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# Carnivorous heterotopias: gender, nostalgia and hipsterness in the Copenhagen meat scene

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## Abstract

The past years have seen an upsurge of burger- and barbecue restaurants in a Copenhagen gastronomic scene otherwise dominated by trends towards sustainability, ‘wholesome’, local and organic food. In these new spaces, meat is glorified and consumed materially and symbolically (through design and decorations), appeasing a presumed masculine appetite and conveying ideas about masculine, carnivorous bonding/community and a masculine, heterosexual, middle class gaze.

This article examines two manifestations of these celebrations of meat and masculinity: the hotdog restaurant Foderbrættet (‘The Bird Table’, opened in 2014 and elected as the 2014 Best New Restaurant in Copenhagen) and WarPigs, a Texas-inspired barbecue opened in 2015.

We discuss negotiations of masculinity in these meatscapes that challenge contemporary ideals for (sustainable, moderate, wholesome) food consumption and gender performances. We argue that these spaces of consumption express nostalgia and longing for authenticity that are simultaneously articulated as progressive and emancipatory. Consequently, these sites represent middle class masculine counter-spaces- masculine, carnivorous heterotopias where archaic, working class modes of doing masculinity (such as commodification of female bodies and excessive meat consumption) are appropriated, legitimized and sought transformed through irony, hipness and nostalgia.

**Key words:** masculinities, new carnivorism, gender equality, space, heterotopias, gentrification

## Meatscapes: glorifications of meat and masculinity

May 17th 2015, a biker-reunion turned into a tragic fight with nine dead and many more wounded at a Twin Peaks-restaurant in Waco, Texas. Twin Peaks is one the many new American restaurant chains that revive and cater to a traditional idea of masculinity and masculine taste. In the public, these are known as ‘breastaurants’. According to the chain’s marketing director, ‘men are simple’- the only thing they want is gulp beer and devour large chunks of meat while watching sports on big screen, surrounded by attractive, scantily clad female employees that are expected to flirt with male customers (Høi, 2015). There seems to be an underlying idea about an excessive masculinity centered around consumption of ‘traditional male’ products (meat, beer, sports en masse) and an untamed, heterosexual desire. These ‘breastaurants’ are perfect illustrations of the theories that accentuate how meat consumption is closely connected to patriarchal masculinity and to men’s dominance over women (Adams, 1990, 2003). The biker incident, however, could suggest that restaurants playing explicitly on meat and masculinity only appeal to marginalized men with premodern understanding of gender (such as bikers) and that such restaurants only exist in areas far away from the cultural and political center of modern Western societies, such as a provincial town in the conservative state of Texas.

In this article, we will argue that this is not the case by analyzing how meat and masculinity are connected in meat-based restaurants in a quite different social and geographical environment, namely in Vesterbro, a hip neighborhood of Copenhagen, the capital of Danish welfare state that has been globally recognized for its gender equal ideals and politics. We have chosen to examine this setting because Copenhagen’s restaurant scene has seen an influx of meat-based concept restaurants in the last couple of years: burgers, sausages, barbecue, steaks, game, intestines... 2014 was even termed ‘the year of the hotdog’ in the Danish capital (Schou, 2014). Opening a new meat-centered restaurant is becoming like ‘selling sand in Sahara’ (Schou, 2015). While many titles on the menus seem familiar and can be seen as catering to a traditional (masculine) taste, most of these new eateries have a twist that differentiates them from classic, ‘old-fashioned’ burger or hotdog joints.

Meat consumption and masculinity are also tied together, and feed off one another, in these eateries (Adams, 1990; Nath, 2011). Meat is devoured and glorified both literally and symbolically (for instance, through design and decorations). The menus, design and branding of these restaurants

aim to tease and appease an imagined masculine taste, reinforcing ideas about distinct masculine social bonds enacted around and through meat consumption and a shared (propensity towards) heterosexual masculine gaze. These restaurants can be interpreted as arenas for negotiations of masculinity. While playing with ‘old’ ideals and narratives of masculinity realized through ‘traditional’ meat consumption, these eateries simultaneously promise newness, hipness and progressive liberation, set in the Scandinavian discursive context of gender equality and ‘post-traditional’ masculinity (Leer, 2014a; Søndergaard, 1996). A nostalgic longing for authenticity is combined with promises of renewal, liberation and progressive ways of doing maleness/gender.

The article investigates these contradictory and yet mutually reinforcing logics through examining how these meat celebrations as masculinity (re)producing spaces combine sophisticated gastronomy and gobbling of meat of unknown origin; promises of blissful, ignorant indulgence and reflexive consumption; irony and sincerity; emphasis on being a ‘real man’ and gender equality; increasing demands for eating healthy, locally produced, and organic food in the everyday and the opportunity for a temporary escape and liberation beyond concerns about greenhouse gases, animal welfare, traces of antibiotics, fat or cholesterol.

We describe these places as meatscapes as they represent spaces that are constructed around and through consumption of meat. Within food studies, the concept of “foodscape” has been used in a multitude of ways to understand food culture from a spatial perspective (Wenzer, 2015). Despite variations in definitions and usages, the concept has mostly been activated in analyses of larger food systems. According to Johnston and Goodman (2015, p. 207), ‘the idea of a foodscape (...) crucially and at its most powerful highlights the dialectical *relationalities* between and amongst food culture (values, meanings and representations) and food materiality (physical landscapes, ecologies and political economy)’. Although we agree with the ambition of understanding food “in context” and “in relation to”, we would like in this article to use concept of meatscape to underline that we are looking at spaces formed by a specific food product, meat, in a specific (cultural and spatial) context; and we are not mapping a complete food system. Rather, we see the meatscapes as “subscapes” of the larger foodscape of Copenhagen.

