



The naturalization of the **urban and corporate logic:** **How the sacred waters of Lund,** **Sweden, progressed into a toxic** **sludge hole**

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Title and Subtitle:	The naturalization of the urban and corporate logic: How the sacred waters of Lund, Sweden, progressed into a toxic sludge hole
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Abstract:

In this study a landscape is interpreted from an analytical and binary theoretical framework in order to contrast and extract different social formations that have been conducive to its creation. The landscape in question is a contemporary park found in Lund, Sweden, in the province of Skåne. Lurking beneath the spatial scenery of the park, histories of transgressed and repressed social formations are found. Stories that are buried in the depth of this landscape include a landfill, a commons, that was enclosed, and a sacred water that later was transformed into something very close to a flush toilet for the globally expanding local industries. According to some philologists this toxic sludge hole is synonymous with the wellspring of Lund. The crucial point of this study is that ideas materialize in the landscape. Some of these are seemingly prone to stability and justice, whilst others are seemingly prone to risk and unfettered capital accumulation. History has morally vilified both types.

Key-words:

Commons, Sacred waters, Enclosure, Lund University, Rausing dynasty, Landfill workers of Lund, Moral economies

The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But leaves the greater villain loose
Who steals the common from the goose¹

¹Anti-enclosure quatrain from the core of empire. Author unknown (cf. Linebaugh 2013, 1, 20, 153).

Contents

Acknowledgements

Figures

1. **Introduction (8)**
2. **Research questions (9)**
3. **Methods and theoretical backgrounds (10)**
 - 3.1. **Critical muckraking: Digging where you stand (10)**
 - 3.2. **Ferdinand Tönnies on *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (11)**
 - 3.3. **Kenneth R. Olwig on the duplicitous meanings of “landscape” (15)**
 - 3.4. **Moral economies and social justice (17)**
4. **Empirical data and discussion (1): How the sacred waters of Lund, Sweden, progressed into a toxic sludge hole (21)**
 - 4.1. **An agrarian town in transition (21)**
 - 4.2. **Contemporary philologists on the sacred grove and waters of Lund (24)**
 - 4.3. **How the commons were turned upside down (25)**
 - 4.4. ***Sankt Hans källa* in retrospect (29)**
 - 4.5. **Deciphering the customs at *Sankt Hans källa* prior to enclosure (31)**
 - 4.6. **Towards an excessive naturalization of the urban and corporate logic (33)**
 - 4.7. **Transient new relationships to sacred waters: The establishment of the landfill (34)**
 - 4.8. **A landfill worker has a meeting with the press (36)**
 - 4.9. **The Rausing dynasty (39)**
 - 4.10. **The complaint by Åkerlund & Rausing curtails the customary rights of the landfill workers of Lund (42)**
- 5.0. **Discussion (2): The possible moral economies of the landscape (44)**
 - 5.1. **The transient moral economy of the landfill and the Rausing dynasty (*arbitrary will*) (45)**
 - 5.2. **The perpetual moral economy of the commons (*essential will*) (48)**
- 6.0. **Conclusion (49)**

References (50)

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Figures

Figure 0. *Commoners, gleaners, without a commons at an outdoor museum in Scandinavia.* Photo taken by Kirsti Skjervheim, August 2020.

Figure 1. *Situating the case study. View from the summit of Sankt Hans backar. The Öresund bridge, that connects Malmö (Sweden) with Copenhagen (Denmark), is visible. In the 1950s Ruben Rausing (1953), a key actor in this study, proposed that the sound should be drained as an alternative to the bridge.* Photo taken by Sandra Vestlund, July 2020.

Figure 2. *Geometrical map of the town of Lund in Scania with its properties in arable land and meadow.* Land surveyor map by Jean [Johan] Bergman, 1704. L131-1:1 [LA].

Figure 3. *Cropped land surveyor map showing parcel 289 with the position of well [källa] in the upper right corner.* Land surveyor map by Magnus Wremp, 1799. Kulturen. Lund.

Figure 4. *Sketch over Sankt Hans källa where the waters take a northward turn.* Document created by Walter Welin, 1941. M 7436:53[F].

Figure 5. *Aerial photo from 1940 with Magnus Wremp's land surveyor map from 1799 superimposed. Notice how the lines of the map fit almost perfectly in the landscape. At the white stretch of land the sacred body of water is found in parcel 289, under number 52 and 53.* Aerial photo provided by the municipality of Lund.

Figure 6. *The summit of Sankt Hans backar.* Photo taken by author in early May 2020.

Figure 7. *Cropped photo with whistle-blower Gustav Nordqvist together with Fred Flintstone.* Photographer unknown. (Unikt 1965[N]).

Figure 8. *Gleaners.* Oil-painting by Jean-François Millet, 1857. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>



Figure 0. *Commoners, gleaners, without a commons at an outdoor museum in Scandinavia.* Photo taken by Kirsti Skjervheim, August 2020.

1. Introduction

Sankt Hans backar (Fig. 1) is a popular recreational park in Lund, southern Sweden, in the province of Skåne. It was created upon a landfill that had been active prior to the park. Prior to both the park and the landfill this landscape was also the home of a pasture commons and what could be understood as a sacred body of water. The commons were transformed into a landfill and the sacred body of water into a toxic sludge hole. This study investigates what kind of social formations brought about this transformation.

The study as such is a product of the rather straightforward methodology provided by Sven Lindqvist (1978). Lindqvist argued that the histories of corporations have primarily been written from the perspectives of the owners and not the workers. In this study the social system of the commons is given the privileged perspective, as the customs and the cultures of the commons have generally been denigrated and belittled by influential and powerful actors. In this case representatives from Lund University threw some of the first stones. These actors stand on the shoulders of the commons, as the purported owners of corporations historically have been standing on the shoulders of the workers. Lindqvist recommended to “Dig where you stand.” This is what I have done as a student at Lund University. *The aim and purpose is to understand what forces and actors – local and global – shaped the contemporary landscape of Sankt Hans backar.* Lund University was one of many prominent actors of this transformation.

The conceptualizations of the social transformation of this landscape have been enriched primarily by classical sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies and philologist and cultural geographer Kenneth R. Olwig. Each of these scholars provide a useful terminology to understand this transition, where the local is animated by global currents. With Tönnies the naturalization of the urban and corporate logic is exposed, while with Olwig the duplicitous meanings of “landscape” are put to the forefront. Their critical theoretical frameworks are crucial in order to grasp the social mechanisms behind the transition from the commons to the landfill and from sacred waters to a toxic sludge hole, or in other words – the orchestration of *Sankt Hans backar*.

The empirical material found must be said to be quite extraordinary and the hope is that the theoretical framework used has enhanced the understanding of it. Added to this are conceptualizations and historical backgrounds of the possible *moral economies* of the commons and the landfill. These moral economies are inimical to each other. As the world turns and burns we urgently need to choose if we should cultivate the moral economy of the commons or of the landfill. This study points in the direction of the commons while finding it important to discuss how so-called bitter money (Shipton 1989) is associated with the toxic sludge hole.



Figure 1. *Situating the case study. View from the summit of Sankt Hans backar. The Öresund bridge, that connects Malmö (Sweden) with Copenhagen (Denmark), is visible. In the 1950s Ruben Rausing (1953), a key actor in this study, proposed that the sound should be drained as an alternative to the bridge. Photo taken by Sandra Vestlund, July 2020.*

2. Research questions

1. How were the commons and sacred waters of Lund transformed into a landfill and a toxic sludge hole?

2. How have the different groups associated with the commons and the landfill, respectively, been conducive to the creation of these entities?
3. How can the moral economies of the commons and landfill, respectively, be understood?

3. Methods and theoretical backgrounds

3.1. Critical muckraking: Digging where you stand

The philosopher John Dewey (1946, 215) once wrote that “[t]he local is the ultimate universal, and as near an absolute as exists.” The poet William Carlos Williams (1983, iii) would later misquote him from memory saying: “The local is the only universal, upon that all art builds.” In *Gräv där du står*, in English *Dig where you stand*, the Swedish political essayist and writer Sven Lindqvist (1978, 275) quotes a slogan from the Barefoot research tradition: “Det konkreta är alltid lokalt”, in English “The concrete is always local.”² This theorem, or plain truism, correlates with critical realism’s philosophical stance where “epistemic relativity” is equivalent with the understanding that “knowledge is always local and historical” (Mingers et al. 2013, 795). Lindqvist wrote *Dig where you stand* as a handbook primarily for factory workers as he had noticed that corporate history had been written from the perspective of the owners and not from the perspective of the workers. This provoked Lindqvist. By privileging the perspective of the workers Lindqvist indirectly subscribed to critical realism’s denunciation of “judgmental relativity” (ibid). With the book he proclaimed that workers hold greater potential to write a true history of their workplace than historians employed by the owners. In the present inquiry the perspectives, customs, and cosmologies of the commons are the ones privileged and contrasted with those that are inimical and antagonistic to them, i.e. closely related to the ideas and actors that Lindqvist (1979, 28) speaks about here:

[T]hese gentlemen thought it very unfair that the sins of the past should be held against them today. (...) But the RESULTS of these sins – the land, the buildings, the machinery, in short the Capital – these they were of course not willing to surrender. The RESULTS of the past were sacred private property and must not be touched.

²Although this book has been translated to several languages it has of today not been translated to English. Perhaps the Swedish Tetra Pak heiress, Sigrid Rausing, who owns the literary magazine Granta and has published many of Lindqvist’s books in England could add “Dig where you stand” to the list (cf. Jeffries 2012[N]). This could possibly also do wonders for a new and more substantive history of Tetra Pak, i.e. from the perspective of the workers.

Lindqvist (1978, 29, 276) who envisioned the Barefoot Research Movement, or what was popularized as an effect of his work as The-Dig-Where-You-Stand-Movement, to be part of the greater movement that wanted workers to successively gain control over corporations. This vision saw the barefoot researcher as crossing disciplinary boundaries, but also building solidarity movements beyond national borders, and students by 2020 as having equal experiences from universities as from the world exterior to them (ibid., 10-12, 279). Lindqvist was alarmed that many of the professors at the universities in the 1970s did not have any such experiences (ibid.). As a countermovement to this and the hegemony of corporate history Lindqvist's book informs the working-class how to do archival research and what rights they have to enter and use these archives as citizens. Lindqvist was thoroughly advocating a history made from below – i.e. by workers and for workers.

Critical realists have interpreted Lindqvist's methodology as including two forms of inferences, *abduction* and *retroduction* (Ackroyd and Karlsson 2014, 42-43). Abduction aims “[t]o interpret and recontextualize individual phenomena within a conceptual framework or a set of ideas,” retroduction aims to proceed “[f]rom a description and analysis of concrete phenomena to reconstruct the basic conditions for these phenomena to be what they are” (Danermark et al. 2002, 81). From this and through archival research, but also from various other sources, this study tries to reimagine and recontextualize a specific landscape – a commons – and its history in the university city of Lund, Sweden. This will be done by extracting certain historical social constellations, formations – i.e. active social mechanisms – and their relationship to the commons of Lund. As will be shown, the real history of the “RESULTS” that Lindqvist speaks about in the above quote are found by the spadeful in the archival material connected to this landscape. The oral and embodied history of a landfill worker is also crucial for unveiling these “RESULTS.” By doing research locally this study historicizes the local landscape, in the midst of global currents, from the perspective of the commons. By digging in the archives locally the conventional history of the commons will be methodologically re-contextualized and re-examined.

3.2. Ferdinand Tönnies on *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*

Precisely like Sven Lindqvist – sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies was driven to write his *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887) from a position of dismay. Tönnies (1957, 227) despaired that left unchecked the mechanisms of *Gesellschaft* would leave “the entire ‘world’ [...] to resemble one large city.” In one letter to a friend “he feared that the main trend of modern life was going away

from moral and aesthetic ideals to luxury for its own sake” (Mitzman 1973, 67). In another he described the “misunderstanding of the Middle Ages, economic and moral individualism” as the main weakness of the Enlightenment (ibid., 66). In 1864 his home region of Schleswig-Holstein was integrated into Prussia, which in a blow reduced several rather autonomous communities into an administrative unit (Olwig 2002, 16). All of this coloured and preconditioned Tönnies’ lifelong theoretical approach that will be used throughout this study to unravel and extract the analytical and binary social formations from the depth of *Sankt Hans backar*.

As concepts – belonging to what Tönnies defined as pure theory – *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* discern elements of social life that are dialectical and ever-present. In their generalized form *Gemeinschaft* is associated with the communal agrarian culture and *Gesellschaft* with the individualistic urban culture. Tönnies (2001, 66) conceptualized “the transition from the predominance of agriculture to the predominance of industry.” While the former social formation is primarily associated with the horizontal sphere of the grounded earth, the latter social formation is primarily associated with the vertical sphere of fossil capital (Sieferle 2001; Malm 2016). The former is conceived as something living, while the latter is understood “as a mechanical aggregate and artefact” (Tönnies 1957, 35). As social forms they are in various degrees ingrained in each other – i.e. they should not be understood as distinct polar opposites (Deflem 2014, xi; Tönnies 1957, 222, 229).

