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Sonic ingredients in television food programmes

The use, significance and role of sound in food programmes

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Abstract

The main focus of this article is the use, significance, and role of sound in food and food travel programmes, exemplified by cooking programmes broadcast on Danish television – public service and commercial channels. The aim is to demonstrate how sound and music in this kind of programme plays an important part mediating both the cooking and the kitchen as well-ordered and well organized. The use of music represents flow, but refers also to locality, globality and identity, and is often linked to the notions of nostalgia, tradition and authenticity, and contributes to an aesthetization of food programmes as it forms part of the performance and presentation of meals.

The early kitchen programmes emphasized on information, as a kind of living cooking books as the idea was to enlighten the housewives and their practices by challenging their common sense choices introducing a more French inspired kitchen. In relation to such kitchen programmes todays cooking programmes seem to appeal to a broader sensibility as they present us to the possibilities of modern life, and the chefs' multisensuorious performances underlines this – often induced by the sound. It is through the sounds in food programmes that an authentic experience of taste and smell is mediated to the viewer: both through the lustful, approving sounds made by presenters and through the cooks' handling of raw materials. What looks delicious, also smells and tastes delicious – mediated through sound.

Keywords
Sound in TV cooking programmes, sound as domestication, sound and senses, food programmes.

Introduction

The relationship between the components of a meal is important. The handing down of recipes earlier had two essentially different forms: one which was primarily based on an visual-aural-oral sense ratio, as experiences were handed down from an elder (woman) to a younger person, and another, namely the cooking book which was based on a visual-literate ratio, communicating knowledge about cooking from different perspectives to a defined public or with a defined purpose.

In television food programmes we experience an enhancement of these two traditions. The early kitchen programmes emphasised information, as a kind of living cook book, and here the idea was to enlighten the housewives and their practices by challenging their common sense choices,[1] introducing a more French-inspired kitchen. Today's cooking programmes present excellent performances by cooks demonstrating possibilities that transcend the social context; the viewers are presented with dishes which they might never serve, as the cuisines they are presented with are no longer delimited to a domestic place, just as the techniques as well as the

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appearance of the dishes are professional. In relation to the kitchen programmes the cooking programmes seem to appeal to a broader sensibility, as they present us with the possibilities of modern life, and the cooks' multisensuous performances underline this – often induced by sound. The following article will discuss the narrative and sensuous potentiality of sound in relation to different aspects of food programmes.

In the following example you should notice how a cook instructs, ensures, performs, enlightens and entertains.



Example 1: Rick Stein cooking in Palermo

In this example we witness Rick Stein's almost choreographed cooking in which the sound from the ripe, squirting tomatoes assures tastiness, while the sound of the voice and the use of music underline the performative aspects of a show, as Stein's timing seems to be 'following' the underlying music, which again underscores his bodily movements. The sound understood as the soundtrack encourages us to watch the movement sequences. There are few oral instructions; instead the music helps the flow of the programme, connecting the film clips. Normally sounds of the kitchen and cooking are chaotic and accompanied by fiery verbal outbursts and complaints when something goes wrong, but in food programmes the sound is arranged and tidied up, harmony prevails and the viewers watch cookery as performance – a genre generated by TV.

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The number and variety of television cooking programmes has increased dramatically on both commercial television and public service broadcasting networks in recent years.[2] From an editorial point of view the distinctive feature of cooking programmes is their diverse mix of oral narratives, recipes, demonstration and performative instructions for a variety of lifestyles.

The subject of this article is the use and role of sound in cooking programmes, which I define as programmes centred on the art of cooking.[3] How are the sonic ingredients mediated and what do we (actually) hear? Sound seems to be a significant indication of the above-mentioned transformation of recipes: sound places (e.g. through language); the addition of music creates a form of 'aesthetic staging', letting us experience the sight of the meal (hearing the aroma?); sound can facilitate our imagination of the taste of what we are seeing by priming other senses (e.g. appreciative sounds of snuffing); and by focusing on what is in the foreground (and muffling sounds which are of no importance to the performance), sound can bring order to the boisterous, intractable atmosphere of a kitchen. The article's examples are taken from the large number of English-language cooking series that are themed around cooks and their travels to various localities and their sampling of different objects significant to the *terroir*.[4] In *food travel programmes* terroir, presented as regions and ethnicity, is communicated by the travelling cooks' focus on food and cooking habits. The programmes often attempt to display a kind of displacement; based on and referring to cultural differences in cooking practices they articulate difference, but at the same time they represent hybridisation and transcend places for the viewers. It is within this context that the article discusses the transformative role of sound: not only as sound perceived by the ear similar to sight perceived by the eye or smell by the nose, but sound as a gateway to multisensory perception.

