FORUM

New knowledge and the university

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What forms of knowledge have legitimacy in the contemporary university? By using Actor-Network Theory to unravel the strands in a recent dispute about access to skeletons from a burial ground in Cape Town, this paper shows how circulating systems of references connect institutions, historical trajectories and differing sets of interests to form competing knowledge systems. Rather than falling back on a defence of established disciplines and academic authority, it is argued that there are considerable benefits in recognising the importance and validity of knowledge generated 'in community', and in the course of political discourse. Rather than undermining truth, such an approach will result in both better science and more informed community action.

Keywords: knowledge, university, actor-network-theory, physical anthropology, burials, community, memory

Between December 1913 and March 1914 Emile Durkheim delivered a series of fourteen lectures on the subject of Pragmatism and Sociology (Durkheim 1964). As the first Chair of the new discipline of Sociology at the Sorbonne, Durkheim was caught up in both the politics of curriculum reform and the wider issues of internationalism, nationalism and anti-Semitism in a Europe a few months away from war. The theme of his lectures was the conflict between a long-established, conservative tradition of Rationalism, with its insistence on an absolute and independent concept of Truth, and the radical and aggressive pragmatism advanced primarily by US philosophers such as Peirce, Dewey and James, who argued for an experiential concept of reality.

Durkheim's concerns of a century ago mirror in many respects our own debates about knowledge and power, diversity and the relationship between 'science' and 'indigenous knowledge'. Nineteenth century academic establishments sought to exclude new and barbaric knowledge claims from new fields of study such as Sociology and English Literature and resisted curricula reforms. As Bourdieu (1996) famously demonstrated, universities characteristically have a double life, serving both as the gatekeepers to the establishment but also challenging and re-calibrating the boundaries of knowledge systems, enabling the creation of the new knowledge systems that are essential to intellectual progress. This double role was played out in the Sorbonne in Durkheim's time, in Bourdieu's France before, and after, the protests of 1968, and today.

But why evoke the ghost of Durkheim now? In a series of influential essays Johan Muller (2000) and subsequently Young and Muller (2007) have claimed Durkheim as the quintessential sociologist of the boundary, the defender of the 'sacred' knowledge of the established academy against the claims of ways of knowing that are constituted outside the university establishment. In this paper, through the use of a case study of conflicting knowledge claims in Cape Town, I want to show that such simple binaries of inclusion/ exclusion are an inappropriate way of characterizing how knowledge systems

work in practice (as well as being a misrepresentation of Durkheim's position). Instead, we are in a phase of transition where the disciplinary certainties of high modernism are being replaced by hybrid knowledge fields and new networks of interconnection (Latour 1993). Rather than relying on status-based valorization (the primacy of the scientific expert, the authority of the professor), we need to look for opportunities for university-based knowledge systems to set up new networks of circulation that draw on ever-widening sources of information and expertise grounded in communities other than the academy.

Building on Bernstein's concepts of knowledge structures, Young, Muller and others insist on disciplinarity and the continued exclusion of the profane world from the academy (Bernstein 2000; Muller 2000; Young 2005; Young and Muller 2007, 2008). The decision on what constitutes legitimate knowledge rests with experts inside the academy: "truth and knowledge are fundamentally social categories – theories and facts about the world based on the best evidence and the most powerful theories as rationally arrived at by … the inner community of scientists who can legitimately contribute to the rational consensus" (Young and Muller 2008: 519).

Muller and Young's position is in essence a defence of modernism in the face of various forms of relativism and arguments advocating the socially constructed nature of knowledge. Moving between the school curriculum and the sins of outcomes-based education and the role of the university in building and disseminating knowledge, their line of argument offers little comfort for ways of knowing loosely grouped together as "traditional", "indigenous", "community based" or "experiential". The modern university, from Kant through the rise of the great nineteenth century universities to contemporary defenders of the established academy, is seen as a place apart where departmental boundaries must be defended against calls for problem-based research or the primacy of interdisciplinarity.

Writing some years before Muller, Bruno Latour (no friend of postmodernism or social constructivism, despite

claims to the contrary) had identified the emerging crisis in this position (Latour 1993). Latour's argument is that vast achievements of science were based on a productive, but artificial, distinction between nature and society. While this device worked magnificently in establishing the foundations of advanced science and technology, the nature/society distinction is increasingly failing to explain or resolve contemporary issues of critical importance. Instead, the major challenges of the contemporary world are hybrid in character, requiring analysis and interpretation that is both social and scientific. Writing in the early 1990s, Latour is prescient in identifying some of these key hybrids. A definitive instance is global warming, where the "sacred" knowledges of environmental and political science are unable to deliver a solution that reconciles the valorization of democratic government with the consensus that, unless carbon emissions are reduced within the next decade, the consequences will be fatal for future governments. A current instance is the failure of the disciplinary structures of the academy to predict, or find solutions to, the partial collapse of the banking system, which has discredited, in the most experiential of ways, a vast paradigm of academic orthodoxy.

Latour's argument is not that modernism's achievements should be negated, and he has no time for 'absolute relativists', postmoderns or anti-modernists. He is rather arguing for the recognition of the key significance of hybrid systems, of ways of knowing that embody both science and the networks of associations which, for Latour, constitute the social (Latour 1993; 2005). While he is thinking here of Donna Haraway's cyborgs, or the combination of political associations and experimentation in which microbiology emerged (Haraway 1992; 1997; Latour 1999), Latour's work can equally be applied to the 'science' versus 'indigenous knowledge' debate, showing that the very distinction is invalid. Following Latour's insistence that the global can only ever be traced through the local, I will make this case through looking at the cries of despair of one group of scientists as they were denied access to their laboratory specimens, arguing that they should forget the recourse to sacred knowledge and should rather seek to understand the hybridism of the field in which they work and seek a politics that allows for differing interests and productive intersections between different ways of knowing.

Alan Morris's inaugural lecture in Human Biology, delivered at the University of Cape Town in October 2008 and published in part in the local press, was titled "The Politics of Old Bones" (Morris 2008). Morris's lecture was in part an overview of the field of Physical Anthropology, tracing its history from the racial obsessions of the nineteenth century through the disgrace of eugenics to contemporary work on the physical variability of human populations and the evidence of lifestyle revealed by skeletal analysis and chemical analysis of bone samples. But its main emphasis, and media interest, was a *cri de coeur* for the invasion of science by politics, the breaching of the boundaries of science by profane, popular interests.

The inaugural lecture is one of the formative rituals of disciplines, the assertion of the privileged status of university knowledge. Delivered in academic dress, before colleagues and students and without the opportunity for questions or debate, it is expected that the newly appointed or promoted

professor will account for her or his intellectual antecedents, set out the scope of teaching and research and offer a programme for the future development of a field of study. Thus the professor professes and the boundaries of discipline are reviewed, revised and reasserted. This is Young and Muller's "inner community of scientists" reminding the world that they are the legitimate custodians of knowledge.

Morris argument was that Physical Anthropology had been "purified" (to use Latour's term) in the mid-twentieth century, following the excesses of colonialism and Nazi racial science, and has for the last half-century been a legitimate part of Human Biology: "the big break with the past came in 1951 when the United Nations published a statement on 'race' that rejected race science and the classification of human types on which it was based" (Morris 2008). However this rebirth has not been accepted by some outside the academy: "not everyone thinks that what I do for a living is respectable. For a significant and very vocal group here in Cape Town, anyone who studies the physical remains of humans is not a legitimate scientist. The cause of this is not what I have done, but what was done before me" (Morris 2008). For Morris, the social sciences are complicit in this process of misrepresentation: "there is a myth amongst social scientists that because physical anthropology no longer accepts the concept of race, that human variation somehow doesn't exit. This is a failure to understand current scholarship in the field and demonstrates an almost shameful ignorance of biology".

It is not common for an inaugural lecturer to both condemn public opinion and to denounce the work of another set of disciplines within the academy as "shameful". Clearly, the stakes were high. The scientific study of human remains has continued to be controversial long past the UN declaration of 1951 and has a complex history of controversy ranging from calls to repatriate parts of the collections of the British Museum, the rights of indigenous communities in Australasia and North America and, closer to home, to the return and reburial of the remains of Sara Baartman from the Musee de l'Homme in Paris. Such controversies have had a local history, with previous contestations concerning human burials in Cape Town and, of course, in other parts of South Africa as well (Malan 2008).

The particular events leading to Morris's inaugural statement started in May 2003 with the unearthing of a large burial ground in the course of the redevelopment of Prestwich Place, part of the older city of Cape Town along what had once been the foreshore. Long known as a part of town where the colony's underclass of slaves, dispossessed indigenes and marginalized were buried, such a discovery was bound to be controversial, the developer (Styleprops Ltd) duly notified the regulatory authority, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), and commissioned a recognized archaeological agency, the University of Cape Town's Archaeological Contracts Office (ACO), to carry out the required initial investigation and report. While not involved in the discovery and regulatory process, Morris and his team of science students from Human Biology made a robust claim for right of access to the 1200 or so skeletons unearthed at the site, and then applied to SAHRA for a permit to study the skeletons and take bone samples for chemical analysis. This

application was turned down in April 2005 (Shepherd 2007).

