

Wreckage Installation: Towards an Archaeology of Southern Sweden's Heterotopias

LEILA PAPOLI-YAZDI¹  AND WILLIAM HOGLAND² 

¹*School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University, Sweden*

²*Department of Biology and Environmental Science, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden*

*'And oh! where meantime was the hapless
owner of this wreck? In what land?
Under what auspices?'*

Charlotte Bronte (*Jane Eyre*, Chapter 36)

During a survey on the island of Öland in south-eastern Sweden, whose aim was to study the local waste-disposal practices, the authors recorded abandoned machinery and cars dating from the 1940s to today in locations close to residential areas and farms, and complemented the investigation by interviewing informants. This led them to conclude that dumping redundant objects in the surroundings of villages forms an entangled network with other behaviour, i.e. collecting things which had outlived their usefulness and embedding them in the landscape. The behaviour observed in Öland is compared with two other cases of collecting abandoned objects in Öland and southern Sweden. Using the location and chronology of the finds, the authors interpret the behaviour by borrowing the concept of heterotopia, as defined by Foucault.

Keywords: heterotopia, Öland, installation, useless objects, contemporary archaeology

INTRODUCTION

According to Mary Douglas (1966: 44–59), every society develops its own criteria to define binaries and differentiate between clean and dirty and between refuse and usable material. In archaeology, refuse (garbage in US English) is usually defined as useless or redundant objects whose use date has expired. For many people, these dumped or discarded items are considered to be outside the production/usage loop (Rathje & Murphy, 2001). Reuse is accepted behaviour in many societies. Some dumped items may find their way to second-hand shops or be remade or recycled. Collecting objects that

have lost their initial function seems to have increased, given the growing rate of refuse disposal.

Observing the large quantities of waste accumulated outside the villages and farms on the island of Öland in Sweden led us to ask questions about the entangled network between people and useless things (Hodder, 1991, 2012). What drives people to collect and abandon useless objects? Do the aesthetics of decay play a part in this? Should we consider these objects as rubbish or heritage (Burström, 2011)? Interviewing the villagers and surveying the woods around the villages helped us find an explanation for this cultural phenomenon.

Since the spaces and the objects acquire different meanings when they are discarded or dumped outside their normal context, we applied the concept of heterotopia, developed by Michel Foucault, to characterize the spaces occupied by discarded cars and machinery on Öland. Foucault's notion of heterotopia attempts to bring order and understanding to a space that features a wealth of displaced entities and seeks to explain cultural boundaries.

The hypothesis in this article is that the people in the community under study created a particular form of space by abandoning/keeping useless objects that gradually turned into installations of decayed things. These spaces fit the general description of heterotopia. Heterotopia is usually related to utopia, which can be interpreted as nostalgia for a world in which objects existed before their 'death'. Seeing these spaces as installations in nature draws our attention to their resemblance to graveyards; like graveyards, they possess their own dynamics but also serve as reminders to the still-living of their residents' earlier existence.

We shall start by explaining why we chose the idea of heterotopia to understand these practices, classified here under the headings of collecting, keeping, and abandoning in locations close to residential areas.

QUESTIONS AND ENCOUNTERS

Abandoned objects dating to recent times, such as discarded furniture, food waste, industrial waste, and even human remains, have been the subject of worldwide archaeological study for a long time. But only since the 1970s has modern refuse been studied by archaeologists under the name 'garbology', or the archaeology of garbage, as developed by William Rathje (Rathje &

Murphy, 2001). Rathje's project showed that discarded objects could tell a story substantially different from that reported by consumers (González-Ruibal, 2014: 1691).

Garbology, as devised in the 1970s, remained dominant in the topical research literature from the early 1970s to the 2000s. In the 2000s and after the emergence of debates on climate change, garbology has again been applied by archaeologists and cultural anthropologists, but in a different way, the focus has shifted to analysing the impact of consumption and waste on the environment. In recent years, archaeological investigations of recent refuse have targeted rural areas (Brunclíková, 2017) as well as cities and explored patterns of consumption among different social classes and strata (e.g. Kalmon et al., 2012).

The acceleration of consumption has divided cities and settlements into places where people live and places where garbage is located (Papoli-Yazdi, 2021). The places where waste is left are not a specifically modern social phenomenon, but, since modern garbage is more durable than the organic material discarded by pre-modern societies, the spaces occupied by modern refuse and landfills are more complicated to study. Though they are adjacent to settlements, they cannot be construed as lived spaces, that is, a phenomenological concept that emphasizes the experience of individuals in the world.

Many countries have ceased using landfill sites and are replacing them with advanced recycling systems. However, there is still durable refuse, such as plastic objects (Williams, 2022) and machinery dumped on the seas or land. Depending on their durability, these objects will remain for a long time, and if they are dumped near residential areas, people will form a relationship with them.

Regarding such a relationship, we propose that garbageologists should address the conceptualization of refuse dumps and landfills. Our case studies in Öland illustrate a present-day integration between rural communities and durable garbage. These cases are not unique, and there are numerous examples of durable refuse discarded close to residential areas worldwide (e.g. Carhenge in Nebraska; Carhenge, *n.d.*). What makes the Öland and southern Swedish cases remarkable is that they are located next to tourist and industrial sites. This situation indicates how villagers develop relationships with the objects and derive new meanings from them. In this, installations of objects in nature are formed gradually, containing things at the boundary between being remembered and forgotten (Buchli & Lucas, 2001) and between being useless and useful.

In summer 2021, during weekend visits, we observed and documented cars and machinery abandoned on Öland (Figure 1). These cars were not left in car cemeteries or recycling sites, and the (former) owners of most of them were known to the people living in the area. Our project was supported and defined under the Baltic Phytoremediation Project (BAPR), which monitors and investigates environmental changes in the Baltic Sea. Our aim was to study the refuse left on the island to explore the general patterns of waste-disposal behaviour of rural communities in the region, complemented by interviews with local people. The surveys covered the municipality of Borgholm in the north of the island.

To protect the data and privacy of the interviewees and participants, the project complied with the regulations of the European Association of Archaeologists' Code (<https://www.e-a-a.org/EAACodes>) and EU General Data Protection Regulation. The permissions for the fieldwork, including sampling and interviews, were provided by the Baltic

Phytoremediation Project BAPR. The interviewees were not asked any questions about their private lives. The people named in the article were informed of it, or their information was taken from the public museum or exhibition websites.