In general, food travel programmes present places and territories. The sound of the programmes helps to underline and contextualise different representations of locality, globality and identity, which are often paired with nostalgia, tradition and authenticity. However, the soundtracks of the programmes not only reflect the particularities of a localised place they also portray a transgression of the foreign and the domestic. Curiously food travel programmes seem centred on the Western kitchen as place, as the sounds of the kitchen are domestic, but the dishes thematise the exotic; smell and taste reach out, while the sound stays (at) home. The article will discuss the meaning of this domestication and its sound aspects.

As the first example shows, the soundtracks of these programmes make use of music, speech and diegetic sounds, but the boundaries between them are often blurred in the sound design of the programmes.[5] Kitchen sounds such as the chopping of a knife dominate. Such a constant and familiar sound assures the viewer that a foreign dish or style of cooking can be domesticated. In English-language programmes a kind of ubiquitousness[6] seems to be underlined by the role of the

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sonorous language, which both serves as a common denominator and as a marker of difference; English is spoken with regional accents by means of which the language (like the chopping knife) connects the global with the local, as it supports the melting pot of sameness, keeping all the exotic and foreign elements together. It is through the sounds in food programmes that an authentic experience of taste and smell is mediated to the viewer: both through the lustful, approving sounds made by presenters and through the cooks' handling of raw materials. What looks delicious, also smells and tastes delicious – mediated through sound.

From housewives to foodies:[7] The shifting focus from kitchen programmes to food programmes

The number of televised travel or terroir-based food programmes is increasing, both on public service TV channels and commercial networks. Not all countries or regions seem to be represented in the programmes. Recently, in Denmark, for example, dishes from France, Italy and other Mediterranean countries, Scandinavia, the USA and India have been the most common subjects.[8] Furthermore, an essential characteristic of the programmes seems to be that they are circulated on several channels and in several countries – over several years.

A fundamental precondition for the food programmes and the viewers' ever keen and increasing interest in them is that the consumption of food is based on more than biological conditions. Through the consumption of different foods, we state and mark class differences (Bourdieu, 1994/2005, p. 72ff.), geographical variations and differences in culture, age, sex and religion. Food is also an important part of the staging of rituals and traditions, the orchestration of the seasons, the indexation of everyday life – you may say that food is an important issue when it comes to our appearance (Lupton, 1996/2005, p. 317). Food is never unimportant, as we classify it as good or bad, as healthy or harmful, as sinful or virtuous, as vital or sickening – contradistinctions which not only refer to food, but are also passed on to ourselves and mirror our upbringing, our beliefs and hopes and contribute to the construction of our identity in the world.

In general, food programmes present food and recipes as a mix of *instructional programme* and *lifestyle programme* – somewhere between doing and being. They offer us the opportunity to gain insight into the lives of others, especially when it comes to their eating habits, as the programmes provide us with propositions and tools to make a better and tastier life for ourselves. The cooks *instruct* us; they look directly into the camera when they show us what to do (i.e. what and how they practise). But it is also possible to understand the selection of raw materials and dishes and the kitchen setting as *lifestyle* programming: that is, a programme that instructs us on how to act if we want to appear as the ideal portrayed in the programme. *Style* as it

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is displayed and signalled in goods, clothes, practices and appearance is a key point (Bell & Hollows, 2005, p. 5).

According to Carlsen and Frandsen (2005), we should view what in everyday speech is dubbed *lifestyle programmes* as those television programmes that fall in the range of *instructional* to completely *lifestyle*-oriented programmes. The instructional aspects originate in the early public service broadcaster's *hobby programmes*, where the viewer was instructed on *how* to perform a certain task; however, today such programmes have been twisted into *feel-good programmes*. Originally the instructional programmes simply expanded a practice which structured the programme. Today's kitchen programmes are based on similar concepts. They have a particular signature and are centred on a host whose name is often reflected in the title of the programme, e.g. *Spise med Price* (*Eat with the Prices*),[9] *Anne-mad*[10] (*Anne's food*), *Floyd around the Med* and *Rick Stein's French Odyssey*. According to Carlsen and Frandsen, (2005, pp. 13-21) such focus on the host can be seen as a move away from earlier programmes' focus on subject and expertise and a step closer to the lifestyle programme genre's focus on hosting and what they term 'a special "exquisite", aesthetic expression' (Carlsen & Frandsen, 2005, p. 22). Carlsen and Frandsen note that food programmes in particular exemplify this transformation; they identify the Danish programme *TV-køkkenet* (*The TV Kitchen*) from 1966[11] as an educational (instructive) consumer programme (Carlsen & Frandsen, 2005, p. 13). The aim of the programme, which was produced by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation's culture department, was to raise the standard of Danish food culture and practice. This aim was reinforced by the programme's structure, which basically maintained the same format, set and signature for 25 years, although the cooks running the programme did change along the way. The programme served learning and educational functions presented by Denmark's best cooks, and as such 'the kitchen' and 'the craft' were in focus.[12]

