooking is dangerous and judges warn children to be careful with hot pans. Similarly we see judges encouraging children and hear that the jury feels inspired and learns from the children. Compared to the depiction of junior cooks in the Australian and UK version it is as well the autonomy that distinguishes the children of the American version the most. They are depicted as needing less help and are treated with less warnings and more trust. We see Sarah dropping the tray with the beef Wellington because it is too hot, however, she does not get hurt and the Wellington stays on the tray. She just picks it up, goes on with the challenge and creates the best Wellington of the evening.

Conclusion: The world is their oyster

As I demonstrated the strong notion of children the show creates can be explained by their high culinary capital and their portrayal as strong and independent individuals, which almost opposes the current conception of children in popular media which depicts them mainly as vulnerable and dependent.

205 *MJUSA*, S1E3, TC 07:30-09:55.

By analyzing how food and food practices are portrayed I am able to formulate a basic idea of what kind of taste *MasterChef Junior* constructs. Compared to the Bourdieuan categories of 'taste of necessity' and 'taste of luxury and freedom' the show creates an elitist taste of omnivorous luxury. That means food is mainly illustrated as fresh, expansive, mundane and exquisite as the 'taste of luxury and freedom' defines it, but the show also depicts all kinds of cheap and plain food that falls into the category of 'taste as necessity' which is celebrated after it has been elevated through the process of cooking. Therefore, the show depicts food as endless variety from expensive ingredients such as abalone, lobster and filet mignon over food for distinct tastes such as snails, blue cheese and organs to everyday food like potatoes, chicken and eggs.

The analysis of the cooking scenes results in the finding of two principles in which cooking is depicted: cooking as an art and cooking as a craft. Applying the Kantian categories of 'genius', 'artist' and 'imitator' I conclude that children are portrayed as 'geniuses' more often than as 'imitators'. Mostly cooking is illustrated as an obscured mystery that cannot be understood by the viewer as only the 'genius' is able to create an exemplary object. This notion is constructed by editing the cooking process in a non-chronological, fast-paced way that hardly shows the cooking itself but rather fragmented and unrelated glimpses of the process. When cooking is portrayed as imitation it is noticeable that the editing and narration emphasize the difficulty of replicating a dish. All in all, cooking is literally described as hard culinary capital since the notion of difficulty, stress and pressure the children are under is almost constantly present during the cooking. The quantitative analysis of the language of judging enables me to add more values to food which are centered around the idea that a good dish is complex and coherent in taste, texture and flavors and can be compared to an artwork. Furthermore, food is described as balanced in flavors like sweet, spicy, salty, acidic and as having interesting textures like crunchiness, softness, crispiness and delicacy. It also has to be cooked "spot on" that means meat has to be medium-rare which says it needs the perfect pinkish color that results from the correct cooking technique and temperature. All in all, the judging scenes introduce the viewer to all kinds of rules of how to judge food in taste and looks.

After analyzing and describing the taste the show constructs and the culinary capital it promotes, I noticed a difference in how children are assigned with culinary capital and what kind of capital the audience can gain. This prominent decent in culinary capital between children and viewer induced me to develop the theoretical categories of hard and soft culinary capital based on the values constructed in the show. An individual with hard culinary capital can be called a cook, as this person has the knowledge of how to prepare food and is able to use this information practically. The more hard culinary capital a person has, the higher is its position. Soft culinary capital describes the knowledge of judging food and

expressing one's personal taste. To have high soft culinary capital one has to be trained in describing flavors, tastes, textures and aesthetic characteristics of a dish which means one has a sophisticated palate and could work as a professional food critique. On the contrary an individual with low soft culinary capital can be described as an ordinary eater who has little knowledge about food and an undeveloped palate. The categories of hard and soft culinary capital oppose each other in a similar way as art and art critique: agents with hard culinary capital produce objects that agents with soft culinary capital discuss. At the same time individuals can move around in between the categories as cooks can become food critiques by learning the rules and language of food criticism. Applied on the contestants and viewer we can see that children are able to cook and express their tastes while the viewer is only able to learn the language of judging the jury provides them with. While children have hard and soft culinary capital, the viewer has only the possibility to gain the soft one. Furthermore, I noticed that the language the show uses is mostly indefinite. The taste of food is described as rich, balanced and beautiful, which enables a wide range of audiences to participate since the specific definition of those words can be subjectively interpreted. As culinary capital functions to distinguish oneself from others through expressing taste we can notice a hierarchy in culinary capital. In the bottom are the ordinary eaters from which the viewers can distinguish themselves through using the language of food criticism which they learned through watching the show. However, the junior cooks are higher in social status based on culinary capital since they have hard and soft knowledge which sets the basis for the notion of strong junior cooks. Furthermore, the children are assigned with the potential to cook better than the judges in a not too far away future.

The historical summary of roles of children in comparison to roles of children in reality TV lead to the conclusion that there are ideas about children that are still relevant today and provided a context for situating the portrayal of children in *MasterChef Junior*. For example can the concept of the amusing child that was popular in the 17th century be found in various reality TV shows such as *Here comes Honey Boo Boo* or *Toddlers and Tiaras*. In *MasterChef Junior* we find it in an extenuated way as especially the younger children are depicted as funny and cute through showing them running, using extensive gestures or loosing themselves in play. The most striking difference in the portrayal of children I could find is that the junior cooks in *MasterChef Junior* are shown as being more independent. After analyzing the narrations that construct the image of a strong child I can conclude that the junior chefs are shown as being trusted, funny, smart, friendly but still competitive, determined but not impeccable. Especially narrations of how children overcome various obstacles add on to an image of a strong child with a healthy personality and the ability to solve problems by themselves. Most reality TV shows depict children as under protection of their parents or under supervision of adults. The way *MasterChef Junior* illustrates children reminds of the ideas of Basedow on education when it comes to food as he encourages

to acquaint children with various foods and to let them freely develop their personal tastes. The junior cooks have the same freedom as they cook all by themselves and are not protected from making mistakes but enabled to learn through them. Instead of showing the child being dependent on the judges advice and supervision the relationship between them is portrayed as equal. On the one hand, the contestants are having more freedoms towards the judges, on the other hand the jury is more childish than in the adult version, which creates the notion of more closeness between jury and contestants in the junior version. This closeness is also narrated through respectful communication, fair competition and the focus on food and cooking which is more present in the junior version than the adult one. This results in illustrating the junior cooks as patient, respectful and eager to learn. The contradiction of junior and adult contestants emphasizes the kindness and potential of the children and reminds of Rousseau's idea of children as noble savages that do not need teaching by adults as they know right and wrong themselves. I noticed that overall the children are portrayed as having more good qualities than the adult contestants.

This thesis is an analysis of a specific type of culinary capital and, therefore, serves as a case-study that contributes to Naccarato's and LeBesco's larger model of culinary capital. Through describing and defining culinary capital of *MasterChef Junior* this thesis adds information of how food and food practices are connected with values and what stylistic devices are fruitful to analyze. Especially camera work such as pans and close-ups are used to portray food are interesting to evaluate and compare. Furthermore, the categories of soft and hard culinary capital will be useful to understand the viewer-contestant relationship since the combination of obscured cooking and emphasis on language could be a common strategy in cooking shows to keep the viewer away from learning more about hard culinary capital. Additionally, this thesis contributes to fill a gap in visual culture studies by analyzing the depiction of children's roles in popular media. Through setting free characteristics and values children are assigned with and describing stylistic patterns that are used to describe them this research makes the first step to a categorization of children's roles in reality TV.