We conducted twelve interviews with the inhabitants of the island and eight with staff at the local camping sites, with a view to evaluate the patterns of refuse discard and waste disposal by the inhabitants of the island as well as tourists. Having seen the abandoned objects, we added a couple of questions to our questionnaires about the ownership and history of the objects and the places where they were left.

We mapped the locations of abandoned cars and other objects; the oldest object was from the 1940s, a Jeep abandoned in the woods. Most of the other objects dated to the 1960s and 1970s and consisted of old farming machinery made redundant by more advanced technology. The distribution of the items shows that they were repeatedly left in places close to, but outside, domestic spaces and in the neighbourhood of farms and woods (Figure 2). In autumn 2021, we (with Omran Garazhian) re-surveyed the sites we had identified; more objects were recognized in the woods as the vegetation cover had thinned with the season.

During our interviews, we realized that it is barely possible to consider collecting and abandoning as two distinct behaviours. Even though they seem very different at first glance, they both form part of a single process of discarding. Initially, every person who abandons useless objects close to their living environment has to collect or keep them. It is not clear whether people use the landscape as a place to abandon their collection of old objects or as a place to keep large objects.

The focus of this article is on the relationship between people and objects, and

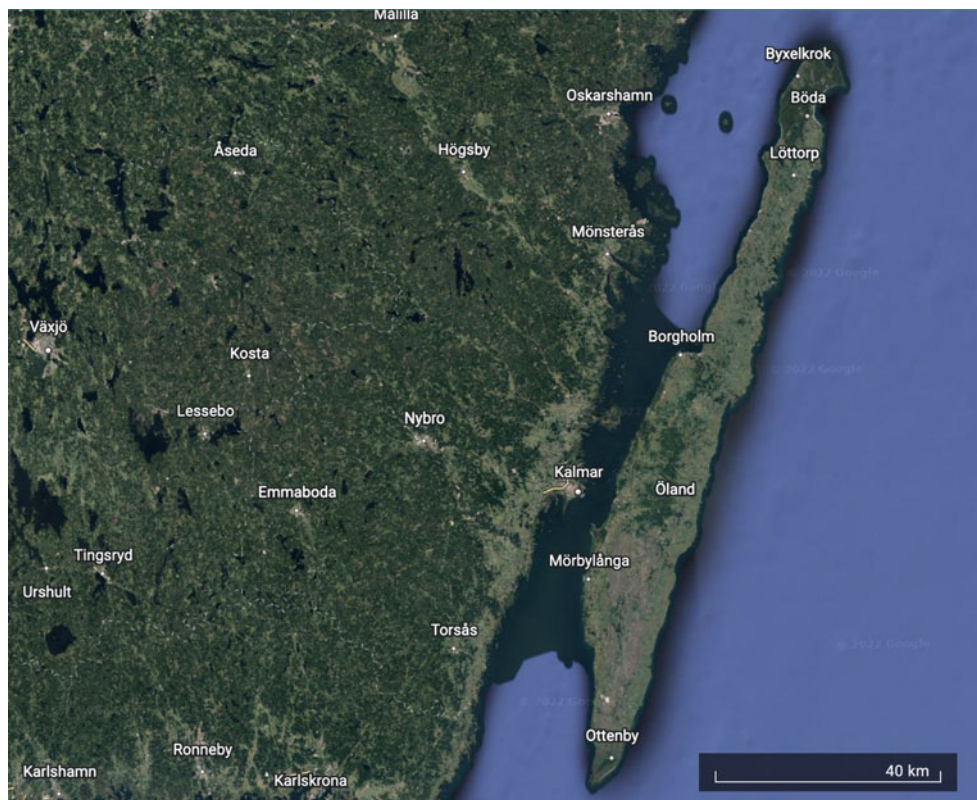


Figure 1. Location of Öland. Map Data: Google Earth, Image Landsat/Copernicus Image ©2009 GeoBasis-DE/BKG.

we will consider collecting and abandoning behaviours together to investigate the existence of heterotopias in southern Sweden and Öland. We classified the collected/kept and abandoned objects and spaces into three categories:

1. Unusable agricultural machinery and cars left in the woods and outside villages
2. Decayed abandoned architectural features and architectural spaces such as huts, villas, and stables
3. Small objects and antiques abandoned by villagers but bought, collected, and exhibited by local collectors.

The second category contains many houses, abandoned because of the rapid transformation of the island's population

and its replacement by incomers from larger cities. This requires investigating the processes of population replacement and migration, which will be conducted in a further phase of the project. Consequently, we concentrate here on presenting and interpreting the first and third categories, specifically the abandoned objects found close to villages on Öland, a private car cemetery on the mainland, and a private museum on Öland.

WHY HETEROTOPIA?

Heterotopia is a concept put forward by the philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault described heterotopia as an incongruous space in which all the sites that could be



Figure 2. Location of abandoned objects on the edge of farms around Torp, northern Öland. Top: A farm located in south-eastern Torp. Useless machinery is observable on the borders of the farm. Bottom: South-western Torp with an abandoned assemblage of farm machines. Map Data: Google Earth, Image Landsat/Copernicus Image ©2009 GeoBasis-DE/BKG.

found within a culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted (Birringer, 1998: 74). Foucault’s heterotopia attempts to bring order and understanding to a space that accommodates a wealth of displaced entities and explains liminal

culture (Morales, 1995). Heterotopia can be an ‘out of time’ and ‘out of place’ idea where taboos and inhibitions are being confronted (Andriotis, 2010: 1092).

Heterotopia works in the way ‘the Other’ works in human society. In this

sense, it could be compared to the terrifying moment of language loss, or aphasia. Foucault's argument had been directed at his own intended destabilization of philosophical and scientific language and it remained within the domain of linguistics and the psychological implications of language (Vidler et al., 2014). In his preface to *Les Mots et Les Choses*, Foucault (1971) introduced the notion of dualism between utopia and heterotopia. This was not supposed to reappear in the book's argument but, since it did, it demonstrated Foucault's growing interest in the question of space as a problem in itself and not just as an analogous version of the 'Space of the text' or 'Space of writing' that was a common motif in the 1950s, particularly in Maurice Blanchot's work (Foucault, 1990). In Foucault's view, 'heterotopia is a disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the heterocline ... in such a state, things are laid, placed, arranged in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them' (Foucault, 1971: xvii).