Compared to the early instructional kitchen programmes, which were based on a concept that could go on for years, outliving cook after cook, the *instructional programmes* of today are designed around a host and tend to teach the viewers 'how to live' (Solier, 2008, p. 65). Most of these food programmes are shown during prime time, and they 'target and attempt to cultivate an educated and sophisticated audience of "foodies" or amateur food connoisseurs', rather than focus on basic cooking skills (Solier, 2008, p. 68). These more lifestyle-oriented food programmes do, however, still exhibit some traits of their more instructional past, as they describe techniques and teach viewers new skills. On the other hand, the lifestyle-oriented traits of food programmes offer their viewers 'more informal "ideas", rather than formal advice about living' (Hill, 2005, pp. 93-94 in: Carlsen & Frandsen, 2005, p. 6), in the same way as the profusion of cookery books underpin dreams of meals that were never cooked. Contemporary food programme coverage often combines instruction with more spectacular sequences (as shown in example 1), and the soundtrack

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is active in underpinning these different aspects; at one end of the spectrum the instructional part of a programme is underlined by a strong acoustic conciseness, which can match the host. The sound seems to confirm and document real (diegetic) sounds, but what we actually hear in the programmes are rather the expected sounds of the real. When and if music appears, it is connected to the host and to the taste experience of the host,[13] who sometimes comments on taste to underline and lift the quality of the programme.[14] At the other end of the spectrum most *food travel programmes* are translating regional dishes into easy home cooking, incorporating extra culinary scenes and popularising the products of a region or country, a process which is often accompanied by regional background music.[15]

In her qualitative study of foodies the food ethnographer Isabelle de Solier states that all foodie viewers claim 'to have learnt practical things from culinary television such as new recipes and ingredients, culinary skills and techniques, and which equipment to use for particular purposes' (Solier, 2008, p. 73) (this contradicts what Dover and Hill found in their 2007 study of lifestyle television in general, where only 10 per cent indicated that they had acquired skills from lifestyle programmes). The foodies also reported that by watching the programmes they felt that they had gained insight into the application of demonstrated culinary skills as well as more theoretical information about the foods being prepared. This seems to suggest that the food programmes are not typical lifestyle programmes, as the heritage instructional characteristics remain an important aspect of the programmes. However, the soundtrack often indicates or underlines at which end of the spectrum of culinary knowledge the programme is conceptualised. The use of music points to a more aestheticised consumption of the programme in which the taste knowledge and not the skills are accentuated.[16] This aspect is expanded by Orvar Löfgren who in the article 'Remediated Vardag' relates how routines create room for daydreaming. According to Löfgren, watching lifestyle programmes offers consumers (as participants) the opportunity to transform their lives, and at the same time the well-known and clichéd music indicates that they are free to daydream (Löfgren, 2007, p. 11). This aestheticised condition could perhaps also be considered a space where the idea of a 'sense-by-sense' (or sense-to-sense) approach is replaced by multisensory organisation (Howes, 2004, pp. 381-382) stimulating the individual's concatenating, encouraged by the soundtrack.

The soundscapes of food programmes – constructing domesticity?

In 1977 the composer Murray Schafer introduced the concept of *soundscape*, which has gained widespread popularity (Kelman, 2010, p. 214). Although Schafer's term was originally meant to serve as a concept for evaluating (i.e. a landscape's) wanted and unwanted sounds based on rather normative distinctions, over the years it has become a more descriptive tool for describing the relationship between sound and

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place (Kelman, 2010, p. 215). Schafer favours the hi-fi soundscape in which 'discrete sounds can be heard clearly', rather than the lo-fi soundscape's obscured sounds where the perspective is lost (Schafer, 1994 p. 43). Kelman points out how Schafer, by paying attention to some sounds rather than others, in fact makes us listen with intent: learning to distinguish sounds and to listen for sounds that dominate or are repeated. Often the concept has been used (also in Schafer's works) as if soundscape should be understood and described as a kind of orchestration, arrangement and choreographed relationship between the different elements of a composition (Schafer, 1994, p. 157). Schafer himself realises that embedded in his idea of *the tuning of the world*[17] is an aspect of design: 'The best way to comprehend what I mean by acoustic design, is to regard the soundscape of the world as a huge musical composition, unfolding around us ceaseless' (Schafer,1994, p. 205). With statements such as this Schafer underlines the importance of the listener; it is through revised listening, through a distinction between sound and noise, that we will be able to change our soundscape. To accomplish this, Schafer introduces *keynote sounds*, *signals* and *soundmarks* which are all introduced as parts of an orchestration; we pay no attention to *keynote sounds*, as they serve as a background for all other sounds and are part of our sonic environment. *Signals* appear above the keynote sounds. Signals are sounds in the foreground, informing the listener of what is happening right now. And finally there are *soundmarks*, which are the sound counterparts to landmarks. A landmark makes you realise where you are – and so does the equivalent soundmark. Shelemay (2006) criticises the concept's insufficiency in relation to 'music's ability to both stay in place and to move in the world of today' (Shelemay, 2006, p. xxxiv in: Kelman, 2010, p. 224) and suggests that since a landscape stands rooted to the spot and sound does not, the concept of sound and context should rather be seascape, as this offers a more flexible understanding. Shelemay is just one of several scholars (Truax, 2001; Thompson, 2002) who use and reconceptualise the term soundscape in relation to music (Shelemay), communication (Truax), and sound (Thompson).[18] Such reconceptualisations have increased the applicability of the term, while also highlighting its deficiencies.

