Keys to heterotopia

An actantial approach to landfills as societal mirrors

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Abstract:

In a reflection on two landfills – *Fresh Kills*, a wetland area belonging to New York City, and *Spillepeng*, an artificially constructed peninsula in the Öresund region in Scandinavia – and the reshaping of dumping sites into programmed landscapes for recreation, this paper addresses the notion of "heterotopia". It is claimed that the capacity of heterotopia as an alternate place functioning as a social "mirror", could apply meaningfully to the domain of landscape and urban planning, providing that this somewhat vague and overly general concept is supplied with a contribution from actant theory, a contribution that would bring a multiplicity of influential forces into the picture.

Re-shaped garbage dumps (like Fresh Kills, New York and Spillepeng, Malmö) have an exemplary heterotopian character, since they are geographies materialised by the need to find a place outside of normal urban fabric, and artificially constructed by remains from the surrounding social space. It is here suggested that the study of landfills, especially the ones programmed into recreation areas or in other ways furnished with a public agenda, could be done in an approach where not only the expected parta-kers of urban/regional planning appear, but also those unexpected "owners", "visitors", and "authorizers" that could be found as having an interest.

What follows is above all a theoretical investigation into advantages, limitations and extensions of the notion of heterotopia, and to what extent this notion helps viewing the *multiplicity of partakers* and their influence on *access to space*. Eventually, a method is suggested for the investigation of the influential conditions of places in general. In this methodological model – an analytical tool for urban/rural studies as well as for the practicing architect – the recognition of unforeseen as well as expected *actants* will help visualising the ongoing formation of public and semi-public space, the determination of which may otherwise be destined to a much more closed, or arbitrary, design process.

Keywords:

waste, recreation, actants, Foucault, Latour, Hammad, Fresh Kills, Spillepeng

Introduction: Two landfills

"Fresh Kills has been amplified as a symbolic vessel encapsulating who we are, what comprised our past, how we live in the present, and what may constitute the future."[1] In this quotation from a site-specific exhibition located at Staten Island just outside New York City, one of the largest landfill areas in the world, Fresh Kills (kill = creek, channel), is seen as a mirror of human culture. The fact that garbage reflects those who throw it away is not precisely a novel thought, but this quote suggests that in a singular area more than twice the size of Central Park, a significant part of New York's history is buried and thus also inversely present. The quote attributes, in other words, to this landfill a heterotopian character, meaning a socially, historically and spatially complex type of reflection. The quoted statement above should perhaps be read in relation to a specifically American context, and in particular in relation to the political decision in September 2001 to reopen this – at that time newly closed – dumping site, in order to put there the wreckage from the World Trade Center attacks. This fact drastically changed, of course, the general conception of the area. In Fresh Kills there have been plans since several decades to re-establish the wetland area as a large park system for recreation, a reshaping that also aims to acknowledge and incorporate its bio-topic specificity. Those plans came then to involve also a monument over the killed in the World Trade Center attacks. The current master plan for the area, released by the City of New York in 2006, is to a large extent a realisation of the winning design proposal "Lifescape" by the New York based planning firm Field Operations/James Corner, authorised in a joint venture with among others the architect Stan Allen. Field Operations have continued in close co-operation with the City Planning Office to prepare a blueprint for a future "green oasis for all New Yorkers"[2], with drafts, suggestions

View from Fresh Kills, New York (Staten Island) showing facilities for the collection of methane gas.

and visions for large-scale nature-related activities like running, biking, horse riding, canoeing, and bird-watching, but also indoor sport arenas, museums, etc. Before that, since 1989, the (re)construction of the area involved artistic over-view and judgement by the American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Ukeles has since the 1970s devoted her art to maintenance and sanitation issues, originally from a gender perspective, and has an experience not only as an addresser of such issues in exhibitions, but also from being an artist in residence, as well as a former member of the Executive Committee of New York City Department of Sanitation. When first told about the decision to dump at Fresh Kills the WTC remnants, she remembers thinking she'd been misinformed: "'The city would never do that. They would never mingle human remains in a place where they put garbage; that would collapse a taboo in our whole culture. That crosses a line.' "[3] But, no other site was big enough and no other so secure. Ultimately, about 175 of the landfill's 2200 acres were given over to sifting through the hundreds of thousands of tons from Ground Zero, a mixture of building material with human flesh and ash. "This added a layer of tragedy to a site that was already contested, fragile, enormous, resented, and political."[4]

This particular fate of Fresh Kills, with ethical and political consequences the amplitude of which still cannot be foreseen, can in a way not be compared with other more neutral but geographically similar sites. However, as the landfill it was before autumn 2001, and as the landfill it is at present in the perspective of New York City Planning Office, treated as a future ground for activities in a constructed nature, the Fresh Kills area could represent a large amount of sites around the world for the dumping of garbage, sites often re-shaped into parks or spontaneously used as areas for recreation. Every city needs to find – or create – destinations for the transportation of homes' and industries' junk, toxic or not, and for the leftovers of renewals: torn down houses, trees and earth. And today, in a branded culture, when pains are taken to create symbolical values for the future of such sites, and when we do not only leave them in the state of an ever more naturalized heap of garbage but turn them into various types of urbanized and programmed landscapes, we have in these recreation areas also an interesting "mirror" of current comprehensions of what is supposed to constitute human "activities".