During the 1990s and later, the concept of heterotopia influenced geographers (Elden & Crampton, 2007). It was redefined in a more suitable way to explain why some places, such as prisons or brothels, exist in different societies. In this more spatial meaning, heterotopia transforms its residents into migrant strangers who imagine themselves as part of the dominant society and hope that the wider community will consider them as members. This sense of being simultaneously 'inside' and 'outside' is a manifestation of the utopian desire to belong, which is unattainable in a heterotopia (Morales, 1995).

According to Sohn (2008: 44), 'heterotopias have an essentially disturbing function: they are meant to overturn established orders, to subvert language and

signification, to contrast sameness, and to reflect the inverse or reverse side of society. Heterotopias are the spaces reserved for the abnormal, the other, the deviant [...] it is precisely in the subversion and the challenging of the established order of things that heterotopia acquires its full potential'.

For Foucault (1984, 2008), there is probably no single culture without its heterotopias. They are a constant in every human group but they can obviously take varied forms, and perhaps there is no one universal form of heterotopia. To strengthen the idea that the abandoned objects in southern Sweden and Öland constitute heterotopic spaces, we considered the six principles of heterotopia listed by Foucault (1984):

1. Heterotopias take various forms but exist across all cultures
2. Heterotopias can change their function over time, allowing for adaptation to society
3. Heterotopias, like in a theatre, can juxtapose elements that are otherwise incompatible in a single place
4. Heterotopias are most often linked to slices of time
5. Heterotopias always presuppose an opening and closing aspect that isolates them and, at the same time, makes them penetrable
6. Heterotopias have a function in relation to all the spaces that are left.

Foucault also categorizes heterotopias into two major groups: deviant and crisis heterotopias. The latter is a form of heterotopia in ancient societies (Foucault, 1984: 6, 2008): they are privileged or sacred or forbidden places in a state of crisis reserved for individuals in relation to society and the human environment in which they live. The heterotopias of crisis are disappearing today and are being replaced by what we might call

heterotopias of deviation, in which individuals are considered deviant compared to the required mean or norm (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986: 24). Indeed, in heterotopias, there are power dynamics at work that make them spaces that are intrinsically in conflict with the mainstream. These ambivalent places that simultaneously include and exclude have revolutionary codes (Lekesizalin, 2009; Sajjad & Perveen, 2019).

Since the principles regarding the definition of heterotopia are reflected in our case studies, we have categorized our examples as deviant heterotopias. In a nutshell, they have changed their meanings through time. Graveyards are also places where collections and businesses (e.g. engraving gravestones, digging graves, gardening) are formed around them. Yet they persevere their mysterious, terrifying, and questionable nature. The term 'mechanical cemetery' is relevant to the nature of these places; in Öland, different activities such as farming, living, hoarding, abandoning, and remembering are found juxtaposed in one location. The mechanical cemeteries presuppose a system of opening and closing, i.e. they are simultaneously observable and accessible in nature and hidden and left to oblivion. Importantly, the abandoned objects form spaces that link to all other spaces in the area.

ÖLAND'S 'MECHANICAL CEMETERIES'

The case studies introduced here are located on Öland, an island of two municipalities officially part of Kalmar County and connected to the Swedish mainland by a bridge constructed in 1972, and Ryd (Figure 3), a settlement located in Kronoberg County on the mainland.

To study the discard patterns in rural areas, we surveyed the area occupied by the municipality of Borgholm in northern Öland in the summer of 2021. We found

that abandoning machinery is common in the area, especially around the Torp area and Byxelkrok. In our interviews, the villagers revealed that one of the reasons for abandoning such objects is that taking them to recycling sites was expensive. But, when asked 'why they had not sold the metal parts of the machinery', they usually left the question unanswered. They explained that the older generation of machinery was being replaced by more advanced equipment almost every decade, and hence the older versions lost their function. Usually, the engine would be removed, and the metal body of the machinery dumped or abandoned (Figures 4 and 5). From the answers of the informants, it is evident that abandoning machinery had been practised by at least the last three generations.

In our classification of the location of abandoned items, two major spaces can be distinguished. First, agricultural machinery was left close to the farms but out of sight because vegetation covered it. For example, four generations of machinery have been abandoned at a farm in Byxelkrok. Second, discarded cars, bicycles, and tricycles are usually found in nearby places or in the woods. The oldest cars found in the woods were a Jeep from the 1940s and a Volvo produced in the 1950s.

Some machinery, wagons, and carriers appear to be older, with plants growing within their bodies, but there is no firm evidence to determine the absolute chronology of these objects. In most cases, the memory of the inhabitants had faded, and they could not pinpoint the time the machinery was abandoned. Moreover, the bodies of the machinery had decayed, making it difficult to guess the year of production.

We identified two different businesses dedicated to collecting the dismantled parts of machinery. The first is that of the local farmers and villagers who remove the cars'



Figure 3. *The location of Bilkyrkogården Kyrkö Mosse (white arrow) and Ryd settlement.*
Map Data: Google Earth, Image Landsat/Copernicus Image ©2009 GeoBasis-DE/BKG.

engines and mend and reuse or sell them. The second type of business is run by local artists: for example, Christina Prütz collects the metal parts of the cars and transforms them into aesthetic and ornamental objects (Prütz & Warhus, *n.d.*).

The density of abandoned objects decreases in places visited by tourists.

Cycle trails and walks for the tourists are empty of abandoned cars, whereas the quantity of abandoned machinery increases on the approach to villages and their surroundings, and in the woods that are not accessible to the island's visitors.

In our survey, we identified buildings, i.e. villas and stables, that have been



Figure 4. *Machinery abandoned on Öland.*



Figure 5. Volvo PV 444 DS abandoned on Öland. It dates to around 1958.

unoccupied for a long time (Figure 6). Their number increases in the Torp region and towards the island’s northern side. Some of the buildings are covered by dense vegetation and fragmented glass, and it seems that they have been empty for years. Some informants claim that the houses are being refurbished by their owners to let to incomer families, but there was no sign of renovation.