The meatscapes analyzed in this article represent a counter-narrative and practice to prevailing middle class ideals about local, sustainable and organic food that have dominated the Copenhagen food scene in the past decade (Jensen, 2014). However, these spaces are also inspired by a focus on quality, unorthodox food combinations and creative gastronomy- and it is not least this echo that makes the new meat scene marketable as trendy and progressive. The ‘authenticity’ being sold in the restaurants feeds off ideas about ‘traditional’ and ‘heavy’ (working class)

foodstuffs such as sausages (and the gender roles and practices they signify). This leads to interesting ambivalences and frictions as ideas and practices linked to working class food and ‘traditional’ masculinity are combined with middle class hipsterness and ‘modern’ gender performances informed by gender equality discourses in stylish, gentrified spaces.

We have chosen two restaurants as cases for our analyses. Both exemplify the ‘meat wave’ of new Copenhagen eateries, linking carnivorism and masculinity, authenticity and progress. However, these spaces also differ in their particular enactments of gendered food consumption. In this article we analyze how these trendy meatscapes enable particular ways of doing masculinity. We explore how these places promise and market a masculine counter-space where distinct archaic performances of masculinity (objectification of female bodies and articulation of male food customs) are legitimized through nostalgic and ironic strategies and negotiations.

### **Spaces of new carnivorism and masculinity**

The article applies a performative view on food, masculinity and space, and these phenomena are seen as continuously unfolding and mutually constitutive. The article is part of a new series of studies that examine food consumption as an arena where conflicting discourses compete in defining masculinity in a time with increasingly contested and fluid gender roles, behaviors and identities (Attwood, 2005; Brownlie & Hower, 2008; Hollows, 2003; Leer, 2014a). Space plays a central role for negotiations of contemporary masculinity (Gottzén, 2013). This is also very much the case within the culinary field. For instance, the restaurant kitchen continues to be one of the arenas where more ‘traditional’ forms of masculinity are cultivated (Nilsson, 2012; Steno & Friche, 2015), while men entering the kitchen at home is to a larger extent interpreted as a renewal of masculinity (Leer, 2014b; Nath, 2011; Szabo, 2013, 2014; Aarseth & Olsen, 2008). Studies on food and culture have also emphasized a wave of new carnivorism where animal slaughter and meat eating are used to legitimize sexist (food) practices (Adams, 1990, 2003) or at least articulate and perform ‘traditional’ forms of masculinity (Leer, 2014b; Parry, 2010). This article contributes to the existing research on gender and food consumption by examining such carnivorous negotiations of masculinity in a new arena- the Copenhagen restaurant scene.

The celebratory meatscapes analyzed in the article are understood as social spaces- continually produced through the social practices that unfold in these locations, but also enabling and constraining the practices and forms of masculinity and subjectivity that are enacted in these spaces (Berg & Longhurst, 2003; Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2014; Lefebvre, 1991). The material and symbolic manifestations of the meatscape invite and encourage certain expressions of masculinity- and at the same time, arise through these expressions. Furthermore, we draw on

feminist post-colonial theory to discuss how these arenas (re-)produce conditions for belonging and exclusion. Some bodies are always, already 'at home' and can claim ownership in these spaces, while others are denoted as 'out of place' (Ahmed 2000, 2006, 2012). In this respect, Ahmed's perspectives on affective technologies and alignments (2004a), bodies' historically and culturally contingent orientations in spaces (2006) constitute a valuable addition to perspectives from masculinity- and food studies. These perspectives allow us analyze how particular practices and affects (for instance, nostalgia, irony and longing for 'escape') circulate and 'stick to' (gendered, classed and racialized) bodies. In addition, we use these notions in affective readings of the meatscapes and to nuance Foucault's (1984) notion of heterotopias.

According to Foucault, heterotopias denote counterpoints to mainstream and everyday social spaces, simultaneously reflecting and distorting these ordinary and/or hegemonic spaces and their functionalities (Foucault, 1984, p.3). In contrast to utopias, heterotopias are physically manifest in concrete locations, such as cemeteries, ships and hammam baths- or in this case, restaurant spaces of carnivorous and masculine excess.

The concept of heterotopia was only sketched by Foucault, which has led to divergent interpretations and criticisms of the vagueness and slipperiness of this notion (Johnson, 2013). In this article we use this term to capture the mutually constitutive relation between the meatscape as counter-space, seemingly liberated from (but also constituted through) the increasing demands on everyday food consumption (ethical, healthy, sustainable) and masculinity (gender equality and political correctness) in Copenhagen middle class milieus. While the celebrations of meat and masculinity imply stepping outside predominant norms and ideals, they point back to and are defined through the same everyday that they promise an escape from, which is a central insight in Foucault's original text. Several recent studies emphasize the emergence of particular masculinized spaces around cooking that situate 'masculine food' outside dullness of everyday (Leer, 2013, 2016; Nacarrato, 2012) – while everyday preparation of food has traditionally been perceived as female domain (Devault, 1991; Aarseth & Olsen, 2008).

Drawing on Ahmed (2000, 2004a, 2006, 2007, 2012) underlines that the escapes offered by heterotopic spaces (and the nostalgic, at times melancholic sentiments that propel them) are not universally available or appealing, but rather, contingent on gendered, classed, and racialized embodied histories. While the restaurant spaces can be experienced as liberating for some bodies, they are confining others, locking them in inferior positions established the past.

As pointed out by Bourdieu (1984), gastronomy has served as a mode of distinction reproducing classed structures, but also hierarchies of gender (Neuman & Fjellström, 2014; Nilsson, 2012; Nyvang, 2016) and ethnicity (Heldke, 2003; Leer & Kjær, 2015). In recent years, it has been

argued that traditional taste hierarchies (such as the longstanding reputation of the French cuisine (Ferguson, 2004)) have been challenged and even democratized to a certain degree (Johnston and Baumann, 2007, 2010). While some have interpreted these processes as abolition of food culture as a social arena for distinctions (Bennett et al., 2009), others suggest on the contrary that the emergence of new omnivore taste ideals (Peterson & Kern, 1996) has established new forms of 'culinary capital' (Naccarato & Lebesco, 2012) and new modes of distinction (Johnston & Baumann, 2007, 2010; Paddock, 2014, 2015) and that these new taste ideals reproduce traditional gender dichotomy of Western food culture (Leer, 2016; Parson, 2015). Our meatspaces should be understood within this context in which culinary taste ideals are reconfigured, but still serve as a mode of distinction and are defined to a large extent by white, privileged men.