Gemeinschaft should be understood as ontologically prior to *Gesellschaft*. The latter is new and transitory, the former is perpetual and a condition for everything social. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* relate to each other as custom does to fashion (Tönnies 2014). Empirically *Gemeinschaft* has been noted to be abating by the expansion of *Gesellschaft* since the Renaissance of the late Middle Ages. As will be demonstrated this is analogous to the rise of empire and to the corrosion of the commons.

Tönnies also constructed two specific volitional patterns as being concomitant to *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. To the former he affixed *essential will* (Wesenwille) and to the latter *arbitrary will* (Kürwille). While *essential will* includes thinking, the thinking in *arbitrary will* encompasses the will (Tönnies 1957, 103). While the former is “real or natural” the latter is “conceptual or artificial” (ibid.) As such these concepts were created via Tönnies’ own *arbitrary will* and he stipulates that “scientific concepts assume the same position in a scientific system as commodities do in the *Gesellschaft*” (ibid. 1957, 71).

To speak with philosopher Harald Höffding (1890) – one of the first reviewers of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* – *essential will* is understood as organically instinctive, as immediate and instantaneous, powered by an inner necessity. As such it is conditioned by natural predisposition, the habitual and an instant sympathy. With *arbitrary will*, by contrast, ends and means are distinctly separated and it is consciously estimated how much it is worth spending on the means in order to reach a specific end. Every *arbitrary will* is so to speak an investment in order to acquire something. The peculiar thing about *arbitrary will* is that the means are entirely conditioned by the ends. For the trader the end is reducible to “profit.” *Arbitrary will* is therefore characteristically unnatural, compulsive, and false. This *bargaining will* breeds egoism and self-obsession and expunges sincerity. Here life is not so much a mission in which one immerses oneself but a business venture that should be completed (ibid., 469). *Arbitrary will* could be understood as unfettered from customs and morals (Adair-Totef 2016, 12).

It has been suggested that *essential will* is particular and that *arbitrary will* is identical throughout the world (Bond 2016, 39). Although allegedly “identical”, it could be argued that *Gesellschaft* and *arbitrary will* have been radiating especially strong from certain imperial nodes, for instance the Roman Catholic Church, in the Vatican. I.e. their “identical” or “universal” aspects have been constructed and projected from a particular centre.³ Niall Bond (ibid.) posits London as a historical hub of *Weltgesellschaft* and confirms that Ferdinand Tönnies was sceptical of “centres” – or in my reading, of empires and authoritarian states as such – and that he shared a sympathy and solidarity with the marginalized in this *Weltgesellschaft*.⁴ As these structures of empire, state, city, or town, encroached on a small village community the tight-knit social fabric would irreversibly crumble and the following generalized description would fade into oblivion due to commodification and imperial scientific conceptualization:

The closeness of the dwellings, the common fields, even the way the holdings run alongside each other, cause the people to meet and get used to each other and to develop intimate acquaintance. It becomes necessary to share work, organisation, and forms of administration. *The gods and spirits of land and water, which confer blessing or threaten disaster, have to be implored for grace and mercy.* (Tönnies 2001, 28; emphasis added)

³Nor is it entirely correct to say that *essential will* is wholly particular – in fact, cultures with a strong *essential will* share distinct commonalities. See *Moral economies and social justice* below.

⁴Tönnies reports from London in 1878. “Altogether everything here simply boils down to the comfort of individuals, human individuals, and only a few are in their reasoned judgment seriously repulsed by the historic fact that the greater comfort of some is invariably bought at the reduced comfort, indeed the lives of others... Even liberal newspapers occasionally come out openly against the poverty of the masses, England’s disgrace.” (Bond 2013, 90). Tönnies is here an advocate for what could be understood as *the image of limited good* (Foster 1965).

The slashing of the *Gemeinschaft* could be perceived as analogous to the entry of the merchant, colonizer, or land surveyor – “a man who enters the magic circle from the outside” (Cahnman 1968, 141). *Gesellschaft* as an expanding social form is associated with state and market. It is more or less equivalent with Karl Marx’s description of capitalist society. As such it could be suggested that *Gesellschaft* flourishes in times of imperial expansion. Following Marx’s lead, Tönnies (1957, 76) illustrates the essence of *Gesellschaft* by quoting political economist Adam Smith: “Every man ... becomes in some measure a merchant, ...” I.e. the central culprit for the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* is arguably “trade” (Cahnman 1968, 141).

If we are to believe Karl Marx (1992, 875) this transition has throughout the world been written “in letters of blood and fire.” Tönnies (2014, 17) likewise described this process as an onslaught by “the conquerors’ fire and sword”. While generally in agreement, Tönnies diverged from Marx’s notion that “trade and merchants’ capital are subsidiary aspects of the capitalist mode of production” (Inglis 2016, 85). In declaring that the essence of capitalism, i.e. *Gesellschaft*, is trade, Tönnies drew a stark distinction between “labour” and “trade.” According to Tönnies the former belonged to *Gemeinschaft* and *essential will* and the latter to *Gesellschaft* and *arbitrary will*:

Labour wants a reward for its achievements: either directly as a fruit of its endeavour or indirectly by means of exchange; trade wants to gain abstract value, which is inconsiderate of any of the purposes of concrete value, and instead merely pursues the objective of its own perpetual accumulation. Labour wants *equal value* (equivalents) through simple exchange; trade wants *surplus value* through double exchange. (1974, 151)

For Tönnies (1957, 165) one of the most prolific features of *Gesellschaft* was – perhaps not surprisingly – the lie. The rise of *Gesellschaft* meant the “victory of egoism, impudence, falsehood, and cunning, the ascendancy of greed for money, ambition and lust for pleasure.” That *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* is replete with this kind of value judgements does not lessen its scientific quality (Bond 2013, 10). Tönnies obviously also cherished the reflexive scientific knowledge that ran parallel with this transition. “The scientific critical attitude” is irreversible and “destroys all these illusions,” he asserted (Tönnies 1957, 247). Tönnies (2014, 69-70) stressed the need of an “emancipation from superstition, spiritism, and magic” and pointed out how industrial forces had capitalized on this nostalgia. He emphatically stated that “[t]he spirit of *Gesellschaft* remains the same: it cannot jump over its own shadow”. The only way to suppress the *Gesellschaft*, according to Tönnies (ibid), is through surmounting it in its forward motion.

3.3. Kenneth R. Olwig on the duplicitous meanings of “landscape”

In 1991 sociologist Johan Asplund (1991, 79) published an essay on the meaning of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. In it he insists that it is crucial that we keep the dialectical tension between these concepts alive. However, due to what I interpret as the extensive naturalization of the urbanization process, he feared that it was too late (ibid., 17). Some years later the sociologist Dag Østerberg (2000, 27-28) – under the rubric *The distinction between city and country is fading* – in essence claimed that *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as concepts have played out their roles and were obsolete in contemporary society. That could have been the end, in some quarters, but instead of reflecting the very real conflation between city and country with a corresponding analytical conflation others continue to find it important to keep the descriptive and analytical dimensions alive.

This kind of blurring is what philologist and geographer Kenneth R. Olwig noticed had happened with the meaning of “landscape.” Instead of letting the conceptual conflation – or confusion – continue Olwig (1996) set forth to recover the “substantive” meaning of “landscape.”⁵ This approach is crucial in order to extract contrasting social formations from *Sankt Hans backar*.

Olwig (2019, 20) defines “substantive” as “‘real rather than apparent’, ‘belonging to the substance of a thing’” and points out that “[i]t is also used in the legal sense of ‘creating and defining rights and duties.’” This quest amounts to the construction of probing questions, like “[w]hat is it that is being covered up, or masked, by the landscape?” (Olwig 2002, 214). Olwig (2019, 46) wants to look behind the “scenes” and to venture beyond the conventional “landscape as scenic text” in order to grapple with the wider meanings of a “substantive” landscape. Uncovering the real material and social strata of the landscape is described as a form of “political landscape ecology” (Olwig 2002, 21).

According to Olwig’s (2015, 197) findings, “[t]he first idea of landscape developed prior to the Renaissance and mediated the communality of the commons, whereas the second arose in the Renaissance as an expression of ideas of modernity, and mediated the space of private property.” This is in congruence with Tönnies binary conceptualization above. The substantive meaning of

⁵This is very close to the method of Karl Polanyi (1957, 243-44) when he was chiselling out the duplicitous meaning of “economic.” Polanyi here laid the foundation for the classical formalist–substantivist debate in economic anthropology.

landscape (*Gemeinschaft*) is understood as place and polity which is prior to landscape as spatial scenery (*Gesellschaft*.) This is an extension from Olwig's mentor Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 133) who proposed that the former meaning equals the real world while the latter equals the world of art and make-believe. Olwig (2002, 30) associates the first idea to a landscape that is imbued with customs and practices from the bottom up, while the latter has been associated with "the courts of Europe [that] sought to mirror their authority in the celestial rationality mapped by the heavenly bodies of the cosmos." The logic of the latter is also inherent in the cadastral map that projects geometrical space of private property on former commons from the top down (Olwig 2013, 39).

This resurrection of geometrical space from imperial antiquity is inimical to place and therefore overrides the substantial landscape with spatial scenery. In certain circles in the imperial core this would have manifested itself as "the image of nature created on a stage through the perspectival representation of geometrical space" (Olwig 2019, 35). The imperial ontology of the core could be likened to the perspectival representation of a theatre stage. When placed in a central position in the theatre hall "the illusion of perspective is high" and when moved "to a position on the side [...] the sense of perspective is distorted" (ibid. 2019, 35). With the perspective distorted the illusion of imperial ontology is unveiled. This is congruent with the approach and perspective of the commons.

As the world-system with expanding empires and ancillary states historically churned forward the meaning of "landscape" aligned the focus from "place" to "space" and from a "particular" customary law to a "universal" natural law.⁶ Here the prior meaning of landscape – i.e. the commons that was imbued with humans and their non-human companions and by their ever-evolving and dynamic customary law – was seen as an obstacle by the gentry that propagated enclosure and agricultural "improvements" (Olwig 2019, 37). While these revived ideas from the Roman Empire settled, the illusions of unilinear progress and infinite growth took form in the new imperial core. With the perspective and generative logic of the commons these lifeworlds of empire – i.e. *Gesellschaft* – could arguably be demystified.

However, as the commons have had their histories hollowed out we are left with a non-substantial world of make-believe and landscapes that are portrayed as no longer having an obvious entry point for a community. As "externalities" of capital accumulation they have become the substantial and

⁶Olwig (2019, 48n22) defines natural and customary law by quoting Aristotle (1934, 295-298): "There are two kinds of political justice: the natural and the conventional. Natural justice has the same force everywhere and it does not depend upon its being agreed upon or not. Conventional justice is justice whose provisions are originally indifferent, but once these have been established they are important."

actively veiled stepping-stones for billionaires – i.e. the very few. These constructed “spaces” are mere mirrors of “individual material possessiveness and profit” (Olwig 2015, 197), or what C.B. Macpherson (1962) called “possessive individualism.” The core message of Olwig (2015, 203) is that it is up to us to recover the substantive meaning of our everyday landscapes – i.e. very much in tune with Lindqvist above – and despite “the fact that many ‘make-believe’ that landscape can be fully commodified as private property does not mean that landscape is not still very much a commons [...]” The approach taken here is to investigate the duplicitous landscape of *Sankt Hans backar* from the perspective of the commons.

3.4. Moral economies and social justice

With the above theoretical framework in mind we can analytically construct two forms of moral economies from the literature: one that is aligned with the conditions of *Gemeinschaft* and another that is closer to conditions of *Gesellschaft*. The former is congruent with customary law and place while the latter is compatible with natural law and space. Furthermore, the former is closer to the substantive sphere while the latter coincides with the parasitical nexus of empire (i.e. the womb of classical, neoclassical and neoliberal economics.) Like Tönnies, we could posit that the former belongs to “labour” while the latter belongs to “trade.” The former is perpetual and therefore universal, while the latter is transitory and could be understood as universal only in the sense of an inflated balloon – although with very real consequences.

It could be argued that the acceptance of usury through the invention of the purgatory by the church in the 12th century is a key moment in history when a Christian *Gemeinschaft* is transformed into a Christian *Gesellschaft* (Asplund 1991, 102; Le Goff 1988). This epochal change would later open up the hypothetical possibility for two forms of moral economies. As a term “moral economy” was first used in the mid-18th century when morality had supposedly been separated as a core feature from the “economy” (Götz 2015, 149). By the 1830s it was used as a critique of “political economy” (Thompson 1991, 337; Linebaugh 2019, 86). With the marginalist revolution of the 1870 political economy was omitted from the field of mainstream economics (Hann 2010, 190). Contemporary mainstream economics – in the lineage from Jeremy Bentham to Milton Friedman – rejects the idea that morality has anything to do with their field. They instead argue that it is amoral (Gregory 2018, 5). Neither of these models of the economy should be conflated with the actual economy (Carrier 1997; Browne 2008).

Regardless of the ambitions of an “amoral” model of the economy, contemporary mainstream economics has by some been seen as a “moral” project – one example will be given further down. Sociologist Andrew Sayer (2007, 262) has argued for an inclusive definition of “moral economy” as an approach, in affirming that it “studies the moral norms and sentiments that structure and influence economic practices, both formal and informal [...]” Such a definition is conducive for the approach taken here, where an older form of “moral economy” is contrasted with a new – i.e. basically the not too obvious moral economy of mainstream economics.