Turing to a quieter corner of the world and a Scandinavian context, we may find an interesting case in an artificially formed peninsula right North from the city of Malmö in Sweden. Its name is Spillepeng (literally an old Danish word for "game marker") and it is built by various types of processed garbage and remains from urban reshaping of the city of Malmö. This regular and smoothly hammer-shaped tongue of land that stretches out from the Scanian (Skåne) west coast in the direction towards Denmark and Copenhagen is declared in a detailed development plan from 1987 as "public area", divided into a "recreation area" and a "nature park".[5] An older part of the landfill, closer to the original coastline, has been used as a garbage dump for more than a century and became during twentieth century successively more regulated by the City of Malmö and its neighbours Burlöv and Lomma. The larger part of this older landfill is also declared as public, and has partly been re-designed so as to gain a picturesque surrounding for walks as well as to a limited extent for cars to drive in. It is, in other words, accessible in some parts, however for an occasional visitor the landscape still seems to be very much in an in-between state of exception, neither private nor public, neither designed nor natural, neither urban nor rural.

The garbage processing and land transformation in Spillepeng will, so it is predicted, go on for 25-30 years, depending on the volume of incinerated garbage.[6] However, the repeated delays in the historical transformation from dumping site into a recreation area, ever since the 1940s when the more industrialized dumping begun, seem to continue in a fairly unnoticed slow pace.[7] This place – compared to Fresh Kills – has not been part of a public debate, neither as part of a broader societal context, nor in the sense invitational to citizens' participation in planning. But here too, an inevitable phase of more precise and complex decisions, including designs, will become more intense in the future.

Before returning to the landfill case towards the end of this paper, the main part of it will be devoted to a discussion of the theoretical background from which an eventual methodology could be derived. It starts with a critical analysis of the notion of heterotopia, thought of as an alternate and reflective space in a societal web, and continues with suggestions of how to supply this partly effective, partly blunt notion with more precise sets of possible actors.

Heterotopia: Foucault, and the inverted reflection of societal space

Michel Foucault's renderings of the "order" of institutions, languages and sciences formed a seminal inquiry into the manifestation of structural power, an inquiry more occupied with describing its appearance and arrangement, and less with the ways by which people actually handles disciplinary power in daily practical circumstances.[8] In *Des espaces autres* – a short and dense article, bearing the lecture manuscript's character of provisory arrangement and proclamation, Foucault took his overall interest in various disciplines' obsession with *emplacement*, and applied it to the specific concerns of architectural and urban space. Foucault here introduces the concept of *heterotopia* as a spatial as well as a placial entity, referring to a specific set of places, lived and clearly demarcated, which all have the ability to reflect their surroundings in such a way as to "represent, challenge, and overturn all (other) real emplacements."[9] Heterotopias are real and existing, defined in contrast to the utopias, which are "emplacements having no real place."[10] Seen either as a rugged realisation of utopia, or as a mirror of other existing societal topoi, heterotopia is thus defined as an idiosyncratic place in the societal web, a place that establishes a fundamental difference when entered. It is, as actual place, in possession of the rules and schemas of both utopian and ordinary worlds – and so reflects both. It is described through six principles that could be summarised as:[11]

View from outmost part of Spillepeng with plant for the treatment of compost material located below sea level. In the background: construction of landscape topology.

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1. A heterotopia, as a spatial condition of otherness in all societies, appears in two principal guises:

> 1) of crisis (loci for rites of passage, e.g. boarding schools, military service, and honeymoon hotels);
> 2) of deviance (loci for putting aside, e.g. rest homes, psychiatric clinics, prisons, and old people's homes).

2. A heterotopia may operate in different ways in different historical periods – its paradigmatic function may be modified and altered, as in the historical development of cemeteries and the rituals connected with them.

3. A heterotopia makes possible the juxtaposition of locations that are essentially different (by the conjunction of separate and otherwise incompatible dimensions, as in theatres (place after place), cinemas (3D into 2D) and gardens (representation of several different worlds)).

4. A heterotopia clarifies different types of time:

> 1) time as accumulation (i.e. in providing locus for collections, e.g. museums and libraries)
> 2) time as absolute presence (as in temporally conditioned festivals, fairs and holiday trips).

5. A heterotopia opens and closes by will of others than those who enters them (Systems and rituals work as more or less hidden holder(s) of keys to access, as in a guest house.)

6. A heterotopia as a spatial entity has the function of reflecting the remaining space: in one extreme as rendering that space as an illusion; in another extreme as a compensation providing an alternative. (Brothels, colonies, and ships serve as Foucault's examples here.)

This shows the diversity of place types the juxtaposition of which could seem incongruent or even crude when seen from more recent perspectives – such as post colonial studies and gender studies – where social emplacements like these would reveal other, richer and more precise histories. The six principles show an ambition to encompass a vast variety of space-types, which lends to the concept of heterotopia an almost Borgesian character of paradoxical juxtaposition.[12] Only if judged as a major discursive attempt at a paradigmatic turn of analytical interest – of seeing places not primarily for what and whom they contain, but for what they may reflect – does the notion of heterotopia show its relevance.