For Morris, indignant at the continued association of his discipline with racial science and denied the opportunity of laboratory work and publication, this is a straightforward tale of truth versus ignorance, science versus prejudice and objectivity versus politics:

> There was little debate about who was buried on the site, but a group of activists claimed 'ownership' on the basis of the poverty and exclusion of the people who were buried there. The public meetings, and more importantly the SAHRA facilitated meetings of 'interested parties', quickly deteriorated into slanging matches about who was going to benefit from the profits of the development. There were distinct racial overtones. The developer was seen as a white person about to make a financial killing by evicting the earlier oppressed people from the land in which they were buried. These same people were oppressed in life by the white colonial settlers and were now being oppressed in death by the same people. The demand of the activists was to stop all excavation and to turn the cemetery into a place of memorial … The activists raised the old 'straw man' of the race scientist and bluntly refused to allow even the most basic assessment of who was buried on the site. My students and I tried everything we could to show them how we could decipher a wealth of information about health, lifestyle and demography from the skeletons, but to no avail (Morris 2008).

Prior to Morris's inaugural lecture, Antonia Malan and Nick Shepherd had published comprehensive and insightful analyses of the Prestwich Place story, the former in the context of community rights and the complexities of consultation and development, Shepherd as part of a larger project concerned with the politics of archaeological practice (Shepherd 2007; Malan 2008;). My purpose here is not to repeat their work, but rather to follow Latour in asking a somewhat different set of questions. If we see Morris's intellectual agony as a consequence of the larger fissures in the 'modernist settlement' – as an inability to control the production of knowledge in the terms of a simple dichotomy between science and society – is there another way that the plot could have developed? Would it have been possible to have avoided the stark distinction between the sacred world of Human Biology and the profane world of those apparently mobilised against Science, admitting to the legitimacy of knowledge held and transmitted in the community and advanced and advocated via the public meetings and organizational networks aligned in opposition to the laboratory project?

Both Malan and Shepherd show that the Prestwich Place story is considerably more complex that the sacred/profane dichotomy presented by Morris. By using the methodology of Actor-Network-Theory to take Malan and Shepherd's analyses further, this complexity can be mapped as sets of associations between actors (some human and some non-human) revealed through traces of objects, records, statements and other texts (Latour 2005). These networks bring the global into the local (for example, as Morris does by evoking the United Nations in his case for legitimate sampling of the Prestwich Place skeletons) and range across time (again, as Morris does by ranging across the history of his disciplines). As Latour has shown through his closely worked cases, such actor-networks are motivated by spokespersons who claim legitimacy in distinction to other actor-networks and constantly define legitimacy through coding knowledge and defining boundaries. Thus rather than seeing preordained domains of the sacred and profane, to understand knowledge production in terms of actor-networks is to prioritize the ethnographic observation of the complex intersections between science as a way of understanding the world and other, sometimes competing, systems of knowledge (Latour 2005).

Shepherd's close reading of the discovery and bringing to life of the key actors in the Prestwich Place story – the 1200 people previously buried there – shows the traces of three key actor-networks. For analytical convenience, we can call these 'Development', 'Memory' and 'Science' (although this is of course a device, since none would necessarily recognize the legitimacy of either of the others). Each evokes what Latour would call a 'panorama' – a legitimating view of an integrated world - and each would claim to represent a larger group (although it would be quite possible for an individual to be a member of more than one group). Further – and for the specific purposes of this discussion – each is aligned directly or indirectly with a set of academic disciplines.

Table 1 maps out these three actor-networks as a set of traces. For convenience, they are articulated by the key common event, the unearthing of the first of the Prestwich Place burials in May 2003. However, these are not the only intersections, and the traces of associations before and after May 2003 are not necessarily coterminous and range across time. Traces of the actor-networks similarly range across space, sometimes comprising intensely local records (for instance, the minutes of the first public meeting in St Stephen's Church) and at other times evoking a global archive (for example, international condemnation of Group Areas removals). The traces inventoried in Table 1 would be more fully expressed as a multidimensional set of radiating associations of highly variable length.

Since the group claims of Science have already found a prominent platform in Alan Morris's inaugural lecture, we will turn first to Development, barely visible in either Malan or Shepherd's accounts, and yet of key significance. To understand this actor-network it is necessary to reach beyond the obvious agency – Styleprops Ltd and the up-market urban apartments, the Rockwell, now completed and sold on the Prestwich Place site. The Development actor-network originates in theories of urban redevelopment, the need to reverse the middle class flight to the suburbs, to add-value, bulk up and ensure financial returns on investment in infrastructure. In this, the City of Cape Town, through its cohort of professional planners, committee structures and elected public representatives, follows the lead of cities in the west and north in the name of best practice. Urban redevelopment is enabled through local and international banks and commercial investors. The immediate manifestation of this wide-reaching set of associations and archive of company ownership, shareholdings, regulations and financial transfers is the proprietor of Styleprop Ltd, who purchased a rundown set of

buildings with a great deal more below ground than he bargained for.

The trace of the Development actor-network continues past the key event – the unearthing of the first skeletons – with exemplary attention to required process. The South African Heritage Resources Agency is duly notified as the legislation requires, and Styleprop Ltd picks up the fees due to the Archaeological Contracts Office, appointed to carry out the initial survey and write the first report. The interests of Stylepropps Ltd, and indeed of the whole connected edifice of urban redevelopment and property investment are clear – the skeletons must be exhumed and relocated under whatever regulatory regime and memorialisation process is deemed appropriate. While the proprietor of Styleprop, understandably, expresses anxiety from time to time, the trajectory of this group of actors is comparatively clear and uncomplicated by existential angst. Given property prices in up-market Cape Town at the time, it is likely that the costs of the delay and archaeological investigations were easily absorbed within the financial margins of the project. The Development actor-network continues to roll on, somewhat more alert after Prestwich Place, reinvesting profits in further urban regeneration in pursuit of the standing of a World City.

Morris dismisses the second actor-network set of associations – here labeled Memory for convenience – with a cursory condemnation as 'activists' who have a "shameful ignorance of biology" and who evoke a simplistic notion of race politics (Morris 2008). But Shepherd's earlier analysis, as well as subsequent writing by some of those most closely involved, shows that this is far from the case (Shepherd 2007). In order to understand this group of positions, it is again necessary to go beyond Shepherd's narrative and back to the consequences of forced removals conducted under the Group Areas Act from the 1960s onwards.

While many communities were displaced by apartheid legislation, the removal of more than 60 000 people from District Six, and the bulldozing of entire blocks of houses on the east side of the Cape Town CBD, became iconic of the core human rights violations of the apartheid regime (Jeppie and Soudien 1990; Hall 2001; Rassool and Prosalendis 2001). In well documented histories of resistance, opposition crystallized in a range of civic organizations and, in particular, the Hands Off District Six Committee. After initially opposing the apartheid government, these civic organizations also stood against attempts by the City of Cape Town, allied with big business interests, to redevelop District Six as part of general urban development. This opposition has continued to the present, with community organizations at loggerheads with city planners and vociferous opposition to upmarket commercial and residential development on the fringes of District Six (Soudien 1990; 2008; Beyers 2005).

A second key outcome of the opposition to Group Areas removals was the establishment of the District Six Museum by former residents, committed to keeping memories of life in the suburb alive (Rassool and Prosalendis 2001). Through the powerful association of oral histories, material traces of everyday life before the bulldozers and continuing engagement with contemporary issues, the District Six Museum has become internationally renowned as an iconic community museum and memory project. It has long defined its role as reaching beyond the boundaries of District Six through engaging with the continuing consequences of dispossession and marginalization. There has been a close association between the work of the District Six Museum and academic work in oral history and heritage, particularly at the University of the Western Cape (Rassool 2008; Soudien 2008).

Far from being the anonymous and maligned 'activists' of Morris's account, then, those who engaged, by invitation, in the public meetings about Prestwich Place in 2005 had a long lineage of concern with memory, heritage and land rights, and a complex and often fraught relationship with the City of Cape Town's professional planning structures. They signaled this association through naming their coordinating group the Hands Off Prestwich Place Committee, and marked out continuity through the organizational structure of the District Six Museum (Weeder 2008). Because of the Anglican Church's long engagement with District Six, the Hands Off District Six Committee was able to mobilize the support of the then Archbishop of Cape Town (now, in a nice ironic twist, the Chair of the Council of the University of Cape Town).

Thirdly, then, the Science network. This position was put by the Archaeology Contracts Office and the Department of Archaeology at UCT during the public consultation process (Shepherd 2007) and – particularly – by Alan Morris in his inaugural lecture. This view – that there is an external truth awaiting discovery by a politically disinterested community of scientists using objective methodologies tested by proved theories – is of course widespread, and has been shown by Latour and others to be the core of the modernist settlement (Latour 1993)

Indeed, the 'panorama' of contemporary science is a powerful discourse that often drowns out other perspectives. As Table 1 summarises, the Science network that came into play around the Prestwich Place burial ground had in place, long prior to the unearthing of the first skeletons, a formal and comprehensive system of sampling and analytical techniques as well as a methodology of excavation protocol, stratigraphic interpretation and recording. This system of material traces and circulating references is similar in many respects to the techniques of soil science and botanical fieldwork painstakingly described by Latour in his now-classic account of science fieldwork at the Amazon forest edge (Latour 1999). These techniques were sufficiently well integrated with the regulatory protocols of the South African Heritage Resource Agency such that the 'Science machine' slipped easily into action once the discovery was reported, with the commissioning of the Archaeology Contracts Office under appropriate permits.