The older conceptualization is not so old in academia, however. It was popularized by the social historian E.P. Thompson (1971; 1991) in the early 1970s when it was used to make sense of food riots in pre-industrial England. It was later elaborated by political scientist James C. Scott (1977) who identified a form of subsistence ethics practised by peasants in South-East Asia. Scott (ibid., 3-4) argued that peasants have a strong aversion to risk as it can jeopardize their subsistence base. As such this subsistence ethics is inimical and an obstacle to the logics of mainstream economics. Generally speaking, the former approach could be said to practice long-term forms of exchange, conducive to stability, while the latter practices short-term forms of exchange, conducive to risk (Bloch and Parry 1989; Luetchford 2012, 403). An important aspect of this is what has been defined as “the trader’s dilemma”:

In *The moral economy of trade*, [Hans-Dieter] Evers (1994) asserts that trade and acquisitive profit-making in the short term poses a challenge to the long-term organic peasant community, founded on mutual help and solidarity. The demand for profit sits uneasily with the ethic of the community, in which the value of goods is determined by the use to which they can be put rather than the value that can be realised in the market. A trader who buys at the subsistence rate through the activation of reciprocal ties, and then makes a fat profit, is thus seen as betraying the community by moving from values determined by use to those based on exchange. (Luetchford 2012, 403)

Speaking with Tönnies, this could amount to a fellow community member who is treating his own kin or group through *arbitrary will* – as means to an exterior end – rather than *essential will* – as ends in themselves – in order to make a buck (Inglis 2016, 83). This is all underpinned by what anthropologist George Foster (1965) defined as *the image of limited good*. Foster (ibid., 297) had posited from his field research with peasants in Mexico that “[i]n the average village there is only a finite amount of wealth produced, and no amount of extra hard work will significantly change the figure.” The limited good “like land, is seen as inherent in nature, there to be divided and re-divided, if necessary, but not to be augmented.” A Scandinavian version of this seemingly universal

moral economy has been denigrated and mutilated in a widely quoted novel by the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose (1936). As it is tainted by mainstream economics' inimical and insurmountable relationship to *the image of limited good*, the message of the novel is an approval of *the image of unlimited good* (cf. Dundes 1971; Hornborg 1992). The villagers of the novel "believed that there was only a finite amount of Luck in life; for one man to become rich, another must become poor" (Sandemose 1936). *Luck* could be understood as another word for the more substantial *land* in the aforementioned definition given by Foster (1965, 297). The immoral people of the novel had wronged in their incomplete understanding of *the image of unlimited good*. The non-mutilated version of this moral economy – or subsistence ethic – can be gleaned from ethnographies from all parts of the world. Anthropologist James Suzman (2017) from his field research in Kalahari describes how individuals who get too self-important become the targets of mockery as an effect of a social levelling mechanism. Anthropologist Pierre Clastres (1987, 186) from his fieldwork in South America has boiled down the logic of this moral economy to an aphorism:

None of you are less than us; none of you are more than us. [...] You are worth no more than anyone else; you are worth no less than anyone else.

Tönnies would probably reject all possibilities of a moral found in the *Gesellschaft*. One voice that disagrees is political scientist William James Booth. According to Booth (1994, 661), the "starry-eyed" moral economists have made one major omission "about the theory of market society, namely the extent to which it too is a moral economics, developed in response to the embedded premodern household model." Here Booth attributes Aristotle's *patriarchal* household model to all "premoderns" and imagines an emancipatory new "moral economy" generated by market society. This image – which apparently includes the emancipation of women – clashes with E.P. Thompson's (1991, 336) acknowledgement that it was women who were the staunchest defenders of the moral economy in Europe before it was marginalized by the market economy. Booth's prospect of an emancipatory new moral economy does not bother about the question why women seemingly "retreated into a serial world of private households" by the mid-19th century (Thompson 1991, 336). Women's role in this moral economy had been deteriorating due the long-lasting witch hunts. Silvia Federici (2004, 12) argues that the persecution of "witches" was part and parcel – and "as important as colonization and the expropriation of the European peasantry from its land" – of the development of capitalism. All of these groups arguably exemplify the original form of moral

economy – i.e. the one that has been characterised as being a manifestation of the “resistance to the economy of the ‘free market’” (Thompson 1991, 340).

Booth’s (1994, 664) new moral economy of the “free market” is different. He seems to find the greatest potential for emancipation in money – or what anthropologists usually define as “all-purpose money.” To him this artefact is “egalitarian and thus oblivious of ranked distinction” and “to the use value of the thing” (ibid., 664). In other words, everything is equal in the measurement of money. Land and labour are understood as being freed up by what Booth calls the “process of ‘commodification’” (ibid., 661). As already has been pointed out, the discipline of mainstream economics should not be conflated with the real economy. When “all-purpose money” entered the exchange sphere of the Luo in Kenya it was treated as “special-purpose cash” (Shipton 1989, 10). This is because, as elsewhere, the landscape of the Luo was not yet *isotropic*⁷, it had a particular history. Parker Shipton in his *Bitter money: Cultural economy and some African meanings of forbidden commodities* describes how an older form of moral economy confronts the metabolic expansion of empire and state formations:

Luo say that ancestral spirits follow money obtained in land sales and ensure that it comes to no good for the seller. This money is *makech*, bitter. Luo believe that if a man sells land and buys livestock with it, either directly or indirectly, the animals or their offspring will die off by disease or other misfortune. (ibid., 37)

A similar phenomenon has been described by a folklorist of Scandinavia. As a general idea that follows the notion of *the image of limited good*, it was believed that “the sudden acquisition of wealth [in this case related to the phenomenon of buried treasures] were tempered by the conviction that such acquisition would be *disruptive*” (Lindow 1982, 275; emphasis added). This is contrasted to the proposed *folk idea* in the USA of *the image of unlimited good* – that “suggests that Americans think that America remains a land of opportunity, that boundless wealth is still readily available to anyone with the energy and initiative to go dig for it” (Dundes 1971, 97 quoted in Lindow 1982, 269). This modern *folk idea* surely belongs to the newer and transient moral economy of market society.

To sum up, it could be suggested that while the moral economy of mainstream economics views the commons and what is held in common “as the symbolic antithesis of morality” (Olwig 2013, 39), they were the unmistakable backbone in the older meaning of a “moral economy” (ibid., 34). The

⁷*Isotropic* means uniform in all directions. An isotropic landscape is a landscape that is ruled by all-purpose money.

one true red flag for economic liberalism – and for Booth’s new moral economy – has been the commons and the verb attached to it, *commoning* (cf. Linebaugh 2008; 2013).⁸

We have identified two distinct meanings and dimensions of the “moral economy” that differ radically in their positions on the commons. It would be wrong to situate them on an evolutionary scale from premodern to modern moral economies – as if one belonged to folklore and the other to political science. However, one of them is definitely more conducive to empire – no matter its geographical location – than the other. It could therefore be posited that these moral economies have crucially different material outcomes. We can also underscore the perhaps obvious point made by David Whyte and Jörg Wiegratz (2016, 7) in their introduction to *Neoliberalism and the moral economy of fraud*: “[T]o describe and analyse this moral character of neoliberalism – is not to sanction or endorse this morality.”

4. Empirical data and discussion (1): How the sacred waters of Lund, Sweden, progressed into a toxic sludge hole

4.1. An agrarian town in transition

Uniport [University] had been recently built with money coming from the oil boom of the late 1970s. It was built on land expropriated from the nearby village of Alu, but the villagers still held on to it. Every morning bicycling to my classes I saw women farming along the road on any patch of land the university had not cemented. (Federici 2019, 99)

[I]n every commercial nation the low people are exceedingly stupid. ([Adam] Smith 1982, 539)

[P]astor Schlyter wrote that the poverty of the Scanian peasantry was caused by “peasants’ stupidity [...]” (Van Gent 2008, 49)

In a map (Fig. 2) published in 1704 we see how the town of Lund, in the province of Skåne, is surrounded by a vast area of communal pastureland. These commons are coloured in bright yellow and exceed more than half of the space depicted. Perhaps the colour could be associated with *Reseda luteola*, a herb that produces a bright yellow dye, which according to the eighteenth-century botanist Linnaeus (Linné 2005, 180) covered the commons while he was a student in Lund in the 1720s.

⁸This verb was completely omitted when biologist Garrett Hardin (1968) forcefully populated the commons with self-maximizing economic men, in an article that was referenced by a generation of market fundamentalists.

In the upper part of the map is found *Bredgatans fälád*, which includes a body of water. The map comes with some text in Swedish explaining what we see. The most revealing word is probably *possessores*, that is Latin for landowners (Weibull 1919, 10). Cadastral maps with their top down logic provided the essential tool in order to enclose commons as individual private properties (Olwig 2013, 39). Used in this way they would nullify the substantial particularities of the landscape that had previously been the subject of local customary law.

Although historian Fernand Braudel (1992, 569-570) has written that Northern Europe had been “bullied into shape, catechized and exploited by the old Latin culture, the Church and Rome” and that the Reformation was an end to this colonial project, some imperial terminology like *possessores* would linger on and even prosper as these commons diminished. By the end of the same century, all of the commons in Lund had been engulfed and divided into individualized parcels by *possessores*. Some of these possessores were professors at the University of Lund, which had been established after Skåne had been annexed by Sweden in 1658. After the Swedish-Danish war between 10 000 to 20 000 peasants had fled to Denmark while the nobility had been persuaded to stay and were offered positions at the Swedish Riksdag in Stockholm (Åberg 1958, 110-120). One of these remaining noblemen – an influential coal mine owner – had some years prior to the annexation survived the “witchcraft” of some peasant women who were all sentenced to death by the sword and by burning (Ankarloo 1988). The coal soot from this money-making nobleman would stifle the world of herbs and magical wax and is together with the fleeing peasants and the other comfortable noblemen indicative of how the landscape would be transformed in the years to come.

Lund University was not the only university that Sweden had established in its expanding northern empire. The University of Tartu, in modern day Estonia, had been founded in 1632. The universities were run very much like feudal manors (Thoré 2001; Helmer 1993). These and other universities in the same realm were purposed, according to the Swedish regent Johan Skytte (1577-1645), to produce “clergymen who ought to be capable of influencing the peasantry” (Kahk 1990, 277). This meant clergy focused not only on uprooting so-called papist superstitions, but also on disseminating “the official ideology about witchcraft” (ibid., 276). It should be noted that “papist superstitions” and vernacular beliefs intermingled in folk practice (ibid., 279; Van Gent 2008, 140).

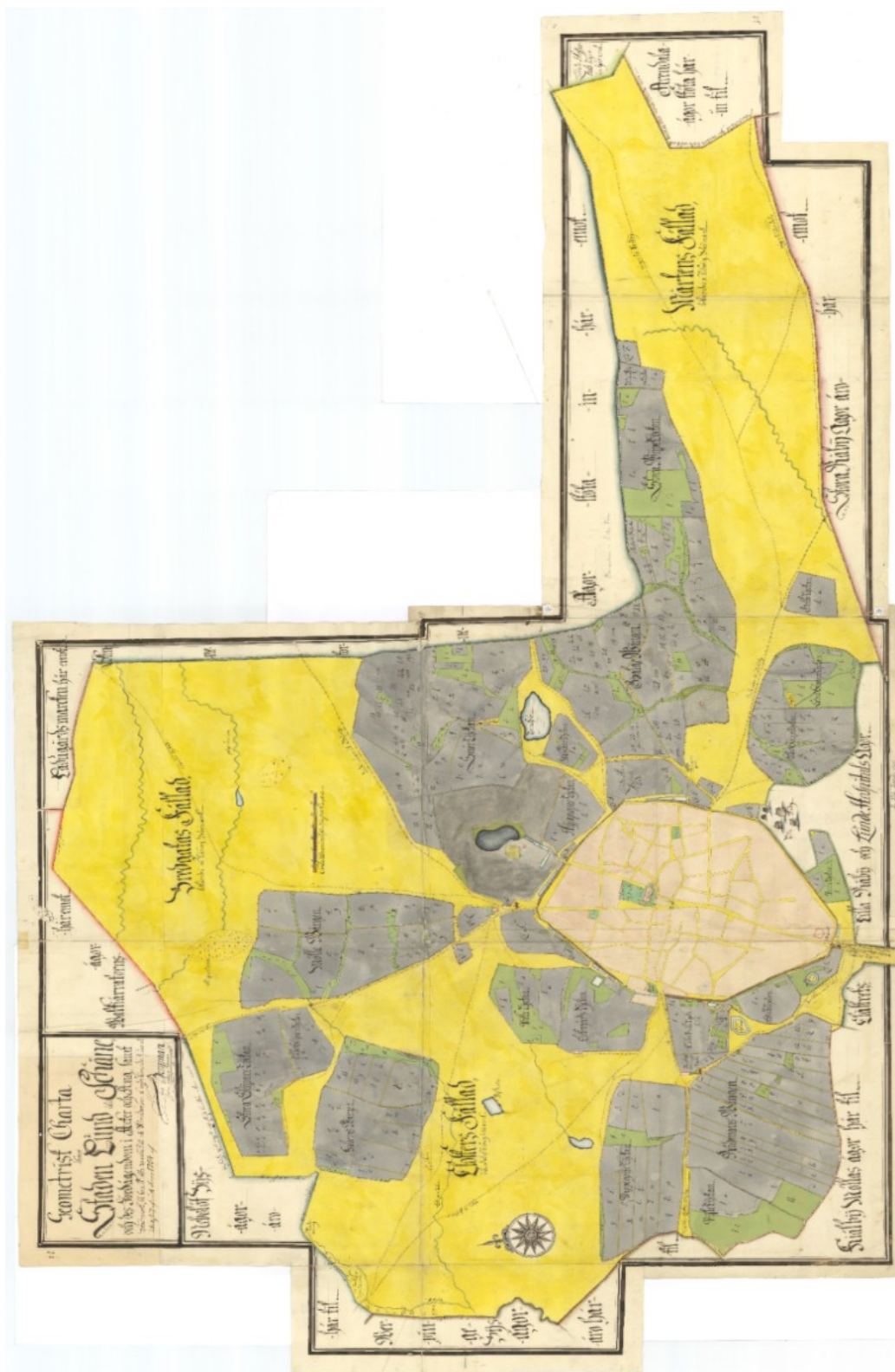


Figure 2. Geometrical map of the town of Lund in Scania with its properties in arable land and meadow. Land surveyor map by Jean [Johan] Bergman, 1704. L131-1:1 [LA].