Before we try to make use of that relevance, and apply it to landfills and recreation areas, a theoretical reflection on the concept of heterotopia will make clear its limitations and advantages.

Heterotopia criticized ...

It is not self-evident in what kind of topological "universe" Foucault bases his discourse of space.[13] When he refers to the heterotopia as "utterly different from all the other emplacements that they reflect or refer to," one could actually conclude that all other spaces could be (inversely regarded as) heterotopian too. This is implied also when he speaks about the remaining space as illusory if viewed from inside a heterotopia. The all-encompassing trait of this particular feature would emphasise the heterotopology as a structuralist analytical tool, applicable to the orders of *any* place. The statement that the heterotopian emplacements "have their function in relation to all the space that remains,"[14] implies that there is a normal background or structure. Foucault thus renders only indirectly, and without any specific features, the normal society that produces heterotopia. Since he, furthermore, sets out to question the typical "void, within which individuals and things might be located," it is clear that Foucault's "remaining space" is that of a taken-for-granted normality or homogeneity.[15] Henri Lefebvre labelled this space "isotopia" in a polemic passage directed against Foucault's dualistic distinction between heterotopia and utopia, thus naming the omitted third.[16] One of the explicit comments on Foucault made by Lefebvre, a comment that clearly shows the deviance between their otherwise mutual interest in spatial figures of thought and the dismantling of hidden structures of power, concerned this problem: "...this tactic [of Foucault's] which concentrates on the peripheries, simply ends up with a lot of pinprick operations which are separated from each other in time and space. It neglects the centers and centrality; it neglects the global."[17] Lefebvre uses isotopia, heterotopia, and utopia – or as he also labels them: "analogous places, contrasting places, and the places of what has no place" – to state that it is only one triad – another "more suppler" one being "private, public and mediational (passageways, or pathways)."[18]

... and acknowledged

These early criticisms by Lefebvre, have later been followed by others, like Edward Said, Anne McLeod and Cindy Katz, all of whom,

from the perspectives of other histories of culture, feminist views, etc., to a certain extent have acknowledged heterotopia as a working concept, but at the same time pointed to Foucault as a thinker who positions himself in a western (French) logo-centrist context.[19] One of the most constructive re-readings of heterotopia is Kevin Hetherington's view of these spaces as "of an alternate ordering."[20] Hetherington emphasizes the networking feature of these places: "they never exist in and of themselves" and he integrates them with Bruno Latour's notion of "obligatory points of passage", saying that certain nodes in a societal web, like for instance the scientific laboratory's role in modern science, are clearly both produced by, and producing that society.

In what follows I will join, but also slightly deviate from Hetherington's way of seeing heteroptopia and actor-network-nodes as integrated, and try a more supplementary connection to actor/actant theory and Latour, by paying attention in particular to *access* to public places and to local *formatting actors*, and less to large-scale political, or historical, formatting forces. Since access inevitably concerns the division private/public, I will first discuss this dichotomy through Foucault's heterotopian examples, but also through a more socio-semiotic perspective. So, before ending with an actantial approach that methodologically handles the *increasing and decreasing of access* to a place, i.e. of privatizing and making public, I will discuss heterotopia again, now more affirmatively, by asking to what extent Foucault's view, or rather examples, actually may problematize the commonly simplified, but constantly reappearing distinction between private and public.

Unsettling the border between private and public

"Perhaps," says Foucault, "our life is still dominated by a certain number of oppositions that cannot be tampered with, that institutions and practices have not ventured to change."[21] The private/public is one of those "sacred" spatial dichotomies that still exists in our days as taken for granted. Other spaces of this kind, spaces that according to Foucault "are not yet entirely desacralized"[22] are those defined by the oppositions: family/social, culture/use and leisure/work.

One has to ask, of course, some decades after the conception of *Des espaces autres*, decades that have shown the influence of computerized worlds on the physical ones, and of increasing artificial bio-constructs, if these "sacred" spaces are still evident. As concerns the division of work and leisure it is probably more of a mixed matter today than in Foucault's late-modern world, even if the essential difference between a work-event and a leisure-event still holds a strong symbolical position in people's minds. And the borderline between culture and use may also be questioned, most evidently so in contemporary art where a direct undertaking of actual circumstances is quite common, or inversely, when "culture" is appropriated by experience industry and branding purposes. It would be wrong to say that Foucault's "sacred spaces", or rather sacred types of division, have vanished, but they exist probably more as mental schematic guidelines and less as socio-spatial facts. They also exist, as in our example of landfills (for future recreation), as measures by which a lot of planning takes place.