A key feature of actor-networks, however, and one that makes the approach particularly valuable for tracing how knowledge is created and generated, is that the incorporation of agents has unpredictable consequences. In this case, and for reasons to do with its unstable relationship between heritage and development interests, the South African Heritage Resource Agency stumbled, and permitted the continuing excavation and removal of burials from Prestwich Place during the statutory 60-day consultation period, rather than waiting to collect all opinions (Shepherd 2007). For reasons that will be explored further, this violation of required processes provided a focus of political action which, in Latour's

terms, broke the system of circulating references definitive of the Science network. Outclassed in the rhetoric of public engagement, the science group of archaeologists and physical anthropologists lost access rights to the burials, and could therefore not complete the cycle of sampling, measurement,

recordal and publication (shown in brackets in Table 1 to indicate unrealized aspirations).

Table 1 Prestwich Place: Actor-Networks

Development	Memory	Science
Panorama: integrated city development plan	Panorama: continuity and comprehensiveness of underclass repression	Panorama: Integrity of non-political science based knowledge
Discipline: urban planning	Discipline: Historical Studies	Discipline: Physical Anthropology
Group: urban planners, investors, developers	Group: church and community organizations	Group: scientists
University: principles of urban planning	Hands Off District Six opposition to Group Areas redevelopment	General anthropological principles of research
City of Cape Town urban development plans	District Six Museum and material markers of memory	Agreed methods of sampling and bone analysis
Banks and investors	Opposition to City urban renewal plans	Excavation techniques and protocols
Styleprops Limited	Opposition to District Six property developments	
Acquisition of Prestwich property	Prior conflicts over burials and international referents	
Rockwell property development	University: heritage and oral history studies	
Discovery of skeletons	Discovery of skeletons	Discovery of skeletons
SAHRA notification	SAHRA public consultation	SAHRA permit regulation
Commission to ACO	Public meeting: coordination and mobilization	Commission to ACO
Removal of skeletons	Hands Off Prestwich Place Committee	Proposition for sampling, measurement and storage
Memorialisation	Anglican Church engagement	(sampling and measurement)
Sale of Rockwell apartments	District Six Museum engagement	(Recordal and archive)
Monetarisation of value	(appropriation and memorialisation of burial ground)	(Publication)
Investment in next urban development project	Appeal to SAHRA	(claim on IP through publication)
	Appeal to Minister of Culture	(research grant, job offer, promotion)
	Continuing opposition to urban development	Inaugural lecture: assertion of rights of science

It is by now clear that we are a long way from the simple story of good and evil presented in the rituals of disciplinary renewal of the inaugural lecture. The intersections of diverse communities of interest around the Prestwich Place burial ground has many implications of which several have particular interest in this discussion of the mechanics of knowledge construction. One is that, as Table 1 indicates, each of the three actor-networks incorporates the university as an institution. For the Science position, this is self-evident and asserted. But it is equally important for the Development network, which rests on a strongly integrated raft of professional education and certification in the planning, design and architecture disciplines, with disciplines such as Construction Economics and property studies and with legal education and qualification structures that codify the development and application of property law and rights. Similarly, the Memory network is reinforced and validated by Historical Studies, including theories and methodologies for working with oral histories, principles and ethical processes for community engagement and the broad, and expanding, field of critical heritage studies. These well-established disciplines and fields of study could be excused for responding to Alan Morris's complaint that they have a 'shameful' ignorance of biology with an equivalent complaint that Science seems to lack respect for the intellectual work of fellow academics who share their campuses.

The counterbalancing of the claims of Science with the imperatives of Memory is well articulated in a collection of essays that was published shortly after Morris's inaugural lecture, and which connect the long-standing work of the District Six Museum with the Hands Off Prestwich Place campaign (Bennett, Julius and Soudien 2008).

Here, Crain Soudien defines the core project of the District Six Museum as a specific and deliberate politics of remembering the City's past in ways that challenge assumptions of fixed racial identities, particularly by the City of Cape Town which, since re-development plans were first launched in the 1980s, has persisted in casting the rebuilding of District Six as a celebration of 'Coloured' identity (Soudien 2008). Soudien explains that opposing Science with community solidarity in the face of the proposed excavation and analysis of the Prestwich burial ground was a key part of this ongoing political project, particularly since the archaeological and anthropological processes claimed in the name of truth would render the disposed dead "scientific objects of inspection" (Soudien 2008:28). This theme is further developed by Michael Weeder in the same set of essays. Weeder reviews the evidence for the extent and nature of burial grounds in colonial Cape Town and sees a similarity between the reification of the body of the slave as a thing of commercial value, and the proposed harvesting of samples from the Prestwich Place burials. "Ironically in the early 21st century, professional interests in the exhumed skeletal remains may inadvertently precipitate a similar propensity to separate experience from the facts of being. The dead of Prestwich Place were deemed to be archival resources to be forensically mined and interrogated" (Weeder 2008: 39).

Stepping back from the detailed issues that define the Prestwich Place conflict, the more general question - that brings together Muller, Young, Morris and a substantial number of those whom Latour has termed the 'Science Warriors' – is whether or not the District Six/ Hands Off Prestwich Place position is 'socially constructed', in the sense that meaning is ascribed according to contingent, political requirements, rather than by means of a rigorous, disciplined set of methodologies. Leaving aside for the moment what is understood by 'politics', what emerges from this close examination of the different positions on Prestwich Place is that the institutions engaged in 'memory work' deploy a set of methodologies for collecting, interpreting and synthesizing oral testimony, documentary sources and collections of objects that are as 'disciplined' as the biological and anthropological sciences. Thus Ciraj Rassool, both an academic and historian at the University of the Western Cape and a Trustee of the District Six Museum, describes the District Six Museum as "a hybrid space of research, representation and pedagogy, which has brokered and mediated relations of knowledge and varied kinds of intellectual and cultural practice between different sites, institutions and sociological domains" (Rassool 2008: 70). Indeed, as Latour has frequently pointed out, detailed studies of the ways in which meaning is generated as systems of circulating references brings the science laboratory and the oral history project into the same frame of understanding, and makes the dialectical opposition between 'science' and 'society' redundant (except as political rhetoric deployed by scientists to seek access to resources).

Seen in this way, what happened at Prestwich Place cannot be seen as a stand-off between Science-as-Truth and the dubiously-motivated rabble of the Prestwich Place public meetings. Rather, there are two systems of circulation, each incorporating a set of institutions (with some, such as the university, in common), texts (newspaper reports, science journals, the inaugural lecture etc) and, of course, the 1200 or so people buried at Prestwich Place.

There is also no inherent reason why these two systems of circulation should be in conflict, since their ultimate interests are quite different. Science seeks a continuing series of explanations of phenomena and scientists are motivated by the reputational benefits that come with publication and citation (David 1998). In this particular case, physical anthropologists and archaeologists wish to apply cutting-edge laboratory techniques to deduce epidemiological characteristics such as disease and nutrition. Memory work seeks to augment documentary evidence of the past, which favours the literate and powerful, with oral testimonies that better represent the lives of the underclass. In this particular case, historians and heritage practitioners wish to use such evidence in order to mobilize opinion against the continuing valency of racially-deterministic categories and assumptions. Since physical anthropology no longer endorses the racial science that underpinned apartheid, and since it is in the interests of memory work to discover as much as possible about these underclass communities, it should be possible to map out an approach that would result in a productive intersection between these networks.

The difficulty is politics or, rather, the conceptualization of the political. For the District Six Museum (as a primary agent

in this specific case) all memory work is inherently political. Soudien, Rassool, Bennett and others make this clear in their recently published collection of essays (Bennett, Julius and Soudien 2008) and Soudien sees the uncovering of the Prestwich Place burials as a political opportunity to challenge dominant discourses, in particular the determination of the City of Cape Town to perpetuate racialized identities in their urban planning assumptions (Soudien 2008). This is a clear demonstration of politics as "the progressive composition of the common world" (Latour 2005: 254) and is consistent with a wide range of definitions of what constitutes political work. In this case, this concept of the political reaches back over a century to the traditions of non-racialism and the Unity Movement.

In contrast, the 'Science Warriors' mobilise their common world, and claim access to influence and resources, by denying that their work is political in any sense. Thus in his inaugural lecture, Morris denounces those who oppose the claims of science to the bodies of the Prestwich Street dead as politically-motivated opponents of truth. Such denunciations are, of course, strongly political statements that lay claim to authority, decision-rights and primacy. The problem is that, in its very terms, this form of political claim denies the possibility of reconciliation with non-competing sets of interests.

But, as Shepherd and others have pointed out, there are well-tried and widely used alternatives to this confrontational approach that have been in place for many years. These archaeological and anthropological methodologies seek to implement what Bennett and Julius, in the context of the District Six Museum, call research 'in community' (Bennett and Julius 2008: 61). Here, for example, is Lynn Meskell introducing a set of "cosmopolitan archaeologies": "the past matters a great deal in the present and its material residues are increasingly crucial for imagining possible futures, particularly for developing beneficial trajectories based on the economic, political, and social potentials embedded within valued archaeological sites and objects" (Meskell 2009: 10). In one of these studies Ian Lilley, reviewing the relationship between archaeological practice and indigenous communities in Oceana, argues that archaeologists need to move from being 'archetypal strangers' by reconciling the universalizing scientific tenets of archaeology and heritage management with local perspectives on the past. This will require forms of knowledge that are "functional and mutually rewarding hybrids": "we advance the general proposition that the way that the physical landscape appears to Aboriginal people – its visual organization or structure – contains spiritual information concerning the organization or structure of the landscape that constrains people's behavior. This means, to give a simplified example, that if the landscape in a particular place looks like a snake, it actually is, in its spiritual guise, that snake and must be approached as such" (Lilley 2009: 56).