### **Sophisticated hotdogs vs indulgent barbecue: Foderbrættet and WarPigs**

In order to analyze the influx of meat into the Copenhagen restaurant scene, we focus on two recently opened restaurants in Vesterbro district- Foderbrættet and WarPigs.

'**Foderbrættet**' opened in 2014 in a long, dark space on Vesterbro's central street and was awarded a prize for the best new restaurant of the year. The menu boasts gourmet hotdogs, cocktails and champagne. The price level is mid-range: a hotdog costs 56 DKK (7.5 EUR), snacks for a starter 40 DKK (5.4 EUR); staff recommends one starter and two hotdogs per person. In the evenings the restaurant is transformed into a trendy cocktail bar, with bearded, tattooed patrons and DJs on the weekend nights.

The walls are adorned with black and white photos of scantily clad, skinny women holding hotdogs or sausages in 1960s style; but there are also contemporary hipster accessories placed around the bar, such as a pair of sneakers on the champagne fridge. Gastronomically, Foderbrættet is an interesting case, illustrating a hybrid of meat consumption in-between sophisticated gourmet food combined with tributes and references to the traditional, authentic (working class, comfort and fast food) hotdog.

'**WarPigs**' opened in 2015 as a collaboration between the Danish brewery 'Mikkeller' and the US-based brewery 'Three Floyds'. This 'brewpub' occupies sizeable premises in Vesterbro's meat packing district, laid with white tiles. The menu offers meats smoked on the premises for 12 hours and numerous beers. The décor is minimalistic and invites associations with a canteen or festival tent, rather than a restaurant.

While Foderbrættet caters to various dietary preferences (although dominated by traditional sausages, hotdog fillings include vegetarian 'sausages' and fish), WarPigs specializes in 'heavy

food for heavy men' (Rasmussen, 2015). As a consequence, the two meatscapes emerge as sufficiently comparable and sufficiently different to form a basis for a nuanced analysis of hip celebrations of carnivorism and masculinity on Vesterbro.

## Meat and Gender on Vesterbro

Even before being incorporated in the city of Copenhagen, Vesterbro ('Western bridge') was characterized by presence of deviant occupations, including butchers and prostitutes. At the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, Copenhagen's butchers were allocated to the area beyond Vesterport ('Western gate'), where a slaughterhouse was built for the purpose. The butchers remained on Vesterbro until 'the white meat village', part of the Meat Packing District, began undergoing retail gentrification at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Vesterbro became increasingly known for entertainment, including numerous beer gardens, dance halls, ballrooms and inns. This infrastructure provided favorable conditions for widespread prostitution in the district.<sup>1</sup>

Prostitution was legal in Copenhagen between 1886 and 1906; however, it was under strict control of the so-called 'Chastity police' whose responsibilities involved registration and health checks of women involved in sex work. Along with the Inner city, Vesterbro was the district with most brothels and prostitutes- also after prostitution again became illegalized. Classic works of Danish literature<sup>2</sup> describe the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Vesterbro as populated by (also exotic and racialized) artists, prostitutes and other subaltern subjects.

The Meat Packing District, or Kødbyen ('The meat village') in Danish, had a special role in Vesterbro as arena for meat retail by day and sale and purchase of bodies for sex by night on the adjoining Halmtorvet (Hay square). Butchers began thinning out around 10-15 years ago, at the same time as 'Kødbyen' (after an example set by, for instance, the Meat Packing District in New York) increasingly started attracting creative start-ups and entrepreneurs, as well as restaurants, boutiques, clubs, bars and culture and arts venues. These developments can be linked to a general

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<sup>1</sup> We thank Allan Mylius Thomsen for sharing his knowledge about history of Vesterbro and Meat Packing District; for more information (in Danish) see <http://kodbyen.kk.dk/artikel/k%C3%B8dbyens-historie-0>, accessed September 17, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Among others: Kristensen, T. (1968) *Havoc*. University of Wisconsin Press. (Originally published in Danish as 'Hærværk' in 1930). Andersen Nexø, M. (2006) *Pelle the Conqueror*. Mondial. (Originally published in Danish as 'Pelle Erobreren' in 1906-1910).



gentrification process on Vesterbro. In the last years, the area has become increasingly trendy and popular with the middle class. These social and physical transformations have given rise to nostalgia and longing for an imagined old and authentic Vesterbro. Fear of Vesterbro losing its 'soul' and character has become so widespread that even the contemporary urban renewal project has made it an explicit goal to ensure that there remains a 'room for differences' in Vesterbro<sup>3</sup>. In addition, several books have been published to commemorate and pay tribute to a disappearing, authentic Vesterbro<sup>4</sup>.

This history situates Vesterbro as a contested, richly told and remembered urban space with regards to negotiations of gender, authenticity, hipsterness and class. The new, hip meat restaurants in Vesterbro, including Foderbrættet and WarPigs, are embedded and play a role in this history—both as hip eateries signifying processes related to gentrification and food (in)justice (Anguelovski, 2014; Kern, 2015) and as arenas for symbolic negotiation of pasts, presents and futures of meat and gender in Vesterbro.

### **Reading spaces: restaurant ethnography**

This article is based on sensory 'readings' of the interiors, food and artifacts of the two restaurant spaces, conducted over several visits in the summer and fall of 2015. We have chosen a sensory ethnography approach (Pink, 2008, 2009; Rhys-Taylor, 2013), using our embodied perceptions as point of departure for our analyses. This method has enabled us to 'look' beyond visual elements, examining the food prepared and served in these eateries as a material and cultural product, or the role of smell in constitution of a particular sense of (social) space. Our fieldwork in the restaurant spaces is supplemented by examining pictures and text from the restaurants' webpages and Facebook.