As concerns the opposition between private and public, the heterotopia has the capacity to tackle and modify a traditional evaluation of urban milieus as consisting of spaces that are either restricted as "private" or open as "public."[23]

Historically, in architects' and planners' practice, a lot of attempts have been made to regard urban space as semi-private (allowing activity for close habitants) or semi -public (allowing activity for occasional visitors, etc.), for instance in the planning of yards between chains of houses for living, but Foucault's heterotopic spaces seem more enclosed and ruled so as to constantly allow the co-presence key-holders, personnel, guests and visitors. Judging from several of Foucault's examples, a typical heterotopia hosts activities that involve a plurality of persons from different origin or different family, persons that have temporarily – in some cases for a long time – left the privacy of their homes or the routines of their offices and workplaces. Several of the places listed by Foucault leaves space for a person to be on his/her own, or for persons to have a rendez-vous, and in that sense provide for a certain amount of privacy, but these private spaces are "owned" only from a situational point of view. They are not possessions that can be taken for granted. And they are not freely accessible – neither in the way one would enter one's own home, nor in the way one would supposedly take part of the open atmosphere of an ideal public place. One is, in Foucault's words, "either constrained to enter, such as is the case with barracks and prisons, or one has to submit to rituals and purification."[24]

This type of situation, where someone is in possession of a factual or ritual "key" to a space resembles the situation of privacy, in the sense that "private" could be defined as a space where no other than the key-holder(s) have automatic access. As regards access to Foucault's typical heterotopian places, we could approach that issue by looking at who visits them. From the examples it is obvious that these places' existence depends on the presence of a diversity of people – mainly care-takers and guests – who do not necessarily know each other. In that sense they are not free public places, but they have a public trait in the sense that they are relational, conditioned by others, also by non-familiars. Usually, though, we do not confuse institutional "privacy" with a homely one, even if both could be said to consist of a set of relations. In Foucault's examples we can easily imagine various types of relational affairs, whether we view them as purely discursive matters, as factual "components" in urban planning, or from the inner perspective of an occupier or a visitor. [25]

We have seen that a consideration of heterotopia as neither private nor public, but to a certain extent both, generates various modes of accessibility. It suggests that spaces and places are indeed controlled, but also conceivable as un-definite and situational – even in regulated places like prisons, museums, libraries, gardens, ships, etc. Space, or the cultural formation of it that we genarally label "place", is thus ruled by temporary contracts that include a certain amount of arbitrarity. They are not destined to obey a certain political or architectural circumstance. We have also seen that the heterotopias' ways of affording public access, obligatory but limited, suggests very clearly that "public" space is a rule-based and relational affair, produced by "key-holders", "visitors," "maintenance," "ritual", "law," etc.

We might be tempted, then, to conclude, especially regarding privatisation, that the concept of heterotopia, and the exemplification given in Foucault's heterotopology, reveals that private and public spaces are – if not simply ideals, or illusions – mutually intertwined in a continuous spatial production. This type of production of space is, in coherence with Henri Lefebvre's ideas – and with the practice of everyday planning – governed, not by "society", but by its common conceptions, its laws, its representations, the will of its individuals, and its materiality. This is also a main interest in recent theories that are sometimes labelled actor-network-

oriented, sometimes agency-oriented, sometimes "actantial". [26]

An experiment about negotiating the access to space

In a relational, or more specifically: "actantial" approach to space we may define for instance "the key-holder" as a general (or de-humanised) actant. In this perspective every space (for instance a home) is continuously produced by a number of actors (or more generalized: actants) and this allows us to say that an individual's apartment is not necessarily "more privatised" than an institution's room, or more in the hands of one single owner. One suggestion to such an approach might be found in an experimental setting by the architect and space semiotican Manar Hammad, a setting with a more archetypal sort of space, namely a room in a hotel with owners and visitors. Hammad performs in a more formal manner an attempt to dissolve the borderline between private and public. He questions the stability of the borderline itself, and is interested in the dynamics of privatizing rather than by the characteristics of the private and the public, but maintains the division between "owner" and "visitor" in order to discuss the continuously produced division of space between them.

In 1984, Hammad staged an experiment in La Tourette, the architectonic classic designed by Le Corbusier. Once a monastery with room for prayer, meals, living, gathering, management, transportation, etcetera, this building was now functioning as a conference hotel, but still with a small amount of monastic representation (a prior and a few monks) in the running of some of the daily operations. In collaboration with a group of selected partakers in a conference taking place here, Hammad initiated a series of rule-braking behaviour such as 1) sitting at the particular table in the refectory (room for meals) usually advised for a group of leaders including the prior, or 2) knocking at the door of a guest room and ask the guest for access to the room, or 3) telling a guest that he has to leave the room and move to another one for reasons of ranking of the guests, etc. It was important to Hammad that the experiment concerned implicit (or tacit) rules, more like etiquette, implicating that a violation of them was initially perhaps only vaguely experienced, without the possibility to consult any written regulations. In all, Hammad conducted five types of spatial violations which all were proxemic (body-related) to their character. In his

analysis of this experiment,[27] Hammad suggests a set of spatial "modalities", or variations of the socio-spatial situations, based on different types of relations: between people; between people and concrete architectural elements like windows; between people and authorisation (or law); between activities and time; etc. These relations constitute a set of "actants" in the La Tourette analysis, such as: "the owner of a place," "the spatial partition controlled by this owner," "the authoriser (or legaliser)" "the visitor," "the spatial extent external to the visitor inside the place of the owner," and so on.[28] They all concern modes of the possession of space, i.e. how a portion of space is prohibited from access, how it is possible to access, how it is de-accessed, etc. Hammad's analysis concerns, in other words, some fundamental mechanisms in acts of privatisation of space. Hammad's conclusions support the initial hypothesis that to privatise (to make ones own) means always also to deprive others of a part of space. He points to the possibility of creating temporary spaces within a larger place, partitions achieved through the "bending" of etiquette. The notion of threshold (to a space) is here given an expanded understanding, while several of the experimental acts are performed virtually on the threshold to the room in question. While the threshold is a liminal space that architectonically belongs to "the house", it appears also as a non-place, or marked space of passage and openness, and this space can from a social point of view be temporarily extended, for instance by way of having a conversation that can expand further into next room. In Hammad's description this threshold space belongs initially to "the owner of the place", but is at the same time the very space where the owner as such can be questioned.