TWO CASES OF COLLECTING IN RYD AND ÖLAND

Two cases of collectors from Ryd and Öland illustrate that instances of collecting and discarding are not limited to Öland’s rural areas. One of the best-known sites is near Ryd settlement located in Tingsryd Municipality, Kronoberg County, where Åke Danielsson has been collecting abandoned cars for decades. The other example is Torp’s gårdsmuseum, a private museum of artefacts illustrating daily life on the island of Öland.

Danielsson’s car cemetery and the abandoned machinery on Öland reflect the

same material culture, but they are not the only destination for useless objects. There are collectors in the region who assemble objects as well as some machinery and cars left by the deceased. As for smaller objects, they can be sold to second-hand shops or to collectors or dumped if not precious.

Unlike the smaller objects, the larger items are installed in the landscape even if collected by collectors. From an archaeological viewpoint, these unusable items illustrate the process of decay. They represent the entangled network created among the abandoned objects: the abandoner subject (culture) and the context (nature). They differ fundamentally from landscapes that become fossilized at a given time, coincident with their abandonment or some natural catastrophe, like the Roman townscape of Pompeii (Harrison & Schofield, 2010: 218).

Åke Danielsson’s car cemetery

The Kyrkö car cemetery, set up by Åke Danielsson, can be found west of the

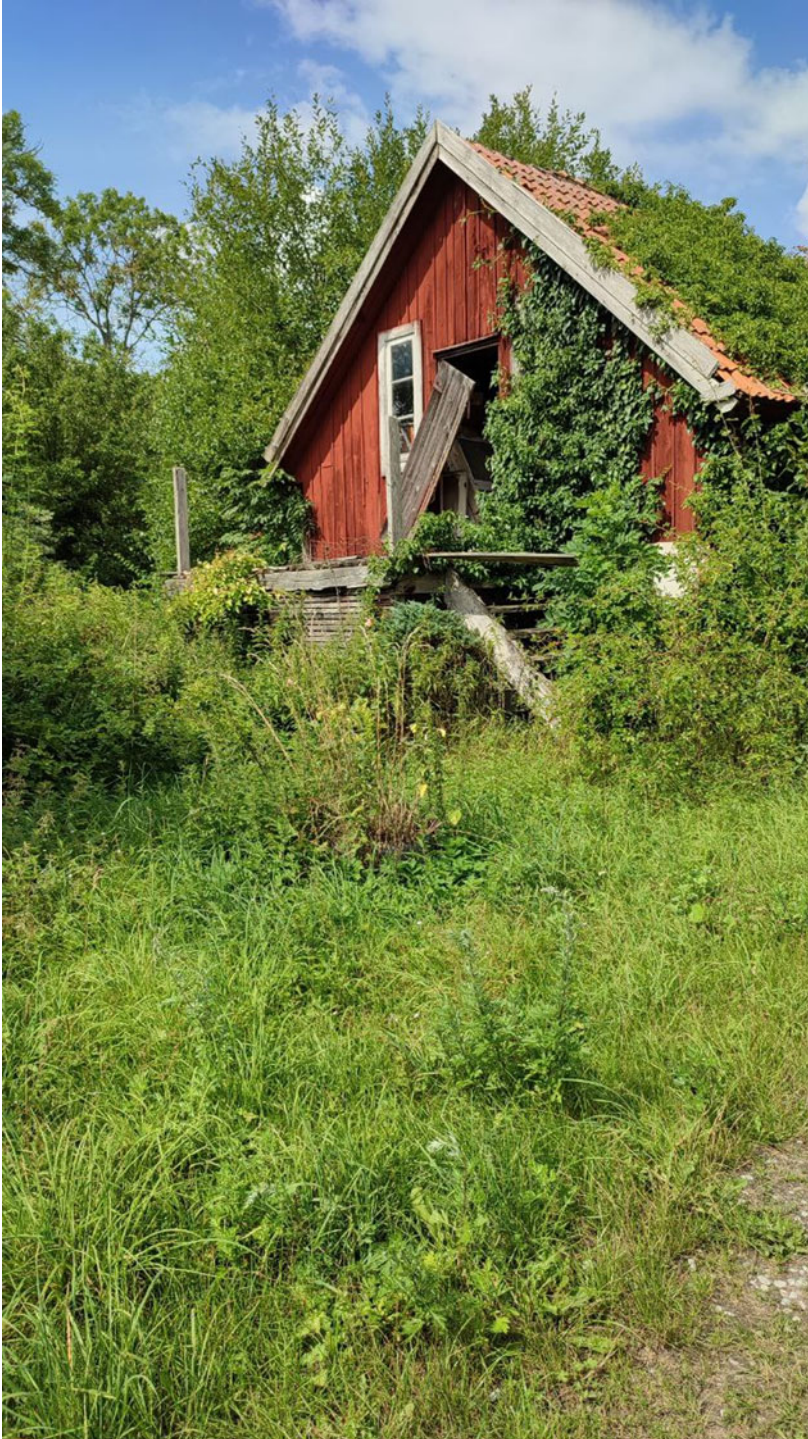


Figure 6. *Abandoned house on Öland.*

settlement of Ryd in southern Sweden. Åke Danielsson was never asked to explain his desire to collect and abandon old cars before his death in 2000. After his death, many questions were raised about the nature of the site. On the one hand, environmentalists believed that the site was an environmental hazard. On the other hand, heritage specialists believed that Danielsson's car cemetery was unique and deserved to be preserved.

The story of the cemetery began in the 1930s. Åke Danielsson settled on Kyrkö bog to dig for peat. After a couple of profitable decades, he switched to scrap-metal dealing. Åke was from a poor background. As an adult, he lived a lonely life, and it seems that his hobby was collecting old cars and keeping them at his home (Burström, 2011). He started gathering the vehicles with no training in engines or mechanics. He did not even have a driver's licence. He learned all he could from old junkyard hands. His small side-business in spare parts caught on, and soon he had a scrapyard, and the spare parts business took over from peat extraction. The collection grew until 1974, the year Åke bought his last car (Kyrkö Car Cemetery, n.d.). Even though Åke was aware of the risk of contamination to his peat bog and took care always to remove the fuel, oil, and batteries, the local authorities were not keen on the setup. They decided that the cars must be sent to an authorized recycling site by November 1998, and if not, a fine would be imposed. The battle over Åke Danielsson's cars entered a new phase (Burström, 2011: 134–35) when an increasing number of people started to visit sites of abandoned cars not merely as an environmental problem but as a tourist destination. Eventually, the authorities responded. Car wrecks were seen as an environmental hazard, and there was a dispute over who would pay for removal and decontamination (Burström, 2011: 138). But public

opinion gradually turned, with an increasing number of people seeing the scrap metal as a museum collection—but one where the objects are not preserved but gradually destroyed.