All in all, the thesis provides a basis for further research in various direction. It would be fruitful to analyze the judgment of the dishes and taste in an aesthetic way using Kant's ideas of 'beauty' and 'sublime'. How does *MasterChef Junior* use the word beautiful in connection to taste? Is taste defined to be a legitimate category of judging aesthetic objects in the show? Is taste constructed as agreeable or pure? The answers to those questions would help to get a better understanding of how soft culinary capital is constructed, what mechanisms and rules it is built up upon and how it is perceived by the viewer. It also would add to the discussion around food as art. Another question that arose is how the depiction of children and parenting are connected. On the example of taste we can see that education and parenting play an important role in the development of a child's taste. During the uprising parents, teachers and

media provide the child with culinary capital that enables the child to distinguish oneself from others. Can the rejection of fruits and vegetable that is depicted for example in the role of children as innocent victims in *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution* be linked with the concept of protecting a child from harm, problems and resistance? It would be interesting to research how children today develop their taste. Are they influenced by parents, friends or TV shows? What food do children prefer and why? How would a child's taste develop today when being introduced to a variety of food and being able to chose freely?

Last but not least I suggest a comparison of *MasterChef Junior* versions as this would provide a body of analytic material that results in quantitative conclusions and serves as basis for all kinds of studies. For example it will be possible, under the awareness of the different cultural identities, to define a more distinct image of the role of children and see how much of the notions I detected in *MasterChef Junior USA* can be found in other shows and are, therefore, universal. Furthermore, one could research using the approach of Bednarek and analyze facial expressions, vocal cues, gestures and body movements to understand the emotionality that is constructed and affects the viewer to find out if it is an Australian phenomenon or a more common way to depict children.

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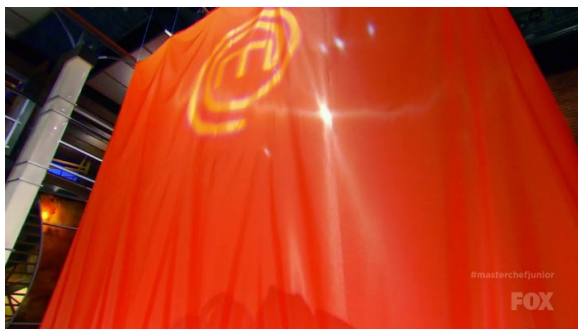
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Appendix

A1: Sequence of screen shots of the deserts, Episode 1, TC 28:00-29:55

The orange curtain is seen from various angles and distances while the jury talks. We see shots of the excited children and the orange curtain in turns which created suspense that is extended through a commercial break and a repetition of already shown shots. The food itself is presented with distance shots and close-ups so that we never see all the deserts. Besides the shots are cut fast so that we only get glimpses of the food.

(If read from from left to the right, the screen shots replicate the chronological sequence of images)







"I was like, what's behind the curtain?"



"I'm hoping for there not to be cabbage or liver..."



..."I hate cooking organs."







Commercial Break





Quick pan that resembles the movement of a flight over a landscape.



"Cake, Chocolate Fountain, Cupcakes"





A2: Exemplary screen shots of seafood, Episode 1, TC 3.42-4.27



A3: Exemplary screen shots of pasta, Episode 1, TC 16.05-16.34



A4: Exemplary screen shots of the beef Wellington, Episode 3, TC 13.22-15.20









A5: Screen shot sequence of first pantry scene, Episode 1, TC 04:46-05:07





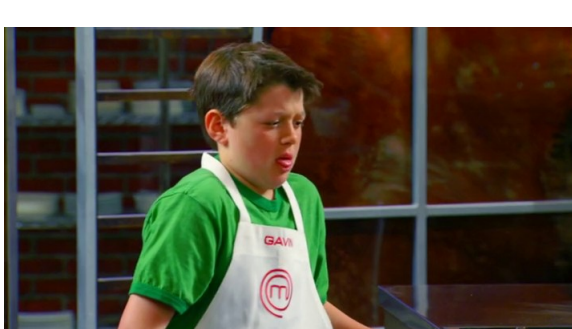


A quick pan blurs images.



A6: Exemplary screen shots of Mystery Box with adult food, Episode 4, TC 2:09-3:27





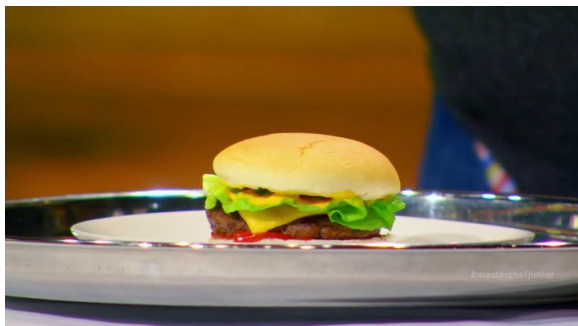
„When I lifted it up I immediately stepped back by the stinch and looks of it.“







A7: Exemplary screen-shots of Jack picking the dish for the Elimination Challenge, Episode 2, TC 17.54-21.30





A8: Screen shot sequence of the cooking of seafood, Episode 1, TC 5.12-8.33





Ramsay: “ This is it, 8 to 13-year-olds, the best junior home-cooks across America.
Bastianich: “Listen, its one thing to cook at home, its another think to come here to the Masterchef kitchen and be given seafood.”





"I tasted this before and it was great."



Before this shot we saw a close-up of Justin's face.



Here we saw as well a close-up of the cook, Daniel before this shot.



Molly knocks over some of her ingredients.



Jack has to try twice to open the jar.



Justin realizes he forgot something and runs back to the pantry.





Example for non-chronological images of cooking: Molly.

Point in time is unclear: When is she doing that?



In this moment she explains her dish. Note: the spinach is still in a box.



Glimpse into the future: Sophia fills the spinach in a pot.



She finishes her sentence, we are back in the moment of speaking.







Justin is about to cut the cucumber.



The next image shows him doing something else.



The cucumber is already cut and in the salad.



Here we see the fried Snapper on a plate.

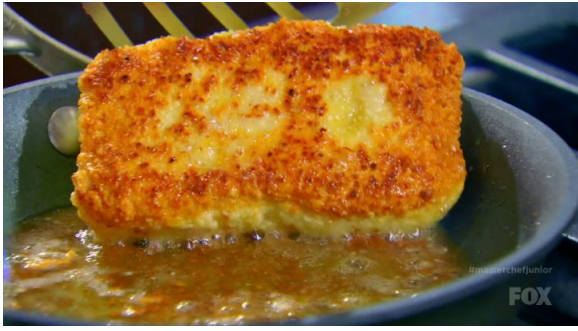


Next we see the Snapper being fried. Is he frying it twice?

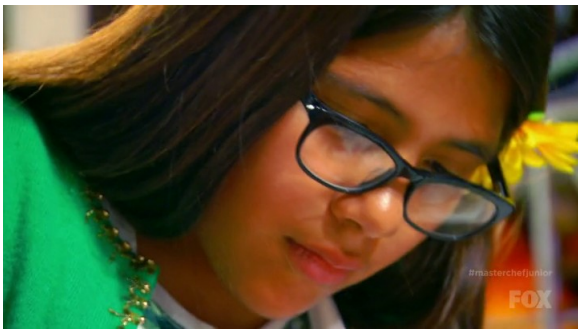
















A9: Judging the Seafood, Episode 1 TC 08:54-09:58.