These and similar studies demonstrate the richness of interpretation that can follow from scientific research conducted 'in community'. Precedents have shown that it is quite feasible for archaeologists and physical anthropologists to negotiate with descendant communities for recording and measurement, and for sampling. Indeed, ethical protocols require this of all science research with human subjects, and no reputable human biologist would harvest samples from a

recently deceased person without consent prior to death or the permission of immediate family. Similarly, a project to exhume and take samples from burials from demarcated graveyards in contemporary Cape Town would be inconceivable without engagement with religious communities and traceable family members and there is no clear reason why the Prestwich Place Burial Ground should have been treated differently (Weeder 2008). If such engagements were to align the interests of science with those of the memory community, the creation of new knowledge could be enhanced considerably. For example, historical epidemiology based on measurement, recording pathologies and bone sampling would yield broad indicators at the population level. For their part, oral histories would record traditions of food preparation, recurrent patterns of illness and qualitative aspects of life-expectancy and mortality. Such memories would constitute a rich, contextualized ethnography, invaluable for interpreting laboratory findings. In short, research negotiated and conducted 'in community' will be better research.

Were such a settlement to be attained for another of the burial grounds that lies beneath the still-unrenewed parts of Cape Town, where would this leave the distinction between sacred and the profane forms of knowledge, between the disciplined work of the academy and the far broader terrain of community-based and indigenous ways of knowing?

Rereading Durkheim almost a century after the foundations of sociological method were laid out evokes a sense of millennial parallel. Just as established nineteenth-century rationalism was confronted with New World pragmatism and its insistence on the significance of sense and experience, so are the monolithic academic disciplines of the twentieth-century university confronted with new and powerful forms of knowledge that thrive outside the academy. Muller and Young's response seeks to be to pull up the drawbridge and fall back on the authority of "the inner community of scientists who can legitimately contribute to the rational consensus" (Young and Muller 2008: 519). But Durkheim's response a century earlier was different.

Change, Durkheim argued, was inevitable: "our inclination to represent everything under the aspect of immutability is actually only an expediency. It is a means of giving the mind a sort of intellectual security. There are intellects that feel the need to base themselves on something fixed, to have a clearly drawn line of conduct that admits neither hesitation nor doubt, to tell themselves that there are no two ways of acting and thus no necessity to find out which of them is better. Such intellects need a ready-made discipline, a pre-established truth and code of laws. Otherwise they feel disoriented. All change, risk, and attempts at exploration cause them disquiet and uneasiness. Hence the tendency to believe in immutable truth and immutable realities is wholly natural. According to the pragmatists, this is the attitude that is characteristic of the rationalist mind: it represents a need for stability and assurance – in short, for repose" (Durkeim 1964: 413).

For Durkheim, as for the pragmatists, a static and immutable concept of truth was unacceptable. Durkheim's problem with the pragmatists was not that they violated discipline, stressed the importance of experience or sought to overturn the sacred world of the academy. It was rather that they

argued for the primacy of individual experience rather than seeing the significance of the collective – of the regularities of human behavior through time and space that constituted the foundation of the sociological method. Indeed, pragmatism and sociology were interested in the same set of issues but, "if sociology poses the problem in the same sense of pragmatism, it is in a better position to solve it". This is because "the nature of the individual is too limited to explain by itself alone all things human". Pragmatism fails to recognize the "duality" between individual and collective experiences. "By contrast, sociology reminds us that what is social always possesses a higher dignity than what is individual … The sociological point of view has the advantage of permitting us to analyze even the august thing that is truth" (Durkheim 1964: 429-430).

In Durkheim's sociology, progress stems from "the obliteration of individual differences". The social world comprises a set of institutions which, while changing, are also constant in their form. For the sociologist (as for the pragmatist), truth is variable: "intellectual life as well as practical life, and thought as well as action, need diversity, which is, consequently, a condition of truth … it is in this way that the thesis enunciated by pragmatism is justified from the sociological point of view" (Durkheim 1964: 434). The difference between pragmatism and sociology lies in the mode of explanation. Pragmatism leads to arbitrary claims based on "a purely verbal definition that lacks an objective validity" (Durkheim 1964: 435). By implication sociology establishes objective validity through delineating the "higher order" of the collective.

When Durkheim's fourteen lectures on pragmatism are revisited, then, he emerges not as the defender of the sacred knowledge of the academy but as the quintessential modernist, speaking in the face of a Europe-wide war in which individual thought and action appeared powerless in the face of overwhelming social forces. His response was not to fall back on nineteenth-century rationalism, but was rather to absorb the energy and insight of the new pragmatist philosophy and to use it to move further in delineating the then-new field of sociological enquiry. Similarly today: the appropriate response to new knowledge claims and institutions is not to insist on the authority of the traditional and established disciplines (which now include Sociology) or to revert to claims for a politically-neutral, authoritative Science, but rather to look for the possibilities for revealing syncretisms, new institutional forms and hybrid approaches to knowledge construction.

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FORUM RESPONDENTS

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Given humanity's inherent conservatism, it seems reasonable to envision the reasons why some of those based at universities would resist new knowledge forms. The main strand running through Martin Hall's thesis is that as crucibles of knowledge, universities should open their doors to alternative forms of knowledge. Scientists based at universities should perceive the cropping up of new knowledge forms not as a foil to their established position but as an opportunity to distil a new breed of knowledge beneficial to all. This is the ideal. The reality shows a major chasm between principle and practice.

As the Prestwitch case study and Alan Morris's alleged claim for the university's privileged position have shown, it is not clear who represents alternative knowledge. In the Prestwitch case, one would assume that the local communities represented by lobby groups such as the Hands Off Prestwitch Place pressure group represent this alternative knowledge. Perhaps, the most important question at this juncture is who represents this new knowledge? And how should this knowledge be brought into the main stream? I deal with first question first. A critical review of the stakeholders involved in the Prestwitch debacle suggests the existence of different groups each with its own agenda. Among them are notable academics such as Rassool who provide alternative viewpoints. Therefore, the divergent views of Morris and others on new knowledge are consistent with research: paradigms are bound to differ.

Every knowledge system should have its proponents. Who should be responsible for making public any new knowledge? Conventionally, this has been the role of universities. If we can place ourselves in Alan Morris's shoes, we can argue that by requesting to study the materials, he was creating new knowledge, something that has not been possible as a result of permission being denied. There is no clearly definable structure to deal with views from the so-called public. Unless that public creates a centre of its own, it may not be necessary given that universities are funded by the same public. It would be a difficult situation.

The most important issue to consider is why is new knowledge generated and whose interest is that knowledge supposed to satisfy. Clearly, Prestwitch Place is not the only burial ground encountered in Cape Town. Therefore, why is this case so special? Is it because of the love of the oppressed or are the motives beyond that? It is here that I feel that Hall should be aware of the invention of tradition whereby people can invoke the past to obtain advantages – material, ideological etc. in the present. Sometimes, there is massive opportunism associated with contested heritage (Nemaheni 2002). If the scientists had been allowed to study the materials, perhaps the pressure groups could have had more information to use.

Perhaps, it is important to bring to light an example where university-based researchers have brought on board new knowledge. This concerns the Old Bulawayo restoration project in Zimbabwe. Here, the university-based researchers and representatives of the local community shared equal powers with the archaeologists (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008). They could veto the interpretation constructed by the researchers. A controversy arose when a house in the royal enclosure was exposed through excavations. The archaeologists suggested that the house faced the east but local community representatives claimed that historically Ndebele houses did not face the east. Aware of new knowledge, the university-based researchers agreed only for the same communities to change their viewpoint and to claim that the archaeology was correct. This shows that the views and interests of so-called interest groups change with time, but perhaps this is human nature.

To Hall's credit, universities are sometimes arrogant in their dealings with so-called non-scientists. Indeed, the embargo placed on research at Prestwitch should be a cautionary tale to any researcher to engage constructively with host communities rather than impose their will. Being a scientist does not privilege one to do whatever one deems necessary. This is a particularly sensitive issue because universities do have a history of colluding with reactionary forces. To shed this sad baggage, they must be more transparent and sensitive to host communities even if they do not agree with their views.

In summary, it seems the way forward is to consider divergent views and not to suppress dissent. This can also mean that even non-scientists can express their knowledge which universities may or may not accept. This kind of pluralism maybe a healthy reminder to scientists who think that they have a monopoly of knowledge creation. However, this may swing the pendulum of knowledge production violently. Perhaps we are not yet ready for such an upheaval, or are we?

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Academics are incredibly vested stakeholders in archaeological debates, yet we often fail to recognise that our careers and livelihoods are grounded in other people's pasts. Claims around access to scientific knowledge and a broader knowledge of a 'common' humanity can be heavily inflected with coercive power and privilege. We are neither neutral players nor detached experts, but deeply enmeshed actors who have

inherited some rather negative legacies. Historic and some-times ongoing volatilities in the United States and Australia (Lilley 2000) between indigenous people and archaeologists should remind South African scholars that socio-political ten-sions involving the past and present are not easily resolved and we should expect protracted periods of negotiation. For archaeological agendas to be even considered, practitioners must foster greater inclusion and open discussion, and be willing to give up something of our own research priorities. Process is everything and there can be no real power sharing without communities having the right of veto (Meskell 2007; Hodder 2009). As others have noted, even the increasing push for community 'participation' - so redolently deployed in contexts such as South Africa - can be seen as a tyranny in itself. Archaeologists are still learning these lessons in the United States and the battles over Kennewick Man (Watkins *et al* 2008) form one salient example of where 'scientific' agendas have been pitched against Native Americans and a great many social archaeologists who are similarly aligned.