Moreover, sensory ethnography's insistence on knowing through the body (Pink, 2009) is consistent with our focus on intersecting, embodied subject positions (also our own) oriented in and by particular spaces and their affective circulations (Ahmed, 2004a, 2006). Our modes of being emplaced in the field (Pink, 2009), sensory experiences and their articulations are constrained and

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.vesterbrolokaludvalg.kk.dk/vesterbro-for-raat-for-paent-for-meget/> (Accessed September 24, 2015)

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Albers L., Mott, S., Bjerre, S. m.fl. (2010). *Ode til kastanjen- historier om Enghave Plads på Vesterbro* (Ode to the chestnut tree- stories about Enghave square in Vesterbro). København: Byens Forlag; Rostrup Fleischer, M. & Olsen, R. (2014). *Mens baggårdskattene forsvandt* (While the backyard cats disappeared). København: Byens Forlag.

enabled by our situated, embodied positionings (Ahlstedt, 2015; Billo & Hiemstra, 2013; Haraway, 1988), also with regards to gender, class and racialization. The different positionings of the two authors have contributed to variations in, and dialogue between, researcher perspectives. One of us (Linda) is a psychologist-gone-cultural geographer with Eastern European background passing as a woman, who does not eat most meats. The other (Jonatan) is a male, heterosexual, carnivorous, Danish but a little bit Francophile food culture researcher. These listings of social categories and embodied positionings do not determine who we are, or how we perceive the field, but the particular subject positionings have contributed to our researcher foci and modes of knowing and articulating these spaces. For instance, Linda's occupation with spatially and structurally bound processes of boundary-making, in- and exclusion has been mediated by her own feeling 'out of place' in the restaurants as a gendered and occasionally classed and exotified Eastern European migrant subject; while Jonatan has been more focused on ambivalence, new masculinities and the distinctive semiotics of food. These divergent attentions have enabled an analytically enriching dialogue and exchange of ideas with point of departure in our fieldnotes. Our analysis follows a circular trajectory, zooming in from the urban settings that the restaurants are embedded in, to the experiential meatscapes where types of flesh and masculinities are celebrated, to finally examine the gastronomical manifestations of carnivorism in these spaces.

Our analyses link together domains of gender performances, gastronomy and urban social spaces through the notion of celebratory meatscapes. One way these links manifest emerges by exploring which bodies, practices and cultural codes emerge as having a right to, or belonging in the restaurants. According to Ahmed (2007, p.158),

(...) bodies are orientated in certain ways by their surroundings. Spaces are orientated as well, and take shape by being orientated around some bodies more so than others- those bodies that, historically, have been 'at home' in those spaces. To be orientated is to be 'at home in the world', to be comfortable.

Consequently, one of the central foci for our analysis is who can be 'at home' in these hip, gendered, gentrified and carnivorous (and at times, conspicuously racialized) spaces. While we do not approach 'traditional' masculinity (in these settings, aligned with carnivorism, heteronormativity and whiteness) as a monolithic category, this trope finds its way into our analysis as a historically contingent notion of a particular ('real', authentic) masculinity. Thus sensory and affective readings of the meatscapes allow examining how space, gender, and culinary practices, interwoven with race, sexuality and affect, intersect and constrain each other (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Christensen & Jensen, 2014).

When analyzing the restaurant spaces we use photos taken during our fieldwork for illustration. Since we have decided to not anonymise the restaurants, we find that the photos of interior or food served are no more revealing than the text itself<sup>5</sup>. However, we due to ethical reasons the faces of the employees visible in one of the photos have been blurred.

## **Gourmet hotdogs, meat porno and white, masculine nostalgia**

### *Erected sausages and white nostalgia*

Foderbrættet is situated on Vesterbrogade, right next to a newly opened, lavish Vietnamese inspired restaurant. The façade is made up of high, dark and blank glass windows, resembling a bar or a club.

One enters an elongated, dark room. Even most of the oversized lamp shades, looming over the tables, are black; brighter light is emanated by smaller, emerald green, antique- looking lamps. The furniture and the bar are cut in dark wood, and the walls are painted dark army green. The tall windows opening towards the street are covered by heavy black drapes.

Seating is found in different constellations. Customers can choose between small tables for two situated in a row immediately to the left from the entrance. On the other side there are high tables surrounded by bar chairs, including a bigger table that seats five or six guests. Deeper into the restaurant one finds semi-closed, more intimate boxes that seat four, with wooden benches with high backrests, and a longer table. The boxes and the tables at the back of the restaurant are not parallel, so no seating offers full overview of the restaurant space.

At the far back, the kitchen can be glimpsed, laid with white tiles, with sharp fluorescent lighting emanating out the ‘window’ in the back wall. In this way, Foderbrættet delivers symbolic transparency and openness. The customers can get an impression of being able to see where their food comes from.

The décor appears to have been selected with great deliberation, but in a make-believe haphazard way signaling spontaneity and irony. Behind the bar there are bottles of alcohol in bright colors, lit by electric LED lights and candles. Pop-religious decorations with Christian and Hindi reminiscences stand in close proximity to a couple of papiermache masks with moustache. Someone has placed a pair of black and white sneakers on the bar fridge filled with champagne bottles. The composition seems thrown together accidentally in a trendy, elaborate fashion.

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<sup>5</sup> Photos of the restaurants’ interiors and food are also available on their webpages and official Facebook pages. We have nonetheless chosen to use our own photos- both due to copyright issues, but also to avoid the glossy advertising language of the official photos.

The space is abundant with racialized colonial-exotic objects, perhaps placed in the bar as trophies. The stand below the emerald green lamp shade on the bar is comprised by a figure of a black, topless woman in a hay skirt à la Josephine Baker. By her side there is a glass bowl filled with straws, formed as a stereotypical Asian-looking head with a wide grin and narrow eyes. The container for tips resembles a voodoo-like magic object, a kind of aboriginal skull. On a shelf on the left there is yet another decorative porcelain head, depicting a cheerful older black woman with round cheeks- warm, cozy, with a headscarf around her hair (so as not to disturb her in performing house chores see Figure 1)<sup>6</sup>. Rather than being explicitly sexualized like the topless figurine of the young black woman, she seems to impersonate a cheerful ‘Black mama’ maid.