The first dish to be judged is shown in by listing every shot of the scene, the following 7 dishes will be only illustrated with the shots in which the food is seen.

★ A star marks the winning dishes.

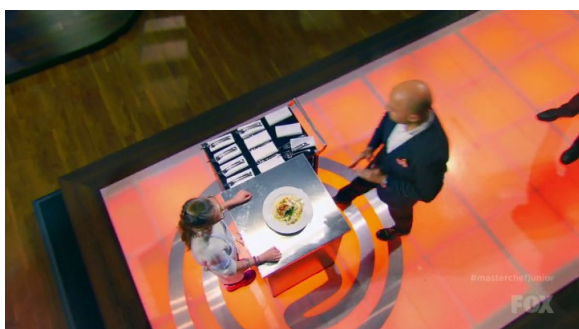
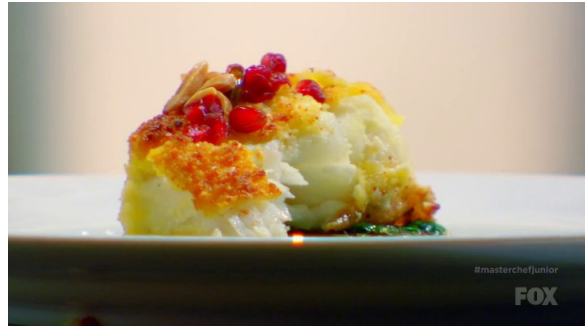




"Let's start with Sophia, let's go."









The following images show the dish and citations of the judges critique on it.

Episode 1: The remaining seven seafood dishes

 <p>SEARED AHI TUNA with SALMON, AVOCADO and CUCUMBER ROLL</p> <p><i>Roen, 12 years.</i></p>	<p>Elliot (E): “Oh my God. That's incredible! How old are you?” Roen: “I am 12.” E:“ I don't believe that you are 12. Paperthin cucumbers, perfectly sliced avocado...the sear beautifully even(...) you've got (...) some super-special ninja sushi-skills.”</p>
 <p>COCONUT SHRIMP with CACTUS SALAD</p> <p><i>Mia, age between 8 and 13.</i></p>	<p>Bastianich (B): “Cactus, wow...unusual. (...) I like the dish a lot. It's a little sweet for me, but the shrimps are perfectly cooked.”</p>
 <p>OCTOPUS SALAD</p> <p><i>Daniel, 11 years.</i></p>	<p>Ramsay (R): „Mmmh the octopus is more tender than I expected. I thought it would be slightly undercooked, a bit rubbery but no, it's delicious.”</p>
 <p>FRIED RED SNAPPER with GREEK SALAD</p> <p><i>Justin, age between 8 and 13.</i></p>	<p>E: “The only thing I would make different is a bit less squaring on the fish because the inside starts to get overcooked. But it's really delicious. Good job.”</p>



Jack, 10 years.

B: “Really good. Nice, crispy, great recipe. I love the aioli. Good job.”



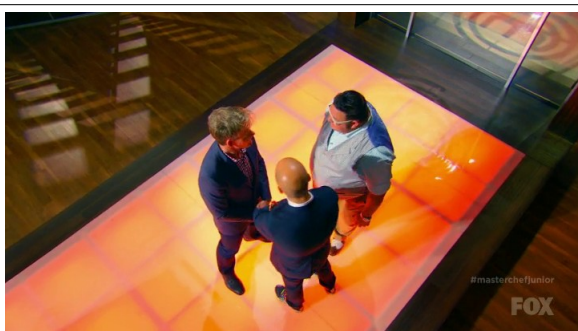
Franco, age between 8 and 13.

R: “Lovely sear on the scallops, but because you cut them into three they've gone slightly rubbery. Nice dish in terms of cohesiveness and tasting. If you were my son, I would be incredibly proud of that dish. Good job.”



Molly, 12 years.

B: “You made everything from scratch. The pomegranates offer incredible beautiful sweetness and the fish is crispy and salty and you tacos are rich. Quite an impressive dish, considering that all the components were made by you, Molly.”



The judges take a moment to discuss their decision who has to be eliminated, we hear single words of their conversation such as incredible, beautiful, complex, wow.

Episode 1: Pasta dishes of group 2



Dara, 12 years.

E: "You have every reason to be happy. I mean I wanna cry, it's that good. Honestly, it tastes incredible. And I think it's gonna inspire a ton of people and you inspire me. It's good stuff."

R: "I could lift that out of this kitchen and put that dish tonight into my restaurant. Great job."



Tommy, 11 years.

B: "So I need to have the right ratio of filling and the outside.(...)I am judging you as a restaurant plate right now. It's beautiful, the balance is good, the flavor is good, wow. Good job, Tommy."

E: "These look gorgeous. I cannot believe that 11-year-olds (...) that your putting up food that's the same exact level that you find in restaurants. Great job, well done."



Sage, between 8 and 13 years.

R: "The pasta is cooked beautifully. You got that nice thickness. If I could season the vegetables a touch more it would match the delicacy of that pasta more. But good job, thank you."



Jewels, 12 years.

B: "The gnocchi is very light, it's beautiful. The balance is good. The flavor is good. This is a great dish. Delicious."



Troy, 12 years.

E: "Pasta is great. I love the vegetables. Pretty awesome."



Sara, age between 8 and 13.

R: "The seasoning of the meatballs is absolutely spot on. I just wish I had the same seasoning on the pasta as you've got in the meatballs."



Gavin, 10 years.

B: "You know that peccorino is more salty than parmesan, that's impressive. (...) You cook like a real San Francisco native. Good job, buddy."



Noah, 12 years.

E: "The flavor is great. The technique is spot on. The only thing I would do different is cook the pasta a little less. Just that it is a little bit more toothsome. Everything else is awesome, good job."



Again the jury discusses for a short moment in a low voice all at the same time so that we hear only some words: “very technical tonight, gnocchi, spaetzle, incredible.”

Episode 1: Dessert dishes of group 3



Alexander, 13 years.

E: ”That is amazing. Those look beautiful. You are 13 years old and those look to be the best macaroons that we'd ever had in Masterchef. I wanna take that whole plate in that corner and just mow down, but I'll be nice and share them. Incredible.”

R: “Ah, visually they look beautiful (...) they are delicious. Here's the bad news: You're now perfected the most dangerous desert anywhere in the world, so everything you do from know on in this competition is downhill.”



Sarah, 9 years.

E: “Wow (...) so what are you hoping is inside?”
Sarah: “Chocolate.”

E: “So kind of running out, like lava.(...) This is what we call the moment of truth. Sarah I think you have nailed it. That is amazing. This is probably the best molten lava cake that we've had in Masterchef and you are 9 years old. Awesome.”

R: “I'll give you 10 out of 10. That is delicious.”



Lishai, age between 8 and 13.

E: “I think everything tastes delicious. The apples are a little undercooked, slight crunch still left to them. Maybe sweeten up that whipped cream to give it a bit more spice. Just to kick it up. Great job.”



Ethan, 11 years.

B: "You temper your own chocolate? How old are you?"

Ethan: "11."

B: "Wow, the chocolate might be a little grainy, but really smooth inside. Good job, Ethan."



Hana, between 8 and 13.

R: "Unfortunately they are a bit dry. However the blood orange is delicious. Good job, very good job."



Amanda, between 8 and 13.

E: "Not cooked all the way. Could have gone a little longer. However, it's decadent, and you nailed that salted caramel. Awesome."



Kaylen, 11 years.