In Lund, which had been the archdiocese with ecclesiastical provinces that included the greater Nordic realm from 1103 until 1133, legislation against witchcraft had already been promulgated in Church Law in the 1170s (Johansen 1990, 339; Vogt and Tamm 2016, 54). With the Reformation the influence of the Vatican deflated and the number of churches in Lund dwindled in numbers (Skansjö 2012). Some Catholic saints were however harder than others to uproot, especially if they had been configured as veils over substantive vernacular cults.

On *Bredgatans fäläd* we discover that one of these saints was associated with a specific body of water.⁹ As for context we can note that *fä* in *fäläd* translates to “cattle” and conjoined as in *fäläd* to mean “pasture commons.” The name *Bredgatans fäläd* indicates that this pasture commons could be associated with people inhabiting dwellings along *Bredgatan* – literally “The Broadway” – of Lund. We should keep in mind, however, that this is information provided by the land surveyor who had been employed by the magistrate of Lund. The magistrate in turn had been ordered to survey these lands for taxation purposes by the king in Stockholm (Weibull 1919, 9). The land surveyor represents the space of natural law, rather than the place of customary law found in the villages that border the surveyed commons. This was the first time the commons surrounding Lund were surveyed and mapped. That the commons would be all gone by the end of the century is significant. From a protocol from October 14, 1699, we can discern what looks like some serious wrangling between the land surveyor Johan Bergman and the magistrate regarding the payment (ibid.). The haggling on the part of the magistrate, the bargaining on the part of the land surveyor, and the contract that is signed by both parts indicate that we are dealing with the *arbitrary will* – or the *bargaining will* – and that *Gesellschaft* is emerging. In order to unearth contrasting dimensions and to discover what was perhaps being trampled upon at *Bredgatans fäläd*, let us turn to the philologists.

4.2. Contemporary philologists on the sacred grove and waters of Lund

Philologists have proposed that the body of water at the former *Bredgatans fäläd* could be of great historical importance. They argue that the name of Lund should be associated to an old cult centre (Pamp 1998; Svensson 2015a; Hallberg 2016). It is assumed that it existed prior to the establishment of the town around the turn of the second millennium. This centre, they argue, could have had a connection to what later became known as *Sankt Hans källa*. *Sankt Hans* translates to

⁹Some scholars have pointed out the similarities between female saints and female witches but also between the narratives of miracles and *maleficium* (Dinzelbacher 1995; Klaniczay 1994; cf. Van Gent 2008, 198). Some facets of this interpretation will be developed further on.

John the Baptist, i.e. St. John, and *källa* to well, spring. There are many examples throughout Scandinavia of Christian missions establishing themselves on former cult sites. This “pagan” dimension is often discernable in the place names. This is also true for Lund, that translates to “grove.” Ola Svensson (2015b, 86) writes, “the simplex form indicates a special and well-known grove.” The building of the town and its early wooden churches intensified any previous activity and the rate of deforestation in these landscapes (Hybel and Poulsen 2007, 10). It is possible that this *lund*, i.e. “grove,” shared the same characteristics as other similar entities throughout the world:

As agriculture’s Middle Eastern invention was accompanied by deforestation for crop production, early animist farmers reserved groves as the dwelling places of otherwise dispossessed spirits. Agriculture enabled a human population boom and these sacred groves could be whittled away to single sacred trees as farmlands, dwellings and livestock pastures gradually encroached on even tabooed sacred precincts. (Ray 2020, 9)

This description fits the one given by the philologists. According to them, Lund could be associated with a “grove” where hawthorn trees grew (Pamp 1998; Svensson 2015a; Hallberg 2016). They have suggested that the location of this historical hawthorn grove was to be found somewhere between *Östra Torn* and *Vallkärra Torn*. This is where *Bredgatans fälad* is situated on the map. It could be noted that hawthorn trees generally are avoided by cattle and that both Midsummer Eve and holy wells that are identified with *Sankt Hans* have been associated with thorny trees (Svensson 2015a, 139 Reitzel-Nielsen 1995, 123; Nicolovius 1908, 181). That the suggested hawthorn grove was a significant locale is also mirrored – it is hypothesized – in that the judicial district (or hundred) of Lund is named *Torna Härad* (Svensson 2015a, 139). That this grove was associated with certain springs was, as one philologist points out, already debated in the 16th century (ibid., 136). In sum, the possible nexus of the aforementioned thorny toponyms points in the direction of *Sankt Hans källa* situated on *Bredgatans fälad*.

4.3. How the commons were turned upside down

Commons such as *Bredgatans fälad* could be understood as places where power struggles have been on display. The different groups that have historically been associated with the commons, i.e. the peasants, the church, the nobility, and the king, all differ in their motives, although the peasants’ relationship to the commons is arguably the most direct and least parasitical. Some historians have interpreted the Scanian Law that was promulgated in 1220 as “expressing an anti-royal stance.” They argue that the Scanian Law elaborates on the rights of the peasantry to village commons while leaving the nobility and king unmentioned (Hybel and Poulsen 2007, 5-6). They also bring up

instances when the encroachment on the commons by the church and nobility have ignited peasant rebellions in Skåne (ibid., 7). As noticed, the relationships to the commons have been fluid and contested over time. In The Law of Jutland, promulgated in 1241, it is stated in regards to the wood commons that the king owns the land while the peasants own the trees growing there (ibid., 10). In The Town Law of Lund, with records surviving from the late 14th century, it is stipulated in paragraph eight that “no man is allowed to give or sell land that belongs to the town” (Holmbäck and Wessén 1979, 190).

About the 1790s social historian Peter Linebaugh (2019, 414; for a corresponding Swedish context see Weiss 2016) has written: “More slaves were traded, more land enclosed, more country conquered, more factory hands made during this long decade than ever before.” This global script of empire would also intervene in Lund. In 1784 a disciple to Linnaeus, Eric Gustaf Liedbeck (1784[N]), professor at Lund University, had conceptualized the commons of Lund as “fruitless” and “inutile,” and had therefore argued for enclosure. Thus, the thirteenth of June 1797, it had been decided in the *Rådhus* of Lund that the commons were to be enclosed and given away as private property to the local *possessores*. Inside Lund, all houses were since 1758 associated with specific numbers and to these the parcels from the divided commons were to be attached (Gadde 1961). Even *Sankt Hans källa*, the well dedicated to John the Baptist, was privatized, as seen in the land surveyor map from 1799 (Fig. 3).¹⁰ The location of the well is indicated in the upper right-hand corner of parcel number 289 where it is written *källa*, i.e. well, spring. Several complaints had been made against this process that would transform the former communal pastureland to individually owned and geometrically squared parcels. Some of these complaints were made by people outside the town of Lund (Förslag 1862). Some “outsiders” obviously did not think that these commons only belonged to the town of Lund. Those who were most outspoken and in favour of the transformation were representatives from Lund University – we have the names of at least three professors who participated at the meeting – who argued that they did not have any interest in a communal pastureland (Lindeberg 1989, 31). Others, including the mayor of Lund, claimed that there existed a great need to keep the communal pastureland in order for the people of Lund to have somewhere to graze their cattle (ibid; Holm 1911, 119). The complaints were formally considered in the upper echelons in Stockholm but to no avail – the commons of Lund were enclosed (ibid.).

¹⁰ Gunnar Granberg (1934, 21) mentions that the enclosure of wells, springs, on commons, often lead to disputes and conflicts.

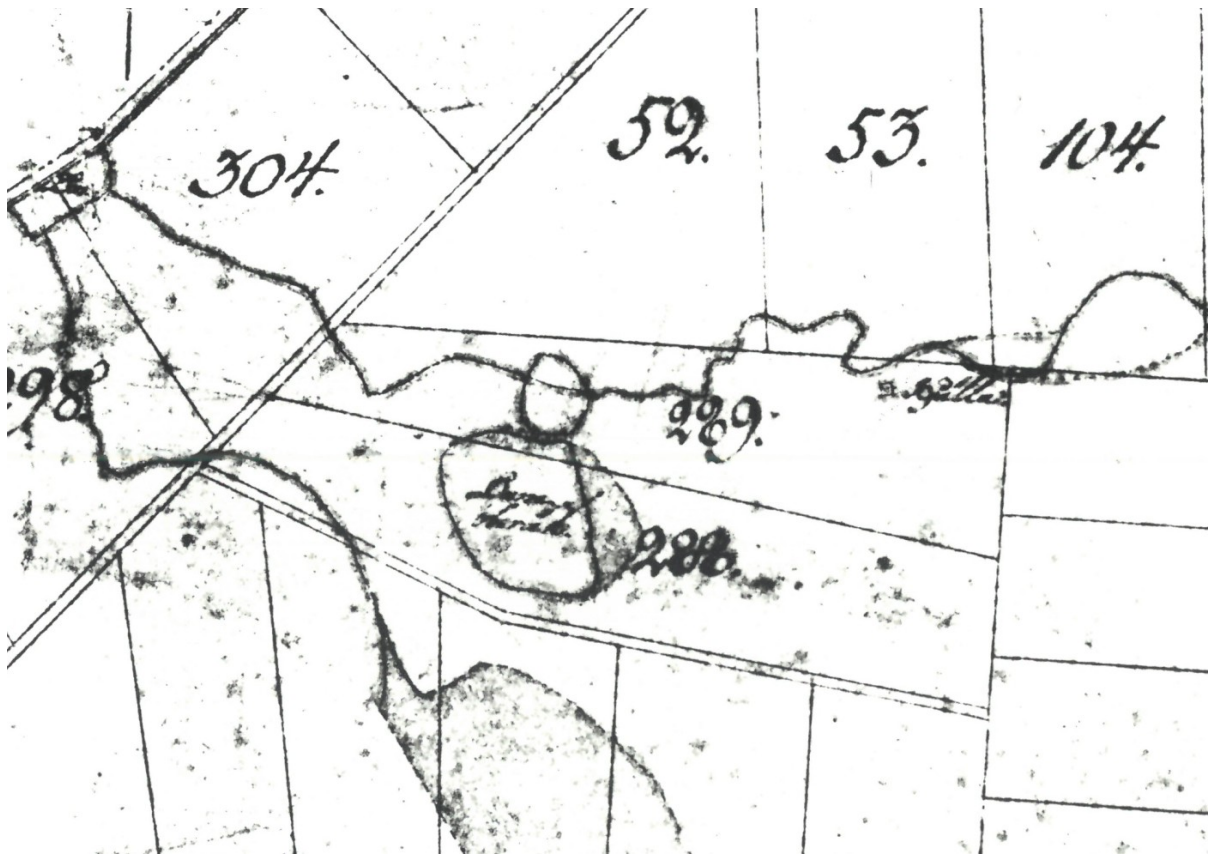


Figure 3. *Cropped land surveyor map showing parcel 289 with the position of well [källa] in the upper right corner.* Land surveyor map by Magnus Wremp, 1799. Kulturen. Lund.

As the communal customary law was abolished it was stipulated that the owners were free to utilize their individualized plots in whichever way they pleased (*ibid.*; cf. Campbell 1928). This and the reform as such reflect how the University of Lund was coloured by the ideas of the French Physiocrats at the time, in their view that the land was the source of all capital and that no restriction – i.e. no community – should hamper the initiative of the individual (Helmer 1993, 75). These ideas worked in tandem with the tenacious feudal and patriarchal structures of Lund University. The influence of classical economics would steadily grow and already tainted the leases that the university made with their tenants in the early 19th century (*ibid.*, 75-76).