**Figure 1. 'Black mama' and hotdog themed tattoo designs.**

These fetishized images of bodies of color, portrayed as comfortable and affectively at ease with being oppressed, echo aesthetics and ethos of colonialism and slavery. Hereby they also contribute to articulation of white, masculine, heterosexual and carnivorous nostalgia in this space- and mediate its effects like a kind of 'white melancholia' (Hübinette & Lundstöm, 2011). However, they are dominated in numbers by images of sexualized and objectified (white) female bodies on

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<sup>6</sup> This figure is now absent from the shelf.

the walls, portrayed in the company of, or adorned by, sausages and hotdogs in various constellations.

The main piece, which also serves as Foderbrættet's icon on the restaurant's Facebook and webpage, as well as a replica poster outside the restaurant, is centrally placed by the side of the blazing light opening into the kitchen. It's a black and white photo of a woman wearing retro underwear. Her body is enveloped in sausages, and there is a sausage crown on her head, bearing the brand name ZION. The sausage attire simultaneously adorns and undresses her for a masculine, heterosexual gaze (see figure 2).



**Figures 2(a) and (b). The Sausage Lady- Foderbrættet's icon (in the restaurant and as original)<sup>7</sup>.**

There are photos of women eating hotdogs, but their consumption of animal flesh is framed in a particular way. For instance, on the left of the entrance there is a photo of a skinny, scantily clad woman eating an enormous hotdog, where the phallic symbolism seems to block all other interpretations of the image. Due to the dimensions of the hotdog it is as if she is being penetrated by it; it is as if the hotdog consumes and symbolizes power over the female body and not the other way around (Adams, 1990). Another photo shows a woman posed as a snake charmer playing flute, making a make-believe snake comprised of sausages elevate itself to an upright position. Meat is made tame and erect in contact with a sexualized female body.

<sup>7</sup> <http://elderofziyon.blogspot.dk/2012/05/introducing-zionist-sausage-queen.html#.VnFBOL-nxME>, Accessed December 16, 2015.

Apart from the black and white ‘retro’ photos on the walls, woman-sausage interactions are also depicted on a color plate by the side of the ‘Black mama’ figurine, offering hotdog-themed tattoo designs in retro cartoon style (these might resemble the cartoon ‘Tom and Jerry’, like the figurine can echo the maid from the cartoon- whose face is never shown). One of these images portrays a naked woman with bulging breasts and buttocks rubbing herself against an oversized hotdog (see figure 1).

In Foderbrættet’s iconography, sausages and hotdogs are transformed into sex toys, extensions of masculine agency and desire, as a metaphor for huge phallus penetrating a female body or symbolizing a male body that she rubs herself against.

Both the large-scale black and white photos on the walls and the colored tattoo designs aesthetically echo the 1940-1960ies, which also aligns them with the racialized trophy objects echoing colonialism and slavery. The assemblage of all these images and figures, and the atmosphere they afford to the room, signify a longing for a lost, innocent age, where racism, sexism and excessive meat consumption were normalized and/or idealized and less challenged than in contemporary Copenhagen middle class circles. They can be seen as comprising and signifying white, masculine gastronomic nostalgia (Andreassen, 2015; Hübinette & Lundström, 2011;).

At the same time, we read the placement and exhibition of these items as ironic, inviting ambivalence and distancing to these objects of desire and longing in the negotiations of masculinity taking place. However, irony does not undermine nostalgia or desire; it is rather utilized as an legitimizing and enabling affective technology (Ahmed, 2004b). From this perspective irony somewhat softens and ‘appetizes’ displays and sentiments of white masculine nostalgia. The trendiness and claims to liberation inherent in Foderbrættet’s meatscape are established exactly through the combination of longing for an age of hegemony of masculine, objectifying, racializing gaze, and ironic, perhaps even reflexive, distance to that very gaze. This enabling ambiguity also highlights that Foderbrættet’s inviting heterotopia (Foucault, 1984) is only accessible to particular (gendered, racialized and classed) bodies, while others become tokens, fetishized and consumed to permit this escape (Ahmed, 2000; bell hooks, 1992).

### *Gastronomy of the meatscape*

Although the restaurant’s menu is dominated by hotdogs, Foderbrættet represents a diversified and hybrid culinary universe. All hotdogs can be ordered with a vegetarian ‘sausage’, resembling an elongated falafel rather than a traditional sausage. There are seafood hotdogs (octopus and cod); organic lamb meat; and one starter is prepared with Danish bacon. However,

most hotdogs are made with unspecified (most likely non-Danish, non- organic) poultry, pork or beef.

The hotdogs come wrapped in white, soft wheat buns, without a proposed alternative. In this regard there is no attempt to ‘customize’ or appeal to health- conscious or gluten-avoiding customers. The appetizers include vegetables (for example, tomato or summer salad), if, however, customers should wish to ‘dilute’ their hotdogs. Some hotdogs show ‘cosmopolitan’ aspirations- dressings and sauces involve mango chutney, Russian salad, avocado crème and aioli. One can order a hotdog without meat; with mango chutney instead of ketchup; with veggies on the side; but the white wheat buns are not up for negotiation. They seem to symbolize these hotdogs’ last mark of (working class) authenticity.