Danielsson's car cemetery (Autofriedhof Kyrkö Mosse) is also called Bilar Museet (Car Museum; Kyrkö Car Cemetery, 2015) (Figure 7). The words used to refer to the site, cemetery and museum, reveal the complicated nature of Danielsson's collection and its connection to the concept of heterotopia. They describe a static context with things out of use as well as the accumulation of objects in a specific place.

The lasting debates over the site by the legal system, the environmental authorities, and heritage experts (Burström, 2011) show that the site differs from other sites of this kind. It is not a place to store or exhibit the car industry in a way we see in museums of technology or industry but a place to observe gradual decay and wreckage. Unlike museum stores where experts strive to minimize decomposition, Danielsson's car cemetery exhibits the inevitable process of death, decay, decomposition, and transformation into tiny substances. On the internet, there are numerous websites (e.g. Kyrkö Car Cemetery, 2015; Lindkvist, n.d.) where photographers share their images of the process of Danielsson's car decomposition.

Cemeteries have been considered as one category of heterotopia that has different forms in different societies (see Spanu, 2019). Whether we think of it as a cemetery or a museum, Danielsson's site makes it possible to observe the life of an object after death. This is an aspect that is generally absent from the cemeteries where the bodies of people are buried. Often, the signs of death are confined to gravestones, symbols of death, and mourning. In this forest of symbols (a metaphor borrowed from Turner, 1969), visitors enjoy



Figure 7. Danielsson's car cemetery in 2015 (image from <http://www.rendabl.se/bil-kyrkogard.htm>). Reproduced by permission of Patrik Rendahl.

encountering a heterotopia that embodies an absent but significant part of life: death. It is a concept upon which we as human beings are curious to shed light. In this sense, the site constructed by Danielsson is a heterotopia that revives the concept of a utopian after-death world.

Arik Nilsson: Torp's gårdsmuseum

Torp's gårdsmuseum (farm museum) is run by a retired senior citizen from Öland, Arik Nilsson. His private museum is located in Torp, on the north-western side of the island, on his own property (Borgholms kommun, 2012; Torps gårdsmuseum, n.d.). It consists of five rooms where he has stored thousands of objects (Figure 8), such as fossils and historical artefacts from the area's daily life. The collection includes machinery from the early twentieth century as well as carriages and engines.

We met Arik Nilsson at the museum and asked about the meaning and process of collecting the things in his private museum, an activity he has pursued for more than four decades. Explaining his reasons for doing this, he mentioned his deep interest in old and antique objects. He is well-known in the local community, and the villagers sell or donate old things left by their parents and grandparents to him. In his house, the objects do not follow a strict classification scheme (e.g. both fossils and artefacts are exhibited together) although they are assembled in groups (Figure 8). Nilsson lives in the same building as his museum, and he himself welcomes visitors and gives tours of the multiple rooms of his museum.

The objects collected by Nilsson were taken out of their contexts and have not been given a new contextual framework; for example, an old rifle is next to a monochrome photograph of a boat. The



Figure 8. Household equipment in Torp's gårdsmuseum. Reproduced by permission of Alrik Nilsson.

objects have thus lost their narrative aspects, but Nilsson has a clear memory of every object. If visitors ask, he will tell them the story of each object, how it used to function, and who its first owner had been.

In nineteenth-century Europe, colonialism accelerated the creation of private collections (Thomas, 2000). In Nordic countries, the relative ease of travelling across the world also helped the accumulation of foreign objects in private collections (Törmä, 2021). In most cases, the objects were antiques or prestige items from cultures considered ancient, glorious, or mysterious. In contrast, Torps gårdsmuseum is the result of a local person's attempt to collect objects that are usually overlooked by museum collectors living in large cities. It is a private heterotopia whose doors are open to visitors. There remain people in communities like Öland who believe that past culture and heritage form society's 'social glue' (Niklasson & Hølleland, 2018: 126). They attempt to protect this heritage and perceived traditions in various ways, such as collecting abandoned objects.

The collection mirrors the fading traditions and lifestyles of a society that is being modernized and is forgetting its ancient ways of living.

ÖLAND: FINGERPRINTS, SIGNATURE, AND SOLITUDE

According to Vidler et al. (2014: 22), heterotopia is an open place, but it also has the property of keeping people on the outside. In our case studies, the abandoning and collecting behaviours are two sides of the same coin. These attitudes are responsible for forming spaces that are at once accessible and inaccessible. To explain these heterotopias, it is helpful to consider that they are usually constructed

in private, out-of-sight locations, generally only accessible to local people.

The history of Öland includes day markets, where both old and new objects would be sold and where festivals were held for the region's people to sing, dance, and drink (Kalmar Län, 1957a). Öland's archives reveal that not only small objects but also timber dwellings were kept for a long time (Kalmar Län, 1957b), and historical reports state that people from elite families and wealthy status used to collect antiques (Ekströmer, 1976). This is comparable to the desire to collect and sell vintage cars, which is a popular business on the island (Nostalgigaraget Öland, n.d.).

To understand our collections of abandoned objects, insights can be gained from Giorgio Agamben's *The Signature of all Things* (2009), where he considers the diverse and sophisticated layers of meaning in language. He calls the words, as written, magical signs, signs that are not merely neutral stand-ins for things but symbols with their own energy, signs that have 'efficacy' or 'efficacious likenesses'; they are not just written down but are marks written across an entity. Situating such signs or signatures between semiotics and hermeneutics, in Foucault's distinction between knowledge of what a sign is and awareness of its interpretation, Agamben proposes that it is through that space, that intermediary space, that we can move from sign to meaning (Lussier, 2011).