The experiments in La Tourette make clear the tactical importance of a temporal division of space, like when the refectory in the monastery is used only a couple of hours per day, a fact that provides the possibility to disturb that particular spatial system by out-of-regulation actions (occupying chairs) at the immediate beginning of active hours. This liminal time-space then constitutes a threshold to a possible spatial appropriation. Another time-related experimental mechanism that appeared as important in this experiment is the ability to negotiate access to a room depending on the amount of time possible for an intruder to spend spontaneously at the doorstep or at the far end of the room.

*Refectory at
La Tourette monastery*

Extending the mirror by adding actants

Hammad's set of actants follows, as we saw, a certain set of expected interests in the "fight" for spatial access. Bruno Latour has a slightly different approach to the emergence of actants, and requires of social scientists a greater openness for unexpected actors to show up, and lead the way for the investigator: "Actors are also able to propose their own *theories of action* to explain how agencies' effects are carried over".[29] By "following" the actors themselves, and how they define their own spatial activities, and by locating and mapping the various determinators and controversies[30] in connection to these activities, one would achieve an even more complex reflexive image of areas like Fresh Kills and Spillepeng, an extended heterotopic image. But not only that; one would also, with Latour, be able to extend Hammad's position, while still maintaining the locating of possible conjunctions and disjunctions of actants. That would open for the issue of the *negotiability* of space, and for the determination of access to this area, in the fashion of Hammad's experiment. In comparison to Hammad's systematically elaborated application of spatial actants, devoted to and confined by the variants, or modalities, of the spatial situation under study, the heterotopia confines to its ability to describe structural spatial divisions, and at best to deconstruct them, in preference of a space of lived diversity.

And further, by way of Latour's approach to actor-network theory, i.e. by looking more into what the situation might reveal in terms of

obscured controversies, and less into predicted grouping of humans and matter, an even richer set of actors may appear. If Latour's emphasis on letting the actants themselves decide the listing and grouping of will and matter, is added to Foucault's and Hammad's approaches, one may see a methodological pattern of how to approach an investigation of who and what defines urban/rural space. The methodological succession, or the order in which to realise such an analysis, should avoid rigidity, not to loose its applicability to various situations. However, it seems here that a fair acknowledgement of all three approaches could be reached if an initial heterotopological approach was followed by an open search for controversies and connections between unforeseen actors, ending with a "check" on a set of recurrent types. This procedure would leave Latour's approach untouched by predicted forces, while Hammad's scale of recurrent actants (owners, visitors, authorizers, and their spatial claims) could provide unforseen aspects that might inform the description of the socio-spatial situations that urban and rural landscapes may bring.

The "public" nature of urban landscaping: landfills and their spatial politics

Without here accounting for any deeper case studies, but merely pointing out a possible case, I would suggest hypothetically that the socio-spatial considerations made in the La Tourette experiment, could be transferred from these almost archetypal interior situations (a couple of persons in a room) into the empirically more complex fields of urbanity and landscape. Such an undertaking would aim for instance on dismantling the unstable rules of urban/rural public access.

At the virtually new ground of the landfills here addressed, i.e. in the shift from one particular application (garbage dumping) to another (recreation), there are effective (and, as we saw, very extended) time lapses for the action

Plan for a future Fresh Kills with four major parks and a central confluence area.
(Field Operations/New York City Planning Office, 2006)

of various stakeholders. It is not very hard to imagine a net of possible "actants" here, emanating from for instance: 1) the will of landowners; 2) political decision-making of where and when to fill land; 3) the policies and practices of garbage dumping; 4) the political decisions about access to such areas; 5) the planning decisions about the re-vitalisation and shaping of these areas; 6) the existing material formations; 7) the activities of various sort that have already been given a special access; 8) specialised visitors' claims; 9) occasional visitors' wishes; etc.

A brief look into the interests involved in Fresh Kills and Spillepeng respectively, will render the picture somewhat more substantial.

Fresh Kills

In the case of Fresh Kills the authorization pattern got more complicated, and media interest got increased first in connection with the design competition of the area (several proposals and jury members) and then significantly when the decision was made to place remnants from World Trade Center there. Also material forces and restrictions belonging to the designs and virtualisation of landfills for the creation of the North, West, East and South Parks, including the 9-11 monument has successively increased the number of actants here.

The wills of designers Corner and Allen and their collaborators are part of the obligatory and expected set of actors appearing here, actors that include also individuals and boards of authorization, like the representatives of the three NY departments of City Planning, Parks & Recreation and Sanitation, as well as several representatives of Staten Island. More specific ones emanate from the conflict between those who reacted negatively to burry the human flesh/ash there, and those relatives who did not want to move these remnants once they had been settled. Together, they constitute the actantial influence on the future of this place.