These various customizations signify a gourmetification of the hotdog, where ‘traditional’ working class fare is ‘lifted’ to the status of gourmet food item (Stamer, 2014). This reconfiguration of the hotdog from culinary unworthy to worthy food is a classic example of the new foodie culture that play with classic distinction of worthiness often by highlighting authenticity and simplicity as a core value (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). This transformation can be read on the menu, smelled, glimpsed, tasted and is reflected by the prices. All sausages, dressings and toppings are made on the premises, and the taste combinations are deliberately composed. While fried chicken sausage and mango chutney make up the minimalistic chicken hotdog, ‘Sea master’ boasts fried octopus topped by Portobello tartare sauce and glasswort. The special edition rabbit hotdog, sold for a limited period, is even more sophisticated, seasoned with thyme, apples and coarse mustard and topped with a crème composed of Greek yoghurt, lemon juice, ginger and honey and fine shreds of leek and carrot infused with lemon, cinnamon and chili. As such, the reworking of the hotdog in Foderbrættet is not only a return to an “authentic” working class comfort food, Foderbrættet also renders this - in Danish context - very familiar type of food “exotic”. According to Johnston and Baumann (2010), the exotic is along with the authentic (and the combination of the two) the new central modes of distinction in foodie discourse.



**Figure 3. Tonight's hotdogs: chicken and rabbit in the front. ('Josefine Baker' lamp and tips bowl in voodoo style can be glimpsed in the background.)**

The gastronomic, material and social meatscape of Foderbrættet combines an ambition towards sophistication (progress) AND nostalgic longing for bygone times- expressed and negotiated through flesh presented on the plates and on the walls. For instance, the fact that only white, fluffy hotdog buns are offered to go with the hotdogs can be interpreted as a tribute to an imagined authentic hotdog and its working class roots, while attributes like glasswort and rabbit sausage gesture towards the gourmet segment. At the same time, the white bread serves as an anti-health statement, valorizing sinful, indulgent gastronomic practices.

This cultivation of sinful indulgence can also be traced in the pornographic images of exotified and commodified female bodies. The (creative) middle class' appropriation of what is perceived as staple working class food can be a prism for interpreting the negotiations of gender that unfold in the meatscape, combining frictions between elitism and popular appeal, everyday and heterotopic space, irony and sincerity, tradition and progress. By being placed in a Vesterbro space



that promises hipness and emancipation, 'retro' objects such as the hotdog and the racialized, objectified female bodies call for and enable an ironic and somewhat reflexive distance to the white, masculine, heterosexual nostalgia. Gaze, desire and appetite that signal bad taste in middle class spaces outside Foderbrættet become legitimized and capitalized. The ironic distance refines and rehabilitates this increasingly denounced masculine gaze and masculine appetite, enabling it to be articulated in 'progressive' middle class spaces and milieus otherwise tainted by gender equality discourses.

Consequently, this meatscape as a venue celebrating meat and masculinity can be conceptualized as a white, masculine, middle class carnivorous heterotopia (Foucault, 1984; Johnson, 2013) where consumer practices that are losing legitimacy in middle class everyday lives (white wheat bread, meat of unknown origin, objectification of women, racial stereotypes etc.) acquire a status as hip and liberating. The celebration of meat becomes a source of authenticity, tradition and escapism; likewise, the images of female and/or racialised bodies can connect one to an 'innocent' age where more was allowed for a white, masculine gaze and appetite. Foderbrættet's meatscape represents a break from the everyday where long-held privileges seem to be restricted and demands for (correct middle class) consumption abound.

### **Glorified meatscape and the chosen warriors**

WarPigs (named after a Black Sabbath song) is located in a long, light and large venue in Vesterbro's meat packing district. The room is laid with white tiles and furnished with long, army green wooden tables, uniformly distributed and lined with benches without back support. There is also seating on high chairs by the windows that are tall and completely open. There is just as much seating outside the eatery. At first glance, 'restaurant' seems to be a misguided label, as the space seems to resemble a hybrid between a festival barbecue joint and a canteen.

The space evokes associations to the 'Meat town's' butchering past. Upon entering one is enveloped in strong aroma of smoked meat. According to WarPigs' American chef's blog, meat is smoked on the premises for 12 hours twice a day, every day- and the smell takes time to get used to. Both ends of the main room open out to adjoining spaces- on one side the kitchen where customers line up to order and pick up their food, and on the other side, a compartment lined with enormous shiny metal tanks for brewing beer. In contrast to Foderbrættet's dimmed intimacy the space seems to signal transparency and openness.



**Figure 4. WarPigs' menu.**

The main room is light and clean, but it does not seem sterile, rather efficient, standardized and exposing. The décor is minimalistic- apart from posters for upcoming events (which include Oktoberfest and an exclusive metal concert in the basement) and blackboards advertising menu and drinks, the only decorations are an impressive collection of cacti, some of them tall and phallus-shaped, and rows of big, brown empty beer bottles adorned with WarPigs logo in the windows.

### *Spectator to the general's lounge*

The white minimalism of the main venue is in stark contrast to the dark enclosure of the General's lounge- a smaller glass enclave in the middle of the eating area, adjoining the wall at the back. The lounge is furnished with a massive table and chairs, resembling an aristocrat's hunting cabin: baroque style, carvings, dark wood and leather. The floor of the enclave is elevated on a platform 20 or 30 centimeters above the main eating area. Burgundy red, heavy velour curtains hang on the inside of the glass windows and can be closed if the General should wish for more privacy- or left open if He wishes to be seen. Particularly in the evenings, the main space of the brewpub becomes loud, busy and uninviting for prolonged stay- rather an 'eat-drink-and move on' venue. The general's lounge is an exception- a space within the space whose by comparison comfortable furniture, dimmed lights and shelter from noise and busy, efficient atmosphere of the brewpub invite to relax and indulge.

Apart from a sign in the crate explaining the concept of General's lounge, and a sign advertising the possibility of becoming a WarPigs 'trooper' at the bar, there are no references to the WarPigs hierarchy that hereby seems undertold and undersold.