B: "They smell good. (...) I said a dessert has to have sophisticated flavors to be restaurant-quality. Is this restaurant quality?"

Kaylen: "Yes."

B: "I agree."



Nathan, 8 years.

R: "Where is the roulade gone, cause it is rather flat?(...) Here is the thing. It's not the most attractive dessert. Let's get that right. But it does taste delicious. It's got that crunch on the outside."

B: "Did you improvise today? I like that. It's really good man. Really good for an improv'. I like it."



Jury talks in a low voice, we can hear: "delicious, everything was tasty, so much creativity going on, flavors, textures."

Episode 2: Mysterybox Challenge: All 12 children cook a dish, the jury selects 3 to taste and announces the winner.



Alexander, 13 years.

R:"Visually it's got that wow-factor. We don't genuinely serve salad under the steak (...) you've got enough room (...) to have the salad on the side.(...) Carrots cooked beautifully. Love that fragrance of the ginger there as well. But what you have nailed tonight is that mash. I've tasted thousands of plates of mash cooked by professional chefs and there is always the occasional lump or bite of garlic. Roasting the garlic and the pureeing it through the mash is a smart thing to do(...) you've come up with a very good dish."



E: "(...) the outside is beautifully seared so your pan was the right temp. (...) I see a lot of myself in you. I was nowhere near where you are at your age. It took me twice as long to get to that point. I'm extremely excited what you keep doing as we go along, good job."

B: "Where did the idea come from for the spicy berry sauce? I was really fascinated." Alexander: "(...) I wanted to make them a little bit more unique, so I decided to make it spicy."



Jack, 10 years.



E: "Wow, beautiful(..) look at that crust. That sear and then nice and pink in the middle. Awesome job. So this (shrimp) looks like a sea monster (...) how do we know if this is perfect?"

J: "Just white and not transparent and we don't want it to be rubbery."

E: "It looks perfect. How old are you, Jack? (...) you nailed it."

R: "(...) What's the tie about the dish?"

Jack: "I used a lot of soy sauce."

R: "(...) You cook like a dream, I'm telling you. The filet is beautifully done, shrimps are seasoned and cooked beautifully. You put food on a plate with finesse."



Troy, 12 years.



B: "(...) It's gorgeous. Who taught you how to plate like this? Have you been studying?"

Troy: "Yes."

B: "Wow, you have the bitterness from the arugula and sweetness from the root vegetables, the steak has a good crust, the rub is amazing. I never thought about putting bay leaf for a steak rub but the flavor is very intense. Very impressive."

R: "Why medium-well?"

Troy: "Because I like the crunch on it?"

R: "What would I change? Not much to be honest. Maybe cook the beef medium-rare (...) remember you try to win us over(...) great finesse."

★ Marks dishes that lead to Elimination.



Alexander, 13 years.



Thommy, 12 years.

B: "Incredible, the plating, visually and we talk about restaurant-quality guys. This is a dish I couldn't distinguish from a restaurant. It's amazing, I only hope it tastes as good as it looks. How did you wanna cook the meat?"
Alexander: "Medium, medium-rare."
B: "It looks perfectly medium to medium-rare. How did you get the temperature of the beef just right?"

Alexander: "I've done it by eye, I've done this many times before."

B: "(...) It's interesting, I never thought of making a black garlic aioli. Great idea, take some notes, chefs."

R: "That is the most attractive sliders anywhere in the county tonight.(...) So why the kale?"

Alexander: "I think it's a really nice alternative than using potatoes. I really like going outside the box and making things really different and its a lighter option."

Ramsay: "The burger is delicious. It tastes as good as it looks and they've got that star-quality. You know I come across a lot of young chefs and there are chefs that need to be taught and then there's a brigade of chefs that are naturals at cooking. Young man you have a natural gift and very strong connection with food."

E: "(...) It tastes great. The food world is gonna be lucky to have someone like you in it."

R: "(...) Hmm is that the processed cheese in squares?(...) So when you got that thick processed cheese you never gonna melt that, because it is processed it needs help. Either settle them under where it gets glazed or cover it so it melts. However, the bun is really nice and crispy, the bacon cooked beautifully. Fried egg sort of gets lost in that strong cheese flavor inside that turkey which is slightly dry."

B: "(...) I never had a turkey burger in my life

that I have liked. I just don't like it. If you had to do it again, would you do a turkey burger?" Tommy:" Probably, because I really like the taste of turkey, but it's just kind of hard to cook since there is no fat on it."
 B: " So dry. (tastes) (...) People want a new breakfast all the time. You certainly hit on that theme with your breakfast burger. The question is can breakfast save you from elimination?"



Gavin, 10 years.

E: "(...) Very smart seasoning all the way through. The salad over here amazing on its own. It's a really smart side."

B: "(...) I love the Italian sausage in the burger. How did you think of that?"

Gavin: "I like the sausage a lot."

B: "Me too. I love the Italian seasoning. I think your salad is really smart. In any of my Italian restaurants, if I wanted to put out a burger, this would be a terrific example. Bravo."



Sarah, 9 years.

R: "The burger itself is slightly overcooked, however pineapple works, I like that kind of flavor. You've elevated a basic plain burger into a premier league."



Jewels, 12 years.

E: "(...) The meat is a little dry, but the whole idea behind it is really great."



Kaylen, 11 years.

B: "It has a great sear on the outside. Very good grilling discipline. I'll tell you a secret. If you invited me to your house and make me this burger, I would wanna come like once a week. Keep on cooking like that."



Molly, 12 years.

B: "(...) So, I love the idea of an Asian burger. It's a very, very good idea. I think that you know as well as I do it could have been a little bit more in the execution. It's very risky, Do you think this was a risk worth taking?"
 Molly: "I don't know. I just wanted to do something I've never done before."
 B: "Sometimes it can be a risk that doesn't pay off."



This time the judges take more time to talk and we can hear them better:
 B: "Alexander's was the most restauranty dish. The thing is with that kale you can get it crispy in the oven you didn't need you fry it. So Gavin..."
 E: "It didn't have the presentation, but it had the flavor. Kaylen, the around-the-world-burger, so creative."
 B: "Really good flavor."
 R: "Molly's was way overcooked."
 B: "It's like she gave up."
 R: "Yeah and Tommy's was dry."
 E: "I think Jewels shot herself in the foot by doing that lamb."
 R: "Not good at all."

Episode 3

Individual Challenge: Kaylen, Alexander and Gavin have to whip cream by hand, the instead of judging the children have to turn the bowl around over the chefs head to see if its whip to "stiff peaks".



Alexander wins as his cream stays in the bowl.



Episode 3: Beef Wellington Tag-team challenge TC 26:22-38:36.



R: "(...) Wow (...) visually that looks stunning. When I cut in the middle of the Beef Wellington what am I gonna get?"

Alexander: "Medium-rare, a little closer to rare."

Ramsay: "That, young men, is perfect. Absolutely incredible. But let's see how it tastes. You've got that crispness of the pastry (...) guys it's phenomenal, it's absolutely delicious. You have just nailed one of the most sophisticated, one of the most complicated dishes anywhere in the world to cook. It's the kind of beef Wellington I would be serving at the Savoy Grill. Beautiful, seriously well done."

E: "So, to me when you look at the outside of this, this is talking the talk. You cut inside and it's walking the walk.(...) Everything is equally important: the broccolini, the potatoes, the sauce and every single component of the Wellington. I can't really find a fault. It's almost a complete grand slam."

B: "I have to say, your dish looks beautiful. So what should it look like inside when I cut it?"