Applying his theory, our abandoned objects are not only signs of cultural attitudes but marks of complicated long-term patterns that need to be decoded. One reading of this behaviour could explore the psychology of the collectors. Still, from a more archaeological viewpoint, our objects may be interpreted as the signs of a network created by the inhabitants connecting nature, other communities, and objects. In our interviews, the local

villagers were well aware of who owned the redundant machinery and when it was in use but could rarely recall when the machines were abandoned. For the cars and machinery dating to the 1950s and 1960s, the vehicles serve to remember the deceased owners. Surprisingly, the abandoned objects appear to have the same purpose as gravestones. The cars and machinery from later decades also possess their own identities. Their owners remember why and how they bought it and in which decade more advanced machinery was produced. We nevertheless assume that these objects have other functions than just signifying ownership.

In a nineteenth-century historical report on Öland by Carl J. Almqvist (Fahlbeck, 1983), the boundaries between the villages are clear, but today's modernization and tourism have changed the concept of cultural boundaries and ownership. In a pre-modern society, graveyards used to signify a village or community (Parker Pearson, 2003; Rodwell, 2012). There are still local cemeteries located in the churchyards in each parish, but the replacement of the population has changed the traditional order of the graveyards. Ownership of farmland is one of the few traditional signs of local identity left. The incomers usually purchase gardens and houses, but the local population still account for the highest number of inhabitants, and their livelihood is still strongly tied to agriculture.

The installation of useless machinery works in terms of marking property; it is abandoned on the edges of farms (see Figure 2) so as not to interfere with farming activities. At the same time, such equipment contains the memories and stories of a family who have worked on the land for decades or own the farm. In this, the machinery cemeteries resemble the graveyards that mark a community or commemorate religious beliefs. Hence, we interpret the abandoned houses, wooden

huts, and machinery as signs of ownership, belonging, and genealogy: 'This place is mine.' In a second layer of meaning, the material culture leaves its fingerprint everywhere in the landscape by transforming it into an installation.

CONCLUSION: HERITAGE OR GARBAGE?

The objects abandoned in nature transform it through the presence of human fingerprints. They change the landscapes in a way that is similar to the installations that artists construct in artificial places, such as exhibitions. In other words, the locations of abandoned items create spaces that function in a way that resembles many other heterotopias, like graveyards and gardens in antiquity. The difference is that, unlike cemeteries, these places serve fewer people.

These so-called open exhibitions, full of different installations, change dramatically from year to year. The metal bodies of cars decompose, decay, and finally find their place in the landscape. They also affect nature by leaking oil, polluting the soil, and influencing the vegetation. This long process of degradation happens gradually in front of the eyes of the inhabitants of the villages and houses close to the mechanical cemeteries. We can break the southern Sweden and Öland cases into several discrete categories. The small portable objects may find their way to recycling facilities (Figure 9) or, if deemed precious, they may be sold or donated to local collectors, for example at Torp's gårdmuseum. As for the large machinery and cars, their valuable and still usable parts (e.g. the engines) are removed and repaired or sold elsewhere, while their bodies are left to nature. In our case, the oldest cars, dating from the 1940s to the 1960s, were left in the woods, suggesting that their concentration in woodland is a



Figure 9. *Wooden material dumped at a recycling site, Kalleguta Återvinningscentral, Öland.*

behaviour practised by older generations in the mid-twentieth century. The newer machinery was found closer to residential areas and farms.

These discarded objects are no longer usable and, unlike other kinds of refuse that can be sorted and moved to recycling facilities, they remain in the landscape. Businesses around the metal bodies of the cars exist, but on a very limited scale, and do not play much part in removing machinery from the environment.

In her recent book, Cal Flynn (2021) argued that, despite mankind's impact on the environment, nature can still rebound and create a life of its own from the wreckage left behind. Though the machinery is polluting nature, it has rebounded with nature, losing its original shape in the process. Plants and grass growing over the metal bodies of the cars transform them into new items and form new spaces which are neither natural nor part of the human-made landscape. There is much to learn from them: on ontological symmetry between humans and non-humans, on deconstruction and moving away from its

human-centred focus, and on the alterity of things (González-Ruibal, 2018). The decomposition process in heterotopias can be remarkably beautiful, picturesque, and scenic, giving an idea of a genuine landscape (Einla, 2009).

We were told by two informants that before the overpopulation of the island and changes to the environment of the region began, they sometimes used objects to mark paths through the woods because the winter darkness frightened them and made them lose their way back to the village. The abandoned objects could thus also play a role in familiarizing and marking space. At the same time, cases such as Danielsson's car cemetery have an additional role as a playground or as the manifestation of a long-term hobby. Attempts to study these spaces without appreciating the knowledge held by their invisible inhabitants (those people who once owned or used them) are futile and myopic (Moshenka, 2016: 25).

Every culture and every human group develop their own heterotopias. No universal form of heterotopia exists, as they

vary significantly in different societies and at different times (Foucault & Miskowicz, 1986: 24; Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008). Southern Sweden is no exception (Einla, 2009; Ljungberg, 2020). Its heterotopias reveal a very local characteristic of the culture, a special network constructed with objects. The abandoned objects are usually seen as waste discarded by society. Their original meaning is destroyed, and the items are hidden from sight for years, in woods where the plants grow on them and change their form.

Some heterotopias are constructed by society to conceal some actions from the scrutiny of power (Hook, 2007) to resist homogenization and deformation (Johnson, 2006), while other heterotopias, like graveyards, are public areas. The machinery cemeteries are in between. They are neither dynamic nor static. The objects there have lost their position as useful objects but still contain memories of their owners, deceased or alive. They are not garbage by the definition that identifies refuse as material that has lost its use, nature, and form. The people who abandoned the objects created an installation by adding machinery to nature (or combining machinery with nature) and putting their own fingerprints on the edges of their farms and residential areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article and the Öland garbology project are supported by the Baltic Phytoremediation project (BAPR) and Interreg Baltic Sea Region project 'Baltic Beach Wrack'—Conversion of a Nuisance To a Resource and Asset (CONTRA). We would like to thank Anders Åberg for the idea of 'installation' which we used in this article and Omran Garazhian for accompanying us on field visits and sharing his views with us. We are also