According to the WarPigs website, the General is the highest and most expensive of a number of ranks for sale at the brewpub. The ranks give access to various privileges. Trooper, the lowest rank, can be purchased for 660 DKK (88,5 EUR) and includes assorted merchandise (t-shirt, tote bag, numbered coin and a patch), newsletter subscription, entry to an annual event and a small discount on beer. The General of the Armies, the highest and most expensive rank, has been sold to the highest bidder (in order to come into consideration, candidates were required to write a letter of motivation and describe a perfect day at WarPigs). The second highest rank, the Colonel, costs around 68.500 DKK (9180 EUR). The highest ranks include personal beer mugs and seats at the bar, literally providing extended ownership of the space. The General's rank combines multiple privileges:

There is no reason to sugarcoat it. As the General of the Armies you are going to be famous. Your own General's stick and a reserved special made chair at the bar anytime from open to close, non-stop VIP treatment coming your way. Your portrait is painted on the mash tun and people will turn their heads when you walk past. Of course, with power comes responsibility. But, to be honest, in this case your responsibilities will mostly be: drinking beer and extreme VIP treatment, lots of it. And your mug is going to be the biggest of them all.<sup>8</sup>

As with Foderbrættet's nostalgic retro adornments, this description gleams with irony. However, the gravity of seduction is underlined by the fact that someone has paid to become the General (most likely significantly more than the 9180 EUR price tag on the Colonel's title). The ranks constitute a claim to fame in WarPigs' universe of beer, meat and masculinity where the biggest is the best; abundance, indulgence and excess go hand in hand. Also in this case irony works as an affective technology (Ahmed 2004), enabling this clan-like hierarchic structure with privileges and fame allegedly on sale.

The interior of WarPigs contains multiple references to dead animals in form of bones and skulls- as illustrations on the blackboards, in the logos and as elements in some of the furniture. For instance, the lamp in the General's lounge is made of (simile?) animal skulls, referencing hunting trophies. This contrasts the symbolic universe of Foderbrættet that includes replica of human craniums, but no animal bones or skulls.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://WarPigs.dk/shop/product/memberships/general-of-the-armies/>, accessed 17. September 2015.

These objects and the military hierarchy that aestheticizes (animal) death and glorifies war and the military, represent a friction with regards to the reference to Black Sabbath anti-war song 'War Pigs' in the brewpubs name. In the lyrics of the song, the evil and destructiveness of 'brainwashed' generals and other 'war pigs' ends in the 'pigs' crawling on their knees on judgment day<sup>9</sup> - a radically different outcome from the extreme privileges granted to the General, physically manifest through the exclusive lounge. The reference to the song can be read as appropriation of cultural capital and black metal 'cred' - while the song's central message is playfully reversed.

Interestingly, the space of WarPigs acknowledges and complies with customers' possible parental responsibilities. There are a few baby high chairs lined along the wall - but they are painted black. So is the sign hanging by the ceiling that indicates the location of nursing area, situated next to the male bathroom. The responsibilities of parenthood that men are increasingly expected to partake in the context of Scandinavian gender equality discourses are not banished from the space of WarPigs, but instead re-branded to acquire black metal, masculine cred, perhaps also as an ironic commentary. The space promises an ideal of fatherhood where spending time with one's baby can easily be combined with beers and barbecue in hip places with friends.

### *Barbecue of excess*

A food journalist described WarPigs as a place for 'heavy men' where seeing a woman alone would be unthinkable (Rasmussen, 2015). While this is an overstatement, male customers comprise around 85% on our visits. However, the menu does cultivate a gastronomic universe appealing a traditionally masculine taste where substance (not refinement) takes center stage.

The food is ordered and handed out straight from the kitchen, slices of meat served directly on fat-stained brown paper on big trays, with pickles and coleslaw in cardboard cups on the side. Big chunks of meat, pork shoulder and ribs, are so soft that the meat almost falls from the bones by itself. Trays with greasy plastic bottles of homemade barbecue sauce are strewn around on the long tables.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/blacksabbath/WarPigs.html>, accessed September 30, 2015.



**Figures 5(a) and 5(b). The meat party (the vegetarian option, cheese 'salad', in front on the left).**

The only vegetarian main dish is 'Hush puppies', deep-fried corn balls with pimiento and a cheese 'salad', consisting of grated cheese with mayo dressing and spices. Hush puppies are served in a paper bag, suggesting using one's fingers; the cheese salad resembles a thick dip and comes in a cardboard cup. For a vegetarian main dish this is a heavy option. This vegetarian menu, entitled 'puppies', can be read as a parody and ironic comment on vegetarian food. Rich in animal products (cheese and eggs) and fat, void of vegetables, this dish seems to demarcate a symbolic boundary rather than include customers who do not desire the meats that are the trademark of this traditionally masculine food universe.

Besides the choice of ingredients, all food in WarPigs is served in a way that invites the customers to use their fingers and get their faces covered in grease. In this meatscape, one is not, and should not be, 'playing smart' and concerned with table manners or a drop of dressing on the cheek. However, this liberation from table manners is not equally available to everyone, as it contradicts culturally embedded ideals about good looks, femininity and 'good (female) behavior'. Of course, there is room for negotiation (there are some women eating at WarPigs), but the aesthetics and affordances mediated through food constitute the brewpub as a masculine meatscape that marginalizes femininely connoted food practices.

Consequently, this demarcation acquires a clear gendered dimension, where food and table manners associated with femininity become positioned as deviant and illegitimate vis-à-vis 'hardcore' or traditional masculine practice. This underlines how culturally and historically bound ideals about masculine and feminine bodies and practices always, already are present in a given space: 'histories (...) surface on the body, or even shape how the body surfaces' (Ahmed, 2006, p.

111). All bodies are not equally enabled or 'liberated' to gobble large portions of calorie-rich, fatty meats with their fingers.