Sarah: "Pink, and you can see all the layers."

B: "Nice crust, nice and crispy, looks beautiful on top. Very nice egg wash, gives a nice, even coating. Are you ready? (...) Here's the moment of truth (...) I have to say it might beat team number 1 in cooking perfection."

R: "Flawless."

B: "(...) Nice flavor, your broccolini are crispy, you're potatoes are rich, your sauce is



justifiably accidiated.”

E: “It means seasoned. He's just trying to use these big words.”

B: ”Accidiated means when you add acidity to something, you accidiate it. Perfectly accidiated. Wonderful, wonderful Beef Wellington. My compliments to the chefs.”

R: “Here's the thing: delicious, seasoned beautifully, warm, succulent, tender in the center. Alexander and Troy have raised the bar, but I think you've jumped it. (...) What I am struggling to understand is that you're 12 and 9 years old, combined that's 21 years of age. I know chefs at 21 that are professional in this industry that can't cook a Wellington that good.”



E: “Look at that, this is beautiful. (...) This is the moment of truth. You were right. Some of that puff pastry on the bottom is looking a little gummy. The cook and the flavor is there, but the broccolini have maybe cooked a little bit to early cause it's been almost skewered. It turned into that kind of toy army men (...)”



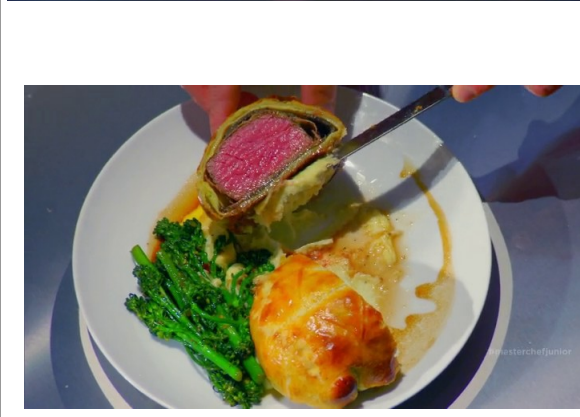
R: ”So the problem we've got here is the colors, because I'm not seeing that dark, nice ring of mushroom all the way round. Did you forget to put the mushrooms on?(...) I'm spotting hardly any mushrooms. So look, beef slightly overcooked, it's seasoned beautifully, but you have those technical flaws. (...) You've been very spare with the mushrooms, so therefore it's changed the dynamics and that's why the beef became overcooked, because the mushrooms are there to protect but enhance the flavor. So if we haven't got that wall of mushrooms on the outside it cooks quicker. The beef is slightly overcooked for me.”





E: "First up, it looks beautiful. You have all the components on the plate. Nice, beautiful crisp puff pastry on the outside, probably looking at an A, B+, closer to an A. (...) It's incredibly good. The only thing I think needs help on this: the puff pastry could have been rolled a little thinner, cause you notice, it's a little under. (...) But flavor, everything else pretty spot on."

R: "The beef is cooked beautifully (...). You have done all the fundamentals: great. The problem with your Wellington, that pastry is too heavy but the topping, the seasoning and the sear and the cooking of the filet is absolutely perfectly done."



R: "It looks like a slightly larger puff pastry (...) looks like the biggest Wellington tonight. (...) It's so salty that after your first mouthful the first thing you wanna grab is a glass of water. You've been so heavy-handedly with the seasoning that its like eating a mouthful of salt. What a shame. The prosciutto naturally seasons it, so that gives it the saltiness. I said to be careful with the seasoning on top of the pastry to get the pastry nice and crispy. If you just touch it there, the pastry has gone soggy. But you cooked it beautifully. That's the frustrating part for me."

B: "(...) It's what I expected the taste is raw mustard which makes the salinity even saltier. The mustard when you put it on out of the pan tenderizes it and gets almost cooked into the beef. When it's raw like this it makes the beef even saltier, so you have to be careful.(...) The cook is delicious and your broccoli are perfect, mashed potatoes excellent."



Jury talks in the back, we hear only snippets of their conversation: “their flavor was really good and I loved the broccolini....I agree, I definitely agree.”

Episode 4

Mysterybox Challenge 2 TC 08:35-14:45.



Troy, 12 years.

R: “Visually, it looks delicious. It's rich, creamy, love those eggplant chips. The snails aren't overcooked, sometimes when they go inside a chowder they get rubbery, a little bit chewy but they taste delicious. Mindblowing.”

E: “Genuinely with an eggplant everyone is cooking the inside, what made you do the skin?”

T: “I think that the outside of the eggplant is a lot more creative than people would think of.”

E: “You're showing a ton of creativity, but also skill and knowledge of making a good soup. Spot on.”

B: “It's properly seasoned and its very rich and the snails have a nice kind of bite to them. The herb oil gives it a lift in flavor. It's a good soup.”





Alexander, 13 years.


E: (writes 'wow' with caramel on plate) “If there would be more of the caramel, I would have written stupendously incredible jummyness. It's so delicious. The only thing that I can say that I would change is putting more of the toffee sauce over the top, just so it sucks it up a little more like a sponge. Phenomenal.”

R: “Visually it looks beautiful. Why the fennel?”

Alexander:” Fennel is something that I really don't like and I wanted to be creative with it.”

	<p>R: "The texture inside is on the verge of a cupcake texture, cause it's very light. The fennel doesn't work for me. However, trust me, technically you've nailed it. (...) to see the confidence in you to attempt something as difficult as this, I love it."</p>
 <p>FRIED SARDINES with CABBAGE, BRUSSELS SPROUT and FENNEL SALAD</p> <p><i>Sarah, 9 years.</i></p>	<p>B: "(...) It is the most restauranty dish of all the dishes, I think. When I think about Mediterranean flavors, it's all right here. It's all cooked perfectly. It's moist and sweet. (...) I'm afraid of how good this dish is, because its really really amazing. I don't even know how you come up with this stuff."</p> <p>R: "So visually it looks beautiful.(...) The Brussel sprouts taste fragrant, the fennel that cools it down. Sardines delicious, looks like grandma has passed on some of her magic. Here's the thing, you might be the smallest, might be the youngest, but if I would be standing behind you right now I would be pooing my pants. Brilliant."</p>
	<p>The jury takes a short moment to discuss: "Escargot, toffee pudding, followed by these sardines. It's like three completely different worlds. It's perfect."</p>

Episode 4 : Elimination Challenge: Three-Layer-Cake, TC 26:55-36:50.

 <p>LEMON LAYER CAKE with MERINGUE FROSTING</p> <p><i>Alexander, 13 years.</i></p>	<p>B: "I have to push really hard that is usually not a good sign. How should it look like?"</p> <p>A: "The cake should be light and airy and the layers should be even."</p> <p>B: "(...) I can feel it just by the weight of it that it is a little bit dense."</p> <p>E: "It's definitely undercooked.(...) As far as the structure goes you can tell that you know what your doing, but it's not your best work."</p>
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R: "That's the first time in this competition I've seen you struggle, sometimes if your not that good at doing something that you want to be brilliant at, don't over complicate it, do something plain and do it beautifully. Because the sponge is too dense, the frosting doesn't work and unfortunately the dough textures have gone crunchy. What a shame."



Dara, 12 years.

E: "Wow that looks beautiful.(...) It smells awesome. I can't believe you can pull this off with 12. Great use of that spice, it just accents the chocolate, the raspberry helps bringing some of that floral. It's just perfectly nuanced. I think you have hit it out of the park with this one."