The enclosure of the commons in southern Sweden would transform the landscape and how people related to it completely. Here as elsewhere it was the wealthy elite who were enriched as their ideology of “agricultural improvement” ravaged the communal culture. These protagonists for enclosure in Skåne had been impacted by the prior enclosure in Denmark (Holmberg 1939, 12). There, as in Skåne, the communal culture was framed as an obstacle and enclosure was basically a question for the king, as the king always had the last word (*ibid.*, 19). Such absolute politics is

reflected in how the governor-general of Skåne, Johan Christopher Toll (1743-1817), by all means possible seemed to want to exclude the peasantry and their complaints as they, according to him, were not fully assured regarding the benefits with the enclosure (ibid., 59). Toll did not think that the peasantry were as enlightened as the great landowners and the nobility of Skåne (ibid.). This unprecedented reform – and the contemporary landscape of Skåne¹¹ – thus bear the imprint of a despotic state (Dovring 1953, 76; Germundsson and Lewan 2003, 1). When Adam Smith (1976, 222; cf. Ince 2020) praises “the great abundance and cheapness of land, a circumstance common to all new colonies,” this also applies to how the “agricultural improvers” perceived the commons of Skåne.

Smith’s (1982, 15) condemnation of indigenous agricultural practices in America is similar to those made by Linnaeus during his journey through Skåne in 1749. While celebrating the husbandry of those who would become his peers, i.e. the noblemen, Linnaeus (Linné 2005, 167) sneers at their servants who according to him only perceive this world through the senses of smell and taste and have no knowledge of scholarly topics such as *dietetice* or *botanice*. The ambition with his journey through Skåne is to document what Linnaeus understands as the backward practices of the peasants and to find a cure to this “severe malady” (Linné 2005, 182). When he pays a visit to the holy well dedicated to St. Olav he is affronted by the poor and their “papist superstition” and claims that the people in this part of Skåne live *in obscuro* and far away from the enlightened *medici* (Linné 2005, 170). Being a *medici* himself, as well as a former student at Lund and Uppsala University, this cannot be anything else but a self-aggrandizing comment. It seems like Linnaeus conceives the peasants as something close to mere artefacts, as pawns in a game of chess. As such they are simply instrumental means to an end – i.e. Linnaeus’ perception of them is equal to the *arbitrary will* as defined by Tönnies – and their perceptions of the environment – their “superstition” – are offered up to the reader as pure entertainment, in the words of Linnaeus (Linné 1977, 11-12). His biographer Gunnar Broberg (2019, 177, 291) writes that Linnaeus’ science is primarily visual, that the environment is a scenery for him. This is equivalent to the conceptualization of landscape as a spatial scenery, as described by Olwig. Early in the morning of June 11, 1749, in what presumably is Lund, Linnaeus describes one such landscape scenery – a picturesque vista, perhaps seen from the top down from the horse-drawn carriage: how the shepherds blew their horns in order to assemble the cattle that are to be taken to the *fäläd*, the commons (Linné 2005, 180). He finds the practices of the peasants in Lund to be erroneous (Linné 2005, 185). On his way from Lund to Malmö he notes that geese are especially plentiful here and that even the poor and elderly women

¹¹Historical ecologist Carole Crumley (2017) has conceptualized such landscapes as “industrial agricultural wasteland.”

have them on the commons (Linné 2005, 187). With enclosure, in the late 1790s, the geese, together with the social system of the commoners, would be banished from the former commons of Lund (Genrup 1975, 19-23).

4.4. *Sankt Hans källa* in retrospect

With the commons enclosed and transformed into individually owned geometric units, Petter Löwegren, a blacksmith working at Lund University, later remembered that the popular assemblies on the commons, at *Sankt Hans källa*, during Midsummer Eve abruptly petered out (Löwegren 1945, 47).¹² From his childhood in the 1790s he recollected the processions of people who walked out to the holy well, *Sankt Hans källa*, on the commons to play, dance, eat, and light a great bonfire. According to him, the well was surrounded by four massive posts that were sculpted (ibid.).¹³ From the mid-18th century we have a source saying that there had been gatherings on the commons since time immemorial (Blomqvist 1978, 226). A third source is more damning and was written down by Carl Fredrik Nymann (1745-1818), a priest, who in all probability had been educated at Lund University. Under the rubric of *Vidskepelser* (superstitions) he lists what he considers to be misdeeds. Number sixteen is devoted to offerings or sacrifices at holy wells and at churches. The priest mentions the cult of Saint Olof (cf. Bringéus 1997; Linné 2005; Skans 1991) at the church in South-East Skåne but also memories from his childhood – probably around the 1750s – in Lund, where offerings were made at *Sankt Hans källa* during Midsummer Eve (Nymann[L], 105). Nymann's condemnation of "superstition" was backed up by legislation which basically understood *Sankt Hans källa* as a crime scene (cf. Van Gent 2008, 22). This "crime scene" should be remembered and contrasted to what later happens at this body of water in the 20th century.

It could be suggested that the offerings at *Sankt Hans källa* reflect a social system that expressed gratitude and veneration to a body of water that was part and parcel of a perpetual socioecological reproduction process, cognate to what Tönnies has conceptualized as *Gemeinschaft*. This is supported by the fact that a wide range of ethnographic accounts have shown that ancestors are associated with bodies of water that have been considered sacred or holy (Ray 2019, 265). It has also been argued that the importance of freshwater springs for human flourishing was what first

¹²Löwegren had applied for the job as a blacksmith at Lund University as the former blacksmith, Bäckgren, had run away due to unpaid debts (Löwegren 1945, 41). David McNally (2020, 14) writes in *Blood and Money: War, Slavery, and the State* that "Plato cannot avoid the conclusion that the enslaved—the one who remains in bondage, the one who cannot escape—is a necessary condition of philosophical truth." This is perhaps also an apt description of the knowledge production at the feudal university but also the relationship of the modern university to expropriated communal land.

¹³These posts are in a later source described as columns of granite (M 7452:18[F]).

dispersed people throughout the world (Finlayson, 2014). Probably as a consequence of its vital properties for everything living, different bodies of water have in various degrees been conceived as sacred or holy. John the Baptist was associated with the latter category. Much as the celebration of Jesus' birth in 388 was adjusted from the 6th of January to the 24th of December in order to squeeze out the general heathen rituals of that date, the suggested birth of John the Baptist on the 24th of June was perfectly suited to take on and appropriate the "pagan" rituals of Midsummer Eve (Reitzel-Nielsen 1995, 114). Therefore, it is probable that *Sankt Hans källa* has previously been associated with some other saint, entity, or ancestor. One archaeologist, for instance, has suggested that St. Olav might at one time have been associated with this body of water (Ödman 2018, 245).

The Catholic Church has had a wide range of policies regarding worship at sacred springs, from the harsh banishment that was stipulated at the Second Council of Arles in the year 452 to the ambivalent Pope Gregory the Great (540-604), who first advocated their destruction but later pragmatically called for the reuse of these sites for Christian practices (Ray 2020, 6-7). Half a millennium later it has been claimed that Cnut the Great in England "not only forbade, but imposed fines for the worship of heathen gods, the sun and the moon, sacred springs and stones" (Ray 2014, 88). Cnut the Great (995–1035), who was king over England and Denmark, is, together with his father Sweyn Forkbeard, also associated with the establishment of the town of Lund (Carelli 2012).

The fact that the customs associated with this body of water show up in the historical sources can be seen as a measure of its importance and elasticity, despite the wrath or will of any king or church. By "elasticity" it is here suggested that all periods and epochs have had their own peculiar perception of prior customs. Above we have some empirical glimpses of them regarding the offerings at the well. For every generation that the land and water kept on generating vital substances for, the customs that were created in the relationship to these entities were no doubt perceived as trustworthy. These customs, belonging to the social system of the commons, were repeatedly branded as "superstition" by the clergy (Van Gent 2008).

The sacrifices or offerings made are often associated with the cult of the dead, which according to Tönnies is the mother of all customs (Tönnies 2014, 13). The water and the land are in this interpretation associated with the dead, who were revered as spirits that looked over their descendants (Tönnies 2001, 28).¹⁴ The landscape was in various degrees accordingly conceived as

¹⁴ It is perhaps indicative for this local study of a specific landscape in Lund that the archives that have been used during the research are situated at *Gastelyckan*. It has been suggested that *Gast* in *Gastelyckan* could be associated – i.e. here translated – to specter, ghost or phantom (Svensson 2015a, 140), and *Lycka* to a plot of land, or parcel of farmland.

sacred. Tönnies (2014, 19) relates the burning of “witches” to how this practice of necromancy was perceived as a rejection of the Christian faith. The role as mediator or guardian of sacred landscapes have throughout the world been associated with “witches”, “shamans”, and “blacksmiths” (Eliade 1978; McNaughton 1993; Pentikäinen 1999). This sacred presence in the horizontal, green, and life-generating strata was “affronted by those who penetrate into the geological strata of life” (Eliade 1978, 57). As a social class they had previously been key community figures who upheld their positions “particularly through the correct and artistically perfect execution of sacrifices” (Tönnies 2014, 20).

4.5. Deciphering the customs at *Sankt Hans källa* prior to enclosure

Healers were mediators between the earthly world and the supernatural realm and could access magical power.

Cunning people performed many services for the community: healing, recovering lost or stolen objects, and predicting the future. (Van Gent 2008, 157)

If we are to shed some light on the rituals that have been executed at *Sankt Hans källa* we are compelled to triangulate with external sources. Regarding any possible local mediators or guardians of the sacred aspects of the landscape we cannot say much. We can observe that anything that fell under the definition of superstition was persecuted and condemned (Leide 1958). The Swedish Jurisdictional system had forbidden “superstition” in 1665 and redefined it as “fraud” in 1864 (Van Gent 2008, 22n20). Targets of these legislations were so-called cunning people, wise women, and healers, on whose altars offerings had been made, according to one dean who had been consulted on the subject of superstition in the diocese of Lund in 1795 (Bringéus 1951, 95; cf. Van Gent 2008 133). In Torna Härad, in 1758, one of these women, who was known for helping “to cure animals and children and to find stolen goods,” was put on trial (ibid., 34).

Here, however, we are just able to point out some indications, beyond what has already been stated, in order to form some conjectures regarding *Sankt Hans källa*. Nymann, the priest above, had under the banner of “superstition” remembered offerings being made at *Sankt Hans källa* around the 1750s, and Löwegren, the blacksmith at Lund University, mentions a great bonfire that was lit annually around the 1790s. While the priest entirely condemns the practices at *Sankt Hans källa*, the blacksmith is more positive. In order to understand how the transition from place to space and from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* developed, we could triangulate the position and the possible symbolic significance of the bonfire that Löwegren mentions. It will be suggested that the symbolic

meaning of the bonfire that Löwegren remembers is found somewhere between two distinct points. The first is found in the written record from an investigation of heathen idolatry done by some Swedish officials in southern Estonia during the summer of 1667:

The undersigned [...] went to the site of idolatry at nine o'clock on Midsummer Eve [...] where the peasants hold their usual sessions of idolatry and had already gathered, and for some time viewed the proceedings, how they built a fire and near the fire there was a stone with three women sitting around it; one of them is the most venerable and something like their priest, who receives the sick and their offerings and conducts the sacrificing. In the meantime the other two widows prepare the wax [...] Then the sick [...] go around the fire three times and while doing this they must bow to certain places of the stone while saying 'O help us, St John.' (Kahk 1990, 279)

This syncretic and conspicuously inclusive practice of a folk liturgy could be considered to be a point where the local peasantry is still somewhat independent – but probably not for long, as the “undersigned” officials are observing them.¹⁵ According to one source from a trial in southern Sweden it is claimed that “woman healers were visited by many people on holy days” (Van Gent 2008, 137-138). These women might reflect the “witches” that were believed to meet during Midsummer Eve (Johansen 1990, 360). In the folkloric material it is said that the herbs of the earth and the water at the springs were at their most vital during this night (Tillhagen 1997, 61; Ussing 1925, 67). In Denmark people are said to have been executing several rituals in order to keep these “witches” away during *Sankt Hans aften*, i.e. Midsummer Eve. One of the methods of keeping the “witches” away was to light a bonfire (Ussing 1925). Here we notice a difference from the above point that encompassed syncretic and inclusive practices. The difference is of course the European witch-hunts that had been inaugurated by the church and its clergy and primarily targeted the vernacular “pagan” beliefs throughout the centuries. During the peak of the witch-hunts in Sweden it has been claimed that king Charles XI (1655-1697) on a visit in Malmö – some kilometres south of Lund – was flabbergasted by the number of people that been imprisoned for *trolldom*, i.e. “sorcery” (Föreläsningen 1871). All of this is ingrained in our next point which is a song that was written in the late 19th century and that is still today sung during Saint John's Eve throughout Denmark:

[...] then youth go dancing
on your command, *St. John* [...]
every town has its witch

¹⁵Gunnar Broberg (2019) makes a point in his recent biography about Linnaeus being a pioneering ethnologist due to the travelogues that he wrote. This is also true for these quoted Swedish officials. The reason why Karl Marx enraged so many was because he turned this anthropological gaze on the imperial core.

and every parish its trolls.

We will keep them from life with the fire of joy

we want peace in this country

St. John, St. John!

It can be won where the hearts

never gets doubtfully cold.

(Holger Drachmann's song from 1885 translated from Danish to English in Federici 2018, 8-10; emphasis added.)