It is natural that researchers analysing human remains believe that there are real benefits to be derived from their investigation, otherwise why would they pursue such studies? But that is not to say that communities, indigenous and other-wise, need necessarily share those viewpoints. Issues of health, lifestyle, and demography may not be pressing com-pared to spiritual and ancestral knowledge for example, not to mention contemporary needs and continued injustices (Meskell and Scheermeyer 2008). Other knowledges and questions that interest indigenous groups typically have been downplayed in academic circles, and this is where Hall's invo-cation of Latour's formulation of purification and hybridity is insightful. Some rapprochement between South African researchers and indigenous communities may be possible in future, as has happened in Australia, but this has taken time and trust. But in the meantime academics should prepare to be 'outclassed in the rhetoric of public engagement,' as Hall warns. Instead of forcing academic agendas we, as archaeolo-gists, might have to be patient in light of a new recalibration around social and historical justice; we might reconsider the types of research we choose to undertake and decisively work collaboratively around issues of mutual interest and benefit. And if scholars feel that there is insufficient interest today in an archaeological past, then it is us archaeologists who have fallen short, then and now. Historians have always done it better in South Africa, much to our chagrin. It is we who need to change our profile, make ourselves relevant and do some transformative work in the world. Martin Hall's research and career as a public intellectual in South Africa serve very well to chart that productive way forward.

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Burning the Straw Man: A Response to Hall's *'New Knowledge and the University'*

An inaugural lecture is indeed an opportunity to present a vision of a field of scientific discipline in a very one-sided way. It is a 'rite of passage' not unlike the formal attainment of a doctoral degree. The degree is necessary to gain entry to the 'inner community of scientists' and the inaugural is effectively the formal ceremony that confirms the newly appointed indi-vidual to the highest academic rank within that 'community'. Perhaps it would be fair to give time in the ceremony to debate the content of the lecture, but that is an entirely dif-ferent issue for discussion. Hall has chosen to rise to some of my inaugural comments in this article and for that I am grate-ful. What I wanted was for someone to listen, something that did not happen before the inaugural.

The creation of a hybrid knowledge of nature and society has been a process that has been ongoing for a long time. That science has been guilty of arrogance in claiming its supe-riority over indigenous knowledge is certainly true, but in fields like archaeology and physical anthropology there has been a definite attempt to bridge the divide. The comments in my inaugural were never planned as a defense of the disci-pline and a claim to be the custodian of knowledge. The words were intended to explicitly express the frustration of three years of attempts to become part of the process of memorialisation of the Prestwich people in which every effort was made to block any physical anthropology from being part of the project. Shepherd (2007) is quite correct in noting the broader context of the debate around the excava-tion, and Hall, in turn, is correct in noting that this was based in forty years of anger over the Group Areas Act and the demise of District Six. The debate about science was a smaller part of the issue, but one that affected me directly.

Hall laments at my use of the term 'activist', and perhaps he is correct that I have attempted to generalise too much by using this category. Activists, in the South African sense, are people who stand up for the rights of the community from which they are drawn and put themselves in a role where they can influence events to the benefit of that community. Invariably such people are self-appointed and although this does not detract from their role, it does provide opportunity to push a given viewpoint. This is the context in which I take issue. The past is not a single ownership. The voices of activ-ism have rightfully claimed that the community MUST have the most important say in the interpretation and memoriali-sation of the past when the history of the community is dis-cussed. The acceptance by all of this position is a major advance on the thinking of the recent past, but within it is the

potential risk that the community view (as articulated by individuals who claim to be the voice of that community) becomes the only view.

This has indeed happened in the case of the Prestwich burials. The anger over the controlled archaeological investigation was not assuaged by the decision of the Department of Arts and Culture to allow the excavations to continue, and what had started as anger against a perceived desecration of the graves became a fury against the perceived desecration of the bones. The outlet for this anger was indeed controlled and directed by specific individuals (dare I call them activists?) who gave the researchers who study bones the tag, 'race scientists'. Once the construction of this straw man was complete, it was easy to identify the 'enemy'. Even Hall is guilty of this to a small degree although I doubt that this was intentional. He notes that "Morris and his team of scientists" claimed access to the skeletons and requested to "take bone samples for chemical analysis". There never was such a request despite the fact that Hall makes a further four more references to it in his paper. In fact, the application specifically excluded this approach. To quote from our letter of application to SAHRA on February 2, 2005:

> No destructive techniques will be used in this work. Although these techniques may provide additional valuable information, permission to do such studies would only be requested after intensive consultation with representatives of all stakeholders – descendant communities, scholars and the nation as a whole.

The claim that destructive analysis would be part of the study was part of the straw man construction. The worst came at the meeting at the District Six Museum on April 6, 2005 when the then Acting Director, Bennett, explicitly said that "Physical Anthropology cannot provide anything of value to the study of these people". This is the trigger for my comment on the 'shameful ignorance of biology'.

Does science have any sort of a claim to 'Truth' in a manner that is different from other branches of knowledge? If Hall's critique of my work had been about history, I would have agreed with most of what he has to say. In essence, everything in history must be seen relative to one's viewpoint. No two people (never mind historians) interpret the past in the same way. The interpretation depends entirely on the perspective.

But archaeology is not the same as history. Archaeology has the power to uncover contextual information that is otherwise not available in any other form of enquiry. In essence, it creates its own documentary evidence. It is not 'Truth', but it is factual information that allows interpretation of the past. Sadly, this ability to generate 'new' information about the past is coupled with the destruction of the context of that information. An excavation can only happen once. Traditional archaeology (and by extension physical anthropology) balances the destruction of context with its detailed methodology of recording. It cannot do otherwise. Although archaeological data are as open to interpretation as in any other field of knowledge, there are indeed key facts that are generated (not interpreted) in the process. In the case of the skeletons, this is basic data on 'who' is there – men, women, children, old, young – the basic demography of the people of that community. Memorialisation can be done without that information, but it will be a partial memory. We can re-interpret as often as we like, but we will only get one chance to get this kind of information on which the future generations will conduct their own interpretations.

Towards the end of Hall's paper, he recommends engagement between the two opposing sides in which the interests of both could be aligned so that creation of new knowledge could be enhanced. I could not agree more, but while many scientists (including Hall himself) have started that attempt to engage, parties such as the District Six Museum need to take a metaphorical deep breath and step back from their own biases before the engagement can become a duet. As I have already argued in my applications to SAHRA for examination of the people from the Prestwich Place Burial Ground, there is so much to learn here about the past, and all of us – both scientists and community - should be part of that process.

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Expertise and Public Life: A Response

The inaugural lecture by Alan Morris, professor of Human Biology at UCT, has clearly touched a nerve. In the process of putting the record straight, and by way of (re) presenting the case of Prestwich Place, Martin Hall mischaracterises my work, using it as a placeholder for an elitism I have always disavowed. I personally know very little about the Prestwich Place saga, having gleaned from the press at the time, perhaps erroneously, that the brouhaha it raised was the product of an intra-university squabble between the archaeologists and the historians over control of the emergent lucrative interdisciplinary field of 'Heritage'. Hall recruits Bruno Latour, an iconic figure of 'second wave' science studies (Collins and Evans 2007) to put forward the view that Morris and I wish to keep the university insulated from 'profane' interests of the public and the polity. In what follows, I will briefly counter this misapprehension, at least in my case. I then go on to show, following Bourdieu, Collins and others, why Latour-style 'symmetrical' accounts, while presenting insights into the way that knowledge communities intersect in knowledge work, have the potential to mislead because they frequently do not recognise the idea of expertise and its importance for public policy, democracy and public life.

My work deals with varieties of specialised knowledge (Muller 2000). It does not deal with something called 'the "sacred" knowledge of the university establishment' (Hall 2009). The 'sacred' in this work is a primitive concept signifying the varieties of specialised knowledge and their social organisation. Indeed, specialised knowledge can be found not only outside the academy, but in people who have not even had a rudimentary formal education. This is the lesson of the case I discuss in my book of 'Mr Hendriks', a non-literate farm worker on a wine farm in the Western Cape, who is

able to design and build wagons to expert technical specification (*ibid* 85-90). Mr Hendriks has specialised knowledge even if it is not clear how he developed the specialised habitus that gives him his special skill. Most people nevertheless get it from one of the specialised institutions society has developed to transmit this specialised knowledge, of which the university is one. In other words, I am interested in analysing the lineaments of specialised knowledges, the social conditions under which they arise, and the forms of their transmission. I am also interested in their relation to public policy. This is very far from defending the university as an organisation against the world. Or to put this another way, the 'boundary' is a marker for distinguishing between varieties of specialised knowledge and their social conditions, not a moat between university and the world as Hall has me say.

Hall argues that there were three 'networks' (discourses) operating in the Prestwich Place saga, of which science was one. The implication is that these three are 'symmetrical', that none of them, least of all science, is 'privileged'. If this suggests that the scientists could and should have negotiated in good faith - 'align the interests of science' (Hall 2009) with those of the other interested parties - I can only agree. In fact, a considerable part of my educational policy work has consisted in doing just that (for example see The National Education Policy Investigation 1993). But if this is also taken to mean that all discourses carry the same socio-epistemic 'weight', then we part company. Denying, ignoring or downplaying socio-epistemic 'weight' can have serious consequences.