Also the comments sampled in a public review of the Draft Master Plan reveal fear of improper spatial juxtaposition: "The plan is to use the back of the West Mound to house major Department of Sanitation facilities and operations both related to Fresh Kills closure and Sanitation needs. This area will have a leachate treatment plant, a landfill gas recovery facility, and a DSNY Staten island grage borough repair shop, and is incompatible with an area for quiet

reflection".[31] Another comment concerns the fact that Staten Island is the fastest growing county in the State of New York, and that the Draft Master Plan is based on obsolete figures.[32]

The sanitation business a such has over the last decades become ever more interested in the production, thus ultimately also the fate, of sanitary landfills: "Among the most significant changes the rubbish conglomerates wrought were the domination of the waste market by a few large firms, the reinvigoration of the sanitary landfill, and the exporting of garbage."[33] All of these supplementary agencies will eventually have an impact on the total comprehension of the landfill politics.
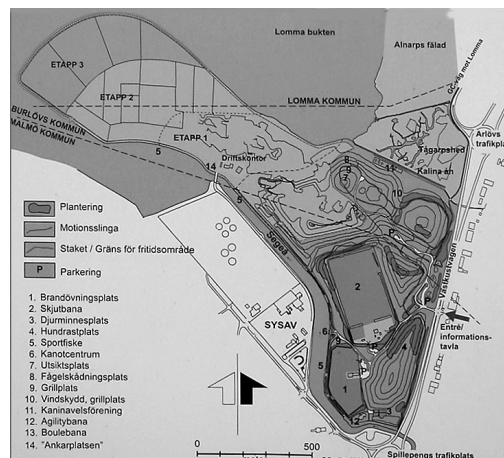
Spillepeng

In the before mentioned Spillepeng landfill area, the citizens of Malmö have for several decades been promised a public ground for recreation activities. At present, one may find other, unexpected, "minor" actors beside those "major", or governmental ones that consist of the three municipalities that share the area, plus the incineration plant that operate the land fill activities and handles processes in the ground. Spillepeng serves as an official dumping and recirculation site for fourteen Southmost Swedish municipalities. This fits with the current late-modern trend of having larger units for processing, transporting and storing garbage. Originally, in early 20th century, the East-most part of Spillepeng functioned as a local dump yard for Malmö and the neighbouring communities of Burlöv and Lomma. These three municipalities now share the legal right to the land of Spillepeng. To control the landscape construction and maintenance of the area they have together formed a politically representative foundation (Stiftelsen Spillepeng).

The incineration plant company (SYSAV) that manages the handling and recirculation of garbage, earth, polluted earth, wood, metal, chemicals, etc., has decisive influence in the daily goings-on of the area. It also holds positions in the board of this political foundation. SYSAV serves as a public resource for several municipalities', citizens' and companies' needs to find dumping facilities, but also as a de-assessment agency for their own processed products: gardeners can for instance buy composted earth here.
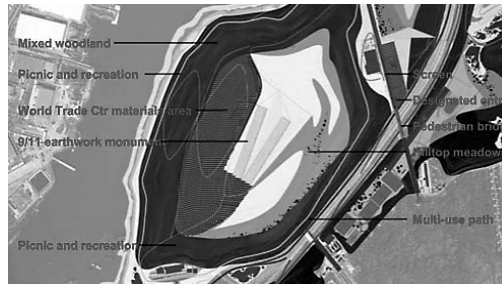
Location of monument over the 9-11 victims in West Park section.

Apart from these major stakeholders, we find at present also several associations or agencies that already are hosted in the older part of Spillepeng's area for recreation: for instance in an animals' cemetery; several ranges of various size for local shooting-clubs; drilling

Information poster showing Spillepeng and its division into three municipalities.

grounds for the fire brigade and for rescue services; a community of farms for rabbit breeding, an agility track, etc.

The range and types of activities to be found here may seem a bit random from an occasional visitors point of view, and the set of sign posts directing a visitor's way immediately triggers a question: Why exactly these associations? And, in a next step, what is their influence, and view, of this landfill and its future?

Un-incinerated remains, mainly wood, transported to outer part of Spillepeng to be circulated as landfill material

Some of the present and relatively stable activities at Spillepeng: fire drill, shooting range, animals' cemetery

These actors, or actants, if we by this term mean types of actors including also materials' impact, will also influence the future of this area: as stakeholders representing hard-to-move activities; as having experience from
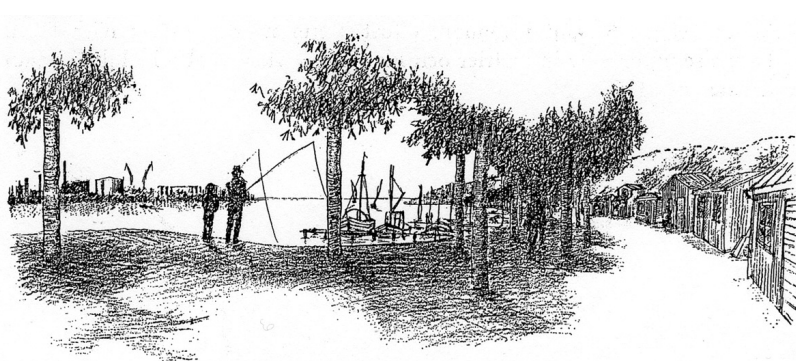

Illustration of marina in detailed development plan

extended temporary land use in the area; as organizers of a yearly, very popular, one-day public event (Spillepengsdagen, with several thousand visitors); and perhaps also as incongruent with the future plans for the new re-creation area, as the implementation of these plans gets closer.