WarPigs' plain aesthetics and canteen style décor do not imply an absence of culinary ambition. Everything is prepared on the premises, and the meat is slow cooked. The brewpubs' webpage contains an elaborate account of the ambition to be 'the best' with regard to perfecting Texas- inspired, authentic barbecue and refined brewing techniques. However, this sophistication is not meant to make the culinary universe formal or 'too smart'. There is a classic distinction between working class and upper class food, where the first emphasizes substance and the second centers on form (Bourdieu, 1984). Each of these competing ideals represented a value in itself. The upper class perceived their more advanced culinary practices as manifesting (cultural) superiority, while the working class regarded upper class food as superficial quirk and their own substance-focused cuisine as more honest, natural and authentic. WarPigs can be read as trying to appease both types of taste. On one side, the meatscape appeals to the substance-focused ideals affiliated with working class food through the minimalistic furnishing and invitation to devour excessive amounts of fatty meats. On the other side, the price level, slow cooking and advanced culinary lingo are intended to attract customers with high culinary capital (Naccarato & Lebesco, 2012). As a result, while attempting to distance the food from (from a working class perspective) vain and disciplined upper class cuisine, WarPigs also aims to be much more than a regular canteen. This includes a gendered distinction, as the restaurant space evidently ejects culinary ideals that are traditionally associated with, or 'stick to' (Ahmed, 2004b), femininity: green, healthy, balanced food in moderation.

This 'sophisticated substance'- borne taste practice affords certain possibilities for negotiation of gender in the meatscape of WarPigs, where middle class men can cultivate ideals on food and masculinity associated with working class, while simultaneously claiming superiority to these.

Moreover, the space co-produces in- and exclusion, not least with regards to gender. Lack of concern for health and nutrition conscious customers, vegetarians etc. reflects and reinforces gendered ideas about who eats and drinks what. This results in constitution of a masculine meatscape where binary gender categories are reified. Women, vegetarians, Muslims and other minorities are not stopped by a bouncer, but through culturally bound, historically contingent norms (for instance, related to feminine and masculine culinary practices) some bodies are enabled to feel 'at home' while others are marginalized (Ahmed 2006, 2007).

The space invites cultivation of masculine bonding and notions of community, made explicit through military references. The almost lodge-like organization of the elaborate ranking

system, physically manifest through the General's lounge, gives this invitation a satirical after-taste that allows ironic positionings with regard to culinary homosocialities (Leer, 2016). Like the lodge, WarPigs emerges as a universe of particular meanings and logics outside everyday space: a heterotopic space that offers temporary liberation from and/or renegotiation of a part of complexity and normativity that characterizes middle class gender and food practices in the late modern Danish welfare society. The meatscape emerges as an arena for nostalgic, working class- appropriating masculinity, marketed to meat gobbling and authenticity-starved middle class men.

### **Carnivorous heterotopias**

As the example of the 'breastaurant' chain Twin Peaks illustrated, in some settings masculine meatscapes seem to be built on long-standing stereotypes tying gender, sexuality and (meat) consumption. These spaces cultivate and are built around notions of 'simple' masculinity that entails devouring enormous amounts of meat, glaring at topless waitresses, drinking beer, watching sports and perhaps getting into fights (Høi, 2015).

While the Copenhagen meatscapes analysed in this article also utilize historically and culturally contingent ideas of 'traditional' gender roles, their negotiations of food and gender are more ambiguous and complex. This difference is to some extent explained by class. Twin Peaks and similar restaurant chains offer cheap, standardized 'substance' foods with working class appeal, without an emphasis on culinary sophistication, subtlety or irony. The customer base of Foderbrættet and WarPigs would most likely never dream of becoming regulars in a chain like Twin Peaks. Perhaps they would find the commodification of waitresses' bodies archaic and repulsive; while the sexualized and racialized images in Foderbrættet's décor come to signify hipness and liberation through use of irony as an affective technology (Ahmed, 2004a). Moreover, both Vesterbro meatscapes celebrate 'authentic' carnivorism and masculinity, although in slightly different ways.

Foderbrættet constitutes an intimate, sophisticated, trendy space, where photos and other decorations portray women interacting with phallic sausages and hotdogs and racial stereotypes. We have argued that this meatscape articulates and appeases white, masculine, heterosexual and carnivorous nostalgia- longing for an 'innocent' age when even more was allowed for a white, masculine gaze. On the contrary, WarPigs emerges as a space of excess where 'biggest is best' and where the selection of food and drinks, glorification of war and the aesthetics of the space establish a hegemonic masculine field where other (also feminized) bodies always, already are 'out of place' (Ahmed, 2006).

While the two restaurants appear different, they share important commonalities. Both meatscapes utilize irony as an enabling affective technology that legitimizes and re-brands masculine practices otherwise increasingly shunned from a middle class perspective, such as commodification of female and racialized bodies, glorification of war and gobbling of meat of unknown origin. Masculinity is negotiated through competing spatiotemporal logics. On one hand these spaces are saturated by white masculine nostalgia and longing for authenticity, consummated through appropriation of working class food and gendered practices. On the other hand, the meatscapes articulate ambitions of trendiness, sophistication, self-reflexive irony and liberation. Even parental responsibilities acquire some black metal coolness through black baby chairs and a nursing table next to men's, not women's toilets. This combination allows these spaces to emerge as gendered, classed and racialized carnivorous heterotopias (Foucault, 1984) where proximity and distance to 'traditional' masculinity and culinary practices are continuously re-negotiated. The customers can be 'real men', seemingly 'free' from the Scandinavian welfare state's middle class everyday and its demands on political correctness, gender equality, healthy, sustainable and organic food consumption- and at the same time feel that they are at the culinary forefront, progressive and fashion-conscious.



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## Figure captions

**Figure 5. 'Black mama' and hotdog themed tattoo designs.**

**Figures 6(a) and (b). The Sausage Lady- Foderbrættet's icon (in the restaurant and as original)<sup>10</sup>.**

**Figure 7. Tonight's hotdogs: chicken and rabbit in the front. ('Josefine Baker' lamp and tips bowl in voodoo style can be glimpsed in the background.)**

**Figure 8. WarPigs' menu.**

**Figures 5(a) and 5(b). The meat party (the vegetarian option, cheese 'salad', in front on the left).**

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<sup>10</sup> <http://elderofziyon.blogspot.dk/2012/05/introducing-zionist-sausage-queen.html#.VnFBOL-nxME>, Accessed December 16, 2015.