To see this, let me take a different case to Prestwich Place, that of Thabo Mbeki and AZT. In October 1999 Mbeki first propounded his theory, based on his reading of the scientific evidence, that AZT was so toxic that the government could not possibly support its roll out. When he was faced with a chorus of scientific dissent he had this to say: 'I don't particularly see why health should be treated as a specialist thing and the president of the country can't take Health decisions. I think it would be a dereliction of duty if we were to say as far as health issues are concerned we will leave it to doctors and scientists…' (quoted in Weinel 2007: 756).

What went wrong here? Was the problem that 'politics' should not have entered the 'sacred' domain of health science? The issue is not so simple. Mbeki had every right to make decisions *to do with* public health policy. But he was not equipped to make informed judgments *within* the specialised domain of health research. He lacked the specialised habitus that would have given him the capability to make sound judgments in the highly specialised field of emerging knowledge about AZT toxicity and to assess its dangers – he lacked 'interactional' expertise (Collins and Evans 2007) and refrained from consulting knowledgeable people with 'contributory' expertise. Since, like many of the 'second wave' science scholars, he accorded no special privilege to specialist health knowledge (recall Latour's [1993:111] mischievous slogan 'science is indeed politics pursued by other means') made no such crucial distinction. As a result, he misjudged the issue of toxicity, with far-reaching consequences.

To regard all 'networks' and their discourses as equal and 'symmetrical' can suggest one of two things: that all discourses and their communities are equally distinct – are bounded, in my terms – and are equally deserving of respect in public life, though they may have differential contributions to make in specific instances; or it can suggest, since politics is intrinsic to science, that it should also be extrinsic – that is, that it should 'be made an explicit part of a scientific argument' (Collins 2007). Taking this second step, as 'second wave' science studies have a tendency to do, is to sound superficially 'radical', as Bourdieu (2004: 26) has derisively said (the 'radicality effect', after Yves Gingras), but tends to cut the very idea of expertise off at the knees. The impact on democracy and public life can be lethal.

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Savage science, public accountability, and the missing debate in South African universities: a response to Martin Hall's "New Knowledge and the University"

Pippa Skotnes prefaced her landmark *Miscast Exhibition* (1996) with a quote from the historian Greg Dening: "There is no escape from the politics of our knowledge…"[1]. Coming when it did, shortly after the 1994 elections, we might have anticipated that *Miscast* would herald a new and intensive set of debates in the academy around histories of disciplinary practice, and the ways in which institutions and disciplinary knowledge projects are implicated in histories of colonialism and apartheid. What did it mean for an institution such as the University of Cape Town, for example, that it entered the postapartheid moment substantially as a beneficiary of apartheid? How had individual disciplines negotiated apartheid, particularly those disciplines focused on the lives and bodies

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1. "There is no escape from the politics of our knowledge, but that politics is not in the past. That politics is in the present" (Dening 1992: 179 quoted in Skotnes 1996: 15).

of black South Africans? What had been lost, or given up, in the process? How have these disciplines been marked by their own histories of practice under colonialism and apartheid, characterised by the epistemic violence of racism and patriarchy? How did a nominally public institution such as UCT rethink notions of accountability and forms of engagement suitable to a new set of political freedoms and a new and emergent set of postapartheid publics? It had always been the position of UCT, that but for the repressive politics of apartheid, it would be a more fully socially engaged institution. Where was the new vision and blueprint for the public university after apartheid?

We might have recognised, back in 1996, that it was no accident that this debate was to be inaugurated by focusing on the history of Bushman Studies, which itself constitutes a kind of limit discourse in the field of Southern African Studies. With a deep history in what John Coetzee has called a 'discourse of the Cape', the casual observations and stereotypes originated by travellers to this part of the world, Bushman Studies was a field which well into the twentieth century was characterised by practices of anthropometric photography and measurement, body casting, exhibitions-in-life, and what Ciraj Rassool and Martin Legassic, have detailed as the widespread collecting of body parts and human skeletal remains (Coetzee 1988; Legassick and Rassool 1999). It was also characterized by what Rassool and Patricia Hayes have described as forms of 'hyperfocalization' and the 'medical sectioning off' of black bodies (Rassool and Hayes 2002). In one strand of what I would understand to be 'savage science', this focused on the external genetalia of women and men described as 'Bushman' and 'Hottentot'. A long running feature of travellers' accounts to the Cape, and a sub-text to public displays of 'Bushmen' and 'Hottentots', this was mainstreamed as part of medical discourse in a paper published by James Drudy and Matthew Drennan on *The Pudendal Parts of the South African Bush Race* in 1926 (Drury and Drennan 1926). Raymond Dart elaborated on this research during the University of the Witwatersrand expedition to Tweerivieren in the southern Kalahari, working on a subject group of seventy N/u-speaking San/ Bushmen (Dart 1937). This was the same group of people who were exhibited as part of the 'Bushman Camp' at the Empire Exhibition in 1936 (Gordon 1999). The self-styled 'laboratory in the desert' at Tweerivieren was doubled by the 'Bushman Camp' at the Empire Exhibition, just as the medico-scientific gaze of Dart and his colleagues was doubled by the exhibitionary gaze, and the focused attention and photographs of the estimated half million visitors to the display.

At the same time, the savage science of Drury, Drennan and Dart marks the point at which histories of modernity, coloniality, fascism and genocide converge. Robert Gordon notes of German colonial policy in relation to the Bushmen, that "events in Namibia [in the early part of the twentieth century] *anticipated* those in Nazi Germany to an extraordinary degree". Many of the most prominent Nazi racial hygienists "cut their academic teeth on the Bushman debate", a debate about the supposed unassimilability of the Bushmen in which "genital distinctiveness played a central, if at times sub-

merged role" (Gordon 1992: 215). The last scientific paper written by the notorious Nazi racial hygienist Eugen Fischer concerned Bushman genetalia. It is also relevant to the current discussion that the science that framed and legitimated these practices was banal. In his research at Tweerivieren, Dart produced a typology of Bushman groups based, in part, on the size and shape of the labia minora (in women), and the disposition of the penis (in men). These features were also deduced as indicators of racial 'purity' (Dart 1937). In a not untypical example form my own discipline, archaeology, published in the same year as the Tweerivieren report, Drennan devotes the narrative sections of his paper on the skeletal remains of the Oakhurst Cave dead to the vexed question of their 'tribe' or 'race'. Although they resemble 'modern Hottentots', they cannot be (because they are self-evidently ancient). He decides that they are better described as part of a 'Wilton race' or 'pre-Bushman type' (in his tables he describes them as an 'Oakhurst tribe') (Drennan 1937).

Much of this dismal history of research was either explicit or implicit in *Miscast*. It seemed a short step to imagine that this would turn into an ongoing and structured set of discussions in the academy around disciplinary histories and terms of engagement. One might have argued that such discussions were both historically necessary, and exciting to the extent that they articulated with emergent global debates (in archaeology, for example, at the cutting edges of sub-fields such as public archaeology and indigenous archaeology). The fact that, apart from isolated and sporadic instances, this debate did not take place must be seen as one of the defining features of the post-apartheid university. In fact, coming out of *Miscast*, two things happened, neither of them anticipated by the terms of the exhibition.[2] The first was an added impetus to forms of San/Bushman ethno-genesis, predicated on a cultural politics of primordialism. This was not about an historical image of inventive and hybrid groupings of people responding to complexly changing conditions at an expanding colonial frontier, predicated in the work of Gordon and others, but about timeless eco-stewards staking a claim to the land as mythic as it was undeniable. At the same time this was set in a broader frame of what Jean and John Comaroff have described as the 'politics of ID-ology', "the pursuit of recognition, right, interest and empowerment under the sign of ethnicity" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2008: 82).

The second development was a move within the disciplines to shut down forms of questioning and debate understood as inherently antithetical to their interests. It was to be business as usual (science as usual, excavation as usual, ethnography as usual), with perhaps a greater investment in the acceptable face of public engagement, rendering disciplinary knowledges in popularly accessible formats. In the institution more broadly, the anticipated debate around forms of public engagement and accountability gave way to a language of competitiveness, economic rationalisation and racial/demographic 'transformation', and a new set of frames focused on the world, and a global landscape of higher education, rather than on neglected claimants and subaltern publics at home. These moves were themselves set in a broader context of

2. I want to make it clear that I am talking about the material of the exhibition, and my understanding of the terms of its framing, and not about the intentions of the curator for whom I cannot speak.

developments: on the one hand, post-apartheid macroeconomic policy prioritising 'development', and the enrichment of new (black) and historical (white) middle classes (Koelble 2008; Reddy 2008). On the other hand, another great non-debate of post-1994 South Africa: the debate around what it means to have been a beneficiary of apartheid, and the kinds of accountabilities and responsibilities that flow from this status. If the non-debate around disciplinary histories and institutional accountabilities forms a deafening silence within the postapartheid university, then the non-debate around the status and meanings of apartheid beneficiaries, and around questions of social justice and restitution more broadly, can be seen as a defining feature of the new society in its first fifteen years (Shepherd and Robins 2008). At the same time, of course, there is every indication that this is set to change, and that this particular non-debate will express itself not as a set of discussions, whose moment has passed, but in more direct ways.