When "We love our Country," *Vi elsker vort land*, is sung collectively it is often accompanied by a straw witch that is slowly burning in the bonfire. Let us not speculate what the persecuted and beheaded John the Baptist had thought about this re-enactment of the witch-hunts and the song that is sung to honour his name. If anything, this seems to reflect the cumulative effect of Christian imperial politics. With the impact of the towering cathedral of Lund, the early condemnation of "sorcery" in the church law mentioned above, and its new university that was set to reform the peasantry, one conclusion could be that there are some indications that the witch-hunts – i.e. the murder of poor people with vernacular beliefs – have been naturalized as something "normal" and "good" in modern society. Nymann's perception of the world is a strong promoter of this view. Therefore, it is more likely that the bonfire that Löwegren remembers was lit in order to keep the "witches" away, than to attract the plausible former mediators and guardians of the landscape. The commons, we should remember, were a social system in which women had a central role (Neeson 1996; Federici 2004; Linebaugh 2008).

4.6. Towards an excessive naturalization of the urban and corporate logic

Although the popular gatherings at the well had ended there were still offerings made in the early 20th century (Wahlöö 1989, 77). By this time, the town of Lund had finally and with great effort bought back the last of the enclosed parcels and the enclosure was by many viewed as a grave mistake (Lindeberg 1989, 45). The fact that a man was known to loot *Sankt Hans källa* during the same period without any repercussion (Wahlöö 1989, 77) may suggest that the coins offered at this time were mere whimsical re-enactments of what was now considered to be "tradition" – i.e. an empty signifier. At this point, the looting of the commons had become the norm promulgated by the imperial powers.

With the communal subsistence practices temporarily gone, the moral imagination of the commons had no obvious material base. However, it should be remembered that this vilified communal culture after enclosure conceptualized unjust land surveyors as condemned spirits glowing in the night, i.e. as reincarnated glow-worms (Holmberg 1939,67). This happened as the remnants of the Scandinavian communal culture were showcased as evolutionary relics at outdoor museums by middle- and upper-class curators.

The top-down orchestration of the landscape as spatial scenery had taken over and whatever “tradition” that was attached to it by ethnologists or anthropologists was the opposite of anything essential or actually living. The substantive landscape had been degraded and enthralled by the transient spirit of *Gesellschaft* for exterior purposes, i.e. unfettered capital accumulation for a select few. The peasants with their substantive places, labour, and customs, had been hammered in the head by Linnaeus’ *diætetice* and *botanice* and by the cadastral maps of the land surveyors. The substantive place had effectively been overridden by imperial space. Other travelogues of Skåne would follow Linnaeus’ tradition up to the late 1930s by trying very hard to ridicule what remained of regional and local agriculture (cf. Nordström 1938). The hollowed-out customs and commons had become artefacts of the sprawling city where, according to Tönnies (2001, 252), “only the upper classes, the rich and educated, are really active and alive.”

4.7. Transient new relationships to sacred waters: The establishment of the landfill

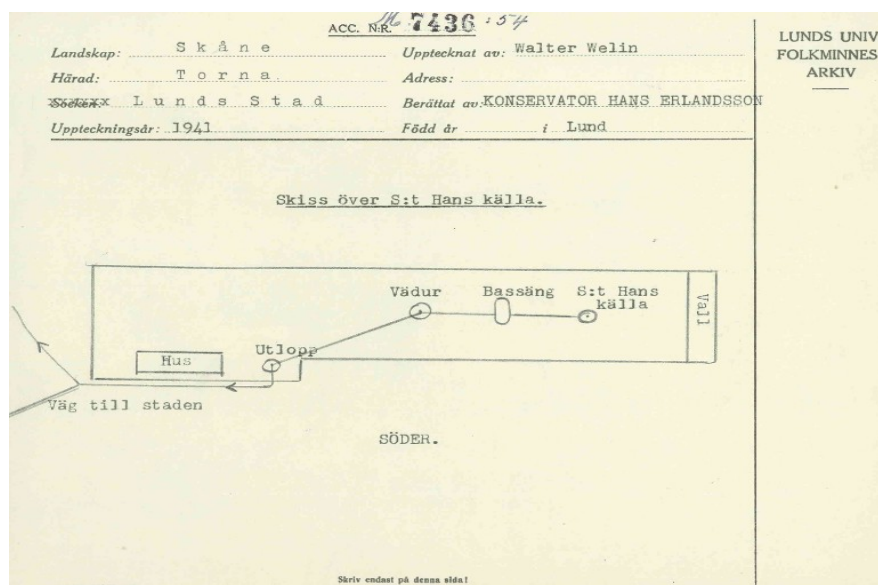


Figure 4. Sketch over Sankt Hans källa where the waters take a northward turn. Document created by Walter Welin, 1941. M 7436:54[F].

From the Reformation there is evidence that the clergy with force tried to uproot the papist cults at the holy wells (Granberg 1971; Østigård 2013), but later the tolerance and elaborations of the curative aspects of the wells and springs grew (Johansen 1997). This trend is noticeable in Linnaeus' (Linné 2005) journey through Skåne, when he with forced grandeur sketches the ambience surrounding the curative and mineral wells associated with the upper-class, while mechanically condemning the papist "superstition" of the peasants at the holy well dedicated to St. Olav. This trend is also true for the toponymic variations of *Sankt Hans källa*. From 1941 there is a document (M 7436:53[F]) from *The Folklife Archives* in Lund that confirms this. The well is now also referred to as *Sankt Hans hälsokälla*. *Hälsokälla* is closely related with the curative aspects of water. It indicates that the discursive politics of Linnaeus in 1749 are also of importance in the 20th century. This shift towards what would become a more profane and scientific – or perhaps engineering – relationship to water now seems to be complete. What previously was conceptualized as sacred had become H₂O (Illich 1987). This historical anomaly is manifested in how we on a daily basis defecate in water closets. As the pagan cult of water had deteriorated through the millennia, the image of *Sankt Hans* (John the Baptist) as associated with this body of water was probably discovered to be as hollow as a Trojan horse. The informant behind the aforementioned document repeats some of the memories already told by Petter Löwegren but also adds new vital information:

At the number [289, see Fig. 2 and 4], where nowadays the shooting range is found, there still today exists a well. The janitor who has lived here for over twenty years has heard from older people that the well is supposed to be *Sankt Hans hälsokälla*. [...] [W]hen the well had been cleansed copper coins were found. [...] The water has a mild and agreeable taste and holds a temperature of 9 °C [48 °F] and therefore never freezes during winter. The well is the source of a small brook that runs northwards to *Vallkärratorn* [...] Since tradition and empirical evidence tell us that this is *Sankt Hans källa*, caution should be taken so it receives a proper and well-deserved framing. When the shooting range is not needed any more [...], the area could have hazel trees planted and other green niceties like yew and oak and become a central part of the great park that has been planned out here. (M 7436:53)¹⁶

Somewhat surprisingly a "great park" had been planned before the landfill was established. The landfill was probably not included in the visions of a "well-deserved framing" for *Sankt Hans källa*. Had the landfill just haphazardly been given a greater priority in the late 1940s? The park that was created to cover the landfill in the late 1960s was nevertheless named after the well: *Sankt Hans backar*. The qualitative remark that the water "has a mild and agreeable taste" probably reflected a feature that had been cherished since time before memory. This would abruptly change as the profit

¹⁶All translations, if not otherwise stated, have been made by the author.

motives and the *arbitrary will* of industrial capitalism convened in the landscape a few years later. The landfill had been established in 1947 and in July of the same year the water on the shooting range was deemed contaminated. The test made confirms that the temperature holds 8,8 °C but now the smell is defined as “rotten” and it is concluded that the water is not proper for human consumption due to its chemical and bacteriological content.¹⁷ Although it is evident by the documentation from the 1940s that the municipality of Lund with all its branches had done a meticulous job in order to choose a proper place for the new landfill, they had probably been working with the wrong parameters from the start.¹⁸ This happens as maps, engineering blueprints, and non-substantive economic models are conflated with the actual substantive landscape. The man who would be in charge of the Sisyphean labour of mitigating the leakage from the landfill would in 2013 tell Swedish State Radio that the landfill was situated on the worst possible place, between two gullies (Fritsch-Lärka 2013[N]). When the municipality had replaced this landfill with a new one at *Rögle* in *Södra Sandby* in the late 1960s, a regional environmental organisation, *Skånes Naturskyddsförening*, wondered if it was such a great idea to place the new landfill 50–75 meters north of an important water reservoir, *Rögle damm*. “As a principle”, they wrote, “it should be obvious that a landfill and a water reservoir should not overlap as has happened here.”¹⁹

Included in the above cited document (M 7436:54[F]) is a sketched map (Fig. 4) that shows the position of *Sankt Hans källa* and how the water flows northward. According to the folklorists the north was associated with the cold, trolls, death, and wicked spirits (Bergmark 1964, 1935; for more folkloric material regarding the possible symbolic meaning of the north and the north-west see Flentzburg 1910: 141; Granberg 1934, 23; Tillhagen 1997, 104; Van Gent 2008, 32-33, 76-77, 167, 176, 182). It was believed that things that were offered in springs that flowed northward encapsulated the sickness or whatever was troubling the person making the sacrifice. The thing offered would so to speak join with the other bad forces in the north, where it belonged. Foul water would flow northward from *Sankt Hans källa*.

4.8. A landfill worker has a meeting with the press

Capitalism has long been presumed to be a powerful solvent of enchantment—all that is holy is profaned, ecstasy is murdered in the waters of calculation. But what if those waters of pecuniary reason constituted a baptismal font, a

¹⁷Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1946, §62 [S].

¹⁸Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1946, §97 [S].

¹⁹Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1968, §73 [S].

consecration of capitalism as a covert form of enchantment, all the more beguiling on account of its apparent profanity?
(McCarraher 2019, 9)

One of the principal characteristics of the votive and sacrificial offerings [...] is that they must be removed from this world and placed beyond human recovery and re-use. A common method of accomplishing this was to throw the objects into water [...] A second method, very commonly employed, was to bury the objects in the ground [...] (Wait 1985, 51)

In 2007 the southern Swedish press started writing about the discovery and evidence of deformed and crooked sea trout in *Vallkärrabäcken*, the brook north of the former landfill and *Sankt Hans källa*. It was suspected that the fish had metabolically accumulated the leachate from the old landfill. A report written by a freshwater ecologist in 1999 had been mismanaged by the municipality of Lund and was now scrutinized in the press. The freshwater ecologist explained that he had never encountered anything like the condition of *Vallkärrabäcken* throughout his career (Gustavsson 2007a[N]). Soon a former employee at the landfill turned up to unravel the unveiled history of what became known as *surhållet*, the sludge hole. If *Sankt Hans källa*, or rather the life-generating body of water of the commons, had been essential for the communal culture that had been managed through customary law for over millennia, the sludge hole would prove to be indispensable for the transitory and short-term industrial entrepreneur:

The trucks with industrial waste were running constantly from the corporations Åkerlund & Rausing and Tetra Pak. Barrels of chemicals and industrial waste were without reservation dumped at *Sankt Hans backar* [here indicating the landfill under the present park]. – It does not surprise me that the fish are dying. There is so much crap on this landfill, says former landfill worker Gustav Nordqvist and shakes his head. Gustav Nordqvist worked at the landfill from 1964 until 1967, when it closed. [...] The “sludge hole” was dug at the old driveway, close to the now demolished house [see the house, *hus*, in Fig. 4, or the shooting range – a white stretch of land found in number 289 in Fig. 5] belonging to the shooting club. The sludge pit was about 25 metres in diameter and had been dug on boggy soil, without any bottom plate. This was the place where chemicals from drums and barrels were dumped on a more or less daily basis. They were marked with warning logos and definitions of different chemicals that were common in paper and plastic industries during the 1960s. Everything that was in liquid form was dumped here. It mostly came from the industries that produced packaging, Åkerlund & Rausing and Tetra Pak. [...] - We just poured it straight into the pit. Gustav Nordqvist remembers that the “sludge hole” was covered over in 1966. – The pit existed already when I came here. When the hole was full it was covered with soil. But this place is soggy and it has to go somewhere. (Gustavsson 2007b[N])

What the philologists have claimed to be the plausible origin of Lund, i.e. the body of water with holy and sacred connotations, had become a toxic sludge hole. The low cost of dumping industrial

waste, paid by Åkerlund & Rausing and Tetra Pak, was equal to the cost of discarding household waste at the landfill (ibid.). The capitalist corporation and the capitalist consumer were equal entities in this scheme. A compliant state and a lack of environmental legislation explains why corporations like these can flourish. In 1965 the Waste Department acknowledges that industrial waste exceeds the volume of household waste disposed at the landfill.²⁰ In Sweden environmentally hazardous waste was first conceptualized as a distinct category in the 1970s, although this kind of waste had been dumped indiscriminately for decades on the landfill in Lund (Sjöstrand 2014, 33; Bergsjö and Nilsson 1983, 59). The landfill, which was active between 1947 and 1967, had purportedly received a lot of praise from visiting delegations from neighbouring countries (Renhållningsverket 1967, 14). The Waste Department was especially proud of the mounds that had been created in order to block the view of the landfill from people who lived in the area (ibid.) It is also clear that the purpose of the park – *Sankt Hans backar* – that was created in the late 1960 was to conceal the landfill.²¹ Here it should also be noted that the intervention made by the former landfill worker Gustav Nordqvist gives us the answer to the question posited by Kenneth R. Olwig (2002, 214) above, i.e. “[w]hat is it that is being covered up, or masked, by the landscape?” The spatial scenery of *Sankt Hans backar* was hiding the substantial birth pangs of corporate and philanthropic capital.