These associations have at various times been

Detail of an information board located at the entering of the Spillepeng area. The listed places read: 1. Fire drill ground; 2. Shooting range; 3. Cemetary for animals; 4. Dog exercise ground; 5. Angling; 6. Canoe center; 7. Outlook; 8. Bird watching site; 9. Barbeque; 10. Wind protection; 11. Rabbit breeding association; 12. Agility ground; 13. Boule track; 14. "Anchor's place".
(Photo by author)

1. Brandövningsplats
2. Skjutbana
3. Djurminnesplats
4. Hundrastplats
5. Sportfiske
6. Kanocentrum
7. Utsiktsplats
8. Fågelskådningsplats
9. Grillplats
10. Vindskydd
11. Kaninavelsförening
12. Agilitybana
13. Boulebana
14. "Ankarplatsen"

attributed space here by authorities that found the Spillepeng area suitable, large enough, and untouched by other interests than pure governmental ones. For the new extended part of the peninsula, two small harbours and a sand beach were proposed in the detailed development plan.

Without here trying to foresee any exact contents of a future landscape at Spillepeng, or its design processes, I have here suggested a methodological approach to the study of the interests that do influence and might continue to influence places like this one, i.e. places where a certain randomness and non-decisiveness has been able to rule for a significant amount of time. This is not to say that randomness, in the sense spontaneous activities and biological growth possibilities, should necessarily be more formatively regulated, but only that the incorporation of the existing interests and material resources already at hand might creatively help the developing process of areas like these. This against short-term planning perspectives that may be economically convenient or tempting from a branding point of view.

Conclusion and methodology: reflective and active capacities conjoined

The notion of heterotopia, with its general ability to reflect and represent social space, captures a broad and diverse urban/rural context. It works also, as we have seen through Foucault's exemplification, as a tool for the discussion of the demarcation line between private and public space. But a mere recognition of heterotopia does not, in comparison to strategies that focus on the multiplicity of actors that continuously co-produce spaces, show the mechanisms active in spatial negotiation, violation and privatisation. In his condensed, proclamatory and descriptive definition of the notion of heterotopia as a different, yet representational societal space, Michel Foucault mentions as a principle of heterotopia that there are always systems or rituals that you have to obey to enter. But apart from that, he does not add much to the finer issues of accessing, possessing, or negotiating these particular spaces/places. If to the notion of heterotopia is added an actantial approach, such as here Bruno Latour's and Manar Hammad's, new types of place-formatting influences will appear, and a more action-oriented approach to the analysis of urban/rural landscaping will emerge, an approach that in the long run may

enable ways to better negotiate the outcome and future of these places.

A few hints at possible actantial patterns have been discussed specifically in relation to landfills, where, apart from involved municipalities' departments of planning, sanitation and recreation, also certain major and minor private interests have been added as possible influences and stakeholders. A fuller analysis, pursued in the fashion of the methodological approach discussed in the paper, may in the future render this picture more complex and more precise. The approach here derived at, could be expressed as follows:

Three methodological steps to a sociological understanding of places, places' formation, and access to places: 1) Let the heterotopia, i.e. a place that have the quality of representing, contesting and inverting other places (spaces, societies), lead an initial interest into the specific relations and rule systems of the studied situation; 2) Combine this interest, led by the unexpected actors that appear as forming the studied situation, with a description of the associations and controversies that have an impact on the formation of the place. 3) Compare the scope of found actors with a set of certain given actantial types – owners, visitors, spatial partitions, authorizers and regulation – that constitute the interpersonal, material, and legal forces that decide access to a place.

Yearly public event at Spillepeng: shooting range

Yearly public event at Spillepengsdagen: rabbit exhibition

Yearly public event at Spillepengsdagen: Tent for the display of outdoor recreation activities (Friluftsfrämjandet)

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NOTES

[1] Snug Harbor Cultural Center, public catalogue announcement, as quoted in Goddard, Donald, 2002, *Mierle Laderman Ukeles: Penetration and Transparency: Morphed (with videographers Kathy Brew and Robert Guerra)*, http://www.newyorkartworld.com/reviews/ukeles.html
[2] Michael R Bloomberg, Mayor of New York, in *Fresh Kills Park: Draft Master Plan*, March 2006, http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/fkl/fkl4.shtml (2007-12-07).
[3] Mierle Laderman Ukeles, in Goddard, 2002.
[4] Goddard, 2002.
[5] The plan was established by law as early as in 1987. Malmö Kommunfullmäktiges handlingar, bihang Nr 112, 1987, Plan 1603.
[6] SYSAV: Mitt i kretsloppet, Sysav, 2001, p 8.
[7] The number of delays during the 20th century of the transformation of this area has been historically laid bare and interpreted by landscape architect and researcher Mattias Qviström, see Qviström M., A waste of time? On spatial planning and 'wastelands' at the city edge of Malmö (Sweden), in *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, (2007),doi:10.1016/j.ufug.207.03.004
[8] At least Michel de Certeau so described the difference between himself (as interested in practical antidisciplinary tactics) and Foucault (as revealing the disciplinary technologies) in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984.