All this by way of necessary preface to the events around Prestwich Street. Such was the paranoid conjunction between university and society into which Prestwich Street erupted, a terrain of disavowed debates, willed silences, institutional defensiveness, and fear. Prestwich Street was (and is) a defining moment for a politics of memory in postapartheid South Africa, and Cape Town more particularly. It also marks a defining moment for a politics of knowledge in archaeology and physical anthropology. The most publicly contested instance of archaeological work in the post-1994 period, it was also the first real test of the new heritage legislation, the National Heritage Resources Act. The kind of focused investment of affect and attention that characterised Prestwich Street, and the scale of the response, suggest that it came about as a direct result of the non-debates of the late-1990s and early-2000s. Here was the moment of the eruption, the moment of the return. At the same time, Prestwich Street represents a catastrophic failure of response on the part of heritage and city managers, pro-exhumation archaeologists and physical anthropologists, and those who argued on the basis of the rights of a narrowly-conceived (and largely fictive) notion of capital-S 'Science' pitted against something else ('politics' or 'society'). It is no exaggeration to say that we will be counting the cost of Prestwich Street for years to come. This is not a cost in lost 'data' as we are asked to believe, but a complex loss as a number of levels. At an early date, public responses to Prestwich Street connected a deep history of slavery at the Cape with the living memory of forced removals. Cape Town is a city which carries its own woundedness, even as it produces a big smile for the visiting tourists. Prestwich Street offered an opportunity to get to the bottom of this, a point which formed the core of the argument of the anti-exhumation campaigners of the Hands Off Prestwich Street Committee.[3] Instead we have *The Rockwell*, luxury apartments with an invented history framed around New York's 'jazz age'. Commentators have described the losing battle in addressing the socio-spatial legacies and inequalities of apartheid (Robins 2005; Marks 2006). Market-led develop-

ment, unimaginative and technocratic planning practices, and lack of political will and vision have created a 'seamless transition' from the apartheid city to the 'postmodern city', marked by urban voids and discontinuities and the kind of savage irony of *The Rockwell*. Photographer David Lurie's work provides a visual commentary to this process: the poor and unemployed fight a losing battle in the medieval conditions of the urban ghettoes, while those with means sip chardonnay at a themed dockside development, and the middle classes cower in fortress suburbia (Lurie 2005; 2006).

Much of the blame for Prestwich Street must be placed at the door of SAHRA, the public body charged with preserving and protecting the national estate. A number of legally questionable decisions by key SAHRA staffers, including the decision to allow exhumation to take place in tandem with the mandated public process, turned Prestwich Street into a win-all/lose-all scenario with total exhumation as the unstated goal. SAHRA CEO Pumla Madiba dismissed the impassioned arguments of the many anti-exhumation lobbyists on the grounds that "Many of the people who objected were highly emotional and did not give real reasons why the skeletons should not be relocated (sic)" (Kassiem 2003: 1). Leaked internal memos make it clear that, from the start, SAHRA was bent on appeasing the developer (Shepherd 2007). For them at least, non-exhumation was never on the table.

As an archaeologist interested in questions of disciplinary futures, I understand how rarely it happens that scholars and disciplinarians are invited to join a thoughtfully constituted public debate around the relation between science and society. All the more valuable and rare as an opportunity when this comes in a context of savage science, when, as we might say, every time a trowel enters the ground, that single act is over-determined by histories of casual exhumation and the destruction of burial places and sacred sites. The lasting failure of pro-exhumation archaeologists and anthropologists was in failing to engage on these terms. Their response was often high-handed, patronising, and dismissive. Either they stuck with two formulations, 'science' versus 'politics' and 'we will give you back your history', or they responded with anger, as Alan Morris did, fulminating against 'UWC historians' and 'pseudo-politicians'. In fact, there are very few contexts in the world in which science is given carte blanche, especially not archaeology and physical anthropology. A feature of the archaeological response to Prestwich Street was a resolute determination *not* to frame events in the context of global debates in the discipline, and the many existing resolutions, protocols, statements of best practice, and ethical statements that apply to relations between archaeologists and descendent and affected communities. These include the multi-tiered advocacy work of the World Archaeological Congress, the Vermillion Accord, the WAC First Code of Ethics, national legislation such as NAGPRA, and the myriad codes of ethics of societies such as the Society for American Archaeology. When I raised this at a SAHRA-convened meeting of archaeologists and heritage managers at an early stage of the process, I was told that "we will find South African

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3. "… in this city there's never been a willingness to take up [the issue of genocide and the] destruction of human communities that were brought from across the globe… This is an opportunity to get to the bottom of that…" SAHRA 2003 Minutes of South African Heritage Resources Agency Public Consultation Meeting held on 29th August 2003 at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Somerset Rd, Green Point., South African Heritage Resources Agency, Cape Town

solutions to South African problems", a sentiment which has served us so badly in so many contexts. The fact is that the outcome at Prestwich Steet, and the manner in which the mass exhumation was conducted, would have been unthinkable in Australia or the United States, hardly national contexts famed for the rights of subaltern minorities. The notion of free and unfettered science set in play by Morris and others was less a look outwards at other national contexts, than it was a look backwards, to a history of unaccountable practice in South Africa.

As someone interested in the history of the discipline locally, I think about archaeology differently after Prestwich Street. Like others, I understood that archaeology emerged as a beneficiary of apartheid. It was a material beneficiary in the sense that many jobs and a substantial archaeological infrastructure came about as part of the modernisation of the apartheid state (Hall 1990). However, an equally substantial benefit was in freeing archaeologists from forms of social accountability. Apartheid made African sacred sites, material cultures and human remains available to archaeologists, with very little say-so on the part of subject persons. We might understand this as part of a broader set of relations between colonial science, subject persons, and captive pasts. I have argued that a key moment of accommodation between archaeology and apartheid came about with the partial adoption of the New Archaeology in the early-1970s (Shepherd 2003). This was a form of the discipline based on logical positivism and empiricism, which eschewed involvement in broader social and political contexts. It meant that archaeologists could pass the red-letter decades of the 1970s and 1980s without developing a commentary on apartheid. Most South African archaeologists would oppose the academic boycott in the name of the free circulation of science and scientists, unlike a sizeable number of their colleagues abroad. They would also refuse to condemn the politics of apartheid when this was presented in the form of a motion by colleagues form the Frontline States at a meeting of the Southern African Association of Archaeologists in Gaborone in 1983. Nevertheless, it had always been a claim of the discipline that this was a strategic drawing in of horns, that come the moment of political freedom it would be more fully engaged in the public sphere. After Prestwich Street I ask: when does an attachment to a particular notion of science become entirely self-serving? The self-righteous indignation of the knights of science, is this not simply a ruse for perpetuating inherited forms of privilege? At one point, archaeologists at Prestwich Street argued that they were simply hired technicians, and that it was not their job to comment on the broader implications of their actions. This limping and self-blinded form of the discipline, is this really the future that we promised ourselves? There is a world of vigorous debate out there which is *all* about considering the broader implications of our actions; is this not where we should be situating ourselves as we consider forms of archaeology after apartheid?

Alan Morris emerged as the most vocal of the pro-exhumation scholars around Prestwich Street. Uninteresting in their own terms, his arguments need to be taken seriously to the extent that they form part of dominant imaginaries around the role of science and the place of the university. They also give voice to the quiet consensus on non-debate around issues of apartheid legacies and disciplinary histories. In a carefully considered and wide-ranging paper, Martin Hall has performed an important service in engaging with Morris's position. Taking points of orientation from the work of Durkheim, Bourdieu, and Latour, he uses Actor-Network-Theory to describe a set of differently motivated positions: 'Development', 'Memory', and 'Science'. His targets are twofold: the defiantly unreflecting science of Morris, and, more broadly, Young and Muller's insistence on "disciplinarity and the continued exclusion of the profane world from the academy" (Hall forthcoming: 2). He correctly identifies Morris's position as a kind of fundamentalism. By denying his own position "is political in any sense", and by denouncing his opponents as "politically motivated opponents of truth", Morris himself takes a strongly political position that "[lays] claim to authority, decision-rights and primacy. The problem is that, in its very terms, this form of political claim denies the possibility of reconciliation with non-competing sets of interests" (Hall forthcoming: 11). This is not the beginning of debate but its end.

Hall's career as an archaeologist has been distinctive, and has cut across many of the contexts and responses that I describe here. From the early-1980s onwards he produced a sustained and critical commentary on the relation between archaeology and apartheid, first in Iron Age Studies, later as a Historical Archaeologist. His gift has been for the encompassing outlook, and the intersection of multiple strands of theory and disciplinary approaches, a feature which has been more appreciated abroad than it has been at home. There is a depressingly embattled, backs-to-the-wall defensiveness in Morris's response to Prestwich Street. It may be that we are witnessing the passing of the old order. In a global politics of knowledge in archaeology, Morris's position is increasingly untenable. Cold comfort to the dead of Prestwich Street, in their cardboard boxes, on the concrete shelves of the city's ossuary.

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Response

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I am grateful to all five respondents for their careful and considered replies to my paper. Debate on key issues such as these is essential to making progress in what we are all passionate about – advancing knowledge to general benefit. By nature, formats of engagement such as this privilege responses to those who have disagreed with me, and the reply that follows leads more towards such criticisms.