B: "(...) I love your cake, this is delicious. This idea of doing the spiced chocolate, it's brilliant, very brave, but very good sensibility because you know sometimes things like this can get out of balance. And the great thing about this cake is it has balance. I am very very impressed."





Kaylen, 11 years.



E: "(...) Did you have any problems with it? The shape is (...) a little abstract. So the actual sponge cake is really dense. I don't know if you aerated it enough, like when you make a whipped cream and it fluffs up (...) I think that's why you get some of those bits where it is almost moist (...)."

R: "Here's the thing, you know that the visual impact of layer cakes have to have this wow-factor and your's doesn't look like it's up there with the best of the best. So the icing has not enough sugar in there, so you were struggling to spread it because it is so firm. The sponge is a little bit floury, cause it's slightly undercooked. However, you didn't give up (...) its a gallant effort."



Gavin, 10 years.

B: "It's really, really good. I think that the frosting or ganache whatever you wanna call it is tremendous. Did you try how good your cake is? Describe it for me?"

Gavin: "Stupendous."

B: "I was thinking moist, but let's go with stupendous."



Troy, 12 years.

E: "I like that you've showed yourself. It's light and sunny. A little sweet for me, the problem though is that you've skimmed it at the frosting."



Jack, 10 years.

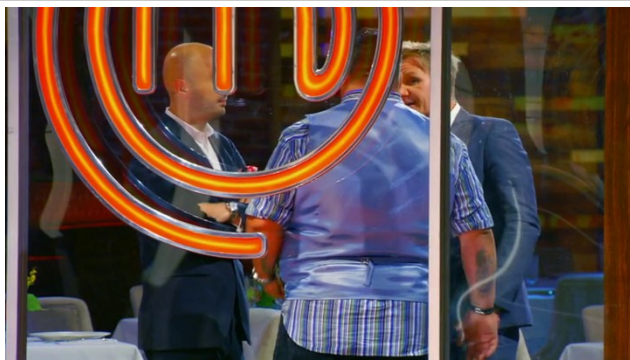
R: "Visually, it's got that intriguing look.(...) OMGD, do you no what that means? Oh my Goodness delicious. Sponge is exquisite, it's light, absolutely incredible.(...) When I dig into something that delicious it makes me feel less homesick."



Sophia, 12 years.

B: "(...) It has not many layers, they all got kind of mushed together. The icing, it's a little too buttery, maybe a little bit of cream cheese would have given it a little bit more of that tartness and would have made it also easier to spread. It's a little bit of technical errors."

R: "So the oven must have been a little bit too high, cause you've got a crispy edge to your sponge. You know: layer-cake, souffles, deserts, that chemistry and it's so regimental (..) But I'm impressed what you did in that short period of time."



The jury discuss their decision for a moment. "Honestly Dara, incredible, Jacks, Gavin's got flavor."

Episode 5 Restaurant Takeover

The children are split up into two teams. Red Team: Dara, Alexander, Jack; Blue Team: Sarah, Troy, Gavin. They have to cook several dishes that are judged by the head-chef and the customers but the decision which team will win is made by the jury. The red team wins.

They have to cook two appetizers and two entrees who are depicted in the following four screen-shots, underneath follow images of the teams dishes and the comments guests and the head-chef of the restaurant made.

TC 19:23-34.14



Appetizer 1 (A1)



Appetizer 2 (A2)



Entree 1 (E1)



Entree 2 (E2)



A 1, Red Team

Guest: "I like the way it looks, the Burrata is nice and soft."



A1, Blue Team

Guest: "(...) the presentation was really pretty. It's just a little bit chewy."



A2, Red Team

Guest: "(...) the risotto cake, I couldn't identify if it was risotto or potato."



A2, Blue Team

Guest: "(...) very crunchy on the outside, soft on the inside. It's really good."



A1, both teams

Head-chef: "First impression, they look good. (...) The blue team's plating looks very impressive. I think the arugula on the red team's doesn't look as nice. (Tries the dish of the blue team) "Really well seasoned, this is a great dish." (Tries the red) "The only thing missing on this dish is the vinaigrette on the arugula leaves. In this appetizer the blue team definitely won."



A2, Red Team

Head-chef: "The risotto cake is a little bit under but the rest of their dish is really spot on."



A2, Blue Team

Head-chef: "The blue team, the tuna is a little under seasoned, but the star was, they cooked the risotto cake correctly. It's really good."
 Bastianich: "So if you would have to pick a winner what do you think?"
 Head-Chef: "Right now, it's neck on neck."



E1, E2, Red Team

Guests: "Really good."
 B: "What was the best part about the Branzino?"
 Guest: "I love the fish, it was crispy on the outside and the sauce was amazing."
 B: "How about the ravioli, how were they?"
 Guest: "The sauce was a little congealed like it was sitting in the window for a while."
 B: "So sorry."



E1, Blue Team

Guest: "I had the blue teams ravioli. The actual pasta was really well done. But I felt like there could have been more seasoning."



E2, Blue Team

Guest: “My entree today was the fish. Beautifully presented, the fish was cooked nicely, the peas were nicely fried. It was good.”



E1, both teams

Head-chef: “The overall look of the red teams ravioli looks a lot better. The sauce coats all the pasta. The blue team's has too much garnish, too many carrots.”

B: ”(...) So let's taste it start with the red one's please.”

Head-chef: “Their ravioli is really good. They've got a nice amount of filling and the sauce is really good. The blue team made the ravioli correctly, its just missing the sauce. I clearly think the red teams ravioli is better.”







E2, both teams

Head-chef: “The look of the red team's Branzino, looks a little bit better, nice crispy skin. The fish is cooked well, really mild, just needs a little bit more salt.”

B: ”Ok , let's try the blue team's.”

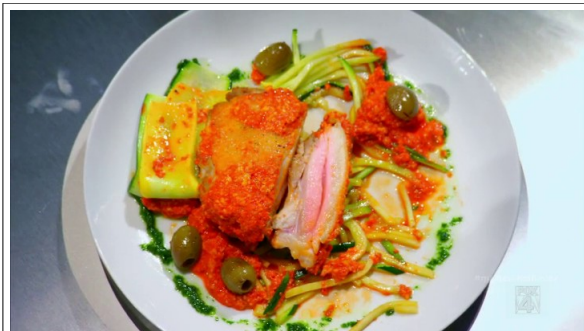
Head-chef:” It's seasoned very well, it just doesn't have that crispy skin. Well I would say that the red teams dish looked a lot better, but the blue teams fish tasted a lot better.“

Episode 6 : Individual Challenge: Soft-boiled Egg TC 8:13-13-20.

 <p><i>Jack, 10 years.</i></p>	<p>E: ” (...) Well Jack this is what they call the moment of truth. (...) Let's see how it separates from the shell.(...) I would say that that is over.”</p>
 <p><i>Dara, 12 years, aiming for 3,5 min.</i></p>	<p>B: ”Hard-boiled. It's a very difficult challenge, obviously.”</p>
 <p><i>Alexander, 13 years, aiming for 3,5 min.</i></p>	<p>R: ”(...) What am I expected to find inside your soft-boiled egg?” Alexander:” Perfectly cooked egg white, so that their firm and a runny egg yolk.” R: ”(...) that is a hard-boiled egg.”</p>
 <p><i>Troy, 12 years, aiming for 4 min.</i></p>	<p>R: ”Egg white, nice and firm. Inside (..) it's not perfect, it is definitely the closest to a soft-boiled egg. Good job, well done.”</p>

Episode 6 Elimination-Challenge: Chicken

Troy assigned one of four different cuts of chicken to every child, TC 26:59-35:10



Troy, 12 years.