[9] Foucault, Michel, Different Spaces, p. 178. Before Foucault turned it into an epistemological and spatial concept, "heterotopia" existed as a term in medicine. "Heterotopic" is then used as denoting tissues or growths occurring in unusual (corporeal) places, as opposed to orthotopic growth that are in their right place. "Otherness" is here made particularly visual, as deviations from harmonious patterns, looked for in magnified images of human or biological tissue. And moreover, "otherness" is in this context generally not something completely other (unknown), but rather a normal phenomenon at place regarded as abnormal. (See for instance Sigurd F. Lax, "'Heterotopia, from a biological and medical point of view'", in *Other Spaces*, 1998.
[10] *Different Spaces*, p. 178.
[11] The six points are a distillate of what Foucault says in *Different Spaces*, pp. 179-184.
[12] This is perhaps of no coincidence since Foucault slightly earlier, in *Les Mots et les choses (The Order of Things)*, 1966, had mentioned the concept of heterotopia, but then in a discussion not addressing architectural/urban space, but rather the general disciplinary desire to order things in pre-established categories – a desire that permeates social and scientific habits as well as language itself. Here Foucault, inspired by Jorge Louis Borges writings on dictionaries' arbitrary categorization, points to the force of

juxtaposition of otherwise incongruent categories as a strong formative principle in language, in representation generally, and in the practice of various disciplines. Heterotopias were in this context briefly presented (in the preface) as a category of linguistic *resistance*, as entities that in their ability to "destroy syntax in advance" escape any common locus applied to them, even language itself. *The Order of Things*, 1994, p. xviii.

[13] In a way it is a phenomenological universe, because it is constituted by what we, as subjects, perceive, conceive and produce, rather than by what we believe is there regardless of our presence. But Foucault himself dismisses phenomenology as primarily concerned with "internal" space – after first having credited it (and especially Gaston Bachelard) for loosening up the notion of a "homogeneous and empty space" (Ibid. p. 177). By this statement, Foucault positions himself as a thinker of social rather than of cognitive or perceptual concerns, and above all as a thinker bringing otherness and outsideness into the centre of discourse.

[14] Ibid., p. 184.

[15] This is congruent not only with his other writings concerning the general problem of (the power of) categorisation, but also of the common attempt in post-structuralist philosophy to question and reflect orders and structures that are normally taken for granted.

[16] Lefebvre, H., *The Production of Space*, pp. 163, 366.

[17] As noted in Soja, Edward, *Thirdspace*, 1996, p. 146. The passage origins from Lefebvre, Henri, *The Survival of Capitalism,* 1976, p. 116. In the introduction to *The Production of Space* Lefebvre positions himself against Foucault (among others), who is accused of rejecting a productive relation between a thinking "I" and its relation to an epistemological world. Here, he views Foucault as one of many structuralists promoting an updated version of a Cartesian space with separated subject/object-worlds.

[18] *The Production of Space*, p. 163-164.

[19] See Sandin, G., *Modalities of Place: On Polarisation and Exclusion in Concepts of Place and in Site-specific Art*, dissertation, Lund University, 1993, p. 154-168.

[20] Hetherington, Kevin, *Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and social ordering,* 1997, p. 52.

[21] *Different Spaces* p. 177.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid p. 183.

[25] The fact that spatial access is relational and continuously produced should be clear enough from experiences of everyday life, like being able or not to pay the rent. And it become obvious, of course, in urgent situations where spatial delimitation is governed directly by warfare politics, revolutionary change of power, or natural disaster.

[26] For an overview of the various labelling, scope and interest of these types of theories, see for instance the first chapters of Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social*, Oxford, 2005.

[27] Published 1990 as "La privatisation de l'espace", and later translated into English in Hammad, Manar, *The Privatisation of Space*, issue 2002:1 of "Studies in Theoretical and Applied Aesthetics," Lund University.

[28] The notion of "actant" is in Hammad's version more formal, and more true to the originator Algirdas Julien Greimas's confined set of actants, than it is in the hands of for instance Bruno Latour, who seems to allow a more unprecedented set of actants to occur. I consider, as we shall see, both views as useful in a pragmatic methodological handling of planning matters.

[29] Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social*, Oxford, 2005, p. 57.

[30] Ibid. p. 31. According to Latour, the listing of controversies is far more telling, and also an easier task to pursue, than trying to maintain and describe already fixed social groupings.

[31] Comment 6, in Appendix B: Response to Comments, http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/fresh_kills_park/html/phasing.html In this attachment the NYC Dept of Parks and Recreation summarizes and responds to the comments to a public review in 2006 of the Draft Scope of Work to prepare a Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Fresh Kills Park project.

[32] Ibid. Comment 7.

[33] Heather Rogers, *The Power of Garbage*, in a text announcing a project by Center of Urban Pedagogy: "The New York City Garbage Machine", about the mapping of sanitation business interests. http://www.an-atlas.com/contents/cup_rogers.html

[34] Malmö Kommunfullmäktiges handlingar, bihang Nr 112, 1987, Plan 1603.

Gunnar Sandin: Keys to heterotopia. An actantial approach to landfills as societal mirrors

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