Following the precedent for modelling soundscape theory (i.e. Thompson and Corbin), as described above, I suggest that the TV production offers its listeners a soundscape which can be understood as the kind of composition that Schafer intended his listeners to make; by ranking the hierarchy of sounds, the TV production actually presents a designed soundscape that balances the sounds of 'those pots and pans',[19] the cooks' instructions, background music etc. The producers of television food programmes create this 'picture' by producing an idealised place: a place that is the product of control of the soundscape of food making – which in real life often sounds chaotic.

The (social) semiotician Theo van Leeuwen divides (inspired by Schafer) radio and film soundtracks into three zones: close, middle and far distance (van Leeu-

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wen, 1999, p. 15). He understands a signal to be something the listener must react to, while the background sounds should be heard, but not listened to. Van Leeuwen underlines that he does not think of the zones only in the literal sense, but also as symbolic places or positions, just as there may at times only be two layers: a foreground and a background (van Leeuwen, 1999, p. 16). Van Leeuwen augments Schafer's inspiration with Western psychology's figure (signal), ground (keynote) and field (soundmark) (Schafer, 1994, p. 157) and shows how the interpretations of the three shifts depend on the listener's relation to the represented world (van Leeuwen, 1999, p. 17). We should remember that sound can move us *towards* or *away* from a certain position and also *change* our relation to what we hear (van Leeuwen, 1999, p. 18). One of the examples presented by van Leeuwen is an ambient sound recording of a Costa Rican afternoon by Eloisa Mathieu, which he analyses and argues fits a design schema 'more typical of the modern city than of the tropical forest' (van Leeuwen, 1999, p. 18).

The food sociologist Krishnendo Ray emphasises *domestication* as an important aspect of the rise of food television. He notes, in particular, the importance of the trailblazing American TV cool Julia Child (1912-2004) who domesticated (French) cuisine, when she 'made American what was French, bringing into home what was usually cooked in the restaurant and normalizing what was extraordinary' (Ray, 2007, p. 51) in her 1963 television kitchen programme *The French Chef*. She also domesticated cuisine by claiming that French food did not derive from some magic soil or character (terroir), but from good ingredients, cooking techniques, patience and devotion (Ray, 2007, p. 53). What one could regard as her concept of domestication, *Bringing it all back home*, is widely practised in the food travel programmes; in Danish television almost every cook invites the viewer into his or her 'own' kitchen – further stressed by the name of the programme[20] – and so performs in a kitchen marked by domesticity.

Where Ray understands domestication as a process of acculturation, the domestic space researcher Janet Floyd discusses how the kitchen space in media is used to link a range of debates circulating 'outside' and notes how the settings of these kitchens in their ambiguity are set apart from relationships of home and the routine responsibility for feeding people (Floyd, 2004, p. 63), handing their tasks over to professionals. She concludes that the 'real' domestic kitchen is regarded as a space made for mundane and unskilled work, while the cooks demonstrate their skills. Floyd's conclusion on this is that what we see in these food programmes are kitchens with no contextualising relationship, and this allows us to understand the TV kitchen as a space to which all other meanings may be attributed (Floyd, 2004, p. 64).

But is this domestication evident from sound? I have already mentioned the construction of a harmonious and equalised soundscape, which turns deafening machines into bearable background. Furthermore, the mixing of the sound permits

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a nearness ensured by the amplification of the cook's voice unaffiliated with the kitchen sounds. This adjustment and balancing of the sound is further emphasised by the sounds of the kitchen area and the presence of measured ingredients kept in bowls and dishes, which avoids noisy paper bags and wrapping. When the dialogical monologue stops, it is replaced by sound-producing activities such as stirring, frying and chopping (seldom grinding or machine mixing). The chaotic sounds of Floyd's 'real' kitchen are composed into a hierarchically organised social world, where (wo)man (the voice) is enhanced on a background of sounds from craft and skills (i.e. chopping of a knife), whereas machine sounds are kept in the background as unwanted noises. In addition, the cooks addressing the viewers as if they were present in the kitchen, at the same time, stress the homely atmosphere and point to its construction. According to Schafer, the *soundmark* is a sound that tells you where you are in a split second (Schafer, 1994, p. 10), while van Leeuwen points out that the meaning of the different ingredients of the soundscape can change. The soundmark of the *domesticated TV kitchen* in Ray's sense is the chopping of a knife; the 'chop, chop, chop' is a sign of activity, of crafts and of home. These repeated sounds performed in a homely kitchen indicate sameness and familiarity, as they occur in programme after programme, and such domestication even transforms and domesticates unfamiliar food. In Floyd's constructive kitchen world the ingredients or the referentiality of the sounds point to their relationship with the domestic kitchen, while the harmonising of the sounds points to the rewriting of the kitchen 'as a space in which in which the cook performs independently and manages a series of tasks, simple as well as complex, without recourse to any responsibility or authority' (Floyd, 2004, p. 64). The differentiation and selection of sounds underlines Floyd's point, namely that the TV kitchen is a space to which all kinds of meaning may be attributed.