Figure 5. Aerial photo from 1940 with Magnus Wremp's land surveyor map from 1799 superimposed. Notice how the lines of the map fit almost perfectly in the landscape. At the white stretch of land the sacred body of water is found in parcel 289, under number 52 and 53. Aerial photo provided by the municipality of Lund.

²⁰Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1965, “Avfallets mängd” [S].

²¹Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1954, §33 [S].

Companies such as Åkerlund & Rausing and Tetra Pak have always been wholly dependent on others taking care of their industrial toxins, e.g. the public sector like the local municipality or state.²² In this sense they have always been dependent on the benevolence of the latter group. In fact, when the question of responsibility was later discussed by the municipality of Lund it was suggested by a member of a conservative party that the “tax collective” were the ones to cover the costs to mitigate the leakage from the toxic sludge hole and landfill (Nathéll 2007[N]).²³ This is also what happened. By that time, irreversible damage had already been done and the efforts made by engineering expertise – payed by the aforementioned “tax collective” – to counter the environmental destruction naturally focused solely on the symptoms, i.e. basically contributing to the strength and allure of the spatial scenery of the landfill-*cum*-park. The commons and the possible wellspring of Lund had been sacrificed due to the transitory inflation of the *Gesellschaft* and its concomitant *arbitrary will*. To understand this urban and corporate logic better, we need to change focus from *Sankt Hans källa* to a man who had also been named after John the Baptist.

4.9. The Rausing dynasty

Remember that we live in a feudal state. (Rausing 2000, 148)

We live in a society where incredible sums, vast resources, are wasted for ‘reasons of dogma.’ (Rausing 1997, 352)

Biodegradability is saintliness. But *why*? (ibid., 352)

These statements were written by Hans Rausing, the CEO of Tetra Pak between 1954–1983. Rausing had studied economics at Lund University and had by the time of these remarks become honorary Doctor of Economics at the same department. As naturally embroiled, due to his position, in the world of landfills both locally and globally, he proposed with entrepreneurial logic that “‘landfill taxes’ [...] are just a burden on the consumer and a political way to sub-optimize the economy” and that “green laws inhibit competition” (Rausing 1997, 353). Confronted with the morality of the real economy outside the “scientific” bubble of mainstream economics he would write: “The Prophets have always used laws, exploited the state to enforce dogma,” “[i]t is hard to retain hope, since damage done cannot be undone,” and “[w]hen shall they ever learn???” (ibid., 353-354). In 2017 the net worth of this man was \$12.5 billion according to Forbes.²⁴ This is greater

²²This is similar to how corporations extracting fossil fuels are dependent on the atmosphere as a carbon sink, i.e. a commons.

²³This logic is systematic in the contemporary *Gesellschaft*. The British “tax collective,” for example, have paid “reparations” to former slave owners since slavery was abolished. This “compensation” lasted from 1835 until 2015 when the “debt” had finally been paid back. (Olusoga 2018 [N]).

²⁴<https://web.archive.org/web/20170330091233/https://www.forbes.com/profile/hans-rausing/>

than the GDP of many nations. After their move to one of the world's most extreme tax havens (London), the wealth of Hans Rausing and his brother Gad would exceed that of Queen Elisabeth II (Wäingelin 1995 [N]; cf. Davies 2002[N]). For Hans Rausing (1997, 350), this was corporate utopia: "Mrs. Thatcher was in my opinion the most important political leader of all after the war. She took on a country riddled with socialism, with no hope, no future, Swedish-type taxes and with its industry slowly but surely destroyed, strangled by dogmatic, boss-run labour unions."

What is referred to as the Rausing dynasty in the press made its wealth during what has been called *The Great Acceleration*. This period, which significantly runs parallel with the landfill under scrutiny, commenced after World War II and has been defined by two historians as "the most anomalous and unrepresentative period in the 200,000-year-long history of relations between our species and the biosphere" (McNeill and Engelke 2016, 5). Like Ferdinand Tönnies, these historians understand that it will not last for long (ibid.). Tetra Pak was ready to reap the fruits of this new age in a landscape where the customary moral moorings had been seriously weakened. With the customs of the commons out of the way, the lithosphere was laid bare and exposed to unfettered looting.

In 1938 it had been decided by the city council of Lund, dominated by the Social Democrats, to fund the establishment of an industrial zone that was to be given away freely to Tetra Pak (Andersson and Larsson 1998, 79-80.) Tetra Pak's oligopolistic position on the market, its regimentation of consumer behaviour, and its negative impact on the environment early on lead to protests. The *SSU*, the youth league of the Social Democratic Party in Sweden, advanced the idea of nationalizing the company in 1970 in order to mitigate its environmentally destructive logic (Lindström 1970[N]). When similar ideas were advanced at their congress years later, they were voted down. It was charged that "no intervention of the state or union could modify the laws of capitalism if the roots of the problem are not attacked – the private ownership of the means of production" (TT 1975[N]). The *SSU* and other groups had also criticized what they claimed to be severe infringements of *allemansrätten*, i.e. the right to roam, at *Simontorp*, the old feudal manor outside Lund belonging to the Rausing dynasty since the 1940s (Martinsson 1974[N]). *Simontorp* had also been the battleground of a peasant rebellion in 1811, where the rebels, very much like the *SSU*, wanted the manors of Skåne to be divided and distributed (Olofsson 2006; Ahnfelt 1963, 146).

The patriarch of the Rausing dynasty, Ruben Rausing (1895-1983), had ordered his two sons to dedicate their lives to the company in the early days of *The Great Acceleration* (Andersson and Larsson 1998, 89). Gad Rausing, who was engaged in archaeology, is the only one who has

completed an excavation at the landfill. The aim was not so much to excavate the possible origin of Lund as to investigate what disposable packages were disintegrating most rapidly, the ones produced by Tetra Pak or the ones produced by a rivalling company.²⁵ The excavation lasted some weeks.²⁶ It is not entirely clear when it took place, but the previous two sources have argued for the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Nor is it entirely clear what would be gained if these packages did in fact disintegrate faster than their rival. Much of the entrepreneurial logic that would flood the landfill in Lund and the rest of the world with disposable materials and the tax havens with capital was invested in the Rigello. The Rigello was a plastic bottle that was introduced by Tetra Pak in the early 1970s as a marvel of science and as the pinnacle of environmental friendliness. It was advertised that it would degrade rapidly once disposed. The production of the Rigello ended in 1983, but the bottle still shows up on beaches as a token from an ocean stifled with plastic (Rydén 2018[N]).



Figure 6. *The summit of Sankt Hans backar*. Photo taken by author in early May 2020.

As a scholar of grave mounds, Gad Rausing (1993, 191) would write: “Since time immemorial man has tried to express his affinity with his family and tribe not only in life but also after death and also to mark his own and his group’s political position and ownership of the land.” Burial mounds defined in this way are topographically and symbolically similar to landfills – or to the parks that

²⁵Professor Emeritus Stig Welinder, e-mail message to author, April 5, 2020.

²⁶Archaeologist Per Urban Hörberg, phone conversation, April 24, 2020.

sometimes cover them (Fig. 6). Here the Rausing dynasty surely has made an impact throughout the world, as they will be unable to shake off their connection to this litter. This deduction has been made after consulting some documents found at *The City Archive* of Lund. We are informed that a complaint was made in 1964 by Åkerlund & Rausing, the parent company of Tetra Pak, about the afterlife of some cardboard boxes, 150 kg in total. Åkerlund & Rausing were not pleased that their cardboard boxes had been recycled by a paper mill in Västervik after having been discarded at the landfill. According to them, the cardboard boxes should not have left the landfill. Åkerlund & Rausing seem to have imagined that the property rights would be flawlessly intact at the landfill. A police report is thereby filed against the person who carried the cardboard boxes away from the landfill, but later all charges were dropped as it was concluded that there was no substance to the allegation.²⁷ In the early 1990s, environmental activists throughout Sweden would enthusiastically and independently agree to this logic of ownership by returning the waste to its sender, i.e. to Tetra Pak in Lund (Förpackningar 1992[N]; Skickar 1992[N]; Wedel 1992[N]; Mattsson 1992[N]).

4.10. The complaint by Åkerlund & Rausing curtails the customary rights of the landfill workers of Lund

[I]t required almost two centuries to educate the lower classes to feel nausea from the odor of shit. (Illich 1986, 51)

As an effect of the complaint by Åkerlund & Rausing, a stricter policy would be enforced at the landfill, with written rules of conduct, which meant that less materials were to be recycled. This is clear by a response from the director of the Waste Department, *Renhållningsstyrelsen*, of Lund, to a request by a person who wondered if it would be possible to recycle the excess of cardboard and other paper material accumulating at the landfill. In a rather arrogant tone, the director elaborates on why this is not possible and mentions the complaint by the local industrial giants Åkerlund & Rausing and that the workers previously have had the right to sort out and collect whatever they found useful. The administration had allegedly facilitated storage shacks for the landfill workers where they could place sellable items. This obviously must have lessened the amount of waste and kept material in circulation. In the 1950s, the administration had tried to reverse what could be understood as the customary rights of the landfill workers. This had happened, the director argues, due to the low social status that recycling of waste gave the landfill workers. A dispute followed between the administration and the landfill workers, where the rights of the latter group in the end

²⁷Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1964, §57 [S].

were curtailed. The word that the director uses to describe this banned practice is *lumpa*.²⁸ Peter Linebaugh (2013, 32) associates such bans to enclosure and “the complete separation of the worker from the means of production [...]” Despite the ban, some forms of *lumpa* were still practised in 1965, as is demonstrated in an article about the landfill, where the whistle-blower Gustav Nordqvist is shown in a photo with a Fred Flintstone poster that he has found and that he says he will use to adorn his Caterpillar tractor (Fig. 7). This practice of *lumpa* could be associated with what Tönnies defined as *essential will*, as the use value of a thing is prior to any possible exchange value.

It is no wonder that Walter Benjamin (1999) built his historical materialism on the practices of the rag-picker, the *chiffonnier*, the *lumpensammler*. They all hold up a mirror that demystifies and displays the cracks in the industrial magic. It is also logical that the industrialists of the 20th century rather wanted to incinerate than to collect the mess that they had created. Some forms of waste management are more conducive to the profits of mass production than others. Hans Rausing (1997, 353), for example, could not fathom why “plastic coated papers cannot be burnt?”²⁹

The infringement on what is here understood as the customary rights of the landfill workers has a historical antecedent in how the practice of gleaning (Sw. *efterskörd*, *axplockning*; Fig. 8) has been vilified.³⁰ The meanings of *lumpa* and to glean are equivalent. They are attributes of the same practice in different socioecological formations. Gleaning is the communal customary right of gathering what is left on the field after harvest. This subsistence base diminished with the enclosure of the commons (Linebaugh 2008, 125). During the Great Famine of 1876–78, women and children in Madras, India, were severely punished for gleaning (*ibid.*, 147). We are told that the practice of communal strip-farming in open-fields “required intensive *ad hoc* cooperation, to share the plow, coordinate grazing, [...] distribute wastes, above all, to glean” (Linebaugh 2013, 168). In France, the encroachment of these customary rights of the peasantry is



Figure 7. Cropped photo with whistle-blower Gustav Nordqvist together with Fred Flintstone. Photographer unknown. (Unikt 1965[N]).

²⁸Lunds renhållningsstyrelse: Protokoll med bilagor, 1969, §44 [S].

²⁹This unwillingness to differentiate between the lithosphere and the atmosphere is significant. The former guardians and mediators of landscapes have kept these entities separate (Eliade 1978, 57). In modern terminology trees (transformed into paper) naturally belong to the carbon cycle of the atmosphere while oil (transformed into plastic) from the lithosphere does not.

³⁰For a contemporary account on gleaning from France see documentary film-maker Agnès Varda’s poetic and political *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000): <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0247380/>

said to have ignited the uprising of 1789 (ibid., 33). In England the “Great Gleaning Case” of 1788 would criminalize this ancient practice as an agricultural labourer, Mary Houghton, stood trial for gleaning on the land of Lord Cornwallis (ibid., 195). It was also common for the geese to “feed on the stubble after the harvest [...], completing the work of the other gleaners” (Linebaugh 2019, 241). The geese, as already described above, vanished from the commons of Skåne due to enclosure. Both *lumpa*, gleaning, and what anthropologist Joshua O. Reno (2016, 101) – who has done fieldwork on a landfill in Michigan – refers to as “scavenging,” unite in that they “circumvent the tacit norms of mass consumption.” The colonialists, the lords, Linnaeus, and Åkerlund & Rausing were infuriated: people did not move according to their script. The former group is conducive to the formation of the landfill and the latter to the formation of the commons. The latter group’s practices, that are inimical to the reduction and regimentation of people as consumers, have been defined as “degrading,” “dirty” (ibid., 100), or as being associated with “low social status,” as postulated by the director of the Waste Department of Lund above.