immensely grateful to Cornelius Holtorf, Samira Elyasi, and Arman Masoudi for their comments on an earlier version and the initial idea of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Agamben, G. 2009. *The Signature of All Things: On Method*. New York: Zone Books.
- Andriotis, K. 2010. Heterotopic Erotic Oases: The Public Nude Beach Experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37: 1076–96.
- Birringer, J. 1998. Makrolab: A Heterotopia. *Journal of Performance and Art*, 20: 66–75.
- Borgholms kommun 2012. Kulturmiljöutredning av området Byxelkrok Landskapslaget AB & Wenanders, September 2012 [online] [accessed on 1 July 2022]. Available at: <<https://www.borgholm.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/kulturmiljobeskrivning.pdf>>
- Brunclíková, L. 2017. Waste and Value in the Post-Socialist Space. *Anthropologie*, 55: 385–98.
- Buchli, V. & Lucas, G. 2001. Between Remembering and Forgetting. In: V. Buchli & G. Lucas, eds. *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*. New York & London: Routledge, pp. 79–84.
- Burström, M. 2011. Garbage or Heritage: The Existential Dimension of a Car Cemetery. In: C. Holtorf & A. Piccini, eds. *Contemporary Archaeologies: Excavating Now*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 131–43.
- Carhenge n.d. Carhenge: The Nebraska Answer to Stonehenge [online] [accessed 1 July 2022]. Available at: <<https://carhenge.com>>
- Dehaene, M. & De Cauter, L. 2008. Heterotopia in a Post-Civil Society. In: M. Dehaene & L. De Cauter, eds. *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 3–9.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Einla, L. 2009. The Notion of Heterotopia in the Practice of Landscape Architecture. The Garden of Education Einla, L. Alnarp (MA dissertation, Swedish University of Agricultural Science Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Science).

- Ekströmer, L. 1976. Silver och ostindiskt till museet och Krusenstjerna gården. In: K.G. Petersson & K. Pettersson, eds. *Kalmar Län, Årsbok för kulturhistoria och hembygdsvärd*. Kalmar: Barometern, pp. 79–88.
- Elden, S. & Crampton, J.W. 2007. *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Fahlbeck, A. with Jonas, C. & Almqvist, L. 1983. På Öland och i Kalmartrakten. In: M.-B. Lundberg, I. Svanström, K.G. Petersson & F. Warringer, eds. *Kalmar Län, Årsbok för kulturhistoria och hembygdsvärd*. Kalmar: Barometern, pp. 58–65.
- Flyn, C. 2021. *Islands of Abandonment: Life in the Post-Human Landscape*. London: Collins.
- Foucault, M. 1971. *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. 1984. Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias. *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5: 46–49. <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>
- Foucault, M. 1990. Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside. In: M. Foucault & M. Blanchot, eds. *Foucault/Blanchot: Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside and Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him*. New York: Zone Books, pp. 7–58.
- Foucault, M. 2008. Of Other Spaces [1967]. In: M. Dehaene & L. De Cauter, eds. *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 13–29.
- Foucault, M. & Miskowicz, J. 1986. Of Other Spaces. *Diacritics* 16(1): 22–27.
- González-Ruibal, A. 2014. Contemporary Past: Archaeology of the. In: C. Smith, ed. *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*. New York: Springer, pp. 1683–94.
- González-Ruibal, A. 2018. Beyond the Anthropocene: Defining the Age of Destruction. *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 51: 10–21.
- Harrison, R. & Schofield, J. 2010. *After Modernity: Archaeological Approaches to the Contemporary Past*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hodder, I. ed. 1991. *The Meanings of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*. New York: Harper Collins Academic.
- Hodder, I. 2012. *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. London: Wiley.
- Hook, D. 2007. Space, Discourse, Power: Heterotopia as Analytics. In: D. Hook, ed. *Foucault, Psychology, and the Analytics of Power*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 178–214.
- Johnson, P. 2006. Unravelling Foucault's Different Spaces. *History of the Human Sciences*, 19: 75–90.
- Kalmar Län 1957a. Marknad och torgdag i Östsmåland och på Öland. In: M. Hofren, ed. *Kalmar Län, Årsbok för kulturhistoria och hembygdsvärd*. Kalmar: Barometern, pp. 5–30.
- Kalmar Län 1957b. Virserums hembygdspark, vägledning och beskrivning. In: M. Hofren, ed. *Kalmar Län, Årsbok för kulturhistoria och hembygdsvärd*. Kalmar: Barometern, pp. 73–87.
- Kalmon, S., O'Neill-Jones, P., Stout, C. & Sargent Wood, L. 2012. From Corn Chips to Garbology: The Dynamics of Historical Inquiry. *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, 26: 13–18.
- Kyrkö Car Cemetery n.d. Kyrkö car cemetery, Tingsryd SV, Sweden [online] [accessed 8 November 2021]. Available at: <<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/kyrko-car-cemetery>>
- Kyrkö Car Cemetery 2015. Photographs [online] [accessed 8 November 2021]. Available at: <<http://www.rendahl.se/bilkyrkogard.htm>>
- Lekesizalin, F. 2009. Art, Desire, and Death in Orhan Pamuk's *My Name Is Red*. *English Studies in Africa*, 52: 90–103.
- Lindkvist, J. n.d. Tillbaka till bilkyrkogården [online] [accessed 8 November 2021]. Available at: <<https://www.transportarbetaren.se/tillbaka-till-bilkyrkogarden/>>
- Ljungberg, E. 2020. Media Practices in the Making of an 'Other Space': Communicating Inclusion, Exclusion, and Belonging in a Controversial Heterotopia. *New Media & Society*, 22: 2166–82.
- Lussier, M. 2011. Review of *The Signature of All Things* by Giorgio Agamben. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28: 165–68.
- Morales, A. 1995. Dynamic Identities in Heterotopia. *Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe*, 20: 14–27.
- Moshenska, G. 2016. Reverse Engineering and the Archaeology of the Modern World. *Forum Kritische Archäologie*, 5: 16–28.