Listening to versus watching food programmes

Research has shown that people actually do *listen* to television. According to a study by Arnt Maasø, it is the sound of the television that tells us when to resume watching if we have turned away, which we actually do for about a third of the time when watching television (Maasø, 2002, p. 51). The TV soundtrack accentuates the important parts. Studies of soundtracks often distinguish between dialogue, music and sound effects (in van Leeuwen's case: 'Speech, music and sound'). Sound effects generally refer to sources of material sounds (diegetic) in the room we are watching. In food programmes the instructions (dialogue) are typically accompanied by sound effects, which create a background for the talking, while the music often covers up clips and dramaturgic shifts.

The sounds of the voices signal gender, social status, age etc., that is, something we will be able to verify with our sense of sight. But they also reveal something that

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we are unable to register with our eyes and which is hidden by the cook's uniform, namely the cook's ancestry. In English-speaking television food programmes the tone and intonation of the cook are revealing. At the same time, the English language expresses sameness, localisation and globalisation; 'origin' is underlined by sound. But our idea of this is often based on second-hand experiences mediated by mass media (van Leeuwen, 1999, p. 141).[21]

Though foodies, according to Solier, whose research in this area was mentioned above, say that they have acquired new knowledge and skills from watching television food programmes, finding them both informative and entertaining (Solier, 2008, p. 73), some commentators disparage food programmes as *food or gastro porn*, regarding them as visual gateways to imaginations about cooking and eating while watching. The term food porn is said to have been introduced by the Irish-American journalist Alexander Cockburn who in a Barthes-inspired review of cooking books, 'Gastro Porn', from 1977 unravels how 'there is curious parallels between manuals on sexual techniques and manuals on the preparation of food; [...] True gastro-porn heightens the excitement and also the sense of unattainable by proffering colored photographs of various completed recipes' (Cockburn, 1977[22]). This viewpoint is further developed with a reference to Barthes' *Mythologies* which describes the high-angle photographs of *Elle* as 'objects at once near and inaccessible, whose consumption can perfectly well be accomplished just by looking' (Barthes in: Cockburn, 1977). Barthes adds that this is a cuisine of advertisement – fully magical. Magic or not, according to Celia Lury, a change of style in advertising can be charted throughout the twentieth century from product features to the look of the product and its use, which means that the 'visual image increasingly came to stand on its own, unexplained by any written text' (Lury, 1996, pp. 64-65).[23]

Several writers and bloggers have adopted the concept of gastro porn when characterising food programmes (Ray, 2007, pp. 5-10). Common among these mediators is the concentration only on the visual elements. Of course Barthes' and Cockburn's notes on cookery books must focus on visual elements, but writings that classify television food programmes as food porn seem to ignore sound and forget about the audiovisual aspects of the medium. Ray claims that food programmes do distinguish themselves from the one-dimensional and indifferent view that is suggested with the expression gastro porn (Ray, 2007, pp. 59-60).

Performing food programmes as extended gastronomic literature

According to Professor Steven Mennell, the tradition of gastronomic literature can be summarised into the following themes:

- *The correct practices at the time*: Compositions of menus, manuals about carving, sequences of the courses etc.).

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- *Dietetic instructions*: What is considered healthy according to the prevailing knowledge of the day?
- *Histories, stories and myths*: A mixture of biographies, origins of dishes (often lacking any solid foundation in history).
- *Nostalgic evocations of memorable meals and notable menus* (Mennell, 2005, pp. 241-242)

Mennell's categories can be identified in television food programmes, but they are here given a bodily dimension, which might be one of the reasons for their popularity. What we witness is a *performance* of the correct contemporary practices, instructions, histories and myths and nostalgic evocations of memorable meals. As the audiovisual TV medium takes us into a kitchen, the pictures provide the originally literary genres listed above with bodily, material/tactile and performative dimensions, including sound, which can blur the boundaries between them. The correct contemporary practices are verified by the cooks who demonstrate their skills by praising the excellence of the raw materials and seasoning their performance with stories and myths about the origin of the dishes. The nostalgic element is often passed on as recreated locality, establishing the world as it once was. Locality is then presented as a passage to the true origins – almost genetic origins – of food. By going back and by accentuating and imitating what is produced as authentic dishes and authentic places the programmes recreate the origins of food, but in the image of the present. The programmes often have to leave the kitchen to show these true origins – and these excursions are often accompanied by music from the place visited. I shall return to this later.