R: "Visually, it looks beautiful. I was concerned it would look slightly beige, but you've got that vibrancy from the sauce. (...) Wow, that sauce is so fresh, so delicious, it's got that vibrancy to it."
 B: "It's raw."
 R: "I can't even taste the side of it, because you can see, it's all raw (...). I'm so disappointed. A thigh takes minimum 20 to 25 minutes in the oven. A breast is so much easier to cook. You did so well in this competition, I didn't expect you to serve me an undercooked chicken."
 B: "Your Romesco is delicious. I have a Spanish restaurant in New York and it's as good as the Romesco we serve there. Fabulous, and I love the idea of the dish (...). I asked you if you have put another one in, you should have (...) a little bit more cooking time or maybe a second plan you could have saved yourself, but (...)."




Dara, 12 years.

E: "It's beautiful. You know, you've cleaned the wings down that they look like little lollipops. They are gorgeous (...) Look at that color. That could be the best wing that I have had this entire show. It's crunchy, acidic, rich, amazing."
 B: "Wow, crunchy, amazing flavors, great balance between sweetness and acidity. More than restaurant quality, this is a restaurant signature dish (...) That is very, very impressive."




Alexander, 13 years.

R: "You've got the cheapest and most unwanted ingredient (...) Why the board, not the plate?"
 Alexander: "(...)the board really compliments the rustic feel of the crostini."
 R: "It tastes delicious. What you have got to understand now is that something you are afraid of cooking, cause you didn't like liver, you just opened up a completely different door. Don't cut yourself off from learning. Did you taste that?"

	<p>Alexander: "I did and I really liked it." R: "See, there you go. You now like liver. I'm impressed." B: "This dish is remarkable. Not only is it beautiful to look at, it is delicious, it's rustic, it's truly truly a masterpiece. I'm gonna eat the rest of this, okay?"</p>
 <p><i>Jack, 10 years.</i></p>	<p>R: "Look at that beauty. (...) Visually it looks beautiful. Just remind me again how old you are.(...) When we heard you're doing a roulade, one of the most difficult things to accomplish, why are you being so adventurous?" Jack: "I like being very ambitious and unique and I like blowing people away with my food." R: "I'm at a loss for words(...)the dish is delicious, the prosciutto crispy the chicken is moist. Pounding it, rolling it, wrapping it, cooking it, so technical, if this is what you are like at 10, God help our industry when you're 20." E: "So most kids at your age wouldn't even order it on a menu, let alone cook it in a challenge. That's awesome. It's moist, it's seasoned because of the acidity of the goat cheese and attended with saltiness from the prosciutto, so it all works. I think you've nailed it. That's probably the best thing you've created so far."</p>

Episode 7 Finale, Three-course-meal of Dara and Alexander

 <p><i>Dara's Appetizer</i></p>	<p>R: "Wow, visually it looks stunning. I'm really proud." B: "So this is effectively two appetizers in one." Dara: "Yes I wanted to showcase the poki because it has so many flavors in it but I wanted to show more skill by doing the seared tuna." B: "The rice cake is very rich and crunchy, the white rice in the inside is still moist (...) the tuna is beautiful. So here is the seared tuna, raw in the middle, nice char on the outside."</p>
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Did you season or marinade this tuna in anything?"

Dara: "I marinated it in soy sauce, sesame oil and cilantro the same as the poki."

B: "It's an amazing dish, the rice cake is delicious, tuna itself is fabulous, this is a 25 dollar appetizer in Manhattan, amazing."

E: "I think you went above and beyond what we asked. Amazing. The fact that at your age you're able to pull something this technical off speaks volumes."

R: "You know, when I was 12 years of age I was eating canned tuna mixed with mayonnaise I thought this was the best thing my mom ever feed me. To see you cook three courses is mind blowing I wouldn't change anything."



Alexander's Appetizer

B: "I love the flavor of the roasted pepper, really kind of amps up the whole dish. I love this dish because you can taste every individual component as you eat it."

E: "Just from here I can see that the shrimp are cooked like magic. It's delicious, it's beautiful, looks like you stumbled upon in the woods, it's very natural. The only thing I would change is a pinch more salt, that's the only thing missing for me."

R: "Visually, young man, beautifully. Vibrant, I love the fragrance of it, it looks so appetizing. Delicious, however I think your dish is so much simpler than Dara's. Your depending more on the ingredients than the actual cooking skills because you didn't really do much to those tomatoes. Fragrant, delicious, bright, colorful, but not as technical as Dara's appetizer."



Jury discusses while the children are outside getting the entree.





B: "I really was impressed with Alexander's appetizer. It was a study in purity and flavor, a lot of courage."



R: "But it wasn't as complex as Dara's appetizer and it certainly wasn't nowhere near as technical."

B: "(...) I know, I think his dish is about confidence in ingredients and that's what we preach today in our restaurants (...)."

R: "No, no no, we don't preach that (...)."

E: "I think if we look at her dish and the fact that she seared the tuna then added Hawaiian poki tuna and crispy rice that she made right

	<p>there (...).</p> <p>R: "(...) cooked fresh rice, come on we are dealing with 12 and 13 year olds (...) we shouldn't forget that (...)."</p>
 <p><i>Dara's Entree</i></p> 	<p>R: "(...) Why dumplings?"</p> <p>Dara: "Well I had rice in he appetizer, so I didn't want to do rice in the entree, so I thought wontons would be perfect."</p> <p>R: "It's delicious. I love the lightly, spicy, fragrant curry sauce, dumplings are delicious. Inside you put scallop and what else?"</p> <p>D: "Scallop and shrimp."</p> <p>R: "Spot prawns delicious, could have done a minute less cooking (...) the sear on there, phenomenal!"</p> <p>E: "I love the fact that you steamed those (prawns), that's the kind of mentality a chef has, not a 12 year old. It's delicious, but the curry itself seems a little thick, I think maybe over reduced and that coconut milk gets thick and kind of concentrated. But delicious."</p> <p>B: "The curry, I disagree, I think it's delicious, rich, very extracted, the dumplings are fabulous very light, very handmade delicious. I'd pay 45 dollars for that dish."</p>
 <p><i>Alexander's Entree</i></p> 	<p>R: "When I cut inside that veal chop, tell me what I'm expecting."</p> <p>Alexander: "You should be expecting a medium-rare cook in the middle."</p> <p>R: "(...) That is one of the best visually cooked veil chops anywhere in the country tonight. And there are chefs right now shuddering with the way that it's cooked. Phenomenal. Why the sage?"</p> <p>Alexander: "I think that a sage give a nice herb flavor."</p> <p>R: "The gnocchi is delicious (..) little pillows of magic, got that crisp on the outside, fluffy in the center. A bit like you and I hard on the outside but magical in the center. It looks amazing, it tastes amazing, sensational."</p> <p>E: "I wish I could nail this temp everytime I cook veil chop. This is an incredible cook. First of all I love any food that comes with a handle.(...) So is this luck there, or did you really know what you were doing?"</p> <p>Alexander: "I think I did know what I was doing because it's a dish I cook at home (...) so</p>