- Niklasson, E. & Hølleland, H. 2018. The Scandinavian Far-Right and the New Politicisation of Heritage. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 18(2): 121–48.
- Nostalgaraget Öland n.d. Nostalgaraget [online] [accessed 21 August 2022]. Available at: <<https://www.alltpaoland.se/platser/nostalgaraget/>>
- Papoli-Yazdi, L. 2021. Garbage Hunting-Gathering: The Ignored Face of Future Cities. *Forum Kritische Archäologie*, 10: 89–101.
- Parker Pearson, M. 2003. *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*. Stroud: Sutton.
- Prütz, C. & Warhus, N. n.d. I & I Christina Prütz [online] [accessed 8 November 2021]. Available at: <<https://www.xn--i-o-ichristinaprtz-16b.se/>>
- Rathje, W. & Murphy, C. 2001. *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage*. Tucson (AZ): University of Arizona Press.
- Rodwell, W. 2012. *The Archaeology of Churches*. Stroud: Amberley.
- Sajjad, N.A. & Perveen, A. 2019. Private Heterotopia and the Public Space: An Incongruity Explored through Orhan Pamuk's *My Name Is Red*. *SAGE Open*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018824490>
- Sohn, H. 2008. Heterotopia: Anamnesis of a Medical Term. In: M. Dehaene & L. De Cauter, eds. *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 41–50.
- Spanu, S. 2019. *Heterotopia and Heritage Preservation: The Heterotopic Tool as a Means of Heritage Assessment*. Cham: Springer.
- Thomas, J. 2000. *Archaeology and Modernity*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Tömmä, M. 2021. *Nordic Private Collections of Chinese Objects*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Torps gårdsmuseum n.d. Fotoalbum [online] [accessed 8 November 2021]. Available at: <<http://www.torpsgardsmuseum.se/26050104>>
- Turner, V. 1969. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.
- Vidler, A., Foucault, M. & Johnston, P. 2014. Heterotopias. *Architectural Association Files*, 69: 18–22.
- Williams, T. 2022. *Adrift: The Curious Tale of the Lego Lost at Sea*. Lewes: Unicorn.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Leila Papoli-Yazdi is a researcher and archaeologist at the School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University. She has directed several projects in Sweden, Pakistan, Kuwait, and Iran. The main themes of her research are oppression, poverty, and waste disposal. She has pioneered research in Iran into political oppositions and nationalism from an archaeological viewpoint. Her widely published research can be read in Persian and English.

Address: School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden. [email: leila.papoli-yazdi@mau.se]. ORCID: [0000-0002-7526-2684](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7526-2684).

William Hogland is a professor at Linnaeus University. He has published more than 500 reports, research articles, and textbooks. Hogland has organized several international conferences, including Linnaeus Eco-tech and the Youth Environmental Science Forum — EcoBaltica. He directs the project 'Closing the Life Cycle of Landfills; Landfill Mining in the Baltic Sea Region for Future', which engages academics, researchers, and companies around the Baltic Sea. In 2015 he won the Elsevier Atlas Award for 'Research for a Better World'. In 2017 his research project won the Sweden Impact Award 2017 for Physical Sciences and Engineering.

Address: Department of Biology and Environmental Science, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden. [email: william.hogland@lnu.se]. ORCID: [0000-0002-1903-760X](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1903-760X)

Installation d'épaves : vers une archéologie des hétérotopies du sud de la Suède

Au cours de recherches dans l'île d'Öland dans le sud-est de la Suède destinées à étudier les pratiques d'élimination des déchets, les auteurs ont documenté des vestiges de voitures et autres engins des années 1940 à nos jours abandonnés dans des lieux proches de fermes et de zones résidentielles. Cette étude, complétée par des entretiens avec les habitants de l'île, leur permet de conclure que les décharges d'objets devenus inutiles aux alentours des villages faisaient partie des habitudes locales de recueillir des objets usagés et de les insérer dans le paysage. Les auteurs comparent deux autres cas de collecte d'objets dans le sud de la Suède et Öland au comportement observé sur l'île d'Öland. L'emplacement et la chronologie des objets leur permet de proposer que ce comportement représente un type d'hétérotopie telle que la définit Foucault. Translation by Madeleine Hummler

Mots-clés: hétérotopie, Öland, installation, d'objets inutiles, archéologie contemporaine

Wrackinstallation: Auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie der Heterotopien Südschwedens

Während einer Studie der lokalen Abfallentsorgungsgewohnheiten auf der Insel Öland im schwedischen Südosten haben die Verfasser verlassene Fahrzeuge und Maschinen von den 1940er-Jahren bis heute in der Nähe von Siedlungen und Bauernhöfen dokumentiert. Die einheimische Bevölkerung wurde auch befragt. Damit gelangten die Verfasser zur Auffassung, dass die Entsorgung von nicht mehr brauchbaren Gegenständen in der Nähe von Dörfern ein Verhaltensmuster zum Vorschein bringt, welches das Sammeln von unbenutzbaren Sachen und ihre Einfügung in die Landschaft einschließt. Die Verhaltensweise der Einwohner Ölands wird mit zwei anderen Sammlungen von verlassenen Gegenständen in Südschweden verglichen. Angesichts der Lage und Chronologie der Funde weist das Verhaltensmuster auf eine Heterotopie, wie sie Foucault definiert. Translation by Madeleine Hummler

Stichworte: Heterotopie, Öland, Installation, unbrauchbare Gegenstände, Archäologie der Gegenwart

Vrakinstallation: Mot en arkeologi över södra Sveriges heterotopier

Under en undersökning på Öland i sydöstra Sverige, vars syfte var att studera de lokala avfallshanteringsmetoderna, registrerade författarna övergivna maskiner och bilar från 1940-talet till idag på platser nära bostadsområden och gårdar. Undersökningen stärktes av intervjuer som hölls med informanter. Detta fick författarna att dra slutsatsen att dumpning av överflödiga föremål i byarnas omgivning bildar ett intrasslat nätverk med andra beteenden. Det vill säga att samla in saker som överlevt sin användbarhet och bäddat in dem i landskapet. Det beteende som observerats på Öland jämförs med två andra fall av insamling av övergivna föremål på Öland och i södra Sverige. Med hjälp av fyndens plats och kronologi tolkar författarna beteendet genom att låna begreppet heterotopia, enligt definitionen av Foucault. Translation by the authors

Nyckelord: heterotopia, Öland, installation, värdelösa föremål, samtidsarkeologi