In this sense, the cook is a character who persuades the viewer of the magic that Barthes' viewers had to experience when reading a silent magazine. The following examples are all from food travel programmes. If you listen to them from the perspective of Mennell's categories, they can be heard to demonstrate different aspects hereof. The correct practices of the time are represented by the 'diegetic' sounds of the kitchen, that is, the cook's speech, sounds of carving knives, of stirring and whipping etc. Such sounds emphasise presence. The dietetic instructions (kilojoules are seldom mentioned in these programmes, but are banished to health or makeover programmes) have turned into visually appealing, sensuous enjoyment, which is meant to introduce the spectator to the outstanding qualities of the dishes and the healing power of the correct raw materials. Here sound is important, as it is used to convince the viewer of the character of taste and smell. Sounds like 'mmh' originate from the cook's body. These communicate a sensorial experience – from one body to another. They guarantee that what looks delicious also smells and tastes delicious, and the sound of the human touch transforms communication from one sense to another. The sound adds a physiological dimension to the experi-

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ence of food. The sound of the histories, memories and myths are transmitted by voices, which inject meanings beyond the words. Aspects of the voice signal gender, social status, age etc., that is, something we will be able to recognise with our sense of sight. But voices reveal something that we are not always able to see with our eyes, namely the cook's ancestry. At the same time, the voice in food programmes expresses sameness, localisation and globalisation. Again this last aspect can be understood both in accordance with Ray's and Floyd's domestication concepts. In Ray's understanding the programmes' involvement with other cultures might be seen as a continuation of Julia Kind's insistence on 'home bringing' in the form of ingredients, cooking techniques and devotion, while Floyd rather would understand the kitchen as a scene of negotiation, constructing and debating meaning.

Sound samples

The following examples are meant to exemplify different aspects of sound as important in food programmes. They touch upon sound as a means to transforming a bodily experience, sound as a mediator of aesthetic sensibility and sound as a means to negotiating domestication.

A: Appreciating sounds



Example 2: Rick Stein in French Odyssey[24]

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Example 3: Claus Meyer in Smagen af Skagen[25]

These are examples of a specific television food programme demeanour, as both examples show a transmission of tasting and smelling communicated to the viewer via sound in a rather exaggerated fashion, if compared to similar sounds in real life. Sounds like 'mmh' and 'ah' are sounds of bodily approval that convince us that something actually tastes and smells good. These sounds are embodied transmissions of the sense of smell and the sense of taste. The examples show how sound authenticates a bodily experience and mediates a bodily dimension to the viewer, who is convinced by sound and voiced consonants. This practise is an example of sound as transformative; it points to a multisensuous experience, and in relation to the development from kitchen to food programmes the sniffing points to a transformation of dishes as illumination of good practice to dishes as tempting sense experiences.

B: Food and music as aesthetic experiences

In *French Odyssey*[26] the cook Rick Stein, accompanied by music, demonstrates how a meal is prepared at home. The sounds are hierarchised. We hear few signal sounds – only the ones that come from human physical movement; that is, we hear the

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Example 4: Rick Stein in French odyssey

chopping, but we are unable to hear the butter bubbling in the pan, and we hear no cooking sounds, only the anonymous keyboard music that accompanies Rick Stein's instructions. The visual aesthetics is inspired by commercials, and Stein's speech coaches us with the right practices at the right time, thus providing an instructional aspect. There are no articulated soundmarks in the programme, as the language spoken by Rick Stein is British; he is, however, travelling in France. What happens in this example is that decorative pictures tell a story with a happy ending. The beautiful meal is eaten almost by itself; we seem to glide into the wellness-like pictures. The indispensable music underlines that the images are the most important part – but the music is required to establish the flow of images. The aesthetics of the programme suggests an illustrated cooking book complete with flow. Again (as in example 1) it is the music that choreographs the flow of cooking.

The commercial aesthetics of the clip might make us look upon it as an example of gastro porn underlined by sound. However, this concept is, as already mentioned, based on a purely visual approach. It is the sound in this example that makes the dishes accessible – though we cannot touch them, the smooth pictures, the smooth

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music, the filtered colours and the discrete sound of cooking address us aesthetically, contrary to the more sensuous appeal of examples 2 and 3.

C: Negotiating place and terroir



Example 5: Antonio Carluccio's Sicily[27]

In food travel programmes locality is often used as a kind of passage to the true heritage and genuineness (terroir) of a dish, which generally is the idea of the programmes. By going back to what in other contexts would be understood as territorially at the edge and switched off spaces,[28] and by accentuating and imitating what is produced as authentic dishes and authentic places, the programmes seek to recreate the origins of food, but in the picture of the present. The places are to be rediscovered as regional representations, and via cooking they are domesticated; the soundtrack underlines this transformation or switch between being away and coming home. The domestication process is partly expressed by the sounds of the kitchen; the sounds of a worktop and a large knife are indispensable sounds of cooking, no matter where in the world the cook is located. In this way the sounds of the global get a touch of the local, and vice versa, supported by the English language which connects the global and the local in a melting pot of sameness, which, in spite of all the exotic or foreign elements, keeps the programmes together.