In general terms, my paper seeks to use the case of Prestwich Place as a point of departure for a wider consideration of knowledge production. This does not diminish the significance of the Prestwich Place case in itself. Far from a 'brouhaha' stemming from "an intra-university squabble between the archaeologists and the historians over control of the emergent lucrative interdisciplinary field of 'Heritage'" (which Muller acknowledges as an incorrect first assumption), Prestwich Place is more of "a defining moment for a politics of memory in postapartheid South Africa" and "for a politics of knowledge in archaeology and physical anthropology" (Shepherd).

A first issue, which worries both Chirikure and Morris, is the status of individuals, groups and communities in claiming voice. Chirikure believes that "it is not clear who represents alternative knowledge". While he accepts that lobby groups such as Hands Off Prestwich Place may have jurisdiction here, he argues for a clear identification of legitimate proponents: "perhaps, the most important question at this juncture is who represents this new knowledge? Every knowledge system should have its proponents. Who should be responsible for making public any new knowledge?" For his part, Morris usefully amplifies the position he took in his inaugural lecture. While acknowledging that "an activist, in the South African sense, is one who stands up for the rights of the community from which he or she is drawn and puts himself in a role where he can influence events to the benefit of that community", he continues by arguing that "invariably such people are self-appointed" and use the "opportunity to push a given viewpoint". Similarly, Chirikure is concerned about the potential for "the invention of tradition whereby people can invoke the past to get advantages – material, ideological etc in the present. Sometimes, there is massive opportunism associated with contested heritage".

I do not doubt that activists can be self-appointed, self-interested and opportunistic. So too can public intellectuals, and academics, while not self-appointed, may often be motivated by their own interests in seeking opportunities for advancement. On the other hand, few community activists have any sustained voice or leverage unless they speak for significant sectors of communities, and many activists have democratic mandates for the positions that they take. This is certainly the case here, and the origins of community campaigns that led to positions on land rights in Cape Town, claims to heritage and the founding and resilience of the District Six Museum are well documented. In general terms, it would seem to me beneficial for the academic community to give community organisations and activists the benefit of doubt when it comes to their legitimacy since – and this is the main point of my paper – there is so much to gain by an inclusive approach to the generation of new forms of knowledge.

Meskell usefully reminds us that, while of key importance to Cape Town, Prestwich Place is a manifestation of a familiar form of conflict, well known and documented in Australia, the US and elsewhere: "historic and sometimes ongoing volatilities in the United States and Australia between indigenous people and archaeologists should remind South African scholars that socio-political tensions involving the past and present are not easily resolved and we should expect protracted periods of negotiation. For archaeological agendas to be even considered, practitioners must foster greater inclusion and open discussion and be willing to give up something of our own research priorities". However, she goes on to argue that "there can be no real power sharing without communities having the right of veto". I part company with Meskell on this

point, since it was a particular ambition of my paper to map out an approach that establishes coeval forms of inquiry that respect differing objectives without prohibitions on either side. Indeed, to argue for the inevitability of community rights of veto over academic enquiry suggests a relativism that I have been careful to avoid (I pick up on this point later in this response).

The importance of avoiding processes of enquiry that entrench veto rights is illustrated in the issue of invasive sampling. Morris correctly, and graciously, chastises me in pointing out that he did not request the right to take bone samples for chemical analysis, and was in fact asking for access to the Prestwich Place burials for metric analysis. But bone sampling is a powerful methodology for establishing diet, disease burden and genetic interconnections, and is becoming ever more powerful with contemporary scientific advances. My hope is that, through a mutually respectful approach to inquiry, it would indeed be possible to take samples from burials, and with community support. Indeed, Morris anticipated this in his February 2005 letter to SAHRA, writing that "although these techniques may provide additional valuable information, permission to do such studies would only be requested after intensive consultation with representatives of all stakeholders – descendant communities, scholars and the nation as a whole".

I turn now to the more general questions that are raised by the Prestwich Place case and similar instances, both in South Africa and elsewhere.

My interest in Muller's work is founded in respect for the formative intellectual role he has played in the discourse of knowledge creation, both through and since the South African demographic transition. In this, Muller feels that I have misrepresented his work, using it as "a placeholder for an elitism I have always disavowed". In reality, I nowhere make an accusation of elitism. My interest is rather in boundaries and their legitimacy and utility. My representation of Muller's position is based on a close reading of his own writing, and on several collaborative papers with Michael Young. While some of these papers have been concerned with narrower issues of school curriculum, they invariably have more general import. In addition, Muller maps out a millennial lineage with the work of Emile Durkheim and the foundations of Sociology which is why I, too, revisited Durkheim's lectures on the nature of knowledge.

Muller's collection of essays, published in 2000, served as a useful point of entry into this cycle of debate. A central standpoint was that positions on knowledge construction (in the broad sense, or in the narrower question of curriculum design) had been overrun by a misguided social constructivism and the denial of the legitimacy of the idea of objective knowledge. He argued that, while the ends of social justice may appear to be served, there is in reality little real benefit of socially constructed knowledge to poor or marginalised communities. This is taken further in Muller's 2007 paper, written with Michael Young, in which social constructivism is compared with "muck-raking journalism" and "moral self-righteousness". Muller and Young's contention is that such positions start with the assumption that "identification with the powerless or with a particular disadvantaged group brings them automatically closer to the truth". This introduces a

conflict between "the formal, codified, theoretical and, at least potentially, universalising knowledge of the curriculum that students seek to acquire and teachers to transmit, and the informal, local, experiential and everyday knowledge that pupils (or students) bring to school" (Young and Muller 2007: 175).

My point here is the conflation between the critique of social constructivism and community engagement; it is often assumed that community engagement requires a belief in social constructivism and a relativism that "flattens out" different forms of knowledge such that they are regarded as having inherently equivalent value. In his response to my paper, Muller claims that I imply this to be the case. I do not, and my intention was exactly the opposite, which was why I turned to the work of Bruno Latour.

Through his close and painstaking analysis of both contemporary scientific investigation and earlier, paradigmatic, discoveries, Latour shows how the subjective interventions, interactions and decisions are connected with objects (whether specimens, records, scientific papers or other constituents of the archive of knowledge) through systems of 'circulating references'. For example, in his close study of a fieldtrip, comprising a botanist, pedologist and geomorphologist, to study the border of the Amazon forest and the savanna in Brazil, Latour shows how the research exercise comprises a series of "transformations". Thus the research site is mapped, soil samples taken, codified by the use of standards of colour and granularity, removed from the field to the laboratory and published, encouraging further questions that will prompt a return to the field, and the collection and codification of further samples.

Muller, in his response to my paper, repeats a common misrepresentation of Latour's work - that it somehow insists that such systems of circulating reference have an a priori equality of weight. Latour has repeatedly rejected this, as well as social constructivism. The purpose of science studies – and Actor-Network-Theory – is to provide a methodology for mapping the development of ways of knowing through the interdigitation of forms of enquiry. "Science warriors", as Latour calls them, are in fact the ones who make a priori assumptions of the weight of certain forms of knowledge, and of the priority of specific processes of discovery. As Latour put it, with a degree of despair, "science warriors deal with nothing but an empty heart brightly lit on the operating table; science studies treats a bloody, throbbing, tangled mess, the entire vascularization of the collective. And the first group makes fun of the second because its members look messy and have blood on their white coats, and accuses them of ignoring the heart of science! Indeed, how can we talk to one another?" (Latour 1999: 109).

I make my own position on this quite clear in my paper: "there is also no inherent reason why these two systems of circulation should be in conflict, since their ultimate interests are quite different. Science seeks a continuing series of explanations of phenomena and scientists are motivated by the reputational benefits that come with publication and citation. In this particular case [Prestwich Place], physical anthropologists and archaeologists wish to apply cutting-edge laboratory techniques to deduce epidemiological characteristics such as disease and nutrition. Memory work seeks to augment docu-

mentary evidence of the past, which favours the literate and powerful, with oral testimonies that better represent the lives of the underclass". Consequently, I can see no basis for Muller's assertion, in his response to me, that I claim that "all discourses carry the same socio-epistemic 'weight'"

Latour's approach to science studies anticipates an objection that Morris raises to the case I make. Morris is concerned with the differences between different kinds of fact. He writes that "if Hall's critique of my work had been about history, I would have agreed with most of what he has to say". This is because "everything in history must be seen relative to your viewpoint. No two people (never mind historians) will interpret the past in the same way. The interpretation will depend entirely on the perspective". In contrast, Morris sees archaeology as establishing a different kind of evidence, "factual information that allows interpretation of the past" that, while not "truth", has "the power to uncover contextual information that is otherwise not available in any other form of enquiry". While Morris's position on the epistemological status of documentary and archaeological evidence would keep both historians and archaeologists in busy debate for some considerable time, my point here is that Latour's methodology for mapping the circulation of references that connect differing forms of enquiry well serves to articulate these differing approaches to knowledge creation.

Returning, in conclusion, to Muller's formidable corpus of scholarship, what is the essential difference between us? It is indeed that I see Muller as arguing for the primacy of the disciplinary order of the academy, with the dominance of "the inner community of scientists who can legitimately contribute to the rational consensus" (Young and Muller 2008:519). Muller's protestations to the contrary, it is reasonable to assume that this "inner community" is within the boundaries of formal academic and research institutions, of which the university is the exemplar. I do not argue for the relativism of social constructivism or the inherent equality of differing knowledge systems. My claim is that by removing the a *priori* claims of institutions and disciplines to the protection of their boundaries, new possibilities become immediately evident.

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