	<p>I have experience (...)"</p> <p>E: "It speaks for itself its amazing."</p> <p>B:" What's more heroic in your opinion the gnocchi or the veil chop?"</p> <p>Alexander: "I think that it would have to be the veil chop because its the protein of the plate but I still think that the gnocchi is a really important element of the dish as well."</p> <p>B."You know what the hero of this dish is? - You. Its amazing Alexander, congratulations."</p>
	<p>B:" That was one of the best dishes we've ever tasted in a finale.(Alexander's)"</p> <p>R: "(...) was that luck?"</p> <p>B: " The way the chop was seasoned, the juicy it was the way it was handled, there's no luck.</p> <p>E: "Perfectly caramelized all the way round, fat rendered the bone pure white..."</p> <p>B: "And let's not forget the gnocchi. The gnocchi were fabulous. That could have been a dish in itself."</p> <p>R: "But that delicious spot prawn curry and those wonderful dumplings, the technical ability to parcel those little parcels."</p> <p>B: "Just those shrimp were a little bit overcooked.(...) but the dumplings delicious, very handmade."</p> <p>E: "(...) supercool technique."</p> <p>B: " I've to keep myself reminding that those two are 12 and 13 year old chefs, amazing."</p>
 <p><i>Dara's Dessert</i></p>	<p>E: "Wow, miso ,something you would not genuinely see in a dessert. This pears here, what did you poach them in?"</p> <p>Dara: "I poached them in water, lemon juice, sugar and lemon peel."</p> <p>E: "It's fragrant, so light and beautiful, like, its hard to put in words, it's like nothing I've ever had before. I think it's really creative, it's really balanced and I like it."</p> <p>R: "Visually, again stunning. Why poaching the pears, why not roasting them?"</p> <p>D: "(...) it makes them more dessert-quality, I guess you could say."</p> <p>R: "Delicious, spicy, the pears are poached beautifully they just melt in your mouth. Not a big fan of the miso, but when you eat the cream with the miso it actually works. But having that kind of confidence to put miso in a dessert and to make it pop the way it did, I</p>



wanna give you a hug, delicious.”
 B: “It’s actually quite amazing in its simplicity it’s sweet but still acidic at the same time, what’s the acidity in there?”
 D:” I poached them in lemon juice and lemon peel.”
 B: ”I think it’s the perfect harmonious ending note to an incredible symphony of dishes.”



Alexander's dessert



E: ”Listen to that texture, I mean beautifully crispy. I love the berries, I love the dough, it’s rolled out and how crispy it is, it’s got that flavor we (...) love from a cannoli, the filling with the mascarpone, actually the only thing is that it’s a touch on the sweet side.”
 R: ”Remind us again, when were you born? (...) Here’s the thing deconstructing? Come on you shouldn’t be deconstructing anything at the age of 13.(...) Why the fruit in between?”
 Alexander: ”Well I just think that it needs a little blast of citrus and a little lightness.”
 R: ”It’s bloody phenomenal, the mascarpone needs fruit because the tartness of the fruit lifts that mascarpone density.”
 E: ”Dara, Alexander whatever happens from that point on you guys should be extremely proud of what you’ve accomplished.”



Judges discuss the desserts.

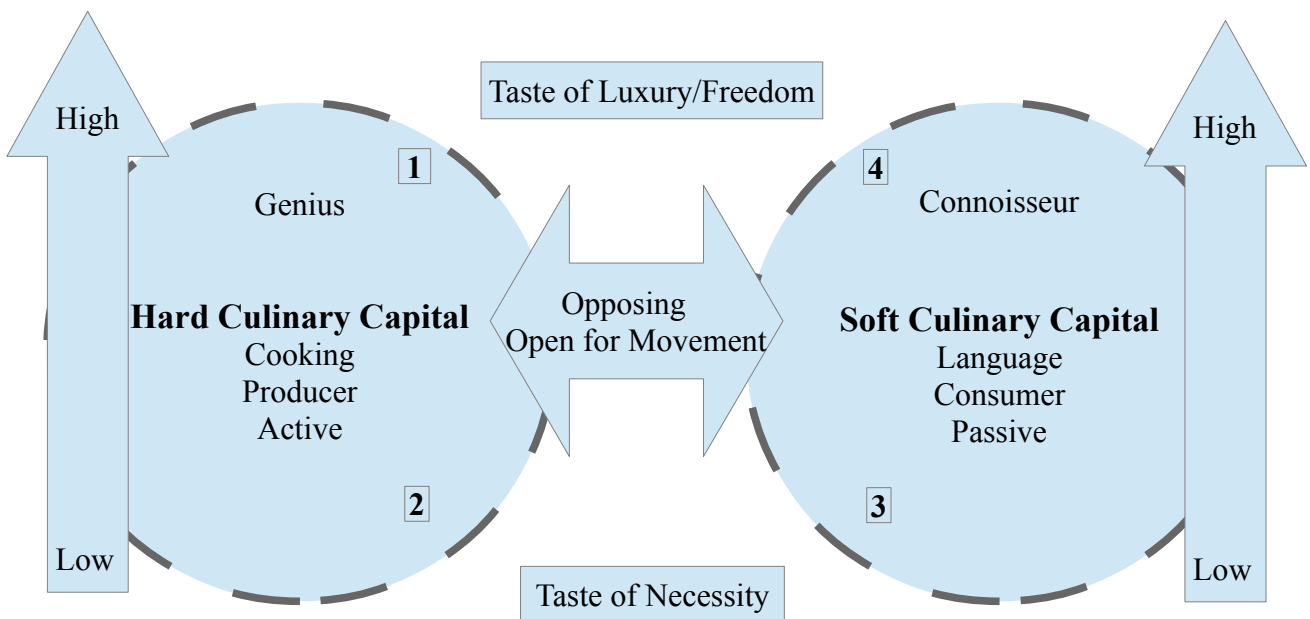
R: ”How do you separate those two desserts, because(...) Dara went to the extent of making a twirl, poaching the pear, miso, I mean Dara’s dessert was a perfect end to a stunning dinner.”
 E: ”What do you think of Alexander taking that dough and rolling(...)?”
 R: “Absolutely phenomenal.”
 B: ”More interpretive (...)”
 R: “I mean clever.”
 E: ”There was so much skill in that.”
 B: “I think both menus were very intellectual and very intuitive for a 12 and 13 year old.”
 R: “Alexander payed a homage to the classics

	<p>with the gnocchi and the veil chops stunning ingredients, cooks like an angel and the n deconstructs a cannoli.”</p> <p>B: ”I don't care how old they are, we've sat in this room for 4 years and never tasted a dish as good as Alexanders gnocchi and veil chop.”</p> <p>R: “But what about the balance Joe, it's not just about one course, we asked to produce restaurant quality three courses and I feel like Dara did.”</p> <p>E. ”I thought her menu was extremely cohesive.”</p> <p>R: “For me Dara's menu summed up her confidence and her composure and the technicality from start to finish, not just the appetizer and the entree but the dessert as well, the twirl, (...) miso. To take a risk like that tonight, extraordinary.”</p>
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A10: Wordcloud created on worditout.com of text in right column of A9



A11: Soft and Hard Culinary capital, author's work



- 1 Chef in a Michelin-starred restaurant, Ramsay as a chef
- 2 Cook in a fast food burger chain
- 3 „Ordinary Eater“
- 4 Professional Food Critique, Masterchef Jury

A12: Die meisten Arten der Nahrungsmittel, Tab.1, Chodowiecki in Basedow's Elementarwerk.



Basedow, J.B., J.B. Basedows Elementarwerk mit den Kupfertafeln Chodowieckis ed. by Fritsch, T., Leipzig 1909, commented edition in three volumes of the 1785 published 2nd edition of 'Elementarwerk'.