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The example shows us a Sicilian village, where the local guard marches through the streets accompanied by a brass band playing a Godfather/Italian folk music style tune. To this some distracting sounds are added, which, as the picture shifts, turn out to be the guardsmen eating their lunch, while the drill of the band's flute continues to sound. The soundtrack underscores and couples traditions, folksiness and food. As the camera subsequently pans across the Sicilian landscape, bird song is accompanied by Italian opera music (the *Intermezzo* from the opera *Cavellaria Rusticana* by Mascagni), leading us and the cook Antonio Carluccio into untouched nature represented by a shepherd accompanied by the tinkling sounds of a herd of sheep as the Italian language and the repeated *Intermezzo* round off the scene. In the example both nature and originality are represented by sound. From the simple life of the village through the beautiful and magnificent past of Italy, visually represented by the remains of ancient Roman temples and auditorily reflected by the opera, we meet the 'switched off' true origins: the unspoiled food and the unspoiled sounds. The shepherd presents his packed lunch underscored by a hi-fi soundscape serving to strengthen the impression of the genuine and to underline Carluccio's statement, 'The purist taste of the country side'. In a Schaferian analysis one could understand the *keynote sound* to be nature expanded in this hi-fi landscape where the invisible bird song and the sheep's bleating are *signals* creating a sense of depth in the picture; there is more to it than meets the eye. The *soundmarks* are the Italian language, which the cook himself switches to as a sign of nature coming upon him. In the clip nature in the form of the shepherd's packed lunch even supersedes cooking. What is central in this example is the sound of authenticity coupled with nostalgia represented by music. The opera music underlines the construction of a meta-Italy, as place is indicated by a soundtrack from the country's great past.[29]

The example illustrates domestication on different levels; the music, the soundscape and the language point to a well-known otherness: a clichéd Italy representing 'out'. The soundtrack demonstrates a rather outmoded programme which constitutes a conservative *elsewhere* emanating from the Mediterranean (Floyd, 2004, p. 70), presented to us as an ideal. The soundtracks thus protects this space of otherness, letting us experience the particularities of an exotic place with which we can never interact, and the soundtrack points to one single understanding of domestication: the exchange of here and there.

Sensing food programmes

Food programmes can be understood as lineal descendants of a former literary genre. The aural both communicates and authenticates taste and smell and underscores the physical and bodily aspects of cooking.

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Immanuel Kant distinguished between the three objective senses, sight, hearing and feeling, which he categorised as higher than the two subjective senses, taste and smell. The three objective senses support empirical realisation and reflection, while the two others appeal to enjoyment (Kant, 2002, pp. 54-56). Kant understood taste as *an experience in the mouth* and smell as an experience *in the nose* (Kant, 2002, p. 57), and the subjectivity of the latter to him meant that they were the lowest of the senses. While *taste as aesthetic experience and judgement* could be applied to an *imaginative* object (Klitgaard Povlsen, 2007, p. 47) and would relate to beauty and to the sublime evoked and recognised by the objective senses, physiological taste needed an object to be aroused. In the context of the sound of television food programmes Kant's distinction might seem irrelevant, as taste and smell do not come into play. But on the screen *taste as physiological experience* (the meeting with an object) is facilitated by the *aural* which is intensified by sounds and speech, while *taste as aesthetic experience* is facilitated by the *visual*, which appeals to an imaginative conception intensified by *music*.

In relation to the food programme examples sound subscribes to and concatenates both categories of taste. The *physiological experience* of food is represented in the human communication – 'mmh' and 'ah' communicate human sounds, especially voices and voicing – while the *aesthetic experience* is visually pervaded by the beautiful close-ups of food, almost still lives, accompanied by flowing music which signals an aesthetic experience and judgement as the object is presented. The music underscores the visual and is as such stamped by traditions of artistic reproduction of food, further developed by commercials.

In general the mediated sounds relating to the physiological experience tend to be more tactile, as close miking ties the augmented sound to the object, while the aesthetic/imaginative sounds usually take the form of music that refers to other contexts, drawing inspiration from human history and tapping into our shared memories and longings.

Conclusion

Some media researchers (e.g. Frandsen & Carlsen, Löfgren) understand food programmes as wellness programmes that aim to provide a space for dreams and opportunities. Focusing on sight and music separately one might consider the programmes pictures supported by speech and music offering the viewer flows for daydreaming. But considering Solier's research (Solier, 2008), food programmes, in contrast to other lifestyle programmes, involve and actually engage people's awareness of the political, ecological and economic politics of food. Sound plays an important part in how we understand and perceive the message of the programmes.