Figure 8. *Gleaners*. Oil-painting by Jean-François Millet, 1857. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

5. Discussion (2): The possible moral economies of the landscape

5.1. The transient moral economy of the landfill and the Rausing dynasty (*arbitrary will*)

A proper history of the unaccountability of the corporation is yet to be written. (Ruggiero 2013, 106)

Mass waste comes to rest in places that are considered *empty*. (Reno 2016, 136)

The Rausing family kept both copies and the lid was put on what was perceived as unfavorable writing of history.
(Lundahl 2015, 217)

Eternal existence is a fantasy of ruling classes, which is why they are afraid of history. (Linebaugh 2013, 3)

It is hard to fathom the possible morality of the landfill, or what William James Booth (1994) calls the “moral economics” of market society. As we have learned above, enclosure is inimical to communal culture: how is a moral economy at all possible without a community? Margaret Thatcher, whose political philosophy Hans Rausing (1997, 350) praises, infamously claimed that “there’s no such thing as society.” By praising the “There Is No Alternative” of Thatcherism, Hans Rausing presumably also subscribed to the authoritarian politics of post-coup Chile, where the neoliberal ideas of contemporary society were rolled out with force (Klein 2007; Bevins 2020). Accordingly, it should not surprise us that a few years after Gad Rausing proposed that Sweden should be run by experts, the true political colour of these experts was revealed (Larsson 1977[N]; Källberg 1981[N]). In the early 1980s, Tetra Pak faced corruption charges in West Germany. Money had been given to a minister of agriculture belonging to the Free Democratic Party. The prosecutor alleged that money had been given to the minister in order for him to counter the proposed ban on disposable packages. Gad Rausing claimed that the money had been given to the minister since the FDP was the party closest aligned with the politics of Tetra Pak (ibid.). This converges with the authoritarian politics of post-coup Chile in how the politics of enclosure have been orchestrated, i.e. by claiming that communal culture was an obstacle to the entrepreneurial spirit. Why should West Germany’s democracy hinder the entrepreneurial spirit of Tetra Pak? At the core of the moral economy of the landfill, i.e. the moral economy of enclosure, we stumble upon the structure of authoritarian – or unfree – liberalism.³¹

³¹With references to Jean-Paul Sartre and Karl Marx, Jairus Banaji (2011, 151) has called this “repressive liberal capitalism.”

Lisbeth Rausing – then Koerner (1999, 2) – in her biography of the most famous scientist in the history of Sweden delivers a peculiar observation, where she claims that “Linnaeus thus rejected Adam Smith’s laissez-faire theory” and that “he had a zero-sum view of the economy.” From this and what follows in her dissertation we can deduce that the protagonists of the moral economy of the landfill subscribe to *the image of unlimited good*, i.e. to mainstream economics. The difference between *the image of limited good* from the view of Linnaeus and the peasants is that the former conceptualized it from the national sphere while the peasants conceptualized it from the sphere of the local commons. According to Tönnies (1957) the national sphere is always conducive to *Gesellschaft*, while the local commons sphere is not.

The inherent logic of the disposable commodities of Tetra Pak presumably also mirrors how classical economics had conceptualized land and water as indestructible and boundless entities (Ricardo 1911, 33-35; cf. Foster and Clark 2020, 15). In her bashing of the purportedly non-liberal Linnaeus, Rausing omits that it was a disciple of Linnaeus who first proposed the enclosure of the commons of Lund – i.e. effectively making the accumulation of future philanthropic capital and the toxic sludge hole possible (cf. Liedbeck 1784[N]). Lisbeth Rausing is the co-founder of Arcadia, which “supports charities and scholarly institutions to preserve cultural heritage, protect the environment, and promote open access.”³² Arcadia has, for example, donated means to *The Endangered Landscapes Programme*.³³ Scholars of ravaged landscapes – such as *Sankt Hans backar* – have a possible donor here.

According to foundation scholar Jean Roelofs (2003, 8), “[t]ax evasion and public relations” and “indeterminable quantities of guilt and benevolence” have motivated the creation of most foundations. Roelofs also adds that the foundations’ “greatest threat to democracy lies in their translation of wealth into power.” The modern university, much as the West German minister of agriculture mentioned above, has seemingly made itself dependent on donations from foundations, possibly obstructing “engaged critique about [market-society’s] most basic principles and social [and ecological] consequences” (Giroux 2004 quoted in Smyth 2017, 13). That the modern university is a product of the expropriation of communal land (Thoré 2001; Federici 2019, 99; Lee and Ahtone 2020[N]) is part and parcel of this quandary.

³²<https://www.arcadiahfund.org.uk>

³³<https://www.arcadiahfund.org.uk/the-endangered-landscapes-programme-announced-winning-projects/>

Most central to Booth's (1994, 664) "moral economics" is, however, all-purpose money. We must agree when he alleges that this artefact "is oblivious to ranked distinction" and "to the use value of the thing" (ibid.). This is similar to how Hans Rausing (1997, 353) is oblivious to the adverse logics of the lithosphere and the atmosphere. It is plausible to posit that the groups with the most intimate relationships to this artefact (all-purpose money), designed by classical liberalism in the imperial core, generated the landfill and the toxic sludge hole. The logic of all-purpose money together with the moral guidelines provided by Milton Friedman (1982, 133) makes the transformation from the possible wellspring of Lund to the toxic sludge hole even less opaque: "[t]he only responsibility of corporate officials is to make as much money for their stockholders as possible."³⁴ To this we can add a comment by economic anthropologist Stephen Gudeman about the French Physiocrat François Quesnay. Gudeman (2005, 147) writes: "[w]e should [...] observe a contradiction in Quesnay's statement about productive expenditure: how could mining be productive in the Physiocratic sense, while livestock were not?" The revelatory prerogative and moral credentials that are given to the mining of the lithosphere are fundamental to the possible moral economy of enclosure and the accumulation of waste at the landfill.³⁵ This model, we should remember, was what ideologically preconfigured Lund University and the enclosure of the commons of Lund (cf. Helmer 1993). Such models, i.e. the economics of early classical liberalism to contemporary neoliberal economics, have primarily catered for a select few in a narrow imperial realm.

After the Rausing dynasty had swapped what could be perceived as reciprocal gifts – or use values³⁶ – for exchange values on the global market they faced the trader's dilemma (Evers 1994; Luetchford 2012, 403). They left Sweden when there was talk of democratizing the industry (Andersson and Larsson, 1998, 79-80, 317; Meidner 1975) for former imperial nodes like London and Rome. In England, the Rausing dynasty claimed to have strong connections to Sweden and Lund in order to get non-domicile statuses, thereby avoiding paying taxes (Davies 2002[N]; Leigh 2019, 204). These nodes are the historical and parochial homes of the moral economy of enclosure, with the parliament in London historically being associated with "The Den of Thieves" (cf.

³⁴Friedman like Friedrich von Hayek had received the "Bank of Sweden Award in Economic Sciences in Honor of Alfred Nobel." Cf. Mirowski 2020 for the scheming politics behind this "Award in Economic Sciences." According to Mirowski (ibid., 238), it had been created in order to popularize and naturalize neoliberal economics by "Swedish economists bent upon rolling back the Swedish welfare state."

³⁵For the record: not only plastic infused commodities and barrels with industrial toxins from *Tetra Pak* and *Åkerlund & Rausing* were dumped at the landfill – so was radioactive waste. The landfill workers naturally became worried when they started to receive radioactive waste in the 1950s (Renhållningsverket 1967, 18). After some experts had been consulted it was concluded that the personnel had no reason to worry (ibid). According to one of the experts, a professor in practical medicine at Lund University, the landfill workers had been advised to place the cans with radioactive waste underneath other waste so it would not lay easily accessible. Hälsovårdsnämndens protokoll: Inneliggande handlingar, 1960-14-7, §277 [S].

³⁶In the conceptualization given by Luetchford (2012, 403) of the trader's dilemma above.

Linebaugh 2019, 247-260). From this we can posit that the prime protagonists of the moral economy of enclosure live far away from the places – which, according to the logic of all-purpose money, are conflated as spaces – that are necessary for their metabolic and seemingly limitless capital expansion aligned with *the image of unlimited good*. Beyond the testimony given by landfill worker Gustav Nordqvist and the mainstream economics of Hans Rausing, we could perhaps best understand the Rausing dynasty and their relationship to the former landfill of Lund by trying to digest how Gad Rausing from abroad decided to dedicate precious time at old age to dispute a fee of “\$4 a year for rubbish collection at his cabin [in Valdemarsvik, Sweden], on the ground that he was seldom there” (Obituary 2000). A disabled senior citizen – that had not willfully excluded himself from the “tax collective” (cf. Nathéll 2007[N]) – ended up paying the fee, making the billionaire the laughing stock of a nation (TT 1998). Another example of this calculative moral economy was showcased when the patriarch of the Rausing dynasty, Ruben Rausing, due to an advance and convoluted tax evasion scheme was sent as a straw man to live in a villa in the EUR-district of Rome, Italy, as the first member of the dynasty to leave Sweden (Andersson and Larsson, 1998, 304). The historians Peter Andersson and Tommy Larsson (ibid., 306) write that Ruben Rausing “was 74 years old, did not grasp any Italian, and did not have any friends in Rome.” What he did have as company in the villa was Tetra Pak’s most sacred commodity at the time – the aforementioned Rigello bottle, in pure gold (ibid., 309). The logic and allure of all-purpose money and gilded commodities are significant here. If these phenomena are concomitant to the moral economy of the landfill and the toxic sludge hole, they are also complicit with the real tragedy of the commons.

5.2. The perpetual moral economy of the commons (*essential will*)

We have, if not a duty, then a need, deeply engraved within our culture, to pass the place on no worse than we found it.

Those of us who do not expect an afterlife may see in this our only immortality: to pass on the succession of life, the succession of culture. It may even be that we are happier when we are engaged in matters larger than our own wants, larger than ourselves. (Thompson 1982 quoted in Edelman 2012, 64)

[S]tate and market mechanisms have been used to undermine collective commons, by allowing their alienation or by relaxing protective regulations. (Standing 2019, 34)

Communism, socialism and liberalism all viewed the commons as dispensable, while economic growth was sacrosanct (ibid., 43)

Healers and mediators, i.e. the vernacular wise women – or men – of Scandinavian peasant culture that were prosecuted for “witchcraft” and “superstition,” helped others in their communities to recover or find stolen goods (Van Gent 2008). The non-industrial social systems of Scandinavia (Lindow 1982) – as elsewhere in the world (Foster 1965; Thompson 1971; 1991; Scott 1977; Clastres 1987; Suzman 2017) – have had a plethora of mechanisms to mitigate and counter social injustice. Should it surprise us that the customary laws of the commons, which necessarily upheld such mechanisms, were conceived of as obstacles and hindrances in the narrow understanding of landowners, nobility, and even universities, in their pursuit to widen their domains while subscribing to the class-biased ideas of classical liberalism?

A core aspect of the moral economy of mainstream economics and of the landfill is the belief in and vindication of boundless growth, i.e. *the image of unlimited good* (Dundes 1971; Hornborg 1992). This idea was something that Ruben Rausing probably imbibed during his stay at Columbia University in New York (Andersson and Larsson, 1998, 46). There he wrote a joint Master’s thesis on Frederick Taylor’s Scientific Management (Engwall 2018, 20) and attended the lectures of neoclassical economist John Bates Clark (1907, 374), who had written that “[i]f nothing suppresses competition, progress will continue forever.” Against the background of a world set on fire and the historical destruction of the possible wellspring of Lund, these convictions can be associated with modern superstition, magical thinking, mammonism (i.e. the love of money) – or at best, wilful ignorance. The short-term profits – i.e. the “bitter money” (Shipton 1989) – that were gained by turning the commons and sacred waters of Lund into a landfill and a toxic sludge hole could be conceptualized as *short-term accumulation by long-term socioecological destruction*. Such conceptualizations are grounded in the moral economy of the commons, where stolen goods are disruptive until found and recovered. Historian Jacqueline Van Gent (2008, 183) writes about one of many women, who was prosecuted in 18th-century Sweden, that she “was asked to re-establish the social balance, through rituals of healing and recovery of stolen goods.” Her deeds were interpreted as crimes at the time, but what happened in Lund with the commons and the sacred body of water, due to enclosure, was not.

6. Conclusion

(1) Crucial to the understanding of the historical transition from commons and sacred waters to a landfill and a toxic sludge hole in Lund has been the breakdown of customary laws, which safeguarded the commons, due to the expansion of imperial socioecological formations. First, due

to the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church; second, due to the formation of certain European empires – not excluding Sweden – and their concomitant political economies. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the political economies of the European empires have basically criminalized the social system of the commons and defined the practices of this social system as obstacles to their particular *arbitrary wills*. This was what made the landfill and the toxic sludge hole possible.

(2) The groups that have been associated with and conducive to the creation of the commons are basically cultures – including humans and non-humans – that have been in direct contact with this landscape and therefore safeguarded its existence and continued reproduction through specific customs and ritual practice. The commons and these groups can be understood as associated with the outcome of *essential will* and *the image of limited good*. The groups that have been associated with and conducive to the creation of the landfill are all products of state, church, and empire. Their relation to the landfill could be understood in terms of how they conflate place with space. All-purpose money has been imperative for this imperial perception or ontology. The landfill and these groups can be associated with the outcome of *arbitrary will* and *the image of unlimited good*.

(3) The moral economy of the commons could be understood as being long-term and protective. The moral economy of the landfill could be understood as being short-term and destructive.

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