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In general the programmes offer an open frame. Consumption of the programmes can be understood as an aesthetic activity in which sound induces an aesthetic experience or communicates a more sensuous experience. Furthermore, sound plays a part in identifying how notions of domestication are managed.

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DVD: Rick Stein's French Odyssey, BBC DVD 2007

Notes

1 Ironically the housewife dishes from the 1950s are idolised today by cooks and young people as 'mormormad' ('grandma food').
2 In the period 18-24 February 2013 the 20 most seen TV channels in Denmark screened 23 food programmes (a total of nine different food series). And cookery forms part of morning TV, weather forecasts as well as programmes on districts, diets and health etc. This is a general tendency in the Western world (Solier, 2005, p. 465). Also Christensen and Klitgaard Povlsen (2008) comment on this.
3 I leave out competitions such as MasterChef and programmes in which amateurs play an important part.
4 The terroir concept originally relates to the embodiment of the place in taste. For an excellent discussion of the concept in relation to TV food programmes see Christensen & Klitgaard Povlsen, 2008.
5 In food blogs, which seem to appear more amateurish, you can hear non-mediated, 'raw' sounds of a kitchen. E.g.: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9-9mSuhPx8 (accessed on 28 July 2013). (In case the link does not work, copy and paste the link into your browser).
6 Here I am referring to the concept of *ubiquitous music* conceived by Anahid Kassabian. The concept refers to situations where the music engages us in a distributed subjectivity. Here I apply the concept to the food travel programmes, as I find that the sound underlines a state of ubiquitousness.
7 A foodie is a connoisseur who is interested in aspects of food and drink. The concept was coined in the book *The Official Foodie Handbook* by Levy and Barr from 1984.
8 As presented on DR's website (Danish Broadcasting Corporation): http://www.dr.dk/Mad/20110131094553.htm (accessed on 28 July 2013).
9 The Prices are two Danish gourmet brothers and restaurateurs.

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10 Anne is a Danish food columnist and the title of the programme is a pun, since the Danish words for 'Anne food' and 'duck weed' sound the same, although there is a slight difference in the spelling.
11 According to Boesen, the programme *Lørdagsmagasinet* (*The Saturday Magazine*) already featured cooking in 1965.
12 Though neither Boesen nor Carlsen and Frandsen mention her, the American TV cook Julia Child seems to have been a great inspiration for the concept of the Danish kitchen programmes.
13 Camilla Plum in *Den sorte gryde* (*The Black Casserole*), unlike Claus Meyer's *Mad i Norden* (*Food in the North*) in which a jaunty signature in some ways seems to denounce the concept of genuine quality that the programme stands for: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCjeMatKHCM (accessed on 28 July 2013). (In case the link does not work, copy and paste the link into your browser).
14 Mik Schack in *Hjemmeservice* and *Public Service*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDkwLmdJSf4, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDkwLmdJSf4 (accessed on 28 July 2013). (In case the link does not work, copy and paste the link into your browser).
15 Like Rick Stein's programmes: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2g6eBLyx5s&list=PLCB42123B8924B35A (accessed on 28 July 2013). (In case the link does not work, copy and paste the link into your browser).
16 Solier (2005) suggests that TV cooking programmes provide the viewers with two kinds of culinary knowledge: accumulation of cookery skills and taste knowledge of ideological food preferences (Solier, 2005, p. 471).
17 *The Tuning of the World* (1977) is also the title of Schafer's book on his World Soundscape Project in which he describes his methods and thoughts.
18 This is brilliantly unravelled by Kelman (2010).
19 To cite Bill Hayley's 1954 cover version of 'Shake, Rattle and Roll', 'Get out in that kitchen and rattle those pots and pans'.
20 In relation to these, programmes such as MasterChef and Hell's Kitchen are 'spectacular, anti-domestic, and antipedagogic' (Ray, 2007, p. 59).
21 Think of the 'Spanish-English' spoken by German-born Manuel in Fawlty Towers.
22 http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1977/dec/08/gastro-porn/?pagination=false (accessed on 28 July 2013).
23 See also Larsen, 2012, p. 51.
24 Rick Stein's *French Odyssey* BBC DVD, 2007 part II, episode 9, 13:05.:
25 Claus Meyer in New Scandinavian Cooking, DVD, 2005
26 Rick Stein's *French Odyssey* BBC DVD, 2007 part II, episode 9, 13:41
27 Antonio Carluccio's *Sicily* shown on BBC Food 2008 in Denmark. Frem the DVD Southern Italian Feast, 2 Entertain, 2009.
28 Cf. Castells' network society (1997, p. 15) which describes how the networking logics constitutes a relation between different territories in a society.
29 This amalgamation of opera and cooking is further exemplified in an analysis of the Rick Stein programme *Rick Stein's Food of the Italian Opera* (BBC 2010).

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